

## HISTORY OF INDIA UPTO 1000 A.D (19CHI1A)

### Unit – I

#### Geographical Division

- The geographical boundaries of *Bharatavarsha* are demarcated by –
  - The Himalayas in the north;
  - The *Pamir* plateau and *Sulaiman Kirthar* ranges in the western and north-western side;
  - The *Bay of Bengal* in the east and Arabian Sea in the west; and
  - The Indian Ocean in the south.
- The physiography of the subcontinent can be studied under the three following parts –
  - The Himalayas,
  - The Indo-Gangetic-Brahmaputra plain, and
  - The Deccan plateau.

#### The Himalayas

- The Himalaya is about 2,400 Km long (from east to west) and about 250 to 320 km wide (north to south).
- The Himalaya touches Afghanistan in the west to Myanmar in the east.
- There are about 114 peaks (of Himalayan Mountain Range), which are more than 20,000 feet high.
- Some of the highest peaks (of the Himalaya) are –
  - *Gauri Shankar* or Mount Everest (it is the highest mountain peak in the world),
  - *Kanchanjanga*,
  - *Dhaulagiri*,
  - *Nanga Parvat*, and
  - *Nanda Devi*.
- The Himalayas form a barrier against the foreign invasions from the north.
- The *Khyber* and *Bolan* passes were well known since the ancient time. Khyber Pass was popular as the ‘gateway to India.’

#### The Indo-Gangetic-Brahmaputra Plain

- The great plain lies to the south of the Himalayas. It covers more than 255 million hectares fertile plain area.
- The great plain is formed by the rivers originating from Himalaya.

- The Indus, the Ganga, and the Brahmaputra are the three major river systems.
- The ancient River *Saraswati* and its tributaries used to flow through the northern plain area. The stream of *Saraswati* had flown through the states of Haryana, Punjab, and Rajasthan.
- The Indus River has five tributaries (flowing from east to west), namely –
  - The *Sutlej* (Satudri),
  - The *Beas* (Vipasa),
  - The *Ravi* (Parushni),
  - The *Chenab* (Asikni), and
  - The *Jhelum* (Vitesta).
- The river *Sutlej* was (once) a tributary of the lost river *Saraswati*, but changed its course.
- The *Brahmaputra* originating from the eastern part of the Lake *Manasarovar* in the *Kailasa* Range (of Himalaya) flows eastward through the plateau of Tibet. Before entering India, its name is ‘*Tsangpo*.’
- The *Brahmaputra* enters in India and from here, it is called as the Brahmaputra. It passes through Assam and Bengal and joins the eastern most mouth of the *Ganga* i.e., *Padma*.
- Originating from the *Gangotri* glacier, the River Ganga flows through the India and Bangladesh and finally debouches into the Bay of Bengal. It is the most sacred river of India.

### **The Deccan Plateau**

- The surface of the Deccan plateau (which is located in the southern part of the subcontinent) is tilted from west to east.
- On the western side, a range of high cliffs is located (in the direction of) south to north leaving a narrow strip of plain between it and the sea. It is known as the Western *Ghats*.
- The Eastern Ghats (which is situated along the eastern coast) is divided into groups of low hills. It has several gaps through which the peninsular rivers join the Bay of Bengal.

### **Central Indian Plateau**

- The Central Indian plateau stretches from Gujarat in the west to *Chhota Nagpur* in the east.
- *Thar*, the Great Indian Desert lies to the north-west of the Aravalli range.
- Central Indian plateau consists of *Malwa* plateau, *Bundelkhand*, and *Baghelkhand*.

## Western Ghats

- The Western Ghats, also known as Sahyadri (Benevolent Mountains), are a mountain range that covers an area of 140,000 square kilometres (54,000 sq mi) in a stretch of 1,600 kilometres (990 mi) parallel to the western coast of the Indian peninsula, traversing the states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat.

## Eastern Ghats

- The **Eastern Ghats** are a discontinuous range of mountains along India's eastern coast. The Eastern Ghats run from the northern Odisha through Andhra Pradesh to Tamil Nadu in the south passing some parts of Karnataka. They are eroded and cut through by four major rivers of peninsular India, viz. Godavari, Mahanadi, Krishna, and Kaveri.

## The Coastal Regions

### Western coastal plain

- The western coastal plain stretches from the Gulf of Cambay in the north to Kerala in the south.
- The northern part of the western coast is called the *Konkan* coast. And, the southern one is called the *Malabar* Coast.
- Some of the ideal harbors are located in the Konkan and Malabar region.

### Eastern Coast

- The eastern coast has a few natural harbor. The natural harbors provide an opportunity for maritime activities during the historical period, which lead to more vigorous and fruitful contacts with the south-east Asian countries.
- The southern tip of the peninsula is known as *Cape Comorin*.

## Climate

- The Indian subcontinent is located largely in the tropical zone and has a fairly warm climate throughout the year.
- The Indian subcontinent has three seasons namely, winter, summer, and rainy.
- March to June is the hot season. The temperature goes up to 48° C or more in some regions. It follows the rainy season from July to October.
- The south-west monsoon brings rain in the country.
- The regions of Haryana, Rajasthan, and some parts of Sind and Gujarat receive less rainfall, but during the ancient time, it received higher rainfall and created an ideal condition for the development of the *Harappan* civilization.
- The ancient vast subcontinent of India was popular as *Bharatavarsha* (the land of Bharata), which was the part of southern *Jambudvipa*.

## Sources

- Literary and Archaeological records are the two main categories that give evidences of Ancient Indian History.

- The literary source includes literature of Vedic, Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, and other literature along with other foreign accounts.
- The archaeological source includes epigraphic, numismatic, and other architectural remains.
- The archaeological explorations and excavations have opened the great landscapes of new information.

### **Indian Literary Sources**

- The ancient Indian literature is mostly religious in nature.
- The *Puranic* and Epic literature are considered as history by Indians, but it contains no definite dates for events and kingdoms.
- The effort of history writing was shown by a large number of inscriptions, coins, and local chronicles. The principles of history are preserved in the *Puranas* and Epics.
- The *Puranas* and epics narrate the genealogies of kings and their achievements. But they are not arranged in a chronological order.
- The Vedic literature contains mainly the four Vedas i.e. ***Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, and Atharvanaveda.***
- The Vedic literature is in a different language called as the Vedic language. Its vocabulary contains a wide range of meaning and is different in grammatical usages. It has a definite **mode of pronunciation** in which **emphasis** changes the meaning entirely.
- The Vedas give reliable information about the culture and civilization of the Vedic period, but do not reveal the political history.
- Six *Vedangas* are the important limbs of Vedas. They were evolved for the proper understanding of the Vedas. The *Vedangas* are –
  - *Siksha* (Phonetics)
  - *Kalpa* (Rituals)
  - *Vyakarna* (Grammar)
  - *Nirukta* (Etymology)
  - *Chhanda* (Metrics) and
  - *Jyotisha* (Astronomy).
- *Vedanga* has been written in the precepts (*sutra*) form. This is a very precise and exact form of expression in prose, which was developed by the scholars of ancient India.
- ***Ashtadhyayi*** (eight chapters), written by **Panini**, is a book on grammar that gives excellent information on the art of writing in *sutra* (precepts).
- The later Vedic literature includes the *Brahmanas*, the *Aranyakas*, and the *Upanishads*.
- *Brahmanas* gives a description of Vedic rituals.

- *Aranyakas* and *Upanishads* give speeches on different spiritual and philosophical problems.
- *Puranas*, which are 18 in numbers, give mainly historical accounts.
- **The Ramayana and the Mahabharata** is epics of great historical importance.
- The Jain and the Buddhist literature had been written in *Prakrit* and *Pali* languages.
- Early Jain literature is mostly written in *Prakrit* language.
- Prakrit language was a form of Sanskrit language.
- Pali language was a form of Prakrit language which was used in Magadha.
- Most of the early Buddhist literature is written in Pali language.
- Pali language reached to Sri Lanka through some of the Buddhist monks where it is a living language.
- Ashokan edicts had been written in *Pali* language.
- Mahavira and Buddha are considered as the historical personalities (equivalent to the God). They have created Jain and Buddhist religious ideology respectively.

#### **Ancient Books**

- The Buddhist books are called as **Jataka** stories. They have been given some historical importance because they are related with the previous births of the Buddha. There are more than 550 such stories.
- The historic information mentioned in *Jaina* literature also helps us in reconstructing the history of different regions of India.
- The *Dharmasutras* and the *Smritis* were the rules and regulations for the general public and the rulers. It can be equated with the constitution and the law books of the modern concept of polity and society. For example, *Manusmriti*.
- *Dharmashastras* were compiled between 600 and 200 B.C.
- *Arthashastra* is a book on statecraft written by Kautilya during the Maurya period. The book is divided into 15 parts dealing with different subject matters related to polity, economy, and society.
- The final version of *Arthashastra* was written in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.
- Kautilya acknowledges his debt to his predecessors in his book, which shows that there was a tradition of writing on and teaching of statecrafts.
- *Mudrarakshasha* is a play written by **Visakha datta**. It describes the society and culture of that period.
- *Malavikagnimitram* written by **Kalidasa** gives information of the reign of Pusyamitra Sunga dynasty.
- **Bhasa** and **Sudraka** are other poets who have written plays based on historical events.

- *Harshacharita*, written by **Banabhatta**, throws light on many historical facts about which we could not have known otherwise.
- **Vakpati** wrote *Gaudavaho*, based on the exploits of Yasovarman of Kanauj.
- *Vikramankadevacharita*, written by **Bilhana**, describes the victories of the later Chalukya king Vikramaditya.
- Some of the prominent biographical works, which are based on the lives of the kings are –
  - *Kumarapalacharita* of Jayasimha,
  - *Kumarapalacharita* or *Dvayashraya Mahakavya* of Hemachandra,
  - *Hammirakavya* of Nayachandra
  - *Navasahasankacharita* of Padmagupta
  - *Bhojaprabandha* of Billal
  - *Priihvirajacharit* of Chandbardai
- *Rajatarangini*, written by **Kalhana**, is the best form of history writing valued by modern historians. His critical method of historical research and impartial treatment of the historical facts have earned him a great respect among the modern historians.
- The **Sangam** literature is in the form of short and long poems consisting 30,000 lines of poetry, which arranged in two main groups i.e. *Patinenkilkanakku* and the *Pattupattu*. It describes many kings and dynasties of South India.
- The *Sangam* was the poetic compilation by a group of poets of different times mainly supported by chiefs and kings.
- The *Sangam* literature was composed by a large number of poets in praise of their kings. Some kings and events mentioned are also supported by the inscriptions.
- The *Sangam* literature generally describes events up to the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

### Foreign Accounts

- **Herodotus** was dependent upon the Persian sources for his information about India.
- Herodotus in his book *Histories* (written in many volumes) describes about the Indo-Persian relations.
- A detailed account of the invasion of India by Alexander was written by **Arrian**.
- The Greek kings send their ambassadors to *Pataliputra*. Megasthenes, Deimachus, and Dionysius were some of them.
- **Megasthenes** came in the court of Chandragupta Maurya. He had written about the Indian society and culture in his book called as '*Indica*'. Though the original work has been lost, but it had been frequently quoted in the works of later writers.

- A book '*Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*' written by an anonymous Greek author who settled in Egypt on the basis of his personal voyage of Indian coast in about A. D. 80 gives valuable information about the Indian coasts.
- In the second century A. D., **Ptolemy** had written a geographical treatise on India.
- The Greek writing about India, however, is based on secondary sources. They were ignorant of the language and the customs of the country and hence their information is full of errors and contradictions.
- Many Chinese travelers visited India as Buddhist pilgrims from time to time; three important pilgrims were –
  - Fa-Hien (Faxian) – visited India in 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Hiuen-Tsang (Xuanzang) – visited India in 7<sup>th</sup> century and I-Tsing (Yijing) – visited India in 7<sup>th</sup> century.
- Hiuen-Tsang had given valuable account about Harshavardhana and some other contemporary kings of Northern India.
- Fa-Hien and Hiuen-Tsang traveled many parts of the country and they have given an exaggerated account of Buddhism during the period of their visit.
- Hiuen-Tsang mentioned Harsha as a follower of Buddhism while in his epigraphic records, Harsha mentions himself as a devotee of Siva. Such contradictions may be considered due to the fact of multi-religious nature of Indian rulers, which might confuse a foreigner.
- Al-Biruni gave important information about India. He was Arab scholar and contemporary of Mahmud of Ghazni.
- Al-Biruni studied Sanskrit and acquired knowledge of Indian society and culture through literature. Therefore, his observations are based on his knowledge about Indian society and culture, but he did not give any political information of his times.
- The archaeological sources played an important role in constructing or/and reconstructing the history of a region.
- The archaeological source of Indian history is only about two centuries old.
- The archaeological source enhanced our knowledge about our past and also provided important materials, which we could not have been obtained otherwise.
- Up to 1920, Indian civilization was considered to have begun about 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. However, the excavations at *Mohenjodaro*, *Kalibangan*, and *Harappa* prove its antiquity to be of 5,000 B.C.
- Prehistoric artifacts found in the excavations have shown that human activities had started here as early as about two million years ago.
- Epigraphy and Numismatics are the important branches of the study of history, which has greatly enhanced the knowledge of India's past.
- **Epigraphy** is the study of inscriptions and **Numismatic** is the study of coins, medals, or paper money.

- Coins are an important numismatic source that tells us about the Indo-Greek, Saka-Parthian, and Kushana Kings.
- Inscriptions of Ashoka and Samudragupta provide valuable information about social and political status of the people of that period.
- The study of these inscriptions reveals the world about Ashoka's views on *dharma* (religion) and conquests of Samudragupta.

### **Archaeological Monuments**

- The temples and sculptures display an architectural and artistic history of the Indians from the Gupta period up-to recent times.
- During the Gupta period, the large caves i.e. *Chaityas* and *Viharas* were excavated in the hills of Western India.
- The Kailasa Temple of Ellora and *Rathas* at Mahabalipuram have been carved out of rocks from outside.
- The excavations of the cities of Mohenjodaro and Harappa prove the antiquity of Indian culture and civilization, which are more than two thousand years old.
- The historic sites such as Kalibangan, Lothal, Dholavira, and Rakhigarhi are the contemporary of Mohenjodaro and Harappa civilizations.
- The Harappan civilizations cover the area of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh (in India).
- The Dark Age of Indian history was the period between 1500 and 600 B.C. This is known as Dark Age because not much is known about this period.
- The archaeological discoveries of Black-and-Red Ware, Painted Grey Ware, Malwa, and Jorwe cultures have filled the chronological gaps as well as covered the geographical extent.
- Some of the important points that Archaeological discoveries display are –
  - Indians had domesticated sheep and goat and started agriculture about 8,000 years ago and Iron metal came in regular use about 1,600 B.C.
  - The tradition of rock paintings in India is proved to be more than 12 thousand years old.
  - Tools and remains found in the Kashmir and Narmada valleys show that the human activities started in the subcontinent as early as two million years ago.

### **Inscriptions**

- The inscriptions are the most important and reliable sources of Indian history.
- Inscriptions are the contemporary documents those are free from later interpolations as it is impossible to add something to it at a later period. Therefore, it comes in the original form as it was composed in and engraved.



- The manuscripts were written on soft materials like birch bark, palm leaf, paper etc. They became fragile in a course of time and were frequently required to be copied and at the time of copying, some irrelevant additions were made and some errors tend to creep in. Therefore, they are not considered as a reliable source of information about history.
- The script of the inscriptions also helps the historian in many ways.
- The **Harappan** seals depict the earliest system of writings, however, they could not be decoded yet.
- The Ashokan inscriptions are claimed to be the earliest one of the systems of writing. Ashoka's inscriptions are found written in four scripts.
- **Kharoshthi** script was used in Pakistan region, which is written from right to left and is evolved on the *Varnamala* (alphabet) system of the Indian languages.
- **Brahmi** script was used for the rest of the empire from Kalsi in the north in Uttaranchal up to Mysore in the south.
- **Palaeography** is the study of development of the scripts.
- The epigraphic studies started in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- **Brahmi** script was adopted by the rulers after Ashoka and continued for succeeding centuries.
- The **Brahmi** script kept modifying century after century, which led to the development of most of the scripts of India, including *Tamil*, *Telugu*, *Kannada*, and *Malayalam* in the south and *Nagari*, *Gujarati*, *Bangla*, etc. in the north.
- The modifications in the letters of the script have made it possible to ascertain the time period in which the inscription was written.
- In 1837, **James Prinsep** completed the chart of *Ashokan* alphabets.
- The inscriptions of Ashoka had been recorded in different years of his reign and are known as edicts because they are in the form of the king's order or desire
- The edicts of Ashoka prove that he (Ashoka) was a benevolent king concerned with the welfare of not only his subjects, but also of the whole humanity.
- Inscriptions of the Indo-Greeks, '*Saka-kshatrapas*' and '*Kushanas*' adopt Indian names after two or three generations. These inscriptions illustrate that they were also engaged in social and religious welfare activities like any other Indian kings.
- **Junagarh Rock** inscription of Rudradaman was written in the mid of 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. It was an early example of an inscription written in Sanskrit; however, Sanskrit became prominent since the Gupta period.
- Pillar inscription of Allahabad describes the achievements of Samudragupta.
- The epigraphs of the Gupta period started trends of giving the genealogy of kings with the account of their conquests and achievements. This became a trend of the subsequent dynasties to give a list of their predecessors and mention mythology of their origins.

- The *Aihole* inscription of the Chalukya king Pulkeshin-II describes a dynastic genealogy and achievements.
- The Gwalior inscription of Bhoja also gives a full account of his predecessors and their achievements.

### Numismatics

- Numismatics is considered as the second most important source for reconstructing the history of India after inscriptions.
- Coins are mostly found in the hoards while digging field or constructing a building, making a road, etc.
- Coins found in systematic excavations are less in number, but are very valuable because their chronology and cultural context can be fixed precisely.
- Earliest coins are known as the *punch-marked* coins. They are made of either silver or copper. In addition to this, some gold punch-marked coins were also found, but they are very rare and their authenticity is doubtful.
- The Indo-Greek coins were also made up of silver and copper and rarely in gold.
- The *Kushanas* issued their coins mostly in gold and copper, rarely in silver.
- The *Guptas* issued their coins mostly in gold and silver but the gold coins are numerous.
- The punch-marked coins that bear (only) symbols on them are the earliest coins of India. Each symbol is punched separately, which sometimes overlap the other.
- Punch-marked coins have been found throughout the country, starting from Taxila to Magadha to Mysore or even further south. They do not bear any inscription or legend on them.
- The **Indo-Greek coins** depict beautiful artistic features on them. The portrait or bust of the king on the obverse side appear to be real portraits and on the reverse, some deity is depicted.
- The information about *Saka-Parthians* kings also came through their coins.
- The *Kushanas* issued mostly gold coins and numerous copper coins, which are found in most parts of north India up to Bihar.
- The *Vima Kadphises* coins bear the picture of Lord Siva standing beside a bull illustrate the Indian influence from the very beginning.
- The king calls himself *Mahesvara* i.e. devotee of Siva in the depiction on coins. Kanishka, Huvishka, and Vasudeva etc. all have this depiction on their coins.
- Kushana coins depicted many Indian gods and goddesses along with many Persian and Greek deities.
- The Guptas had succeeded Kushanas in the tradition of imprinting coins. They completely had been *Indianized* their coinage.
- The kings are portrayed engaged in activities like hunting a lion or rhinoceros, holding a bow or battle-axes, playing a musical instrument, or performing *Ashvamedha yajna*.

- Indian subcontinent comprises **six** countries (as shown in the image given below) namely
  - Afghanistan,
  - Pakistan,
  - Nepal,
  - India,
  - Bhutan, and
  - Bangladesh.
  
- The whole subcontinent was known as ***Bharatavarsha*** or **Hindustan** in ancient time.
- The word Hindustan is derived from the name of the river Sindhu, pronounced by the westerners as 'Hindu' or 'Indu.' The name India is thus derived.
- The name 'India' is called as '***Bharata***' in the Indian Constitution.

### **Pre – history**

Human prehistory is the period between the use of the first stone tools c. 3.3 million years ago by hominins and the invention of writing systems. The earliest writing systems appeared c. 5,300 years ago, but it took thousands of years for writing to be widely adopted, and it was not used in some human cultures until the 19th century or even until the present. The end of prehistory therefore came at very different dates in different places, and the term is less often used in discussing societies where prehistory ended relatively recently.

Sumer in Mesopotamia, the Indus valley civilization, and ancient Egypt were the first civilizations to develop their own scripts and to keep historical records; this took place already during the early Bronze Age. Neighboring civilizations were the first to follow. Most other civilizations reached the end of prehistory during the Iron Age. The three-age system of division of prehistory into the Stone Age, followed by the Bronze Age and Iron Age, remains in use for much of Eurasia and North Africa, but is not generally used in those parts of the world where the working of hard metals arrived abruptly with contact with Eurasian cultures, such as the Americas, Oceania, Australasia and much of Sub-Saharan Africa. These areas also, with some exceptions in Pre-Columbian civilizations in the Americas, did not develop complex writing systems before the arrival of Eurasians, and their prehistory reaches into relatively recent periods; for example 1788 is usually taken as the end of the prehistory of Australia.

### **Proto - history**

The period when a culture is written about by others, but has not developed its own writing is often known as the protohistory of the culture. By definition,<sup>[1]</sup> there are no written records from human prehistory, so dating of prehistoric materials is crucial. Clear techniques for dating were not well-developed until the 19th century.<sup>[2]</sup>

This article is concerned with human prehistory, the time since behaviorally and anatomically modern humans first appeared until the beginning of recorded history. Earlier periods are also called "prehistoric"; there are separate articles for the overall history of the Earth and the history of life before humans.

### **Earliest Palaeolithic Tools**

- The stage of human development started at the time when people begin the use of tools for their aid. It was the time that laid the foundation of science and the uses of machines.
- About 2.6 million years ago, human beings started the regular use of tools in east Africa.
- In Indonesia, several hominid fossils have recently been dated between 1.8 and 1.6 million years.
- In China, the early stone tools are associated with human fossils dated between 1.7 and 1.9 million years.
- In India, no human fossils have been found associated with Stone Age tools.
- The various strata of the *Sivalik* hills containing stone tools have been dated between 2 to 1.2 million years.
- The archaeological site of *Bori* in Pune district of Maharashtra is about 1.38 million years old. It gives the scientific record for the early stone tools in India.
- The early human settlement in India is contemporary to the Asian countries, but it is of the later period than that in the African region.

### **Palaeolithic Cultures**

- Based on tool technology, the Palaeolithic Age in India is divided into the following three phases –
  - Lower Palaeolithic Hand-axe and cleaver industries;
  - Middle Palaeolithic Tools made on flakes; and
  - Upper Palaeolithic Tools made on flakes and blades.

### **Lower Palaeolithic Culture**

- The time period of Lower Palaeolithic culture was marked between 600,000 and 60,000 B.C.
- The main tool types of this era were hand axes and cleavers, along with chopper-chopping tools. These were made on cores as well as flakes.
- The raw materials used for making the stone tools were largely of different kinds of stones, including quartzite, chert, and sometimes even quartz and basalt, etc.
- Following are the major types of sites of the Lower Palaeolithic culture –
  - Habitation sites (either under rock-shelters or in the open);
  - Factory sites associated with sources of raw materials;
  - Sites that combine elements of both these functions; and
  - Open-air sites (any of the above categories).

- The Lower Palaeolithic tools have been abundantly found throughout the Indian subcontinent, except the plains of the Indus, *Saraswati*, *Brahmaputra*, and *Ganga* where raw material in the form of stone is not available.
- Following are the important sites of Lower Palaeolithic cultures –
  - *Pahalgam* in Kashmir,
  - *Belan* valley in Allahabad district (Uttar Pradesh),
  - *Bhimbetka* and *Adamgarh* in Hoshangabad district (Madhya Pradesh),
  - *16 R* and *Singi Talav* in Nagaur district (Rajasthan),
  - *Nevasa* in Ahmadnagar district (Maharashtra),
  - *Hunsgi* in Gulburga district (in Karnataka), and
  - *Attirampakkam* (Tamil Nadu).
- Some other sites also have been found in –
  - *Shivalik* range of Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Punjab;
  - *Belan* valley in Uttar Pradesh;
  - *Berach* basin and the hilly area of Rajasthan; and
  - *Narmada* and *Sone* valleys in Madhya Pradesh;
  - *Malprabha* and *Ghatprabha* basins in Karnataka;
  - *Chhota Nagpur* plateau and several areas of Maharashtra;
  - Some areas near Chennai in Tamil Nadu; and
  - Some areas of Orissa, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh.

### **Middle Palaeolithic Culture**

- The period between 150,000 B.C. and 40,000 B.C. is marked as the middle Palaeolithic culture.
- The tools of middle Palaeolithic were characterized as –
  - The flake tools those are made on flakes obtained by striking them out from pebbles or cobbles.
  - These tool types include small and medium-sized hand-axes, cleavers, and various kinds of scrapers, borers, and knives.
- The Middle Palaeolithic tools were found in Central India, Deccan, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Orissa.
- The most important sites of Middle Palaeolithic period were –
  - Bhimbetka
  - Nevasa
  - Pushkar

- Rohiri hills of upper Sind
- Samnapur on Narmada

### **Upper Palaeolithic Culture**

- The period between 9,000 and 8,000 B.C. is marked as Upper Palaeolithic culture.
- The tools of Upper Palaeolithic culture were characterized by basic technological innovation in the method of producing parallel sided blades from a carefully prepared core and in the development of the composite tools.
- The main tool types of Palaeolithic period were –
  - Scrapers
  - Points
  - Awls
  - Burins
  - Borers
  - Knives etc.
- During the Upper Palaeolithic period, the concept of composite tools developed.
- The most noteworthy discovery of the Upper Palaeolithic period is the rubble-made platforms and the Mother Goddess who was worshiped as female principle or *Sakti* in the countryside.
- The rubble platform with its unique stone was made by a group of final upper Palaeolithic hunter-gatherers. A piece of natural stone in the center of the platform is found on the top of the *Kaimur* escarpment.
- The upper Palaeolithic tools were found in –
  - Rajasthan,
  - Central and Western India,
  - Parts of the Ganga and *Belan* valleys,
  - Gujarat,
  - Andhra Pradesh, and
  - Karnataka.
- The various sites in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra were of the upper Palaeolithic period lasted from about 45,000 to 10,000 B.C.
- The time period between 12,000 and 2,000 B.C. in India is marked as Late Stone Age, Mesolithic, or Microlithic period.

### **Tools of Mesolithic Culture**

- The tools of Mesolithic Culture were characterized by –

- Parallel-sided blades taken out from prepared cores of such fine material as chert, chalcedony, crystal, jasper, carnelian, agate, etc.;
  - Stone size (of tools) decreased;
  - Tools were hafted in wood and bones;
  - The size and shapes of the tools used as composite tools; and
  - Some new tool-types namely lunates, trapezes, triangles, arrow-heads, etc. were developed.
- The archaeological stratigraphy reflects the continuity from the Upper Palaeolithic age to the Microlithic age and it proved that the Microlithic industry is rooted in the preceding phase of the Upper Palaeolithic industry.
  - The C-14 dates available for the Mesolithic culture illustrate that this industry began around 12,000 B.C. and survived up to 2,000 B.C.

#### **Sites of Mesolithic Culture**

- The various sites of the Mesolithic period were located in –
  - *Langhnaj* in Gujarat,
  - *Bagor* in Rajasthan,
  - *Sarai Nahar Rai, Chopani Mando, Mahdaha, and Damdama* in Uttar Pradesh,
  - *Bhimbetka and Adamgarh* in Madhya Pradesh,
  - Orissa,
  - Kerala, and
  - Andhra Pradesh
- The inhabitant community of the sites in Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh were essentially hunters, food-gatherers, and fishermen. However, some of the agricultural practice also evidenced at these sites.
- The sites of *Bagor* in Rajasthan and *Langhnaj* in Gujarat elucidate that these Mesolithic communities were in touch with the people of the *Harappan* and other Chalcolithic cultures and traded various items with each other.
- About 6,000 B.C., the Mesolithic people may have partly adopted the settled way of life and started domestication of animals including sheep and goat.

#### **Beginning of Settled Life**

- About 6,000 years ago the first urban societies came into being in both the western and southern Asia regions.
- The peculiar advancement in the human life was the domestication of a large number of animals and plants.

- Around 7,000 B.C., humans in west Asia started domesticated crops like wheat and barley.
- Rice might have been domesticated at the same time in India as it is shown by the evidence from *Koldihwa* in the *Belan* valley.
- The domestication of various animals and successful exploitation of various species of wild plants ushered a shift towards permanent settlements, which gradually lead the economic and cultural developments.

### **Neolithic-Agriculture Regions**

- The Neolithic-agriculture based regions (in Indian), can be categorized into four groups –
  - Indus system and its western borderland;
  - Ganga valley;
  - Western India and the northern Deccan; and
  - Southern Deccan.
- Agriculture and animal domestication were the main economic activity of early Neolithic cultures.
- The evidence of the agricultural based economy of Neolithic culture comes from the *Quetta* valley and in the Valleys of *Loralai* and *Zob* rivers in the north-western part of the Indo-Pakistan region.
- The site of *Mehrgarh* has been extensively examined and the result shows that the habitation here began in (around) 7,000 B.C. There is also an evidence of the use of ceramic during this period.
- Around 6,000 B.C., earthen pots and pans were used; initially handmade and later wheel-made.
- Initially, in the pre-ceramic period, the houses were in irregular scatter of square or rectangular shape and were made up of mud bricks.
- The first village was formed by separating the house by waste dumps and passage ways between them.
- The houses were generally divided into four or more internal compartments to be used some as storage.
- The subsistence of early inhabitants was primarily depended on hunting and food gathering and additionally supplemented by some agriculture and animal husbandry.
- The domestic cereals included wheat and barley and the domesticated animals were sheep, goat, pig, and cattle.
- Beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> millennium B.C. marked as the use of pottery by the human beings; first handmade and then wheel-made.



- The people of this period, used to wear beads made up of lapis lazuli, carnelian, banded agate, and white marine shell. Beads were found with burial remains.
- The people were largely engaged in long-distance trade as suggested by the occurrence of shell bangles and pendants made up of a mother of pearl.
- During 7,000, the Neolithic settlement at *Mehrgarh* marked the early food-producing subsistence economy and beginning of trade and crafts in the Indus valley.
- The communities in the Indus valley during the next 2,500 years developed new technologies to produce pottery and figurines of terracotta; elaborate ornaments of stone and metal; tools and utensils; and architectural style.
- Large numbers of Neolithic sites have been found in the *Ganga* valley, Assam, and the north-east region.
- Apart from the Indus valley, some important Neolithic sites are –
  - *Gufkral* and *Burzahom* in Kashmir,
  - *Mahgara*, *Chopani Mando*, and *Koldihwa* in Belan valley in Uttar Pradesh, and
  - *Chirand* in Bihar.
- The site of *Koldihwa* (of 6,500 B.C.) provided the earliest evidence for the domestication of rice. It is the oldest evidence of rice cultivation in any part of the world.
- The agriculture in the *Belan* valley began around 6,500 B.C. Besides rice, cultivation of barley was also attested at *Mahgara*.
- The radiocarbon dates of the bone remains, (from *Koldihwa* and *Mahgara*) show that cattle, sheep, and goat were domesticated in the region.
- The early Neolithic settlers in *Burzahom* lived in pit dwellings, rather than building houses on the ground.
- The settlement at *Chirand* in Bihar is of the later period (relatively) to Indus valley.
- Small polished Neolithic stone axes have been found from *Cachar Hills*, *Garo Hills*, and *Naga Hills* in north-east regions of India.
- The excavations at *Sarutaru* near Guwahati revealed shouldered Celts and round-buttled axes associated with the crude cord or the basket-marked pottery.
- The new patterns of subsistence found in south India that was almost contemporary with the *Harappan* culture.
- Following were the important sites in southern India –
  - *Kodekal*, *Utnur*, *Nagatjunikonda*, and *Palavoy* in Andhra Pradesh;
  - *Tekkalkolta*, *Maski*, *Narsipur*, *Sangankallu*, *Hallur*, and *Brahmagiri* in Karnataka
  - *Paiyampalli* in Tamil Nadu.
- The Neolithic Age of southern India is dated between 2,600 and 800 B.C. It is divided into three phases as –

- Phase-I – No metal tool (at all);
- Phase-II – It is marked with tools of copper and bronze, but in limited quantity. People have domesticated cattle, including cow, bull, sheep, and goat and also practiced some agriculture and cultivated *gram*, *millet*, and *ragi*. Pottery of both handmade as well as wheel-made variety was used; and
- Phase-III – It is marked with the use of iron.
- The evidence (discussed above) leads us to draw certain broad conclusions.
  - The earliest Neolithic settlements, in the Indian subcontinent, was first developed in the west of the Indus River. At *Mehrgarh*, the Neolithic culture began about 8,000 B.C. and soon it became a widespread phenomenon.
  - People lived in mud houses; wheat and barley were cultivated; and sheep and goat were domesticated.
  - Long-distance trade for precious goods was practiced.
  - By 3,000 B.C., the Neolithic culture was a widespread phenomenon and covered a large part of the Indian subcontinent.
- By the end of the Neolithic period, a full-fledged civilization was developed in the *Indus* and *Saraswati* valleys in the northern part of India.

### **Chalcolithic Culture**

- A completely different kind of culture known as Chalcolithic Culture was developed in central India and Deccan region. They, however, never reached the level of urbanization in spite they were using metal. They were contemporary of the *Harappan* culture, but some other were of later *Harappan* age.
- Important Chalcolithic cultures were –
  - *Ahar* culture c. 2,800-1,500 B.C.
  - *Kayatha* culture c. 2,450-700 B.C.
  - *Malwa* culture c. 1,900-1,400 B.C.
  - *Savarda* culture c. 2,300-2,000 B.C.
  - *Jorwe* culture c. 1,500 -900 B.C.
  - *Prabhas* culture c. 2,000-1,400 B.C.
  - *Rangpur* culture c. 1,700-1,400 B.C.

### **Common Features**

- The people of Chalcolithic culture had used unique painted earthenware usually black-on-red.
- They used specialized blade and flake industry of the siliceous material like chalcedony and chert. However, the use of copper and bronze tools also evidenced on a limited scale.

- The Economy was largely based on subsistence agriculture, stock-raising, hunting, and fishing.
- Painted pottery is the most distinguishing feature of all Chalcolithic cultures.
- The *Kayatha* culture is distinguished by a sturdy red-slipped ware painted with designs in chocolate color, a red painted buff ware, and a combed ware bearing incised patterns.
- The *Ahar* people made a unique black-and-red ware decorated with the white designs.
- The *Prabhas* and *Rangpur* wares both were derived from *Harappan* culture and are called Lustrous Red Ware because of their glossy surface.
- The *Malwa* ware is slightly coarse in fabric, but has a thick buff surface over which designs were made either in red or black.
- *Jorwe* ware is painted black-on-red and has a matt surface treated with a wash.
- Well-known pottery forms used in this culture are –
  - Dishes-on-stand,
  - Spouted vases,
  - Stemmed cups,
  - Pedestalled bowls,
  - Big storage jars, and
  - Spouted basins and bowls.
- The centers of Chalcolithic cultures flourished in semi-arid regions of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Maharashtra.
- The settlements of *Kayatha* culture were mostly located on the *Chambal* River and its tributaries. They were only a few in number and relatively small in size and the biggest may not be over two hectares.
- The settlements of *Ahar* Culture were larger in comparison to *Kayatha* culture.
- Excavations revealed that they used stone, mud bricks, and mud for the construction of houses and other structures. *Balathal* settlement was a fortified settlement.
- The settlements of *Malwa* culture are mostly located on the Narmada and its tributaries. The three best known settlements of *Malwa* culture are at *Navdatoli*, *Eran*, and *Nagada*.
- *Navdatoli* was one of the largest Chalcolithic settlements in the country. It was spread in almost 10 hectares. Some of these sites were fortified. *Eran* had a fortification wall with a moat. *Nagada* had a bastion of mud-bricks.
- Very few not more than half dozen settlements of *Prabhas* culture are known.
- The settlements of *Rangpur* culture are located mostly on *Ghelo* and *Kalubhar* rivers in Gujarat.
- More than 200 settlements of *Jorwe* culture are known. Greater number of these settlements are found in Maharashtra.

- The best known settlements of *Jorwe* culture are *Prakash*, *Daimabad*, and *Inamgaon*. *Daimabad* was the largest one that measured almost 20 hectares.
- The houses of Chalcolithic people were rectangular and circular. They were made of mud wattle and daub. The circular houses were mostly in clusters.
- The roofs of these houses were made up of straw, which were supported on bamboo and wooden rafters. Floors were made of rammed clay.
- They cultivated both *Kharif* and *Rabi* crops in rotation and also raised cattle with it. They cultivated wheat and barley in *Malwa* region. Rice was cultivated in *Inamgaon* and *Ahar*.
- They also cultivated *jowar*, *bajra*, *kulth*, *ragi*, *green peas*, *lentil*, and green and black *grams*.
- Largely, the Chalcolithic cultures flourished in the black cotton soil zone. This reflects the ecological adaptation by the Chalcolithic people in developing a system of dry farming, dependent on moisture retentive soils based upon then available technology, knowledge, and means.

### **Chalcolithic: Trade and Commerce**

- The Chalcolithic communities traded and exchanged materials with other contemporary communities.
- A large settlement serves as the major centers of trade and exchange. Some of them were *Ahar*, *Gilund*, *Nagada*, *Navdatoli*, *Eran*, *Prabhas*, *Rangpur*, *Prakash*, *Daimabad*, and *Inamgaon*.
- The *Ahar* people settled close to the copper source and were used to supply copper tools and objects to other contemporary communities in *Malwa* and Gujarat.
- Identical marks embedded on most of the copper axes found in *Malwa*, *Jorwe*, and *Prabhas* cultures that might indicate that it may be the trademarks of the smiths who made them.
- Gold and ivory come to *Jorwe* people from *Tekkalkotta* in Karnataka and semiprecious stones may have been traded to various parts from *Rajpipla* in Gujarat.
- *Inamgaon* pottery has been found at several sites located far away. This shows that the *Jorwe* people used to trade even the pottery to distant places.
- Wheeled bullock carts were used for long distance trade, besides the river transport. The drawings of wheeled bullock carts have been found on pots.

### **Religious Beliefs**

- Religion was an important aspect that interlinked all centers of Chalcolithic cultures.
- The people of Chalcolithic cultures worshiped the mother goddess and the bull.
- In *Malwa*, the bull cult seems to have been predominant during the *Ahar* period.
- A large number of both the naturalistic as well as stylized *lingas* have been found from most of the sites.
- The realistic or naturalistic ones may have served as ritual offerings.

- The Mother Goddess is depicted on a huge storage jar of *Malwa* culture in an applique design. She is surrounded by a woman on the right and a crocodile on the left, by the side of which is represented the shrine.
- In a painted design on a pot, a deity is shown with disheveled hair, recalling the *Rudra* of later period.
- A painting on a jar found from *Daimabad* portrayed a deity surrounded by animals and birds such as tigers and peacocks.
- It similar with the Siva *Pashupati* that was found depicted on a seal from *Mohanjodaro*.
- Two figurines belonging to late *Jorwe* culture found from *Inamgaon* have been identified as proto-Ganesh, which was worshipped for success before embarking on an undertaking.
- Headless figurines were found at *Inamgaon*, which have been likened with the Goddess *Visira* of the Mahabharata.
- The people of Chalcolithic had a belief in life after the death, which is indicated by the existence of pots and other funerary objects found with the burials of the *Malwa* and *Jorwe* people.
- The Chalcolithic cultures grown during the 3,000 to 2,000 B.C.
- Excavation shows that large number of settlements like *Kayatha*, *Prabhas*, *Ahar*, *Balathal*, *Prakash*, and *Nevasa* were deserted due to decline in rainfall, which made it hard for the agricultural communities to sustain. They were reoccupied after four to six centuries.

### **Technology**

- The Chalcolithic people were farmers. They had made considerable progress in ceramic as well as metal technology. They used painted pottery, which was well made and well fired in a kiln. It was fired at a temperature between 500 and 700° C.
- Metal tools were mostly made up of copper obtained from the *Khetri* mines of Rajasthan. Some of the commonly used tools were axes, chisels, bangles, beads, hooks, etc.
- A gold ornament was found only in the *Jorwe* culture, which was extremely rare. An ear ornament has been found from *Prabhas* culture.
- Crucibles and pairs of *tongs* of copper found at *Inamgaon* illustrate the working of goldsmiths. Chalcedony drills were used for perforating beads of semiprecious stones.
- Lime was prepared out of Kankar that was used for painting houses and lining the storage bins and various other purposes.

## **Unit – II**

### **Indus Valley Civilization**

## Harappan Civilization

- Till 1920, the relics of the civilization were found only in the Indus valley region; therefore, it was known as the Indus civilization.
- In 1920-21, the *Harappan* civilization was discovered in the excavations by D. R. Salini (at *Harappa*) and by R. D. Banerjee (at *Mohenjo Daro*).
- The remains of the civilization were first noticed at *Harappa*, therefore it is also known as the *Harappan* civilization.

## Geographical Facts

Following are the important geographical facts of distribution of *Harappan* civilization –

- The 1,400 settlements of this civilization discovered so far are distributed over a very wide geographical area covering almost 1,600 km (east to west) and 1,400 km (north to south).
- *Harappan* civilization extent starts from –
  - *Sutkagendor* (Baluchistan) in the west to *Alamgirpur* (Meerut, Uttar Pradesh) in the east and
  - *Manda* (Akhnoor District, Jammu and Kashmir) in the north to *Daimabad* (Ahmadnagar District, Maharashtra) in the south.
- About 1,400 settlements of the *Harappan* culture are known from different parts of India. About 925 settlements sites are now in India and 475 are in Pakistan.
- The total geographical stretch of *Harappan* civilization is about **1,250,000 sq.** km which is more than **20 times of the area of Egyptian** and more than **12 times** of the combined area of Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations.
- Mostly, the *Harappan* settlements were located on river banks of which –
  - Only 40 settlements were located on the Indus and its tributaries;
  - As many as 1,100 (80%) settlements were located on the vast plain between the Indus and the Ganga, comprising mainly the *Saraswati* river system (which no more exist);
  - About 250 settlements were found in India beyond the *Saraswati* River system; a number of them were located in Gujarat, and a few in Maharashtra.
  - The distribution pattern of settlements shows that the focus of *Harappan* civilization was not the Indus, but the *Saraswati* River and its tributaries, which flowed between the Indus and the Ganga. Therefore, few researchers prefer to call it as *Saraswati* civilization or *Indus-Saraswati* civilization
- The settlements belonging to this civilization can be classified as
  - Small villages (which were up to 10 hectares),

- Larger towns and small cities (10 to 50 hectares).
- Large cities settlements such as
  - *Mohenjo Daro* (+250 hectares),
  - *Harappa* (+150 hectares),
  - *Ganawariwala* (+80 hectares),
  - *Rakhigarhi* (+80 hectares),
  - *Kalibangan* (+100 hectares), and
  - *Dholavira* (+100 hectares).
- Large cities were surrounded by vast agricultural lands, rivers, and forest that were inhabited by scattered farming and pastoral communities and bands of hunters and food-gatherers.
- Excavations at the sites of *Mohenjo Daro*, *Harappa*, *Kalibangan*, *Lothal*, *Surkotada*, *Dholavira*, etc. have given us a fair idea about the various aspects such as town planning, economy, technology, religion, etc. of this civilization.
- The orientation of streets and buildings, according to the cardinal directions east-west, and north-south was the distinguishing factor of the *Indus-Saraswati* cities.
- *Harappan* city sites, including *Mohenjo Daro*, *Harappa*, *Kalibangan*, and *Surkotada* were having large gateways at various entry points of the city. These gateways are seen even in the inner fortification areas also.
- At *Dholavira*, a fallen signboard was found close to the main gateway. It is a large inscription having ten symbols each measuring approximately 37 cm high and 25 to 27 cm wide proclaimed some name or title.

### **Materials Used in Buildings**

- Most settlements were situated in the alluvial plains where the most common building materials were mud-bricks and kiln-fired-bricks, wood and reeds.
- In the foothills and on the Islands of Kutch and in Saurashtra, dressed stone replaced bricks (due to an abundance of stone).
- The sizes of bricks have been found identical proportions 1:2:4, that the width is double the thickness and the length four times, the thickness.
- Doors and windows were made up of wood and mats.
- Floors of houses were generally hard-packed earth that was often plastered.
- Drains and bathing areas were made with baked bricks or stone.
- Roofs were probably made of wooden beams covered with reeds and packed clay.

### **Types of Buildings**

- Excavations have uncovered many types of houses and public buildings at both large and small settlements.

- The architecture may be grouped into three categories with some variations as –
  - Private houses,
  - Large houses surrounded by smaller units, and
  - Large public structures.
- Doorways and windows rarely opened out into the main street, but faced side lanes.
- The view into the house was blocked by a wall or a room around the front door. This was done to protect the activities in the central courtyard from the view of passers-by.
- The doors were made with wooden frames and a brick socket set in the threshold served as door pivot.
- Some of the doors seem to have been painted and possibly carved with simple ornamentation
- The windows were small at first and second stories.
- The adjacent houses were separated by a narrow space of "no man's land".

### **Public Buildings**

- Some large and distinct structures have been found in several cities designed especially for the public purpose.

### **Great Bath of Mohenjo Daro**

- The Great Bath of *Mohenjo Daro* is the most remarkable feature of any *Harappan* site.
- The Great Bath was a brick structure, which measured 12 m by 7 m and is nearly 3 m deep from the surrounding pavement.
- Water was evidently supplied by 3 large well placed in an adjacent room.
- Surrounding the bath, there were porticos and sets of rooms, while a stairway led to an upper storey.
- The bath was linked with some sort of ritual bathing, which was very common in Indian life right from the ancient times to till date.
- Immediately to the west of the Great Bath (at *Mohenjo Daro*) was a group of 27 blocks of brickwork crisscrossed by narrow lanes. This structure measures 50 m. east-west and 27 m. north-south. These structures have been identified as granaries, which were used for storing grains. Similar structures have been also found at *Harappa*, *Kalibangan*, and *Lothal*.
- The dockyard found at *Lothal* was another important structure. It was a large structure measuring 223 m. in length, 35 m. in width and 8 m. in depth, provided with an inlet channel (12.30 m. wide) in the eastern wall and a spillway.



- The inlet channel was connected to a river. By its side, it was 240 m. long and 21.6 m wide wharf. This was a dockyard where ships and boats used to come for loading and unloading of trading goods.
- *Lothal* was a major trading center of the *Harappan* civilization.

### **Streets and Drains**

- The most outstanding features of the *Harappan* civilization were the streets and side lanes equipped with drains system.
- The streets cut each other on the right angles and the width of these streets was in a set ratio.
- No encroachment on the streets was to be seen.
- Even smaller towns and villages had impressive drainage systems. This indicates that people had a great civic sense of sanitation and care for health and hygiene.
- Burnt bricks were used to make drains. Small drains connected with bathing platforms and latrines of private houses were joined with the medium sized drains in the side streets then these drains ran into larger sewers in the main streets which were covered with bricks or dressed stone blocks.
- The *Harappan* civilization is referred to as a Bronze Age civilization.
- Customarily, unalloyed copper was used for manufacturing artifacts and rarely tin was mixed with copper to make bronze.

### **Harappan Tools**

- Tools and weapons were simple in form. They comprised of flat -axes, chisels, arrowhead, spearheads, knives, saws, razors, and fish-hooks.
- People also made copper and bronze vessels. They made small plates and weights of lead, and gold and silver jewelry of considerable sophistication.
- The *Harappans* continued to use knives of *chert* blades. Further, a great skill and expertise have been seen in precious and semi-precious stone beads and weights.
- Long barrel shaped cornelian beads (up to 10 cm. long) are the finest examples of craftsmanship.
- Steatite was used for making a variety of objects like seals, beads, bracelets, buttons, vessels, etc. but its use in making faience (a form of glass) is particularly noteworthy.
- The gold objects found in the form of beads, pendants, amulets, brooches, and other small ornaments in the *Harappan* civilization. The *Harappan* gold is of light color indicating high silver content.
- Mature *Harappan* pottery represents a blend of the ceramic tradition of the pre-*Harappan* culture of both wests of the Indus region as well as of the *Saraswati* area.
- The pottery technology was quite advanced. Most of the pots were wheel-made.

- Big storage jars were also produced. Pots were beautifully painted in black on the bright red surface with geometric designs, plants, animals, and a few paintings seem to depict scenes from stories.
- More than 2,500 seals have been found. These are made of steatite. They mostly depict a single animal-unicorn bull, elephant, rhinoceros etc. but some also depict trees, semi-human, and human figurines; in some cases, participating in a ceremony.
- Shell working was another flourishing industry. Artisans, settlements close to the sea manufactured shell ornaments like pendants, rings, bracelets, inlays, beads etc., besides objects as bowls, ladles, and gamesmen.

### **Trade and Commerce**

- Intensive agricultural production and large-scale trade played significant roles in flourishing of the *Harappan* civilization.
- The elegant social structure and the standard of living must have been achieved by a highly developed system of communication and a strong economy.
- The trade must have been internal in the beginning i.e. between one zone and another.
- Agricultural produce, industrial raw materials (including copper ores, stone, semi-precious shells, etc.) were traded on a large scale.
- Besides the raw material, they used to trade –
  - Finished products of metals (pots and pans, weapon, etc.);
  - Precious and semi-precious stones (beads, pendants, amulets, etc.); and
  - Ornaments of gold and silver were also traded to various areas.
- They procured –
  - Copper from *Khetri* mines of Rajasthan;
  - Chert blades from *Rohri* hills of Sindh;
  - Carnelian beads from Gujarat and Sindh;
  - Lead from south India;
  - Lapis-lazuli from Kashmir and Afghanistan;
  - Turquoise and jade from central Asia or Iran;
  - Amethyst from Maharashtra; and
  - Agate, chalcedony, and carnelian from *Saurashtra*.
- The occurrence of mature *Harappan* seals and other artefacts in contemporary Mesopotamian civilization, and some of the Mesopotamian and Egyptian objects in *Harappan* civilization, and the evidence of Mesopotamian documents established that the *Harappans* had the trading relationship with each other.

### **Weights and Measures**

- The trade requires a regulation of exchange and of weights and measures.
- *Harappan* weights and measures were cubical and spherical in shape and were made up of *chert, jasper, and agate*.
- The system of weights proceeded in a series i.e.
  - first doubling, from 1, 2, 4, 8, to 64, then going to 160; then
  - Decimal multiples of sixteen, 320, 640, 1600, 6400 ( $1600 \times 4$ ), 8000 ( $1600 \times 5$ ) and 128,000 (i.e.  $16000 \times 8$ ).
- The tradition of 16 or its multiples continued in India till 1950s.
- Sixteen *chhatank* made a *ser* (equivalent to one kilo) and 16 *annas* made one rupee.
- The measure of length was based upon a foot of 37.6 cm. and a cubit of 51.8 to 53.6 cm.

### Transport and Travel

- Pictures of ships and boats are found on some seals and drawings on pottery from *Harappa* and *Mohenjo Daro*.
- Ship or a boat, with a stick-impressed socket for the mast, has been found from Lothal.
- The boats depicted on seals and pottery resembles with the boats used in Sindh and Punjab areas (even today).
- For land transport, bullock-carts and pack animals like bull, camel, ass etc. were used.
- The terracotta models of bullock-cart found on roads from various sites indicate that carts used in those days were of the same size and shape used in the present day.

### Arts

- A large variety of objects such as seals, stone statues, terracotta, etc. is superb examples of the art activities.
- A *Yogi* from *Mohenjo Daro* and two small figurines from *Harappa* are the most outstanding pieces of art.
- A dancing girl statue of about 11.5 cm. in height made up of bronzes was found from *Mohenjo Daro*.
- *Daimabad* bronze animals' workmanship, most likely belong to *Harappan* period.
- The red sandstone torso found at Harappa is made up of **detachable limbs and head**.
- The grey stone torso perhaps illustrates a dancing figure. Both these are so **realistic** that none would believe that they belong to the *Harappan* period.
- *Harappan* people produced a large number of terracotta figurines, which were handmade. The figurines include humans, animals, birds, and monkey.
- Following are the Specimen of Arts from the *Harappan* Civilization –
  - Bronze statue (Dancing Girl);

- Terracotta Bulls;
- Terracotta Female Figurine;
- Head of a Yogi; and
- Painted Jar dogs, sheep, and cattle.
- The most artistic depictions are the figures of humped bull. Figurines of both humped and humpless bulls are found in excavations
- A painting was found only on pottery. Unfortunately, no wall paintings, even if there were any, have survived.

### **Script**

- The language of *Harappan* is still unknown. But some scholars connect it to the Dravidian languages and others to Indo-Aryan and Sanskrit.
- There are nearly 400 specimens of *Harappan* signs on seals and other materials such as copper tablets, axes, and pottery. Most of the inscriptions on seals are small, a group of few letters.
- The Harappa script has 400 to 500 signs and it is generally agreed that it is not an alphabetic form of writing.

### **Agriculture**

- Agriculture was generally practiced along the river banks most of which were flooded during the summer and monsoons. The flood deposited every year fresh alluvial silt, which is highly productive and for which no major furrowing and certainly no manures and irrigation were required.
- The cultivated field excavated at *Kalibangan* shows crisscross furrow marks indicating that two crops were grown simultaneously. This method is followed even today in the Rajasthan, Haryana, and western Uttar Pradesh.
- The granaries found at *Harappan* cities suggest that cereals were produced in such a large quantities. They also kept enough reserve to face any future emergency.
- The principal cereals were wheat and barley. Rice was also known and was a favored grain. Remains of rice have been found from Gujarat and Haryana areas.
- Six varieties of millets including *ragi*, *kodon*, *sanwa*, and *jowar* were cultivated, along with peas and beans.
- Fragments of cotton cloth found at *Mohenjo Daro* and other sites show that cotton was also grown.
- Cotton has been found at *Mehrgarh* at least 2,000 years before the mature phase of the Civilization. This is the oldest evidence of cotton in the world.
- Other major crops include dates, varieties of legumes, sesame, and mustard.
- Wooden plough with a copper or wooden ploughshare was used for tilling fields.
- Terracotta models of the plough have been found at *Mohenjo Daro* and *Banawali*.

- Harvesting of crops would have been done with copper sickles as well as stone blades hafted in wood.
- Animals like sheep, goat, humped bull, buffalo, elephant, etc. have been depicted on the seals. This shows that the range of animals domesticated by the *Harappan* people was quite large.
- Skeletal remains of several animals like sheep, goat, bull; buffalo, elephant, camel, pig, dog, and cat etc. have been found in excavations.
- Wild animals were hunted for the food. Bones of animals like spotted deer, sambhar deer, hog deer, wild pig, etc. found in the excavation prove it. Besides, several types of birds as well as fishes, were also hunted for food.
- Bones of horses have been reported from *Lothal*, *Surkotada*, *Kalibangan*, and several other sites.
- Terracotta figurines of the horse have been found at *Nausharo* and *Lothal*. But this animal is not depicted on seals.
- There are generally two aspects of Harappan religion –
  - Conceptual or philosophical and
  - Practical or ritualistic.
- The available evidence indicates that the religion of the Indus people comprised of –
  - Worship of the Mother Goddess;
  - Worship of a male deity, probably of Lord Siva;
  - Worship of animals, nature, semi human, or fabulous;
  - Worship of trees in their natural state or of their indwelling spirits;
  - Worship of inanimate stones or other objects, of *linga* and *yonisymbol*;
  - Chrematheism as illustrated in the worship of the sacred "incense-burners";
  - Faith in amulets and charms indicative of demonophobia; and
  - Practice of yoga.
- These characteristics suggest that the religion was mainly of an indigenous growth and "the lineal progenitor of Hinduism," which is characterized by most of the features.
- A large number of female figurines of terracotta have been found which the representations of the Great Mother Goddess are.
- A striking rectangle sealing found at *Harappa* represents the Earth or Mother Goddess with a plant growing from her womb.
- A male deity, which depiction Siva as *Pasupati* (i.e. the prototype of the historic Siva), is portrayed on a seal with three faces, seated on a low throne in the typical posture of a Yogi, with two animals on each side - elephant and tiger on right and rhinoceros and buffalo on left, and two deer standing under the throne.

- A terracotta piece having *linga* and *yonis* in one piece found from *Kalibangan*. People of *Kalibangan* region were worshiped the symbolic representation of *Siva* and *Sakti* respectively.
- A remarkable seal, found at *Mohenjo Daro*, standing between two branches of a *pipal* tree, represents the deity.
- A large number of 'fire-altars' have been found from the sites located in Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Haryana. From *Kalibangan*, *Lothal*, and *Banawali* a number of 'fire-altars' have been found.
- *Swastika*, a sacred symbol with Hindus, Buddhists, and Jaina has been depicted on seals, painting, and graffiti.
- A large number of terracotta figurines depict the individuals in various yogic postures (*asanas*) indicating thereby that the *Harappans* practiced yoga.

### **Social Stratification**

- The *Harappan* society appears to have been divided into three sections, viz.
  - An elite class associated with the Citadel;
  - A well-to-do middle class; and
  - A relatively weaker section, occupying the lower town, which was generally fortified.
- The Craftsmen and laborers normally were resided outside the fortified area.
- It is, however, difficult to say whether these divisions were based purely on the economic factors or had a socio-religious basis.
- At *Kalibangan*, it appears that the priests resided in the upper part of the citadel and performed rituals on fire altars in the lower part of it.

### **Political Setup**

- It is also difficult to ascertain that what kind of political setup was prevailed at the time of the *Harappan* civilization.
- The entire area of Indus Empire was administered from one capital, with a few regional administrative centers or provincial capitals.
- There were several independent states or kingdoms, each with cities like *Mohenjo Daro* in Sindh, *Harappa* in Punjab, *Kalibangan* in Rajasthan, and *Lothal* in Gujarat as their capitals.
- During 1,000 B.C., the area was divided into sixteen *Mahajanapadas* each independent with its own capital.

### **Disposal of the Dead**

- Scattered burials, as well as discreet cemeteries, have been found at many major sites.
- The skeletal remains are few in comparison to the size of settlements and the population that may have lived on them.

- The general practice was that skeletons were placed in an extended position with the head towards the north. Earthen pots containing food grains, etc. were placed in the grave and, in some cases, the body was buried with ornaments.
- Cremation was also practiced, which has been proved by many cinerary urns or other receptacles containing calcined human bones and ashes together with vessel offerings for the use of a dead person in the next life.
- Marshall suggested that *Harappan* civilization flourished between 3,250 and 2,750 B.C.
- Wheeler dated it to 2,500-1,500 B.C.
- On the basis of radiocarbon dating method following chronology of the civilization emerges as –
  - Early *Harappan* Phase: c. 3,500 – 2,600 B.C.
  - Mature *Harappan* Phase: c. 2,600 - 1,900 B.C.
  - Late *Harappan* Phase: c. 1,900 – 1,300 B.C.

### **Decline**

- **John Marshall** (Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India from 1902 to 1928) declares that *Harappan* civilization declined due to environmental degradation. The cutting of forests for agricultural land and timber for fuel and over-exploitation of resources, etc. resulted in the land to become barren and in the silting of rivers.
- The environmental degradation, flood, drought, and famine must have become a recurring feature, which finally led to its decline.
- **Wheeler** opined that it was destroyed by the *Barbarian* Aryans who came to India in about 1,500 B.C.
- The archaeological or biological evidence proved that Wheeler's thesis of Aryan was the destroyer of the *Harappan* civilization was a myth.
- The *Harappan* civilization was spread over a large area. There may be many causes of its decline as –
  - In the River *Saraswati* region, most likely, it declined mainly due to shifting of river channels.
  - Along the River Indus, most likely, it declined largely due to recurring floods.
  - Rainfall declined in general, which affected the agriculture, the main economic resource.
  - With the decline in economic conditions all other institutions like trade and commerce, administrative and political structures, Civic amenities, etc. also declined over a period of time.
- Archaeological evidence shows that *Harappan* civilization did not disappear suddenly.
- The decline was gradual and slow, which is witnessed over a period of almost 600 years from c. 1,900-1,300 B.C.

- Features such as town-planning, grid patterns, drainage system, standard weights, and measures etc. slowly disappeared and a kind of realization takes place with distinctive regional variations.

### **Vedic Civilization**

- Vedic literature is the most significant source of information about the Vedic civilization.
- The Vedic literature consists of three successive classes of literary creations, namely –
  - Vedas
  - Brahmanas
  - Aranyakas and Upanishads

### **Vedas**

- Veda means "**knowledge**". The Vedas formed the earliest segment of Vedic literature.
- The Vedic literature had been evolved in the course of many centuries and was handed down from generation to generation by the **word of mouth**.
- The Vedas are the collection of *hymns, prayers, charms, litanies, and sacrificial formulae*.
- Vedas are four in number, namely –
  - **Rig Veda** – It is the oldest Veda. It is a collection of hymns.
  - **Samveda** – it is a collection of songs, which are mostly taken from Rig Veda.
  - **Yajurveda** – It is a collection of sacrificial formulae.
  - **Atharvanaveda** – it is a collection of spells and charms.

### **Brahmanas**

- The Brahmanas are prose texts. It describes about the meaning of Vedic hymns, their applications, and stories of their origins in details. Besides, it also explains the details about rituals and philosophies.

### **Aranyakas and Upanishads**

- Aranyakas and Upanishads exemplify philosophical meditations of the hermits and ascetics on soul, god, world, etc. These are partly included in the Brahmanas or attached, and partly exist as separate works.
- They, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas, and the Upanishads are attached to one or the other of the four Vedas.
- Compositions of the hymns are credited to Hindu *Rishis* (monks) of divine origin.
- The Vedas are called '*apaurusheya*' (not created by man) and '*nitya*' (existing in all eternity) while the *Rishis* are known as inspired seers who received the *mantras* from the Supreme deity.

### **Age of RigVeda (or) Early Vedic**



- The origin of the earth goes back to about 4,600 million years and the origin of humans themselves goes back to about 4.2 million years (ago).
- **Max Muller** gives arbitrarily the date of composition of Rig Veda to be around 1,200 to 1,000 B.C.
- **W. D. Whitney** negated and criticized Muller for using totally arbitrary, unscientific, and un-academic method in assigning the dates.
- On the analogy of the language of *Avesta*, some scholars opined that the date of Rig Veda may be **1,000 B.C.**
- Some of the Vedic gods namely *Indra*, *Varuna*, *Mitra*, and the two *Nasatyas* were mentioned in *Boghaz-Koi* (Asia Minor) inscription of 1,400 B.C., which proves that Rig Veda must have come into existence much before the date described by some of the foreigner scholars.
- The *Boghaz-Koi* inscription records a treaty between the *Hittite* and the *Mitanni* Kings and the gods (mentioned in the above point) were cited as witnesses to this treaty. Even today, exactly in the same way, the oath is taken in the courts and on an assumption of a public office (in the name of god).
- Bal Gangadhar Tilak, on astronomical grounds, dated Rig Veda to 6,000 B.C.
- Harmon Jacobi held that Vedic civilization flourished between 4,500 B.C. and 2,500 B.C. and the *Samhitas* were composed in the latter half of the period.
- Famous Sanskritist, Winternitz felt that the Rig Veda was probably composed in the third millennium B.C.
- R. K. Mukerjee suggested that "on a modest computation, we should come to 2,500 B.C. as the time of Rig Veda".
- G. C. Pande also favors a date of 3,000 B.C. or even earlier.

### **Rig Vedic Geography**

- Rig Vedic people called themselves '*Aryans*'. They had detailed knowledge of the geographical area in which they lived. Name and location and pattern of geographical features such as rivers and mountains mentioned in Rig-Veda suggest location of the regions of the geographical area of their habitat.
- The *Nadi-sukta* hymn of the Rig Veda mentions 21 rivers, which include the *Ganga* in the east and the *Kubha* (Kabul) in the west.
- The pattern of rivers is given in a definite order from the east to west i.e. from the *Ganga* in the east to the *Kubul* in the west. The rivers like *Yamuna*, *Saraswati*, *Sutlej*, *Ravi*, *Jhelum*, and *Indus* are situated between *Ganga* and *Kabul*.
- The mountain namely the *Himalayas* and the *Mujavant* (as mentioned in the Veda) are located in the north.

- The Ocean i.e. '*Samudra*' is mentioned in connection with rivers Sindhu and the river *Saraswati* had been falling into the ocean. Ocean has been also mentioned in the context of foreign trade.
- The geography of Rig Vedic period covers present-day western Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, the whole of Pakistan, and the south of Afghanistan.
- The battle of ten kings, mentioned in the Rig Veda, gives names of ten kings who participated in a war against **Sudas** who was *Bharata* king of *Tritsus* family. It illustrates that the territory known to Vedic people was divided into a number of states-republics and monarchical (kingdoms).
- The battle was fought on the bank of *Parushani* (Ravi) river and Sudas emerged as victorious.
- '*Bharatvarsha*' was the name used for the whole country. It was given by the most important people of the Rig Veda. They were '*Bharatas*' who were settled in the region between the rivers *Saraswati* and *Yamuna*.
- The Rig Veda also gives the location of other people, such as **Purus** in the region of *Kurukshetra*; the Tritsus east of Ravi; the Alinas, the Pakhtas, the Bhalanas and the Sibis west of Indus (up to Kabul river) and so on.

### **Society**

- Occupation of individuals was the basis of classification of a society in the Rig Vedic period.
- It was divided into four *varnas*, namely
  - *Brahmanas* (teacher and priests);
  - *Kshatriya* (rulers and administrators);
  - *Vaisya* (farmers, merchants, and bankers); and
  - *Sudra* (artisan and laborers).
- There was complete freedom and mobility for the adoption of a profession.
- Trades and occupations did not assume a hereditary character in the society (till now).

### **Salient Features of Vedic Society**

- The family was the smallest unit of a society. It was primarily monogamous and Patriarchal.
- Child marriage was not in fashion.
- There was freedom of choice in marriage.
- A widow could marry the younger brother of her deceased husband.
- The wife was a partner of the husband in all religious and social ceremonies.
- The father's property was inherited by son.
- The daughter could inherit it only if she was the only child of her parents.

- Right to property was known in moveable things like cattle, horse, gold, and ornament and so also in immovable property like land and house.

### **Education**

- The teacher was given great respect.
- The school was in the home of the teacher where he taught the particular sacred texts.
- The texts were in the first instance learnt by pupils repeating the words taught by their teacher.
- A great importance was attached to enunciation and pronunciation.
- Oral learning was the method of training.
- Students were given intense training and learning to memorize and preserve the huge mass of Vedic literature.

### **Food and Drinks**

- The important part of the diet was milk and its products like curd, butter, and *ghee*. Grains were cooked with milk (*kshira-pakamodanam*).
- *Chappati* (bread) of wheat and barley was eaten mixed with *ghee*.
- People used to eat the meat of birds, wild animals (like boar, antelopes, and buffalo), and fish.
- The meat of animals such as sheep, goat, and buffalo etc., which were sacrificed on ceremonial occasions, was also eaten.
- The cow was mentioned as *aghnya* i.e. not to be killed. The Vedas prescribe a penalty of death or expulsion from the kingdom to those who kill or injure cows.
- *Sura* and *Soma* i.e. alcoholic drinks were also consumed, though their consumption had been condemned.

### **Economic Life**

- Agriculture, cattle rearing, and trade and commerce were the main economic activity of the Rig Vedic people.
- People had domestic animals like cows, sheep, goats, asses, dogs, buffalos etc.
- Oxen were used for ploughing and drawing carts and horses for drawing the chariots.
- The plough was drawn by the oxen at times in a team of six, eight, or even twelve.
- The grains were harvested with sickles.
- Manure was used for high yield; irrigation was also practiced.
- Excess of rains and drought is mentioned as damaging the crops.
- The grains are collectively called '*Yava*' and '*Dhanya*.'
- Some other occupations were pottery-making, weaving, carpentry, metal working, leather-working, etc.

- Initially, copper was the only metal that was used and the general term '*ayas*' had been used for this. In a later period, terms like '*lohit ayas*' and '*syam ayas*' were used for copper and iron respectively.
- The trade and traders (*vanik*) were also known in the Rig Vedic era.
- The practices of exchange of goods (Barter Economy) were in trend. It has been found that ten cows were quoted as the price for an image of *Indra*.
- The use of money can be traced in the mention of a gift of 100 *nishkas*.
- Money-lending was also popular. It is mentioned that an eighth or a sixteenth part of one being paid either as an interest or part of the principle.
- The sea is mentioned in the context of trade and ocean wealth, like pearls, and shells. Politics of Vedic India was well structured and organized.

### Political Structure

- The political structure of Rig Vedic India can be studied in the following ascending order –
  - The Family (*Kula*), the smallest unit.
  - The Village (*Grama*)
  - The Clan (*Vis*)
  - The People (*Jana*)
  - The Country (*Rashtra*)
- ***Kula*** (family) included all the people living under the same roof (*griha*).
- A collection of several families constitutes the *grama* (village) and its headman was called ***gramini***.
- The collection of several *gramas* (village) was called as the ***Vis*** and its head was called ***Vispati***.
- Several *Vis* constituted a ***Jana*** as it is mentioned as *Panchajana*, *Yadva-janaha*, and *Bharata-janaha*.
- The aggregation of all *Jana* constitutes ***Rashtra*** (country).

### Administration

- The hereditary kings were the popular form of Government.
- The provision of a democratically elected king by the assembly of people *Jana* was also known.
- The *Rashtra* was small states ruled by a *raja* (king).
- The bigger kingdoms were ruled by '*samrat*' that reflects that they enjoyed a position of greater authority and dignity.
- The *Raja* administered justice with the assistance of *Purohita* and other officials.

- The *Raja* was offered ***Bali***, which was voluntary gift or tribute for his services. The *Bali* was offered by his own people and also from defeated people.
- The crimes were strongly dealt with by the administration. Major crimes were theft, burglary, robbery, and cattle lifting.
- The important royal officials were –
  - *Purohita* (chief priest and minister)
  - *Senani* (army chief)
  - *Gramini* (head of a village)
  - *Dutas* (envoys)
  - *Spies* (spy)
- *Sabha* and *Samiti* were two important assemblies mentioned in the Rig Veda. These assemblies were forms the essential feature of the government.
- The *Samiti* was mainly dealt with the policy decisions and political business, included common people.
- The *Sabha* was a selected body of the Elders or Nobles and less political in character.
- Some gods had also been worshipped during the Rig Vedic period, which were the personified powers of nature.

### Categories of Gods

- The Vedic Gods were classified into three categories as –
  - Terrestrial (*Prithivisthana*) e.g. Prithivi, Agni, Soma, Brihaspati, and Rivers.
  - Aerial or intermediate (*Antarikshasthana*), Indra, Apam-napat, Rudra, Vayu-Vata, Prujanya, and Apah (water).
  - Celestial (*Dyusthana*) e.g. Dyaus, Varuna, Mitra, Surya, Savitri, Pushan, Vishnu, the Adityas, Ushas, and the Asvins.
- *Indra* and *Varuna* (the supreme cosmic and moral ruler) stand out in that order, pre-eminent above the rest.
- *Agni* and *Soma* were also popular deities. *Agni* was valued as the messenger between the earth and the heaven. *Agni* is the only God who is regarded as present among all the categories of Gods.
- Gods are described as born yet they are immortal. In appearance, they are humans, though sometimes they are conceived as animals, e.g. *Dyaus* as a bull and *Sun* as a swift horse.
- In the sacrifice to the God, ordinary food of men such as milk, grain, flesh, etc. were offered and it becomes the food of Gods.

- The gods normally used to be kind; but some of them also had unkind traits, like *Rudra* and *Maruta*.
- Splendor, strength, knowledge, possession, and truth are common attributes of all the deities.
- *Gayatri Mantra* is recited daily by the pious Hindus even today.
- The multiplicity of gods is due to the different designations that have been given to God.
- The ultimate unity of the universe is asserted as the creation of one God to whom different designations applied.
- The creation is deemed as the outcome of the sacrifice made by the *Viratpurusha* or of evolution from nonbeing manifested in the form of water.
- It is mentioned that **Hiranyagarbha** arose from **the great waters**, pervading the universe, and thus created the waves out of eternally pre-existing matter.
- The hymn devoted to *Visvakarman* tells us that the waters contained the floating world egg from which *Visvakarman* arises; the first born in the universe, the creator, and maker of the world. It is **now confirmed** by science that life first developed in water.

### Later Vedic Age

- The different branches of Vedic literature had grown out of one another.
- The four Vedas were followed by the *Brahmanas*, the *Aranyakas*, and the *Upanishads*.
- The *Brahmanas* explain in detail various Vedic sacrificial ceremonies and their origins. It is the earliest of the Aryan's prose literature.
- The *Aranyakas* contains the philosophical and mystical content. They are called so because their contents required that they should be studied in the isolation of the forest (*aranya*). They are the closing portions of the *Brahmanas*.
- In the last phase of the Vedic literature, Upanishads were deduced from the tradition of the *Aranyakas*.
- The Rig Veda deals with *Karmakanda* (ritualistic) and philosophical aspects.
- The *Brahmanas* contains the ritualistic aspect.
- The Upanishads contains the philosophic aspect.
- *Chhandogya* and *Brihadaranyaka* are the two oldest and most important of forms of the Upanishads.
- Other important Upanishads include *Kathak*, *Isa*, *Mundaka*, *Prasna*, etc.

### Geography and New Political States

- The main settlement of the Rig Vedic people was the region of Indus and Saraswati Valleys. However, during the later Vedic period, *Samhitas* and *Brahmanas* mention that the settlements covered virtually the whole of northern India.

- The *Ganga* river, by the time, occupied the proud place of the most revered and sacred river of India. Therefore, the center of civilization now shifted from *Saraswati* to *Ganga*.
- There was remarkable development in gradual expansion and consolidation of *Vis*.
- Jana known in Rig Vedic period like *Bharatas*, *Purus*, *Tritsus*, and *Turvasas* were slowly merging with other *Janas* and disappeared from the scene. People of *Anus*, *Druhyus*, *Turvasas*, the *Krivis*, were also vanished.
- The states, namely *Kasi*, *Kosala*, *Videha*, *Magadha*, and *Anga* developed in the eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. However, the areas of south India are not clearly mentioned.
- The struggle for supremacy among different states was of frequent occurrence. The ideal of universal empire appeared.
- *Satapatha Brahmana* mentioned the expansion of people towards the east. It mentioned *Videgh Madhav* migrated from the land of Vedic Culture (*Saraswati* Valley) and crossed *Sadanira* (modern *Gandak* River) and the eastern boundary of *Kosala* and came to the land of *Videha* (modern Tirhut).
- The growth of three kingdoms, namely *Kosala*, *Kasi*, and *Videha* took place. Thereafter, the excavations at *Hastinapur*, *Atranjikhhera*, and many other sites have revealed cultures ranging from 2,000 B.C. onwards.
- Some characteristic of the pottery of post *Harappan* period were noticed as Ochre Colored Pottery (O.C.P.) (c. 2,000-1,500) and during c. 1,200-600 B.C., Black and Red ware, Painted Grey Ware etc. were noticed.
- Northern Black Polished (N.B.P.) ware came to be manufactured about 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C.
- The Kuru-Panchala region is mentioned in the Upanishads as the seat of culture and prosperity. It was the region of present western and central Uttar Pradesh.
- Three kingdoms of *Kosala*, *Kasi*, and *Videha* mentioned as the seats of Vedic culture.
- *Magadha* and *Anga* were also mentioned as distant lands in the *Atharvanaveda*.
- In the south, *Vidarbha* (in Maharashtra) was mentioned.
- The states of *Bahlikas*, *Kesins*, *Kekayas*, and *Kamboja* were situated in the further west to Punjab.

### **Polity and Administration**

- With the growing concept of states, kingship became the normal form of government. The kingship was being given the status of divine origin.
- Terms like *adhiraj*, *rajadhiraja*, *samrat*, and *ekrat* were used in most of the text refers to the concept of a king of kings.
- The term *ekrat* defined in *Atharvanaveda*, refers the paramount sovereign.
- Special ceremonies were organized for the appointment of kings, such as the *Vajpeya*, *Rajsuya*, and *Ashvamedha*.

- The monarchy was established on the firm foundations. It was not absolute, but limited in several ways.
- Certain democratic elements were operating within the framework of kingship. These were –
  - The people's right in choosing their king;
  - The conditions imposed on king's rights and duties;
  - The king's dependence on the council of his ministers; and
  - The assemblies of people, *sabha*, and *samiti*, as check upon king's absolutism.
- The king, under no circumstances, be considered as the sole owner of the kingdom with absolute power over the objects and subjects.
- The king was holding the kingdom as a trust. He was supposed to be only a trustee and hold it on the condition that he would promote the people's well-beings and progress.

### **Sabha**

- *Sabha* and *Samiti* played important role in the administration along with the ministers and officials,
- The *sabha* functioned as a parliament for disposal of public business by debate and discussion.
- The Chief of the *sabha* was called as the *sabhapati*, the keepers as *sabhapala* and the members as *sabheya*, *sabhasad*, or *sabhasina*
- Rules were framed to govern the debate in *sabha*.
- *Sabha* also acted as a court of justice as it is said that "one who attends the *Sabha* sits as a law court to dispense *dharma* Justice".

### **Samiti**

- *Samiti* was the larger General Assembly of the people and it was different than *Sabha* in terms of function and composition. The *Sabha* was a smaller selected body, which functioned as the lower court.
- Due to increase in complexity of the society and political structure, some new officials were appointed by the state namely –
  - *Suta* (charioteer),
  - *Sangrahitri* (treasurer),
  - *Bhagadugha* (collector of taxes),
  - *Gramini* (head of a village),
  - *Sthapati* (chief judge),
  - *Takshan* (carpenter),
  - *Kshatri* (chamberlain), etc.



- The administrative machinery was highly organized and became an efficient instrument for ruling over a large kingdom.
- Legal institutions became more focused. The king administered justice and wielded the rod of punishment.
- Petty offences were left to "village judges."
- The punishments for the crime were rather severe.
- For evidence, the eye-witness was more important than informer.
- The law was also very clear on the question of inheritance of property, ownership of land, etc.
- The father's property was inherited by sons alone.
- The daughters could inherit it only if she was the only child or there were no male issues.
- During the latter Vedic period, *Varnas* came to be birth-based rather than profession-based (as were in Rig Vedic period).
- Development of new professions gave rise to '*jatis*.' But the *jati* system was not yet as rigid as it became during the period of the *sutras*.
- The Rig Veda describes *Vishvamitra* as a *rishi*, but *Aitareya* Brahmana mentions him as *Kshatriya*.
- The fourth *Varna*, i.e. *Sudra* were deprived of the rights of performing sacrifices, learning the sacred texts and of even holding landed property.
- The concept of untouchability had not acquired its ugly form.
- The individuals such as *Kavasha*, *Vatsa*, and *Satyakama Jabala* were born in non-Brahman *jatis*, but came to be known as the great Brahmins.

### **Education**

- This was period of the development of a vast and varied Vedic literature.
- The Upanishads were evolved as the highest level of intellectual attainments.
- Education began with the '*Upanayana*' ceremony.
- The aim of learning was to get success in both worldly as well as spiritual life. Therefore It was necessary to learn faith, retention of knowledge acquired, posterity, wealth, longevity, and immortality.
- The duties of pupils were well defined and there were stages of studies.
- The pupils were taught at the homes of their teachers where they lived as family members and participated in the household works also.
- For an advanced study, there were academies and circles of philosophical discussions.
- Educated house holder may carry on their quest of knowledge by mutual discussions and regularly visiting the distinguished sages and learned scholars at different centers.

- A great motivation of learning came from the assemblies of learned men; normally, organized and invited by the kings.
- *Parishads* were established in different *Janapadas* with kings' support.
- *Brihadaranyaka* Upanishad described that king Janak of *Videha* organized a conference of the learned people. The major participants in this conference were Yajnavalkya, Uddalaka Aruni, Sakalya, Gargi, etc.
- Yajnavalkya defeated all the participants in discussions and was declared as the most learned and wise.
- Gargi and Maitreyi were the learned women. Their status shows that women were allowed to take an active part in the intellectual quest.
- During this period, Kshatriyas begins to participate in the intellectual pursuit.
- Some well-known Kshatriyas scholars were –
  - **Janaka** – the king of *Videha*,
  - **Pravahana Jaivali** – the king of Panchala, and
  - **Asvapati Kaikeya** – the king of Kasi.
- These scholars (mentioned above) had acquired such distinction that even the learned Brahmins came to them for further instructions.
- It is mentioned that Yajnavalkya, after completing his education with Uddalaka Aruni, went to Janaka (a king and Kshatriya) to study philosophy and other subjects.
- The *Chhandogya Upanishad* described some subjects as the study of Vedas, namely Mathematics, Mineralogy, Logic, Ethics, Military Science, Astronomy, Science dealing with poisons, Fine Arts and Crafts, Music, and Medical Sciences.
- The *Mundaka Upanishad* classifies all the subjects of study under *Apara vidya*.
- In *Mundaka Upanishad*, the term *Para vidya* was used for the highest knowledge i.e. the knowledge of *atman* that involves knowledge of life, death, God, etc.

### **Economic life**

- Atharvanaveda dealt with economic aspect. It described many prayers to bring economic prosperity for the success of farmers, shepherds, merchants, and so on.
- Atharvanaveda explained prayers for ploughing, sowing, rains, and an increase in cattle, wealth, and exorcism against beasts, wild animals, and robbers.
- The plough was known as *Sira* and the furrow *Sita*.
- Cow dung was used as manure.
- It is mentioned that six, eight, and sometimes even twenty-four oxen were used to pull a plough.

- Many types of grains were grown, such as rice, barley, beans, and sesame. Their seasons are also mentioned as barley sown in winter, ripened in summer; rice sown in the rains, reaped in autumn and so on.
- The *Satapatha* Brahmana mentions various operations of agriculture such as ploughing, sowing, reaping, and threshing
- The Atharvaveda discussed that drought and excess rains threatened agriculture.
- The Atharvaveda mentioned that hymens to worship the cow and the death penalty were prescribed for cow killing.
- Moneylending was also in trend; normally, practiced by Rich merchants.
- Specific weight and measuring units were also known.
- *Niska* and *Satamana* were the units of currency.
- Bargaining in the market was known from the Rig Vedic times itself.
- *Aitareya* Brahmana speaks of the "*inexhaustible sea*" and "the sea as encircling the earth". It shows that sea-borne trade was well known.
- The term *Bali* was used for a voluntary gift to chief (initially), but later on, it becomes a regular tax. It was collected to maintain the political and administrative structure.
- During this period, a noticeable development in industry and occupations was seen.
- Various occupations were mentioned such as: fishermen, fire and rangers, washer men, barbers, butchers, elephant-keepers, footmen, messengers, makers of jewels, baskets, ropes, dyes, chariots, bows, smelters, smiths, potters, etc. Besides, merchants, long distance caravans, and sea trade were also mentioned.
- The Rig Veda describes only one metal as '*ayas*,' which has been identified as copper. But during this period, a new metal i.e. iron, came into existence. Therefore, we get the term '*syam ayas*' (iron) and '*lohit ayas*' (copper). Apart from this gold, lead and tin are also mentioned.
- Iron was used for making weapons and other objects like *nail-parers*, hammers, clamps, ploughshares etc. and Copper was used for making vessels.
- Silver (*rajat*) and Gold were used for making ornaments, dishes, etc.

### **Religion and Philosophy**

- The Brahmanas recorded the growth of ritualism and ceremonial religion and the consequent growth of priesthood.
- During the Rig Vedic period, large-scale ceremonies required maximum seven priests and two chief priests, but in the later Vedic period, the large-scale ceremonies required seventeen priests.
- Several rites and ceremonies were come into practice as a means of attaining success in life in this world or the bliss in heaven.

- The idea of penance and meditation took the precedence. Men took to ascetic practices under the belief that they would not only gain heaven, but also develop "mystic, extraordinary, and superhuman faculties".
- During the later Vedic period, simple religious worship of the Rig Vedic period was replaced by elaborated rites and ceremonies and ascetic practices on one hand.
- Whereas on the other, the intellectual pursuit of the people continued with the conviction that salvation was attainable only through the true knowledge.
- The Upanishad contains philosophical treatises and there are about 200 Upanishads.
- The *Brihadaranyaka* and *Chhandogya* were the oldest Upanishad. They contain bold speculations about the eternal problems of human thought concerning God, man, and the universe etc.
- The Upanishads are considered as an important contribution of India towards the world's stock of spiritual thought.

### Science and Technology

- Vedas, Brahmanas, and Upanishads give enough ideas about the sciences of this period.
- The term '*Ganita*', was used for the '**Mathematics**,' which includes **Arithmetic** (*Anka Ganita*), **Geometry** (*RekhaGanita*), **Algebra** (*BijaGanita*), **Astronomy** and **Astrology** (*Jyotisa*).
- The Vedic people knew the methods of making squares equal in area to triangles, circles, and calculate the sums and differences of the squares. Besides, Cubes, cube roots, square roots, and under roots were also known and used.
- The **Zero** was known in Rig Vedic times and was frequently used in calculations and to record large numbers.
- **Astronomy** was well developed. They were aware of the movement of heavenly bodies and able to calculate about their positions at different times. They had prepared **accurate calendars** and predicting the time of solar and lunar eclipses.
- The Vedic people knew that the earth moves on its own axis and around the Sun. Further, moon moves around the earth. They also tried to calculate the time period taken for revolution and distances among heavenly bodies from the Sun. The results of these calculations are almost the same as the ones done by modern methods.

### Guilds (sreni)

- **Sreni**, in the context of Ancient India, was an association of traders, merchants, and artisans. Generally, a separate shreni existed for a particular group of persons engaged in the same vocation or activity. Shrenis have sometimes been compared with the guilds.<sup>[according to whom?]</sup> However, persons engaged in life destroying activities like hunting and fishing did not form any shreni.
- Well documented references<sup>[citation needed]</sup> to the existing of shreni have been found from 5th century BC, and texts pertaining to hunaina and malika<sup>[disambiguation needed]</sup> mention existence of shrenis and conversion of entire members of some shrenis to Buddhism or

Jainism. Over a period of time, some shrenis became very wealthy with surplus resources, and acted as custodians and bankers of religious and other endowments. One of the widely referred shreni was of ivory carvers of Vidisha (located in the modern Indian state of Madhya Pradesh). This shreni is accredited with sponsoring and financially supporting the construction of the southern gateway of the Stupa at Sanchi, which is currently a World Heritage Site.

- Some scholars<sup>[who?]</sup> have opined that as each economic activity and craft was having its specific traditions and trade secrets, shrenis were formed to protect the same, and fathers used to pass on the same to their sons, and so it continued from one generation to the next generation. Daughters were excluded from becoming the members of the shreni, as once married they went to their husbands' homes, and were prone to divulge the trade secrets to the families of their husbands.

### Unit-III

#### Jainism

- Rishabhanath and Arishthanemia are the two *Tirthankaras* of Jainism mentioned in Rig Veda that proves the antiquity of Jainism.
- Rishabhanath had been mentioned an incarnation of Narayana in *Vayu Purana* and *Bhagwat Purana*.
- The nude sculpture of some *Tirthankara* was also found at Harappa.
- The antiquity of Jainism is represented by a succession of twenty-four *Tirthankaras*.
- Rishabhath was the first Tirthankara of Jainism. The traditions of Jainism say that he was a king and renounced the kingdom in favor of his son, Bharata, and became an ascetic.
- The name *Bharatavarsha* is after Bharata, the son of Rishabhanath as per the Puranic traditions.
- Parsvanath was the twenty-third Tirthankara, he renounced the world at the age of thirty and attained the enlightenment (perfect knowledge) after nearly three months of intense meditation and spent the remaining life as a religious teacher. He had lived 250 years before Mahavira.

#### Mahavira

- Vardhamana Mahavira was the twenty-fourth and the last Tirthankara of Jainism.
- Mahavira was born about 540 B.C. in the village *Kunda-grama* near Vaisali. He was the only son of Siddhartha and Trisala. Siddhartha was the head of famous *kshatriya Jnatrika* clan and Trisala was the sister of Chetaka, an eminent Lichchhavi noble of Vaisali. Chetaka's daughter was married to the king of Magadha, Bimbisara.

- Mahavira was married to Yasoda and lived a life of a householder. After the death of his parents, Mahavira left his home at the age of thirty, and became an ascetic.
- Mahavira had practiced most rigorous asceticism for the next twelve years and attained *kaivalya* at the age of 42 years.
- As per the Jainism, *Kaivalya* is the supreme knowledge and final liberation from the bonds of pleasure and pain.
- After attaining *Kaivalya*, Mahavira came to be known as Mahavira and Jina or the conqueror and spent his remaining life in preaching. His followers came to be known as *Jainas*. Initially, they were designated as *Nirgranthas*, which means free from fetters.
- In 468 B.C., Mahavira passed away at Pawapuri at the age of 72 years. He spent 30 years of his life in preaching his teachings.
- Four **doctrines** of Parsvanath are –
  - Non-injury to living beings,
  - Speaking the truth,
  - Non-possession of property, and
  - Not stealing.
- Vardhaman Mahavira accepted four doctrines of Parsvanath and added Celibacy as a fifth one to them.
- Celibacy is the complete renunciation and free from any possessions. Mahavira asked his followers to discard even their clothes.

### **Jain's Mythology**

- The universe is eternal.
- The world is not created, maintained, or destroyed by a God, but it functions through a universal or eternal law.
- Jains did not deny the existence of God, but they simply ignored.
- The existence of the universe is divided into cycles of progress (*Utsarpini*) and declines (*Avasarpim*). It functions through the interaction of living souls (*Jiva*) and everything in the universe has a soul.
- The souls are found not only in the living beings like animals and plants, but also in stones, rocks, water, etc.
- The purification of the soul is the purpose of living.
- Only the pure soul after being released from the body resides in heaven.
- The soul, which has finally set itself free, rises at once to the top of the universe, above the highest heaven where it remains in an inactive omniscient bliss through eternity. It is known as '*Nirvana*' in the Jainism.

- According to Jainism, salvation is possible only by –
  - Deserting all belongings,
  - A long course of fasting,
  - Self-mortification,
  - Study, and
  - Meditation.
- Jainism, therefore, says that the monastic life is essential for salvation.
- According to the Jaina tradition, the king Chandragupta Maurya has supported Jainism. He had accepted Jaina religion and abdicated the throne and died as a Jaina Bhikshu in the southern part of India.
- Two hundred years after the death of Mahavira (during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya), a terrible famine broke out in Magadha. Bhadrabahu was the chief of the Jaina community at that time.
- Bhadrabahu went to Karnataka with his followers and Sthulabhadra remained in Magadha as the in-charge of Jainism.
- Bhadrabahu convoked a council at Patliputra, in which the Jaina canon was arranged.
- Later in the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D., the Jaina canon was further rearranged when the Jainas returned from south India. From where Jainism divided into two sects.
- Those who returned from southern India held that complete nudity is an essential part of the teachings of Mahavira while the monks in Magadha began to put on white clothes.
- Those who put on white robes known as '*Svetambaras*' and those who were stark naked were called as '*Digambaras*.'

### **Decline of Jainism**

- Jainas had to fight their battle on two fronts since the days of Mahavira: against the followers of the Vedic Brahmanic religion and against Buddhists. They fought on the first front for their faith against the Vedic manifestation, its bloody sacrifices and its social order which assured precedence to the Brahmanas over all other sections of the society; and on the second, against the Buddhistic denial of the self and its doctrine of salvation which acknowledged asceticism only in a negligible measure and considered the saints other than the Tirthankaras as those who could guide one's path to salvation. Buddhism had oppressed **Jainism** for some time quite strongly.
- Kumarila, the restorer of the Vedic sacrificial service, and Sarikara, the pioneer of the illusionist doctrine of non-duality, also proceeded, with all the weapons of their spirit, against the Jaina-doctrine as a heterodoxy which was inimical to the Vedas. The constant progress of the movement coming from the orthodoxy against all heterodox trends increased the pressure, gradually but surely, and it weighed heavily upon the Jaina clan, and although this knew to ward-off the attacks, its position had become much weaker and it was shaken.

- The consequence of the awakening of the Brahmanic religiosity was the revival of the Vaishnavite and Shaivite sects. **Shaivism** and **Vaishnavism** proved to be particularly dangerous opponents, and they did a severe damage to Jainism, particularly in **the Deccan** and the south.
- The Shaivite sect of the Lingayats was another mighty enemy of Jainas. Lingayats proceeded against Jainas extremely fanatically, damaged their properties and life, destroyed their temples or appropriated them for their purpose. It is said that Saint Ekantada-Ramayya had particularly excelled in the propagation of the new doctrine.
- It is seen from the inscription from the year 1368 that Jainas were oppressed later by the Sri Vaisnavas. Jainas then complained to King Bukkaraya-I of Vijayanagar against the persecutions to which they were subject on the side of the Vaishnavites. The king then ordered that the members of both the religions should enjoy the same cultural freedom in his land. Further he ordered that 20 guards be appointed near the Gommata-statue in Sravana Belgola to protect the shrine from denigration and saw to it that the destroyed temples were repaired.
- The growing might of **Hinduism** was not revealed to Jainism in its losing the followers. It was also expressed in the increasing inclination of its follower's towards Hinduistic views and customs. Thus more and more Hindu-deities were mentioned in the Jaina-literature from now on, although they have no place in the Jaina-system. They also used terms which reveal a strong Influence of the Vedanta; and in the following period, there was greater reconciliation even in the religious belief and social life.

## **Buddhism**

### **Gautama Buddha**

- Buddhism was founded by **Gautama** in 566 B.C. He was the son of Suddhodhan and Mayadevi. His father Suddhodhan was the eminent king of Sakya republic.
- An astrologer predicted about Gautama that he would either be *chakravartin-samrat* (a great king) or a great *sanyasin* (a great monk).
- Gautama was married to Yasodhara at an early age. Gautama was shocked at the sight of an old man, a diseased person, a dead body. Thereafter, he was attracted by the saintly appearance of an ascetic. One night he renounced the worldly life and left his home, wife, and son.
- After leaving home, Gautama studied for some time in the philosophical schools of two renowned teachers. Thereafter, six years of profound meditation led to the discovery of truths. Gautama became the '**Buddha**' i.e. the enlightened one.
- The main principle of Buddha's teachings is represented by the "Four Noble Truths (*Arya-Satyas*)" as –
  - *Dukkha* (the world is full of sorrow)
  - *Dukkha Samuddaya* (that causes the sorrow)
  - *Dukkha Nirodha* (sorrow can be stopped)



- *Dukkha Nirodhagamini-pratipada* (path leading to cessation of sorrow)

## Teachings of Buddha

- Desire is the root of all human sadness and the assured way of ending unhappiness was the elimination of desire.
- Death is certain and there is no escape from it which lead to rebirth and caused further suffering. One could get out of this chain of suffering by attaining *Nirvana* (salvation).
- To achieve the final salvation (*Nirvana*) Buddha suggest '*Ashtangika marga*' (the eight-fold path). These eight fold paths are –
  - Right speech,
  - Right action,
  - Right means of livelihood,
  - Right exertion,
  - Right mindfulness,
  - Right meditation,
  - Right resolution, and
  - Right view.
- The ultimate aim of life is to attain *Nirvana*, which means freedom, from further birth and death.
- *Nirvana* is the eternal state of peace and bliss or liberation from the cycle of birth and death
- Buddha had summarized the whole process in three words viz.
  - *Seela* (Right conduct),
  - *Samadhi* (Right concentration), and
  - *Prajna* (Right knowledge).
- According to Buddha, *Seela* and *Samadhi* lead to *Prajna*, which is the direct cause of nirvana.
- Buddha advocated "The Middle Path" in which extremes are avoided.
- Buddha visited to the Deer Park (modern Sarnath), Kasi after his enlightenment and gave his first *Sermon* (lecture).
- His first sermon was known as "*Set in Motion, the Wheel of Law*".
- According to Buddha 's moral doctrine –
  - Man is an arbiter of his own destiny and not any God or Gods.

- If a man does good deeds in his life, he will be reborn in a higher life and so on till he attains the *Nirvana* and finally gets freedom from the evils of birth.
- If a man does evil deeds, he will surely be punished and the man will be reborn into lower and lower life, each life taking him further away from the *Nirvana*.
- The middle path was the best and man should avoid both extremes, viz. a life of comforts and luxury, and a life of severe asceticism.
- Buddhism laid great stress on love, compassion, equanimity, and non-injury to the living creatures in thought, word, and deed.
- Buddhism rejected the necessity of Vedic rituals and practices for the purpose of salvation, and the superiority assumed by the Brahmins.
- The followers of the Buddha fell into two categories –
  - *Upasakas* i.e. the lay followers who lived with family; and
  - *Bhikshus* i.e. monks who renounced the world and led the life of an ascetic.
- *Bhikshus* lived as a commune called ‘Sangha’ founded by Buddha himself. In Buddhism, all the followers enjoyed equal rights irrespective of their *Varna* and *Jati*.
- Women were also allowed to join the Sangha and were known as ‘*Bhikshunis*.’
- Buddha debated in the language of the common people.
- Buddha and his followers used to travel from place to place, and preach for eight months in a year; and, four months, during the rainy season, they stayed at one place.
- Buddha died in the year 486 B.C. at Kushinagar at the age of 80.
- The ashes of Buddha after cremation were distributed among his followers.
- The followers kept these ashes in caskets and built ‘Stupas’ over them. One example of such Stupa is *Sanchi* Stupa.

## **Downfall of Buddhism**

### **1. Decline of Buddhist Sanghas:**

The important cause of the decline and fall of Buddhism was the decline of Buddhist Sanghas. The Sanghas became centres of corruption. The discipline of vinay pitaka was violated. The viharas were dominated by ease-loving people. The monks and nuns began to lead lives of pleasure and ease. The Mahayanist and Hinayanist quarreled with each other. Internal conflict proved to be the ruin of Buddhism.

### **2. Revival of Brahmanism:**

The revival of Brahmanical Hinduism also served as a cause for the decline of Buddhism. The rites and rituals of Hinduism were simplified. It also incorporated Buddhist principle of non-violence and accepted Buddha as a Hindu incarnation. The Gupta rulers were great patrons of Brahmanical religion and did a lot for it. The reformed Brahmanical Hinduism was able to appeal to the people.

### 3. Division among Buddhists:

Buddhism was divided into a number of groups like “Hinayana”, “Mahayana” “Vajrayana” “Tantrayana” and “Sahajayana” and ultimately it lost its originality.

### 4. Use of Sanskrit Language:

The Buddhist monks gave up Pali, the language of the common people. Buddha preached his teachings in Pali which accounted for the spread of Buddhism. But the Buddhist monks took up Sanskrit, the language of intellectuals which was rarely understood by the common people. So people rejected it.

## Jainism vs. Buddhism

- Following are the key **similarities** in the philosophies of Jainism and Buddhism –
  - Both the philosophies recognize the fact that the world is full of sorrows and the salvation of a man means his deliverance from the eternal chain of birth and death.
  - Both the philosophies derived their basic principles from the Upanishads.
  - Both the philosophies did not accept the idea of God.
  - Both the philosophies laid great stress upon a pure and moral life, especially non-injury to living beings.
  - Both the philosophies emphasized the effects of good and bad deeds upon a man's future births and ultimate salvation.
  - Both the philosophies criticized caste.
  - Both the philosophies preached their religions in the common language of the people.
  - Both the philosophies encouraged the idea of giving up the world, and organized a church of monks and nuns.
- Following are the key **differences** between Jainism and Buddhism –
  - Both the philosophies have distinct historic origins.
  - Both the philosophies differ in fundamental conceptions about salvation.
  - Jainism laid great stress upon asceticism and practiced it in a very rigorous manner, but Buddha criticized it and suggested his disciples to follow the middle path between a life of ease and luxury on one hand, and rigorous asceticism on the other.
  - Buddha condemned the practice of going out naked.
  - Jainism's view of non-injury even to animals was carried to far greater excesses.

- Buddhism spread far and wide in different parts of the world within five hundred years whereas Jainism never spread beyond the boundaries of India.
- Buddhism declined considerably in the land of its birth while Jainism is still a living force in India, and has got a stronghold upon a large and influential section of the people.

### **Mahajanapadas**

- The term "Janapada" literally means the *foothold of a people*. The fact that *Janapada* is derived from *Jana* points to an early stage of land-taking by the Jana people for a settled way of life. This process of first settlement on land had completed its final stage prior to the times of the Buddha and Pāṇini. The Pre-Buddhist north-west region of the Indian sub-continent was divided into several Janapadas demarcated from each other by boundaries. In Pāṇini's "Ashtadhyayi", *Janapada* stands for country and *Janapadin* for its citizenry. Each of these Janapadas was named after the Kshatriya people (or the Kshatriya Jana) who had settled therein. Buddhist and other texts only incidentally refer to sixteen great nations (*Solasa Mahajanapadas*) which were in existence before the time of the Buddha. They do not give any connected history except in the case of Magadha. The Buddhist Anguttara Nikaya, at several places,<sup>[13]</sup> gives a list of sixteen great nations:

1. Anga
2. Assaka (or Asmaka)
3. Avanti
4. Chedi
5. Gandhara
6. Kashi
7. Kamboja
8. Kosala
9. Kuru
10. Magadha
11. Malla
12. Machcha (or Matsya)
13. Panchala
14. Surasena
15. Vriji
16. Vatsa (or Vamsa)

### **Alexander Invasion**

- The **Indian campaign of Alexander the Great** began in 326 BC. After conquering the Achaemenid Empire of Persia, the Macedonian king (and now the great king of the Persian Empire), Alexander, launched a campaign into the Indian subcontinent in present-day Pakistan, part of which formed the easternmost territories of the Achaemenid Empire following the Achaemenid conquest of the Indus Valley (6th century BC). The rationale for this campaign is usually said to be Alexander's desire to conquer the entire known world, which the Greeks thought ended in India.

- After gaining control of the former Achaemenid satrapy of Gandhara, including the city of Taxila, Alexander advanced into Punjab, where he engaged in battle against the regional king Porus, whom Alexander defeated in the Battle of the Hydaspes in 326 BC,<sup>[1][2]</sup> but was so impressed by the demeanor with which the king carried himself that he allowed Porus to continue governing his own kingdom as a satrap.<sup>[3]</sup> Although victorious, the Battle of the Hydaspes was possibly also the most costly battle fought by the Macedonians.<sup>[4]</sup>
- Alexander's march east put him in confrontation with the Nanda Empire of Magadha. According to the Greek sources, the Nanda army was supposedly five times larger than the Macedonian army.<sup>[5]</sup> His army, exhausted, homesick, and anxious by the prospects of having to further face large Indian armies throughout the Indo-Gangetic Plain, mutinied at the Hyphasis (modern Beas River) and refused to march further east. Alexander, after a meeting with his officer, Coenus, and after hearing about the lament of his soldiers,<sup>[6]</sup> eventually relented,<sup>[7]</sup> being convinced that it was better to return. This caused Alexander to turn south, advancing through southern Punjab and Sindh, along the way conquering more tribes along the lower Indus River, before finally turning westward.<sup>[8]</sup>
- Alexander died in Babylon on 10 or 11 June 323 BC. In c. 322 BC, one year after Alexander's death, Chandragupta Maurya of Magadha founded the Maurya Empire in India.

### **Battle of the Hydaspes River**

- The Battle of the Hydaspes River was fought by Alexander in July 326 BC against king Porus (possibly, Paurava) on the Hydaspes River (Jhelum River) in the Punjab, near Bhera. The Hydaspes was the last major battle fought by Alexander.<sup>[32]</sup> The main train went into what is now modern-day Pakistan through the Khyber Pass, but a smaller force under the personal command of Alexander went via the northern route, resulting in the Siege of Aornos along the way. In early spring of the next year, he combined his forces and allied with Taxiles (also Ambhi), the King of Taxila, against his neighbor, the King of Hydaspes.
- Porus was a regional King in India. Arrian writes about Porus, in his own words:
- One of the Indian Kings called Porus, a man remarkable alike for his personal strength and noble courage, on hearing the report about Alexander, began to prepare for the inevitable. Accordingly, when hostilities broke out, he ordered his army to attack Macedonians from whom he demanded their king, as if he was his private enemy. Alexander lost no time in joining battle, but his horse being wounded in the first charge, he fell headlong to the ground, and was saved by his attendants who hastened up to his assistance.
- Porus drew up on the south bank of the Jhelum River, and was set to repel any crossings. The Jhelum River was deep and fast enough that any opposed crossing would probably doom the entire attacking force. Alexander knew that a direct crossing would fail, so he found a suitable crossing, about 27 km (17 mi) upstream of his camp. The name of the place is "Kadee". Alexander left his general Craterus behind with most of the army while he crossed the river upstream with a strong contingent. Porus sent a small cavalry and chariot force under his son to the crossing.

- According to sources, Alexander had already encountered Porus's son, so the two men were not strangers. Porus's son killed Alexander's horse with one blow, and Alexander fell to the ground. Also writing about this encounter, Arrian adds,
- Other writers state that there was a fight at the actual landing between Alexander's cavalry and a force of Indians commanded by Porus's son, who was there ready to oppose them with superior numbers, and that in the course of fighting he (Porus's son) wounded Alexander with his own hand and struck the blow which killed his (Alexander's) beloved horse Bucephalus. The force was easily routed, and according to Arrian, Porus' son was killed. Porus now saw that the crossing force was larger than he had expected, and decided to face it with the bulk of his army. Porus's army were poised with cavalry on both flanks, the war elephants in front, and infantry behind the elephants. These war elephants presented an especially difficult situation for Alexander, as they scared the Macedonian horses.
- Alexander started the battle by sending horse archers to shower the Porus's left cavalry wing, and then used his cavalry to destroy Porus's cavalry. Meanwhile, the Macedonian phalanxes had crossed the river to engage the charge of the war elephants. The Macedonians eventually surrounded Porus's force.

### **Effects of Alexander's invasion**

- Effects of Alexander's invasion have been over or under emphasized. Some writers believe that it had no effects as such. In fact the writers ascertain that no trace of invasion remained.
- The effects of the invasion are as follows:
- The routes used by Alexander became trade routes between India and the West. He opened a sea route to the West.
- Alexander brought with him several historians and scientists. These people recorded lot of details about the Indian society.
- The Gandhara School of art is influenced by the Greek art.
- Alexander tried to get the scattered principalities under one unit.
- He had divided the country into satrapas on the Persian model and he bestowed on the settlement of colonies of his followers at strategic points. It left the warrior tribes of the Indus river system weakened thereby paved the way for easy extension of Mauryan rule. It demonstrated the need for a wiser political policy on behalf of Indian rulers.

### **Political effects of Alexander's invasion**

- Help in the work of **Chandragupta Maurya**: Alexander's invasion gave the lesson that small kingdom could not face the attacks of the foreigners.
- **Satrapy organization in northwest**: Due to the establishment of Greeks in the northwest, satrapy system started in the field of administration.
- **Establishment of new cities**: To commemorate his victories Alexander founded several cities, which remained long after his retreat.

### **Change in organization of Indian army:**

- According to some writers Indians learnt much from the Greeks regarding the organization of army and adopted Greek system. However, Dr. V. A. Smith does not agree to this view, and writes, "Even to military, Indians showed no disposition to learn the lesson taught by the sharp swords of Alexander. The kings of hind preferred to go in the old way, trusting, to their elephants and chariots supported by enormous hosts of infantry. They never mastered the shock tactics of Alexander's cavalry."

### **Effect on trade and commerce:**

- New ways have opened for trade and commerce, both through water and land. According to Dr. Smith the wall between east and west was broken with the opening of four ways. According to Paul Masson Oursel, "Direct contact was established between the Mediterranean civilization and those of the Punjab and of central Asia, Semitic Babylonia and the Persian Empire was no longer a screen between the west and east." The opening of new ways gave a bonus to Indian trade and commerce and the consumption of Indian goods in foreign countries increased as well.

### **Historical advantages**

- The date of invasion of Alexander i.e. 327 B.C. has helped in the chronological reconstruction of the ancient history of India.

### **Cultural effect**

- The Greek influence in the field of astrology was very significant. Though the impact was not so permanent, still it brings some colour. The establishment of Greek empire in the northwest of India gave birth to the Gandhara. The style of sculpture was remarkable at that time. Indians learnt much in the field of coinage from the Greek and learnt to make beautiful and well-shaped coins as well.
- Thus it can be seen that although the effects of the invasion were not permanent yet for some time they influenced Indians.

## UNIT – IV

### **Mauryan Empire**

- The Mauryan Empire was the first largest empires that ever established on Indian soil till 324 B.C.
- The epigraphical sources, literary sources, foreign accounts, and other materials obtained from the archaeological excavations describe the greatness of the Mauryan rulers and vast extensions of their empire.
- The Mauryan Empire was spread from the valley of the Oxus (present Amu River) to the delta of Kaveri.
- **Chandragupta Maurya** was the first ruler who unified entire India under one political unit.

- The detailed information about the administrative system of the Mauryan Empire is mentioned in *Arthashastra*. It is a book written by **Kautilya**. He was also known as **Chanakya**.
- Kautilya was the Prime Minister of Chandragupta Maurya. He was considered as the real architect of the Mauryan Empire.
- Megasthenese came in the court of Chandragupta Maurya as an ambassador of the Seleucus (the king of Greek).
- Megasthenese has given detailed accounts of India and Indian people in his book '*Indica*.' Though the original book is lost; however, historians extracted Megasthenese's description through the quotations in the works of the later Greek writers.
- The inscriptions of the great Ashoka are the most important and authentic source for the history of Mauryan period.

The *Arthashastra* is the title of a handbook for running an **empire**, written by **Kautilya** (also known as **Chanakya**, c. 350-275 BCE) an Indian statesman and philosopher, chief advisor and Prime Minister of the Indian Emperor **Chandragupta**, the first ruler of the **Mauryan Empire**. The title *Arthashastra* is a **Sanskrit** word which is normally translated as *The Science of Material Gain*, although *Science of Politics* or *Science of Political Economy* are other accepted translations for Kautilya's work.

## Content

The *Arthashastra* summarizes the political thoughts of Kautilya. This book was lost for many centuries until a copy of it, written on palm leaves, was rediscovered in **India** in 1904 CE. This edition is dated to approximately 250 CE, many centuries after the time of Kautilya, but the main ideas in this book are largely his. The book contains detailed information about specific topics that are relevant for rulers who wish to run an effective government. Diplomacy and ancient **Indian warfare** (including military tactics) are the two points treated in most detail but the work also includes recommendations on **law**, prisons, taxation, irrigation, **agriculture**, mining, fortifications, **coinage**, manufacturing, **trade**, administrations, diplomacy, and spies.

The ideas expressed by Kautilya in the *Arthashastra* are completely practical and unsentimental. Kautilya openly writes about controversial topics such as assassinations, when to kill family members, how to manage secret agents, when it is useful to violate treaties, and when to spy on ministers. Because of this, Kautilya is often compared to the Italian Renaissance writer Machiavelli, author of *The Prince*, who is considered by many as unscrupulous and immoral. It is fair to mention that Kautilya's **writing** is not consistently without principles in that he also writes about the moral duty of the king. He summarizes the duty of a ruler, saying, "The happiness of the subjects is the happiness of the king; their welfare is his. His own pleasure is not his good but the pleasure of his subjects is his good". Some scholars have seen in the ideas of Kautilya a combination of Chinese **Confucianism** and **Legalism**.

Kautilya's book suggests a detailed daily schedule for how a ruler should structure his activities. According to his view, the duties of a ruler should be organized as follows:



- First 90 minutes, at sunrise, the ruler should go through the different reports (revenue, military, etc.).
- Second 90 minutes, time for public audiences.
- Third 90 minutes for breakfast and some personal time (bath, study, etc.).
- Fourth 90 minutes for meeting with ministers.
- Fifth 90 minutes for correspondence.
- Sixth 90 minutes for lunch...

The *Arthashastra* offers a list with the seven components of the state:

1. the king
2. the ministers
3. the country (population, geography and natural resources)
4. fortification
5. treasury
6. army
7. allies

Kautilya goes on to explain each of these individual components and stresses the importance of strengthening these elements in one's kingdom and weakening them in the enemies' states by using spies and secret agents.

One of the most interesting ideas presented by Kautilya is the “**Mandala** theory of interstate relations”. A mandala is a schematic visual representation of the universe, which is a common artistic expression in many Asian cultures. Kautilya explains that, if we can imagine our kingdom in the centre of a circular mandala, then the area surrounding our kingdom should be considered our enemies' territory. The circle surrounding our enemies' territories belongs to our enemies' enemies, who should be considered our allies since we will share many interests with them. The circle surrounding our enemies' enemies' territory will be the allies of our enemies. Kautilya then goes on analysing twelve levels of concentric circles and offers detailed advice on how to deal with each state according to the layer they belong to in the mandala construct.

The various types of foreign policy are also explained in the *Arthashastra*: peace, **war**, neutrality, preparing for war, seeking protection and duplicity (pursuing war and peace at the same time with the same kingdom).

### **Chandragupta Maurya**

- Chandragupta Maurya had ruled during the period of 324-300 B.C.
- The Buddhist literature, the ‘*Mahavamsa*’ and ‘*Dipavamsa*’ give a detail account of Chandragupta Maurya.
- Chandragupta Maurya has been described as a descendant of the Kshatriya clan of the *Moriyas* branch of *Sakyas*. They lived in Pippalivana, in eastern Uttar Pradesh.
- The ‘*Mudrarakshasa*’ is a play written by Vishakhadatta, referred Chandragupta as ‘*Vrishala*’ and ‘*Kulahina*,’ which means a person of humble origin.

### According to Buddhist Traditions

- Chandragupta's father was killed in a battle and he was brought up by his maternal uncle.
- Chanakya observed the signs of royalty in the child Chandragupta and took him as his pupil. He took him at Taxila for his education and training. Taxila, at that time, was a great center of learning.
- The Greek sources described that while he was in Taxila, Chandragupta had seen Alexander in a course of the Punjab campaign. However, the reliable details of Chandragupta's conquests and empire building process are not available.

### According to Greek and Jain Sources

- Chandragupta took advantage of the disturbances caused by the invasion of Alexander and his sudden death in 323 B.C. in Babylon.
- With the help of Kautilya, Chandragupta raised a large army and launched campaigns. He first overthrew the Greek *kshatrapas* ruling in the region of north-western India.
- Greek writer Justin, writes, "*India after the death of Alexander, had shaken, as it were, the yoke of servitude from its neck and put his Governors to death, and the architect of this liberation was Sandrocottas.*"
- The Sandrocottas mentioned in the Greek literature has been identified with Chandragupta Maurya.
- After liberating north-western India from the Greek rule, Chandragupta turned his attention towards the conquest of Magadha (where Nanda was the Emperor). However, the details of this conquest are not known.
- According to Parisistha-parvam (the Jain text), Chandragupta with the help of Chanakya, defeated the Nanda king and captured his empire and became the great ruler of Magadha empire.
- Ashoka and his father Bindusara (son of Chandraguptha Maurya) did not make any conquest in south India. Therefore, it was Chandragupta Maurya who made it.
- The Junagarh rock inscription describes that a dam for irrigation was constructed on the *Sudarshana* Lake by Pushyagupta, a provincial governor of Chandragupta Maurya.
- Inscriptions of Ashoka found at *Girnar* hills in Junagarh district in Gujarat and at Sopara, in Thane district in Maharashtra reflect that these areas were under the rule of Mauryan Empire.
- In south India, Ashoka's inscriptions have been found at *Maski*, *Yerragudi*, and *Chitaldurga* in Karnataka.
- Rock Edict II and XIII of Ashoka explain that Chandragupta's immediate neighboring states (in the south) were Cholas, Pandyas, Satyaputras, and Keralaputras.
- The Jain tradition confirms that in his old age, Chandragupta abdicated the throne and retired to *Shravanabelagola* in Karnataka with his teacher Bhadrabahu (a Jain ascetic).

- Local inscriptions of the later period mentioned that Chandragupta gave up his life as a Jaina devotee by fast unto death at a hill, which later on called as Chandragiri, seems to be named after him.
- In about 305 B.C. Chandragupta defeated the army of the Greek *Kshatrapa* Seleucus who had succeeded Alexander in the eastern part of his empire.
- The Greek writers stated that a treaty was concluded between Seleucus and Chandragupta in which Seleucus accepted the territories of Kandahar, Kabul, Herat, and Baluchistan and Chandragupta presented him 500 elephants.
- The treaty was followed by a matrimonial alliance between the two in which Seleucus married his daughter to Chandragupta Maurya or to his son Bindusara.
- Seleucus sent Megasthenese as his ambassador to the court of Chandragupta.
- Plutarch writes, "*Sandrocottas who had by that time mounted the throne overran and subdued the whole of India with an army of 600,000*".
- It is clear that Chandragupta had established a vast empire extended from Afghanistan in the west to Assam in the east and from Kashmir in the north to Karnataka in the south. The entire country except Kalinga was under his rule.
- Bindusara (son of Chandragupta), did not make any conquests. Thereafter, Ashoka (son of Bindusara) is said to have added only Kalinga to the Mauryan-empire.
- Chandragupta Maurya had ruled for 24 years i.e. from 324 B.C. to 300 B.C.

### **Bindusara (300-273 B.C.)**

- Bindusara, the son of Chandragupta Maurya, ascend to throne after his father.
- According to the Tibetan historian, Taranath, Chanakya continued as a minister of Bindusara after Chandragupta Maurya. Hemachandra, Jain scholar, also confirms this fact.
- Divyavadana mentions that Bindusara appointed his eldest son Sumana (or Susima) as his viceroy at Taxila and Ashoka at Ujjain. It also mentions that when a revolt broke out at Taxila, Ashoka was sent to restore peace as Susima fails to suppress it.
- Bindusara continued his policy of friendly relations with Hellenic world.
- Dionysius was the Egypt ambassador came to the court of Bindusara.
- Pliny mentions that Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt sent him as an ambassador.
- Bindusara had been given the credit of south Indian conquest, but most of the scholars believe that this was done by his father Chandragupta Maurya.

### **Ashoka (273-232 B.C.)**

- Ashoka succeeded to the throne after the death of his father Bindusara in 273 B.C.
- According to the Buddhist tradition,

- Janapada Kalyani or Subhadra was his mother.
  - He was appointed as a viceroy of Ujjain and Taxila while he was a prince.
- Ashoka was very cruel in his early life and captured the throne after killing his 99 brothers. But it appears an exaggerated figure.
- Ashoka himself speaks affectionately about his brothers, sisters, and relatives in his edicts.
- Ashoka was the first king in the Indian history who has left his records engraved on stones.
- The history of Ashoka's reign can be reconstructed with the help of his inscriptions and some other literary sources.
- The Ashokan inscriptions are found at 47 places in different regions of India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.
- The inscriptions on rocks are called as the 'Rock Edicts,' and those on Pillars, 'Pillar Edicts.'
- Ashoka's name occurs only in copies of Minor Rock Edict-I found at three places in Karnataka and one in Madhya Pradesh. Whereas in all other inscriptions, he mentioned himself as '*Devanampiya*' and '*Piyadasi*' meaning beloved of the gods.
- Ashoka's inscriptions were written in four different scripts, namely –
  - Greek languages and scripts used in Afghanistan area;
  - Aramaic languages and scripts used in west Asia;
  - Prakrit language and Kharosthi script used in Pakistan area; and
  - Prakrit language and Brahmi script used in rest of the inscriptions.
- The Rock Edict XIII describes brightly the horrors and miseries of Kalinga war and its impact on Ashoka's life.
- The Rock Edict XIII describes that one lakh people were killed in this war, several lakhs perished and a lakh and a half were taken prisoners.
- These figures might be exaggerated, but it is clearly mentioned that this war had a devastating effect on the people of Kalinga. Likewise, this became the last battle fought by Ashoka.
- The panic of war completely changed the personality of Ashoka. He felt great regret for the killings of the war. He left the policy of aggression and adopted the policy for the welfare of people and animals.
- Ashoka sent ambassadors of peace to the Greek kingdoms in west Asia and several other countries.

- Ashoka did not pursue the policy of peace for the sake of peace and under all conditions.
- Rajjukas was a class of officers appointed within the empire not only for rewarding people, but also punishing them if required.

### **Ashoka's Dhamma**

- Ashoka's personal religion was Buddhism.
- In Bhabru rock edict, he says that he had full faith in Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha*.
- Ashoka accepted Buddhism as his main faith, but he never forced Buddhist ideals on his subjects.
- Ashoka believed in unity among ethical and moral values of all sects. He showed great respect to all sects and faiths.
- In Rock Edict XII Ashoka says, "*I honor all sects and both ascetics and laymen, with gifts and various forms of recognition*". He pronounced his policy of equal respect to all religious sects very clearly.
- After the Kalinga War, the propagation of Dhamma became the utmost objective for Ashoka.
- Ashoka's edicts explained *Dhamma* as a '*Moral Law*', a '*Common Code of Conduct*,' or an '*Ethical Order*'. Further, he says that it is not a religion or a religious system.
- In Pillar Edict II, Ashoka puts a question to himself: "*What is Dhamma?*" Then he mentioned the two basic constituents of *Dhamma* as less evil and many good deeds.
- Ashoka explains evils as rage, cruelty, anger, pride, and envy that are to be avoided.
- Ashoka explains many good deeds as kindness, liberality, truthfulness, gentleness, self-control, purity of heart, attachment to morality, inner and outer purity. These good qualities are to be pursued ardently.
- Ashoka, in his Rock Edict XII, prescribes the following codes to be followed –
  - Obedience to mother and father, elders, teachers and other respectable persons.
  - Respect towards teachers.
  - Proper treatment towards ascetics, relations, slaves, servants and dependents, the poor and miserable, friends, acquaintances, and companions.
  - Liberality towards ascetics, friends, comrades, relatives, and the aged.
  - Abstention from killing of living beings.
  - Non-injury to all living creatures.
  - Spending little and accumulating little wealth.
  - Mildness in a case of all living creatures.
  - Truthfulness.

- Attachment to morality.
- Purity of the heart.
- *Dhamma* is a code for moral and virtuous life. He never discussed god or soul or religion.
- Ashoka implanted a moral law i.e. *Dhamma* as the governing principle in every sphere of life.
- Ashoka practiced all these principles of *Dhamma* and asked his countrymen to –
  - have control over their passion;
  - cultivate purity of life and character in innermost thoughts;
  - learn other religions;
  - abstain from killing or injuring animals; and
  - have regard for them;
  - be charitable to all;
  - be respectful to parents, teachers, relatives, friends, and ascetics;
  - treat slaves and servant kindly; and
  - tell the truth.
- Ashoka not only preached, but had actually practiced these principles. He gave up hunting and killing of animals.
- Ashoka made liberal donations to the Brahmans and ascetics of different religious sects.
- Ashoka established hospitals for humans and animals and constructed rest-houses. He also ordered wells to be dug and trees to be planted along the roads for welfare of the people.
- Ashoka adopted Buddhism after observing the brutality of the Kalinga war.
- Non-violence and non-injury to living beings is the cardinal doctrines of Buddhism.
- Ashoka appointed a special class of officials called '*Dharmamahatras*' whose sole responsibility was to propagate *Dhamma* among the people.
- Ashoka conducted '*Dharmayatras*' (religious journey) and instructed his officials to do the same.
- To propagate *Dhamma*, he sends his missionaries to western Asia, Egypt, and Eastern Europe.
- Some of the foreign kings from whom Ashoka received the message of Buddhism were –
  - Antiochus Theos of Syria
  - Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt

- Antigonus Gonatas of Macedonia
- Megas of Cyrene
- Alexander of Epirus
- Ashoka sent his son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitra to propagate Buddhism in Sri Lanka.

### **Ashoka Rock Edicts and pillar Edicts**

The Rock Edicts was the first tangible evidence of, how Buddhism spread under the patronage of the most powerful monarchs of Indian history. These edicts were deciphered by the British archaeologist and historian James Prinsep. Edicts were basically decoding of practical instructions in running kingdom such as the irrigation systems design and descriptions of Monarchs beliefs in peaceful moral behaviour.

#### **Major Rock Edict I**

In this rock edicts, King prohibited animal slaughter especially during the festive gatherings.

#### **Major Rock Edict II**

In this rock edict, there are descriptions of Kingdoms of South India like Chola, Pandyas, Satyapura and Keralaputra. It also provides for care for man and animals.

#### **Major Rock Edict III**

It was made after 12 years of Asoka's coronation. It says that the Yuktas (subordinate officers and Pradesikas (district Heads) along with Rajukas (Rural officers) shall go to the all areas of kingdom every five years and spread the Dhamma Policy of Asoka. It also decoded the practical instructions to generosity to Brahmins.

#### **Major Rock Edict IV**

Dhammaghosa is ideal to the mankind and not the Bherighosa. Impact of Dhamma on society.

#### **Major Rock Edict V**

It states about the concerns about the policy towards slaves and mentioned the appointment of Dhammamahamatras. And also in this rock edict, Ashoka mentions that "Every Human is my child".

#### **Major Rock Edict VI**

It describes King's desire to get informed about the conditions of the people constantly. In other words, talks about welfare measures.

#### **Major Rock Edict VII**

It decoded the practical instructions of King to tolerance for all religions - "To foster one's own sect, depreciating the others out of affection for one's own, to exalt its merit, is to do the worst harm to one's own sect."

#### **Major Rock Edict VIII**

It describes Asoka's first Dhamma Yatra to Bodhgaya & Bodhi Tree.

### Major Rock Edict IX

It condemns the popular ceremonies like ceremonies after birth, illness, marriage and before setting out of journey. It also stress on the practice of dhamma.

### Major Rock Edict X

It condemns the fame and glory and reasserts the merits of the dhamma policy.

### Major Rock Edict XI

It explained the policy of dhamma and also emphasises the act of individual towards elders and also abstaining from killing animals and liberality towards friends

### Rock Edict XII

It directed and determined request for tolerance among different religious sects.

### Major Rock Edict XIII

It is the paramount importance in understanding the Ashok's Policy of dhamma. This rock edict pleads the way of conquest which is dhamma instead of war. This is logical culmination of the thorough processes which began from the 1<sup>st</sup> rock edict.

### Major Rock Edict XIV

It describes engraving of inscriptions in different parts of country.

## **Other Rock Edicts and inscriptions**

1. Edict I: Asoka declared all people are my sons
2. Edict II: proclamation of edicts even to a single person.
3. Queen Edict: Mentions about second queen of Asoka
4. Barbara cave Inscription: Discusses giving away the Barbara cave to Ajivika sect Kandhar
5. Bilingual Rock Inscription: Expresses gratification over Ashoka's policy

## **Pillar Edicts**

Asoka's 7 pillar edicts have been found at Topra (Delhi), Meerut, Kausambhi, rampurva, Champaran, Mehrauli. Minor pillar edicts have been found at Sanchi, Sarnath, Rummindei, Nigalisagar.

1. Pillar Edict I: Asoka's principle of protection to people
2. Pillar Edict II: Defines dhamma as minimum of sins, many virtues, compassion, liberality, truthfulness and purity
3. Pillar Edict III: Abolishes sins of harshness, cruelty, anger, pride etc
4. Pillar Edict IV: Deals with duties of Rajukas
5. Pillar Edict V: List of animals and birds which should not be killed on some days and another list of animals which have not to be killed at all occasions. Describes release of 25 prisoners by Asoka.
6. Pillar Edict VI: Dhamma Policy
7. Pillar Edict VII: Works done by Asoka for Dhamma Policy. He says that all sects desire both self control and purity of mind.

## **Other Pillar Inscription**



1. Rummindei Pillar Inscription: Asoka's visit to Lumbini & exemption of Lumbini from tax. 2. Nigalisagar Pillar Inscription: It was originally located at Kapilvastu. It mentions that Asoka increased the height of stupa of Buddha Konakamana to its double size.

## Mauryasa Administration

### Polity and Administration

- The king was the head of the state. The king used to issue ordinances known as '*Sasana*.' He possessed the judicial, the legislative, and the executive powers.
- *Sasanas* are available in the form of 'Edicts of Ashoka'.
- The Mauryas king had to follow the law of the country given by law givers and had to govern according to the customs of the land. He could not do whatever he liked.
- The king was assisted in administration by '*Mantriparishad*,' which was a Council of Ministers.
- *Adhyakshas* (superintendent) were officers who performed a special task.
- Kautilya mentioned a large number of *Adhyakshas*, such as *Adhyakshas* of gold, store houses, commerce, agriculture, ships, cows, horses, elephants, chariots, infantry, passports etc.
- *Yukta* was the officer in-charge of the revenues of the king.
- *Rajjukas* were the officers for land measurement and fixing their boundaries. They were also given power to punish the guilty and set free the innocents.
- The Mauryan Empire was divided into provinces. *Pradeshikas* was another officer of the Mauryan administration. He was the provincial governor.
- Bindusara appointed his son Ashoka as Governor of the Avanti region and posted him at Ujjain.
- Asoka's elder brother Susima was posted at Taxila as the Governor of the northwestern provinces.
- The important provinces were directly under *Kumaras* (princes); however, the total number of provinces is not known.
- Junagarh rock inscription of Rudradaman mentions that Saurashtra (Kathiawar) was governed by Vaisya Pushyagupta at the time of Chandragupta Maurya and by Yavana-raia Tushaspa at the time of Ashoka, both were the provincial governors.
- The Mauryan kingdom was divided into different provinces, which were subdivided into the districts and each district was further divided into groups of five to ten villages.
- The village was the smallest unit of an administration.

- The *pradeshika* was the head of district administration. He used to tour the entire district every five years to inspect the administration of areas under his control. A group of officials worked in each district under him.
- *Gramika* was the head of the village. He was assisted in village administration by the "village elders".
- The villages, during this time, enjoyed substantial autonomy. Most of the disputes of the village were settled by *Gramika* with the help of village assembly.
- The Arthashastra mentions the highest salary being 48,000 *Panas* and the lowest 60 *Panas*. There was a wide range of scales in salary.

### **City Administration**

- The Arthashastra has a full chapter on the administration of cities.
- The Edicts of Ashoka also describe name of the cities such as Pataliputra, Taxila, Ujjain, Tosali, Suvarnagiri, Samapa, Isila, and Kausambi.
- Megasthenese had described the administration of Pataliputra in detail.
- Megasthenese described that Pataliputra city was administered by a city council comprising 30 members. These 30 members were divided into a board of 5 members each.
- Each of the 5 member boards had specific responsibilities towards the administration of the city. For example –
  - One such board was concerned with the industrial and artistic produce. Its duties included fixing of wages, check the adulteration etc.
  - The second board dealt with the affairs of the visitors, especially foreigners who came to Pataliputra.
  - The third board was concerned with the registration of birth and death.
  - The fourth board regulated trade and commerce, kept a vigil on the manufactured goods and sales of commodities.
  - The fifth board was responsible for the supervision of manufacturing of goods.
  - The sixth board collected taxes as per the value of sold goods.
- The tax was normally one-tenth of the sold goods.
- Officers were appointed by the 'City council' and accountable for the public welfare such as maintenance and repairs of roads, markets, hospitals, temples, educational institutions, sanitation, water supplies, harbors, etc.
- *Nagaraka* was the officer in-charge of the city.
- There were numerous departments that regulated and controlled the activities of the state.
- Kautilya mentions several important departments such as accounts, revenue, mines and minerals, chariots, customs, and taxation.

## **Society and Economic life**

- Society and Culture during the Mauryas were well classified and organized; work of every class was decided accordingly.

## **Classes of Society**

- Megasthenese mentioned that during this period, the society was comprising seven castes, namely –
  - Philosophers,
  - Farmers,
  - Soldiers,
  - Herdsmen,
  - Artisans,
  - Magistrates, and
  - Councilors
- Megasthenese, however, failed to comprehend the Indian society properly and confused among the terms *jati*, *Varna*, and the occupation.
- *Chaturvarna* system continued to govern the society.
- The urban way of life developed and the craftsmen enjoyed a high place in the society.
- Teaching continued to be the main job of the Brahmins.
- Buddhist monasteries were developed as important educational institutions. Taxila, Ujjayini, and Varanasi were famous educational centers.
- Technical education was generally provided through guilds, where pupils learnt the crafts from the early age.
- The joint family system was the norm in the domestic life.
- A married woman had her own property in the form of bride-gift (*stree-dhana*).
- The widows had given respect in the society. All *stree-dhana* (bride-gift and jewelry) belongs to her. Offences against women were severely dealt with.
- Kautilya also laid down penalties against officials, in charge of workshops and prisons who misbehaved with women.
- Megasthenese mentioned that slavery did not exist in India.

## **Economy**

- Largely, the population was agriculturists and lived in villages. The state helped people to bring new areas under cultivation by cleaning the forest. But certain types of forests were protected by law.
- A number of crops like rice, coarse grains (*kodrava*), sesame, pepper, and saffron, pulses, wheat, linseed, mustard, vegetable and fruits of various kinds and sugarcane were grown.
- The state also owned agricultural farms, cattle farms, dairy farms, etc.
- Water reservoirs and dams were built by the state for irrigation. Steps were taken to distribute and measure this water for irrigation.
- The Mauryan enforced the rules and regulations in respect of agriculture, industry, commerce, animal husbandry, etc.
- Special measures were deduced for the promotion of the economy gave great impetus to economic development during this period.
- Megasthenese mentioned about the extraordinary skill of craftsmen.
- Junagarh inscription of Rudradaman mentions that Pushyagupta (Chandragupta's governors) was responsible for building a dam on *Sudarshana* Lake near Girnar in Kathiawad.
- Skandagupta's inscription of the later period mentioned that the dam (on *Sudarshana* Lake) was repaired during his reign, almost 800 years after its construction.
- They had foreign trade with the western countries. The main items of trade were indigo, various medicinal substances, cotton, and silk. The foreign trade was carried on by the land as well as by the sea.
- Special arrangements were made for facilitation of the trade like security of trade-routes, provisions of warehouses, go-downs, and other means of transport.
- The trade was regulated by the state and the trader had to get a license to trade.
- The state also had the machinery to control and regulate the weights and measures.
- The land tax was one-fourth to one-sixth of the produce. The tax was also levied on all the manufactured goods.
- The toll tax was levied on all items, which were brought for sale in the market.
- Strabo mentions those craftsmen, herdsman, traders, and farmers, all paid taxes. Those who could not pay the tax in cash or kind were to contribute their dues in the form of labor.
- Revenue was that main subject of Arthashastra. It describes revenue at great length.
- Sources of revenue were increased from the income of mines, forests, pasture lands, trade, forts, etc.
- The income from the king's own land or estate was known as '*sita*.'

- Brahmans, children, and handicapped people were exempted from paying the taxes.
- Tax evasion was considered a very serious crime and offenders were severely punished.
- The artisans and craftsmen were given special protection by the state and offences against them were severely punished.
- The main industries during this period were textile, mining and metallurgy, ship-building, jewelry making, metal working, pot making, etc.
- The industries were organized in various guilds. *Jesthaka* was the chief of a guild.
- The guilds were powerful institutions. It gave craftsmen great support and protection.
- The guilds settled the disputes of their members. A few guilds issued their own coins.
- The Sanchi Stupa inscription mentions that one of the carved gateways was donated by the guilds of ivory workers.
- Similarly, the Nasik cave inscription mentions that two weaver's guilds gave permanent endowments for the maintenance of a temple.
- The guilds also made donations to educational institutions and learned Brahmans.

### **Art and Architecture**

- Art and architecture had developed substantially during the Mauryan period.
- The main examples of the Mauryan art and architecture are –
  - Remains of the royal palace and the city of Pataliputra;
  - Ashokan pillars and capitals;
  - Rock cut Chaitya caves in the *Barabar* and *Nagarjuni* hills;
  - Individual Mauryan sculptures and terracotta figurines; etc.
- Megasthenese had described in detail about the famous city of Pataliputra (modern Patna). He describes it as it was stretched along the river Ganga in the form of a parallelogram. It was enclosed by a wooden wall and had 64 gates.
- Excavations have brought to light remains of palaces and the wooden palisade.
- The Mauryan wooden palace survived for about 700 years.
- Fa-Hien also saw it at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.
- The palace and also the wooden palisade had been destroyed by the fire. The burnt wooden structure and ashes have been found from Kumrahar.
- Seven rock-cut caves in the *Barabar* and *Nagarjuni* hills were built during this period.
- The inscription says that after having received his training in writing, mathematics, law, and finance, Kharavela ascended the throne of Kalinga in his 24<sup>th</sup> year.

- Kharavela spent the first year in rebuilding the capital of Kalinga.
- Kharavela invaded the kingdom of Magadha in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> years of his reign.
- The inscription mentions the achievements of Kharavela only up to the 13<sup>th</sup> year of his reign.
- Mauryan Empire was the largest empire in the whole of the ancient world. It was governed by a centralized form of government.
- Kautilya's Arthashastra, Ashoka's inscriptions, and Megasthenese's accounts collectively are the important sources of the information on various aspects of administration, economy, society, and religion of the people.

### **Literary Sources**

#### **a) Kautilya's Arthashastra**

- It is a book written by Kautilya (other name of Chanakya) on polity and governance. It reveals the economic and political conditions of the Mauryan period. Kautilya was the Prime Minister of Chandragupta Maurya, founder of Mauryan dynasty.

#### **b) Mudra Rakshasa**

- The book was written by Visakha Datta in Gupta period. The book gives an account of how Chandragupta Maurya defeated Nandas with help from Chanakya besides throwing light on socio-economic conditions.

#### **c) Indica**

- Indica was authored by Megasthenese who was the ambassador of Seleucus Nikator in Chandragupta Maurya's court. It depicts administration in Mauryan Empire, 7-caste system and absence of slavery in India. Although it is lost in its original form, it has survived in the form of quotations in the text of classical Greek writers such as Plutarch, Strabo and Arrian.

#### **d) Buddhist Literature**

- Buddhist texts such as Jatakas reveal socio-economic conditions of Mauryan period while Buddhist chronicles Mahavamsa and Dipavamsa throws light on the role of Ashoka in spreading Buddhism to Sri Lanka. Divyavadam, the Tibetan Buddhist text informs us about Ashoka's efforts in spreading Buddhism.

#### **e) Puranas**

- Puranas reveals us the lists of Mauryan kings and the chronology.

### **Decline of Mauryan Empire**

- Ashoka ruled for almost 40 years and died in 232 B.C.
- Soon after Ashoka's death, the empire broke up and the decline of the Mauryan Empire set in.

- In a period of about 50 years after Ashoka's death, seven kings followed him in succession
- The empire was divided into an eastern and western part. The western part was governed by Kunala, Samprati and others.
- The eastern part with southern India was governed by six successors of Mauryan kings from Dasarath to Brihadratha. They were having their capital at Pataliputra.
- The power and prestige of the Mauryan Empire were challenged by Andhras (in the south India) and continuous attacks of Greek king in the west.
- The king Brihadratha was killed by Pushyamitra who was the commander-in-chief of the army.
- The incident of the killing of the king in full view of the public, and in the presence of his army clearly reflects that the king neither enjoyed the loyalty of his own army nor the sympathy of the people.
- This is the only recorded incident in the history of India till the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D., wherein the king was murdered and replaced.
- Pushyamitra ascended the throne, but he never declaring himself as the king rather retained the title of the *Senapati*.
- In a very dramatic way, the Mauryan Empire declined and disappeared just in 50 years after the death of Ashoka.

### **Satavahanas of Deccan**

- Before the emergence of the Satavahanas in Maharashtra and Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas dynasties were ruled southern India the region was settled by megalithic people.
- The Satavahanas, also known as '*Andhras*' (in Deccan region) covering the parts of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra was a powerful dynasty.
- The *Andhras* were ancient people and were mentioned in the *Aitareya* Brahmana also.
- The Greek writer Pliny mentions that the *Andhras* were powerful people who possessed a large number of villages and thirty towns, an army of one lakh infantry, two thousand cavalries and one thousand elephants.
- During the Mauryan age, they were part of the Mauryan Empire, but it appears that immediately after the fall of the dynasty, the Andhras declared themselves free.
- Simuka dynasty ruled from 235 B.C. to 213 B.C. and established *Simuka* dynasty.
- Simuka was succeeded by his brother Krishna.
- Satakarni-I was the third king. He made extensive conquests and performed two *Ashvamedhayajna*. The *Nanaghat* inscription described his achievements in details. He conquered western Malwa, Vidarbha, and Anupa (Narmada Valley). He is also referred to as the lord of '*Dakshinapatha*.'

- Satakarni-I's name also occurs on one of the gateways of *Sanchi* stupa because substantial donations were made by the Satavahanas for the renovation and decoration of Sanchi stupas and monasteries.
- Satakarni-II ruled for about 56 years.
- Gautamiputra Satakarni gained Malwa from the Sungas.
- Nahapana had conquered the part of Satavahana territory after Satakarni-II. A large number of coins of Nahapana has been found in Nasik area.
- The Satavahanas became powerful again during the reign of Gautamiputra Satakarni. His achievements are recorded in glowing terms in the Nasik inscription of Queen-mother, Gautami Balasri. This inscription was engraved after his death and in the nineteenth year of the reign of his son and successor Pulmavi II.
- In Nasik inscription, Gautamiputra Satakarni has been described as one who destroyed the Sakas, Yavanas, and Pahlavas. He overthrew Nahapana and restricted a large number of his silver coins. He also recovered northern Maharashtra, Konkan, Vidarbha, Saurashtra, and Malwa from the Sakas.
- Satakarni dedicated a cave in Nasik in the eighteenth year of his reign and granted some land to ascetics in the twenty-fourth year.
- Gautamiputra Satakarni is the first king bearing matronymic and this practice was followed by nearly all his successors.
- Gautamiputra was succeeded by his son Vasisthiputra Sri Pulmavi in about A.D. 130 and ruled for about twenty-four years.
- The coins and inscription of Pulmavi have been found in Andhra Pradesh. This shows that Andhra was the part of Satavahana Empire in the second century A.D. Perhaps, in order to save the Satavahana Empire from the onslaught of the Sakas, Pulmavi married the daughter of Saka ruler Rudradaman. But this Saka king defeated the next Satavahana ruler twice.
- Sri Yajna Satakarni (A.D. 165-195) was perhaps the last of the great Satavahana rulers. His inscriptions have been found in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh.
- From the distribution of his coins, it appears that he ruled over a large kingdom extending from the Bay of Bengal in the east to the Arabian Sea in the west. Thus he regained the land that the Sakas had conquered from his predecessors.
- Maritime trade and activities during his reign had been proved by the depiction of ship with a fish on his coins.
- The successors of Yajna were weak and unworthy to govern such a large empire. Hence, the Satavahana Empire collapsed especially when Abhiras seized Maharashtra and Ikshvakus and Pallavas appropriated the eastern provinces.
- There was political instability between the era of 500 years after the fall of the Mauryan Empire and before the rise of the Gupta Empire. This period is marked as the development of Dravidian languages and literature in the South India.



- The Sanskrit language and various forms of Prakrit language developed and some distinctive literature was written in these languages.
- The two great Epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, were compiled. Besides, some of the *Dharmasastra* were also composed in this period.

## Smritis

- The *Smritis* have continued to play a very important role in Hindu life as it were playing since the last two thousand years.
- The *Smritis* explained the religious duties, usage, laws, and social customs.
- The *Smritis* are the expanded version of the *Dharmasutras*, which covered the period from (about) sixth century to third century B.C.
- The *Smritis* compiled almost in the period of eight hundred years or even more.
- *Manusmriti* is the oldest among all. It was composed in about the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. Other important *Smritis* are –
  - Naradasmriti,
  - Vishnusmriti,
  - Yajnavalkyasmriti,
  - Brihaspatismriti, and
  - Katyayanasmriti.
- These *Smritis* (discussed above) are very important sources of law and social customs of the contemporary society and hence, declared to be of divine origin.
- *Mahabhasya* written by Patanjali was the most outstanding work in the field of grammar during the period of 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.
- The center of Sanskrit grammar learning shifted to the Deccan after Patanjali.
- In Deccan, the Katantra School developed in the first century A.D. Sarvavarman composed the grammar of Katantra. He was a great scholar in the court of Hala (Satavahana King)
- Katantra's grammar was short and handy to help the learning of Sanskrit in about six months.
- Hala, the King of Satavahana wrote a great poetical work, namely '*Gathasaptasati*' in Prakrit language.
- Asvaghosha was an important literary figure of this period. He was a great Buddhist philosopher. He had written many poetry, plays, etc. Important of them are –
  - Saundarananda,
  - Buddhacharita,

- Vajrasuchi, etc.
- ‘**Buddhacharita**’ was written in the form of *Mahakavya*. It is a complete life of Buddha. It has been translated into many languages of the world.
- Remains of Asvaghosha's plays have been recovered from Turfan (in central Asia).
- ‘**Svapnavasavadatta**’ was written by Bhasa. It is famous Sanskrit play of the period.
- The art of dance and drama had already been codified by Panini's time and mentioned by Kautilya and Patanjali.
- Natyashastra was written by Bharata in the same period.
- ‘**Milindapanho**’ was written in Pali language. It explains the Buddhist doctrines in the form of a dialogue between Milinda and his teacher (the great Buddhist philosopher Nagasena). Milinda is generally identified with the Indo-Greek king Menander.

### **Social Classes**

- *Varna* and *Ashrama* systems continued to govern the society.
- The society consisted of four *Varnas*, namely –
  - Brahman,
  - Kshatriya,
  - Vaishya, and
  - Sudra.
- *Dharmasastras* described the duties, status, and occupations of all the four *Varnas*.
- Over a period of time, there was great increase in the number of mixed *Jatis* (castes).
- *Manusmriti* defines the origin of the numerous mixed (*sankara*) *Varnas*.
- **Anuloma** was the marriage between the male of higher *Varna* and the female of lower *Varna*.
- **Pratiloma** was the marriage between the male of lower *Varna* and the female of higher *Varna*.
- The social status of a person born of *Anuloma* was higher than *Pratiloma* and they followed their father's occupation.
- According to the Buddhist texts, mixed castes resulted from organizations like guilds of people following different arts and crafts.
- The Buddhist texts described that a Kshatriya working successively as a potter, basket-maker, reed-worker, garland-maker, and cook. *Setthi* (Vaisya) working as a tailor and a potter without loss of prestige in both cases.
- Kshatriyas of the Sakya and Koliya clans cultivated their fields.

- The *Vasettha Sutta* refers to Brahmans working as cultivators, craftsmen, messengers, and landlords.
- The *Jatakas* mentioned that Brahman pursuing tillage, tending cattle, trade, hunting, carpentry, weaving, policing of caravans, archery, driving of carriages, and even snake charming.
- *Jatakas* story tells that a Brahman peasant as a supremely pious man and even a Bodhisattva.
- The gradual absorption of foreigners like Indo-Greek, Sakas, Yavanas, Kushanas, and Parthians into the Indian society was the most important development of this period.
- The life of an individual man was divided into four stages. The stages are called as *Ashramas*.

### Stages of Life

- The four stages of an individual life as mentioned in *Dharmasutras* are –
  - ***Brahmacharya*** – in this *ashrama*, a person lives a celibate life as a student at the home of his teacher.
  - ***Grihastha*** – after learning the Vedas, a student returns back to his home, gets married, and becomes a *Grihastha* (householder). *Grihastha* has manifold duties broadly marked out as (i) *yajna* (ii) *adhyayana* (iii) *dana*
  - ***Vanaprastha*** – In the middle age, after seeing his grandchildren; he leaves home for the forest to become a hermit.
  - ***Sanyas*** – *Sanyas ashrama* is the time meditation and penance; one frees his soul from material things. He leaves hermitage and becomes a homeless wanderer and thus, earthly ties have been broken.

### Family Life

- The joint family system was the main characteristics of the society.
- The family was considered as the unit of the social system and not the individual.
- Obedience to parents and elders was held as the highest duty for the children.
- Marriage between the same *Jatis* was also preferred though intermarriage between different *Jatis* was prevalent.
- The marriage in the same ‘*gotra*’ and ‘*pravara*’ is restricted.
- *Dharmasastras* explained eight forms of marriage, namely –
  - Brahma Vivah,
  - Daiva Vivah,
  - Arsha Vivah,

- Prajapatya Vivah,
- Asura Vivah,
- Gandharva Vivah,
- Rakshasa Vivah, and
- Paisacha Vivah.
- Among all these eight (as discussed above), *Paisacha Vivah* is condemned by all the *Dharmasatras*.
- Ideal marriage is one in which the father and guardian of the girls selected the bridegroom on an account of his qualifications.
- The women hold an honorable position in the society and household.
- Two classes of women students are mentioned as –
  - *Brahmavadin* or lifelong students of sacred texts and
  - *Sadyodvaha* who pursued their studies till their marriage.
- Women not only attained good education, but also received training in fine arts like music, dancing, and painting.
- *Dharmasastras* described that in the family property, all the sons had equal share, but a large number of *Dharmasastras* rejected the right of women to inherit.
- *Yajnavalkya* lays down a list of priority in inheritance, which places the sequences as son, wife, and daughter.
- The right of a wife to inherit if no sons were living, has been accepted by most of the ancient Indian authorities.
- Women were allowed to have some personal property known as *Stree-dhana* in the form of jewelry, clothing, etc.
- The *Arthashastra* mentioned that a woman can own money up to 2,000 silver *panas* and amount above this could be held by her husband in trust on her behalf.

### **Economic**

- Major economic system of Satavahana and other contemporary dynasties was well organized and systematic.
- There was all round development in the field of agriculture, industry, and trade during this period.
- Agriculture was the main occupation of a large section of the people.
- The land was held by the individuals as well as by the state.
- The *gramakshetra* was protected area by fences and field-watchmen against pests like birds and beasts.

- Usually, the land holdings were small enough that could be cultivated by the individual family. But sometimes, the land holdings were big enough consisting of up to 1,000 acres.
- The land outside the village is called arable land.
- Beyond the arable land of the village lay its pastures, which were common for the grazing of cattle. The arid land also belonged to the state.
- The forest was located on the boundary of the village.
- Kautilya gives a complete scheme of village plan.

### **Land Classification**

- According to Kautilya, the land of the village was divided into –
  - Cultivated land,
  - Uncultivated land,
  - Grove,
  - Forest,
  - Pastures, etc.
- The main crops were rice of different varieties, coarse grains, sesame, saffron, pulses, wheat, linseed, sugarcane, and mustard. Besides, a large number of vegetables and fruits were also grown.
- Every village had artisans like carpenter, potter, blacksmith, barber, rope maker, washer man, etc.

### **Major Guilds**

- Eighteen types of ‘guilds’ were mentioned in the literature.
- Guilds became an important institution in the economy.
- The guilds implemented and defined rules of work and controlled the quality of the finished product and its prices to safeguard both the artisans and the customers.
- The disputes of the guild members were resolved through a guild court.
- Guilds also acted as a banker, financier, and a trustee. Such functions were carried out by a different category of merchants known as ‘*Sresthies*’ in north India and ‘*Chettis*’ in south India.
- Loans were given on security of gold and other things.
- Money was lent for interest on promising rates to be renewed every year.
- Nasik cave inscription mentioned that the interest rates on money deposited to guilds. The common rate of interest was between 12% and 15% per annum

- Both internal and external trade was practiced in most of the parts of India since Mauryan period.
- All the internal cities and ports were interconnected with a well-knit road system.
- A large number of modern national highways were developed during this period including Grand Trunk road. The same road was further maintained and developed by Sher Shah Suri.
- The discovery of monsoon winds in the first century facilitated foreign trade with Egypt as it reduced the distance between the western ports of India to the ports of Alexandria in Egypt. Now the whole distance could be covered in forty days.
- India's trade with Rome also increased enormously by sea as well as by land route, which is generally known as the silk route.
- The account of the author of Periplus of Erythraean Sea and Roman historians like Pliny and Ptolemy mentioned about the trading commodities.
- Indian literature, both in Tamil and Sanskrit mentioned common items of trade were Indian spices, sandalwood, and other variety of woods, pearls, textiles of various types, sea products, metals, semi-precious stones, and animals.
- Arikamedu was an important Roman settlement and trading station. It was located close to a port, which was excavated in 1945.
- Romans paid for the goods mainly in gold currency.
- A number of hordes of Roman coins found in the Deccan and south India indicates the volume of this trade (which was in favor of India).
- Pliny, Roman historian mentioned that Indian trade was a serious drain on the wealth of Rome.

### **Art and Architecture**

- Taxila, Sakala, Bhita, Kausambi, Ahichchhatra, Patliputra, Nagrujankonda, Amaravati, Kaveripattanam were well planned and developed cities, protected by fortification walls and moats.
- Buddhism stupas at Sanchi, Amaravati, Bharhut, and Sarnath are the best examples of art and architecture that flourished during this period.
- Stupa is a hemispherical dome or mound built over sacred relics either of the Buddha himself or of a sanctified monk or a sacred text. Buddha relics were kept in a casket in a smaller chamber in the center of the base of the stupa.
- The stupa has a fenced path around called '*Pradakshinapatha.*'
- The four gateways of Sanchi stupa built in the first century B.C. are extremely artistic and are one of the finest examples of art and architecture of India.
- One of these gateways was donated by the Guild of ivory workers of Vidisa.

- Rock-cut caves are another form of marvel architecture of this period. These rock-cut caves are of two types, namely –
  - A stupa and worshipping hall called as ‘*Chaitya*’ and
  - Monastery called as ‘*Vihara*.’

## **Sculpture**

- Bharhut, Sanchi, Bodh Gaya, Mathura, Amaravati, Gandhara were the important centers of art activities during post Mauryan period.
- The Mathura and Gandhara schools flourished during the Kushana period.
- The Mathura school produced many fine specimens of sculptures that included the images of Brahmanical, Jain and Buddhist deities and the life size sculptures of *Yakshas*, *Yakshini*, and portraits of the kings. This form of art is popularly known as ‘*Gandhara School of Art*,’ which portrays the Buddhist themes.
- Stucco was a popular medium in Gandhara art. Furthermore, the monasteries of Afghanistan were decorated with an abundance of stucco images.
- Gandhara artists created the images of Buddha in different postures and sizes. The large statues of *Bamiyan* Buddha were one of the finest examples of the Gandhara art of having produced the first image of Terracotta.
- The most productive centers of art production were Ahichchhatra, Mathura, Kausambi, Bhita, Rajghat, Pataliputra, Tamralipti, Mahasthan, etc.

## **Science and Technology**

- Engineering skills were evident in this period as proved by the remains of famous dam built for the irrigation works during Chandragupta Maurya's period and repaired by Saka king Rudradaman.
- Another remarkable structure is a complex of four water tanks at Shringaverapura, which reflects a very advanced level of hydraulic engineering.
- In Shringaverapura structures, tanks were built of millions of bricks and water was brought from the river Ganga through a canal measuring about 250 mts in length and 38 mts in width. It had the capacity of about eighty lakh litres of water.
- Indian astronomers had developed an elaborated astronomical system after modifying and adopting more accurate values by counting the periods of revolution of the sun, the moon, the five planets, and the two nodes, namely Rahu and Ketu.
- Eclipses were also predicted with accuracy.
- *Pancha Siddhantika* written by Varahamihira, gives the summary of five schools of astronomy present in his time.

## **Medicinal System**

- The Indian medicinal system was based on the theory of three humors - air, bile, and phlegm – the correct balance of these maintains a healthy body.
- The medicinal system made remarkable progress during this period.
- The surgical equipment commonly consisted of twenty-five types of knives and needles, thirty probes, twenty-six articles of dressing, etc.
- *Athaavnaaveda* is the source of Ayurveda branch of medicine.
- Medicine became a regular subject of study at higher centers of learning like Taxila and Varanasi.
- Varanasi was specialized in surgery.
- *Sushruta Samhita* is an encyclopedia of surgery. It was compiled by the great surgeon Sushruta at Varanasi.
- *Charaka Samhita* was compiled by **Charaka** at Taxila; it contains mainly the teachings of Atreya, which were collected by his pupils.
- Charaka and Sushruta were the contemporaries of Kushana king Kanishka. The great works of Charaka and Sushruta reached as far as Manchuria, China, and Central Asia through translations in various languages.
- Theophrastus gives details of the medicinal use of various plants and herbs from India in his book 'History of Plants.'
- This shows that the knowledge of Indian herbs and medicinal plants had reached the western world through Greeks and Romans.
- Arabic translation of Charaka and Sushruta Samhitas in the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. influenced the Europeans and west Asian medicinal system during the middle age.
- The large number of gold and silver coins-shows the purity of metal and craftsmanship of the period.

## **Kushanas**

### **Kanishka**

- Kanishka was a Kushan of probable Yuezhi ethnicity. His native language is unknown. The Rabatak inscription uses a Greek script, to write a language described as *Arya* – most likely a form of Bactrian native to Ariana, which was an Eastern Iranian language of the Middle Iranian period. However, this was likely adopted by the Kushans to facilitate communication with local subjects. It is not certain, what language the Kushan elite spoke among themselves.
- Kanishka was the successor of Vima Kadphises, as demonstrated by an impressive genealogy of the Kushan kings, known as the Rabatak inscription. The connection of Kanishka with other Kushan rulers is described in the Rabatak inscription as Kanishka makes the list of the kings who ruled up to his time: Kujula Kadphises as his great-grandfather, Vima Taktu as his grandfather, Vima Kadphises as his father, and himself



Kanishka: "for King Kujula Kadphises (his) great grandfather, and for King Vima Taktu (his) grandfather, and for King Vima Kadphises (his) father, and \*also for himself, King Kanishka".

### **Kanishka:**

- Kanishka started his rule in 78 A.D. or later or earlier.
  - Cunningham was the first writer to sponsor the theory that Kanishka's era started from 58 B.C. which came to be known afterwards as Vikrama Samvat: Cunningham, however, gave up this theory later on, but Fleet and after him Kennedy held this view with all earnestness. As a corollary of the above contention it follows that Kanishka group of kings preceded Kadphises group of kings.
- But on a careful analysis of the archaeological and numismatic evidences scholars have come to the conclusion that there can be no doubt that the Kanishka group of kings did not precede but followed the Kadphises group of kings.
- Marshall, Sten Konow and others who are of the opinion that Kanishka ruled in the first quarter of the second century A.D. is- directly against the evidence of Junagarh inscription of Rudradamana. Dr. Raichaudhuri draws our attention to the fact that it is clearly mentioned in the Junagarh inscription that Rudradamana held sway over the lower Sindhu region in the first half of the second century A.D.
- It has been contended by some scholars that if the era was founded by Kanishka why should it have been named Saka era and not Kushana era, after all the Kushanas were not Sakas. But it may be pointed out that the close association of the Yue-chi people of which the Kushanas were a branch, with the Saka-Pahlava made them a composite people with a composite culture in which the contributions of the Sakas was quite large.
- Further, the Kushanas were not Greeks but some of Kanishka's coins bore Greek legend on them. It is therefore no conclusive argument to say that since the era was called Saka era Kanishka could not be its founder. Likewise the contention that the Saka era was not followed in northern India although Kanishka was a ruler of the north is untenable.
- Thus after an analysis of evidences, literary, numismatic as well as epigraphic, the balance of arguments remains in favour of placing the Kanishka group of kings after the Kadphises group of kings and fixing 78 A.D. as the starting point of Kanishka's rule, and also the beginning of the era known as Saka era or Sakavda.

### ***His Conquests: Extent of His Empire:***

- Kanishka was alone among the Kushana kings who has left a name cherished by tradition and famous in India as well beyond her limits.

- At the time of accession to the throne Kanishka's empire comprised Afghanistan, large part of Sindhu, portions of Parthia and the Punjab. He appears to have not forgotten to avenge the defeat of his predecessor Kadphises at the hands of the Chinese general Pan-chao. He also played the part of a conqueror in the early years of his reign. Dr. Smith credits him with the conquest and annexation of the Kashmir Valley. He certainly showed, remarks Smith, a marked preference for that delightful country.
- Here he erected numerous monuments and founded a town, which although now reduced to a petty village, still bears his honoured name. We have, however, no details about the war with the king of Kashmir. Rajatarangini refers to three kings Hushka, Jushka and Kanishka who are described as descendants of Turuksha ruler and were given to acts of piety and built monasteries, Chaityas and similar other structures.
- According to tradition Kanishka penetrated into the interior of India and attacked Pataliputra, the capital of Magadha. It is said that he carried away Asvaghosh, a Buddhist tradition, after the capture of Pataliputra and Buddhist Philosopher Asvaghosa fell into the hands of Kanishka who took the saga with him. Asvaghosa was indeed one of the luminaries that graced the court of Kanishka. We may, therefore, conclude that at least a part of Magadha including Pataliputra was conquered by Kanishka.
- Kanishka seems to have waged war against the western Satraps of Ujjaini. Numismatic evidence proves the inclusion of Malwa in his empire. Sylvan Levi, D. C. Sircar and Rapson suggest that the western Satrap Nahapana who ruled over Kathiawar, Malwa and Sourashtra had been a vassal of Kanishka. Some scholars hold that it was Chastana who was defeated by Kanishka and was compelled to hand over a part of Malwa to him.
- According to Dr. Smith, Kanishka also waged war against the Parthians. Kanishka also conquered Kashgarh, Khotan and Yarkhand. He is credited with defeating the Chinese and thereby avenging the defeat of his predecessor Kadphises II at the hands of the Chinese general Pan-chao and compelled the Chinese to surrender hostages to him.
- From the Chinese source as also from Buddhist traditions we come to know Kanishka conquered Kajangal in the Rajmahal hills in Bengal, some parts of Malda, Murshidabad, Bogra, Midnapur, etc. But in absence of any other evidences to support the indirect evidence furnished by the find spots of the coins of Kanishka it is difficult to come to any definite conclusion with regard to the inclusion of Bengal in Kanishka's empire.
- Kanishka's empire comprised vast tracts of land extending from Afghanistan, and Khotan, Yarkhand, Kashgarh, etc. in Central Asia to Benares, and perhaps to parts of Bengal. His empire included Gandhara, Peshawar, Oudh, Pataliputra, and Mathura. Inclusion of Kashmir is borne out by both the Chinese and Buddhist evidences. The western Satrapies seem to have been under his suzerainty.
- According to Hiuen Tsang Kanishka Raja of Gandhara in old days having subdued all the neighbouring provinces and brought into obedience the people of distant countries,

governed by his army a wide territory even to the east of the Tsung-ling Mountains. All this proves that Kanishka's sway extended beyond the borders of India.

- The Buddhist tradition and Kanishka's own inscriptions are ample testimony to the vast expanse of his dominions within India. Selection of Purushapura, i.e. Peshawar, proves that Kanishka's imperial possessions spread far towards the west and north.

#### ***Administration:***

- Kanishka was a mighty conqueror, but no less was his ability as an administrator and he was even mightier in peaceful pursuits and in his solicitousness of the welfare of the people. For an effective and efficient rule of the empire he resorted to the system of Satrapies and appointed Mahakshatrapa Kharapallana and Kshatrapa Vanaspara in the eastern part of the empire.
- The northern part was ruled by General Lala as Mahakshatrapa with Vaspati and Laika as Kshatrapas. The seat of the Central Government was at Purushapura or Peshawar. This practice of rule through Great Satraps and Satraps was the continuation of the system followed by the Sakas and the Pahlavas.
- We find a conscious emulation of the methods of Asoka by the Kushana king Kanishka. He pursued the policy of propagating Buddhism both within India and outside India. It was in connection with his missionary activities that he established close relationship, religious cultural and commercial, not only with China, Tibet and Central Asia but also with Rome and influx of gold from China and Rome in particular. The prosperity of the empire attested by the fine gold coins struck by Kadphises I appear to have increased under Kanishka. The unmistakable influence of Rome on the Indian coinage of the time could be noticed.
- From the Periplus we know that gold and silver specie constituted one of the imports of Barygaza, i.e., Borach, a port on the eastern sea board of India. Swell has also mentioned to huge hoard of Roman coins of the first five Roman emperors discovered in the Madras Presidency. The very name dinara of gold coins seems to have close affinity with the Roman denarius and drama for silver coins has been adopted from the Greek drachma.
- Kanishka assumed epithet like Shaonau Shoo, as found on his coins, was an adaptation of the Parthian title Basileos Basileon. From Shaonau Shoo the letter Shaahan Sha was derived.
- ***Religion:***
- As it is customary for the Buddhist writers to depict a person wicked before conversion and turned into saint after conversion to Buddhism. Kanishka has been described by them to be devoid of the sense of right or wrong before his conversion. This view of the Buddhist writers has not been accepted by most of the scholars who think that it is an attempt on the part of the Buddhist writers to glorify Buddhism.

- Before conversion to Buddhism Kanishka was a believer in many gods, Persian, Greek, Hindu, etc. This is proved by the figures imprinted on his coins. The exact date of conversion of Kanishka is, however, not known. The conversion is supposed to have taken place after some years he had been on the throne. It is supposed that after his association with the Buddhist philosopher and Saint Asvaghosha, he must have come under his influence.
- Asvaghosha must have won the heart of Kanishka so completely that the latter gave up his allegiance to his previous gods and got converted to Buddhism. Here is a second instance of a great conqueror and emperor being converted to Buddhism and taken to the policy of peace and brotherliness in place of the policy of military conquests.
- Kanishka was a close copy of Asoka. What is specially noteworthy about Kanishka is that he was the only foreigner who became a convert to an Indian religion and turned into zealous missionary. In his missionary activities we find him to an emulator of Asoka whose footsteps he tried to follow closely.
- We renovated the old monasteries which were in a state of disrepair and built many a new one. He endowed the monasteries with liberal money grants for the maintenance of the monks who dwelt in them. Kanishka caused the construction of a number of stupas in the memory of Sakyamuni.
- He also sent missionaries for the propagation of Buddhism to China, Tibet, Japan and Central Asia. The sculptors, painters, as well as the architects of his time also became active propagandists of Buddhism. The celebrated Chaitya at Peshawar constructed under his orders excited the wonder and appreciation of travellers down to a late period and famous sculptures therein included a life-size statue of himself.
- During his time there arose disputes about Buddhism, among 18 schools of Buddhism prevalent at that time, as we know from the Tibetan historian Taranath. It became necessary to restore the disputes and to that end Kanishka convoked the Fourth Buddhist Council to which was attended by 500 monks.
- There is a controversy with regard to the venue of the Council. According to some it was held at Kundavana in Kashmir but others hold that it met at Jullundur in the Punjab. In the Council the entire Buddhist literature was thoroughly examined and commentaries on the three Pitakas were prepared, which were compiled in Mahavibhasha which is the greatest work on Buddhist Philosophy.
- This voluminous work is considered to be the encyclopaedia of Buddhism. The decisions of the Council were inscribed in copper plates and deposited in a stupa built for the purpose, packed in stone chests. Vasumitra acted as the President and Asvaghosha as the Vice-President of the Council.

### ***Buddhist Council:***

- The period of Kanishka saw the transformation of the Hinayana form of Buddhism into Mahayana form. In the Hinayana form the worship of Buddha was only by relics like footprint of Buddha, an empty seat of Buddha, that is, some sort of symbol used to be placed in front of the worshipper.
- There used to be no figure or image of Buddha to worship. This needed great concentration of mind on the part of the worshipper and the method was very subtle and could be followed by persons of great self-control, and of deepest religious bent of mind. This method of proceeding along the Path of Buddhist religion was called Hina-Yana, i.e., lesser vehicle, i.e., subtle mode of transport in the path of religion.
- But during Kanishka's time worship of the image of Buddha came into use. It became easy to concentrate by keeping as visible representation of Buddha in form. This was a greater and easier method hence called Mahayana Buddhism. In the Hinayana form of worship emphasis was laid on good action but in Mahayana system worship of Buddha and Bodhisattvas was emphasised. The use of Pali as the language of the Buddhist religious books was now replaced by Sanskrit.

### **School of Art**

#### **Gandhara School**

- The Gandhara School of Art developed in the **western frontiers of Punjab**, near modern-day Peshawar and Afghanistan.
- Gandhara School came to be known as **Greco-Indian School of Art**.
- The Gandhara School flourished in two stages in the period from 50 B.C. to 500 A.D.
- The Gandhara School of art flourished in **Kanishka reign**.
- Gandhara School images were carved with finer details (Curly hair, anatomical accuracy, spatial depth, and foreshortening) etc.
- Various Mudras of Buddha in Gandhara School of art are:
  - **Abhaya Mudra** - Don't fear
  - **Bhumisparsha Mudra** -Touching the earth
  - **Dhyana mudra** - Meditation
  - **Dharmachakra Mudra** - A preaching mudra

#### **Mathura School**

- The Mathura School flourished **on the banks of the river Yamuna** in the period between 1st and 3rd centuries B.C.
- The sculptures of the Mathura School were influenced by the stories and imageries of all three religions of the time – **Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism**.
- The Hindu Gods were represented using their avayudhas.
- The Mathura style focuses on the internal beauty and facial sentiments rather than bodily gesture.
- **Yaksha images found during the Mauryan period.**

## Amravati School

- In the **southern parts of India**, the Amravati School developed on the banks of Krishna River, under the patronage of the **Satavahana rulers**.
- Amravati sculptures have a sense of movement and energy with profound and quiet naturalism in human, animal and floral forms.
- Later, this style got transformed into Pallava and Chola architecture.
- The sculptures of this school made excessive use of the Tribhanga posture.

## Unit – V

### Gupta Dynasty

- A new dynasty, known as Gupta, emerged in north India. They made a permanent impact on Indian history by building up a large empire. They have firmly established several trends of Indian culture like the Mauryas a few centuries earlier.
- Apart from political might and strength, the Gupta kings were also known for their great achievements in the field of science, art, culture, and literature.
- The Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta mentions maharaja Srigupta and maharaja Ghatotkacha as his ancestors. But we do not know much about the early Guptas.
- I-tsing, a Chinese traveler, came to India between A.D. 671 and 695. He mentioned Srigupta as the builder of a temple at Gaya for the Chinese pilgrims about 500 years before his time.
- The king, Srigupta, has been identified as the first Gupta king mentioned in the Allahabad pillar inscription.
- Puranas also mentioned that the early Guptas controlled the area along the Ganga (the middle Gangetic basin), Prayag (Allahabad and surrounding region), Saketa (Ayodhya region), and Magadha.
- Ghatotkacha succeeded his father Srigupta. He was also referred as the Maharaja in Gupta records.

### Chandragupta-I

- Chandragupta-I succeeded his father Ghatotkacha in A.D. 320.
- Chandragupta-I was considered to have laid the foundation of the great Gupta Empire. He was married to a Lichchhavi princess Kumaradevi. The Lichchhavis were related to Gautama Buddha.
- The Lichchhavis were an old and established *Ganarajya* and quite powerful and still being respected in north India.

- The marriage alliance of Chandragupta-I was important for his political career as is proved by the coins Chandragupta I. These coins portray the figures of Chandragupta and Kumaradevi with the name of the Lichchhavis.
- In the Allahabad inscription, Samudragupta son of Chandragupta-I and Kumaradevi, proudly called himself Lichchhavis '*Dauhitra*' i.e. son of the daughter of Lichchhavis.
- The Gupta era was started with a coronation of Chandragupta-I in A.D. 320. He was the first Gupta king to adopt the title '*Maharajadhiraja*' and issued gold coins. Chandragupta-I introduced a new era called Gupta era.

### Samudragupta

- Samudragupta succeeded his father around 335 or 350 CE, and ruled until c. 375 CE.<sup>[42]</sup> The Allahabad Pillar inscription, composed by his courtier Harishena, credits him with extensive conquests. The inscription asserts that Samudragupta uprooted 8 kings of Aryavarta, the northern region, including the Nagas. It further claims that he subjugated all the kings of the forest region, which was most probably located in central India. It also credits him with defeating 12 rulers of Dakshinapatha, the southern region: the exact identification of several of these kings is debated among modern scholars, but it is clear that these kings ruled areas located on the eastern coast of India. The inscription suggests that Samudragupta advanced as far as the Pallava kingdom in the south, and defeated Vishnugopa, the Pallava regent of Kanchi. During this southern campaign, Samudragupta most probably passed through the forest tract of central India, reached the eastern coast in present-day Odisha, and then marched south along the coast of Bay of Bengal.
- The Allahabad Pillar inscription mentions that rulers of several frontier kingdoms and tribal oligarchies paid Samudragupta tributes, obeyed his orders, and performed obeisance before him. The frontier kingdoms included Samatata, Davaka, Kamarupa, Nepala, and Karttripura. The tribal oligarchies included Malavas, Arjunyanas, Yaudheyas, Madrakas, and Abhiras, among others.
- Finally, the inscription mentions that several foreign kings tried to please Samudragupta by personal attendance; offered him their daughters in marriage (or according to another interpretation, gifted him maidens); and sought the use of the Garuda-depicting Gupta seal for administering their own territories. This is an exaggeration: for example, the inscription lists the king of Simhala among these kings. It is known that from Chinese sources that the Simhala king Meghavarna sent rich presents to the Gupta king requesting his permission to build a Buddhist monastery at Bodh Gaya: Samudragupta's *pangyerist* appears to have described this act of diplomacy as an act of subservience.
- Samudragupta appears to have been Vaishnavite, as attested by his Eran inscription, and performed several Brahmanical ceremonies. The Gupta records credit him with making generous donations of cows and gold. He performed the Ashvamedha ritual (horse sacrifice), which was used by the ancient Indian kings to prove their imperial sovereignty, and issued gold coins (see Coinage below) to mark this performance.

- The Allahabad Pillar inscription presents Samudragupta as a wise king and strict administrator, who was also compassionate enough to help the poor and the helpless. It also alludes to the king's talents as a musician and a poet, and calls him the "king of poets". Such claims are corroborated by Samudragupta's gold coins, which depict him playing a veena.
- Samudragupta appears to have directly controlled a large part of the Indo-Gangetic Plain in present-day India, as well as a substantial part of central India. Besides, his empire comprised a number of monarchical and tribal tributary states of northern India, and of the south-eastern coastal region of India.

### **Ramagupta**

- Although, the narrative of the *Devichandragupta* is not supported by any contemporary epigraphical evidence, the historicity of Rama Gupta is proved by his Durjanpur inscriptions on three Jaina images, where he is mentioned as the *Maharajadhiraja*. A large number of his copper coins also have been found from the Eran-Vidisha region and classified in five distinct types, which include the *Garuda*, *Garudadhvaja*, *lion* and *border legend* types. The Brahmi legends on these coins are written in the early Gupta style. In the opinion of art historian Dr. R. A. Agarawala, D. Litt., Rama Gupta may be the eldest son of Samudragupta. He became king because of him being the eldest. It is possible that he was overthrown because he was considered unfit to rule, and his younger brother Chandragupta II took over.

### **Chandragupta II "Vikramaditya"**

- According to the Gupta records, amongst his sons, Samudragupta nominated prince Chandragupta II, born of queen Dattadevi, as his successor. Chandragupta II, *Vikramaditya* (the Sun of Power), ruled from 375 until 415. He married a Kadamba princess of Kuntala and of Naga lineage (*Nāgakulotpannnā*), Kuberanaga. His daughter Prabhavatigupta from this Naga queen was married to Rudrasena II, the Vakataka ruler of Deccan. His son Kumaragupta I was married to a Kadamba princess of the Karnataka region. Chandragupta II expanded his realm westwards, defeating the Saka Western Kshatrapas of Malwa, Gujarat and Saurashtra in a campaign lasting until 409. His main opponent Rudrasimha III was defeated by 395, and he crushed the Bengal chiefdoms. This extended his control from coast to coast, established a second capital at Ujjain and was the high point of the empire.
- Despite the creation of the empire through war, the reign is remembered for its very influential style of Hindu art, literature, culture and science, especially during the reign of Chandragupta II. Some excellent works of Hindu art such as the panels at the Dashavatara Temple in Deogarh serve to illustrate the magnificence of Gupta art. Above all, it was the synthesis of elements that gave Gupta art its distinctive flavour. During this period, the Guptas were supportive of thriving Buddhist and Jain cultures as well, and for this reason, there is also a long history of non-Hindu Gupta period art. In particular, Gupta period Buddhist art was to be influential in most of East and Southeast Asia. Many advances were recorded by the Chinese scholar and traveller Faxian in his diary and published afterwards.



- The court of Chandragupta was made even more illustrious by the fact that it was graced by the *Navaratna* (Nine Jewels), a group of nine who excelled in the literary arts. Amongst these men was Kālidāsa, whose works dwarfed the works of many other literary geniuses, not only in his own age but in the years to come. Kalidasa was mainly known for his subtle exploitation of the *shringara* (romantic) element in his verse.

### ***Chandragupta II's Campaigns against Foreign Tribes***

- The 4th century Sanskrit poet Kalidasa credits Chandragupta Vikramaditya with conquering about twenty-one kingdoms, both in and outside India. After finishing his campaign in East and West India, Vikramaditya (Chandragupta II) proceeded northwards, subjugated the Parasikas, then the Hunas and the Kambojas tribes located in the west and east Oxus valleys respectively. Thereafter, the king proceeded into the Himalaya mountains to reduce the mountain tribes of the Kinnaras, Kiratas, as well as India proper.
- The *Brihatkathamanjari* of the Kashmiri writer Kshemendra states, King Vikramaditya (Chandragupta II) had "unburdened the sacred earth of the Barbarians like the Sakas, Mlecchas, Kambojas, Yavanas, Tusharas, Parasikas, Hunas, and others, by annihilating these sinful Mlecchas completely".

### ***Fahian***

- Faxian (or Fa Hsien etc.), a Chinese Buddhist, was one of the pilgrims who visited India during the reign of the Gupta emperor Chandragupta II. He started his journey from China in 399 and reached India in 405. During his stay in India up to 411, he went on a pilgrimage to Mathura, Kannauj, Kapilavastu, Kushinagar, Vaishali, Pataliputra, Kashi, and Rajagriha, and made careful observations about the empire's conditions. Faxian was pleased with the mildness of administration. The Penal Code was mild and offences were punished by fines only. From his accounts, the Gupta Empire was a prosperous period. And until the Rome–China trade axis was broken with the fall of the Han dynasty, the Guptas did indeed prosper. His writings form one of the most important sources for the history of this period.

### **Decline of Guptas**

- The Gupta dynasty continued to be in existence for more than 100 years after the death of Skandagupta in A.D. 467.
- Skandagupta was succeeded by his brother Purugupta. Nothing is known about his achievements.
- **Budhagupta** was the only Gupta ruler who continued to rule over a large part of the empire.
- Budhagupta inscriptions have been found from Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh.
- Huna's leader, Toramana attacked Gupta Empire in A.D. 512. He conquered a large part of north India up to Gwalior and Malwa.
- Toramana was succeeded by his son Mihirakula. He founded his capital at Sakala (Sialkot).

- Huna ruled in India for a very short period, but the Gupta Empire suffered much from it.
- Huna rule was one of the shortest instances of foreign rule over India.
- Hiuen-Tsang describes that Mihirkula invaded Magadha. He was defeated and captured by the Gupta king Baladitya. It is also mentioned that Mihirkula's life was saved at the intervention of the queen mother of Magadha.
- Inscription from Malwa mentioned that Yasovarman was a powerful local ruler of Malwa. He also defeated Mihirakula (Huna Ruler).

### **The Administration, Culture and Civilization of the Gupta Age:**

- The age of Guptas has been regarded as the age of all-round progress in India by all historians. Of course, Dr Romila Thapar is near the mark when she contends that when we accept the Gupta period as the classical age of ancient India we have to accept its limitations also. She says that the living standards, which reached their peak, were limited to upper classes alone and, further the classicism of the Gupta period was restricted to northern India alone.
- With these limitations she also agrees with others regarding the progress achieved during this period. Some scholars have described it as 'Augustan Age', some others have compared it with the Periclean age of Greece, and some others define it as the 'Classical Age' and the majority of them agree with the view that it was the 'Golden Age' of ancient India.
- Barnett says, "Gupta period is in the annals of classical India, almost what Periclean age is in the history of Greece." Dr V.A. Smith also writes, "The age of great Gupta kings presented a more agreeable and satisfactory picture than any other period in the history of Hindu India. Literature, art and science flourished in a degree beyond ordinary and gradual changes in religion were affected without persecution."
- The empire of the Guptas was certainly less extensive than the empire of the Mauryas prior to them but it was more extensive than the empire of Harsha or the Gurjara-Pratiharas after them.
- One after another, the great Gupta rulers provided political unity to a large part of north India for nearly two centuries, administered it well and helped in the creation of those circumstances which led to the growth of Sanskrit language and literature, agriculture, trade and commerce - both external and internal, science, fine arts and revival of Hinduism which made their period the most glorious period of ancient India and gave it the title of 'Golden Age'.

### ***Administration:***

#### **The Central Government:**

- The king was the head of the state as well as that of administration. The royal power and prestige had increased and emphasis was laid on the divine powers of the king. In

contemporary literature, the king has been described as the incarnation of Dharma or that of god Vishnu on earth.

- The Gupta rulers assumed the titles such as Maharajadhiraja, Parambhattaraka, etc. Harisena described Samudra Gupta as a 'god dwelling on the earth'. Certainly, the establishment of a vast empire had helped in increasing the powers of the rulers and divinity was assigned to the kings. Yet the kings could not afford to be selfish despots. They had to rule according to Rajya Dharma and with the help of their ministers.
- The political treatise titled Sukra Niti stated: "The ruler has been made by 'Brahma' a servant of the people getting his revenue as remuneration." It also described that "the king should take the side not of his officers, but of his subjects and should dismiss the officer who is accused by hundred men." Thus, the powers of the king were limited in practice.
- Primarily, these were limited by the advice of his ministers and the concept of public welfare. Therefore, a king could not afford to rule as he liked because, thereby, he could forgo his moral right to rule. The princes and the successors to the throne were given proper education and they shared the responsibility of administration in different fields. The royal ladies too could participate in administration. Probably, Kumaradevi participated in administration during the rule of her husband Chandra Gupta I.
- The king was assisted by Amatyas and ministers in administration. The Kamandaka-Niti-Shastra made clear distinction between Amatyas and ministers. Amatyas were simply important executive officers and, in no case, were advisers to the king while ministers who were heads of their respective departments were also advisers to the king in administration.
- The Katyayana-Smriti emphasized the view that only Brahmanas should be appointed Amatyas. But the Gupta rulers had not observed it. They appointed Amatyas from other castes as well. Sometimes an individual was assigned several executive posts.
- Besides, in certain cases, the posts had become hereditary as well, viz., a post remained in the hands of members of a single family for several generations. The Gupta rulers paid cash salaries to their officers. However, some scholars have expressed the view that the practice of assigning land in place of salary- too had made a beginning during the Gupta-age.
- Mostly the ministers looked after the administration of different departments under their respective charge and did not act on the principle of joint responsibility but important matters were decided at a joint meeting. The ministers were appointed by the king on merit and one of their important qualifications was their capability to lead the army. In practice, the king respected the advice given by his ministers.
- The Gupta emperors did not create any new administrative structure. They continued the traditional bureaucratic administration though it was organised more elaborately. Dr U.N.

Ghoshal writes, “The imperial Guptas continued the traditional machinery of bureaucratic administration with nomenclature mostly borrowed or adopted from earlier times.”

- Amongst the highest officials of the central government were the Maha-mantri, the Maha-baladhikrita, the Maha-dandanayaka, the Maha-pratihara, the Sandhi-Vigrahika and a class of officers called Kumaramatyas who could be appointed to look after district administration as well.
- The last two types of officers were introduced by the Guptas. The Maha-baladhikrita (commander-in-chief) was supported by Maha-asvapati (Commander of the Cavalry) Bhatti-asvapati, Maha-pilupati (commander of the elephant-force), Senapati, Baladhikrita, etc. The same way Maha-dandanayaka (Chief justice) had subordinate Dandanayakas and Maha-pratihara had subordinate pratiharas. Another class of officers were called Ayuktas.
- The primary source of the income of the state was land-revenue. The total taxes, probably, numbered 18. The important items of expenditure were the army, the expenditure of king's palace and public welfare works.
- Mostly the government servants were paid in cash. Proper attention was given to the dispensation of justice. Mostly fines were imposed on law-breakers and corporal punishment was given only in extreme cases of repeated offences. In general, the punishments were light.
- The duties of the state were all-embracing. Its duties included not only to protect the frontiers, to maintain law and order and to help in the material progress of its subjects but also to help them in their moral and spiritual progress. However, the one novelty of the administration of the Guptas was its decentralisation.
- The district officers and guilds of the traders and financiers enjoyed wide autonomy in their respective spheres. The village assemblies also enjoyed wide powers regarding the village administration. Dr A.S. Altekar has remarked, “Government, moreover was remarkably decentralised and most of its functions were transferred to district administration.”
- The infantry, the cavalry and war elephants constituted the primary parts of the army of the Guptas which was well-organised and proved an effective force. Dr. D.N. Jha has opined that the Guptas did not maintain a centralised army like the Mauryas and mostly depended on their nobles and dependent rulers for this purpose, each of whom contributed his share towards it when necessary. According to him, the Guptas even did not keep monopoly over the war-elephants and the cavalry.
- Even if we accept the view of Dr Jha, yet, it has to be accepted that the Gupta rulers, certainly, maintained a powerful army. Had it not been the case, the Guptas could not succeed in creating an extensive empire and also defend it from the invasions of the

Hunas. The police duties were, probably, looked after by the Dandanayakas. The Gupta rulers also kept an efficient spy- system.

- Several modern scholars have pointed out that one important feature of the administration of the Guptas was encouragement to feudalism. The Mahabharata and the Puranas described and upheld the view that donation of land to the Brahmanas was a pious duty and religious responsibility of rulers. The Puranas were given final shape during the Gupta-age and therefore, the Gupta rulers accepted their view and started donating land to Purohits.
- This donation of land combined two precepts. One, that whosoever was donated land received the income from that land and, second, that he was responsible for administering that land, viz., maintenance of peace and security, observation of laws of the state etc. In the fifth century, the practice of donating lands by rulers to Purohits increased. In the sixth century, rulers started distributing lands to their officers as well in place of giving them salaries.
- Besides, in the fifth century, the state had kept certain administrative rights in its own hand concerning donated lands, e.g., punishing thieves, deciding property disputes, etc. In the sixth century, even these rights were handed over to the owners of donated lands. Thus, finally, the owners of donated lands, whether Purohits or officials, got all administrative rights over lands donated to them and also over inhabitants of those lands.
- People enjoying such rights were called feudal lords and the system which gave them this privilege was called the feudal-system. However, one thing has to be kept in mind. The Guptas were not the first to begin this system in India. The Satavahanas had already started it in the South.

## **II. The Provincial Administration:**

- The Gupta rulers maintained the traditional system of managing the provinces. However, there was one novelty. They made use of the representative system at the various stages of administration.
- The empire was divided into provinces called Bhuktis or Desas. The head of the administration of a Bhukti was called Uparika while that of a Desa was called Goyatri. They were appointed by the emperor. When princes of royal blood were appointed to these posts they were called Maha-Rajaputra or Devabhattacharya. The provincial governors enjoyed wide, independent powers. They appointed subordinate officers in their provinces and could work independently in matters concerning public welfare.
- The provinces were divided and sub-divided into Vishayas, Mandals and Bliogas respectively. The smallest unit of the administration was Grama (village). The Vishayas were administered by Vishayapati with the help of subordinate officers called Kumaramatyas and Ayuktas.

- Mostly, these subordinate officers were appointed by provincial governors but sometimes they were appointed by the central government. The district officers were helped by junior officers called Dandikas, Dandapasikas, Kulikas, etc. The important officers of the village were Gramikas and Bhojakas.
- The representative system was assigned an important place in the administration of districts and villages. The Vishavapatis (district officers) lived in their district towns and were helped in administration by representatives of various important interests besides their subordinates.
- The representative advisers of Vishayapatis constituted a Board (Adhikarna) which included the Nagara-Sreshthin (the most wealthy man of the town or the President of the Guilds of the town), the Stharavraha (the chief merchant), the Prathama-kulika (the chief artisan) and the Prathama-Kayastha (the chief secretary).
- The same way, village panchayats (assemblies) were the representative bodies of villages and enjoyed fairly independent powers regarding the administrative and judicial functions concerning their respective villages.
- This central and provincial administration of the Guptas was confined to the territories of Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh which were under the direct rule of the Emperor. The dependent rulers were left free to administer their kingdoms as they desired.
- Among the important dependent rulers were the Maitrakas of Vallabhi, the Vardhanas of Thaneswar, the Maukharis of Kannauj, the Gaudas of Bengal and the later Guptas of Malwa and Magadh who were virtually independent in their internal administration. That was one reason why each of these dependent rulers became independent as soon as the Gupta rulers became weak.
- Yet, the administration of the Guptas was successful. Peace and prosperity of the subjects and the progress achieved by them in practically all walks of their lives was its proof. The administrative model of the Guptas was accepted by contemporary Vakataka rulers, the Kalchuries, the Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas after them.

## **SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITION UNDER THE GUPTAS**

- The Puranas, Sastras, the Niti Sastras of Narada, the Dramas of Kalidasa etc supply us with a good deal of information regarding the social life of the Gupta period. Many interesting features, about the social life are also found referred to in the contemporary inscriptions. Fahien, the famous Chinese Pilgrim has also made some observations about the society as it existed in India towards the opening of the 5th century A.D

## **DIVISION OF SOCIETY**

- During the Gupta period society was divided into four castes –brahmana, Kshatriya, vaishya and sudra. Each one of these comprised a major caste or Varna and had specific

duties assigned to them. Fa-hien's account about the plight of sudras proves the prevalence of caste system and caste prejudices in the Indian society during the Gupta period. The reference to the people of various castes in the epigraphs and literary works also point towards the existence of caste system during this period.

- The brahmanas were primarily concerned with the study and teachings of Vedas and other scriptures as also the performance of sacrifices and other religious practices. The kshatriyas came next to brahmanas in status and position in the society. Khatriyas, being the ruling class, enjoyed a very high status in the society. The kshatriyas as well as the vaishyas enjoyed with the brahmanas the status of Dvijati or twice born. The Vaisyas because of their immense wealth were also shown due regard. Sudras formed the lower rank of the cast system. They were forced to serve the other three classes. Besides the division of the society into four major castes; the contemporary inscriptions and literature bear ample testimony to the existence of sub castes. However, there were no rigid rules in respect of either inter-caste marriage or inter-dining of the professions.

## **SLAVERY**

- Although there was no institutionalized slave system in India, sources refer to slaves. There were various categories of slaves during the Gupta age. Prisoners of war were often reduced to the status of slaves. Drunkards, gamblers etc who were unable to pay off their debts to their creditors were often compelled to sell themselves as slaves. Persons doing manual works in the royal household too were termed as slaves. But the slave system under the imperial Gupta monarchs differed from the slave system in Western countries. In India, any slave could get emancipation after fulfilling certain conditions. The slaves could regain their liberty after the payment of their dues either by themselves or their relatives and friends. It is evident from the contemporary records that even prisoners of war could be free if they could provide a substitute for themselves. A slave who saved the life of his master did not only become free but also become entitled to a equal son's share of his master's property.

## **The position of women**

- In Hindu society has been different from age to age. In the Vedic age she enjoyed honour and respect in society. In the Gupta age, the Puranas did their best to improve the lot of the women in some respect of life, but not much could be done due to some prejudice against women. According to Manavadharmasastra women should be under the protection of their father, husbands or eldest son as the society was distinctly patriarchal. Yet, woman like Prabhavati Gupta, the daughter of Chandra Gupta II was regent in the Vakataka kingdom, following the death of her husband.
- Many writers have stated the usual 8 forms of marriage for a woman. There are Brahma, Daiva, Arsha, Prajapatya, Asura, Gandharva, Rakshasa and Paisacha. The first four forms are approved, as they involve parental consent although in the Daiva and Arsa forms a bride price is demanded. The last four forms are not prescribed although the Asura and Gandhara forms – marriage by abduction of the bride, sometimes with her consent and marriage by mutual consent, without the necessity of parental approval, respectively.
- The practice of sati was in vogue during the Gupta rule. Vatsayana and Kalidasa refer to it. Some instances of Sati are found in the time of the Gupta period. From the Mandasor

stone inscription of Kumara Gupta we come to know that practice of sati was prevalent during the Gupta age.

- Polygamy was very popular during the Gupta age. The kings and feudatory lords often had more than one wife. The practice was not confined to kings, but extended also to other people. A woman suffered the misfortune of getting a co-wife if she was stupid, or barren, or she repeatedly bore daughters. Inscription refers to Kubernaga and Dhruvaswamini as the queens of Chandra Gupta II.

#### **Food:**

- According to the description of Kalidasa, the food of the people of Gupta period was both delicious and nutritious. Barley, Wheat and Rice were their staple food. The cucumber, onion, garlic, pumpkin, gourd etc. were used as vegetables.
- We have ample references to edible spices, oil-crops and medicinal herbs. Mustard seed tamarind, cardamoms, cloves, betel nut, ginger, turmeric and saffron were used for different purposes. Moreover the forests and gardens yielded a large variety of valuable fruits such as mango, orange,
- Jackfruit, pomegranate, grapes, banana, coconut etc. Sugar was manufactured from sugarcane. Various kinds of sweetmeats were prepared out of milk and sugar. Honey was another item of food, which was also used in the reception of a guest and at other festive rites.

#### **Dress:**

- Suiting all occasions and weather men and women used various kinds of dresses. Kalidasa refers to hunting dress. Man put on dhoti, turban and a scarf. They were generally made of cotton, but their wedding dresses were of silk. Women used sari and shawl. Clothes were of various colours such as white, red, blue, saffron, multi coloured and black. Both men and women of this period commonly used different kinds of jewellery, such as ornaments for head and hair, ears, neck, arm, waist, feet and fingers. A large variety of jewellery used by men and women are seen from the sculptures and the Ajanta paintings.

#### **Amusement and Sports:**

- Kalidasa has vividly described the high standard of music both in theory and practice. Music, dancing and acting were quite popular in the Gupta society. The spring festival and another popular amusement in some festivity was the sprinkling of coloured water. Dice was another popular game. Hunting was another pastime. Elephant riding were favourite outdoor sports of the kings.

#### **ECONOMIC CONDITION UNDER THE GUPTAS**

- The establishment of the political unity by the Gupta monarchs coupled with an efficient and benevolent government provided a fruitful soil for the development of trade industry and agriculture which helped to build the economic conditions of the country on a sound



footing.

- **Agriculture** was, as in the past, still the mainstay of the economic life of the majority of the people during the Gupta period. There was an increase in the demand for more and more land for cultivation purpose as is evidenced from the Bengal land grants and other sources. Since the revenue from land was still the main source of the income of the state, the Gupta monarchs took special pains to promote the interests of the cultivators and increase the produce of the soil. Attempts were made to expand agriculture. Wastelands were brought under cultivation through various means such as the digging of tanks, wells, cutting of canals ect. The establishment of a large number of irrigation works gave a further impetus to the growth of agriculture even in the dry lands. The Junagarh Rock Inscription refers to the repairing of the dam of the Sudarsan, an artificial lake, by Skanagupta's governor Parnadatta.
- The scientists of the age had laid down guide-lines for the development of agriculture along scientific lines. In this respect the Brihat Samhita of Varahamihira is especially noteworthy. Rice, barley and wheat continued to be the principal crops. Different varieties of vegetables, peas, beans and many more were also grown. Cultivation of oil-seeds was done on an extensive scale. A large number of fruit trees, Indian and foreign, were also grown.
- Inscriptions or other records of the Gupta period nowhere provide any clue to the existence of anything like the zamindari system of modern times. However, this period witnessed the inauguration of a type of feudal economy as the state gradually granted away different rights over the land to Brahmanas and temples.
- Keeping in view the importance of agriculture, the state laid down rules and regulations to protect the interests of the agriculturists. Rules were also been prescribed to safeguard the interests of agricultural labourers and land-holders **INDUSTRY**  
The economic conditions during the Gupta period were specially marked by an all round development in the field of industry and handicrafts. The richness of the country in natural resources, mineral, animal and plant produce provided enough scope for the development of a large number of handicrafts and professions. Both in the law books and epigraphs, have laid stress on the state ownership of the mines and forests and as such these were controlled and maintained by the state for all practical purposes. A special officer was appointed by the government to superintend the forests.
- Metals were most useful in everyday life of the people for agricultural implements and domestic articles, including vessels. This industry was one of the most flourishing industries during the Gupta period. The Mehrauli Iron Pillar near the Qutub Minar in old Delhi stands mute testimony to the art of metallurgy.
- The large number of articles made of gold point towards the flourishing conditions of gold industry. Gold ornaments generally satisfied the demands of richer sections of the society settled mainly in big towns and cities. Amarkosa, Brihat Samhita and the works of Kalidasa refer to diamonds, pearls, corals and precious stones which indicate the existence of small industrial units for these articles. The extensive use of copper proves the existence of copper industry. Pottery, making of utensils and articles of clay, was one of the most popular industries of the period.

- Textile industry was yet another popular industry that prospered during the period of the Imperial Gupta monarchs. Wood carving was yet another important industry because of the use of wood for building purpose along with bamboo.
- The archaeological discoveries, reference in contemporary literary works and a large number of epigraphs have all proved the existence of a flourishing trade and commerce, internal as well as external during the Gupta period. The chief articles of internal trade included all sorts of commodities of every day use. The economic prosperity of the Gupta period is exhibited in a flourishing external trade by land and water routes. Fine quality silk was imported from China.
- The economic prosperity of the country during the imperial Gupta period is amply borne out by numismatic and literary evidences. The majority of coins issued by the Gupta monarchs were minted out of pure gold. While
- Samudragupta issued eight different types of gold coins, his grandson Kumaragupta issued as many as nine varieties of gold coins. Fa-hien, the famous Chinese traveler who visited in the time of Chandra Gupta II also hints at the prosperous economic conditions of the country during the period.
- Thus the above general survey of the economic conditions during the Gupta period leaves no doubt that in the field of economic prosperity the Gupta period was indeed a golden age of Indian history.

### ***Literature and Education:***

Literature, science and fine arts progressed tremendously during the Gupta age. This is the best proof that there existed a varied and sound system of education during this period in the absence of which neither intellectualism could grow nor progress could be achieved in different fields of life. Pataliputra, Vallabhi, Ujjayini, Padmavati, Avarapur, Vatsagulma, Kashi, Mathura, Nasik, Kanchi, etc., were the centres of learning where universities were established.

The rulers and the rich people gave large donations in cash, land or material to educational institutions, though they were all autonomous in their functioning. University education was provided only to meritorious students. The admission to a university was done on the past performance of a student. Once a student was admitted to a university he was provided not only free education but also free boarding and lodging.

In the sixth century, the University of Nalanda became renowned all over Asia. The universities provided both religious and secular education to students according to their choice or capability. The existence of many universities suggests that institutions of the lower level existed in every pan of India and education was quite widespread.

The age of the Guptas has been regarded as the age of Periclean and Augustan or classical age in India. It is primarily because of its progress in the field of literature, both religious and secular. Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina scholars produced the best literature by their writings. By that time, Sanskrit language had become virtually the national language of India and so most of the works were prepared in Sanskrit.

The beautiful Sanskrit in *Kavya* style which was in the process of growth even prior to Gupta age reached its maturity by the fourth or the fifth century A.D. The Epics, the Ramayana

and the Mahabharata, received their present shape during this age. The Puranas, which were also in the process of writing earlier than the Gupta period, were completed in their present shape during the Gupta age.

Many Smritis like Narada Smriti, the Brahaspati Smriti and different Dharmashastras were also written or completed now. In the fourth century A.D. Iswarakrishna wrote the Sankhyakarika, Vyas his commentary on the Yogasutra of Patanjali and Vatsayana his Kamasutra. The Panchatantra, which has now been translated into nearly 50 languages of the world, was also recompiled during this age.

The Hitopadesa was also written. Asanga, Vasubandhu, Diganaga and Dharmapala, the vice-chancellor of the Nalanda University were the famous Buddhist scholars of this age. Asanga wrote the Yogachar-Bhumrisastra, the Mahayana-Sutralankar, the Mahayana-Sampari-graha, etc. Besides, Vasubandhu and Diganaga also wrote many texts. Amongst the Jaina scholars Siddhasena, Bhadrabhanu II and Umaswati became very famous.

All of them enriched literature by their scholarly writings. Amongst the texts written in Pali Dipavansa and Mahavansa proved very popular. Valuable literature was produced in Tamil and Prakrat languages also and many Sanskrit texts were translated into these languages.

Secular literature also made tremendous progress during this period. Amongst prominent works of this age the most notable are the Vasavadatta by Subandhu, the Ravanavadha by Bhattin, the Kiratarjuniyam by Bharavi, the Mudrarakshas and the Devi-Chandraguptam by Visakhadatta, the Mrichchhakatikam by Sudraka and the Dasakumara-charita by Dandina.

Besides, there were a host of scholars, astronomers, scientists and grammarians who produced works of durable merit. Bhartahari was a poet and philosopher, Virsasena Sava was a prominent grammarian, Amarasingh wrote the Amarakosh, and probably Vatsayana wrote the Kamasutra during this very period. The author of the Parasasti of Asoka pillar at Allahabad, Harishena, was also a reputed scholar at the court of Samudra Gupta.

However, the greatest of these scholars in Sanskrit literature was Kalidasa who wrote many scholarly works. Kalidasa has been regarded as the greatest poet and dramatist of ancient India. Probably, he was a contemporary of Chandra Gupta II. Amongst his scholarly writings the Ritusamhara, the Meghaduta, the Kumara-sambhava, the Raghuvansa, the Vikramvamsiya, the Malavikagnimitra and the A bhijnana Sakuntalam have been regarded as the best ones.

Kalidasa has been sometimes compared with the English scholar Shakespeare of England. But now the opinion has veered round to the view that he was even greater than Shakespeare as a literary man. Dr R.C. Majumdar writes of him, "Kalidasa was the most brilliant luminary in the literary firmament of the Gupta age who had shed lustre on the whole Sanskrit literature. He is, by common consent, the greatest poet and dramatist that ever lived in India and his works have enjoyed a high reputation and popularity throughout the ages."

Thus, many scholars of repute flourished during the Gupta age and them, certainly, made this age the classical age of Indian history by their scholarly contributions towards learning and

literature. Of course, Pali, Tamil and Prakrat literature also progressed but the progress of Sanskrit literature remained incomparable.

It has been commented upon by a scholar that, "in amount of cleverness per square inch no poetry surpasses the Sanskrit Kavya." It perfectly applies to the Kavya which was produced during the age of the Guptas.

### **Taxila University**

The renowned University of Taxila became the greatest learning centre in the region, and allowed for exchanges between people from various cultures.

The University was particularly renowned for science, especially medicine, and the arts, but both religious and secular subjects were taught, and even subject such as archery or astrology.<sup>[5]</sup> Students come from distant parts of India. Many Jataka of early Buddhist literature mention students attending the University.<sup>[5]</sup> It is believed that over 10,000 students from China, Babylon, Syria and Greece in addition to Indian students studied there.

The Achaemenid conquest of the Indus Valley made Taxila a part of the Achaemenid Empire. The Persian conquest probably made Taxila University a very cosmopolitan environment in which numerous cultures and ethnicities could exchange their knowledge.

The role of Taxila University as a center of knowledge continued under the Maurya Empire and Greek rule (Indo-Greeks) in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE.

The destruction of Toramana in the 5th century CE seems to have put an end to the activities of the University.

### **Charaka**

Charaka, the Indian "father of medicine" and one of the leading authorities in Ayurveda, is also said to have studied at Taxila, and practiced there.

### **Pāṇini**

The great 5th century BCE Indian grammarian Pāṇini is said to have been born in the northwest, in Shalatala near Attock, not far from Taxila, in what was then a satrapy of the Achaemenid Empire following the Achaemenid conquest of the Indus Valley, but the ethnicity in his name or the way of his life shows that he was of Indian origin.

### **Kautilya**

Kautilya (also called Chanakya), the influential Prime Minister of the founder of the Mauryan Empire, Chandragupta Maurya, is also said to have been a professor teaching in Taxila.

### **Chandragupta Maurya**

Buddhist literature states that Chandragupta Maurya, the future founder of the Mauryan Empire, though born near Patna (Bihar) in Magadha, was taken by Chanakya for his training and education to Taxila, and had him educated there in "all the sciences and arts" of the period, including military sciences. There he studied for eight years. The Greek and Hindu texts also state that Kautilya (Chanakya) was a native of the northwest Indian subcontinent, and

Chandragupta was his resident student for eight years. These accounts match Plutarch's assertion that Alexander the Great met with the young Chandragupta while campaigning in the Punjab.

## **Nalanda University**

### **History**

Nalanda University was one of the first universities in the world, founded in the 5th Century BC, and reported to have been visited by the Buddha during his lifetime. At its peak, in the 7th century AD, Nalanda held some 10,000 students and 2000 teachers when it was visited by the Chinese scholar Xuanzang.

Historical studies indicate that the University of Nalanda was established during the reign of the Gupta emperor Kumaragupta. Both Xuanzang and Prajñavarman cite him as the founder, as does a seal discovered at the site.

As historian Sukumar Dutt describes it, the history of Nalanda university “falls into two main divisions—first, one of growth, development and fruition from the sixth century to the ninth, when it was dominated by the liberal cultural traditions inherited from the Gupta age; the second, one of gradual decline and final dissolution from the ninth century to the thirteenth—a period when the tantric developments of Buddhism became most pronounced in eastern India.

### **Libraries**

The library of Nalanda, known as *Dharma Gunj* (Mountain of Truth) or *Dharmagañja* (Treasury of Truth), was the most renowned repository of Buddhist knowledge in the world at the time. Its collection was said to comprise hundreds of thousands of volumes, so extensive that it burned for months when set aflame by Muslim invaders. The library had three main buildings as high as nine stories tall, *Ratnasagara* (Sea of Jewels), *Ratnodadhi* (Ocean of Jewel)

### **Curriculum**

Courses were drawn from every field of learning, Buddhist and Hindu, sacred and secular, foreign and native. Students studied science, astronomy, medicine, and logic as diligently as they applied themselves to metaphysics, philosophy, Samkhya, Yoga-shastra, the Veda, and the scriptures of Buddhism. They studied foreign philosophy likewise.

### **Ruins**

A number of ruined structures survive. Nearby is the Surya Mandir, a Hindu temple. The known and excavated ruins extend over an area of about 150,000 square metres, although if Xuanzang's account of Nalanda's extent is correlated with present excavations, almost 90% of it remains unexcavated. Nalanda is no longer inhabited. Today the nearest habitation is a village called Bargaon.

In 1951, a modern centre for Pali (Theravadin) Buddhist studies was founded nearby by Bhikshu Jagdish Kashyap, the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara. Presently, this institute is pursuing an ambitious program of satellite imaging of the entire region.

### **Description**

Nalanda was one of the world's first residential universities, i.e., it had dormitories for students. It is also one of the most famous universities. In its heyday it accommodated over 10,000 students and 2,000 teachers. The university was considered an architectural masterpiece,

and was marked by a lofty wall and one gate. Nalanda had eight separate compounds and ten temples, along with many other meditation halls and classrooms. On the grounds were lakes and parks. The library was located in a nine storied building where meticulous copies of texts were produced. The subjects taught at Nalanda University covered every field of learning, and it attracted pupils and scholars from Korea, Japan, China, Tibet, Indonesia, Persia and Turkey. During the period of Harsha the monastery is reported to have owned 200 villages given as grants.

The Tang Dynasty Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang left detailed accounts of the university in the 7th century. Xuanzang described how the regularly laid-out towers, forest of pavilions, harmikas and temples seemed to “soar above the mists in the sky” so that from their cells the monks “might witness the birth of the winds and clouds. Xuanzang states: “An azure pool winds around the monasteries, adorned with the full-blown cups of the blue lotus; the dazzling red flowers of the lovely kanaka hang here and there, and outside groves of mango trees offer the inhabitants their dense and protective shade.

The entrance of many of the viharas in Nalanda University ruins can be seen with a bow marked floor; bow was the royal sign of Guptas’.

### **Structure of Administration**

- Set up of the governments was well organized during the Gupta period, which provided a strong base for them to hold together their extensive territories for such a long period.
- In spite of intermittent wars among them, the reigns of the Guptas survived for two hundred years; the Chalukyas lasted for four hundred years; and Pallavas lasted for about six hundred years.
- The basic (governance) functionalities of the different dynasties were almost same except some differences in their name.
- The kingdom (*Rajya*) was divided into a number of provinces and they were known as ‘*Bhukti*’ in the north and ‘*Mandala*’ or ‘*Mandalam*’ in the south.
- The provinces were sub-divided as ‘*Vishaya*’ or ‘*Bhoga*’ in the north (India) and ‘*Kottams*’ or ‘*Valanadu*’ in the south (India).
- Some other units of administration were the districts, which were called as ‘*Adhis*,’ ‘*Thana*,’ or ‘*Pattana*’ in the north (India) and ‘*Nadu*’ in the south (India).
- The group of villages (i.e. modern tehsil) was known as ‘*Vithis*’ in the north (India) and ‘*Pattala*’ and ‘*Kurram*’ in the south (India).
- The villages were the lowest administrative units.
- There was a number of central, provincial, and local officials to carry on the administration.

### **Golden age of Gupta**

- The administration under Gupta Empire was largely dependent upon the old bureaucratic form of administration; however, they organized it much systematically and elaborately.

- The governor of '*Bhukti*' was appointed by the king and known as '*Uparika*.'
- The administrative work was undertaken by a Board of Advisors, consisting of four members representing the various important sections, namely –
  - The '*Nagarsresthis*,' were the chief of the guild of traders and bankers. They represented the guilds in particular and the urban population in general.
  - The '*Sarthavaha*,' were the head of guild of traders and represented the various trading communities.
  - The '*Prathamakulika*' (the chief of artisan) represented various artisan classes.
  - The '*Prathamakayastha*' might have represented the government official like the Chief Secretary of the present day. This body was known as '*Adhistanadhikarana*.'
- Each city administration had a council body.
- The village administration was under the control of rural bodies consisting of a headman and the village elders.
- During Gupta period, there was a remarkable growth of the local self-governing institutions such as the village committees and district committees.
- Inscriptions and literature records describe the existence of local bodies since very early period. They mentioned about the nature and the activities of these local bodies and testify to the most wonderful organization that the ancient Indians evolved.
- Two New classes of officers were introduced by the Guptas, namely –
  - *Sandhivigrahika*, he was the minister of peace and war i.e. modern foreign minister
  - *Kumaramatyas*, he was a body of top ranking officials attached not only to the king, but also to the crown-prince, and sometimes placed as in charge of districts.
- *Ayuktas* were another important official, they were same as *Yuktas* mentioned in the Ashokan inscriptions and in Kautilya's Arthashastra.
- During the Gupta period, many known officials - such as *Mahapratihara*, *Mahabaladhikrita*, and *Mahadandanayaka*, etc. used their title prefixed with '*Maha*.' The powers of all these officials and officers emanated from the king.
- Gupta rulers assumed several titles such as '*Maharajadhiraja*,' '*Parambhataraka*,' '*Parmesvara*,' etc.
- In Allahabad pillar inscription, Samudragupta is described as equal to the Gods Indra, Varuna, Kuvera, and Varna and also as a 'God dwelling on the earth'. Such titles were used by the rulers of foreign origin such as the Greeks, or the Kushanas, but never by a king of an Indian origin.
- Guptas were the first who adopted high sounding titles in the history of India.

- Literature of this period mentions the ideals of popular government.
- The Smritis explain that "the ruler has been made by Brahma, a servant of the people, getting his revenue as remuneration".
- During the Gupta's period, the powers of the king were more restricted and he was advised to rule with the help of ministers and to respect the decision of guilds and corporate bodies.
- The Gupta kings are usually represented on their coins. They have been described as an excellent and unrivalled chariot warriors and horsemen.
- In the early history of India, Gupta period is considered as a landmark in the field of administration of law and justice. The legal literature, developed during this period, reflects a distinct advancement in the legal system.
- Lawmakers drew a clear line between civil and criminal law for the first time.
- The *Brihaspatismriti* enumerates eighteen titles of land and adds that fourteen of these have their origin in property (*Dhanamula*) and four in injury (*Himsamula*).
- During the Gupta period, the land became private property that could be sold for money.
- Detailed law about partition, sale, mortgage, and lease of land were mentioned in the law-books and in the inscriptions of this period.
- Kautilya's Arthashastra enumerated a bigger list of taxes than those were found in the Gupta inscriptions.
- The burden of taxation was decreased in Gupta period because of the prosperity of the state.
- Land taxes were collected both in cash and kind. It was varying from one-fourth to one-sixth of the produce.
- Special officers are mentioned in the inscriptions to kept proper records of assessment and collection of revenues, land transactions, etc.
- Gupta period was considered as the golden phase of Indian literature.
- The wonderful literature was produced in prose, poetry, drama, and grammar. It is the noticeable product of the system of education and learning.
- The *Puranas* preserved the traditions, legends, moral codes, religious, and philosophical principles. They are eighteen in number.
- The *Smritis* are metrical texts containing the rules and regulations and laws for the guidance and governance of the society.
- *Smritis* are based on *dharmasutras* and *grihyasutras* of Vedic literature. They are written in verse.
- Some additions and alterations have been done to make *Smritis* suitable to the changing conditions of society.
- The commentaries on the *Smritis* were written after the Gupta period.



- The compilation of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* was completed by the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.
- Kalidas has written the best works in poetry, drama as well as in prose. His *kavyas* such as *Meghaduta*, *Raghuvamsa*, and *Kumarasambhava*, and dramas such as *Abhijnashakuntalam* are the best literary works of this time and it is considered as the best even today. These works have been translated into many languages.
- Kalidas adorned the court of Chandragupta-II, the king of Ujjayini, who was popular as Vikramaditya.

### **Trade and commerce**

- Trade was carried on both through the land as well as the coastal routes.
- India had trade relations with both the eastern and the western countries.
- India maintained regular maritime relation with Sri Lanka, Persia, Arabia, Byzantine Empire, Africa, and even further west.
- India also developed commercial relations with China, Burma, and South East Asia.
- The important trade items were silk, spices of various kind, textiles, metals, ivory, sea produce, etc.
- Some important **sea ports** of the Gupta period were –
  - Tamralipti,
  - Arikamedu,
  - Kaveripattnam,
  - Barbaricum,
  - Muziris,
  - Pratihthana,
  - Sopara, and
  - Brighukachchha.
- All these ports (enumerated above) were well connected through inland routes from all parts of India.
- According to Fa-Hien, people of the 'Middle Kingdom' were prosperous and happy in the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and he also mentioned the similar account of prosperity and peace in India.
- People were maintaining a high standard of living and luxury of the town life.
- The land grants were given to Brahmans, temples, *viharas*, *mathas* to run the educational institutions and other social welfare activities.
- The tradition of land grants for the charitable purposes continued into the medieval period as well. These were known as *Madad-i-mash*, *Suyarghal*, etc.

- India had much advanced knowledge in the fields of mathematics, astronomy, and medicine during this period in comparison to any other country in the world.
- Arabs borrowed Indian knowledge of science and technology then it was taken by the western world from them.
- The mathematics and astronomy originated in Vedic period itself.
- **Aryabhata**, a great mathematician, wrote the book '*Aryabhatiya*' in Kusumpura (Pataliputra) at the age of 23 years.
- *Aryabhatiya* is divided into four parts and the most important features of Aryabhata's mathematical system were the unique system of notation. It is based on the decimal place-value system unknown to other ancient people.
- Aryabhata explained various principles of geometry, an area of a triangle, the area of circle and the theorem relating to rectangles.
- **Brahmagupta** was also a famous mathematician. He wrote '*Brahmsiddhanta*' in A.D. 628. He developed rules for operating with negative quantities and with zero. He began to apply Algebra to astronomical problems.
- **Jyotisa** was an ancient term used for astronomy and astrology. Varahamihira wrote '*Panchasiddhantika*' in A.D. 505. He was a popular person in the court of Chandragupta II.
- *Panchasiddhantika* consisted five works (*siddhantas*), which is popular as *Paitamaha*, *Romaka*, *Paulisa*, *Vasishtha*, and *Surya*.
- The *Suryasiddhanta* is the most important and complete work on the astronomy of the period.
- Varahamihira wrote *Brihatsamhita*. This is considered as an encyclopedic work on astrology.
- Varahamihira's son, Prithuyashas also wrote a book on astronomy in about A.D. 600, named as *Harashatpanchashika*.

## Medicine

- **Ayurveda** literally means 'science of longevity.' This is the name of Indian medical sciences. It originated during the Vedic period.
- Vedic literature, particularly, Atharvaveda consisted of more than seven hundred hymns on the topics related to Ayurveda.
- *Hastayurveda* is a guide book that describes (elaborately) the 'animal diseases' particularly about elephants.
- *Asvasastra* was written by sage Salihotra. It is a treatise on the horse.

## Metallurgy

- Chemistry was another science that developed along with the medicine that helped in the development of metallurgy.
- Nagarjuna the great *Mahayanist* was also genius in chemistry.
- The Mehrauli iron pillar is a living memorial of this period. It portrays the progress in metallurgy achieved 1,500 years ago by the Indians. It has been surviving without rusting since its establishment (i.e. for over 1,500 years).

### **Art and Architecture**

- The economic prosperity of the country during the Gupta period led to all round development in the field of sculptural art, architecture, and painting.
- In the Deccan, rock-cut caves were excavated. There are nine caves at Udaygiri near Vidisa. These are partly rock-cut and partly stone-built.
- Ajanta caves were built on the new line of architecture by the great beauty of their pillars of varied design and size and the fine paintings with which the inner wall and ceiling are decorated.
- Ellora's rock-cut monasteries and chaitya halls are other piece of architecture. The Brahmanical, Buddhist, and Jain caves portray the final phase of development.
- Kailash temple is a magnificent monolithic temple with a spacious hall and finely carved pillars. It was carved into a block of hill.
- The seven monolithic temples and number of pillared halls at Mamallapuram were carved by the Pallava kings Mahendravarman and Narasimhavarman in the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D.
- These monolithic temples were popularly called as '*Rathas.*' These massive structural temples were completely cut out of rock.
- Monasteries and stupas were also built during this period. These Monasteries were also the centers of education.
- The famous centers were at Bodhgaya, Sarnatha, Kusinagara, Srayasti, Kanchi, and Nalanda.
- The Nalanda University grew into the most prestigious establishment during the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D.
- Hiuen-Tsang mentioned in detail about the great temples, monasteries, and library buildings of Nalanda mahavihara.
- *Dharmarajaratha* at Mamallapuram is the earliest examples of the rock-cut temple of Dravidian styles.
- The structural temples at Kanchi, known as Kailasanatha and Vaikuntha Perumal were all built by the *Allava* Kings.

### **Vakatakas**

## **Vindhyashakti**

The founder of the dynasty was Vindhyashakti (250-270), whose name is derived from the name of the goddess Vindhya. The dynasty may be originated there. Almost nothing is known about Vindhyashakti, the founder of the Vakatakas. In the Cave XVI inscription of Ajanta he was described as the *banner of the Vakataka family* and a *Dvija*. It is stated in this inscription that he added to his power by fighting great battles and he had a large cavalry. But no regal title is prefixed to his name in this inscription. The Puranas say that he ruled for 96 years. He was placed variously at south Deccan, Madhya Pradesh and Malwa. K.P. Jayaswal attributes Bagat, a village in the Jhansi district as the home of Vakatakas. But after refuting the theory regarding the northern home of the Vakatakas, V.V. Mirashi points out that the earliest mention of the name Vakataka occurs in an inscription found on a fragment of a pillar at Amravati which records the gift of a *Grihapati* (householder) Vakataka and his two wives. This Grihapati in all probability was the progenitor of Vindhyashakti. It appears from the Puranas that Vindhyasakti was a ruler of Vidisha (in the present day Madhya Pradesh state) but that is not considered to be correct.

## **Pravarasena I**

The next ruler was Pravarasena I (270-330), who maintained the realm as a great power, he was the first Vakataka ruler, who called himself a *Samrat* (universal ruler) and conducted wars with the Naga kings. He has become an emperor in his own right, perhaps the only emperor in the dynasty, with his kingdom embracing a good portion of North India and whole of Deccan. He carried his arms to the Narmada in the north and annexed the kingdom of Purika which was being ruled by a king named Sisuka. In any case, he certainly ruled from Bundelkhand in the north (though Dr Mirashi does not accept that he has crossed the Narmada) to the present Andhra Pradesh in the south. The puranas assign him a reign of 60 years.

several *Yajnas* (sacrifices) which include Agnishtoma, Aptoryama, Ukthya, Shodasin, Atiratra, Vajapeya, Brihaspatisava, Sadyaskra and four Asvamedhas. He heavily donated to the Brahmins during the Vajapeya sacrifice as per the Puranas. He also took up the title of *Dharmamaharaja* in addition to *Samrat*. He called himself as *Haritiputra*. His Prime Minister Deva was a very pious and learned Brahmin. The Puranas say that Pravarasena I has four sons. He married his son Gautamiputra to a daughter of King Bhavanaga of the powerful Bharashiva family, which might have proved to be helpful. However, Gautamiputra predeceased him and he was succeeded by his grandson Rudrasena I, the son of Gautamiputra. His second son, Sarvasena set up his capital at Vatsagulma (the present day Washim). Nothing is known about the dynasties set up by the other two sons.

## **Branches of Vakataka Dynasty**

It is generally believed that the Vakataka ruling family was divided into four branches after Pravarasena I. Two branches are known and two are unknown. The known branches are the Pravarapura-Nandivardhana branch and the Vatsagulma branch.

The Pravarapura-Nandivardhana branch ruled from various sites like Pravarapura (Paunar) in Wardha district and Mansar and Nandivardhan (Nagardhan) in Nagpur district. This branch maintained matrimonial relations with the Imperial Guptas.

## **Rudrasena I**

Not much is known about Rudrasena I, the son of Gautamiputra, who ruled from Nandivardhana, near Ramtek hill, about 30 km from Nagpur. There is a mention of Rudradeva in the Allahabad

pillar inscription, bundled along with the other rulers of Aryavarta. A number of scholars, like A.S. Altekar do not agree that Rudradeva is Rudrasena I, since if Rudrasena I had been exterminated by Samudragupta, it is extremely unlikely that his son Prithivishena I would accept a Gupta princess (Prabhavatigupta) as his daughter-in-law. Secondly, no inscription of Rudrasena I have been found north of the Narmada. The only stone inscription of Rudrasena I's reign discovered so far was found at Deotek in the present-day Chandrapur district, so he can not be equated with Rudradeva of the Allahabad pillar inscription, who belonged to the Aryavarta.<sup>[8]</sup>

### **Prithivishena I**

Rudrasena I was succeeded by his son named Prithivishena I (355-380), and Prithivishena I was succeeded by his son named Rudrasena II.

### **Rudrasena II, Divakarasena and Pravarasena II**

Rudrasena II (380–385) is said to have married Prabhavatigupta, the daughter of the Gupta King Chandragupta II (375-413/15). Rudrasena II died fortuitously after a very short reign in 385 CE, following which Prabhavatigupta (385 - 405) ruled as a regent on behalf of her two sons, Divakarasena and Damodarasena (Pravarasena II) for 20 years. During this period the Vakataka realm was practically a part of the Gupta Empire. Many historians refer to this period as the Vakataka-Gupta age. While this has been widely accepted more than 30 years ago, this line of argument has no proper evidence. Prabhavati Gupta's inscription mentions about one "Deva Gupta" who is her father and the historians equated him with Chandra Gupta II. However, there is no other source to prove that Deva Gupta is really Chandra Gupta II. This is questionable more since the dating of Vakatakas is more or less established while that of Guptas is sometimes predated to that of Greek invasion of Alexander by the Indeginists.

Pravarasena II composed the *Setubandha* in Maharashtri Prakrit. A few verses of the *Gaha Sattasai* are also attributed to him. He shifted the capital from Nandivardhana to Pravarapura, a new city of founded by him. He built a temple dedicated to Rama in his new capital.

### **Narendrasena and Prithivishena II**

Pravarasena II was succeeded by Narendrasena (440-460), under whom the Vakataka influence spread to some central Indian states. Prithivishena II, the last known king of the line, succeeded his father Narendrasena in c. 460. After his death in 480, his kingdom was probably annexed by Harishena of the Vatsagulma branch.

### **Sarvasena**

Sarvasena (c. 330 - 355) took the title of *Dharmamaharaja*. He is also known as the author of *Harivijaya* in Prakrit which is based on the story of bringing the *parijat* tree from heaven by Krishna. This work, praised by later writers is lost. He is also known as the author of many verses of the Prakrit *Gaha Sattasai*. One of his minister's names was Ravi. He was succeeded by his son Vindhyasena.

### **Vindhyasena**

Vindhyasena (c. 355 - 400) was also known as Vindhyashakti II. He is known from the well-known Washim plates which recorded the grant of a village situated in the northern marga (sub-division) of Nandikata (presently Nanded) in his 37th regnal year. The genealogical portion of the grant is written in Sanskrit and the formal portion in Prakrit. This is the first known land

grant by any Vakataka ruler. He also took the title of *Dharmamaharaja*. Vindhyasena defeated the ruler of Kuntala, his southern neighbour. One of his minister's names was Pravara. He was succeeded by his son Pravarasena II.

### **Pravarasena II**

Pravarasena II (c. 400 - 415) was the next ruler of who very little is known except from the Cave XVI inscription of Ajanta, which says that he became exalted by his excellent, powerful and liberal rule. He died after a very short rule and succeeded by his minor son, who was only 8 years old when his father died. Name of this ruler is lost from the Cave XVI inscription.<sup>[12]</sup>

### **Devasena**

This unknown ruler was succeeded by his son Devasena (c. 450 - 475). His administration was actually run by his minister Hastibhoja. During his reign, one of his servants Svaminadeva excavated a tank named *Sudarshana* near Washim in c. 458-59.

### **Harishena**

Harishena (c. 475 - 500) succeeded his father Devasena. He was a great patron of Buddhist architecture, art and culture. The World Heritage monument Ajanta Caves is surviving example of his works. The rock cut architectural cell-XVI inscription of Ajanta states that he conquered Avanti (Malwa) in the north, Kosala (Chhattisgarh), Kalinga and Andhra in the east, Lata (Central and Southern Gujarat) and Trikuta (Nasik district) in the west and Kuntala (Southern Maharashtra) in the south. Varahadeva, a minister of Harishena and the son of Hastibhoja, excavated the rock-cut vihara of Cave XVI of Ajanta. Three of the Buddhist caves at Ajanta, two viharas - caves XVI and XVII and a chaitya - cave XIX were excavated and decorated with painting and sculptures during the reign of Harishena. According to an art historian, Walter M. Spink, all the rock-cut monuments of Ajanta excluding caves nos. 9,10,12,13 and 15A (Ref: Page No. 4, Ajanta-A Brief History and Guide - Walter M. Spink) were built during Harishena's reign though his view is not universally accepted.

Harishena was succeeded by two rulers whose names are not known. The end of the dynasty is unknown. They were probably defeated by the Kalachuri of Mahismati.

### **The *Dashakumaracharita* version of the end**

According to the eighth *ucchvāsah* of the *Dashakumaracharita* of Dandin, which was written probably around 125 years after the fall of the Vakataka dynasty, Harishena's son, though intelligent and accomplished in all arts, neglected the study of the *Dandaniti* (Political Science) and gave himself up to the enjoyment of pleasures and indulged in all sorts of vices. His subjects also followed him and led a vicious and dissolute life. Finding this a suitable opportunity, the ruler of the neighbouring *Ashmaka* sent his minister's son to the court of the Vakatakas. The latter ingratiated himself with the king and egged him on in his dissolute life. He also decimated his forces by various means. Ultimately, when the country was thoroughly disorganised, the ruler of Ashmaka instigated the ruler of Vanavasi (in the North Kanara district) to invade the Vakataka territory. The king called all his feudatories and decided to fight his enemy on the bank of the Varada (Wardha). While fighting with the forces of the enemy, he was treacherously attacked in the rear by some of his own feudatories and killed. The Vakataka dynasty ended with his death.<sup>[12]</sup>

## Harshavardhana,

Emperor Harshavardhana, better known as **Harsha**, lived from 590 to 647 CE and was the last ruler of the Vardhana **Empire**, the last great empire in ancient **India** before the Islamic Invasion. He ruled from 606 CE to 647 CE. After Harshavardhana's **death**, however, the Vardhana or **Pushyabhuti Dynasty** came to an end and its empire dissolved.

Sources suggest that Harsha, like the Guptas, was a member of the *Vaishya* Varna. The Chinese traveller Xuanzang mentions an emperor named Shiladitya, who had been claimed to be Harsha.<sup>[11]</sup> Xuanzang mentions that this king belonged to "Fei-she". This word is generally translated as "Vaishya" (a Varna or social class).

India, the land beyond the Indus River, has seen many rulers who dreamt of conquering the vast country and rule from the Himalayas in the north to Deccan in south, from the mountains of Kandhar in the west to Assam in the east, yet very few have been able to subdue history according to their will. Harshavardhana was one such ruler. His empire may not be as large as the great Mauryan's, yet he deserves special mention. After the fall of great **Gupta Empire** in the middle of the 6th century CE, under whom India saw its own golden age, it was Harshavardhana who unified most of northern India and ruled for four decades from his capital Kanyakubja.

## RISE TO POWER & MILITARY CAMPAIGNS

The Pushyabhuti Dynasty's origin is uncertain, but sources become clearer from c. 580 CE when Prabhakaravardhana ruled the kingdom of Thaneshwar, modern-day Haryana. Prabhakaravardhana's queen Yasovati gave birth to two sons Rajyavardhana and Harshavardhana and a daughter named Rajyashri who was later married to king Grahvarman of Kanyakubja, modern-day Kannauj. This was a period of tension as India had to frequently deal with the invasion of the **Huns** of Central Asia. Constant fights were so costly that they weakened the empire to the core, and this eventually led to the downfall of the **Gupta Empire**. As the western frontiers of India and areas adjoining the Indus River were under the occupation of Huns, skirmishes between Huns and Thaneshwar were regular. While Harsha and his brother were busy dealing with the Huns in the west, Prabhakaravardhana died in Thaneshwar. He was succeeded by his elder son, Rajyavardhana.

Meanwhile, in the east far greater events were happening which altered the course of history. Shashanka of the **Gauda Kingdom**, modern-day Bengal, marched and killed king Grahvarmana, Rajyashri's husband, and then kidnapped her. The kidnapping of his sister forced the elder Vardhana brother to march east and confront Shashanka. Shashanka then invited Rajyavardhana for a meeting and treacherously killed him. After his brother's death, at the age of 16, Harshavardhana became the undisputed ruler of Thaneshwar and declared war on Sasaka to avenge his brother and embarked upon a campaign of *Digvijay*, i.e. to conquer the world (which in this context means conquering whole India). Yet, his foremost enemy was now Shashanka who had to face an angry brother's wrath. Harsha issued a proclamation to all kings known to either declare allegiance to him or face him on the battlefield. As Shashanka's enemies responded to Harsha's call, he marched on to Kannauj.

Although there is no evidence, a story in *Harshacharitra* claims that Rajyashri, when released from prison, took refuge in the forest of Vindhya. Hearing this, Harsha hurriedly went into the forest to save her and found her just when she was about to commit suicide by throwing herself in a fire. Rescuing his sister, he rejoined his army at the bank of **Ganges**. After this, Harsha easily conquered Kanyakubja as Shashanka went back to Bengal, and thus began a long enmity. It was only after Shashanka's death that Harsha was able to control entire eastern India including **Magadha**, Bengal, and Kalinga.

Harsha's Digvijay, or the **conquest** of the world had now begun. After Kannauj, he turned his attention towards Gujarat. He defeated the local Valabhi kingdom and expanded his empire. Yet, this rapid expansion led to tensions between him and the Chalukya king Pulakeshin II (r. 609-642 CE). It was now that the most powerful kingdoms of northern and southern India came face-to-face on the battlefield on the banks of river Narmada. In the end, the southerners under the able leadership of Pulakeshin II prevailed leaving the ambitious northern ruler, Harsha, defeated. They say Harsha lost his cheer when he saw his elephants dying in the **battle**.

Harsha entered a peace treaty with the Chalukya king, which established Narmada River as the southern boundary of his empire and after that he never advanced south again. Yet, this did not halt his conquest of the north. He took the title of *sakal uttara patha natha* (lord of northern India). Hieun Tsang tells us that:

He waged incessant **warfare**, until in six years he had fought thr five Indians (referring to five largest kingdoms). Then, having enlarges his territory, he increased his army, bringing the elephant corps upto 60,000 and the cavalry upto 100,000, and reined in peace for thirty years without raising a weapon (Majumdar, 252).

Yet many historians believe his claim may be exaggerated. Still, this gives a glimpse of his military prowess.

The Vardhana Empire consisted of two distinctive types of territories: areas directly under Harsha's rule such as Central Provinces, Gujarat, Bengal, Kalinga, Rajputana, and the states and kingdoms which had become feudatories under him including Jalandhar, Kashmir, Nepal, Sind, Kamarupa (modern-day Assam). Thus, many historians do not find the title justified as he was never able to bring the entire north under a single command. Yet, this does not mean his power was not felt beyond the limits of his direct rule. His writ ran across entire north India. Under his command, King of Jalandhar escorted the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang to the frontiers of India. Another time, king of Kashmir had to submit a tooth relic of **Buddha** to Harsha. The Chinese source suggests that the King of Kamarupa could not dare to detain a Chinese pilgrim in his capital against the wishes of Harsha.

## **ART & EDUCATION**

Harsha was a patron of both art and education. He himself was an author and wrote three **Sanskrit** plays, Nagananda, Ratnavali, and Priyadarshika. One-fourth of his revenue went for patronizing scholars. Hiuen Tsang gives a quite vivid description of the famous Nalanda University which was at its zenith during Harsha's reign. He described how the regularly laid-out



towers, forests of pavilions; temples seemed to "soar above the mists in the sky" so that from their cells the monks "might witness the birth of the winds and clouds". The pilgrim states:

An azure pool winds around the monasteries, adorned with the full-blown cups of the blue lotus; the dazzling red flowers of the lovely kanaka hang here and there, and outside groves of mango trees offer the inhabitants their dense and protective shade (Grousset,158,159).

In its heyday, Nalanda had around 10,000 students and 2,000 teachers. The admission process was very strict. Records say there was a rigorous oral examination conducted by gatekeepers, and many used to be rejected. The curriculum included **Vedas, Buddhism, philosophy**, logic, urban planning, **medicine, law**, astronomy, etc.

## **SOCIETY & RELIGION**

Caste system was prevalent among Hindus. They were divided into four castes or varna: *Brahmana, Vaishya, Kshariya* and *Shudra*, which among them had their own subcastes. The untouchables, who came at the lowest in the hierarchy, led a miserable life. The status of **women** declined as compared to the liberal era of earlier times. *Satipratha* (widow immolation) was common, and widow remarriage was not allowed in higher castes.

Harsha was a worshiper of **Shiva** in the beginning but later became a Mahayana **Buddhist**. Yet, he was tolerant of other faiths. With a view to popularize and propagate the doctrines of **Mahayana Buddhism**, Harsha arranged at Kanyakubja a great assembly which was presided over by Hiuen Tsang. Hiuen Tsang took a lot of manuscripts to **China** and translated more than 600 of them from Sanskrit. Another great ceremony was held for 75 days at Prayag (Allahabad). The images of Buddha, Sun and Siva were worshiped, and gifts of valuable articles and clothing were distributed in charity. Every five years religious ceremonies were celebrated at the ancient **city** of Allahabad. Here, he held the ceremony of Dana, or giving, which lasted for three months. During this, most of the wealth accumulated in the last five years was exhausted. Once, he even gave his clothes and jewellery and begged his sister for an ordinary garment to wear.

## **DEATH & LEGACY**

Harsha's empire marked the beginning of **feudalism** in India. Land was granted in villages, which made the local landlords powerful. This led to the weakening of the empire and gave rise to local feuds. Harsha had to be in constant movement to keep things in order.

Harsha died in 647 A.D. and the empire with him. The death of Harshavardhana is not well documented. It is said that he was married to Durgavati and had two sons named Vagyavardhana and Kalyanvardhana. The story goes that they were killed by a minister in his court, even before the death of Harsha himself. Therefore, Harsha died without any heir. As a result, **Arjuna**, one of the chief ministers took up the thrones. Later in 648 CE, Arjuna was captured and held prisoner in an attack by the Tibetians.

## **Hiuen Tsang**

He is known as the Chinese “Master of the Law”. India is much indebted to this Chinese for the valuable accounts he left behind with many details of political, religious and social conditions of those days. His biography, written by another Chinese, is also another valuable source for Indian history.

Hiuen Tsang was born in China in 600 A.D. Becoming a Buddhist monk at the age of twenty, he longed for knowing more and more of Buddhism to satisfy his spiritual hunger. But without a visit to India, he knew his desire for learning would remain unfulfilled. When he was about 30, he secretly left China for an adventurous journey towards India. Passing through Tashkand, Samarkand and Balkh, he finally reached Gandhara in 630 A.D.

In India, he wanted to visit all the sacred places connected with the life of Buddha, as well as to learn of Buddhism through study. During his travel he covered many more places and observed keenly the social, religious, political, cultural and” economic conditions of the country.

Hiuen Tsang visited Kashmir and the Punjab. He proceeded to Kapilavastu, Bodh-Gaya, Sarnath, and Kusinagara. He studied in the University of Nalanda. He also travelled through the Deccan, Orissa and Bengal. He went almost to every part of India. Harsha came to admire him for his deep devotion to Buddha and his profound knowledge of Buddhism. He honoured him in his Kanauj religious Assembly, and also invited him to attend the Prayaga Assembly. After attending those two magnificent functions, Hiuen Tsang prepared to leave for China in 644 A.D., after having spent long fourteen years of his life on the soil of India.

The emperor was sorry to part with the pilgrim. But he made elaborate arrangements for his safe return. A king named Udit of Jalandhar was authorised by Harsha to take Hiuen Tsang under a strong military escort to the frontiers of India. Beyond the frontiers, the pilgrim was accompanied by Harsha’s official guides who carried the letters of authority from emperor to produce them in other countries. It is understood that Harsha, in his letters, requested the foreign rulers to “provide carriages or other modes of conveyance to escort the Master even to the borders of China. Thus helped, Hiuen Tsang finally reached home in 645 A.D. by way of the Pamirs and Khotan.

Hiuen Tsang took with him from India 150 pieces of the bodily relics of Buddha; a large number of Buddha images in gold, silver and sandal wood; and above all, 657 volumes of valuable manuscripts, carried by twenty horses of his escort party. Back in his home in China, he set himself to translate some of those manuscripts into the Chinese language, assisted by several scholars. About 74 Buddhist works were translated during his life time which proved of immense value to the people of China. Hiuen Tsang died in 664 A.D.

Hiuen Tsang was indeed an ancient ambassador of peace between China and India. Harsha, too was a man of international vision like Asoka. Coming to hear of the prestige of Chinese Emperor from his pilgrim friend, Harsha sent an ambassador to the Chinese Court in

641 A.D. in the person of a Brahmin. Two years later, 643 A.D., the Chinese Emperor sent a mission to Harsha. A second Chinese mission also came in that very year to India. Within the next years, a third mission also came from China. But when it reached India, Harsha was no more.

As a true Buddhist, and a pious pilgrim to a holy land, he could not have been dishonest or untruthful in his writings. He had no reason to flatter anybody when far out of sight. He had also no reason to seek anybody's favour for his Travel Accounts. He was, in fact, describing the condition of Buddhism in India as he saw. That was the subject of his prime concern. Other episodes came in as side descriptions. On the whole, Hiuen Tsang's accounts have been accepted as truthful and trustworthy. His writings have thrown immense light on an important era of the ancient Indian history.

## **Rashtrakuta Dynasty**

The **Rashtrakuta Dynasty** ruled parts of South **India** from the 8th to the 10th century CE. At its zenith, their kingdom included the modern state of Karnataka in its entirety along with parts of the current Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra and Gujarat. Their importance can be gauged from the writings of many Islamic travellers and scholars, especially Al-Masudi and Ibn Khordadbeh (10th century CE), who wrote that all the other kings of India at that time prayed to the Rashtrakutas as a higher power and prostrated themselves in reverence before them, such was their influence and impression.

## **Origin & Rise to Power**

The name 'Rashtrakuta' in **Sanskrit** means 'Country' (*Rashtra*) and 'Chieftain' (*Kuta*). This explains their lineage from the time of the Mauryan Emperor **Ashoka the Great** (3rd century BCE) when they were primarily small clan heads in different parts of India. In some of the edicts of **Ashoka** (in Mansera, Girnar, and Dhavali) the word Rathika appears who may have been the ancestors of the Rashtrakutas. However, though many historians claim that the Rashtrakutas were the earlier Rathikas mentioned in those inscriptions, this theory is not backed up by enough archaeological evidence. Medieval Sanskrit **literature** reveals fragments of their lineage, which is thought to be from the Mauryan times as small clan heads.

However, their rise began when Dantidurga (also known as Dantivarman, r. until 756 CE), who was a feudatory of the Badami Chalukyas, defeated their King Kirtivarman II in 753 CE. Dantidurga's ascent started from the time when he helped the Chalukyas in their successful **war** against the incoming Arab army (between 731 and 739 CE). Soon, it became apparent that he was not satisfied in being just a vassal state and started exerting his influence through military aggression. He defeated the kings of Kosala and Kalinga, subdued the Gurjaras of Malwa, defeated other kings of Central India, and made friendship with the Pallava king Nandivarman II Pallavamalla of **Kanchi** by giving his daughter in marriage, before he made the final assault on the Chalukya king in 753 CE and thus established the Rashtrakuta Empire.

## Expansion

**Dantidurga** died without a male heir and was succeeded by his uncle **Krishna I** (756 - 773/774 CE). Krishna I gave the final **death** nail to their erstwhile masters, the Badami Chalukyas, when he routed them in 757 CE to end that dynasty's rule. He expanded his kingdom by invading the **Ganga** territory and defeating them, by subjugating the Konkan territories and sending his own son to the Eastern Chalukya kingdom of Vengi and accepting their submission without a fight. Krishna I is also culturally very important in the history of India because he was the man behind the construction of the exquisite Kailasa **Temple** of Ellora (a UNESCO World Heritage site now).

**Krishna I** was succeeded by his eldest son Govinda II (774-780 CE). Govinda II's military adventures include his journey to the Eastern Chalukya kingdom upon instruction of his father and also helping a certain Ganga king in securing the throne from his brother. How he came to his end in life is not known but he was overthrown by his younger brother Dhruva Dharavarsha.

The ascension of Dhruva Dharavarsha (780-793 CE) marks the golden period of the Rashtrakutas. He started his military conquests, first of all, by punishing all the kings who were friendly to his elder brother, and then venturing into the imperial Kannauj and defeating its king. Dhruva then defeated the Gurjara-Pratihara Kingdom of Central India and the Pala Kingdom of Eastern India which was centred around present-day Bengal, and thus with him started the tripartite struggle between the **Gurjara-Pratihara Empire**, the Rashtrakutas, and the Pala Dynasty to control the main heartland of India. The **battle** for Kannauj (located in modern-day Uttar Pradesh state) is one of the most important events in the medieval history of India. His other victories include subjugating the Vengi king who could only ensure peace by offering his own daughter in marriage to Dhruva Dharavarsha. He had also successfully moved against the Pallavas of Kanchi (present-day Tamil Nadu) and their immediate neighbours, the Western Ganga Dynasty.

Govinda III (r. 793-814 CE) succeeded his father Dhruva, and though he came to power through a family feud, soon proved to be militarily the most powerful emperor of this dynasty. Though Dhruva had successfully moved into North India in his time, he had not gained many lands. Govinda III rectified that by expanding his kingdom from Kannauj to the Cape Comorin (Kanyakumari now) and from the east of India from Banaras, Bengal etc. to the west of India mainly to the Gujarat territories, and thus on his way defeating numerous kings and rulers like the Gurjara-Pratihara king Nagabhata II, King Dharmapala of the Pala Empire, Pallava Dantivarman, Cholas, Pandyas, Vishnuvardhana IV of Vengi, and several others. Even the King of Ceylon (current-day Sri Lanka) admitted his own subjugation and continued as a feudatory of the Rashtrakutas by paying time to time tributes to them.

Next in line was the greatest of all the Rashtrakuta kings, Govinda III's son, Amoghavarsha I, also called Nripatunga (c. 814-878 CE). He ascended the throne at a very early age due to the death of his father in 814 CE but could not hold real power as an emperor until

821 CE. He was a scholar king under whom the art, literature, and culture of the kingdom flourished. He himself endorsed and wrote landmark pieces in both the Kannada and Sanskrit languages. He also made Manyakheta (Malkhed in Karnataka now) the centre of the empire by which they are known today as the Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta.

Amoghavarsha I ruled for almost 64 years, and though he faced many wars and battles, by temperament he was a peace-loving ruler. He preferred friendly relations with his feudatories over war and used marriages and other amiable gestures to secure their loyalty. Being a lover of art and scholarship, scientists prospered under his rule and his kingdom was adorned with beautiful and intricate artworks and **architecture** all around. He also equally patronised **Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism**, but many scholars are of the opinion that personally he probably followed Jainism.

After Amoghavarsha I came various rulers (like Krishna II, **Indra** III, Amoghavarsha II, Govinda IV, Amoghavarsha III, Krishna III, Khottiga Amoghavarsha, Karka II, and Indra IV) with mixed successes. One of the notable successes was that of King Indra III (r. 915-928 CE), who captured Kannauj in the early 10th century (c. 916 CE). Inscriptions in temples in Tamil Nadu and its surroundings reveal that King Krishna III (r. 939-967 CE) invaded the Chola territory and defeated the Chola army decisively in the 10th century CE.

### **Government, Administration, & Military**

The Rashtrakutas divided their kingdom into various provinces, and the provinces were further divided into districts. The kings or emperors of the Rashtrakutas were followed in hierarchy by a Chief Minister who had a cabinet of ministers and different army personnel under him. All the ministers had to undergo military training and be ready for war at any moment. The empire had a mighty army who were always kept ready, especially in their capital **city** for any incursion or invasion. It was divided into three units; infantry, cavalry, and elephants. It was always diligently trained and kept in proper shape all the time. Feudatory kingdoms would pay tributes, and in case of a special warlike situation or a natural calamity, the administration would also exact some special taxes to meet the expenses, but not at the cost of the happiness and well-being of its subjects. However, the precarious balance that the Rashtrakutas had to maintain between war and well-being, between defence and invasion, between expansion and their administration, ultimately led to their decline.

### **Society**

The subjects of the Rashtrakuta Empire looked up to their emperor or king as the ultimate authority who was expected to look after them and uphold the current social justice, order, and peace. However, for day-to-day matters, there were guilds or co-operatives who would decide on any disputes as per the prevalent custom, and if the case could not be solved, then it was brought to the notice of a higher authority. These guilds generally followed the prevailing rules and regulations of a particular group or caste and would deviate only under special circumstances.

The society was divided into various castes based on profession. The prevailing castes had their own sets of rules, regulations, and customs, which they followed quite diligently. They

also followed ancient orthodoxy. However, due to the Rashtrakuta rulers being tolerant towards all religions, society was generally accommodative of adherents of various faiths.

### **Trade, Commerce, & Economy**

The South Indian and the Deccan region was not as fertile as the **Ganges** valley, but the Malabar coast and other areas still yielded enough agricultural produce to take care of the food supplies. Further, due to the incursion and expansion of the empire to Kannauj and other central and North Indian plains, the food supplies augmented from time to time. As the Kannada states were rich in mineral resources and the coastal areas were controlled by the Rashtrakutas, the export of Indian **silk** and cotton to **Arabia, Persia**, and other countries was unlimited. Jewellery and ivory were other important products of the empire while import included Arabian horses. Rulers issued **gold** and **silver** coins.

### **Religion & Language**

Kannada is one of the most important languages in current-day India, and it was the Rashtrakutas who made it popular and a tool of day-to-day communication, though the language had already been in use for a long time. They also patronised Sanskrit which was actually a language of the elite. Amoghavarsha I was instrumental in composing groundbreaking works in both languages, and his *Kavirajamarga* was an important milestone in Kannada poetry. His work in Sanskrit became widely acclaimed and was read in other Asian countries as well. Amoghavarsha I was said to have endorsed Jainism and so a lot of Jain scholars flourished in his court, including the Jain mathematician Mahavirachariya. In Kannada, Adikabi Pampa and Sri Ponna flourished and are now considered to be iconic contributors to the language.

### **Art & Architecture**

- The art and architecture of the Rashtrakutas can be found at Ellora and Elephanta.
- The most remarkable temple Kailasanatha temple at Ellora was built by Krishna.

### **Kailasanadha Temple**

- The temple is carved out of a massive block of rock measuring 200 feet long, and 100 feet in breadth and height.
- The central face of the plinth has imposing figures of elephants and lions which give an impression that the entire structure rests on their back.
- It has three-tiered sikhara or tower which resembles the **sikhara of the Mamallapuram rathas**.
- There is a pillared hall with 16 square pillars in the interior of the temple.
- A sculpture of the Goddess Durga is engraved as slaying the Buffalo demon.
- In the interior of the temple there is a pillared hall which has sixteen square pillars.
- The sculpture of the **Goddess Durga** is shown as slaying the Buffalo demon.

- In another sculpture Ravana was making attempts to lift Mount Kailasa, the abode of Siva.

## Elephanta

- Originally called as Sripuri, Elephanta is an island near Bombay.
- The Portuguese named it as Elephanta after seeing the huge figure of an elephant.
- The sculptures in Ellora and Elephanta have close similarities.
- There are huge figures of **dwara-palakas** at the entrance to the sanctum.
- **Trimurthi** is the most magnificent figure of this temple. The sculpture is six metres high and said to represent the three aspects of Shiva as Creator, Preserver and Destroyer.

The Rashtrakutas were instrumental in establishing an aesthetic architectural form now known as the Karnata Dravida style. The stunning Kailasa Temple of Ellora (a rock-cut structure) is the epitome of Rashtrakuta architectural achievement, but many of the caves of Ellora and Elephanta (in present-day Maharashtra state) have also been created and renovated under the supervision of the Rashtrakutas. Another UNESCO World Heritage Site, the temples at Pattadakal also came under the sway of the Rashtrakutas after the defeat of the Chalukyas and were subsequently renovated and expanded by the Rashtrakutas. The Jain Narayana Temple is said to be solely created by the Rashtrakuta Dynasty.

## Decline & Legacy

The decline of the Rashtrakutas began from the reign of Khottiga Amoghavarsha who was defeated and killed by a Paramara dynasty ruler in 972 CE, with the capital Manyakheta plundered and destroyed, thus putting a severe dent to the prestige of the dynasty. The last ruler of the kingdom, Indra IV took his own life in 982 CE by performing a Jaina ritual called Sallekhana, which is a practice of fasting to death.

The Rashtrakuta Dynasty came to an end, but their impact remained. The parts of their kingdom were annexed by the later Cholas and other dynasties, but their system of government and several other cultural practices were also followed by the subsequent empires. Culturally, the temples at Pattadakal or the Ellora structures, and numerous medieval literary works bear testimony to the fine tastes of the Rashtrakutas and their patronage.

## Chalukiyas

### The Three Chalukyas

- There were three distinct but related Chalukya dynasties.
- **Badami Chalukyas:** The earliest Chalukyas with their capital at Badami (Vatapi) in Karnataka. They ruled from mid-6th They declined after the death of their greatest king, Pulakesin II in 642 AD.
- **Eastern Chalukyas:** Emerged after the death of Pulakesin II in Eastern Deccan with capital at Vengi. They ruled till the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

- **Western Chalukyas:** Descendants of the Badami Chalukyas, they emerged in the late 10th century and ruled from Kalyani (modern-day Basavakanlyan).

#### Extent of the Chalukya dynasty

- The Chalukya dynasty reached its peak during the reign of Pulakesin II.
- His grandfather Pulakesin I had created an empire around Vatapi.
- Pulakesin II subjugated the Kadambas, the Gangas of Mysore, the Mauravas of North Konkan, the Latas of Gujarat, the Malavas and the Gurjars.
- He also succeeded in getting submission from the Chola, Chera and Pandya kings.
- He had also defeated King Harsha of Kannauj and the Pallava king Mahendravarman.

#### Chalukya Rulers

Jayasimha was the first ruler of the Chalukyas.

#### **Pulakesin I (Reign: 543 AD – 566 AD)**

- Founded the empire with his capital at Vatapi.
- Performed Ashwamedha.

#### **Kirtivarman I (Reign: 566 AD – 597 AD)**

- Son of Pulakesin I.
- Conquered Konkan and northern Kerala.

#### **Mangalesha (Reign: 597 AD – 609 AD)**

- Brother of Kirtivarman I.
- Conquered the Kadambas and the Gangas.
- Was killed by his nephew and son of Kirtivarman, Pulakesin II.

#### **Pulakesin II (609 AD – 642 AD)**

- The greatest of the Chalukya kings.
- Extended the Chalukya rule to most parts of the Deccan.
- His birth name was Eraya. Information about him is obtained from the Aihole inscription dated 634. This poetic inscription was written by his court poet Ravikirti in Sanskrit language using the Kannada script.
- Xuanzang visited his kingdom. He has praised Pulakesin II as a good and authoritative king.
- Though a Hindu, he was tolerant of Buddhism and Jainism.
- He conquered almost entire south-central India.
- He is famous for stopping Northern king Harsha in his tracks while he was trying to conquer southern parts of the country.



- He had defeated the Pallava king Mahendravarman I but was defeated and killed by Mahendravarman's son and successor Narasimhavarman I in a series of battles he had with the Pallavas.
- For the next 13 years, Badami remained under Pallava control.
- Pulakesin II received a Persian mission as depicted in an Ajanta cave painting. He maintained diplomatic relations with the King of Persia Khusru II.
- His death saw a lapse in Chalukya power.

#### **Vikramaditya I (655 AD – 680 AD)**

- Son of Pulakesin II who plundered Kanchi, the capital of the Pallavas.

#### **Kirtivarman II (746 AD – 753 AD)**

- Great-great-grandson of Vikramaditya I.
- Last of the Chalukya rulers. Was defeated by the Rashtrakuta king, Dantidurga.

#### **Administration and Society**

- The Chalukyas had great maritime power.
- They also had a well-organised army.
- Though the Chalukya kings were Hindus, they were tolerant of Buddhism and Jainism.
- Saw great developments in Kannada and Telugu literature.
- Sanskrit along with the local languages thrived. An inscription dated 7th century mentions Sanskrit as the language of the elite whereas Kannada was the language of the masses.

#### **Art and Architecture**

- They built cave temples depicting both religious and secular themes.
- The temples had beautiful mural paintings also.
- The temples under the Chalukyas are a good example of the Vesara style of architecture. This is also called the Deccan style or Karnataka Dravida or Chalukyan style. It is a combination of Dravida and Nagara styles.
- Aihole temples: Ladh Khan temple (Surya Temple), Durga temple, Huchimalligudi temple, Jain temple at Meguti by Ravikirti. There are 70 temples in Aihole.
- Badami temples
- Pattadakal: is a UNESCO World Heritage site. There are ten temples here – 4 in Nagara style and 6 in Dravida style. Virupaksha temple and Sangameshwara Temple are in Dravida style. Papanatha temple is in Nagara style.

#### **Arab conquest of Sind Effect**

Arabs invaded Sindh in seventh century 710–712 Ad. The reason was that some Arab ships were looted by Indian pirates sponsored by King Dahir. The Governor of Iraq received a call for help from a Muslim woman who was captured by Dahir's pirates. The Governor of Iraq

demanded compensation and release of the arrested Muslims but Dahir showed as if he had no knowledge of the event and said that he had no control over the pirates. So Hajjaj bin Yousuf, the Governor of Iraq sent an Army under the Arabs. Thus, started the first military expedition against king Dahir, under Ubaidullah, which failed. The second invasion also failed and this time it was under Budail. In the third attempt, Hajjaj entrusted the responsibility to his son-in-law **Muhammad-bin-Qasim**, with a powerful army to attack Dahir. He arrived at the coast in 712 A.D. and was successful in defeating and killing Dahir and thus, Debal was occupied. After Debal Ibn Qasim continued his conquest till Multan. During these conquests, Qasim was all of a sudden recalled by the Khalifa and by making him a victim of party politics was put to death. It is said that had he been alive, he would have conquered the entire South Asian region.

The people of Sindh were happy with the change as Ibn-e-Qasim gave equal rights to poor or lower caste Hindus as of higher caste Hindus. He was generous and kind to his object. Due to his kindness, many Hindus converted to Islam. The people were crying when he was called back by the Caliph.

**Arabs started invading Sindh. There are several reasons for the invasions of Arabs on India, which are as follows:**

1. **Wealthiness of India** – India was a prosperous country. Arabs have a greedy vision on it. Arab wanted to attack India and rob money from here.
2. **Expansion of Empire** – Arabs had won Syria, Northern Africa, Spain, and Iran. After winning these areas, they wanted to expand their Empire and they moved forward for this. India too became the part of their policy.
3. **The spread of Islam**
4. **Instantaneous reason:** Pirates of the Deval area looted Arabian ships. Al-Hajjaj the Arab Governor of Khalifa Umar, asked for compensation from Dahir. Dahir denied giving damages.

**Effects of the Conquest of Sindh**

- **Religious Changes:** Islam was established in Sind and Multan. The attempt failed as Rajput's had a strong position in North. Initially, after the death of Muhammad bin Qasim, the Khalifah were shaken and the Islamic propagation was declined. The alliances made by Muhammad Bin Qasim proved to be fruitful in later invasion of Islamic rulers. The views on Islam were changed as Arabs were not cruel. No extra taxes were imposed on Hindus for believing in Hinduism which won their hearts and they embraced the Arabs with the open arms.
- **Political and Social impact on India:** The poor management of the Hindu rulers and their weak army strengths were in front of the world which developed the interest of Arabs to occupy the entire India. The Arabs opened the way of communication with the other Islamic regions and thus the direct trade and business with the Islamic countries started (should be added or not). The Sind area which was considered to be tribal before Arab invasion became economically strong and civilized. The law and order of the Arabs changed the social status of the region. The Arabs were great politicians. They believed in winning the mind of people rather than acquiring land. The social reforms took place during this time as the peaceful administration was set whereas other parts of India were highly disturbed. The disunity of Hindu Rajas proved to be the

bigger spring bolt to bring the change in the area. The common people were fed up with internal fights and they had no respect for the Rajput's empire.

- ***Economical and cultural developments:*** The Arabs adopted the policy of toleration and allowed Hindus to follow their religion. The Arabs adopted the rich rituals of Brahmins and gained knowledge in the areas of Astrology, Medicine and Arthashastra. Many of the Sanskrit words were added in Arab dictionaries. The small areas were converted in cities. The Arabs did town planning according to the crop of that particular area and set up business accordingly. This improved the economical conditions of the Sind Region. For trade horses and camels were brought from other areas which later on became a mean of carrying goods from Sind to other countries.
- **The settlement of Arabs:** Many of the Arab soldiers married Sindhi women and got settled in Sind. This increased the population of the region. The Arabs started treating Sind as their own land and tried to develop the area in all the spheres. The good buildings and planning of cities left a significant impact on the Indian culture which was reflected later on. The Arabs were great poets. They believed in the development of new languages which gave birth to Sindhi language (a mixture of Arab and Sanskrit language). The poetry written in Sindhi is famous till date. It given birth too many famous poets. The great Quran was translated in Arabian language.

### **Invasion of Sind by Muhammad-bin-Qasim (695-715 AD)**

Age 17 years old boy was ambitious, a great warrior, courageous. He was born and brought up in the Taif now in Saudi Arabia. He invaded Sind and Multan area. This is a historical win which has its impact on the history of world. He was not a cruel king. He wanted to establish a territory based on rich culture and civilization. He proved to be good administrator. His romance stories led many poets to write great poetry in Arabian language which is called Sindhi heritage.

When he became powerful the Khalifah's could not digest his success and they arrested him against the false charges. He was taken back to Arab where he was killed. People of Sind worshiped his statues. But the caliph's were not liberal, so they could not rule for a long time.

### **Conclusion**

The Arab invasion in Sind region was a great historical moment which brought social and economic development in the tribal region of Sind. The law and order was established. Peace and culture was developed. Education was spread. Trade with the Arab countries was set .The people of Sind adopted Islamic culture. Their belief that the Islam only believes in cruelty changed and the Islam was spread. The Brahmins were given respect and they were free to follow Hinduism. They repaired some Hindu temples which were destroyed in Islamic Invasion. Thus the Hindus developed respect for the Arabs. Hinduism and Islamic culture was followed side by side and the two religions had healthy exchanges of culture. A mix culture was spread which was known as Sindhi Culture. It has impact on the coming times. This period was not for a very long time. It ended with the death of Muhammad Bin Qasim but The Sind area had great benefits during this time.