

CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA AND KING ASHOKA

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of the chapter is:

- To study the rise of the Mauryan dynasty as a single paramount power.
- To study the achievements of Chandragupta Maurya as the founder of the dynasty.
- To study the achievements of Ashoka
- To lesser the Spread of Buddhism in and outside India
- To trace the causes of its decline.
- To study the society and economy of the times.



THE AGE OF THE MAURYS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2 ORIGIN

The kingdom of Magadha became prominent among the Janapadas from 6th century onwards. Under the able rule of Bimbisara (542 B.C.- 493 B.C.) and his son Ajatshatru (493 B.C.- 461 B.C.), Magadha became strong but soon weakened after the death of Udayan (460 B.C.-444 B.C.) and was conquered by the Shishunaga dynasty in 46 B. C.

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

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

1.3 SOURCES

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

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

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

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

Chandragupta Maurya and
King Ashoka

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

Early rise to power:

The rise of Chandragupta Maurya to power is controversial.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Extent of empire:

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

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

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

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

After ruling for about 25 years, he became a Jain ascetic and left his throne to his son Bindusara (296 bc-273 bc). He adopted Jainism, renounced the worldly affairs, became disciple of Jain Muni Bhadrabahu Swami and followed him to South India (Karnataka). He spent his last days, (298 B.C.) in the hill of south India that is called after him as Chandragiri, where the Gangas carved the tallest statue of Gomateshwara later during their rule.

V. A. Smith rightly comments on the greatness of Chandragupta and says, "*In the course of some eighteen years, Chandragupta had*

(i) expelled Macedonian garrisons from the Punjab and the Sindh,

(ii) repulsed and humbled Selucus, the conqueror, and (iii) established himself as undisputed supreme lord of at least all northern India and a large part of Arabia. These achievements airily entitle him to rank among the greatest and most successful Kings, known to history.

1.5 BINDUSARA

Chandragupta Maurya and
King Ashoka

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

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

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

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

Check Your Progress:

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

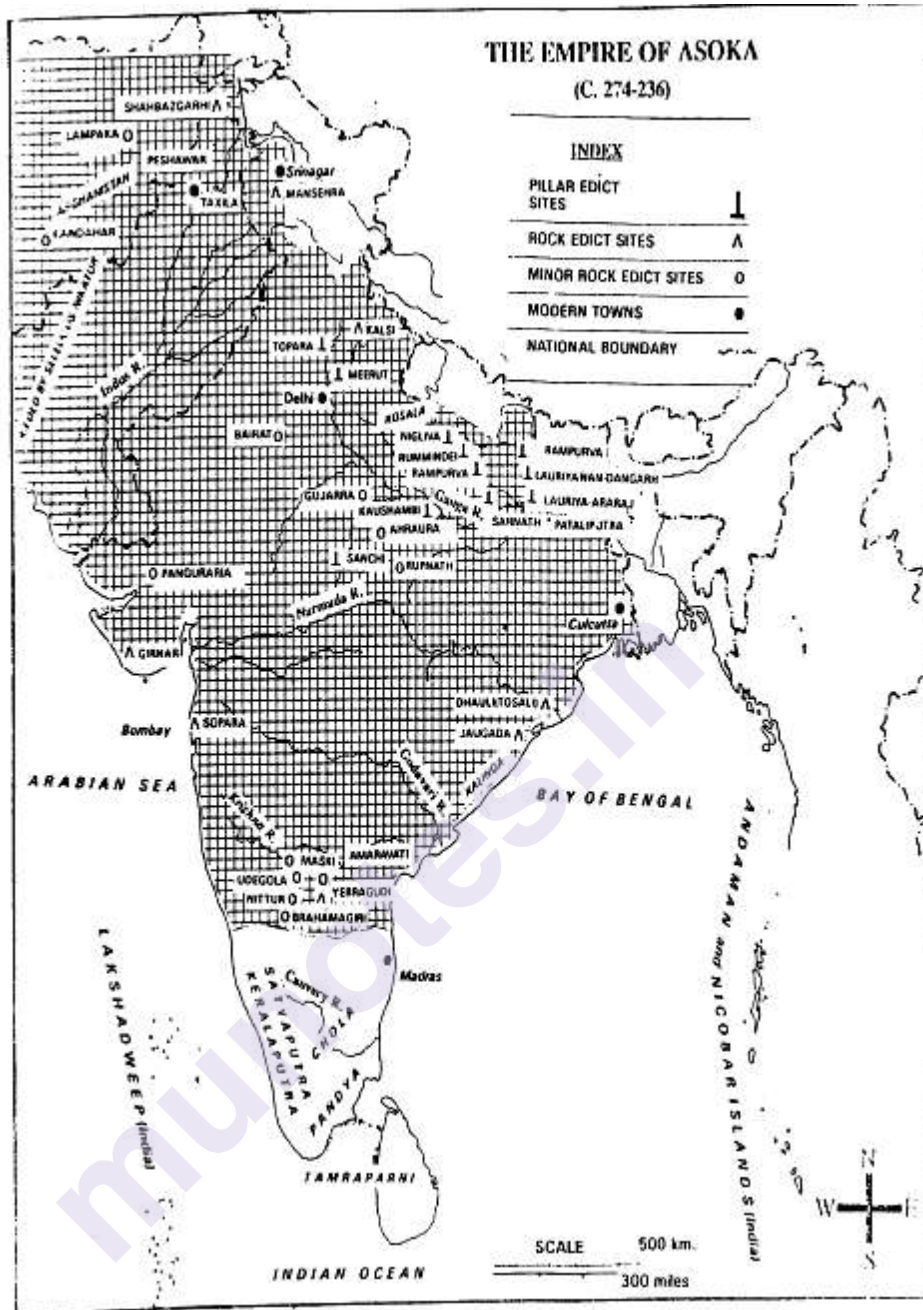
1.6 REGION OF ASHOKA MAURYA (273 BC - 232 BC)

Coronation:

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

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

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



1.7 EXTENSION OF EMPIRE

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



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



1.8 THE KALINGA WAR, 261 BC

However, the Kalinga war proved to be the turning point in the career of Ashoka and produced far reaching consequences not only in the history of India but also in south east Asia. In 260 BC, Ashoka was still pursuing the goal of uniting India by pushing control towards south. In the 6th year of his reign, he conquered Kalinga. It is said that during the war of Kalinga 1,00,000

persons were slain, 1,50,000 held captive. The sight of the massacre involved in his conquest deeply troubled Ashoka and affected his mind. Ashoka could not see the sufferings of the people who survived in the war.

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

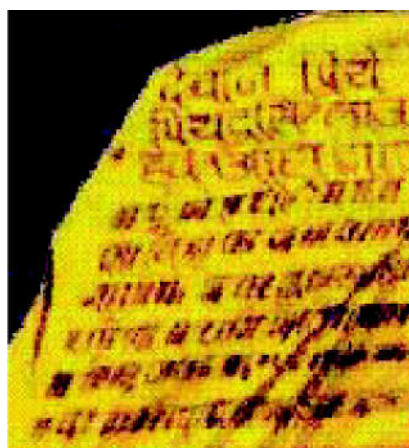
1.9 ASHOKA'S RELIGIOUS POLICY AND SPREAD OF BUDDHISM

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

Rock edicts and pillars:

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

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

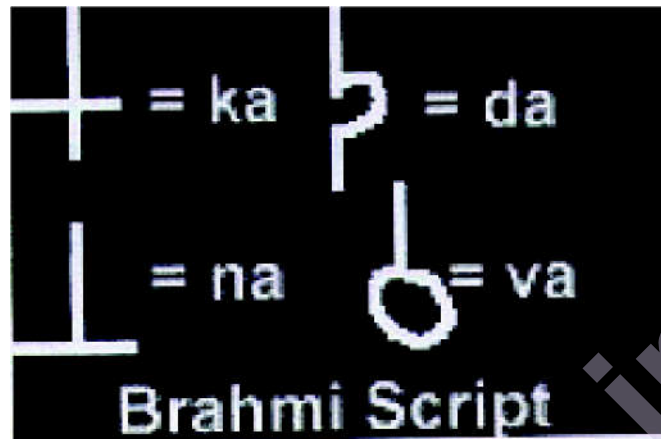


40-50 feet high) were scattered throughout India, as well as modern day Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan. These are referred to as the rock edicts.

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

Chandragupta Maurya and
King Ashoka

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



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

The teachings aimed at moulding the general behaviour of the people. Mostly Buddhist teachings counseled obedience to parents and those older in age; kindness towards employees and slaves; nonviolence towards animals - refraining from meat consumption and animal sacrifices.

The minor rock edict stated that,

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

The third rock edict says,

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

Dispatch of Missionaries to different countries:

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

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

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

1.10 A WELFARE STATE

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

Ashoka attempted a paternalistic society - one in which the state had immense power, but in which it was committed to take care of the people and guarantee a certain quality of life. Increased state power included expanded bureaucratic control and more taxes. The state used these taxes to carry out a number of public work developments. The Mauryan state paid for the digging of wells, irrigation projects, importing of herbs for medicinal purposes and even the planting of trees and creation of rest houses for travelers. State Finances were also spent in constructing sites of worship and preserving the texts of Buddhism.

Policy of toleration:

Even though Buddhism was protected, Ashoka did not repress Hinduism or Jainism. In fact, state funds were also used for improvement of sites for these religions. In his rock edicts, Ashoka expressed his loyalty to religious tolerance - this alone marks his rule as unique in human history. He in fact took delight in being called 'Devanampiya'.

1.11 FALL OF MAURYAS

Chandragupta Maurya and
King Ashoka

The great Mauryan Empire did not last long after the end of Ashoka's rule. This characteristic political trial of a state based on generous but powerful control, and a state based on dharma, collapsed within a few years after his death in 232 B.C. There is a controversy as to who was his successor but if Puranic tradition is to be believed, the immediate successor of Ashoka was his son Kunala. But his name is nowhere mentioned in the Chronicles of Kashmir. Most probably the Mauryan Empire broke up after his demise and it was divided among his sons. One thing is certain that the Mauryan country began to fall apart and finally ended in 185 B.C. when Pushyamitra Sunga, Commander in chief of Brihadatta, the last Mauryan king killed him and established the Sunga dynasty in its place.

The decline of this empire may be attributed to many causes.

- Seven kings (some say 10) followed Ashoka within a period of 50 years. Besides this, after Ashoka there were no strong kings to rule such a vast empire.
- According to some historians, the Brahmanas felt antagonized because their privileged position was affected by the policies of Ashoka. However, Ashoka was extremely tolerant towards other religions. There are evidences in the inscriptions that show his royal patronage to Brahmanas, Jains and Ajivikas.
- The two constant features of Indian political instability re-emerged local leaders trying to take back some of their regional and tribal power, and assaults by outside invaders from Central Asia. Various parts of the Empire became independent and soon the Mauryan Empire gave birth to smaller segments. There was entry of foreign ruling dynasties like the Sungas, the Kanvas, the Kushanas the Satavahanas, the sakas in India through northwestern frontier and Central Asia.
- Ashoka's transformation into a staunch supporter of Buddhism, his belief in the principle of non-violence, also played a role in the decline of the Mauryan Empire. During his reign, Ashoka gave up war and preached peace in the kingdom. It therefore may be assumed that since the later part of Ashoka's rule was devoid of wars, the military were inactive and this weakened them. The state also could not collect taxes properly, which was essential for keeping a vast army and the administrative network working.

Check Your Progress:

1. Trace the Career and achievements of Ashoka Maurya.

1.12 SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

The Indica of Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador at the court of Chandragupta Maurya in Pataliputra, gives a colourful description of the

Mauryan society under the rule of Chandragupta. He also expressed his admiration for the efficient administration of the empire. His book 'Indica' also presents a collection of comments of other Roman Greek travelers, speaking of the general prosperity, Megasthenes wrote, "The Indians, dressed in bright and rich colors, they liberally used ornaments and gems." He also spoke of the division of society according to occupation and the large number of religious sects and foreigners in the empire.

He further reported that agriculture thrived, water was abundant and mineral wealth was found in plenty. Most of the people worked on farms. They either had their own lands or worked as labourers on the land owned by the ruler. The state brought new lands under cultivation and developed irrigation facilities. The famous Sudarshana Lake was built during this time. Forestry was another occupation and the superintendent of forests was entrusted with the responsibility of developing their resources. Cattle rearing and artisanship were popular professions and a large number of people were engaged in activities like animal herding, weaving, pottery making, mining, shipbuilding, shoe making, fishing etc. Irons, copper, silver and gold were available in large quantity. Wood was used for construction purposes.

Traders of all trade were provided state security. Trade was managed by guilds that looked after both internal and external trade. The guilds gave security in their occupation and finance whenever needed. A network of roads, which served as important trade routes, crisscrossed the Mauryan Empire. The merchants and traders took their wares from one part of the empire to another. They carried goods to far-off places by both land and sea. A royal highway connecting Taxila and Pataliputra was built - a road, which survives to this day as the Grand Trunk road. Ships were used for international trade. At this time, India had good trade relations with Egypt, Greece, Syria, south East Asia and China.

A large section of the people worked in the Imperial army. They were employed under various Boards like cavalry, infantry and navy and were well paid and lived a comfortable life.

A few people worked as ministers in the royal court or were high officials, who looked after the various administrative districts of the empire. The society at that time also had Buddhist and Jain monks who generally lived in monasteries. The condition of women was not very good. Birth of a female child was not welcome. However they enjoyed parental property. Although unmarried women were allowed to pursue the study philosophy, they were deprived of the privilege after marriage. Especially the rulers and noblemen practiced polygamy. Prostitution as an institution existed in the society. Prostitutes were taxed and protected against abuse. Accomplished courtesans of the dancing girl class enjoyed a privileged position at the court. Slavery too existed. Slavery as an established institution was not only accepted in the law books but also in the inscriptions. But it appears that slaves were not mistreated. Megasthenes reports that he did not see any slaves in India. Caste system was widespread. However the kings were tolerant towards all

religions. Punishments generally were severe. The general principle was that, *'those whose guilt is believed to be true shall be subjected to torture.'*

Chandragupta Maurya and
King Ashoka

1.13 ART AND LITERATURE

Art and sculpture:

Art flourished during the Mauryan period. The palace of Chandragupta, the rock and pillar edicts, the cave paintings and such other monuments are the living examples of the magnificent art of those days.

The palace of Chandra Gupta Maurya at Pataliputra was magnificent with eighty pillars in the royal hall decorated with golden vines and silver birds. The palace had a beautiful park decorated with fishponds, ornamental trees and shrubs.

While perishable materials like wood and bricks were used in the construction of cities and palaces, permanent materials like stone were used for religious structures. The belief probably was that the religious structures being the house of Gods had to remain forever in contrast to the dwellings of the humans, which was transitory in nature. Yet the beauty of the cities was unique in character. According to the writings of the Greek diplomat Megasthenes, Pataliputra, the capital-surrounded by a wooden wall pierced by 64 gates and 570 towers-surpassed the splendors of contemporary Persian sites such as Susa and Ecbatana.

The Mauryans outclassed in the art of stone carving. Mauryan stone sculptures are characterized by a polished mirror-like surface, which has maintained its shine to this day. This is evident in the famous statue of a beautiful Yakshi, or a female figure unearthed at Didarganj in Patna.



Ashoka pillar

The sandstone pillars were highly polished to a mirror-like effect, and crowned by capitals of animal figures. Some bore an elephant, others a bull or a lion. They are made of fine single block (called monoliths) are so well polished that they give an appearance of metallic columns of 40-50 feet in height. Ten of such magnificent monolithic pillars are found in Delhi, Allahabad, Sanchi, Sarnath, Vaishali, and some other places. They were erected to spread the gospel of Buddhism.

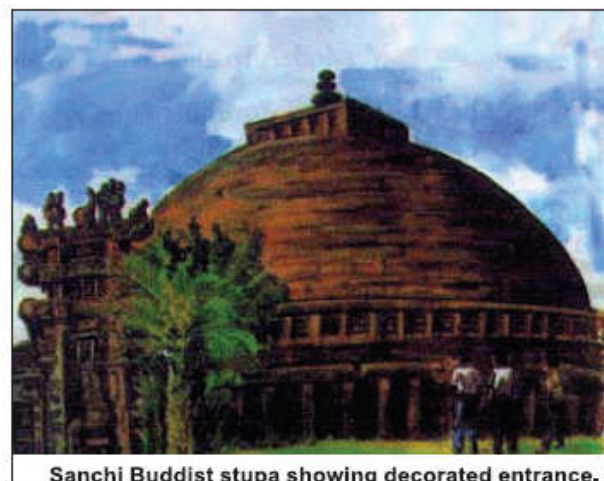
The floral designs on these pillars and the use of pillars themselves show Persian influence. It is said that the Persian palace at Persepolis was the motivation behind these pillars. The animal figures of lion, bull, or elephant, on uppermost part of the pillars also have this well polished exterior.

The Sarnath pillar by far is the best of the series. It is crowned with four lions standing back to back and facing all four directions and has a big wheel of Dharma with thirty-two spokes positioned on their shoulders. This unique pillar at *Sarnath* with four lions was chosen as the national emblem of India upon independence. The *chakra* at the bottom of the *Sarnath* pillar is acknowledged as the *Ashoka chakra* and is part of the Indian national flag.

It indeed reveals an extraordinary skill in art and sculpture. Dr.V.A.Smith commented on the beauty of the pillar thus, *'It would be difficult to find in any country an example of ancient animal sculpture, superior or even equal to this beautiful work of art which successfully combines realistic modeling with ideal dignity and is furnished in every detail, with perfect accuracy.'*

Mauryan artisans also carved out a number of rock-cut caves throughout the empire for the monks to live in. The earliest examples are the Barabar hill caves near Gaya. The caves were the products of immense patience and enormous skill.

The Stupas were built throughout the empire to enshrine the relics of Buddha. The Mahayana Buddhism influenced the stupas. They were the dome like structures made of brick and stone and are also known as chaityas. The general belief is that Lord Buddha ordered one of his disciples to erect a stupa over the remains of his body after cremation. It is said that during the time of Ashoka 84,000 stupas were built in India. Of these, the most famous are at Sanchi and Barhul. The Buddhist caves in the Barabar hills near Gaya in Bihar are famous. They also built a number of Buddhist stupas.



Sanchi Buddhist stupa showing decorated entrance.

Literature :

The main languages of the times were Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali. Some of the important literary works were Kautilya's Arthashastra, Panini's grammar, Bhadrabahu's Kalpasutra, Vatsyayana's Kamasutra. The very fact that Ashoka used writing as a means of medium to spread his ideas shows that the people were literate. The University of Taxila was famous. Usually preliminary education was imparted in the monasteries, gurukulas.

Check Your Progress:

1. Give an account of the main features of Mauryan administration.

1.14 SUMMARY

It is thus found that the rise of mahajanapadas resulted in some dynasties becoming more important than others. In the midst of competition, emerged a single paramount power— namely the Mauryan Empire which laid the foundation of a new rule with a strong government.

It is indeed difficult to explain satisfactorily the causes of the decline of the Mauryan Empire by presenting several occurrences like military inactivity, Brahminical resentment, popular uprisings or economic pressures. Dr. R. K. Mookerji commented on the downfall thus,

"But even if Ashoka's policy brought about the downfall of the Mauryan Empire, India has no cause to regret the fact. That Empire would have fallen to pieces sooner or later, even if Ashoka had followed the policy blood and iron of his grandfather. But the moral ascendancy of Indian culture over a large part of the civilized world, which Ashoka was mostly instrumental in bringing about, remained for centuries, as a monument of her glory and has not altogether vanished even now after the lapse of more than two thousand years."

The Mauryan empire founded by Chandragupta Maurya and strengthened by his illustrious grandson Ashoka gave the country a much needed political unity, an appreciable system of administration, cultural and commercial contacts with other countries, economic prosperity and above all for

preaching ideas of international peace and brotherhood, religious tolerance and nonviolence.

1.15 QUESTIONS

1. Why did Ashoka embrace Buddhism? What efforts did he take for the spread of Buddhism far and wide?
2. Write Short notes on:
 - a) Sources of Mauryan Study.
 - b) Ashoka's Inscriptions
 - c) Kalinga war
 - d) Ashoka and Buddhism
 - e) Causes for the fall of Mauryas.
 - f) Social and economic development during the Mauryan rule.
 - g) Art and architecture.

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MAURYAN ADMINISTRATION

Unit Structure:

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Mauryan Polity
- 2.3 King
- 2.4 Council of Ministers
- 2.5 Administration
- 2.6 Summary
- 2.7 Questions
- 2.8 Additional Reading

2.0 OBJECTIVES

- To introduce students to Mauryan Administration
- To understand Mauryan Polity.
- To orient learners about Mauryan Judicial and Military organization.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chandragupta Maurya not only founded a vast empire, but also established an effective administrative system that helped the empire to last for a very long time. The basic administrative values and machinery was set up by Chandragupta Maurya. It continued without any major transformation except under Ashoka. Ashoka tried to liberalize the entire administrative structure by elaborating the public duties of the state officials. The Mauryan Empire had an efficient and centralised administrative system. The chief source of information regarding administration under the Mauryan Empire is Chanakya's work, Arthashastra. Megasthenes also gives some information in his book Indica.

Check your progress:

- 1] Describe the contribution of Chandragupta Maurya in administration.
- 2] Examine how Ashoka tried to reform the Mauryan administration.

2.2 MAURYAN POLITY

The Arthashastra of Kautilya (Chanakya), the Indica of Megasthenes and the various edicts of Ashoka provide useful evidence regarding the administrative system of the Mauryas. The Arthashastra is the best source of political theory. According to some writers the Mauryan administration was a military rule or centralized despotism. But a close scrutiny of the different aspects of the Mauryan political organization makes it clear that it was a constitutional monarchy which had decentralization. There were certain checks and balances on the monarch so that he could not become absolute or autocratic.

There was a council of ministers known as *mantriparishad*. There were two popular assemblies known as *paura* and *janapada* to which the king was responsible. He consulted them on important matters of policy and administration. Besides, the Mauryan kings followed the principles laid down by the Arthashastra of Kautilya or Chanakya. This could be considered as the dharma of the king. Kautilya says, "In the happiness of the subjects lies the happiness of the king; in their welfare, his; he should not consider good that which pleases himself; he should consider good that which pleases his subjects." Ashoka highlighted the same ideal when he said, "All men are my children; just as I wish every welfare and happiness for my children, both in this world and the next, I wish the same thing for all men." Thus, the ideal of happiness and welfare of the whole community was the guiding spirit of the Mauryan polity.

Check your progress:

- 1] Describe the Mauryan administration.
- 2] Describe the guidelines for the king mentioned in the Arthashastra.

2.3 KING

Kautilya was the chief advocate of the monarchical form of government. To Kautilya the king was the spirit and the state was its expression. The welfare of the state depended upon the kingship and it automatically became the symbol of sovereignty. According to Kautilya, kingship was the embodiment of the unity of the interests of the various sections of the community. It was the guiding authority which regulated all political and political relations.

The king was the ultimate head of the state and administration. He performed legislative, executive, judicial and military functions of the state. His chief task was to protect his subjects and work for their welfare. From Megasthenes we come to know a great deal of the king's own part in the administration. Megasthenes states that, "the king does not sleep in day-time but remains in the court the whole day for the purpose of judging causes and other public business which was not interrupted even when the hour arrived for massaging his body. Even when the king has his hair combed and dressed, he has no respite from public business. At that time

he gives audience to his ambassadors.” The twenty-four hours of each day and night were divided into eight parts and in each part he performed different duties. The king lived in a large and comfortable palace which was highly praised by Megasthenes. Elaborate precautions were taken to ensure the safety of the king’s person within his palace. All personal services were performed by women whose trustworthiness and efficiency had been tested in advance.

The princes were given careful training and employed in offices suited to their capability and interest. Kautilya lays down the procedure for imparting training to the princes with a view to enable them to take up the responsibility of kingship. He was of the opinion that an indisciplined prince should not be put on the throne even if he happened to be the only son of the king. His son or a daughter’s son should be preferred to him. Bad tempered princes were to be put under restraint and kept away from the throne.

Check your progress:

- 1] Describe the duties of the king.
- 2] Examine the treatment given to the prince.

2. 4 COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

There was a Council of Ministers to advise the king known as *Mantriparishad*. It was also a kind of check on the absolute power of the king. However the powers of the council of ministers itself were limited due to the fact that it was the king himself who appointed the council of ministers. Kautilya in his Arthashastra stressed three important qualities that a minister had to possess. These were the qualities of birth, integrity and intelligence. Emphasizing the importance of the council of ministers to advise the king on the administration of the state, Kautilya writes, “Sovereignty is possible only with assistance. A single wheel can never move. Hence, he shall employ ministers and hear their opinion”. Further he says that the king cannot steer the ship of the state without the assistance of ministers. Ministers are the eyes of the king. Thus, “all kinds of administrative measures are preceded by deliberations in a well-formed council”

Kautilya classified the ministers in two categories, the *mantris* and the *amatyas*. The *mantris* constituted the inner circle of the council of ministers which corresponded to the modern cabinet. They included the prime minister, the *purohita*, the commander-in-chief and the crown prince (*Yuvaraja*). The *amatyas* formed the outer circle of the council of ministers. The *amatyas* corresponded to the ministers of state of the modern cabinet. The policies were formulated by the *mantris* where as they were implemented by the *amatyas*. In addition to the *amatyas*, the council of ministers included the leaders of the popular assemblies, the *paura-janapada*. They were designated as *mahamatya*. The all-inclusive larger council resembled a senate.

Kautilya was in favour of a small cabinet. The normal size of the cabinet was twelve, sixteen or twenty members depending on the need of the time. According to Kautilya it “shall consist of as many members as the needs of his dominion require.” Each of the ministers was in charge of one or a few administrative departments. One of them was appointed as the prime minister. They were appointed by the king on the basis of merit and they could be dismissed by him at his wish. The ministers could issue orders, written and oral, as mentioned in the sixth Rock Edict of Ashoka. Every proposal had to be scrutinized by the minister before it was accepted or rejected by the king.

The ministers were directly responsible to the king for the discharge of their duties. They also had an indirect responsibility to the people. By their character and work they tried to win the approval of the people. The prime minister had greater responsibility for the good government of the empire. That was why Kautilya assigned second position to him after the king.

Check your progress:

- 1] Discuss the duties of the council of ministers.
- 2] Examine the roles of mantris and amatyas.

2.5 ADMINISTRATION

The Mauryan administration was carried on by a highly organized, efficient and centralized bureaucracy. Besides the ministers who were in charge of the different departments, Kautilya mentions two very high officials, the collector general (*samaharta*) and the treasurer and keeper of things (*sannidhata*). The Mauryan Empire was divided into four provinces with the imperial capital at Pataliputra. From Ashokan Edicts, the name of the four provincial capitals were Tosali (in the east), Ujjain in the west, Suvarnagiri (in the south), and Taxila (in the north). At the centre of the structure was the king who had the power to enact laws. Kautilya advises the King to propagate dharma when the social order based on the Varnas and Ashramas (stages in life) perishes.

According to Megasthenese, the empire exercised a military of 600,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, and 9,000 war elephants. For the purpose of internal and external security, there was a vast espionage system to keep a watch on the officials and messengers went to and fro. Kings appointed officials to collect taxes from herders, farmers, traders and craftsmen etc. The king was the centre of administrative superstructure and king used to select ministers and high officials. Administrative structure was as follows:

King assisted by Mantriparishad (council of ministers) whose members included Mantriparishad Adhyaksha and below him was as following:

Yuvaraj: The crown prince

Purohita: The chief priest

The Senapati: The commander in chief

Amatya: Civil servants and few other ministers.

Scholars suggest that Mauryan Empire was further divided into various departments with important officials:

Revenue department:- Important officials: Sannidhata: Chief treasury, Samaharta: collector general of revenue.

Military department: Megasthenese mentions a committee with six subcommittees for coordinating military activity of these, one looked after the navy, the second managed transport and provisions, and the third was responsible for foot-soldiers, the fourth for horses, the fifth for chariots and the sixth for elephants.

Espionage Department: Mahamatyapasarpa controlled Gudhapurushas (secret agents)

Police department: The jail was known as Bandhangara and it was different from lock-up called Charaka. There were police head quarters in all principal centres.

Provincial and Local Administration: important officials: Pradeshika: modern district magistrates, Sthanika: tax collecting officer under Pradeshika, Durgapala: governor of fort, Antapala: Governor of frontier, Akshapatala: Accountant general, Lipikaras: Scribes, Gopas: responsible for accountants etc.

Municipal Administration: Important officials: Nagaraka: incharge of city administration, Sita- Adhyaksha: Supervisor of agriculture, samastha-Adhyaksha: superintendent of market, Navadhyaksha: Superintendent of ships, Sulkaadhyaksha: Collector of tolls, Lohadhyaksha: Superintendent of Iron, Akaradhyaksha: Superintendent of mines and Pauthavadhyaksha: Superintendent of weight and measures etc.

Megasthenes referred for six committees of which five were to look after Pataliputra's administration. Industries, Foreigners, Registration of birth and deaths, Trade, Manufacture and sale of goods and Collection of sales tax were under the control of administration.

Check your progress:

- 1] Discuss the various departments of Mauryan administration.
- 2] Discuss the municipal administration under the Mauryas.

2. 6 SUMMARY

The Mauryas not only built a vast empire, covering practically in the entire subcontinent and extending beyond it in the north-west, but also integrated it by adopting a suitable administrative system. The administrative set-up established by Chandragupta Maurya (c. 325 – 300

BC), the founder of the Mauryan dynasty, continued under his successors and no change was felt necessary except that Ashoka tried to liberalise it further and elaborated the public duties of the state officials. The basic principles of Mauryan administration remained the same till the weaker Mauryas lost their hold over the administration. Three major sources viz., Kautilya's Arthashastra, Megasthenes' Indica and Ashokan inscriptions provide necessary information on Mauryan administration. On the basis of the Arthashastra and the Indica many scholars put forward the idea of a highly centralised and uniform structure of Mauryan administration. This idea was prevalent for a long time but now scholars like Romila Thapar, Gerard Fussman have modified this view. In general Mauryan state was a monarchy with a powerful king at the centre of the political system. The Mauryan kings were guided by the Council of Ministers and followed the advice of the Arthashastra. They regarded the welfare and interests of their subjects more important than their own interests (Yoga-khema). Ashoka declared in one of his inscriptions that all his subjects were like his children and he was most anxious to promote their spiritual and temporal well-being. It indicates that the idea of paternal kingship became popular during the reign of Ashoka.

2. 7 QUESTIONS

1. Analyze the Mauryan Polity.
2. Discuss the duties of the King.
3. Examine the responsibilities of the council of ministers.

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POST MAURYAN DYNASTIES - SUNGAS, KUSHANAS AND SATAVAHANAS

Unit Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction: The age of new Invasions
- 3.2 The Sunga dynasty
- 3.3 The Kanvas and the Satavahanas
- 3.4 Kujula Kadaphises
- 3.5 Kadaphises II
- 3.6 Kanishka, a gallant warrior
- 3.7 Kanishka and Buddhism
- 3.8 Science and Literature
- 3.9 Importance of the coins
- 3.10 Successors of Kanishka
- 3.11 The Satavahanas
- 3.12 The Sakas
- 3.13 The Indo-Greeks and The Indo-Parthians
- 3.14 Summary
- 3.15 Questions
- 3.16 Additional Reading

3.0 OBJECTIVES

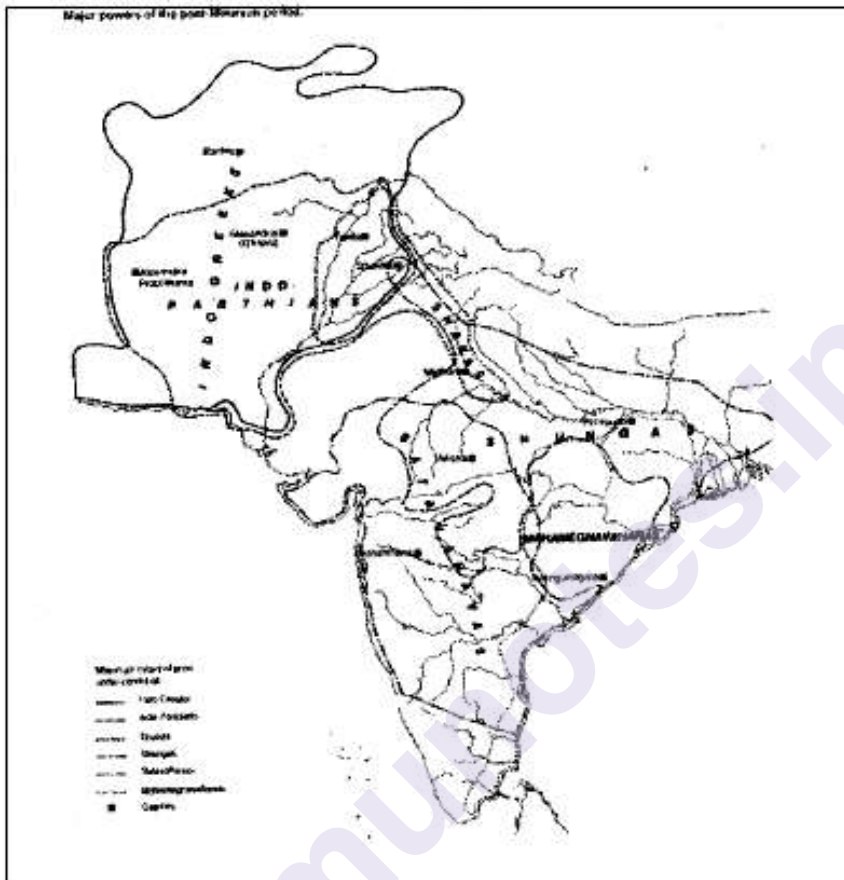
In this chapter an attempt is made to understand the political, social and economic conditions of India during this period, to assess the interaction of these foreign groups with Indians, to understand the absorption of these foreigners into the Indian society leading to the fusion of culture, an analytical study is made of the cultural achievements of the period.

- a) To study the history of Kushanas.
- b) To assess the interaction of this dynasty with Indians and its spread of Buddhism
- c) To learn the cultural achievements.
- d) To assess the impact of the Satavahanas Indo-Greek and Saka rule on India.

3.1 INTRODUCTION: THE AGE OF NEW INVASIONS:

Post Mauryan Dynasties -
Sungas, Kushanas and
Satavahanas

The emergence of the Mauryan dynasty in India had facilitated the consolidation of political and economic unity. For the first time India had taken the shape of a nation because almost all parts were under the control of the Mauryas except the Southern end of India. But with the closing stages this glorious rule, a brilliant phase of the history of India ended.



After Ashoka, the successors were feeble and the Mauryan dynasty was divided into small principalities. The picture was of instability and insecurity everywhere. There was no strong central authority to control the newly sprung states, which had declared their independence. The internal disturbances offered a golden opportunity for the foreign invaders to seize different parts of India. Among the many foreigners who entered India the outstanding ones were the Sungas, the Kanvas, The Satavahanas, the Indo-Greeks, the Indo-Parthians, the Kushanas. These events on the northwestern borders were to have a profound effect both on her own history but also on that of Asia. A distinctive feature of the coming of the new lot of people here was that they came, adopted themselves to the changed situations, influenced the Indians by theirs and finally were absorbed in the Indian culture themselves. This indeed proves the flexibility and strength of Indian culture.

The sources for the study of the various dynasties are inadequate and not well documented.

The Kushanas:

Kushana Rulers	Era
Heraios	5 – 45 BC
Kujulu Kapdphises	30 – 65 AD
Vima Takto	80 – 95 AD
Vima Kadphises	95 – 18 AD
Kaniishka I	18 – 70 AD
Huvishka I	70 – 180 AD
Vasu Deva I	180 – 210 AD
Kanishka II	210 – 230 AD
Vashishka	230 – 250 AD
Kanishka III	255 – 275 AD
Vaskushana	275 – 290 AD
Vasu Deva II	290 – 310 AD
Shaka	325 – 345 AD
Xandesh	335 – 336 AD
Vashishka	350 – 360 AD
Vasu Deva III	360 – 365 AD
Kipunada	350 – 375 AD

The next important chapter in India's history begins with the a of another wave of Central Asian tribes called the Yueh-chih. The Yueh-Chihs belonged to the pastoral nomad state, which is now known as Inner Mongolia. This nomadic horde was the members of the Xiongnu association. They were China's chief foes during the Han period. The Great Wall of China was built to defend the territory that the Hans had occupied from Xiongnu.

So, because of the chaotic and unpredictable conditions on the borders of China, The Yeuhchi tribe was forced to leave the country. They moved to Central Asia and settled in Bactria, Parthia and Afghanistan, leaving back the fertile plains of Xiongnu. Here, they came into contact with the Greek culture and steadily but surely lost their nomadic habits and fitted well to this culture. The Yueh-Chih nobles intermarried the local rich women of high status creating several powerful clans.

Gradually they were divided into five branches. One of these branches — Kouel Chougang (Kushans) — was superior to all. About the middle of the first century A.D. one of those tribes, they overpowered the others and founded the Kushan state. The Kushanas, however, did not do away with Sakas entirely, and allowed them to continue to be under the rule of their princes and show loyalty to Kushana rulers.

3.2 THE SUNGA DYNASTY

Post Mauryan Dynasties -
Sungas, Kushanas and
Satavahanas

The important sources for the Sunga period are available in the inscriptions from Ayodhya, Vidisha, and Bharut. The other sources are Gargi Samhita, the Divyavadana, the Puranas, patanjali's Mahabhyasa, Kalidasa's Malavikagnimitra, Banabhatta's Harshacharita.

Pushyamitra Sunga was the commander-in-chief of the last Mauryan ruler Brihadatta. He became the ruler of the Magadha and neighbouring territories after killing the last king in 185 B.C. According to the Vedic texts and the writings of Panini, he belonged to the clan of Bharadwaja Brahmanas. There is a reference to the assassination of Brihadatta by Pushyamitra in the Harshacharita of Banabhatta and the Puranas.

The kingdom of Pushyamitra was extended upto Narmada in the south, and controlled Jalandhar and Sialkot in the Punjab in the northwestern regions. As far as the northwestern boundary is concerned it cannot be stated with reliability that they belonged to him. But tradition acclaims Pushyamitra to be the ruler of these regions also.

The Sungas governed the kingdom with the help of a mantriparishad. This council existed both in the center and the provinces. The Viceroys administered the provinces. During the Sunga rule Brahmanism revived its vigour. The Bhagavata form of religion prevailed. The Bharbat stupa and the ivory works in its fine manner prove the promotion of art. Patanjali's Mahabhashya is an example of the successful literature of the Sunga.

Pushyamitra had to be on guard in the northwest because of the constant Greek threats. He had to fight two wars the first one with Demetrios, king of Bactria and the second one with King Manender. During the first war, Demetrios conquered Taxila and Sindh and left his lieutenants Manender and Appolodotos to look after the regions respectively. The second war was fought between Manender and Vasumitra the grandson of Pushyamitra. The Greek General defeated Vasumitra in the war. Pushyamitra must have been an aged man and his grandson must have looked after the kingdom during the second war with the Greeks.

There is a reference to the two horse sacrifices performed by Pushyamitra in the Ayodhya Inscriptions. Pushyamitra died after ruling for 36 years (187-81 BC). His Son **Agnimitra** succeeded him. This prince is the hero of a famous drama by India's greatest playwright, Kalidasa. Agnimitra used to hold his court in the city of Vidisa, modern Besnagar in Eastern Malwa. Not much is known about the king through either the inscriptions or the coins. The next ruler was his son **Vasumitra** during whose time the Greek invader defeated him on the banks of river Sindhu.

However the power of the Sungas gradually weakened. It is said that the Sunga dynasty had a line of ten rulers, the last of them being **Devabhuti**. He was supposed to be a luxury loving person who neglected his duties. Vasudeva, the minister of Devabhuti got him killed by a female attendant while he was merrymaking and grabbed the throne.

Thus the Sunga period though is less reflected as a great role in Indian history yet is significant in the matter of its administration, religion, art and literature. As far as the administration was concerned, they neither contributed much to political unity nor introduce any novel administrative ideas. But the kings to a certain degree succeeded in defending the northwestern frontier against recurring invasions of the Greeks.

The achievements of the Sungas in the field of art are worth mentioning. Some of them are the vihara at Bhaga near Poona, the stupa at Amaravati, the no 9 chaitya hall at Ajanta, Bharut and Bodhgaya monuments. Human figures played a prominent role in the Sunga art. One can see them in the superb figures of Virudha Yaksha, Gangeya Yaksha, Chakravaka Nagarjuna, Sirima Devata, Suchiloma Yaksha and such others.

Hinduism especially, Vaisnavism revived during this Period. Vedic rites were invigorated. The yagnas, which had taken a back seat under the Mauryas, came to be patronized. H.C. Raychaudhari rightly says that, *'they (The Sungas) heralded the dawn of a new Brahminical movement which reached its climax in the spacious days of the Guptas.'*

3.3 THE KANVAS AND THE SATAVAHANAS

The last ruler of the Sunga dynasty **Devabhuti** was overthrown Vasudeva Kanva, his minister in 75 B.C. The extent of Kanva territory was confined to the areas of Sunga rule. However, the Kanva ruler seems to have allowed the Sungas to carry on their rule in anonymity in a parts of their four dominions.

Magadha was their main center of power. This period is said to have witnessed the rule of four kings extending to a period about 45 years. **Susarman** was the last ruler of the Kanva dynasty. He was slain by the Andhra prince whose identity is not known.

Check Your Progress:

1. Discuss the contribution of the Sunga dynasty in the History of ancient India.

3.4 KUJULA KADAPHISES

In about 25 AD, they overpowered the Saka- Pahlava or Parthians who ruled Hindu Kush under the leadership of **Kujula Kadaphises** (30 A.D - 65 A.D) and founded one of the greatest empires of India. It was one of the outstanding and illustrious dynasties of ancient India, both culturally and territorially. Kadaphises conquered Gandhara, southern Afghanistan and Parthia. He struck his own coins.

3.5 KADAPHISES II

After his death his grandson Vima Kadphises commonly known as **Kadaphises II** (65 A.D. to 75 A.D.) who made Kushan a paramount power of northern India. His reign saw emergence of Kushan Empire when he

conquered North western regions, Punjab, and large territories of Gangetic valley also. (Pakistan and modern Afghanistan) and northern India. Vima Kadphises revolutionized the monetary system by introducing gold coins to the existing copper coinage. The issue of gold coins reveals two important things, one the prosperity of his empire and the other his conversion to Saivism. The coins show that he came under influence of Hinduism and took opportunity to proclaim himself Mahishwara, another name for Lord Shiva, on his coins.

The Kushana Empire's trade of rare goods with China, Central Asia, Egypt and Rome explains the wealthy and prosperous monetary economy of Kushanas. Ample evidences of trade are available through coins and inscriptions which made their economy strong and kingdom wealthy and prosperous. Vima mostly used one deity, Shiva standing and with bull Nandi on reverse of his coins.



Kanishka was the most famous of the Kushan kings. The dates of his mounting the throne and his relation with the earlier Kushana rulers both are debatable issues. Some of the historians are of the opinion that Kanishka was never related to Vima Kadphises, Kanishka was not strictly a saka but the term is loosely applied as he is known to have founded an era. It is not also not known how he became the king but according to some scholars he ascended the throne in A.D 78 while according to some others he mounted the throne in 18 A. D and yet others feel that he became the king in 120 A.D. of popular Saka era (78 AD) to Kanishka while some others direct it to Vima. However, present opinions of most competent authorities favour a date as 78 A.D.

3.6 KANISHKA, A GALLANT WARRIOR

When Kanishka rose to the throne, his kingdom consisted of **Afghanistan, Sind, Punjab** and portions of the former **Parthian** and **Bactrian** kingdoms. His empire extended from the northwest and Kashmir, to the large parts of the **Gangetic** valley, Kanishka also defeated the Saka ruler **Chastan of Ujjain** who accepted his suzerainty. He seized three territories belonging to the Chinese namely, **Tashkand, Khotan and Yarkhand**. Kanishka also triumphed over the Parthian king Khusru. He subjugated the **Kashmir valley** and is acclaimed of laying the foundation of town, which

he named it as Kanishkapura. Kalhan, a poet and historian of Kashmir, who wrote a famous chronicle of Kings of Kashmir, 'Rajatarangini', a crucial historic document, testified that Kashmir was part of his empire. Thus Kushan Empire was at its peak in terms of area during his reign.

He maintained two capitals one at Purushpura which is now situated in Pakistan and the second one at Mathura in west Uttar Pradesh. He seems to have endorsed the title of Kaiser or Caesar on himself.

3.7 KANISHKA AND BUDDHISM



Gandhara Buddha

Kanishka's father was a saivite and his grandfather was a Buddhist. Kanishka was a patron of Mahayana Buddhism. Kanishka embraced Buddhism towards the middle of his reign. He is said to have been Zoroastrian before he embraced Buddhism. He spent funds in spreading Buddhism. **Mahayana** was the new form of Buddhism that was followed during this period with the essential points of modifications, which were as follows:

Hinayana (the lesser Path)	Mahayana (the great Path)
Buddha worshipped by symbols.	Buddha deified as God and worshipped in the form of statue.
No intermediaries in worship.	Bodhisattvas as inter-medddiaries between the Buddha and the followers.
Direct worship to symbols.	Bodhisattvas worshipped with flowers, gifts to attain salvation.
Emphasis on good actions.	Image worship with elaborate rituals like prayers, acts of sacrifice, helping the needy etc.

3.8 SCIENCE AND LITERATURE

Post Mauryan Dynasties -
Sungas, Kushanas and
Satavahanas

Apart from being a successful warrior, Kanishka was certainly a man of great taste and superior knowledge. He was a great patron of art and literature. During his reign, a large number of Buddhist monasteries, sculptures were built in and around Gandhara and Mathura region. Old monasteries were repaired and many new ones were built. Inscriptions and coins bear well-expressed evidence to the king's keenness and enthusiasm for the spread of Buddhism. The most celebrated monument of the many is the great Chaitya (Shah-ji-kidheri stupa) at his capital Purushpur. Chinese travellers Fa Hien and Huan Tsang wrote detailed account of Kanishka's temple building activity in Taxila and Gandhara.

Thus **Mathura and Gandhara** were centres of art. Mathura developed its distinct Indian style of art and the images were based on prototypes of an Indian Yaksha (nature deity). whereas the Gandhara school was influenced by Greco-Roman philosophies. A new form of art — Gandhara Art — was developed. Beautiful images of Buddha were developed in a Greek-Roman style.

The two styles interacted to develop into classical Buddha sculptures of the Gupta period where the hast mudras (hand-postures) symbolised universal piety - preaching law, calling the earth to witness, meditation and bestowing peace and benediction.

His coinage also bear eloquent testimony to his zeal for Hinduism and Buddhism. Lord Shiva and bull, Nandi were commonly portrayed on his gold and copper coins, but the most important numismatic contribution of him is as follows: he was the first ruler who minted coins with the image of Buddha. The coins depicting Buddha are extremely rare. There exist only 5 gold coins in the world having portrait of Buddha. There are some copper coins, which show Buddha, which are also rare. All these coins have been minted by Kanishka, most likely to commemorate building of great stupa of Purushpur. There are two types of Buddha's coins, Standing Buddha, Gautama, and sitting Buddha, Maitraya.



Gautama Buddha as seen in the ——— Gold Dinar of Kanishka

3.9 IMPORTANCE OF THE COINS

Undoubtedly all the Kushana emperors used their coinage for the propaganda of their own superiority and the possession of extraordinary

talents. The notion of showing the ruler on the coins was absent in India and all the earlier dynasties minted coins demonstrating only the symbols, which were in the form of punch marked coins. It was the Kushana rulers who popularized this idea. Certainly their coins are perhaps the finest evidence we possibly will have of this renowned dynasty.

The coins reveal a great deal about the rulers, coins were used as a media to propagate Kings superiority. They reveal how the images of kings wished to be seen, and the religious practice. Coins were the carriers for official propaganda of greatness of Kings and deities of the empire. Kushanas devised their coins with various Gods of culturally, ethnically diverse population of the empire. It is evident through Kanishka's coins which carried images of Buddha in several poses, that he had been a great patron of Mahayana **Buddhism**. Vasudeva's coins reveal that he is a convert to **Hinduism** and a devotee of Mahisvara (Oesho). The motif of the shoulder fire on Vima, VasudevaI, Huvishka and Kanishka-I coins, symbolizes the super natural power of the kings (connection with Athso - the Fire God).

Trade:

During this period, Buddhism spread in China and Central India. Kushanas enriched the cultural ethos of India. They linked Central Asian, Chinese, India and Persian cultures and trade. They opened and protected silk road, a major trade path for caravans carrying silk and other prominent goods from China to India and Middle east (especially, spices, textile, medicines through ships bound for the Roman empire). The inflow to Kushana empire was gold coins, Greek wine and slaves. The Roman history records that ambassadors were sent to the court of Trajan (98-117 AD) by the Indian kings, but it is unclear whether it is by Vima or Kanishka.

Literature:

Kanishka was a great patron of art and literature. His court was adorned by many scholars like Ashvaghosha, Vasumitra, Nagarjuna and Charaka. Kanishka also patronized contemporary intellectual's sage 'Shakya-muni' who had introduced him to Buddhism.

Kanishka summoned a great council of contemporary scholars and philosophers to examine the Buddhist scriptures and prepare commentaries on them. Ashvaghosha was a great poet and a master of music. He has been credited for being the author of three dramas namely, Buddha Charita (biography of the Buddha), Sariputra, and Saundarananda. Charak was a great physician and he wrote a book Charakamhita which is based on the Ayurvedic system of medicine.

Sanskrit became an official language and many works of the Buddhists were composed in Sanskrit. Nagarjuna was a Buddhist scholar, philosopher and a scientist of the time. He wrote Madhyamika Sutra in which he discusses the relativity theory. Susruta was a renowned physician. The other celebrated personalities were Mathara who was a political scientist and Agesilans an engineer.

3.10 SUCCESSORS OF KANISHKA

Post Mauryan Dynasties -
Sungas, Kushanas and
Satavahanas

Kanishka's immediate successor was Vashishka who was then succeeded by Huvishka. Huvishka-I is supposed to have ruled the Kushana empire from 70-180 AD. There is a controversy as the last ruler of the dynasty although the scholars have agreed upon Vasudeva I being the last great king of Kushanas. Probably he was the last powerful king of the dynasty because the lineage of rulers shows that there were successors after him. What is to be noted here is that after Vasudeva, Kushana empire had started declining and soon after his death it completely disintegrated into few small kingdoms.

The descendants of Kanishka namely Vashishka, Huvishka I, Vaskushana, Vasudeva-II, Shaka, Xandesh, Vashishka, VasudevaIII, held onto power by holding the Kabul valley, though the Kushana power had declined totally. Kipunada (350-375AD.) seems to be the last king who was the descendent of the little Kushanas. The rule of Kushans ended almost at the same time as that of the Satavahans in the south. By fourth century AD this dynasty went into total obscurity with advent of mighty when the Kushans were overthrown by the Sassanians of Persia in the north-west and the Guptas in the north.

Check Your Progress:

1. Outline the career and the achievements of Kanishka.

Some Kushana coins : Vima Kadphises



Vima Kadphises 90-100 AD

Gold Dinar, Possibly the First Gold Coin of India

Obverse : King emerging of cluds

Reverse : Shiva standing holding trident

Weight : 8.0 gm Reference : GK # 19

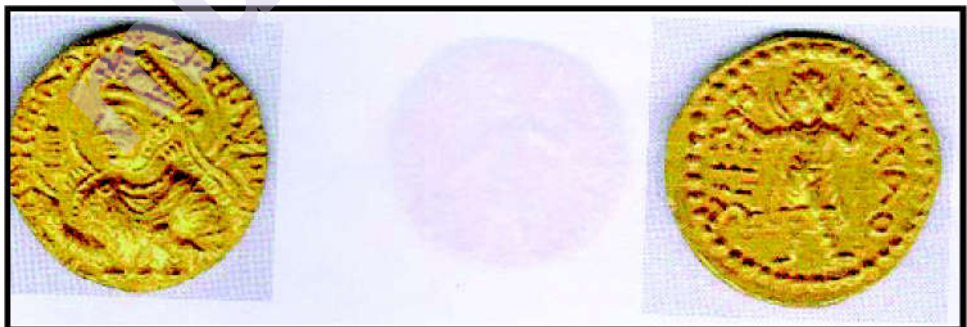
Kanishka (100-126 AD)



Kanishka I (the great) 100-126 AD Gold Dinar, Obverse: King Sacrificing at Altar, Reverse : Four Armed Shiva Weight : 7.9 gm ,GH # 55.



Kanishka I (the great)
100-126 AD
Copper Tetradrachm
Obverse : King sacrificing at altar
Reverse : " Buddha Maitraya seated
Weight : 16 gm.



Huvishka 126-164 AD
Gold Dinar Obverse : Bust of King
Reverse : Lunar god Maa with crescent on shoulder
Weight : 7.9 gm
BMC # 30 Very Rare



Kanishka II
200-222 AD
Obverse : King Sacrificing at Altar
Reverse : Three headed Shiva
Gold Stater
Weight : 7.8 gm.
GK # 635.7



I

Kushana Coin

Vasudeva (164-200 AD)



Vasudeva I
164-200 AD
Gold Stater
Weight : 8.0 gm MAC # 3389

3.11 THE SATAVAHANAS

The Satavahanas were also called Andhras. There is a controversy regarding their ancestry. The Aitareya Brahmana claims the Andhras as, the exiled and degenerated sons of Viswamitra. Scholars are of the opinion that the original home of the Andhras Andhra Bhrityas was the Bellary district. Others claim their records to be found in the Northern Deccan and central India. Ashokan and Nasik inscriptions mention the Andhras to be Brahmins and as Dravidians who joined the Aryan fold later. While Roy Chaudhari agrees that they belonged to the Brahmin fold Dr. Gopal Charya holds the view that they were Kshatriyas.

Whatever may be the debate, the dynasty lived and ruled in the territories lying between the rivers Godavari and the Krishna. This dynasty was believed to have confined to a large part of the South during the time of the Mauryas. It was supposed to be powerful with a well-built army. As long as the Mauryas were dominant, this dynasty accepted their supremacy. After the death of Ashoka it began to exercise its power because it found that the successors of Ashoka were not in a position to defend the vast kingdom handed down by their ancestors. We come to know from the puranas that the dynasty produced thirty kings and ruled for over four thirty years.

Not much is known about the rulers of this dynasty but from the available sources, especially it is possible to trace some of the names of the kings. **Simuka** was the founder of the Satavahana dynasty who ruled from 235 B.C. to 206 B.C. He seized the power after overthrowing the last Kanva ruler Sushanna. His brother **Krishna or Kanha** succeeded him and ruled the kingdom for eighteen years from 206 B.C. to 188 B.C.

Sri Satakarni was the successor after Simuka, and perhaps the greatest of the Andhra monarchs. He ruled from 188 B.C. to 167 B.C. He is known for his performance of two aswamedha sacrifices.

His reign was followed by the rule of **Gautamiputra Satakarni**. (80 AD – 104 AD) Gautamiputra Satakarni was the famous king during the Satavahana dynasty. He defeated the Sakas (Scythians), Yavanas (Greeks) and Pahlavas (Parthians). His empire extended up to Banavasi in the south, and included Maharashtra, Konkan, Saurashtra, Malwa, west Rajasthan and Vidharbha.

His son, Vasishtiputra Sri Pulamavi, succeeded him in about 60 A.D. And ruled at Paithan on the banks of Godavari. He extended his rule towards the Andhra country. Two other cities, Vijayanti in North Kanara and Amravati in the Guntur district, attained fame during this period. Kings succeeding Gautamiputra lost many of their territories.

But the power of Satavahanas rejuvenated under Sri Yajna Satakarni, who was the last great ruler. After him the weak successors resulted in the decrease of the territory of the Satavahanas. Hostility with the Saka rulers also led to the ultimate decrease in its territories and declaration of sovereignty.

Some scholars say that there were 19 kings in this dynasty and they ruled for 300 years, while others say there were 30 kings who ruled for 456 years. The dynasty came to an end about the middle of the third century AD. Their empire at last broke up into small principalities ruled by the Abhiras, Chutus, Ikshvakus, Pallavas. The Satavahana Empire was divided into five provinces in the later years of its rule. The **Abhiras** possessed the western territory of Nasik while the **Ikshvakus** dominated the eastern parts of the Krishna-Guntur region. The **Chutus** triumphed over the southwestern parts and extended their power to the north and east. The southeastern divisions went under the control of the **Pallavas**.

The Satavahana society revealed the presence of four classes. In the first class were placed the persons who administered the districts, the officials or the nobles belonged to the second strata of society. The Vaidhya, cultivators, followed them. The fourth class was common citizen.

Both Buddhism and Brahmanism were followed during this time. Religious tolerance continued among of various cults of people.

Trade thrived and there existed association of workers undertaking a variety of trades. Broach, Sopara and Kalyan were important trading centers. The Satavahana rulers supported Prakrit, which was the frequently used language of the people.

3.12 THE SAKAS

The Sakas or Scythians were originally the inhabitants of Central Asia at the time of Herodotus (5th century B.C.). They were made up of four chief branches identified as the Massa Gatae, Sacae, Alani, and Sarmatians. They shared a common language, customs and traditions.

Herodotus in the 5th century B.C. wrote after his observation about the Scythians thus: *"they were the most manly and law-abiding of the Thracian tribes. If they could combine under one ruler, they would be the most powerful nation on earth."* Greek and Persian historians as tall, large framed and fierce warriors who were unrivalled on the horse remember them.

The Greco-Bactrian rule (200 B.C.-100 B.C.) did not last for more than a century. Continuous warfare's and internal splits soon enfeebled them. India was divided into many small Greek Kingdom, which fell an easy prey to the new invasions of Scythians or Sakas about the middle of the first century B.C. They overthrew the Greek rulers and established their dominion as well as settlements all over India.

Before coming to India many of them lived in the Iranian Sakasthan under Parthian rulers. These people were so closely associated with the Parthians that some of the thinkers believe that both the Sakas and the Parthians were of the same race. A.K. Majumdar states that their association with the Parthians resulted in the formation of a composite group known as the Pahlavas. The Saka clans came into northwest India through two important passes, namely, the Khyber Pass, and the Bolan pass. These groups probably

moved from their homelands in search of pasturelands. When they came to India they settled down in the lower valley of river Indus from where they proceeded further. They initially settled down in Sindh and later on established their superiority over other parts of India.

Some invading groups went to Punjab, some went to Maharashtra, and yet others moved further east to Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Their influence was felt up to Godavari, Kathiawar and Saurashtra.

Sir Cunningham, former Director General of Indian Archeological survey recorded that,

'Me different races of the Scythians which successively appeared as conquerors in the border provinces of Persia and India are the following in the order of arrival :

Sakas or Sacae (the Su or Sai of the Chinese - B. C. ?) Kushans (the great Yue-Chi (Yuti) of the Chinese - B. C. 163)

Kiddarite or later Kushans (the little Yue-chi of the Chinese -A.D. 450)

Epthalites or White Huns (the Yetha of the Chinese - 470 A.D.) "

Once these tribes settled in India, irrespective of the part they settled in, they soon mingled with the residents and adopted Indian ways of life, religious beliefs. They married Indian women also.

Ancient Greek scholars like Herodotus, Pliny, Ptolemy, Arian and Persian writer like Darius throw light on the origin of these inhabitants and show the identified as follows:

Original Name	Name derived
Gatae	Jat
Avar	Ahir
Scythii	Saka
Khazar	Gujjar
Tukharian	Thakur
Sautra Matii	Saurashtra
Sassanian	Sessodia
Medes	Madra

The Saka rulers may be divided under two classes from the administrative point of view. They are as follows:

The Northern Satraps. The Western Satraps.

The northern Satraps were more predominant in Taxila and Matura. The first three Saka kings were **Manes** or **Manes**, **Azes I**, and **Azes II** or **Azilises**. It is difficult to give the exact dates of their rule Maues is supposed to ruled

the kingdom from 20. B.C. to 22 A.D. Their numerous coinages seem to throw light on the influence of the Yavana (Greek) ancestors.

Post Mauryan Dynasties -
Sungas, Kushanas and
Satavahanas

The western Satraps mainly occupied Gujarat, Kutch, Malwa and Maharashtra. The first two rulers of the family were Bhumik and Nahapana. Nahapana is known from his silver coins and from his inscriptions. He seems to have ruled from 119 to 124 A.D. Chatsana and Rudraman were the Satraps who ruled Ujjain. After the death of Rudraman the Sakas continued their rule till the fourth century A.D.

3.13 THE INDO-GREEKS AND THE INDO-PARTHIANS

To understand the history of these two ethnic groups it will be worthwhile to take a peep into the earlier history. Since Alexander's invasion, several Greek families had settled down in northwestern India. It was after his death that **Seleucus Nicator**, his able General, founded a kingdom in the western and Central portions of India. Seleucus Nicator carried on town construction too. He built many towns all over his vast kingdom, including Alexandropolis in India. Among the several tribes he established his grip over, in this territory, the most important were the **Bactrians** and the **Parthians**.

These two tribes declared themselves independent during the rule of **Antiochus**, the successor of Seleucus. Ashoka refers to his Yavana (Greek) subjects. He seems to have engaged Greek aristocrats in the service of the state. With the establishment of Greek rule, arts and sciences received fresh and dynamic momentum and Taxila, their capital, turned out to be one of the greatest centers of learning. Since then the Yavanas are mentioned from time to time in Indian literature.

The **Bactrians** occupied the north western frontiers in about 70 B.C. The most renowned of the Bactrian kings was Menander (Milinda). He invaded central India and fought a war with Pushyamitra Sunga but was defeated. Menander is said to have become a Buddhist later on.

Sind was also under the authority of the Bactrian rulers. It is probable that both Apollodotus and his successor Menander ruled over Sind for a hundred years. In the ancient and early Indian sources we find reference to cities built by the rulers of the Greco-Bactrian states in the basin of the Indus Delta. After Menander the dynasty began to decline. The last ruler was **Heliocles** and his territories were taken over by the Saka dynasty in about 125 B.C.

The **Parthians** became dominant in the western frontier of India. They succeeded the Sakas. **Manes** was the ruler of Punjab and Kabul in about 120 B.C. The most important king of this tribe was **Gondophernes**. It is believed from the clerical records that it was during time that Christianity arrived in India when St. Thomas began propagation of this new religion in 52 A.D. In the course of time even this group was absorbed in the Indian culture like the Sakas.

Check Your Progress

1. Trace the history of Sakas

3.14 SUMMARY

Thus, with the fall of this dynasty, the Andhras became powerful in the south. The Greeks established themselves in the west. The history of the period from the fall of Kanvas to the rise of the Guptas is a confused one. It is true that the Satavahanas also referred to as Andhras, followed the Kanvas.

The Political History of India from 2nd century onwards witnessed political turmoil and instability. There were sudden changes in the administration from the Sungas to Kanvas and to the Anshras. The period also witnessed the reestablishment of the Indo-Greeks in the Punjab and towards eastern parts of India. The history of North West India was influenced also by the coming of new tribal groups, namely the Sakas and Kushanas. Buddhism spread and took a new form during Kanishka's period.

Thus, the various ethnic groups namely, the Satavahanas, the Sakas, the Indo-Greeks and the Indo-Parthians settled in different parts of Indian and got absorbed in the main stream of Indian life and culture. The coming of new groups also led to religious tolerance among various cults of people.

3.15 QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on Kanishka and spread of Buddhism.
2. Write short notes on :
 - a) The Kanvas
 - b) The Satavahanas
 - c) The Sunga Art
 - d) Pushyamitra Sunga.
 - e) Kanishka and Buddhism.
 - f) Science and literature during Kushana rule.
3. Trace the history of Sakas
4. Write a note on the Indo-Greeks.
5. Give a brief account of Indo-Parthians.

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IMPERIAL EXPANSION AND ADMINISTRATION OF GUPTA AGE

Unit Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Sources of Gupta History
- 4.3 Original Home of the Guptas
- 4.4 Rise of Gupta power
 - 4.4.1 Chandra Gupta I
 - 4.4.2 Samudra Gupta
 - 4.4.3 Conquest of Samudra Gupta
 - 4.4.4 Extent of Samudra Gupta Empire
 - 4.4.5 Estimate of Samudra Gupta
- 4.5 Ram Gupta (375-380 A.D.)
- 4.6 Chandra Gupta II (38-47 A.D.)
 - 4.6.1 Policy of Matrimonial Alliance
 - 4.6.2 Conquests of Chandra Gupta
 - 4.6.3 Visit of Fa-Hien
 - 4.6.4 Coins of Chandra Gupta II
 - 4.6.5 Estimate of Chandra Gupta II
- 4.7 Kumar Gupta I
- 4.8 Skanda Gupta
 - 4.8.1 Administration
 - 4.8.2 Estimate of Skanda Gupta
- 4.9 Decline and downfall of Gupta
- 4.10 Monarchy
- 4.11 Council of Ministers
- 4.12 Other Administrative Officials
- 4.13 Provincial Administration
- 4.14 The District council and Administration
- 4.15 Village Administration

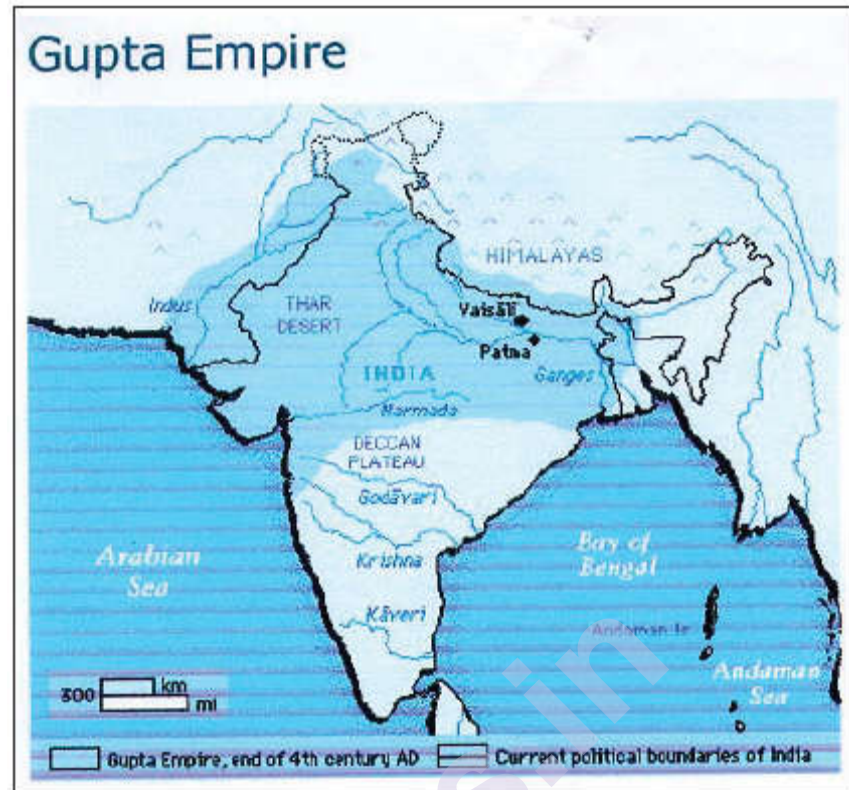
- 4.16 Revenue Administration
- 4.17 Judicial Administration
- 4.18 Military Administration
- 4.19 Summary
- 4.20 Questions
- 4.21 Additional Reading

4.0 OBJECTIVES

- To introduce the students about the era of the Gupta Dynasty.
- To study the Sources and about the origin of the Gupta Dynasty.
- To analyse the role of Chandra Gupta.
- To estimate the conquest of Samudra Gupta.
- To analyse the role played by Ram Gupta.
- To estimate the various policies, conquest, coins of Chandra Gupta I.
- To throw light on the achievements of Kumar Gupta I
- To Estimate Skanda Gupta's carrier.
- To trace the major factors responsible for the downfall of Gupta Empire.
- To study the administration of Gupta empire.
- To analyse the provincial administration, District council, Revenue administration judicial and military administration.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

After the fall of Kushanas, in the period of political disunity, the Gupta rose to paramount power in Magadha. Imperial Gupta once again gave political unity to the country. Under Gupta dynasty India made rapid progress. Although the empire of the Gupta was not as large as the Mauryan Empire, it did succeed in keeping north India politically united for more than a century, from about 300 to 450 A.D. Under Gupta India enjoyed economic prosperity. Gupta rulers encouraged art and learning and they showed interest in nation's cultural advancement. There was a perfect religious tolerance. This era was a great period of expansion of Indian culture in the Far East.



It was due to this all – sided development that the reign of Imperial Gupta has been called the 'Golden Age' in the annals of Indian history.

In many respects the Gupta administration constitutes the water shed between its past and future traditions of quality and government. Infact, it will not be exaggeration to say that Gupta administration provided the model for basic administrative structure both in theory and practise. Due to an all-round development in this age European writers have compared it with the age of Pericles in Greek history. Probably ancient India never attempts such high water mark as she did during Gupta period. India became once again united strong and glorious during Gupta period. Cultural unity was combined with political unity. The monarchical states continued to function in the traditional way based on Dharma. King continued to be the center of Government, amassing all supreme powers to him. Thus at that time India reached the peak of progress in all fields-political, social, economic, religious and culture. Coins, inscriptions, accounts of foreign travellers give us an inside into the administrative structure of the Gupta Empire.

4.2 SOURCES OF GUPTA HISTORY

Both religious and secular literature, accounts of foreign travelers, inscriptions, coins and monuments throw light on the history of Gupta dynasty from various angles.

Imperial Expansion and Administration of Gupta Age

-
- THE GUPTA EMPIRE AT THE CLOSE OF THE FOURTH CENTURY**
- INDEX**
- | | |
|-------------------|--------|
| GUPTA EMPIRE | — |
| ANCIENT TOWN | ○ |
| MODERN TOWNS | ● |
| NATIONAL BOUNDARY | — |
| OTHER POWERS | MADRAS |
- The map illustrates the Gupta Empire's reach, covering a vast area from the Indus River in the west to the Bay of Bengal in the east. Major cities like Patliputra, Prayag, and Kanauj are marked as ancient towns. The map also shows the boundaries of other contemporary powers and the locations of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Archaeological sources

- a) Coins
- b) Inscriptions
- c) Allahabad Pillar Inscription
- d) Eran Stone pillar Inscription
- e) Copper plates
- f) Monuments

4.3 ORIGINAL HOME OF THE GUPTAS

Though there are numerous sources available on Gupta period, the fact remains that the early history of the Gupta is obscure. The origin of the Guptas has been the subject of a lively debate among the historians for quite a longtime. The name or surname Gupta is not absolutely unknown to Ancient Indian history. Officials with title of Gupta are mentioned in old records, particularly of the Sunga and Satavahana period. But there are no definite evidences to connect these Gupta with the Imperial Gupta dynasty of the 4th century A.D. Dr. K.P. Jayaswal on the basis of Kaumudi Mahotsava has considered that Guptas were Jats and they originally belonged to the Punjab. Another view has been advanced by Dr. Dodwell. He says, 'It is just possible that the Gupta and Ghatotkacha are foreign names, under a Sanskrit guise and that the Guptas were not a Hindu blood. In any case the name Gupta suggest a humble origin'. According to Dr. H.C. Raichoudhary Guptas were Brahmin by caste. On the other hand Dr. S. Chattopadhyaya is of the opinion that the Guptas were Kshatriyas. According to Vishnu purana the Gupta belonged to Vaisya caste and it also describes the location of Gupta kingdom, 'The territory along the Ganges (up to) Prayaga will be enjoyed by the people of Magadha and the Guptas'. Thus puranas brings us to the conclusion that the original Gupta territory comprised Magadha, though it may not be original home of Guptas.

4.4 RISE OF GUPTA POWER

Inscriptional evidences at Allahabad pillar proved that Sri Gupta was the founder of the Gupta dynasty. Sri Gupta was succeeded by his son Maharaja Ghatokacha. Sri Gupta, the founder of the Gupta dynasty said to have ruled Magadha from 240 to 280 A.D. His son Ghatotkacha ruled Magadha from 280 A.D. up to 320 A.D. In the Gupta records both Sri Gupta and Ghatotkacha has been referred with the title of Maharaja. It is believed by some historians that both Sri Gupta and Ghatokacha Gupta were feudatory chiefs as they styled themselves simply as Maharajas. Since this title was often borne by feudatory chiefs. Probably early Guptas were subordinate rulers. However there is no definite proof about it.

4.4.1 Chandra Gupta I :

Chandra Gupta I was the first Gupta ruler, who assumed the imperial title of 'Maharajadhiraj' meaning 'Supreme king of great king'. Chandra Gupta I was the first important king of the dynasty rose to eminence. Chandra Gupta I was the son and successor of Maharaja Ghatotkacha. He was the real founder of the Gupta power. His career is not fully known but his main achievement consists in having established a stable and strong government within a short period of fifteen years (320 A.D — 335 A.D.) It is generally accepted that Chandragupta's date of accession was 26th February 320 A.D. To commemorate his coronation date he started a new era known as the Gupta era.

In ancient Indian history there are plenty of instances by which we can say that matrimonial alliances enhanced the status of the rulers. Like several kings of ancient India Chandra Gupta I also strengthened himself by the significant marriage alliance with Lichavis. The Lichavis were a powerful dynasty, who then, controlled considerable portions of Bihar and perhaps even Nepals. Both inscriptions and Chandra Gupta I coinage recorded the marriage of Chandra Gupta I with Lichavi princess, Sri Kamardevi. The coins showed that Kamardevi was associated with the government of Chandra Gupta which included the Lichavi republic. It may be the result of either of their marriage by the way of dowry or may be direct military conquest by Chandra Gupta I. Thus marriage with Kumar Devi added to political power and prestige of Chandra Gupta I. It is also possible that Lichavis and Guptas who ruled over the adjoining areas were united by the marriage between Chandra Gupta I and Kumardevi.

Chandra Gupta I secured a paramount position in Magadha and in the neighbouring countries by the means of this matrimonial alliance. Chandra Gupta I ruled over a fairly extensive kingdom, this is obvious by changing the title Maharajadhiraj. On the basis of a verse in Vayu Puran scholars generally accept the view that Chandra Gupta I ruled over Saket (Avadh) Prayag (Allahabad) and Magadha (south Bihar). From puranic verse given below, we get vague idea of the extent of Chandra Gupta's Empire.

‘Ahu Ganga Prayagamcha Saketam

Magadhamstatha

Etan Janapadan Servan Bhokshyante

Gupta Vamsajah'

Kings born of Gupta race will enjoy all these territories, namely, along the Ganges, Prayaga, Saketa and the Magadhas.

Thus Chandra Gupta prepared the solid foundation on which Gupta kingdom was erected. An important act of this king was the holding of an assembly of councilors and members of the royal family at which prince Samudra Gupta was formally nominated successor to the imperial throne of Guptas.

4.4.2 Samudra Gupta (335 A.D. — 380 A.D.):

Dr. V.A. Smith has described Samudra Gupta as 'the Napoleon of India' due to his conquests in all direction of India. Samudragupta is proverbially known as the greatest conqueror of ancient India. Contemporary epigraphs, such as the Eran inscription, credits him with the overthrowing of 'the whole tribe of kings upon the earth'. The Allahabad pillar inscriptions give full details about him. The Allahabad Pillar inscription refers to the appointment of Samudra Gupta by Chandra Gupta I. Allahabad inscription is generally known as Prasasti (eulogy) because of the superhuman attributes paid to him by the engraver. Inscription, a eulogy of the emperor was composed by Harishena. Harishena was a great official who held the various portfolio in Samudragupta's court. He had composed the poem in praise of his master Harishena the author of the Allahabad pillar inscription says 'In the presence of the full assembly the king embraced his son Samudra Gupta and the overcome with emotions with hairs on his body standing erect, said with tears in his eyes : 'Thou art worthy, rule this whole world'. The poet adds while this declaration caused happiness to the courtiers, the faces of his Kinsmen of equal birth became pale. Thus the nomination of Samudra Gupta has been described with a dramatic effect. Inscription also throw light on genealogy from Srigupta, Ghatotkacha and Chandra Gupta I. Special mention is made in respect of Mahadevi Kumar devi, a Lichavi princess. Inscription also refer to a number of rulers and their kingdom which were either annexed or conquered by Samudragupta. Along with inscriptions certain copper plates supporting to inscriptions are excellent source of information. Samudra Gupta also left an extensive coinage. Some important political events of his reign are known from this source and the records of his successors.

4.4.3 Conquest of Samudra Gupta :

The reign of Samudra Gupta is chiefly remarkable for the series of military campaigns which led in various part of India. Since Samudra Gupta was deliberately selected by his father as the next king, he had to deal with rival princes who coveted the throne. It possibly led to trouble but they were successfully put down to Samudra Gupta. When Samudra Gupta came in power, there were political disturbance in his kingdom but he maintained law and order. All the time of his accession politically India presented a dark picture. Due to lack of powerful empire and emperor, India was divided and distributed into a number of petty principalities. The Magadha empire was surrounded by powerful and independent rulers like Nagas, the Vakatakas, the Shakas and several republican tribes. Rajput and was often molested by the foreign invaders. Gujarat was ruled by various Kshatriyas. Bengal was divided into various units. South was ruled by Cholas, Pandyas, Pallavas and Cheras. Therefore it was really a difficult task for Samudra Gupta to bring them under his control.

From the very beginning Samudra Gupta was fired with the idea of conquest. He followed the policy of Digvijay and attempt success in uprooting small states. Dr. Radha Kumud Mukherjee had praised Samudra Gupta as, "A hero of a hundred fights, he was able to make all parts of

India acknowledge his paramount sovereignty by a victorious march through them which continued for more than two or three years under the physical conditions of such a march." According to the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudra Gupta the places and the countries conquered and annexed or liberated, by Samudra Gupta are as follows :-

a) Northern Conquest :

Samudra Gupta twice laid an expedition to North or Aryavarta. Allahabad pillar inscription records the name of following nine kings along with several princess of Aryavarta defeated by him. There kingdoms where incorporated into Gupta empire. The nine kings where :

1. Rudradeva
2. Matila
3. Naga- Dutta
4. Chandravarman
5. Ganpati –Naga
6. Naga – Sena
7. Achyuta
8. Nandin
9. Balavarman

Thus, Samudra Gupta appears to have led his forces as far as the river Chambell. His Campaign was crowned with success and the kingdom of defeated kings was made part of the Gupta Empire. Conquest of Samudra Gupta had a profound effect on India, for they brought about her political unification.

Southern Conquest : .

Samudra Gupta's campaign of conquest was not confined to north India along. As regard his conquest's in Dakshinapatha i.e. the Deccan and south India, Samudra Gupta defeated as many as twelve kings for this he had to launched a travel of about 3000 miles. This campaign took him more than two years but his empire was greatly extended. He marched through Vindhya forest, Kaling and along the east coast up to river Krishna on the banks of which he made successfully a group of south Indian kings, laid by Vishnu gupta and Pallava family. His expedition towards the south also helps us to know the Geographical and Political condition of southern India. The names of the twelve kings in the south defeated by him are :

1. Mahendra of Kosala
2. Vyaghararaja of Mahakantara
3. Mantaraja of Kaurala
4. Svamidatta of Kottura
5. Daman of Erandapalla

6. Vishnugopa of Kanchi
7. Nilaraj of Avamukta
8. Hastivarman of Vengi
9. Mahendra of Pistapura
10. Ugravasena of Pallaka
11. Kubera of Devarashtra
12. Dhananjaya of Kusthalapura

Most of the kingdoms listed about where in the eastern part of the Deccan. Hence, the many ports on the east, coast, carried on lucrative trader probably Samudra Gupta wanted them under his control. Perhaps the ambition of Samudra Gupta was merely to secure recognition of his imperial position in the Deccan and south India. Samudra Gupta is said to have acted as "Dharam Vijayi" in the south India.

Besides this many more kings were subdued by him.

- Kosala, undoubtedly denotes the districts of Bilaspur, Raipur and Sambhalpur.
- Mahakantara, most probably was in the forest region of Gondvana.
- Kaurala was the Sonpur district of south India. Pishtapura is the modern Pithapuram in the Godavari district.
- Kottura was in Ganjam district.
- Erandapalla is identified by fleet with erandol in Khandesh and by Dumbreuil with Eranda, a town in the Ganjam district.
- Kanchi in Canjeevaram in Madras. Avamukta, from Hathi Gumphra inscription we learn, existed near Godavari.
- Vengi has been identified with Vegi or Pedd- Vegi, about 7 miles north of Ellora between the Krishna and the Godavari.
- Palakka is probably identical with Palakkada in Nellora. Devarashtra was in Vizagapattam district.
- Rusthalapura probably was Kuttalpur in North Arcot.

The territories of the defeated rulers in the south were not annexed by Samudra Gupta, as perhaps he thought it was not quite easy to control directly all the distant regions. Only Northern India came directly under Gupta rule, whereas the southern regions paid homage to him as a paramount ruler.

Subjugation of Forest tribes :

Samudra Gupta reduced to the position of serf down the rulers of forest kingdoms. (Atavika Rajyas's). Harishena state that the border tribes

accepted his rule without much resistant. Tribal ruler submitted to him voluntarily.

These tribes were :

1. **Malavas** : In the time of Alexander they occupied a part of the Punjab. In the time of Samudra Gupta, they were most probably in eastern Rajputana.
2. **Arjunayanas** : The Arjunayanas inhabited the eastern portions of Alwar and Jaipur
3. **Yaudheyas** : They were Rajputs and had extended their dominions from Bharatpur to the borders of Bhawalpur.
4. **Madrakas** : The Madrakas had their capital at Sialkot in the Punjab.
5. **Abhiras** : The Abhiras occupied the tract in the lower Indus Valley and western Rajputana, a section of the tribe apparently settled in Central India and gave its name to the Ahirwar country between Jhansi and Bhilsa.
6. **Prarjunas** : Their capital was at Narsimhapur in central provinces.
7. **Sanakanikas** : They were in the neighbourhood of prarjunas.
8. **Kakas** : The kakas is identified with kakupur near Bithur.
9. **Kharaparikas** : The Kharaparikas might have occupied the Damoh district of the Central provinces.

Conquest with Shakas and Kushanas :

Samudra Gupta commanded respect amongst independent rulers of many neighboring states. The Kushanas rulers of north west, the Saka ruler of west India, the ruler of Sri Lanka and rulers of the south east Asia had cordial relations with him and respected him.

Relations with Ceylon :

A Chinese account state that two Buddhist monks, sent to Bodhgaya by Meghavarman a Buddhist king of Ceylon. These monks had faced a great inconvenient for want of accommodation and this they reported to their kings. On this king Meghavarman sent an embassy with gifts to Samudragupta and obtain his permission to construct a Buddhist monastery at Gaya in Bihar. Samudragupta readily accepted his request. This indicates that Samudragupta had very cordial relations with Ceylon. The king of Ceylon, than constructed a three storied monastery, with six halls and three towers, which housed a statue of Lord Buddha, made of gold and silver. Dr. A.S. Altekar had pointed, "It is likely that Samudragupta's courtiers also regarded the rich presents as tribute and constructed the Ceylonese king's prayer for permission for charter confirming him in the enjoyment of his territories one of the forms of

homage paid by the category of states into which Simhala or Ceylon is included",

4.4.4 Extent of Samudragupta's empire :

Samudragupta ruled over vast Empire. According to Allahabad pillar inscription. Samudragupta never knew any defeat. He had unified the greatest part of India under him. According to Dr. R. C. Majumdar, the empire of Samudra Gupta, "Comprised nearly the whole of northern India, with the exception of Kashmir, Western Punjab, Western Rajaputana, Sindh and Gujarat, with the highlands of Chhatisgarh and Orissa and a long stretch of territory along the eastern coast extending as far south as chinleput and probably even further."

4.4.5 Estimate of Samudra Gupta :

The fame of Samudragupta rests not only on his brilliant martial career, but on his achievements in peace. After establishing such a vast empire Samudragupta naturally performed the Ashwamegha ceremony which had been traditionally recognized in India as a symbol of imperialism. The name of Samudragupta deserves special mention in the history of ancient India. He was a great conqueror and efficient administrator, a far sighted statesman and a patron and lover of art and literature.

1) A successful conqueror :

Samudragupta was one of the greatest warrior in the history of India. Harishena his court poet mention, "Samudragupta was skillful in engaging in a hundred battles of various kinds, whose only ally was the strength of his own arm, whose most elegant physique was covered over with all the beauty of the scars caused by the blows of battle arrows, spears, spikes lances, javelins and many other weapons.'

2) Founder of an Empire :

The real founder of the Gupta Empire was Samudragupta. Though Chandra Gupta I laid the foundations of Gupta empire but his empire was not powerful. Hence, the credit goes to Samudragupta. Samudragupta added immensely to the resources of his empire. He is compared with Napoleon and Akbar due to his sound knowledge of the administration. He was the conqueror who never suffered a defeat.

3) Statesmanship :

Samudragupta was a great diplomat. He was far sighted statesman. He was engaged in a hundred battle, according to the Prasasti. He did not blindly go on conquering one region after another. But he directly governed certain region and from certain state he accepted tribute. He knew it very well that it would be very difficult for him to control the far of areas from Magadha. Samudragupta diplomatically compelled far of state to accept his suzerainty and accepted homage and taxes. In this manner Samudragupta gave proof of been a practical statesman.

4) A Great Administrator:

After his campaign Samudragupta settled down to organized the government. He established peace and order and gave good administration. Due to his administrative qualities he could established a powerful empire. There was general prosperity and people were happy. The Allahabad Pillar inscription described his allocation of his duties and responsibilities to a council of minister. His central government very well knit and also very well organized. The administration under him was quite different from that of the Mauriyans. It must be admitted that it was chiefly due to the statesmanship of Samudragupta that the vast empire which he left behind was gradually extended by his successors.

5) Learning and Lover of Art :

As a lover of learning Samudragupta patronize distinguished scholars. He had a great attachment with literature and learning. Harishena and Vasubhandu were the important personality lived in his court. Harishena lays special emphasis upon Samudragupta's learning and wisdom. Samudragupta had a profound knowledge of sacred books. He was also a great musicians which is proved by his coins representing him as a musicians playing on a vina. According to Harishena, he put to shame the preceptor of the Lord of Gods and Tumburu and Narada and others by his sharp and polished intellect and choral skill and musical accomplishments. The testimony of Harisena to his musical abilities finds corroboration in lyrist type of coins.

6) Revival of Brahaminism :

Samudragupta coins and inscription throw light on his religious conviction. He was a faithful follower of Brahmanic Religion. He revived the Ashwamegha which had not being performed for a longer time. He brought back Hinduism with full honour which is also reflected through the images of Lakshmi, Durga, Saraswati and Ganga and the symbols like Chakra, Lotus and Garuda found in his gold coins.

7) Tolerance :

Samudragupta was a tolerant king. Though he was patron of Brahmanism. He was free from narrow outlook in religion. Vasubhandu the famous Buddhist scholar was his minister. The fact that he permitted to construct monastery at Bodhgaya Speaks for his religious tolerance.

Thus the synthesis of numerous qualities made Samudra Gupta a unique personality. He was an emperor of intuitive genius. Samudragupta has been described as the Indian Napoleon by V.Smith. R.K. Mukherji regards Samudragupta a 'many sided genius' while R.C. Majumder regards him 'the great monarch who looms so large in Indian history'. K.N.Munshi has correctly assessed him in the following words, 'A brilliant general, a farsighted state man, a man of culture and a patron of the arts and letters, he became the symbol and architect of a mighty creative urge among the

people which while drawing vitality from tradition and race memory took on a new shape and power.

Check Your Progress:

1. What are the main sources of information for the history of the Guptas?

4.5 RAMA GUPTA (375 - 380 A.D.)

Till half century ago it was believed by many historians that Chandragupta II succeeded Samudragupta. But the discovery of a lost dramatic work, 'Devi Chandra Guptam' by Vishakdatta has given birth to almost a new question. Accordingly Samudragupta was succeeded by his eldest son Rama Gupta and not by Chandragupta II. The succession of Samudragupta is evidenced from a lost drama 'Devi Chandra Guptam', fragments of which are preserved in the 'Natyadarpana' by Ramachandra and Guruchandra, Bana's Harshacharita and Kavyamimamsa by Rajshekara. By piecing together the scattered evidence the scholars have constructed the following story.

Ram Gupta was not a worthy successor of Samudragupta. He had to face an invasion by the Sakas. While fighting a war with the Sakas, Ram Gupta was placed in a difficult situation. For the safety of his people, he agreed to surrender his queen Dhruvadevi to the Saka King. When it was made known there was protest everywhere. It is said that his younger brother Chandra Gupta II opposed this insulting arrangement. He himself offered to go to the Saka king in disguise of queen Dhruvadevi and killed Saka king. Thus he saved the honour of Dhruvadevi and the family name. This incident must have raised him in the estimation of his subjects as well as of queen Dhruvadevi. Thereafter Chandragupta succeeded in killing his elder brother Ram Gupta and not only seized his kingdom but also married the widow of his elder brother. Though the episode of Ram Gupta is very difficult to refuse, there is no authentic evidence to prove it. Whatever may be the truth, the fact is that the reign of Ram Gupta was short and inglorious.

4.6 CHANDRA GUPTA!! (380 - 47 A.D)

Introduction :

The inscription, coins and writing of Chinese traveler Fa-Hien are the main sources of the information about him. Chandra Gupta was the second great king of Gupta Dynasty. Under Chandra Gupta, Gupta Empire considerably expanded. Chandra Gupta is also called Narendra Chandra, Simha Chandra, Narendra Simha and Simha Vikrama. He ascended the throne in 380 A.D. His mother name was Datta Devi, as found recorded in the Mathura stone inscription, which also says that Chandra Gupta II was chosen by his father Samudra Gupta as the next Emperor. Chandra Gupta II followed the footsteps of his father Samudra Gupta. The reign of Chandra Gupta II witnessed the high water mark of the Gupta Empire, as

he carried on, with remarkable success, the policy of world conquest. Chandra Gupta inherited the military genius of his father. He perceived both wars of conquest and diplomacy for the expansion of his kingdom.

Imperial Expansion and
Administration of Gupta
Age

4.6.1 Policy of Matrimonial Alliance:

Chandra Gupta had Matrimonial Alliance with the powerful ruling families of his times. Matrimonial Alliances occupy a prominent place in the foreign policies of Gupta's. Chandra Gupta I, the Grandfather of Chandra Gupta II had strengthened his imperial position by Matrimonial Alliance with the dynasty of Lichchavis who had controls most of the Bihar and perhaps Nepal as well. Samudra Gupta, father of Chandra Gupta II is said to have accepted the gifts presents of maidens from the courts of contemporary potentates. Chandra Gupta II continued the policy of Matrimonial Alliance followed by his forefather. He married Kubera Naga, of the Naga family and had a daughter by her name Prabhavati Gupta. Later Chandra Gupta II gave his daughter –Prabhavati Gupta in marriage to the Vakataka Rudrasena-I I.

According to Dr. V.A. Smith "the Vakataka Maharaja occupied a geographical position in which he could be of much service or disservice to the northern invader of the dominions of Saka Satraps of Gujrat and Sourashtra. Chandra Gupta adopted a prudent precaution in giving daughter to the Vakataka prince and so securing his subordinate alliance".

4.6.2 Conquests of Chandra Gupta :

Chandra Gupta II has extended the Gupta Empire in all the direction. In the East, the whole of Bengal was annexed to the Gupta Empire, in the north west the Punjab became part of the empire, in the west with the acquisition of Gujarat and Saurashtra, the Gupta had reached the Arabian sea. Chandra Gupta II task had already been made easy by his father Samudra Gupta who had extended his kingdom in all the parts of India. But in spite of this Chandra Gupta had to wage mini wars.

1. Defeating the Republic:

The political condition of India had deteriorated at the time of accession of Chandra Gupta II. The kingdom of Kushana and Avanti in the northwest of India and various petty republic in the south of Gupta empire were disunited and disorganized. Chandra Gupta took full advantage of this weakness and he defeated those states and annexed them to his empire.

2. Conquest of Bengal :

Due to local rebellion in Bengal Chandra Gupta was forced to interfere in the matter. The king of Bengal suffered a terrific defeat and this areas were also annexed by him.

War with Sakas :

The greatest military achievement of Chandra Gupta II was the conquest of the Sakas who were ruling in Gujarat and Kathiawar peninsula. There

are three inscription which refer to the war with Saka. The Sakas or western Satraps were an important dynasty who had being ruling in western India from the later half of the first century A.D. The campaign has been placed between 388 to 409 A.D. The Sakas were finally defeated their territories were annexed to the Gupta empire. The conquest and annexation of western India to the Gupta Empire enormously enriched it by extension of its limit to the Arabian Sea and establishment of direct overseas trade and commercial contact with the Roman Empire. Thus, the western boundary of the empire became secure and Gupta's gained control over the ports of western India.

Commenting on the vitality of the conquest of western India by Chandra Gupta II Dr. V.A. Smith says, "The annexation of Saurashtra and Malwa, not only added to the empire provinces of exceptional wealth and fertility, but opened up to the paramount power, free access to the ports of the western coast; and thus placed Chandra Gupta II in direct touch with the sea-borne commerce with Europe through Egypt and brought his court and subjects under the influence of the European ideas, which traveled with the goods of the Alexandrian merchants".

Effects of the war with Saka:

1. The empire of Chandra Gupta extended to the natural frontiers of India as he gained the areas of Gujarat and Saurashtra.
2. These areas were quite productive, so they contributed to the prosperity of his empire.
3. The annexation of the Saka territory also led to the incorporation of certain parts of the empire of Chandra Gupta and it immensely contributed to the commercial relations with countries abroad.
4. Not only commercial relations were established with the countries abroad, but cultural relations were also established.
5. Internal trade also received a fillip. The trade was not hampered by any sort of local terminal taxes and goods passed unmolested from one region of the country to the other. Increase in trade led to economic prosperity of the country's main center of trade was Ujjain.

4.6.3 Visit of Fa-Hien :

An outstanding event in the reign of Chandra Gupta II was the visit of Chinese pilgrims Fa-Hien to India. Fa-Hien, though he visited with a religious motive, yet the glimpses of the efficiency of Gupta administration and a progress of the people can be had from his accounts. Though Fa-Hien visited India during Chandra Gupta's second time between the year 399 to 407, he has not mentioned the name of Chandra Gupta II but still the glimpses of Indian culture and political condition are available in his account.

His account tell us that, "the people are numerous and happy, they have not to register their rules, only those who cultivate the royal land have to pay a portion of the gain from it. If they want to go they go. If they want to stay on they stay. The kings govern without any decapitation or other corporal punishment; criminals are simply fined, lightly or heavily, according to the gravity of the case. Even in the cases of repeated attempts at wicked rebellion they only have their right hands cut off. The king's bodyguards and attendants all have salaries. Throughout the whole country the people do not kill any living creature, nor drink intoxicating liquor, nor eat onions or garlic. The only exception is that of Chandallas".

Fa-Hien's accounts throw the light on political, social, economic and religious under Chandra Gupta II. According to Fa-Hien, the city of Patliputra and royal palace of Ashoka were the excellent piece of art and architecture. He could not believe that it was constructed by human hands according to him it was a miracle on rare device with marvelous architectural designed. According to him Buddhism was in a flourishing condition in Bengal, in Punjab and Mathura, both set of Buddhism flourished side by side. But it was in decaying state in the middle kingdom, where brahmanism prevailed. He visited many provinces in India and he gives an elaborate description of them. He had given an elaborate account monastery in Taxila, Gandhara, Peshawar. He had also described about Buddhist stupa created by Kanishka in Peshawar. The description of Patliputra, Kapilvastu, Kushinagar and Gaya is very interesting.

Fa-Hien had made some interesting observation of the country of Magadha and its civilization. Thus, the description of Fa-Hien is of great historical significance. He had made special mention of charitable inns where shelter with bed, food and drinks were offered to travellers. Free hospitals and dispensaries were instituted by rich people everywhere in the country. It is only from the description of Fa-Hien, we come to know that the political standard of the people of Gupta period was high in comparison with that of Mauriyans. According to Fa-Hien people of Gupta period avoided meat eating, hunting, drinking, gambling etc. And their moral standard was quite high. Thus, we get an inside into living condition of the people and the administration under Guptas from the record of Fa-Hien. However, we have to accept the account of Fa-Hien with certain limitations.

4.6.4 Coins of Chandra Gupta II:

Gupta kings did much in the field of Indian coin age. Chandra Gupta II introduces the most important innovation in the coin age. Along with gold coins of his ancestor. He also struck silver and copper coins. He issued three types of gold coins which varied in weight it was of 62 Grains, 126 Grains and 121 Grains. His gold coins were as fine as those of his father. His coins are characterized by considerable originality. He had introduced some new types of coin. Such as Umbrella type, horseman type etc. which throw considerable light on his personality and power. It could be classified as under :-

1. Archer type :

In this Chandra Gupta is holding a bow in his left hand while his right is in the act of offering incense at the altar. There are many varieties of this type of coins. The legend 'Chandra', 'Sri Vikram', the symbol on the standards like wheel, garuda, crescent are all profoundly used with different designed.

2. Couch Type:

In this coin the king has been shown sitting on a high backed couch, right leg folded and the left kept hanging. He holds lotus in his hand. The legend is Devasi Maharajadhiraj Sri Chandragupta. On the reverse is goddess Lakshmi is shown. Various legend like Rapakriti, Vikramaditya, Sri Vikramah are used on couch types coins of Chandra Gupta II.

3. Chhatra Type:

In this coin behind the king is a dwarf attendant holding Chhatra over him. The legend is Maharajadhiraja Sri Chandragupta' on reverse goddess Lakshmi is standing. She holds Lotus.

4. Lion Slays type:

In this king has been shown hunting down a lion. The king is dressed as a hunter, he draw an arrow to hit the lion on which he has planted his foot on the lion. There are different varieties of the lionslases type. In some, the king is shown sending the dart, in other the lion is hit a falls back, in some a retreating lion. On the reverse is shown goddess Durga with his lion as a vehicle. The legends are 'Narendrachandra Sinhavikrama, Parama Bhagavata, Bhagavata, Ajitavikrama etc.

4.6.5 Estimate of Chandra Gupta II:

Chandra Gupta II was one of the greatest monarch of Gupta dynasty. Before his coming on the throne there was tendency of political disintegration Chandra Gupta II was the first sovereign of this dynasty to assume the title of 'Vikramaditya'. He is also known as Sakari, Narendr Chandra, Simachandra, Narendrasimha, Simhavikrama, Devaraja, Devagupta and Devashri. He ruled for period of about 40 years, most probably he died in 46 or 47, AD,

1. A Brilliant Administrator:

Chandra Gupta perfected the administrative machinery. He divided his territory into provinces and districts. Officers of these divisions were assisted by the local representative bodies. He paid personal attention towards the administrative details. His administration was based on human principles. He was also assisted by a numbers of ministers. According to Vincent Smith "India was never ruled better than during the regime of Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya".

2. A successful conqueror:

Chandra Gupta by his brilliant conquests not only put an end to foreign domination, but also established peace and prosperity in his vast empire. He defeated many republics and conquered Bengal Western Satraps. He also conquered many territories in north — western India. His empire extended from Himalayas to Narmada. He occupies a unique and prominent position not only in Gupta dynasty but in Indian history also.

3. A Great Diplomat :

Chandra Gupta I was the greatest diplomat of his times. He had strengthened his imperial position by matrimonial alliance with the powerful reigning dynasty. His marriage with Kubernaga, the Naga princess was very important act of his diplomacy. Further his daughter Prabhavati Gupta was married to the Vakataka king Rudrasena II. The Naga and Vakatakas might have been of great help to Chandra Gupta II in his campaign against the Sakas.

4. Religious Toleration:

Chandra Gupta II religious toleration is proved by the fact that the Udaygiri cave inscription are Shaiva and the Sanchi inscription are Vaishnava. Though he himself was a worshipper of Lord Vishnu yet he respected all sects. He appointed his ministers who belonging to other faith such as Virasenasaba, a staunch follower of Shaivism who was his minister of war and peace and his general Amarakarddava was a staunch Buddhist. The Buddhist and the followers of Jainism enjoyed full liberty under him. He is often compared with Ashoka and Akbar. Chandra Gupta I was liberal, to learn and welfare king like Ashoka and was a great diplomat efficient administrator and successful general like Akbar.

5. A patron of Literature:

Chandra Gupta II was a generous patron of art and literature. Being a man of accomplishments himself, he encouraged learning. He had great love for art and education. His court said to have graced by Navartnas or nine gems Kalidasa, a great poet and dramatist, Varahmihira, the greatest astronomer of the period, Vasubandhu, the Buddhist scholar and saint was attached his court. Chandra Gupta I himself was a highly learned person. The period of Chandra Gupta II is known as the period of renaissance in literary sphere.

An able warrior, wise state man, liberal and generous patron, efficient administrator his imperial pomp and power made Chandra Gupta II a greatest monarch of the Gupta dynasty. He occupies a unique and prominent position not only in Gupta dynasty but in Indian history also.

Check Your Progress:

1. Give a critical account of political and military achievements of Chandra Gupta II.

Later Gupta Kings —

- Kumar Gupta I
- Skanda Gupta
- Downfall of Gupta Empire

4.7 KUMAR GUPTA I

Kumar Gupta succeeded Chandragupta II in about 47 A.D., whose known dates range from 48 to 455 A.D. On the death of Chandra Gupta II, his son Kumar Gupta born of his Chief Queen Dhruvadevi ascended the throne. There is no contemporary book or account to have first rate information of his reign but from his coins we learn that he had an efficient organization and complete security in his kingdom. His inscriptions reveal the fact that the country enjoyed peace and prosperity. Trade and Commerce flourished under Shrenis (Guilds). That he was able to maintain the great is evidenced from the finds of his information from north Bengal to Western Malwa. A number of inscriptions of his Governors and feudatories have been found viz the Bilsad stone pillar inscription, Damodarpur copper plate inscription, Gadhwa inscription and Mandasor stone inscription.

Kumar Gupta I had two wives and two sons. The names of his wives were Ananta Devi and Devaki. Purna Gupta was born to Ananta Devi and Skanda Gupta was born to Devaki.

There was a brisk trade during the period of Kumar Gupta. The merchant class had organized themselves under guilds of Western Malwa was famous for cotton and silk clothes in those days. Though he had not fought any famous battle he had performed the Ashvamedha or horse ceremony. And he was recognized as a Chakravarti King of India. After his accession to the throne he adopted the title of Mahendraditya. Kumar Gupta I is known by various names such as Sima Mahendra, Ashvamedha Mahendra, Mahendra Karma, Mahendra Kalpa, Shri Mahendra Simha, Mahendra Kumar, Shri Mahendra Ajita etc. Kumar Gupta I took up the title of Vyaghra-bala-parakrama which means displaying the strength and powers of a tiger. Thus it is obvious that Kumar Gupta was a brave king who with his unflinching courage and inexhaustible strength had extended the frontiers of the Gupta Empire.

The most important source to know more about Kumar Gupta I is his coins. He issued various types of coins which throw a welcome light about his administrative system and also his state officials. His gold coins included archer type, Horseman type, swordsman type, lion slayer type, Tiger slayer type, Elephant ride type, Ashwamegha type and Kartikeya type. Kumar Gupta was a staunch Brahmanist. He introduced the worship of new God Kartikeya. But Kumar Gupta I continued the worship of other Gods and followed the ancestor's policy of religious toleration. The gold coin with the figure of Kartikeya riding his peacock on the other.

Ashwamegha coins must have been issued by him to commemorate the performance of a horse sacrifice. The legend on the obverse of these coins is "Jayanti Diwam Kamarah" and on the reverse the legend is Sri Asvamedha – Mahendrah. Silver coins were issued by Kumar Gupta I for circulation in Western India. He also issued copper coins. Kumar Gupta's coins show the vastness of his empire. Many coins of Kumar Gupta have been unearthed at Satara in Maharashtra indicating the expansion of his Kingdom towards South.

His inscriptions reveal some important names of ministers and governors. It is stated that Chiradatta governed Pundravasthana Bhukti. Govind Gupta, younger brother of the emperor, was in charge of Saurashtra, Chiradatta was in charge of Bengal. Prince Ghatotkacha Gupta acted as the Viceroy of the province of Eastern Malwa. Prithvisen, son of Samudra Gupta's Chief Minister, Shikhariswami, was the Chief Minister and later on commander — in — chief of Gupta armies. Another Viceroy named Bandhuvvarman ruled at Dasapura. Thus it is obvious that Kumar Gupta was a brave king who with his unflinching courage and inexhaustible strength had extended the frontiers of Gupta Empire.

Towards the end of his reign, the peace of the empire was rudely disturbed and after this he had to face a very critical situation and serious problems. The empire was invaded by the Pushyamitra, a tribe of unknown origin. Some scholars do not accept the reading Pushyamitra in the Bhitari inscription as the second syllable of this name is damaged. Recent researches show that they were probably white Huns. Their first attack was in 450 A.D. Kumar Gupta sent his son Skanda Gupta to resist the invasion. The struggle seems to have been severe and long stretched. Kumar Gupta died before Skandagupta defeated the invaders. The Bhitari inscription of Skandagupta records that the victory was achieved after the death of Kumargupta.

Kumar Gupta ruled the country for 40 years with a sound, efficient and stable administration, in peaceful and prosperous conditions. It seems that the liberal religious policy, generous patronage to arts and literature and efficient administration of Chandra Gupta II continued in the long reign of Kumar Gupta I. According to R. C. Majumdar 'The reign of Kumar Gupta is generally regarded as devoid of interest and importance.'

The numerous inscriptions of this age mention only one military campaign towards the very end of his reign, while they all clearly indicate a peaceful and stable administration from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal under his personal authority.... On the whole, it is not unlikely that more credit is due to Kumar Gupta's administration and personality than is usually given to him by modern historians.'

4.8 SKANDA GUPTA (455 - 467 A.D.)

There is a controversy regarding Skanda Gupta's succession. The Bhitari seal of Kumar Gupta makes Puru Gupta the son and successor of Kumar Gupta. However scholars like Smith, Pannala, Raychaudhari hold that the

Skanda Gupta was the immediate successor of Kumar Gupta I. Puru Gupta, Ghatotkacha Gupta, sons of Kumar Gupta and Govind Gupta brother of Kumar Gupta were the rivals of Skanda Gupta. However the Bhitari inscription emphasizes that civil war threatened the fortunes of the Guptas and Skanda Gupta defeated his rivals and seized the throne.

The most important source of information about Skanda Gupta and war with Huns is Bhitari Pillar inscription. Bhitari is in Ghazipur district. There is a red sandstone pillar outside the village and it has a long inscription in 19 lines. In addition to Bhitari inscription the Junagarh inscription, Kahaum Stone pillar inscription (Indore), Bihar Stone pillar inscription and gold coins of Arches, Chakra, King and Lakshmi and horsemen types are the sources.

Skanda Gupta ruled for a brief period of about 12 years. He defeated his rival claimants to the throne and succeeded Kumar Gupta I. The inscripational evidences reveal the fact that other princes were not able and only Skanda Gupta was there fit to have the throne. Dr. R. C. Mujumdar suggests that, 'After Kumar's death which apparently took place while the struggle with Pushyamitra was still undecided, there was and fratricidal war in which Skanda Gupta came off victorious after defeating his brother's including Puru Gupta, the rightful claimant and rescued his mother just as Krishna rescued Devaki. After coming on the power Skanda Gupta was surrounded with many problems. He could not regain the peace for a long time. Almost immediately after his succession he had struggle with many enemies. The problem of defending the frontiers was the serious one. During his reign Skanda Gupta had to encounter the invasion of the Humas who had already proved them to be a formidable power and terror to both Europe and Asia. While fighting against this barbaric people. He had to sleep on bare floor. In the second century B.C. Huns lived in Central Asia on the western border of China. Soon after his accession to the throne, the Huns made a severe attack on India and they chained into India crossing the river Indus in large numbers. For the Second time Skanda Gupta's abilities were tested in dealing with the most dangerous enemy. For second time he proved himself worthy as a Great son of Gupta. Skanda Gupta succeeded against the Huns which was a great achievement for which he might well go down in the history as the savior of India. On the occasion of this victory he offered sacrifices to the God and laid a statue of Lord Vishnu in Bhitary village of Ghazipur district. After this hard earned victory he took the title of Vikramaditya' as his Grandfather.

4.8.1 Administration:

Skanda Gupta inherited certain qualities from his forefathers like other Gupta kings; he also was not only a great warrior but also an administrator of rare caliber. His administration did not become weak even in then our of foreign invention. He shifted his capital from Patliputra to Ayodya because it was located in the Centre of his Empire. He undertook number of welfare activities to strengthen his Empire.

Skanda Gupta paid great attention to public work. The construction of Sudarshan Lake is a notable event of his period. Junagardha Rock inscription informs us that the Sudarshan Lake, built in the time of Chandra Gupta Mourya bridged and burst in the time of Skanda Gupta in 450 A.D. This lake caused a great harm to the people as well as their property. Skanda Gupta got it fully repaired and enlarged within a short period of just two months.

His kingdom was divided into a number of provinces and each province had provincial administrator. Junagardha Rock inscription tells us about administrative spirit of Skanda Gupta. "Having thus conquered the whole earth and the pride of his enemies, he set about organizing his empire by appointing governors in all the provinces and had to spend much thought to find among his officers the most competent of them who could shoulder the burden of administering the whole of the Saurashtra countries newly acquired. Many a day and night did the king spend on this thought till he appointed Parnadatta to rule over the Saurashtra region. Posting Parnadatta on the West quarter, the king was easy at heart, just as the Gods were by appointing Varuna as the guardian of the Western quarter."

4.8.2 Estimate of Skanda Gupta :

Skanda Gupta was the last great emperor of Gupta dynasty. During his period the economic condition was appreciably good, people were happy and prosperous. He issued both Gold and Silver coins. Since under him Empire had to face many problems. Comparatively he had issued few Gold coins. He had introduced a new type of coin age system. And the coin had the picture of King on the one side and Goddess Lakshmi on the reverse. He had issued archer type, King and Lakshmi type and horseman types of coins.

Samudra Gupta was worshipper of Lord Vishnu and a follower of Brahmanism but he was tolerant towards all religion and cults. He did not interfere with the religion of his officers and subjects. The Bihar Pillar inscription refers to the construction of pillar with a circle of temples dedicated to God headed by Skanda and the divine mothers who were Brahmi, Maheshwari Kumari. Vaisenavi, Mahendri, Varahi, Chamunda, Chandi and Charchika. According to the Buddhist Inscription he had recognized Vasubandhu, a Buddhist Saint as his Guru in the rule. The Hindus and the Buddhist had a cordial relation. Thus Skanda Gupta was a great warrior, an able administrator, a benevolent and justice loving emperor.

4.9 DECLINE AND DOWNFALL OF GUPTA EMPIRE

The Great Gupta empire which was founded by Sri Gupta and bravely built up by Samudra Gupta and Chandra Gupta II began to decline and ultimately collapsed completely towards the end of 6th Century A.D. Along with the death of Skanda Gupta the imperial rule seemed to have come to an end. Many factors are responsible for decline of Gupta Dynasty.

1. Weak Successor:

Empire building in ancient India was mainly because of an ambitious ruler. It mainly centered upon the individual ruler who could build the empire. Till Skanda Gupta all the rulers were in a position to extend or maintain the kingdom but the later Gupta's who followed Skanda Gupta were Puru Gupta, Narasimha Gupta, Baladitya Gupta, Buddha Gupta who were weak and incompetent and therefore Gupta Power came to an end.

2. Foreign Invasion:

The stability of Gupta Empire was seriously threatened by Pushyamitra in the time of Kumar Gupta I. Though Skanda Gupta beat them but when the Central Government of the Gupta became weak, this foreign force became more vigorous and soon after the death of Skanda Gupta Huns brought about the ruin of Gupta Empire. The repeated attacks of Huns must have exhausted the resources of Gupta empire. Under the leadership of Toramana Hunas established their authority over Punjab, Rajputana, Sindh and Malwa. Thus the foreign invasions gave a serious blow to the Gupta Empire.

3. Absence of Strong Central Authority:

Gupta dynasty had monarchical type of Government until the rule of Skanda Gupta monarchical type of Government was a boon to them, but the Central administration became weak and defective after the death of Skanda Gupta. Many chiefs revolted against later Gupta rulers. They were successful in setting up an independent kingdom towards the middle of 6th Century. Later Gupta rulers lacked the power to handle the administrative machinery of the Country. They were not competent to hold the empire and bring unity and oneness. Thus the Central administration became weak and defective.

4. Change of Religion:

Another cause contributed to the fall of Gupta's was shift from Hinduism to Buddhism. The early king of Gupta dynasty was a follower of Brahmanism whereas later Gupta embraced Buddhism. Buddha Gupta, Tothagata Gupta and Baladitya adopted Buddhism. This conversion caused a profound impact on the military enterprises of the country so much as that they could not resist the foreign invasions. Buddhism completely brought a change in their military outlook and the later Gupta were not so powerful as the former ones.

5. Deteriorating Economic Condition :

The system of Tax Collection did not work well after Skanda Gupta. Thus, Economic conditions of the people under later Gupta, deteriorated. Deteriorated Economic Condition is well reflected through Gupta Coin Age. The Superior Gold Coins issued by Chandra Gupta and Samudra Gupta could not be continued by their successors. Considerable fall in

economic condition has affected the military strength of a country. Thus, the financial crisis proved to be a cause of destruction of the Gupta empire.

6. Neglected the Borders of the Empire:

The threat of foreign invasions can be weakened by securing the borders of the empire. The later Gupta did not pay much attention to the borders of the empire. As a result, there was always the fear of foreign invasions. This negligence brought about the downfall of Gupta Empire.

7. Vast Empire :

The Gupta Empire was very vast. A vast Empire could only be control by powerful rulers like Samudra Gupta and Chandra Gupta II. But later Gupta rulers were incapable of controlling such a vast Empire. For the convenience and efficiency of the administration, empire was divided into number of provinces. The administration of the provinces was carried on by Governors. Unfortunately all the Governors were not loyal to kings instead of fighting for the empire they fought against it. Thus, internal disturbance and mal-administration led to the ruin of the empire.

Check Your Progress:

1. Make an estimate of Kumar Gupta I as an conqueror and administrator.

4.10 MONARCHY : ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

During the Gupta period king was the center figure in the administration. The kings were looked upon by the people as Gods. The kings lived for their subjects. In order to achieve the high ideals of kingship, Gupta kings like Samudra Gupta, Chandra Gupta, Skanda Gupta devoted their whole life for the welfare of people. Though the powers of king was more or less absolute, there were checks and balances as in the Mauryan policy. The Guptas placed before themselves certain ideals, which they tried to reach. The achievements of Samudra Gupta and Chandra Gupta, for instance, prove this. In order to be worthy of power, the princes were trained properly.

The Guptas discarded the modest title of Rajans. Instead they adopted the titles such as Maharajadhiraja, Vikramaditya, Samrat, Prithvipala, Chakravartin, Parmeshvara, Paramadevta, etc. In an inscription at Prayaga Samudra Gupta has been identified with God Indra, Kubera and Vishnu. The Allahabad Pillar inscription has referred Samudra Gupta as 'God dwelling on earth'. The coin legends of the Gupta emperor from the time of Samudra Gupta refers to them as having 'acquired heaven (by good deeds) following their conquest of the earth. The rule of succession in the Gupta Empire was hereditary descent. But many time emperors himself selected his successor. Younger brother of the ruler and elder sons of the ruler were usually appointed to the post of provincial Governors.

Emperors during Gupta period appeared too absolute. He was as usual the center of all military, political, administrative and judicial authority, many times they were thus own commands-in-chief. Samudra Gupta, Chandra Gupta-II, Skanda Gupta personally led their armies. All the official appointments in administration were appointed by King. The King was the sources of all honours and titles. The Secretariat at the capital worked under his personal direction and supervision and the provincial governors and their officers were under their control and guidance. King had a full liberty to distribute property, titles, recover and remit taxes and give justice loaded with innumerable privileges and rights Gupta Kings were assisted by various officers at and central state, district and village level. All these officials were responsible to the King. They enjoyed their respective positions according to the King's pleasure and could be deprived of their rank at any time.

4.11 COUNCIL OF MINISTER

The Gupta continued the traditional machinery of bureaucratic administration. The King was assisted by a council, which was called as Mantrimandalam. The royal council should not be regarded as a mere advisory body. It must have formed an important organization in the administration machinery. Probably council of ministers consisted of princes, high officials and feudatories. The Gupta Empire had grown fast and extensive. So it was very difficult for the king to govern the country all alone. Thus, the Gupta Kings had a council which rendered advisory functions. The council of ministers was accommodated the officer of the different ministers and heads of department. Each office had its own seal with which its communication were stamped for authentication. Kalidasa had remarked that the important matter were placed before Council of Ministers. The decision of council were conveyed to the King by the Ministers. But the King was not compelled to accept the decision of the Cabinet. Thus duty of the council of ministers was to advice King, but ultimately final decisions were taken by King. The main function of the council was to accept or reject the successor. It was held responsible for making preparation for the coronation of Yuvaraja.

4.12 OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS

Kautilya has mentioned various kinds of ministers who were in charge of different departments. The mantri (high minister), whose office is known to Kautilya's Arthashastra, was the head of civil administration. Among the imperial officers were Mahabaladhikarta (commander-in-chief), the Mahadandanayak (general), the Mahapratihara (chief of the palace guard). Pratihara and Mahapratihara were important officer's in the royal court. They regulated and granted the necessary permission for admission to the royal presence. The Mahashvapati (chief of cavalry), Mahapitupati (officer in charge of elephants), Senapati and Baladhikarta, Sandhivigraha etc. were other high ranking, officers. A link between the central and the provincial administration was furnished by the class of officer called Kamarmatyas and Ayuktas. The Ayuktas may be traced back to the

Yuktas of the Ashokan inscriptions. Ayuktas were entrusted with the task of restoring the wealth of the kings conquered by the emperor and sometimes placed in charge of districts or metropolitan town, Kumaramatyas figured prominently in the Central Government Secretariat. Some of the Kumaramatyas worked in the provincial government. Harishena (Samudra Gupta's Minister). Sikharaswami (Chandra Gupta II's minister) and Prithvisena (Kumar Gupta's Minister) are the best examples of the designation Kumaramatyas. There are no clear evidences about the mode of payment the officers and minister's during Gupta period. Mode of payment has changed from person to person and different at each rule. It is possible that some officials must have received their salaries in cash. However some officials must have given lands in the lieu of their salaries. They earned their livelihood out of the money obtained through this landed property.

4.6 PROVONCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Gupta had ruled upon a very vast and extensive territory. For administrative purpose, it was divided into a number of units and provinces called Bhukti which were about the size of the Commissioner's division in modern times. The head of the provinces was called Uparika or Bhagpat. They were related to the royal family. Further each Bhuktis were sub-divided into Vaishyas, roughly corresponding to the modern districts. Vaishya was ruled by a Visyapati. Uparika and Visyapati were allotted many administrative responsibilities. They were assisted by number of sub-officials. Uparika were appointed by and responsible to emperor himself. Visyapati was usually appointed by Uprikas, but sometimes directly by the emperor himself. Lastly the village or grama was under the officer called Gramika. There is also reference to the 'Ashtakutadhikama' which was a council of 8 leading families in village. This body and Gramika managed the affairs of village.

The administrative divisions of the south differed from that of north. The south was divided into mandals which were further divided into Kohmas. In the south village was the smallest administrative unit. Administration in village was carried out by the village headman, where as in town it was looked after by Nagarpatis'. (in some areas in Central India rural affairs were managed by a committee of five known as Panchamandal. Group of villages formed Vithis' which are mentioned in Gupta inscription and seals.)

The Gupta seals excavated near Vaisali mention about the following provincial officer.

Kumaramatyadhikarana (Office of Prince's Minister) are

1. Bladhikarna (Head of the Army)
2. Military Exchequer
3. Chief of the Police
4. Chief Censor

5. Chamberlain
6. Chief Justice
7. Minister for Law and Order
8. Head of Infantry and Cavalry
9. Governor of Provinces

Thus we can state over here that there was no over- centralization of government under the Guptas. Obviously excellent and well set system of Administration brought peace and prosperity during Gupta period.

4.7 THE DISTRICT COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATION

The district administration enjoyed considerable powers. Officers in charge of districts were responsible for maintaining law and order. They was also in charge of collection of government taxes and revenue. As mentioned earlier a province was divided into District called Vishayas, which were under Vishayapati. The term 'Adhishthitakarana' seemed to be used for the District headquarter during Gupta period. The Districts officers were large in number subordinate revenue officer serving as link between the district administration and the villages were Yuktas, Ayuktas, Niyuktas, Vyaprilas and Adhikritas. The district administrators always enjoyed considerable power. Central Government always consulted district authorities while dealing with the matters related to district administration. At district cover also there was a council whose members were known as Vishayamahattaras. The Faridpur plate III shows that there were about 20 members, some of whom were non-Brahmana. Seals of Vishayamahattaras have been found at Nalanda. The Chief banker, the Chief traders, the Chief artisan and Chief Kayastha (write) figured prominently in the council. The Damodar copper plates furnish more information of the district administration. The district council consisted of Nagarsrestin or the president of the guilds and main traders, artisans, bankers and Kayastas.

4.8 VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION

Gupta period has witness excellent system of administration even at grass root level. As mentioned above the lowest administrative unit was known as Grama. The village (Grama) administration was placed under the change of gramika. The rural council or board known as 'Ashtakutadhikarana' was said to be headed by village elders. This council and Gramika managed the affairs of the village. In some areas in Central India, rural affairs were managed by a committee of five, known as Panchamandal. The seal near Vaisali refer to Pancha Mandali which are equivalent to the Panchayat of later times. These assemblies constituted various committees to look after specific departments, such as tanks, temples, justice etc. Though each village was independent unit of administration, in later period it looked forward to further help from the emperor. Numerous inscription of the Guptas throws welcome light on the

grants of villages to the scholars, servants and even for the religious purposes.

4.16 REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

Excellent revenue administration was the backbone of the Gupta Administration. Though taxation system of the Guptas was not as elaborate as that of Mauryas, it was a perfect system of its kind. Unfortunately inscriptions do not give much information regarding the revenue administration of the Guptas. It appears that the traditional number of taxes was 18, but we do not find the names of these taxes in the inscriptions of the Gupta age. The primary source of revenue to the central exchequers was the land tax. Two types of land taxes specifically are mentioned Shoga' a tax paid by private land owners and Sagabhoga', a tax paid on crown lands. Land was also called Bhagakara in some localities and Udranga in other. There was a separate department to collect taxes regularly. The rate of land tax was according to the quality of land have varied from 16 to 25 percent. It was usually collected in kinds instead of cash. If the production was poor, the government share automatically became small.

Another source of income was derived from taxes enforced on buffalo milk, curd and also on fruits and flowers. The forests, meadow and salt mines, added to the income of the state. The villagers had to pay occasional levy when officers of the Central Government come for inspection. They had to provide them food, flowers and other necessities and luxuries of life with labour and transportation facilities. During emergency these taxes could be raised and even new taxes could be levied. The state claimed ownership in waste lands, forest, pastures and derived considerable income by farming them out or selling their product. However, other sources of revenue included the custom duty, fine collected from criminals, transport fee for the cattle, slaughtering animals, police tax for security of villagers, fee from guilds, traders, bankers, gold and silver merchants. All these sources of revenue always kept Gupta treasury flooded. And made Gupta period a Golden period of Indian History.

4.17 JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

The Judicial administration of such a vast empire could not be carried on by the King alone. The King was the highest judicial authority. But for the convenience there were courts at Central and Provincial level. In inscription we come across the name 'Mahadandnayaka', Chief Judicial Officer. He acted as commander as well as judge. Administration of Justice in important towns and cities was carried on by specially appointed officers. The seals of courts functioning at important provincial and district centers are found at Nalanda and Vaishali which mentions the designations like Nayadhikarana, Dharmadhikarana and Dharmashasan adhikarana. The justice in the village was dispensed by village Panchayat. There were four types of courts namely Kala, Shreni, Gana and Rayakiya.

The first three were the public and last was the government court. All the disputes were referred to first three courts in the first instance. There was permission to appeal to higher court.

The Gupta code of punishment was not very harsh. There was no death punishment. Punishment was inflicted according to the nature of crime. But certain scholars have contradicted the above view. According to them there are very harsh and severe punishment during Gupta period. Ordeal by fire, water, poison and by weighing with stone was also rendered to. According to Fa-Hien punishments during Gupta period were very lenient. However, Vishakhadatt describes heavy punishment, including death sentence. Another cruel and barbarous punishment was the scooping out the eyes or crushing the offender under elephant's feet. In the inscription of Skanda Gupta at Junagad we come to know of the torture inflicted on the sinner. The whole purpose behind heavy and brutal punishments was to deter the people from committing crimes.

4.18 MILITARY ADMINISTRATION

The Gupta kings were great warriors and conquerors. The military organization of the Guptas was well knit and efficient. As they followed imperialistic policy, they maintained big army. The army consisted of elephants, cavalry and infantry. In Rajasthan even camels were used in the army. In the South there were some units of navy. The Senapati was the highest official in the army. The imperialistic policy and security of Kingdom was mainly based on the efficiency of military, hence Gupta kings paid special attention towards the army. Numerous references are found about the designation of military officers. Senapati, Mahasenapati, Baladhikrita, Mahabaladhikrita, Dandanayaka, Sandhivigraha, Mahasandhivigraha, Gupta etc. The Junagad rock inscription of Skanda Gupta tells as that he 'appointed protectors (Goptrin) in all countries. In the hour of crises besides king's army there were separate armies in the provinces. Thus military administration of Gupta gave peace, prosperity and solace to the people.

Check Your Progress:

1. Describe the achievements of Imperial Gupta in Administration.

4.19 SUMMARY

Imperial Gupta once again gave political unity to the country. There are sufficient sources of information about the Imperial Guptas. These are literary archaeological and foreign. Much is not known about origin of the Guptas. Scholars had viewed different origin of Gupta family from Vaisyas to foreign blood. It however, appears that Chandra Gupta I was the their first important ruler. He brought name and fame to this dynasty and also founded a new hour. He married Lichchavi princess which brought strength and prestige to his dynasty.

Samudragupta succeeded Chandra Gupta I. At that time India was politically divided and many small kingdom and monarchies existed. Thus Samudra Gupta was faced with the problem of uniting them Samudragupta was a great conqueror. He defeated 12 kings in the north, in the south also he won many territories and subjugated forest and borders tribes. He had very cordial relations with Ceylon. He also performed Asvamedha Yajna. Thus Samudragupta occupies a unique place in Indian history. He was great warrior, successful conqueror, founders of Gupta Empire, great diplomat, good administrator, patronize of art and literature and a perfect religious tolerant.

Samudra Gupta was succeeded by his son Rama Gupta. Chandra Gupta II younger brother of Rama Gupta reached his wife from Saka rulers. Ram Gupta was killed Chandra Gupta. Subsequently Chandra Gupta married his sister- in - law Dhruvadevi. Chandra Gupta II was one of the greatest monarchs of Gupta dynasty. He ruled for a period of about 40 years. Chandra Gupta followed policy of matrimonial alliance to extend his empire. Chandra Gupta defeated many republics and conquered Bengal. The achievement of Chandra Gupta II was his victory over western Satraps. His empire extended from Himalayas to the Narmada.

Chandra Gupta II issued large numbers of gold, silver and copper coins. Fa- Hien was a Chinese traveler who came to India to study Buddhism. His description gives much information about social, economic and political condition of India of that age. Thus Chandra Gupta II was the most glorious king of king of Gupta dynasty. He was a successful efficient administration, patron of art and literature and followed the policy of religious toleration.

Kumar Gupta Succeeded Chandra Gupta II in about 47 A.D. Kumar Gupta ruled the country for 40 years with a sound efficient and stable administration. He had issued various types of coins. His coins and inscriptions reveal some important names of his ministers and governors. Skanda Gupta succeeded Kumar Gupta. He ruled for a brief period of 12 years Skanda Gupta paid great attention to public work. His kingdom was divided into a number of provinces during his period the economic condition was appreciably good, people were happy and prosperous. He was a follower of Brahmanism but he was tolerant towards all religions and cults. Along with the death of Skand-Gupta the imperial rule of Gupta came to an end.

The Gupta administration provided the model for basic administrative structure both in theory and practice. Cultural unity was combined with political unity. During the Gupta period King was the center figure in the administration. The Guptas discarded the modest title of Rajas. Instead they adopted the titles such as Maharajadhiraj, Chakravastin, Samrat etc. The King was assisted by council of ministers which was called Mantrimandalam. Apart from council of ministers there are other officials also such as Mahabolahdhikarta, Mahadandnayaka, the Mahapratihara and Pratihara. For administrative purpose Kingdom was divided into numerous units and provinces called Bhakti, Vishaya and Grama. The district

administration enjoyed considerable powers. The village administration was under rural council headed by village elders. Excellent revenue administration was the backbone of the Gupta administration. For judicial administration there were courts at Central and Provincial level. The army of Guptas consisted of elephants, cavalry and infantry. Thus Gupta age is rightly called the Golden Age.

4.20 QUESTIONS

1. What do you know about the origin and growth of Guptas? Give brief account of Chandra Gupta I the founders of dynasty.
2. Describe the career and achievements of Samudragupta
3. Write Short notes on
 - i) The origin of the Guptas
 - ii) Chandra Gupta I
 - iii) Samudragupta's military expedition.
 - iv) Fa-Hien
 - v) Ramgupta
4. Examine the contribution of Chandra Gupta II to the expansion and consolidation of Gupta Empire.
5. Describe career and achievements of Chandra Gupta II.
6. Describe the career and achievements of Skanda Gupta.
7. Bring out the salient features of the Gupta administration.
8. Discuss in detail, the imperial administration of the Guptas.
9. Describe, in brief, the Gupta administration.
10. What factors led to the decline and downfall of the Gupta Empire.

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CLASSICAL AGE

Unit Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Religious Condition
 - 5.2.1 Hinduism
 - 5.2.2 Buddhism
 - 5.2.3 Jainism
- 5.3 Economic Conditions
 - 5.3.1 Agriculture
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- 5.4 Social Life During Gupta Period
 - 5.4.1 Caste system
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 - 5.4.4 Joint family system
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 - 5.4.6 Dress and Ornaments
 - 5.4.7 Food and Drinks
- 5.5 Literature
- 5.6 Education
- 5.7 Art and Architecture
- 5.8 Sciences and Technology
- 5.9 Summary
- 5.10 Questions
- 5.11 Additional Reading

5.0 OBJECTIVES

- To focus on the religious, Economic and Social conditions during Gupta period.
- To brief survey the progress made in the field of Art and Architecture Science and Technology and coinage.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Many historians have titled Gupta period as 'The Golden Age' of Gupta. An eminent historian A.L. Basham has expressed his view in the following lines:

‘Perhaps the Gupta period was an age when love, in all the senses of the word, was more widely diffused in India than at any other time in her history – love of the gods and love of one's fellow men, love of the things of the spirit and love of the things of sense, love of pomp and splendor and love of simplicity, love of nature and love of life. In almost every relic of the Gupta age this love is apparent, in the Gupta age this love is apparent, in the simple but dignified script of Gupta inscriptions, in the fine design of Gupta. Coinage, in the words of the court poet Kalidasa as in these of the provincial hack-writer Vastabhathi and of the anonymous scribes who drafted in rather in accurate Sanskrit the texts of the Damodarpur title-deeds, taking pains to mention the names of the members of the local council and those of the humble clerks who kept the records of land transactions. This was surely a period of high civilization in every sense, but especially in the truest sense of the term – an age of equilibrium, when human relations reached a degree of kindness rare in the history of the world, and the best minds of India expressed the fullness and goodness of life in imperishable art and literature'. (A.C. Basham)

5.2 RELIGIOUS CONDITION

A distinguish feature of Gupta period is religious freedom and toleration. During Gupta period every citizen was treated equally apart from their religious beliefs. The Gupta Kings was quite tolerant towards other religion. People loved one another. Buddhism and Jainism enjoyed all those facilities which were enjoyed by the Brahmins. Consequently, Buddhism and Jainism flourished along with Hinduism. The emperor showed the noble spirit of tolerance and did not suppress or harassed any religious community. Talent was encouraged without any religious prejudices. In this period, Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism existed side by side.

5.2.1 Hinduism :

The Gupta rulers were the champion of new Brahmanical movement. The revival of Brahmanism had begun during the Sunga period. The Gupta to patronize this religion. Rather it will be correct to say that a new life was infused into Hinduism. The Gupta age was the Golden age of Hindu revival. There is epigraphical evidence to show that Gupta King's revived Ashvamedha sacrifice after their victory. Most of the Gupta rulers supported Vaishnavism. The epigraphs and coins speak of other God and Goddesses like Laxmi, Durga, Parvati, Shiva, Kartikeya and Surya etc. This period also became famous for Dharma Shashtra literature. The some of Puranas, the epics, the smritis etc. were written during this period. From the inscription we learned that the Gupta's God constructed many temples

and made liberal Grants to the religious institution. The Bhakti movement became strong and one over thousands of people to Hindu faith.

5.2.2 Buddhism:

The Gupta rulers were known for their liberal religious policy. They patronized all faiths equally. Buddhism continued flourishing along with Brahminism. Samudra Gupta granted permission to the ruler of Ceylon for the construction of Vihar at Gaya. The Sanchi inscription of Chandra Gupta II referred to a grant instituted by military officer, for feeding the Buddhists. The Buddhist University of Nalanda was a beneficiary of the royal patronage. A large number of Buddha and Bodhisattva images are discovered in different parts of India. Especially in the sites of Nalanda and Mathura focuses on the religious freedom enjoyed by the Buddhists under the Gupta's. During this period Buddhism underwent complete transformation and adopted some of the practices of shavism and shaktism. At Sarnath images of Buddha were installed under the supervision of Kumar Gupta II and Buddha Gupta. Thus, Buddhism had widely spread during the Gupta age.

5.2.3 Jainism :

The Udayagiri Inscription of Kumar Gupta I in the Kancham Pillar Inscription relates to the installation of Tirthankaras. East Bengal, Mathura, Vallabhi and Punavardhan and in central India Udayagiri, in South Kanchi, Camatic and Mysore were the important places of Jainism. Private and Royal Gifts to the Jain temples and installation of the statues of Tirthankaras are on record. In this age commentaries were written on ancient Jain books. But Sanskrit was dominating language during this period so all the Jain Scripture were written in Sanskrit.

5.3 ECONOMIC CONDITION

Economic prosperity is one of the reasons for the Golden period of Gupta Dynasty. Under Gupta's agriculture, trade and commerce was greatly encouraged. Economic Prosperity was the hallmark of the Gupta age.

5.3.1 Agriculture :

The backbone of Indian Economy is agriculture. It is the basis of economic life in India. During Gupta period agricultural land was owned by individual families and not by State. Land was inherited and cultivated generation after generation. Agriculture was carried on both with Artificial and Natural irrigation. Canals, wells and huge lakes were constructed for irrigation. The construction of Sudarshan Lake by Skand Gupta is evidence of these facts. Many inscriptional records referred to the public welfare project like wells, tanks and canals for irrigation purposes. It is believed that some scientific methods were followed for better agricultural produced. There were strict rules and regulation regarding transaction of land. Land was not sold without the permission of the state. Severe punishments were given to those who stole food grain or damaged dams or

canals. Therefore, during Gupta period there was bumper harvest of not only of food grain but also of different varieties of foods.

5.3.2 Industry :

Millions of people earned their livelihood by spinning and weaving. The most important center of cloth industry was at Gujarat, Bengal and some state in the South. During Gupta period initially instituted clothes were used. But later on, with the influence of foreigners stitched clothes like coats, jackets were also used. Another flourishing industry of Gupta period was of Jewelry making. During this period ornaments were studded with precious and semi-precious stone. The work of cutting diamonds and polishing of diamond was also done. Many people were engaged in metal, copper and ivory work.

5.3.3 Trade :

During Gupta period India traded with number of foreign countries like Arabia, Egypt, Greece, Persia, Rome, Syria and in the east with Burma, Cambodia, China, Malaya, Ceylon, Siam and Sumatra. There was a very active internal trade. For internal trade there were good means of transportation. Internal trade was carried on through sea as well as by land routes. In those day Ujjain, Banaras, Vaishali, Gaya, Prayag and Mathura were the important center of trade. The Ganga, Krishna, Godavari, Brahmaputra were the rivers utilized for trade. Trade routes were made secure from the robbers on the land and pirates at sea. India exported pearls, precious stone, clothes, scents, spices, drugs, coconut, ivory etc.

5.3.4 Guilds : (Shreni):

Guilds were the association of merchant and traders. In today's term it was like a trade union. There were guilds not only of commercial classes but also among workers and weavers. Some guilds combine banking operation to provide capital for the members. During Gupta period some of the Guilds were consisted of a president and an executive community. The Guild was designated by the name of head man. Guild used to deposit and lend money. The members of the Guild got state security and enjoyed social respect. This Guild also imparted vocational and professional education. The Guilds were very powerful in economic and social life. They could even raise a protective police force of their own. A fully organized Guild gave bonus, leave, pension, provident fund etc. Its fixed a fair price according to the quality of product. A minimum wage was fixed by Guilds. They lavishly donated to the charitable institutions, built monasteries, chaityas and temples and promoted education and art.

5.4 SOCIAL LIFE DURING GUPTA PERIOD

5.4.1 Caste System :

During Gupta period the social frame work was patriarchal. There are references to the four stages of life. A man was expected to keep balanced among the four Purusharthas (Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha). Society

was divided among the four castes. Brahmins and Kshatriyas enjoyed a very high status. Different quarters of the city were assigned to different caste, the out caste living outside. The King granted land and Agrahara to Brahmins. Brahmins were known by their Gotras.

In spite of rigid caste regarding the occupation of each Varna. Inscription of the period testify the occupational mobility among caste, Kshatriya merchant and a body of weavers from Gujarat adopting other occupation in Malwa.

5.4.2 Untouchability :

Untouchability existed in the society. Fa-Hein observed "Chandals" are segregated. These people live away from other people and when they approach the city or market place, they beat a piece of wood in order to distinguish themselves. Then the people know who they are and avoid coming into contact with them. Fortunately, along with other caste Shudras were also permitted to change their occupation. Shudras were Traders, agriculturists and artisans. Shudras were also employed in army and state security. Even sudras could own property and could take up teaching as a profession.

5.4.3 Marriages :

Monogamy was the cherished ideals but some of the Gupta ruler and rich merchants followed Polygamy. In spite of the laws of Manu, Caste system was still fluid. Marriages with foreigners and inter caste marriages were common. Gupta Kings themselves married with the girls of other dynasty. Chandra Gupta, I had matrimonial alliance with the dynasty of Lichachvis, Chandra Gupta II married with Kubera Naga of Naga family. Later Chandra Gupta II gave his daughter Prabhavati Gupta in marriage to the Vakatala Rudrasena II.

5.4.4 Joint family system :

Joint family system was very common during Gupta period. The family was managed by the patriarch who was shown profound respect. The ownership of the property vested in the father. However, the Smritis contained rules for the division of property. Rights of sons and brothers to their separate shares were recognized by birthright. Widows got a life interest on maintenance from the family.

5.4.5 Position of women :

The status of women was enhanced during Gupta period. Yagna Valkya Smriti recognizes the right to inherit property for women. Though Kautilya prohibits widow remarriage, Yagnavalkya allows niyoga by which a widow could beget a child. Woman were free in social life. But their Upanayana was stopped. The age of marriage for women was lowered during Gupta period. System of Sati was rare. In the later Gupta period position of women had deteriorated. They had no individual liberty. They could not attain higher education. The women were banned from

attaining religious education. Admission of women to the Buddhist monasteries was stopped by 500 A.D. The women were trained in dancing, painting and playing musical instruments. Parada system was not common but the women of higher families used veils while going out.

5.4.6 Dress and ornaments :

Economic prosperity, peace and security during Gupta period has its impact on their dress and ornaments. Literary evidences of times reveal the information about the dress of the people. The men wore dhotis and covered themselves with shawls. The rulers and the rich wore gorgeous and costly dress and thereby set the fashion in the court. The men wore turban too. Coats, overcoats and trousers become common among the Kings and nobleman. Women generally wore blouses, saris and petticoats. Cotton was more common among woman but silk clothes were also worn occasionally. Common dress of women Saree and Blouse is also seen in the Ajanta paintings.

Women used cosmetics, perfumes etc. Several style of hair dressing and use of paints, pastes and lipsticks as well, are depicted in the painting at Ajanta. Both women and men used a variety of ornaments. Rings, bracelets and necklace were commonly used. The women used jingling ornaments. The ornaments were made of gold, silver and Ivory.

5.4.7 Food and Drinks:

According to Fa-Hein the majority people in Gupta period were Vegetarian. But the literary works of Kalidasa and other references proved that on a festive occasion both meat and wines were consumed. Fa-Hein writes that the people did not use wines, onion, meat and geulic. Only Chandalas ate such things. Probably views of the Fa-Hein were limited to Buddhists only. Even smritis did not put any restriction on eating non-veg. Smritis did not allow women to eat meat especially whose husband have been out. The smritis allowed meat-eating for the sick persons. Use of betel nut and leaves (Pan) were in practice. People sought happiness in good drinks. In fact, the prose and poetic works refers to drinking wine by the queens and other rich ladies.

5.5 LITERATURE

Gupta period has witnessed excellent system of education. The literacy outburst that Gupta age is compared to the golden age of Queen Elizabeth. Gupta kings themselves were highly cultured and liberally patronized art and literature. Samudra Gupta has been described in the Allahabad Pillar inscription as a gifted poet and musicians. Chandra Gupta maintained a magnificent court with the 'Nine gems'. Kalidasa the great poet and dramatist lived in the Gupta age. He wrote number of dramas like Shakuntalam, Malavikagnimitram, Vikramorvashem etc. Poetic works – Raghuvamsha, Kumarasambhava, Ritusamhara and Meghaduta are of rare merit. Bhasa was another great dramatist. Fourteen plays of him have been

discovered till today. The important among them were the Urubhanga, the PratimaNataka, the Pratijna Yaugandharayana and the Svapnavasavadatta.

Sanskrit literature greatly flourished during Gupta period. The inscriptions, coins and literacy work of Gupta age are the evidences of the great progress made in the literacy fields. Prose and poetry both were written during this period. All the literature of a very high orders were composed and written in this age. The famous work in Sanskrit called 'Panchatantram' is the creation of Gupta period. It has been translated in almost all the languages of the world. The puranas were re-written during Gupta age. Yajñvalkyā, Narada, Kōtyāgana and Brihaspati Smṛiti were the religious literature that were rewritten during this age. Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata the two great Epics were rewritten during this age. Kamandaka, the disciple of Kautilya wrote 'Nitisarai' a revised version of Arthashastra. In this period a commentary was written on 'Sāṅkhya Philosophy' and 'Mīmāṃsa Sūtra'. Vātsyāyan' wrote a commentary on the Philosophy of law. Vasubandhu composed 'Abhidharmakośha' Dignaga wrote 'Pramāṇa Samuchchaya'. Famous Jain Acharya Siddhasena composed 'Nyāyavṛtta' or 'Nyāya'. Iswara Krishna wrote 'Sāṅhya Karika', a 'famous work on Sāṅkhya System.' Prasastapada had written Padarthadhasma Samgraha and Vyasabhasya, composed on Yoga Philosophy.

5.6 EDUCATION

Kings, rich merchants' prices all promoted education during Gupta period. Primary education was imparted by family while the vocational education was given by the guilds and the artisans. Generous donations from Princes and rich merchants promoted higher education scholars were devoted to teaching and learning Pataliputra, Ujjain, Vallabhi and Pālavati were the main centers of education. Religious places like Banaras, Mathura, Nasik and Kashi, were also educational ventures. For Buddhist education Kanchi was the main city. Fa-hien records those rich monasteries were scattered over the country. Instruction in Vedas, the Puranas, the Smritis, grammar, logic, mathematics, astronomy and medicine was given at the Universities in the traditional manner, Instruction was oral and it was to be received directly from teacher. Even debates and discussions were the popular means of instruction at university level. During this age only literacy, education was not imparted but even technical education was equally important. The students also learnt arts and crafts.

5.7 ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Coins, sculpture, paintings, caves and temples speak in volumes of the high standard of art in the Gupta period. It is rightly said that art entered in the classical phase in Gupta period. The art of Gupta period has reached at its climax from the point of view of beauty, ideas and representation. Thus, the glories of the Gupta period are partly due to the Gupta art. Some of the most beautiful monuments are a heritage of Gupta period. The center of art during Gupta period were at Mathura, Banaras and Patna.

People during Gupta period had a sharp aesthetic sensibility. Achievements in the field of art and architecture can be studied under following areas.

Architecture :

A new phase began in this sphere under the Guptas. Most of the temples and stupas of the Gupta period has been destroyed, but the few that have survived show remarkable feature. Temples constructed during Gupta period had its own prominent features and themes. Temples are decorated with fine sculptured panels. Some of the Gupta temples were built of bricks, especially in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal and Madhya Pradesh.

Some of the best examples of Gupta architecture.

1. The Siva temple at Khoh.
2. The temple of Lord Vishnu at Tigawa in Jabalpur.
3. A Parvati temple at Ajaygrah.
4. The Buddha temples at Ranchi and Bodh Gaya.
5. The Siva temple at Bhumara in Nagod state.
6. The Dashavatara temples of Devagarh.
7. A temple through devastated has been found on the bank of river Brahmaputra in Darrang district.

This period witnesses the carving of numerous caves and the construction of stupas. The Stupas at Rajgir, and Sarnath belongs to this period. The caves at Ajanta, Nashik, Karla, Mogulrajepuram and Undavalli are the example of the rock architecture.

Painting :

A unique example of Gupta painting can be seen through paintings at Ajanta and other caves. Painting during Gupta period taken the themes from contemporary literature, including the epics. During Gupta period some of the finest caves in Ajanta (No. 16 and No. 17) were painted. The paintings in those days aimed at depicting the main events of human life and the realities of the world. The beautiful Fresco painting in Ajanta insipid and high technical skill in wall painting. Height of excellence achieved in the field of painting indicates that Arts in Gupta period had received royal patronage. Caves were selected for religious painting may be with scanty point of view. They know that their act was worth preserving. And most important characteristic of Ajanta painting is that, though painted for religious purposes, the murals of Ajanta bear rather a secular than a religious message. This devotion to art, religion, knowledge was really praiseworthy. Colour used in Ajanta are still fresh even today reveal their knowledge of science. Thus, the beauty of the paintings during Gupta period is ineffable.

Sculpture:

Gupta king made great progress in the field of Art of Sculpture. This period was at its zenith in Sculpture representation. The important feature of the Gupta's sculpture is the evolution of the perfect types of divinities both Buddhist and Brahmanical. Patliputra, Sarnath and Mathura were the three main centers of statue making. These statues were made of stone, metal and burnt clay. Very beautiful statue of Buddha and images of Vishnu and Shiva were made. Even other Hindu Gods such as Sun, Kartikeya have also been found. During this age some innovations were introduced in the statue of Lord Buddha.

Some of them are :

1. Curly hair were introduced.
2. Graceful ornamentation of different kinds introduced in the halo of the Buddha figure.
3. Transparent drapery plains or with folds, clearly revealing the form was a notable distinguishing feature.
4. Large variety of mudras (hand poses and attitudes.)
5. More spiritual Calmness of face and eyes of the Buddha image than is found in Kushana or Gandhara art.
6. The Gupta age was absolutely free from the influence of Gandhara. It was entirely Indian and free from foreign influences.

Along with images of Buddha icons of Kartikeyas, Shiva, the Ganga relief from Bernagar, Shiv Parvati, from Mandor, The Varahavatara relief of Udaygiri are another specimen with difference.

5.8 SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Gupta period has witnessed a great progress in the field of science and technology. This proves that the ancient scholars of India were interested in only religion philosophy and imaginative literature. During Gupta Age, Indian Science made great progress. The contribution to scientific knowledge by the ancient Indian scholar particularly in the Gupta age was immense. The University of Nalanda and other institution were not only for religious but peculiar learning also. During Gupta Age, Astrology and Arithmetic too advanced to a considerable stage. Aryabhatta was born in 476 was a renowned personality of this age. He proved that the earth is round and it revolves round the Sun. Varahamihira a famous Astrologer made notable contribution through "Panchasiddhanta, Laghujataka, Yogabhasha and Brihatasamhita".

During Gupta Age, Arithmetic also greatly progressed Aryabhatta was also a great Mathematician. He regarded Mathematics as a separate branch

of knowledge. The Vedic Mathematical literature like Vedanga, Jyotisha and Kalpasutras are the Greatest work in Mathematic produced during Gupta period. It was India that gave to the world the decimal system. Brahma Gupta was also a great Mathematician of this age. Great progress was made in the field of medicine also. A scholar name Nagarjuna invented a new method of curing diseases. He proved that diseases could be cured with the help of Gold, silver, Iron, Copper and like metals. A new system of curing diseases known as "Rasachikitsa" this system made use of various metals as cures for various disease.

In the field of physics also India made valuable contribution. Brahma Gupta had found that things fall to the ground not because there is hidden force within them but because of law of Gravity. Thus, ancient Indian medicine, surgery, mathematics, astrology, physics are of a higher order than those of modern west.

5.9 SUMMARY

A distinguish feature of Gupta period is religious freedom and toleration. Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism were treated equally. Under Gupta agriculture, trade and commerce well greatly encouraged. There were associations (Guilds) of merchants and traders which were very powerful in economic and social life. Society was divided among four castes. Brahmins and Kshatriyas enjoyed a very high status. Untouchability existed in the society. Monogamy was cherished ideals but some of the Gupta rulers and rich merchants followed polygamy. Marriages with foreigners and inter caste marriages common. The status of women was enhanced during Gupta period. The women were trained in dancing, painting and playing musical instruments Both women and men used variety of ornaments.

Gupta period has witnessed excellent system of education Sanskrit literature greatly flourished during Gupta period. Coins, sculptures paintings, caves and temples speak in volumes of the high standard of art and architecture in the Gupta period.

5.10 QUESTIONS

1. Why the Gupta age is known as the Golden Age of Ancient India?
2. Discuss the social and economic conditions during the Gupta age.
3. Explain the achievements of the Gupta in the field of literature and art.

5.11 ADDITIONAL READING

- | | |
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REGION OF HARSHAVARDHANA

Unit Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Accession of Harshavardhana
- 6.3 Military campaign of Harshavardhana
 - 6.3.1 Campaign against Sasanka
 - 6.3.2 Conquest of Assam
 - 6.3.3 Conquest of Sind and Nepal
 - 6.3.4 War with Pulakesin II
 - 6.3.5 Conquest of Ganjam
- 6.4 Extent of Harsha's Empire
- 6.5 Harshavardhan's Administration
 - 6.5.1 Council of Ministers
 - 6.5.2 Division of the empire of Harsha
 - 6.5.3 Revenue System
 - 6.5.4 Harsha's Army
 - 6.5.5 Crime and Punishments
- 6.6 Harsha's Religious Activities
 - 6.6.1 Kanauj Assembly (643 A.D.)
 - 6.6.2 The Prayag Assembly
- 6.7 Social Conditions
- 6.8 Estimate of Harsha
- 6.9 Harsha as a patron of art
- 6.10 Summary
- 6.11 Questions
- 6.12 Additional Reading

6.0 OBJECTIVES

- To make students aware of the political condition during the rise of Harsha Vardhan.
- To focus on the Military campaigns of Harsha Vardhan.

- To analyse the Administration and Religious activities of Harsha vardhan.
- To understand the society during the Reign of Harsha Vardhana.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

From the decline of the Guptas until the rise of Harsha in the early seventh century the political scene is confused, and there are few records to illuminate it. This was a period when petty kingdoms vied with each other to succeed to the past glory of the Guptas. North India was divided into three main Kingdoms, those of the Later Guptas of Magadha, the Maukharis, and the Pushyabhutis.

After the fall of Gupta Empire and due to Huns invasion, there was political disintegration in the country. Political unity given to the country by the Guptas practically came to an end. Many petty kingdoms sprang up. The small state was always involved in internal Struggle, with the result that the political condition of the country greatly deteriorated. It was an age of darkness. The Pushyabhuti became the most important power after 575 A.D. under PrabhakarVardhana and his son HarshaVardhanas 606 – 647 A.D.

There are ample sources which throw a considerable light on the history of Harsha. They are:

1. Description of Yuan-Chwang.
2. Bana's Harshacharita.
3. Inscriptions of those days.
4. Chinese official records.
5. Coins of Harsha.
6. Works of Harsha: - Ratnavali, Priyadarsica and Nagananda.

According to Harishacharita the Vardhana Kingdom was founded by Pushyabhuti. The City of Thaneshwara between Ganga and Indus became the capital of rising family of Vardhan rulers. The work of Harsha refers to only four of his successor Naravardhan, Rajya-Vardhan I, Aditya – Vardhan and Prabhakar – Vardhan. The first three rulers were given the simple title of Maharaja. It shows that these rulers were initially feudal lords under Gupta Kingdom. The first ruler to assume full imperial title, Parama Bhattaraka Maharajadhiraj was Prabhakar Vardhan. He defeated Hunas, Sindhu kings Gurjara's king, the lord of Gandhara and Malwa's king. According to be 'a lion to the Huns deer, a burning fever to the king of Sindhus a trouble of sleep to the Gurjara King, a bilious fever to that scent elephant, the lord of Gandhara, destroyer of the skill of the lotus, an are the creeper, which is the goddess of fortune of Malaya."

Prabhakar Vardhana desire for conquest was eventually carried out by his younger son HarshVardhana. Prabhakarvardhan was a devotee of his son. Prebhakarvardhan married Yashovati. They had two sons and a daughter namely RajyaVardhana, HarshaVardhana and Rajeshree respectively. The elder son Rajyavardhan was born in 587 A.D. and the younger son HarshaVardhana was born in 590 A.D. Probably Rajeshree was the youngest. She was married to Grahavarman the son of Avanti Varman, the Maukhari ruler of Kanauj.

Being a elder son Rajyavardhan became the crown praised and was initiated in the affairs of the state. This was the time the rulers of Thaneshwar had to face Hunas invasion. Hence Rajyavardhan and Harshavardhana left the capital to solve the problem. But unfortunately, they got the news of the serious condition of their father, so Harshavardhan was forced to return to see his father. Prabhakarvardhan died and his Queen Yashovati burnt herself alive in her husband funeral pyre. Rajyavardhan did not make any haste to return to kingdom till he succeeded in his campaign. By the time he returns his father was already dead. Rajyavardhan was asked to be the ruler by the court of minister.

A series of tragedies has to be fallen the kingdom. Within the few days the news came that Graha –Varman, husband of Rajeshree was killed by Dev Gupta, king of Malwa. Rajeshree was imprisoned. Rajyavardhan entrusted the government in the hands of Harsha and proceeded with his army. He was able to defeat the ruler of Malwa. But later Rajyavardhan himself murdered by Dev Guptas friend Sasanak the king of Gauda. Harsha's inscriptions record that Rajyavardhan gave up his life at the house of his enemy owing to adherence to a promise. Harsha was too young to tolerate tragedies and responsibilities. After the death of elder brothers. Harsha Vardhan was asked by the council of Ministers to take the supreme command in his hand.

6.2 ASSESION OF HARSHAVARDHANA

Harshavardhan began his reign in A.D.606. He was sixteen years old when he accepted the responsibilities of kingship, yet at such a critical moment he showed a remarkable energy and military genius on his accession. On the death of his brother, he took a firm decision that the enemies. He decided to rescued his sister from prison and to take revenge of his brother's death. So, he sent his general Bhandi against Sasanka of Gauda and he himself went to rescue his sister Rajashree from Malawa. Soon he received the news that Rajeshjree has escaped from the prison and flight to the Vindhya Forest. Harsha made his way into the dese Vindhya jungles. He found her when she was about to mount the funeral pyre. Thus, he rescued his sister. Rajashree was widow of Maukhari king Graha-Varman of Kanauj. Kanauj had been left in a hopeless state of confusion after the death of GrahVarman. He had left no heir. Hence Kanauj was annexed to the kingdom of Thaneshwar. Now two important Kingdoms Kanauj and Thaneshvar was united under Harshavardhan. Harsha formally transferred his capital from Thaneshwar to Kanauj and declared himself the sovereign ruler of the latter Kingdom also be assuming Imperial titles.

6.3 MILITARY CAMPAIGN OF HARSHAVARDHANA

Harsha extended his empire by conquest. Definite data about military campaign of Harsha is not available. Harsha was a great warrior and conqueror. In the course of the 41 years that Harsha ruled, he included among his feudatories, the kingdoms; of Jalandar, Kashmir, Nepal, Vallabhi, Gujarat, Malwa, Sindh, Frontier provinces and Assam. The provinces which he brought under his direct administration where united Province, Bihar, Bengal, Orissa. Central India, Rajputana etc. The following are some of the major conquests of Harsha.

6.3.1 Campaign against Sasanka:

There is evidence that Harsha defeated Sasanka. The literary work, Manjushri, Mulkalpa makes a reference to Harsha defeating Sasanka. Sasanka was his deadliest enemy. Harsha was keen to take revenge of the death of his brother. It is stated in Bana's Harshachrita that military conquest of Harsha started with elaborate preparations for war against the Gauda king who is probably Sasanka. To defeat Sasanka, Harsha entered into an alliance with Bhaskar Varman, the king of Assam. Then Harsha marched against Sasanka and defeated him. Sasanka in a panic ran away from Yauda. When Harsha returned back Sasanka once again took the possession of Magadha. After the death of Sasanka in 620 A.D. Harsha and Bhaskar Varman divided state amongst them. Orissa and west Bengal were controlled by Harsha and Eastern Bengal was occupied by Bhaskar Varman.

6.3.2 Conquest of Assam:

From the available evidences it appears that Bhaskar Varman the ruler of Assam accepted the suzerainty of Harsha. With 20,000 Elephants, he attended the assembly at Kanauj.

6.3.3 Conquest of Sind and Nepal:

According to R.C. Majumdar Harsha was not successful against Sind, since Hsuan! Sang mention it is independent and strong Kingdom but from Bana's Harshcharita we learned that Harsha assumed huge wealth from Sind. The view of Bana cannot be accepted as entirely correct. But there is no denying the fact that PrabhakarVardhana was not having cordial relation with the rulers of Sind and there is a possibility that Harsha might have conqueror Sind completely. Harsha is also credited with the extension of his empire over Nepal. An inscription at Khatmandu says that Amser Verma of Nepal accepted the Harsha era. Harshacharita say that Harsha conquered the difficult Himalayan Kingdom. The regular use of the Nepal route by Chinese and Indian Secular and religious mission and close cultural connection between the two countries may indicate close relations.

6.3.4 War with Pulakesin II :

Regin of Harsha Vardhana

The war between Harsha and Pulakesin II is regarded very important. After having established his authority over the north, Harsha made heavy preparation for the Southern campaign. He tried to invade the South which was under the powerful Karnataka rulers Chalukya Pulakesin II. Pulakesin had defeated almost all the state in the South and he also defeated Harsha. This war was fought most probably in 634 or 635 A.D. The Aihole inscription states that Harsha's Elephant failed in the battle that took place on the river Narmada. And when Harsha had fled the battlefield. Hsuan !sang states that Harsha had defeated many countries but could not defeat Pulakesin. The Hyderabad Grant of Pulakesin II reveals that he had assumed the title of Parmeshwar after defeating the Harsha. Defeat of the ruler from the North at the hands of the South was most certainly one of the Greatest events of history of India. To Pulakesin it was certainly a great victory and he had perfectly justified it by assuming the title of Parmeshwara.

6.3.5 Conquest of Ganjam :

This was the last conquest of Harsha. Ganjam was situated on the Western Coast of India. Harsha made many attempts in order to conquer the province of Ganjam. At last in 643 A.D., he succeeded in establishing his authority over Ganjam.

6.4 EXTENT OF HARSHA'S EMPIRE

The Empire of HarshVardhana was very vast and extensive. He was sovereign lord of at most the whole northern India. All the territories under Harsh's control were extensive enough for him to have the title 'The Lord of the Entire North'. Harsh's Empire was extended from Nepal in the north to Narmada in the South and from Brahmaputra in the east of Gujarat in the West. The provinces of Assam, Bengal, Gujarat, Bihar, Orissa, Kanauj and Punjab form the parts of his Empire. His Empire also included the states of Kashmir, Sind and Nepal. Harsha was unable to extend his power in Deccan or south India. In fact, he suffered in one major defeat at the hands of Deccan Chalukya king, Pulkesin II. Thus, Harsha finally found himself ruling a large kingdom in northern India.

6.5 HARSHAVARDHAN'S ADMINISTRATION

Harsha was not only a great administrator but also the founder of a powerful empire He resorted the political unity in India and consolidated it by his successful administration. The accepted title of a great king in Harsha's day was, Param = Bhattaraka Mahesvara and Maharajadhiraja means 'the noblest the great lord and the supreme king of kings. It was inherited from the Gupta Empire. Huan Tsang's record contains a great deal of information on general aspects of administration. According to him Harsha worked very hard and believed in the personal supervision of minute details. It is believed that he forgot sleep and food in his devotion of good works. He took personal interest in every department of the state

and was very particular about the welfare of his people. He himself undertook frequent tours of inspection. Administration during Harsh's period finds resemblance with the Mauryan and Gupta administration.

King :

The king was the center of the administration. King enjoyed the supreme position in the state, but Harsha never misused them. Harsha aimed at high ideals of Kingship and worked hard to promote the welfare of the people. Harsha was such a dynamic person always busy in administrative business. He treated his subjects as his children. The King was aided and advised by council of ministers. He made the appointments of all the important officials of the state such as Mantri, Rajjapal etc. To ensure good administration, he conducted tour throughout his empire. Contemporary sources mention the different places like Prayaga, and Valabhi, where he camped for the inspection. There are references which reveals the fact that during inspection he made grants in charity and issued official royal orders. Harsha never sat at ease; he expended his energies in the service of his people. Harsha's day was divided into three periods, one part he spent for state purpose and the second for religious and cultural pursuits and third to the care of his subjects. Thus, service and sacrifices were the mottos of his life.

6.5.1 Council of Ministers :

There are no definite evidences available of the existence of council of Ministers during Harsha's time. But it is certain that he was assisted by ministers in the task of administration. Bana's Harshcharita mentions various names of the officials. Harsha's cousin brother Dandi was sachiv or Chief Minister. Huan Tsang mentions that minister and official were given land grants and were not paid cash salary. Thus, the practice making land grants, which stated in the Satvahana period, became fairly widespread at the time of Harsha.

Dr. R. S. Tripathi has given us the following list of Harsha's Ministers.

1. Mahasandhivigrahadhikrita (Minister of War and Peace).
2. Mahabaladhikrita (Officer in Supreme command of the area).
3. Baladhikrita (Senapati or commander).
4. Brihadasvavara (Head cavalry officer).
5. Katuka (Commandant of the elephant force).
6. Pathi (Superintendent of Soldier's barracks).
7. Chata-Bhata (Irregular and regular soldiers)
8. Yama –Cetis (Women watchers at night)
9. Duta (Ambassador).
10. Rajasthaniys (Foreign Secretary)
11. Kumaramatya (Counselor of the Prince)

12. Uparika (Governor of a Province)
13. Visyapati (The head of a visya or modern district)
14. Daussadhanika (Superintendent of Villages)
15. Bhogika or Bhogapati (one responsible for the collection of state produce)
16. Mahapratihara. (Chief warden), Minansak (Justice)
17. Akshpattalika and Dutaka (Keeper of the records)

On the basis of the names of these ministers it can be said that Harsha adopted the administration of Guptas. Almost all the names referred to above are available during Gupta period.

6.5.2 Division of the empire of Harsha:

Harsha's inscription gives us clear picture of division in administration. The province (Desha or Bhukti) was divided into number of district (Pradesha or Vishaya). It was further divided into taluka (Pathaka) and village (Grama). The village administration was in a hand of the village headmen, called the Gramakshapatalika. The Bhukti was governed by Uparikas. The Governors were designated as Uparika Maharaja, Bhojapati Rajasphaniya. Heads of Vishaya were called Vishayapati or Ayuktaka. Self-growing institution at the village level perhaps function efficiently. There were also Adhistan Adhikarana (Municipal Board) and the village council of elders. Huan Tsang refers to forest Chief who were probably non-Aryans. The officers in charge of district (Ayuktaka) and yet a higher provincial official (with the title Kumaramatya) was the link between local administration and the center.

6.5.3 Revenue System:

Land revenue was the main source of income during Harsha's period. From contemporary records we learned that taxation was not high. The main source of income was:

1. Udranga (a type of land revenue)
2. Uparika (taxes behind regular one)
3. Hirenya (Gold)
4. Ordinances.

The officer called Bhogika was in charge of the Bhoga or the share to be paid to the state. Land revenue was one sixth of the produce. Bhoga was the land tax paid in kind. Taxes were also imposed on goods of daily requirements. Traders and Businessmen also paid taxes for transporting their goods. King also had a claim over mines and buried treasures.

According to Huan Tsang royal land was divided into four categories, assigned to four items of expenditure:

1. Government Expenses and State worship.
2. Endowment to Ministers and officers of the crown.
3. Rewards to main of distinguish ability.
4. Charity to all persons of all sects and creed.

6.5.4 Harsha's Army:

Harsha's army consisted to elephant, camels, cavalry and infantry. In order to established peace and stability in his empire, to check internal rebellions and foreign invaders. Harsha felt the necessity of increasing his military strength. Huan Tsang records that there were 5000 Elephants, 20000 Cavalry and 50000 infantries. After territorial expansion of his empire Harsha came to possessed 1 lakh cavalry and 60000 Elephants. The horses for cavalry were imported from Sind, Persia and Kamboja. The Officers of this elephant corpse were called Pilupati and of the cavalry, Ashwapati. The sthanapala was the stable officer while Mahut was the Mahamatra. All the weapons during Harsha period were sharp and pointed which included battle axes, lances, javelins, bows, arrows and swords.

6.5.5 Crime and Punishments:

Huan Tsang refers to a cruel barbarous, ordeals of Harsha's time. The punishments were exemplary in character. The Severity of punishment was perhaps due to the reason that crimes must have been frequent. But Huan Tsang refers, "As the Government is honestly administered and the people lived together on good terms, the criminal class is small." Though the administrator was straight yet the roads were not safe". Crime was rare but roads and river routes were exposed to robbers. Life imprisonment, exile and militation were the penalties prescribed. The Criminals were looked down upon and they had low social statues in the society. Banabhatta refers that on certain festive occasion such as Kings Birthday the prisoners were released. Minor offences were dealt with fines. Ordeals by fire, water and poison were the instrument to prove the innocence or guilt of a person. For offences against social morality, disloyalty, the punishment was to cut of nose or an ear or a hand or a foot to banish the offender to another country.

6.6 HARSHA'S RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Harsha occupies a supreme place in the Indian History for his religious and cultural activities. Huan Tsang had over emphasized Harsha's devotion to Buddhism, but it must be remembered that he was not a born Buddhist. Pushyabhuti, the founder of Vardhana dynasty was a follower of saivism. Harsha's father worshiped the sun and his brother and sister had embraced Buddhism. In the beginning Harsha also was the worshipper of Shiva. He was influenced by Buddhist sage Divakarmitra who was a friend of Grahavarman. Initially he embraced Hinayana Buddhism but due to the Huan Tsang he embarrassed Mahayana form of Buddhism. He became a staunch supporter of Mahayana Buddhism and showered great honour to Chinese pilgrimage, Huan Tsang. Thus, under Harsha Vardhana

along with other religion Buddhism also flourished. Harsha brought a tooth relic from Kashmir and had it enshrined at Kanauj. Every year he used to invite Buddhist monk for discussion. Harsha gave enormous grants to Buddhist monks. He had erected punyaashalas for free supply of food and medicine on the high ways.

Huan Tsang records the condition of Buddhism in all the places he visited:

1. "He (Harsha) caused the use of animal food to cease throughout the five Indies".
2. He prohibited the taking of life under severe penalties.
3. He erected thousands of topes (Stupas) on the banks of the Ganges and established Traveller's Rests through all his dominion.
4. He erected Buddhist monasteries at sacred places of the Buddhists and adorned the common halls of the monasteries.
5. He regularly held, after every five years, the Buddhist convocation, and liberally distributed in religious alms everything except the material of war.
6. At the royal lodges, everyday viands were provided for 1000 Buddhists monks and 500 Brahmans.
7. The king's day was divided into three periods, of which, one was given up to affairs of Government, and two were devoted to religious works.
8. In 643 A. D. Harsha summoned a Buddhist assembly at Kanauj and another at Prayag, where alms were liberally given to mendicants, Brahmans, Buddhists and Jains.

6.6.1 Kanauj Assembly (643 A.D.):

Religious assembly at Kanauj was the landmark event during the reign of HarshVardhana. While returning from Ganjam campaign Harsha met Huan Tsang in Bengal and decided to honour him by holding a religious assembly of all denomination at Kanauj. This assembly was presided over by Huan Tsang.

There were about 3000 Hinayana and Mahayana monks, 3000 Brahmins, 1000 students of Nalanda University, 20 kings and many other people. The Assembly of Kanauj was presided over by Huan Tsang. Harsha himself proposed the name of Huan Tsang to the chair.

It is said that on these occasions a special Tower, 100 feet high with Golden statue of Buddha of the King size was constructed. Harsha also erected a great monastery and a shrine upon the bank of Ganges. Every day a smaller golden image of 3 feet in weight was carried in a procession on a decorated elephant. The canopy was carried by Harshvardhana himself and followed by prince, princes and state officials.

The conference lasted for 23 days. The proceedings of the assembly started with the announcement of Huan —Tsang in the challenging word, "Characteristic of the Age that the master of the law offered hi own head as the revolt of a successful reputation of his thesis." No one accepted the challenge for five days but then the Hinayanists tried to plot a murder of pilgrim. Therefore, Harsha issued a stern warning. That if anyone should the fourth with beheaded. Thus, further 18 days passed without discussion. Huan Tsang was fully praised Mahayana form of Buddhism and the assembly was dissolved. However, on the last day a great fire suddenly broke out in the tower and in the confusion an attempt was made to stab Harsha. Huna Tsang records that 500 Brahmin were arrested and exile on this occasion. This incident reveals the fact that Harsha's religious policy was not acceptable to the people.

6.6.2 The Prayag Assembly :

After the Kanauj assembly was over Harsha also invited Huna Tsang to the assembly at Prayag. This was another ceremony which king used to hold after every 5 years at Prayag. Harsha had celebrated five such ceremonies and along with the Huan Tsang it was sixth one. This ceremony also attended by 18 kings and people amounting to 5 lakhs. Harsha distributed alms every 5 years. On the first day lord Buddha was worshiped and precious article and valuable were distributed. On the second- and third-day Tsang and Lord Shiva were worshiped with the same rights and rituals. On the fourth day began the distribution of treasure. Every Buddhist monk was given hundred pieces of gold, one pearl, one cotton garment, various drinks, flowers and perfumes. During next 20 days Brahmins received the gifts. The next 10 days were reserved for Jains and member of other sects. Then mendants or poor orphan and the destitute received his charity. This distribution exhausted Harsha's accumulated treasury.

6.7 SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The most important source which has described elaborately about social condition during Harsha's reign is account of Hsuan Tsang. He has described the people as harsh, trustworthy, gentle, upright and sincere. Even literature in Sanskrit also present an account of the social conditions prevailing under Harsha. People were peace - loving and had a high standard of honesty and morality. Social distinctions were based on caste and governed by its rules. Brahmins are greatly respected. Hsuan Tsang observed that 'Brahmins to be the purest of all castes. The Kshatriyas are described to fair and unostentatious, pure and simple life. The Vaishyas were trading class. The condition of the sudras had comparatively improved. The general impression he gathered was prosperity.

System of sati prevailed in society; this is obvious from the case of Rayashree Harsha's sister was about to burn herself after the death of her husband. Most of the customs and rituals of north were different from those of the south.

Though people during this reign did not wear colourful clothes, Hsuan Tsang had made a mention of beautiful ornaments like bracelets, earring, bangles and necklace. The ladies covered their shoulder with a long cloth hanging down. In prosperous rule of Harsha houses were either single or multi-storied. The upper classes lived in the cities in well-constructed houses. But the poorer section of the society lived in the houses made of thatch, bamboo and mud. Hsuan Tsang states that houses were built of stone, bricks or wood, with flat roofs. He also mentions painted or carved doors, walls and ceilings. Kanauj the capital of Harsha was tastefully structured with beautiful gardens, tanks of clean water, broad roads, free eating houses.

The main occupation of the people was agriculture. Hunting and metal crafts was carried on side by side. Rice, wheat, sugarcane, Beans, vines and pomegranates were grown. The people observed the purity of diet. Onion and garlic were not used by the people, Meat was forbidden. The common food comprised of milk, ghee, sugar, sugar candy and parched grain with mustard oil. The citizen enjoyed themselves in theaters, musical gathering and picture galleries. Playing chess was another main source of recreation. During Harsh's reign the women led a very peaceful family life. Girls were married at early age. Parada system was in vogue. The life at the court and of the upper classes does not seem to have been so pure and catholic.

6.8 ESTIMATE OF HARSHA

Harsh Vardhana built a vast empire cover almost the entire north. His empire was one of best organized and justify administered empires of ancient India. He was undoubtedly one of the greatest kings of ancient India. Harsha died either of the end of A. D. 646 or the beginning of 647. A great general and a just administrator, he was even greater a patron of religion and learning. He came to the thrones at a critical moment, yet he build a powerful state reflect his military skills.

6.9 HARSHA AS A PATRON OF ART

Harsha extended liberal patronage to learning and the learned. He showed a taste for literature and the arts of peace. He gathered around himself some of the finest intellects and holiest sages' men like Bana, Maurya, Divakara and Hiuen Tsang. Harsha, himself was the author of three plays – Nagananda, Ratnavali and Priyadarsika. The Banaskhera inscription reveals that he was an accomplished painter. In the Banaskhera inscription is his beautiful signature, which suggest that he was an expert at Calligraphy. Harsha being a scholar also encouraged other men of letters. Banabhatta, a distinguished scholar composed the Parvatiparinaya Chendisataka, the Harsh's Charitra and the Kadambari. Jaideva in his work 'Gita Govinda' had compared Harsha with Kalidasa. Maurya was Bana's brother-in-law was a celebrated poet was also in the Harsh's court. He is the other of Suryasataka, Aryamuktamal, and Mayurastaka.

Hauin Tsang observed that during the age of Harsha, India had made splendid progress. Harsha used to keep one-fourth of his income for the economic assistance of the scholars. Every temple or monastery served as an educational institution. Nalanda University was the most famous of all. Students from distant land like China, Tibet and Mongolia come have to receive education. Hauin Tsang stayed in Nalanda University for a period of two years. The medium of instruction was Sanskrit. According to him, the famous teachers at Nalanda were Shilabhadra who was Chancellor of the University, Gunamali and Darmapala. Thus, Harsha occupy a distinguished place in the annals of Indian History.

6.10 SUMMARY

Vardhana kingdom was founded by Pushyabhuti Vardhan. Harshavardhana was the greatest king of the Vardhana dynasty. He was sovereign lord of at most the whole of northern India. He resorted the political unity in India and consolidated it by his successful administration. Harsha aimed at high ideals of Kingship and worked hard to promote the welfare of the people. For the successful administration he had divided his kingdom in number of provinces and districts. Land revenue was the main source of income during Harsha's period. Harsha's army consisted of elephant, camels, cavalry and infantry. In the latter life Harsha became a staunch support of Mahayana Buddhism. He brought a tooth relic from Kashmir and had it and enshrined at Kanauj. Harsha gave enormous grants to Buddhist monks. Religious assemblies at Kanauj and Prayag were the landmark event during the reign of Harshavardhana.

6.11 QUESTIONS

1. Make an estimate of Harshavardhana as promoter of Buddhism and patron of learning and literature.
2. Examine the circumstances that led to the accession of Harshavardhan.
3. Describe briefly the administration of Harshavardhan.

6.12 ADDITIONAL READING

- | | |
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INVASION OF ARABS & RISE OF RAJPUTAS

Unit Structure

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Political Condition of Indian on the eve of Arab invasion
- 7.3 Administrative and Social conditions in 8th century
- 7.4 Sindh on the eve of Arab Invasion
- 7.5 Arab Invasion
- 7.6 Mohammad-bin-Qasims Invasion of Sindh
- 7.7 Causes of Fall of Sind
- 7.8 Effects of Invasion
- 7.9 Rise of Rajputas
- 7.10 Pratihara Empire (725 A.D. – 97 A.D.)
- 7.11 Nagabhata II (800 – 833 A.D.)
- 7.12 Mihira Bhoja (840 – 890 A.D.)
- 7.13 The Later Pratiharas
- 7.14 Summary
- 7.15 Questions
- 7.16 Additional Reading

7.0 OBJECTIVES

- To survey the circumstances led to the Arab invasion of Sind.
- To critically assess the impact of the Arab invasion of Sind on the history of India.
- Understanding the rise and expansion of the Rajputas.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Invasion of hunas, Arabs &
rise of Rajputas

The history of India is full of rise and fall of empires. India, at the opening of the 8th century presented the sad picture. After the death of Harsha, India had been broken into pieces. There were many petty independent states which were all disunited and weak. There was no central government and as such whole of the country was split up into numerous independent states. At the beginning of 8th century important states in northern India were those of Kanauj, Malwa, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Sind, Pandya, Chola, and Chera Kingdom occupied important position. On the eve of Arab invasion Sind was ruled by King Dahir. Sind was politically weak and divided due to internal differences. Thus Arabs took advantage of the state of disunity and dissensions in India.

7.2 POLITICAL CONDITION OF INDIA ON THE EVE OF THE ARAB INVASION

For about Five decades, there was no central government and whole country was split up into numerous independent states. Kanauj was the most prominent state at the beginning of the 8th century. King Yoshovarman ruled over Kanauj. He was a successful administrator and a great patron of letters. Under him kingdom of Kanauj was extended from the Himalayas in the north to the Narmada in the south and from Bengal in the east to the Thaneshwar in the north-west. Another important kingdom was Malwa, which was governed by Pratihara dynasty of the Rajputs. The kingdom of Pratihara was extended to Marwar, Broach and other neighbouring territories Bagabhata. I was a powerful king who ruled from 725 to 740 A.D. king Lalitaditya ruled over the independent state of Kashmir from 725 to 755 A.D. A great conqueror and military general he defeated and killed Yashovarman of Kanau. Bengal, Afganistan, Nepal, Assam and Sindh were other important kingdoms on the eve of Arab invasion of Sindh.

7.3 ADMINISTRATIVE AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN 8TH CENTURY

The head of the administration was the king. King had number of ministers to advise and assist him. Kingship was usually hereditary. The empire was divided into provinces like Bhakti, Mandal, Desa etc. The province was sub-divided into Vaishyas, each under Vaishyapati Villages were governed by Panchayats. The important ministers usually were –

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a) Samant | - Minister of foreign Affairs. |
| b) Raja - Purohit | - Minister of Religious Affairs |
| c) Sandhivigrahas | - Minister of war and peace |
| d) Amatya | - Minister of Finance |
| e) Asktrapataladharita | - Minister of in charge of Records |

The chief source of income was land revenue, depended on capacity of land. Tributes from vassals, duties of excise, Fines were other sources of income. Army consisted of infantry, cavalry, chariots and elephants. Majority of people were agriculturist but few were engaged in trade also. There were four main classes – Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras. System of polygamy was existing particularly amongst the upper classes. The widow could not remarry and the practice of sati was prevalent in the society. There were famous universities like Nalanda and Vallabhi where science, mathematics, astronomy, Vedas and Shastras were taught. Hinduism was the most important religion. Buddhism and Jainism were not popular religions.

7.4 SINDH ON THE EVE OF THE ARAB INVASION

In the beginning of the 8th century A.D. Muslim invaders of India began to attack India. They however, could only succeed in conquering Sindh and Multan. As such the Arab conquest of Sindh did not have any far-reaching effects on India. On the eve of the Arab invasion Sindh was ruled by king Dahir, son of Chacha. His Kingdom included Debal, Nirun, Brahmanabad and Alore. When we peep into the early history of the Sindh we find that Sindh was ruled by the Buddhist Rai dynasty. Rai dynasty ruled from 485 to 622 A.D. Rai Shahi II was the last ruler of the Rai dynasty Chacha, a Brahmin minister of Sindh, set aside the Buddhist rule and established his own Brahmin rule Chacha was succeeded by his brother Chandra. After the death of Chandra nearly for 30 years kingdom was divided and ruled by the two sons of Chacha, Dahir, a youngest amongst all the sons of Chacha brought the whole kingdom under his rule.

It seems Dahir, being Hindu ruler had introduced number of measures against Buddhist. They were neither allowed to wear silk dresses, carry arms, nor to ride on saddled horses. The Buddhist monks who possessed much political power were opposed by the Brahmin regime. All this rendered the king highly unpopular among his Buddhist subjects who welcomed the Arabs. In fight against the Arabs, king Dahir was defeated and killed and his kingdom was conquered by the foreigners.

7.5 ARAB INVASION

In the first quarter of 8th century A.D. the Arab under the leadership of Mohammadbin-Qasim, conquered Sind and Multan. There were various motives behind the conquest of India. Political and territorial ambition of Arabs acquire wealth of India by plunder and spread of Islam are some of the important causes behind Arab invasion. The immediate cause of Arab invasion was the failure of King Dahir to give compensation for certain ships plundered by pirates of the coast of Sindh. In 711 A.D. some Sindhi pirates had plundered a few Arab vessels near Debal port. AL-Hajjaj, viceroy of eastern provinces of khalifa enraged and wrote to king of Dahir of Sind to punish the culprits and compensate for the loss. Dahir replied that the pirates of Debal were not under his jurisdiction and he was powerless to punish them. Hence expedition was sent in 711 A.D. under

the leadership of Ubaidulla against king Dahir but he was killed in the battlefield by Dahir. Again in the A.D. under Budail another expedition was sent, but again Arab were defeated.

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Finally Mohammed-bin-Qasim, a blooming youth of 17 years, was sent to conquer Sind. He had about 25,000 troops under him. Fortunately while marching towards Debal many Jats and Meds who were unhappy with Dahir joined Qasim. With the help of 25,000 troops and native support Mohammad conquered Debal and indulged in massacre and forcibly converted people to Islam. Further Mohammad captured Nirun and Sehwan without much resistance. Consequently whole of lower Sind was dominated by Arabs.

7.6 MOHAMMAD-BIN-QASIMS INVASION OF SINDH

In 712 A.D. Mohammad-bin-Qasim a 17 years old boy was send to conquer Sindh. Unfortunately king Dahir did not realized the seriousness of Arabs invasion and he remained inactive. He made no attempt to check the progress of the invading army. From Shiraz, Mohammad reached Maskon which was under the Arab control. Fortunately many Jats and Meds, who were mostly Buddhist joined Qasim and further swelled the number of his forces. Mohammad's army was more than 25,000 troops, on the other hand only 4000 soldiers fought from the side of Dahir.

Indian troops fought very bravely in the war at Debal. But at last Arabs captured Debal, for three days Arabs mercilessly slaughtered the Indians. People were asked to choose between Islam and death and most of them 'preferred the latter. It is said that all males above seventeen years were put to death and their women and children were enslaved.

Following the capture of Debal, Kasim moved further, fought a great battle at Rewar in which Dahir lost his life. Further he captured Brahmanabad and Multan also. After the conquest of Multan, Mohammad-bin-Qasim began to prepare for the conquest of Kanauj but his sudden tragic death put a full stop to further conquests of the Arabs in India.

7.7 CAUSES OF FALL OF SIND

1. The Hindu Kings had imposed restrictions on Buddhist subject which antagonized them. They rather welcomed the foreigners as they could provide an opportunity for special charge.
2. Population of Sind was sparse and heterogeneous. They did not unite to oppose the conqueror.
3. Sind was isolated in a country which was a cheque-board of small political units.
4. Traitors abounded in Sind and quite often the natives got attracted to the temptations offered by invaders.

5. The people did not like king Dahir who was weak and inefficient.
6. On the other hand Mahmud –bin –Qasim was more capable general and more popular among his soldiers.
7. Resources of Sind were insufficient and could not effectively face the enemies.
8. People were governed and led by superstitions and did not depend upon their own strength.
9. King Dahir made many mistakes on the battlefield.
10. Dhair's army were no match to the army of Muhammad-binKasim.
11. The Muslim fought very bravely and enthusiastically due to their religious zeal.

In the battle of Rawar (20th June 712A.D.) Dhair was defeated and killed. His queen Ravi Bai performed the traditional jauhar, preferring death to dishonour. The Arabs thus won a complete victory. The invader also conquered Brahmanabad and Alore. The whole of the lower Indus valley was dominated by the Arabs. Muhammad-bin Qasim found it difficult to control conquered territories. He followed a policy of partial religious toleration towards the Hindu but the Arab administration did not improve. In 716 A.D. it at the prime of life, Mohammad-bin-Qasim died. One version of the death of Mohammad is that, Mahammad had send beautiful daughter of Dhair, Suraj devi and Parma! Devi to khalifa Walid. To take the revenge of the father's death, they cook the story. Girls told Khalifa that they had already been dishonoured and molested by Qasim. Annoyed Khalifa ordered that Mohammad should be dismissed from Sind. Further Mohammad was sent as a prisoner to Mesopotamia where he was tortured to death.

7.8 EFFECTS OF INVASION

Arab conquest was a mere episode in Indian History as it did not have any permanent effect on any sphere of Indian life. They could only succeed in conquering Sindh and Multan while rest of India remained independent. It is rightly considered to be a mere episode in the annals of Indian History. The Arabs like Turk could not take full advantage of pathetic conditions in India and failed to extend their conquest. If they had acted wisely and taken advantage of the Indian disunity of that time, History of India most probably would have been written in a different manners.

According to Stanley Lahnepool "it was an episode in the history of India Islam, a triumph without result". A close and critical scrutiny proves that Arab conquest did not have any important effect on political, social, religious economic or cultural life of the people. In political sphere Arabs conquered only Sind, a part of India. The other parts of India remained independent under Rajputs. In social sphere also Arabs, due to caste system of Hindus could not influence the customs, traditions and

institutions of India. One of the main purpose of Arab invasion was to spread Islam To some extent they were successful. Arab did not spread Islam widely but they sowed seeds of Islam in India. Another bad impact of Arab invasion was that the lands of the Hindus were confiscated and given over to Arabs. Thus Hindus were reduced to poverty and were obliged to accept the position of tillers alone. The Arbas could not influence the culture of Indians because culturally they were far more backward than Indians. They learnt from Indian in the subject of astronomy , medicine, mathematics, music, painting etc. Many Indian scholars were invited by Khalifas to teach lessons of Indian culture to the Arabs. Some important Sanskrit works. Like Brahama Siddhants of Brahmagupta and his Kandyaka were translated into Arabic. Arabs were enriched due to their contact with India. Arab invasion of Sind resulted in the beginning of India's contact with Islam. Thus Arab conquest did not lead to any momentous and permanent effect on Indian History and civilization. But at the same time it is incorrect to hold that Arab conquest was an episode in the history of Islam because the effects of the conquest upon Muslim culture were 'Profound and far reaching'.

7.9 RISE OF RAJPUTAS

The Gurjara Pratihara:

7.9.1 Objectives:

1. To make Students aware of the History of Rajput period.
2. To analyse the rule of Gurjara Pratihara in north India.

7.9.2 Introduction:

After the death of Harsha in 647 A.D. India again witnessed the disruption and disintegration. The period of 7th Century to 12th Century A.D. there was a rise and growth of various Rajput clans in India. It is, therefore called the period of Rajput ascendancy or Rajput period. Origin of the Rajputs is surrounded in mystery. According to some historians they are foreigners because they love war and worship fire which were the characteristics of foreigners. Dr. Bhandarkar are the opinion that Rajputs were Gurjaras who were foreigners and as such the Rajputs were also foreigners. Some thinkers are of the view that the Rajputs are original inhabitants of India. They have advanced Agnikunda theory, which is more or less not historical. Dr. V. A. Smith has given mixed origin theory. According to him, "The Kshatriya or Rajput group of castes essentially an occupational group, compose of all clans following the Hindu ritual, who actually undertook the work of government, that consequently people of most diverse races were and are lumped together as Rajputs and that most of the great clans now in existence are descended either from foreign immigrants of the 5th or 6th Century of the Christian era or from indigenous races such as Gonds and Bhars."

7.10 PRATIHARA EMPIRE (725 A.D. — 97 A.D.)

After Harsh's death in 646 or 647 A.D., his empire collapsed. However his weak successor tried to maintain their hold at least over Kanoj. It was continued till Pratihara dynasty took over Kananj. The Gurjara Pratihara trace their origin to the solar dynasty. The early history of the Pratiharas is to be found in the Gwalior prasasti of Mihirbhoja. In their epigraphic record the Pratiharas claim descent from Kshatriya Lakshmana (brother of Rama) of the solar race famed in the Ramayana and also from a Brahmana name Harishchandra. There are different school of thoughts placing origin of Pratihara. Accordingly some scholars are of the opinion that, Gurjara race played very important role in 6th Century A.D. They established principalities in Punjab, Marwar and Broach. Hence there is a mention of Gurjara in Harsha-Charita, the records of Hiuen Tsang and Aihole inscription of Pulakesin II. About the middle of the eighth century A.D. certain Gurjara chiefs are represented as serving a Rastrakuta monarch as a Pratihara (door keeper) at a sacrifice performed at Ujjain. The Pratiharas have claim to be descendants of Rama. Since there is a reference to Lakshmana, who acted as Pratihara or door keepers to Rama, it has been suggested that they were palace officials, who rose to power. Another interpretation claims that Gurjara Pratihara said to have begun their political career in Gurjat, hence the dynasty is known as the Gurjara-Pratihara. Western writers, however, have emphasized that they were the descendants of the Pratihara or Parihara, a section of Gurjaras, who come along with Huns in the early sixth century A.D. and established a Kingdom near Mount Abu, in southern Rajasthan. According to R. C. Mujumdar the dynasty was based in Western Malwa and had its capital at Ujjain.

Nagabhata I – (725 – 760 A. D.) :

The earliest known History of Gurjara Pratihara commences with Nagabhata. He has been described as a national hero and empire builder by R. C. Mujumdar, Nagabhata I founded the Pratihara dynasty in 725 A.D. and ruled over his kingdom upto 740 A.D. He is also described as Narayana, appearing in the response to the people's prayer. Nagabhata I defeated Arabs. Arabs who had overrun the Western borders of India in Second quarter of the 8th Century A.D. Arabs army marched through Kutch, Kathiawar, Northern Gujrat and Southern Rajputana and ultimately threatened Western Malwa. Nagabhata I resisted them and sent them back. Thus the whole Northern India was saved from the early invasions of the Muslims. Nagabhat I brought under him a large number of states, which had been overrun by the Arab of the Sind. Nagabhat I kingdom included Bhilamala, Lata, Jalor, Abu and other region in Rajasthan and Central India. R. C. Mujumdar has described him as a national hero and empire builder.

Vatsaraja (775 – 800 A.D.) :

The Gurjara Pratihara could not rule in complete peace but had to fight many wars with Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas of the Deccan. The next

important ruler of the dynasty was the fourth king Vatsaraja. His kingdom was comprised of Malwa and Eastern Rajasthan. In Jaina Harivamsha, Vatsaraja is described as a distinguished ruler of a Avanti (Malwa). Vatsaraja, a grandson of Nagabhatt I claim to have won the position of Samarat or emperor due to his military conquest. He defeated the Bhattis of Central Rajputana and won a victory against Dharmapala of Bengal. But he was defeated by the Rashtrakuta King, Dhruva. However a struggle for supremacy over Northern India among Gurjaras, Rashtrakutas and Palas defeated and pushed Vatsaraja into the desert of Rajasthan, which became the center of Pratihara power.

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7.11 NAGABHATTA II (800 - 833 A.D.)

Vatsaraja was succeeded by his son Nagabhatta II. In the beginning of his career, he had to face many hardships. He was defeated by Govinda III of the Rashtrakuta, as a sworn enemy of his time. Nagabhatta II was very ambitious; his military exploits secured him political prominence. The disturbed political condition of the Ganga Yamuna valley provided him the required opportunity to invade Kanauj. He dethroned Chakrayudha in 816 A.D. and made Kanauj his Capital. His most notable achievement was the defeat of Dharmapala, King of Bengal. He extended his influence from a Kathiawad in the west to the borders of Bengal in the East. According to Dr. R. C. Majumdar, 'reign of Vatsaraja and Nagabhatta II occupy a prominent place in the contemporary history of India. Both of them were remarkable personalities and had a high degree of military skill and the ultimate reverse at the hands of Rashtrakutas cannot minimize the glory that had been achieved by extensive military conquest from one end of North to the other. They raised a provincial principality into a first rate military and political power and although their dreams of founding a stable empire were not realized, they laid its foundations so well that even long king Bhoja succeeded in the great task even in the face of very strenuous opposition from his hereditary enemies, the Palas and the Rashtrakutas.'

7.12 MIHIRA BHOJA (840 - 890 A.D.)

Pratihara power recovered under Mihir Bhoja, grandson of Nagabhatta II. Mihir Bhoja was another powerful King of this dynasty who ruled from 840 — 890 A. D. He established his authority over the Sutej, the Punjab, Prayag, Kashi and a territory of Gwalior. Numerous coins of Mihir Bhoja have been traced at several places in North. He assumed the title Adivaraha, which is one of the names of Vishnu's incarnation. This indicates that he was a worshipper of Vishnu. His coins also indicate the extent of his Kingdom and the long duration of the rule of Mihir Bhoja. The Arab merchant, Sulaiman visited his empire in 851 A.D., admired his military strength and orderly administration. Dr. R. C. Majumdar wrote, 'Bhoja had the reputation of a strong ruler. He stood as a bulwark of defence against Muslim aggression and left this task, as a sacred legacy to his successors'.

7.12.1 MAHENDRAPALA (890 — 908 A.D.):

Mihira Bhoja was succeeded by his son Mahendrapala. He maintained his father's empire and seems to have extended it towards the east. He added West Suvarashtra and in the East Magadha. Mahendrapala's inscriptions have been found in Haryana, Jhansi district and Ayodhya. He had the title *Nirbhag raja* (fearless king). He was a great patron of learning and patronized his teacher Rajasekhara. Rajasekhara was the celebrated prakrit poet. His famous works are *Karpuramanjari*, *Balaramayan*, *Balabharat*. Rajasekhara has described Mahendrapala as "Maharajadhiraja Aryavarta".

7.13 THE LATER PRATI HARAS

Mahendrapala was succeeded by his son Bhoja II (908-97), followed by his brother Mahipala I in 97. It seems he was the last great Pratihara ruler. Mahendrapala had no good successor. The Pratiharas thus began to be challenged by their rivals. They lost Kalinjar to the Chandelas and Kanauj to Rashtrakutas. Gwalior also becomes independent during the rule of Rajyapala. Finally Ajayapala, another ruler of this dynasty joined the group of Hindu Kings to oppose Suktigin in 991 and 1008. Finally Kanauj was conquered by Mahmud of 1019. Thus the Pratiharas ruled over an extensive territory for more than three hundred years. Pratihara held the Muslim invaders in check. It is said that the Gurjara Pratihara Empire was just as glorious as the Gupta Empire. The sack of Kanauj by the Turks in the early 11th Century ended Pratihara rule.

Check Your Progress:

1. Describe the achievements of the Pratiharas.

7.14 SUMMARY

Arab conquest was a mere episode in Indian history as it did not have any permanent effect on any sphere of Indian life. India since the fall of Harsha had been split up into many petty independent states which were all disunited and weak. Arabs were ambitious and wanted to conquer Indian territories. Immediate cause was that failure of King Dahir to pay compensation to Khalifa for Arab ship looted by pirates of Debal. Consequently Mohammad-bin-Qasim 17 years old boy was sent to conquer Sindh. With the help of 25000 troops. Mohammad conquered Debal and whole of Sind and Multan by 76 A.D. He was, however suddenly called back and tortured to death by the Khalifa. Sind was lost due to various reasons such as unpopularity, inefficiency, incapability of Dahir and vice-versa of Mohammad. Arab conquest did not lead to any momentous and permanent effect on Indian History and civilization.

Origin of Rajputs is surrounded in mystery. After the death of Harsha, Pratihara dynasty took over the Kanauj. The earlier known History of Gurjara Pratihara commences with Nagabhata I. He ruled from 725 A.D. to 760 A.D. Nagabhata I defeated Arab invaders. Vatsaraja was another

important King of dynasty. He extended his empire to Central Rajasthan but was defeated by Rashtrakuta King Dhruva. Vatsaraja was succeeded by his son Nagabhatta II. He made Kanauj as his capital and defeated Dahmapala, King of Bengal. Mihir Bhoj a grandson of Nagabhatta II was another powerful king of this dynasty ruled from 840 – 890 A. D. He established his authority over the Sutlej, the Punjab, Prayag, Kashi and a territory of Gwalior. He worshipped Lord Vishnu. His son Mahendrapala succeeded him. Mahendrapala maintained his father empire and extended it towards the East. He was a great patron of learning and patronized his teacher Rajasekhara a great poet. Mahendrapala had no good successor. The sack of Kanauj by the Turks the early 11th Century ended Pratihara rule.

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7.15 QUESTIONS

1. Why did Arabs invade India? Give a brief account of Arab conquest in India?
2. Critically examine the effects of Arab conquest in India?
3. Briefly trace the history of Gurjara-Pratiharas.
4. Write short notes on the following
 1. Vatsaraja
 2. Nagabhatta II
 3. Mahendrapal.

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THE CHALUKYAS OF BADAMI AND RASHTRAKUTAS

Unit Structure

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 History of the Chalukyas of Badami
 - 8.2.1 Pulkesin I
 - 8.2.2 Kirti Varman
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- 8.6 The Rashtrakutas
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 - 8.7.2 Krishna I
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- 8.8 Administration under Rashtrakutas
- 8.9 Contribution to Religions under Rashtrakutas
- 8.10 Education and Learning
- 8.11 Art and Architecture
- 8.12 Summary
- 8.13 Questions
- 8.14 Additional Reading

8.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the History of the Chalukyas of Badami.
2. To analyse the conquest of Chalukya Rulers.
3. To know about the religion and art and architecture in period of Chalukyas.



8.1 INTRODUCTION

In the sixth century the Chalukyas had become very powerful in the south. The Chalukya ruled over south after the Rashtrakuta. The rule of Chalukyas for more than two and half century constitute a brilliant epoch

in the history of south India in particular and the Indian history in general. There were three main branches of the Chalukyas viz. the Chalukyas of Badami or early western Chalukyas of Kalyani or later western Chalukyas. The early Chalukyas ruled from the middle of 6th century A.D. to the middle of 8th century A.D. Towards the end of the later part of the 10th century, the Chalukyas of Kalyani established their rule defeating the Rashtrakutas and rule up to 12th century A.D.

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About the origin of Chalukyas any definite evidence is lacking. According to V.A. Smith, the Chalukyas of Solankies were of foreign origin, related to the Gurjaras invaders from Central Asia. Probably the Chalukyas were of the indigenous Kanarese families and they called themselves as Kshatriyas. In the account of Huan Tsang Pulakesin I is addressed as Kshatriyas. Dr. D.C. Sarkar writes that this dynasty was named after the name of the predecessors of Chalukyas, called Chalak, Chalika or chaluka. We come across such name in Chalukyas inscription. The Chalukyas considered themselves as the sons of God. Some contemporary records reveal that the Chalukyas were worshipers of lord Vishnu.

8.2 HISTORY OF THE CHALUKYAS OF BADAMI

The Chalukyas of Badami, often referred as the western Chalukyas who had held their political sway from the 6th century for more than two centuries till they were overpowered by the Rashtrakutas. Jayasimha, was the first Chalukya king. The great work of Jayasimha has not been recorded well. He had defeated Indra, the son of Krishna and reestablished Chalukyas dynasty. But there is no reference of it in the Aihole inscription. The first historical figure emerges only from Pulakesin I onward.

8.2.1 Pulakesin I (540 — 566 A.D.) :

The first ruler who laid the foundation of Chalukya dynasty was Pulakesin I. He was the son of Ranjiraja and the grandson of Jayasimha about whom much is not known. The Aihole inscription provided us the genealogy of the western Chalukya king up to Pulakesin II. The first king mentioned in the list is Jayasimha. His son and successor was Ranaraja. Nothing more than the names is mentioned in the inscription. Pulakesin I was the first great king among the Chalukyas. He was the first great independent ruler. In fact he is regarded as the real founder of the Chalukya dynasty. From the inscription we get the information that he had performed number of Yajnas and sacrifices, for eg — Himagarbha, Asvamedha, Agnishtoma, and Vajpaye. He established his capital at Vatapi. According to Badami inscription, he had laid the foundation of Vatapi fort, which is situated near modern Bijapur. He was a great scholar and had thoroughly studied Puranas, Ramayanas and Mahabharata.

He assumed the title of Ranavikram and Shreeprithvi — Vallabha.

8.2.2 Kirti Varman I (566 — 598 A.D) :

Pulakesin I was succeeded by his son Kirti Verman I. He had defeated, Vangas, Angas, Maghda, Keralas Vatamas, Madraka, Gangas, Pandyas, Cholas, Dramila. This information is noted in the Mahakuta inscription, may be with little exaggeration. According to Badami cave record he was also known as Puga Verman and Kattiyarasa. He extended his kingdom both in the east and the west.

58.2.3 Mangalesa (598 — 608 A.D.):

In the year 598 Kirti Verman died. He was succeeded by his brother Mangalesa as he had no son. An Aihole inscription shows that he had secured victory over Kalachurei and Revati island. Mangalesa assumed the title like Ranavikram, Parambhgvata. He was also known as Mangalraja, Mangaleshwara and Bhagavati. A great work of art, a beautiful cave temple of Vishnu was excavated during this time at Badami. His last days were clouded by a civil war between him and his nephew Pulakesin II who finally won in the contest for the throne against his uncle and his sons.

8.2.4 Pulakesin II:

Pulakesin II was the son of Kirti Verman I. He ascended the throne of after killing his uncle Mangalesa in the year 910 A.D. He was the most outstanding among the great Chalukya of Badamin. Pulakesin II not only asserted his claim to the throne but also reduced those powers which tried to assert themselves during the Chalukya civil war. Most of the ruler by taking under advantage of the civil war had established their independent dominious. The Chalukya fendataries like Rashtrakuta, Appayika and Govinda declared independents creative disorder and confusion in the Chalukya Empire. In such a situation Pulakesin took a diplomatic and a tactful step. He adopted the policy of divide and rule. He entered in to a military and political alliance with Govinda, and defeated Appayika.

CONQUEST OF PULAKESIN II :

1. Pulakesin's conquest of North :

After strenghtening his power and resource Pulakesin II adopted the policy of aggression. He defeated Kadambas, Mauryas of north Konkan, Alupas of south Kanara, the Gangas of Talakadu and the Latas, Malavas and Gujarat in the north. Pulakesin II extended northern frontier of his kingdom upto the river Mahi. He conquered Gujarat and appointed his brother Jayasimha as the Governor of Gujarat.

2. Defeat of Harshavardhan :

Aihole inscription depicts his victory over Harshavardhan of Kanauj. It is the most significant and memorable of all the victories of Pulakesin II. Both the king wanted to occupy Gujarat. Pulakesin II defeated Harsha on the bank of river Narmada. Some historians are of the view that Gujaras, Latas and Pallavas of Vallabhi joint hands with Pulakesin II due to the fear

of Harsha. After defeating Harsha Pulakesin assumed the title of 'Parameshwara'.

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3. Pulakesin other conquests :

According to Aiholi inscriptions Pulakesin II turned to the east and conquered southern Kasala and Kalinga and important fort of Pistapur. Pulakesin had become the head of the three states namely Maharashtra, Konkan and Karnataka. With Cholas, Keralas and Pandayas he had established cordial relation. Thus, he had won many fold victories.

4. Pulakesin defeat and Death:

Pulakesin could not resist Pallavas for long. Narsimha Verman son and successor of Pallava Mahendre Verman I was eager to take revenge of the defeat and death of his father. Narsimha invaded Badami in 642 and defeated Pulakesin II. Probably Pulakesin II was killed in his war.

Pulakesin was the greatest among the Chalukya ruler. His fame spread far and wide. A contemporary Muslim record shows that he had sent his ambassador in the fort of the Persian king Khusruo II. As an administrator he was active and just devoted his personal attention to the details of the administration. Thus he is regarded as the real founder of the Chalukya imperialism. He should be credited with a remarkable share in the advancement of culture, characteristics of his dynasty.

Vikramaditya I:

Pulakesin II was succeeded by his youngest son, Vikramaditya I attained his hereditary throne and crushed his enemies. There were many claimants to the throne of Pulakesin II. Vikramaditya I with the help of his maternal grandfather succeed to get the throne. As Badami had fallen into the hands of the Pallavas, his accession become difficult for quite some time. His primary aim was to regain the lost empire and to destroy the power of the Pallavas. According to the Hyderabad inscription, he conquered the southern part of the Pallavas and restored the state to the Brahmans, which was confiscated by their enemies. He defeated the Pallava king! Narasimhavarman I, Mahendravarman II and Parmeshwar I. He also captured the city of Kanchi. Vikramaditya I had established his authority on almost whole of the Deccan. He also shattered the power of the Cholas, Pandyas and the Keralas, and compel them to accept his overlord ship. But Vikramaditya could not assert his authority for a long period in the south as he was defeated by Parmeshwar I, the rules of the Pallava dynasty Vikramaditya I died in the year 681 A.D.

Later Chlukya Rulers:

In the year 681 A.D. Vikramaditya, son of Vikramaditya I, ascended the throne. He ruled till 696 A.D. He established his authority over the Pallavas, Kalabhras, Kerala Kalachuris, Mallar, Cholas and Pandyas. He was succeeded by his son Vijayaditya in 696 A.D. Vijayaaditya assumed

the imperial title of Shri Prithvi — Vallabha. His reign was a peaceful. He got constructed a beautiful siva temple at Kanchi. He had a tolerant religious policy and he gave grants to many Jaina teachers. He was succeeded by his son Vikramaditya II. He ruled from the year 735 to 745 A.D. He had defeated Nandivarman and collected heaps of gold from temples at Kanchi. He also defeated the Pandyas, Cholas, Keralas; the last king of the imperial line of Chalukyas was Kirtivasman II. He ruled till 757 A.D. During his reign the Chalukya dynasty started hastening towards decay and downfall and within a short time and Rashtrakutas became all powerful in southern India.

8.3 RELIGION IN THE PERIOD OF CHALUKYAS

Chalukyas were the followers of Hinduism. This period was an era of the revival of the Hindu culture and spirituality. Chalukya rulers had performed various sacrifices including Ashwamedha yagna. The Vaishnava, Shiva and Shakti cult received full support and encouragement from both the rulers and ruled. Though Chalukyas were staunch patron of Brahmanism, they gave toleration to other religions. Jainism and Buddhism both got royal support. During the period of Chalukya rule, Jaina religion was practiced by large section of the people. Ravikirti who composed the inscription of Aihole was a general of Pulkesin II. He was a Jain and built Jinendra temple at Aihole. Vijayaditya gave a village for the maintenance of a Jaina temples. He also gave grants to Jayapansita a learned Jaina. Thus Jaina temples and institutions received greater encouragement and endowments from the members of royal family.

According to Hiuen Tsang there were about 100 Buddhist monasteries and 5000 Buddhist monks. However Buddhism was on its decline.

8.4 ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN THE PERIOD OF THE CHALUKYAS

Art and Architecture flourished during Chalukya period. The Chalukyan monarchs were liberal patron of art, architecture and sculpture. They evolved and developed a new style of architecture known as the Chalukyan style or the Vesara style, which is a combination of the Dravidian (the south Indian) and the Nagara (the north Indian) styles. The structural experiments of the early Chalukyas were confined to their capital Vatapi (modern Badami), Mahakututeshwar and the town cities of Aihole and Patadkal (Bijapur districts).

At Aihole the typical Manadapa temples can be seen at Lad — Khan, Kontgudi and Meguti. The Lad — Khan temple has a simple hall, which is open in the front and enclosed by walls on three sides. The hall contains two square groups of pillars, which are caused with the Kalasha motifs and Ganga and Yamuna images. The Kantgudi complex consist of three temples, two of them facing each other, with a tall open mandapa occupying the open space between them. The mandapa temples have a shrine at its center. In the Meguti, it is a Jaina temple dated 634 A.D. This

dating is supported by the inscription at the foundation of the temple. This Jaina temple is having a principal square structure, which is like a closed mandapa on a molded base, with four central taller pillars walled in between to form the central shrine, closed by peripheral wall on all on four sides.

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At Badami and Mahakuteshwar one can witness the early southern Vimana type of structural temples built by Chalukyas.

The important temples are

1. The two temples called the Malegittisivlaya standing on a outer crag in the hills on the northern side of Badami.
2. The sivalaya highs upon the main hill on the same side called upper sivalaya
3. The main temple and the extreme southerly one called Mallikarjuna in the Mahakutesvara group of northern and southern styles temples inside and enclosure at Mahakateswar in the neighborhood of Badami
4. The temple called Banantigudi on the hill in front of the Mahakutesvara.

The main temple of Mahakuteshwar consists of a vimana, square on plan and with a closed frontal mandapa preceded by an open porch. The garbhagriha has an inner circumambulatory surrounding it.

The Sangamesvara, Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temple at Patakal exhibit to a large degree the southerly elements in their vimanas. The Sangamesvara, the earlier of the three, built by Chalukya Vijayaditya is nearer to each other in being square on plan from the base to shikhara. The Virupaksha was built by the queen of Vikramaditya. It is the earliest dated temple with the Sukanasika, being by another queen of the same king.

Thus the Chalukya of Badami were able rulers and they contributed much to enrich the India's culture. The two centuries of Chalukya rule were benevolent and in all fields progress was registered.

Check Your Progress:

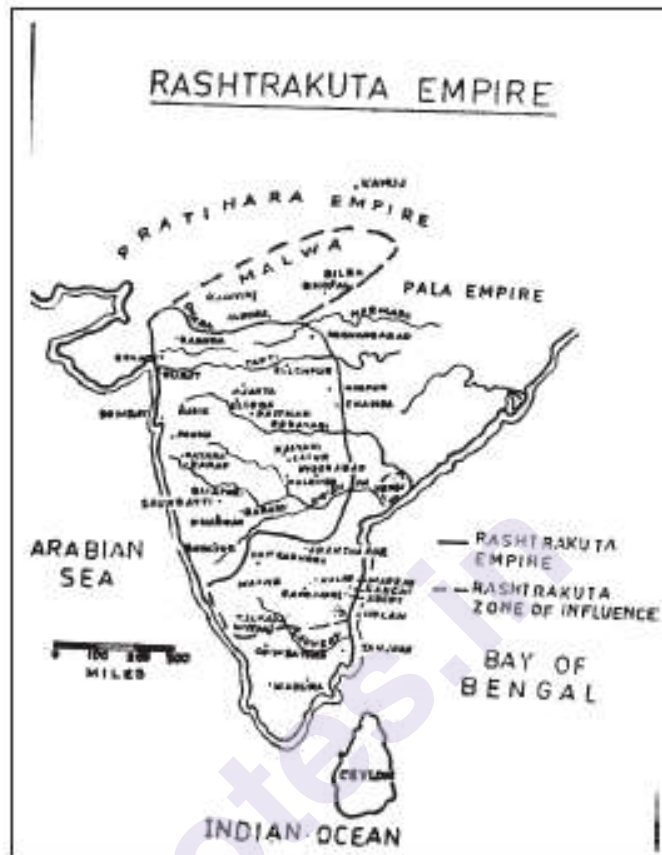
1. Sketch the history of Chalukyas of Badami and estimate its importance.
2. Examine the contribution of western of Badami to Indian culture.

8.5 THE RASHTRAKUTAS

8.6.1 Objectives:

1. To introduce the students to the rule of the Rashtrakutas.
2. To explain about the origin and the rulers in the dynasty.

3. To illustrate the contribution of Rashtrakutas in the field of Religion, Education and Learning and Art and Architecture.



8.5.1 Introduction:

After the death of Harsha, disorders became rampant in northern India. There were many petty kingdoms, that they were always involved in internecine struggles. From the seventh to the twelfth century, the south has altogether a different history. In this period Indian civilization and culture had greatly progressed in Deccan. Number of important dynastic were established during that period

- Chalukyas Dynasty
- Rashtrakuta Dynasty
- Yadava Dynasty
- Pallava Dynasty
- Hoysala Dynasty
- Pandya Dynasty
- Chera or Kerala Dynasty
- Chola Dynasty
- Kakteya Dynasty

8.6 ORIGIN OF RASHTRAKUTAS

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For about 735 A.D. to 975 A.D. the Rashtrakutas held the political domination over Deccan. They destroyed the Chalukyas supremacy in Deccan. Initially they were subordinates of Chalukyas of Badami. In about 735 A.D. the powerful Rashtrakuta chief, Dantidurga defeated the Chalukya king Kirtivarman II. Thus laid the foundation of Rashtrakuta supremacy in the Deccan. There is a controversy among the Historians about the origin of Rashtrakutas. They themselves claimed descent from the epic Yadavas. But some scholars suggest that they were pure Dravidians. According to Basnel, the Rashtrakutas had some affinity with the Dravidians of Andhra. Dr. Altekar had placed them as a loyal feudatories in Maharashtra. Their original place was Karnataka, because they used the Kannad language. In this inscription they have been addressed as the owner of the beautiful city of Latur. Danti Durga's family originally belonged to Latur situated in the Osmanabad district of Maharashtra. This was on the borders of the Karnataka empire in those days. Many personal names such as Asagavve, Abbalabbe, Revaka etc suggest that they were a Kannada family.

Some scholars have mentioned that the family lived in Maharashtra and was related to the ancient family of Yadu (Yadava). Some regards them as related to Reddi family of Andhra, while few other consider, them as Kshatriyas. According, to some the, word 'Rashtrakuta' is derived from two words namely- Rashtra meaning a province or a division of a kingdom and Kuta means the master. Thus, Rashtrakutas were originally governors of a province. However, the most accepted view is that they were chief of district administration under the Chalukyas of Badami and their designation was Rashtrakutas from which they derived their name.

8.7 RASHTRAKUTAS RULERS

8.7.1 Danti Durga (753 – 758) :

The earlier Rashtrakutas rulers namely Dantivesman, Indra I Pushakraj, Govinda I, Kaska I and Indra Raj II were the kings of Rashtrakutas dynasty but they were not renowned enough to occupy a significant place in history. According to Dr. Altekar, they had their sway over the principalities of Berar and Gujrat. Danti Durga, a remarkable monarch seems to have been the founder of the Rashtrakutas dynasty. He was the son of Indra and the grandson of Kaska and great grandson of Govindraja who were feudatories of the Chalukyas of Badami. Initially Danti Durga also was a loyal feudatory of Vikramaditya. He accompanied Chalukya ruler in his expedition against Kanchi. Danti Durga was very ambitious, he decided to take full advantages of the experiences he had gained in his campaigns in north and south. He became successful in his conquest against Pallavas, Arabs, Gurjaras, Malwa, Kalinga, South Kosala etc. By the years 750 A.D. Dantidurga became the master of central and southern Gujarat and whole of Madhya Pradesh and Berar. By 753 A.D. he had become the masters of the whole of Maharashtra. Danti Durga thus

destroyed the power of Chalukyas of Badami and laid the foundation of the empire of Rashtrakutas in the Deccan.

Hence Dantidurga can be regarded as the real founder of the Rashtrakuta Empire. He assumed the full imperial titles, Maharajadhiraja, Parameswara, Paramabhattaraka. Danti Durga performed 'Hiranyagarbha' ceremony at Ujjain. Thus Danti Durga had patronized Hinduism. He died at the age of thirty six in 756 A.D.

8.7.2 Krishna I :

Krishna I was the ambitious uncle of DantiDurga. DantiDurga left no legal heir; hence he was succeeded by this uncle Krishna I, also known as Kannarasa Ballala in 756 A.D. He continued the policy of his nephew and defeated the Chalukya king Kirti Varman II and practically extinguished their power. Then he proceeded against the Gangas and conquered their capital Manayapuram in state of Mysore. By 772 A.D. the whole of Hyderabad state was incorporated in the Rashtrakuta Empire. He brought under him whole of southern Konkan and whole of Marathi – speaking part of Madhya Pradesh. Krishna I is also remembered for having constructed the famous rock cut temple, Kailasa (Siva) temple at Ellora. Temple is vastly regarded as a marvel of architecture, also proves the high level of skill attained by India in the arts of sculpture and architecture under the Rashtrakuta patronage.

8.7.3 Govind II – (773- 780 A.D.) :

Krishna I was succeeded by his son Govindraja II. Govindraja II was the eldest son of Krishna I. He had been nominated as Yuvaraja by his father. He had distinguished himself on the battlefield by defeating Vishnuvardhan IV of Vengi. But after coming on the throne, as a ruler he proved an utter failure. He became pleasure loving and left the entire administration to his younger brothers Dhruva. Dhruva took full advantage of the situation and dethroned his brother Govinda II and came to the throne.

8.7.4 Dhruva (780 A.D.- 793 A.D.) :

Dhruva was one of the greatest rulers of India. Under him, the power, prestige and glory of the Rashtrakuta reached its zenith. His conquest made him the undisputed overlord of the entire Deccan. He defeated the Gurjara king, Vatsaraja who ruled in southern Rajputra. He also defeated the Pallava king Nandivarman and Chalukya king Vishnu Vardhan IV. Dhruva was not satisfied with the achievements, he attacked north India with a view to capturing Kanauj, and finally captured it. Dhruva defeated Ganga prince and imprisoned him, Pallava king surrendered himself to Dhruva, Vatsaraja had fled and Pala king Dharmapala had been overthrown. There was no power in the country to challenge the Rashtrakuta supremacy. Unfortunately he could not consolidate his conquest of the north due to internal rivalries in his family. Thus Dhruva was undisputed overlord of Deccan and Rashtrakuta was at their zenith during his reign.

8.7.5 Govinda III – (794- 87 A.D.) :

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Dhruva had several sons. According to an inscription of the time of Govinda III Dhruva chose Govinda as his successor because he was the ablest and worthiest among his son. Govinda III ascended the throne in 794 A.D. The first known date of Govinda III is May 794 according to Paithan plates. Govinda III had several great achievements to his credit. His elder brother Sthamba (Kamba) who was ruling the Gangavadi rebelled against him with the group of twelve kings. Govinda III defeated Sthamba and he allowed him to continue as governor of Gangavadi. He also appointed his other brother Indra as a governor of Gujarat. Thus Govinda III became the undisputed overlord. In his northern expedition he defeated Nagabhapa of Bengal. Thus the powerful Gurjara, Pratihara and Pala king and other rulers of northern India were also humbled by Govinda III. During the northern expedition, the Pandyas, Pallavas, Cholas, Gangas and Cheras had performed an alliance to attack the Rashtrakuta territory. But Govinda III defeated them and extended his empire up to Kanchi in the south. Govinda III had constructed a Siva temple at Kanchi to serve as a column of victory. The ruler of Ceylon was frightened by this act and surrendered to Govinda III. Undoubtedly Govinda III was the ablest of Rashtrakuta Emperor. The Rashtrakuta reached the climax of their power under Govinda III

8.7.6 Amoghavarsha I:

Next important king in this dynasty is Amoghavarsha. On the death of Govinda III. His son Sarva or Amoghavarsha, a boy of 6, came to the throne and Karka, the nephew of Govinda became regent. Obviously Rashtrakuta had to face many difficulties. Ganga, Pandayas and Eastern Chalukya revolted and declared their independence. Karka brought the situation under control and thus peace was established. The death of Karka brought about disunity in the Empire. And almost continuous war was going on between the Rashtrakuta and Gangas during the first 20 years of the reign of Amoghavarsha. Amoghavarsha adopted conciliatory policy towards the Gangas and the Pallavas. He gave one of his daughter in the marriage to prince Bhugta I, son of Ganga and another daughter to Pallava prince Nandi Verma III. Thus both the dynasty remained loyal to Amoghavarsha.

Amoghavarsha was not born military leader. He had faced many rebellions towards the end of his region. His general Bankesha crushed the rebellion successfully. The most serious rebellion was that of the Gujarat branch of the Rashtrakuta founded by Indra. Amoghavarsha enjoyed reign of 63 years from 87-877 A.D. He founded a new capital city, Manyakheta which still exist under the name of Malkhed. He was a liberal, patron of literature. His court full of many famous Hindu and Jain writers. Jivasen, Mahaviracharya and Sankatayan got patronage from him. He himself was a great writer. He wrote a book of Ethics called "Kavirajmarga". He became Jain and liberally patronized the Digambara sect.

8.7.7 Later Rashtrakuta Rulers :

Amoghavarsha was succeeded by his son Krishna II (878- 97). During his reign Rashtrakuta power gradually declined. It is said that Krishna II had terrified the Gurjaras. But he suffered, defeat both at the hands of Chalukyas of Vengi and the Gurjaras who had conquered Kanauj a few years ago and transfer their capital to the city. Krishna II died towards end of 97 A.D. He was succeeded by his grandson Indra III. He was a youth of 30 at the time of his accession. He had inherited the military dash and daring of Govinda III. He assumed the titles of Nityavarsha, Rattakandarapa. He also captured Gujarat which created a big sensation. Indra died prematurely in 922 A.D. and was succeeded by his son Amoghavarsha II. But he became a victim of the foul play of his younger brother Govinda IV. Govinda IV was a unpopular young ruler. So minister and the feudatories requested Amoghavarsha III, an uncle of Govinda to replaced Govinda. Amoghavarsha III 50 years old at the time of his accession. He did not take any active interest in the administration and thus administration was carried by his son Krishna III. Krishna III was one of the ablest ruler of the Rashtrakuta dynasty. He planned an invasion on Chola kingdom. He had an expedition against Bundelkhand, Malwa, and Ujjain. He constructed many temples. His successors who all proved to be very weak rulers, continued to rule a gradually diminishing territory until about 973 A.D. when the last of the Rashtrakuta kings Kakka II was overthrown by Tailapa, the founder of later western Chalukya dynasty of Kallyani.

8.8 ADMINISTRATION UNDER RASHTRAKUTAS

It was under the Rashtrakuta that Deccan took interest in the affairs of North India. They took the whole course of Indian history. All the political institution of the Rashtrakuta we can clearly see the impact of western Chalukya. King was the centered figure in the administration. The kings used to nominate their own successor. Their existence of council of ministers and a village assembly acted as checks on the absolute authority of the king. Due to the vastness of the empire the kingdom was divided into rashtras or Mandalams, Visayas and Bhuktis. Rashtra was the biggest unit which was governed by Rashrapati. Vaishya was roughly of the size of modern district, was in a charge of Visayapati. Each Visaya was divided into Bhuktis or Tehsil, was governed by officer known as Bhogapati or Bhogika. The village was the lowest unit of administration and was in charge of Gramapati.

8.9 RELIGIOUS CONTRIBUTION UNDER RASHTRAKUTAS

Three main religion mainly Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism flourished during Rashtrakuta period. Many Rashtrakuta king were worshipper of Shiva and Vishnu. Their inscription begins invocation to these Gods. The royal emblem, Govinda reveals the fact, that Rashtrakuta were Vaishnavas. Jainism seems to have enjoyed royal patronage liberally.

Some scholars described Amoghavarsha as a Jain. But Amoghavarsha worship Hindu Goddess Lakshmi and Jain Tirthankara Mahavira as well. Many Jain temple were constructed. Dr. Altekar is of the view that about 30 % of the population in Karnataka during this period must be Jain. Buddhism was losing its hold in Karnataka but Islam was popular in the Kankan coast. Rashtrakuta had permitted Arabs to construct their mosques.

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8.10 EDUCATION AND LEARNING

The Rashtrakuta were great patrons of education and learning. Rashtrakuta ruler encouraged the education by giving liberal grants to educational institutions. In those days education was imparted through Mathas and Agrahara. The Puranas, Philosophy, literature and works on polity were taught. Malkhed, Paithan, Nasik and Karhad were the main center of higher education.

Rashtrakuta period had witnessed the excellent literary works both in Sanskrit as well as in Kanada. The Rashtrakuta were great patron of Hindu and Jains scholar. Amoghavarsha was himself a scholar who wrote Kavirajamarga. The important Sanskrit work produced during this period are –

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1. Trivikrama | - 'Nalachampu' and Mandalasachampu' |
| 2. Halayudha | - 'Mrita-Sanjivani' and 'Kavirahasya a dhathupatha' |
| 3. Somadevasuri | - 'Yashatilaka champu' and 'Neetivaky amrita' |
| 4. Visvarupa | - 'Balakrida' |
| 5. Mahaveer | - 'Ganithasarasangraha' and 'Shakatayana Amothavritts'. |
| 6. Virasena and Jinasena | - 'Dhavala' and 'Jayadhavala'. |
| 7. Jinasena | - Harivamasha and Aadipurana |
| 8. gunabhadra | - uttarapurana |

In Jain literature the famous works are

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| a) Sri Vijaya | - Kavirajamasga |
| b) Chanvundarya - | - Chavundaryapurana |
| c) Poona | - Shantipurana, Bhuvanaika, Rambhyudaya, Jinakshasamale, Gatapratigata. |
| d) Pampa | - A dipurana and pam Bharati or Vikramarjuna Vijaya |
| e) Pushpadanta | - Mahapurana, Jasaura Charju and Nayakumara Charju (Prakrit) |

8.11 ART AND ARCHITECTURE

The greatest contribution of Rashtrakuta dynasty in the field of Art and Architecture is rock-cut shrines at Ellora and Elephanta. The Rashtrakuta have a unique position in the domain of art, architecture and sculpture. The temple of Kailasa was excavated by Krishna I in the 8th century. The Kailas temple can be said as the best visible monuments of the Rashtrakuta. The sculptured panels of Dasavatara, Bhairava, Ravana shaking the mountain dancing Shiva, Vishnu and Lakshmi listening to music carved at bas-relief are the excellent piece of the creativity of the artist. Work at Ellora is an example of unrivalled rock architecture. Dashavatara temple is the only Brahmanical example in stores. It is the largest as well as simplest, depicting both the Vaishnava and Siva temple. Along with this, there are also five Jaina rock shrines. Chota Kailasa, Indra Sabha and Jagannath Sabha are the outstanding structure of Jaina rock shrines.

Elephanta, near Mumbai is outstanding monument of the period. The three faced shiva, sculptured relics of Nataraja and Sadasiva are excellent. They are the finest sculptures in all India. As regards the Great or main shrine at elephanta, it is considered to be superior to the shrine at Ellora. Thus no other ruling dynasty in the Deccan played such a dominant role in the history of India till rise of Marathas as an imperial power.

Check Your Progress:

1. Who were Rashtrakuta? What part did they play in the history of Northern India.
2. Describe the achievements of the Rashtrakutas in literature, religion, art and architecture.

8.12 SUMMARY

Rashtrakutas were ruling over Deccan before Chalukyas came on the throne. The Chalukyas believed that they were sons of God. Jayasimha was the first ruler of the dynasty. The other important rulers were Pulkesin I, Maharaja Kirtivarman, Mangalasa, Pulkesin II. Under Pulkesin II country made considerable progress. It was under Kirtivarman II that their hold began to disintegrate. Chalukyas were followers of Hinduism but they gave patronage to Jainism and Buddhism. The Jaina temples and institution got great royal support during Chalukyas period. Chalukya Monarch were liberal patron of art, architecture and sculpture. The piece of art during Chalukyas have left behind are of two types, a) rock-cut halls and structural temples, wrought in hard sandstone, at Badami, Aibole, Patakal and Mahakuteshwar.

It is believed that the Rashtrakutas belonged to Karnatka. Danti Durga was their first important ruler. By 750 A.D. he had become master of control and southern Gujarat. Krishna I brought southern Konkan under his control. He was both a great conqueror as well builder. Dhruva from the

same dynasty was undisputed overlord of Deccan and Rashtrakuta were at this zenith during his reign. Govinda III ascended the throne in 793 A.D. He took his brother as a prisoner. He was also the undisputed overlord of Deccan. He was the best of all the Rashtrakuta kings. Amoghavarsha I's later part of his reign was full of rebellions. He also sent expeditions against Palas. Important Rashtrakutas after Amoghavarsha I were Krishna II, Govinda IV, Krishna III. During the reign of Karkka II prestige of the empire considerably came down. Thus it was under Rashtrakutas Art, Architecture and Literature reached at its zenith.

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8.13 QUESTIONS

1. Describe the origin of Chalukyas and their contribution to Indian culture.
2. Who were the Chalukyas? Bring out their political and cultural movement.
3. What were the contribution of Chalukya of Badami to Ancient History and culture.
4. Form an estimate of the Chalukya of Badami.
5. Examine the significance of the Rashtrakuta power.
6. Write short note on the following
 - a) Dantidurga
 - b) Dhruva
 - c) Amoghavarsha.

8.14 ADDITIONAL READING

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THE PALLAVAS AND THE CHOLAS

Unit Structure

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- 9.1 Origin of Pallavas
- 9.2 Rulers of Pallava Dynasty
 - 9.2.1 Sivaskanda Varman
 - 9.2.2 Narasimha Varman
 - 9.2.3 Paremesvara Varman
 - 9.2.4 Narsimha Varman II
 - 9.2.5 Nandivarman II
- 9.3 Administration Under Pallavas
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- 9.5 Literature and Learning
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- 9.7 Chola Dynasty
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- 9.10 Rajraja Chola
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- 9.12 Successor of Rajendra Chola
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 - 9.13.1 Central Administration
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 - 9.13.4 Revenue Administration
- 9.14 Art and Architecture
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- 9.16 Questions
- 9.17 Additional Reading

9.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand the Origin and rules of Pallava Dynasty.
- To study about the Administration and Art and Architecture during Pallava period.



9.1 ORIGIN OF PALLAVAS

The origin of the Pallava has remained still in mystery. After the fall of Andhra kingdom the Pallavas were the first to come to powers in the Deccan. The Pallavas were only chieftains during the Sangam age. About the origin of Pallavas the historian hold different views. Some of the thinkers are of the view that they belonged to the south, but still their

origin is very controversial. Some historians are of the view that they belonged to the Parthians who had settled down in Kanchivaram. According to them, the Pallavas of south India were Pahlavas or Parthians, who invaded India, settled down in the Indus valley, then moved on to western India and finally immigrated into the Kanchi region during the period of the decline of Satvahanas. The other theory is that Pallavas were of Tamil origin. According to some historians, the Pallavas belonged to the Chola- Naga family. The first Pallava ruler was the son of a Naga princess. According to Jayswal, the Pallavas were the descendants of the high – ranking Brahmans of Northern India. The names of some early Pallava like Simhavarman and Sivaskandavarman are known from a few coppers plate chastens written in prakrit. It is said that they performed Brahmanical sacrifices and ruled over a well-organized kingdom that covered the northern part of the peninsula. The Pallava, may be the product of intercourse between the Brahman and the Dravidian. There are no unanimous opinion about their origin amongst historians. Historians differ as regards the early history of Pallavas.

9.2 RULERS OF PALLAVA DYNASTY

9.2.1 Sivaskand Varman:

There are different opinions about the earlier rulers of the Pallava dynasty. Some are of the opinion that Bappa was the founder of the Pallava at power Kanchi. The earlier prakrit inscriptions refers that Bappadev, Sivask and Varman and Viravarman were the first three rulers of the Pallavas. It seems Sivaskand Varman was the first great ruler of the Pallava dynasty. He ruled in the 4th century A.D. and extended his empire up to the river Krishna. He was devoted Brahmin. He had also performed the Ashwamedha ceremony and Vajapeya. He assumed the title of Dharmamaharga. His administration resembled the administration system of Mauryas.

Vishnu Gopa:

In the fourth century Vishnu Gopa was defeated by Samudragupta. An inscription at Allahabad reveals that he was one of the kings of southern India who were defeated by Samudragupta. The period between 350- 375 A.D. is assigned to Vishnugopa. After his defeat in war, we do not have much information about Pallava dynasty. However, with the reign of Simhavishnu (575 – 660 A.D.), we have clear accounts of the Pallavas.

Simhavishnu:

To him belongs the credit of the grand political and cultural attainments of the Pallavas. He ascended the throne probably in 565 A.D. He had high political deals and won a victory over the Cholas, Chera, Pandya and Ceylon. His kingdom stretched from Madras to the Kaveri. He was a great Vaishnava. He was also a great patron of literature. Bharvi, the author of Kirtarjuna belonged to this period. Mahabalipuram was the center of fine arts during his period.

Mahendra Varman I(600- 630 A.D.):

Simhavishnu was succeeded by his son Mahendra Varman I who was one of the ablest among the Pallava kings. He was contemporary of Pulakesin II as well as Harshavardhan. The common feature among them was their outstanding contribution to art and culture. From Aihole inscription it is known that the Pallavas had obstructed the path of Pulakesin and consequently Pulakesin marched against Pallavas. As a result Pulakesin defeated Mahendra Varman and thus Pallava lost the province of Vengi. But Pallava sources refer to king Mahendra Varma's victory. It is probable that the loss of Vengi stimulated the Pallavas to push forward the southern frontiers resulting in the conquest of Trichirapali.

Art, architecture and painting received tremendous encouragement during the reign of Mahendra Varman. He commenced building rock cut shrines. He is regarded as the founder of the novel system of stone structure that has produced remarkable specimens in the course of the centuries. According to some scholars he was a follower of Jainism but later on he embraced Saivism. He also patronized Vaishnavism. He constructed cave temples at Mahabalipuram, Pallavasam and other places. He also dedicated a temple to Brahma, Iswara and Vishnu. Mahendravarmans also constructed a Mahendratank near the city of Mahendravadi. He had got constructed many temples of Lord Vishnu. He was also a liberal patron of arts like painting, music and dancing. He himself was a poet and a musician. He wrote *Mattavilasa* – *prahasana* in Sanskrit. From the inscription we get information about various titles of Mahendra Varman like *Mattavilasa*, *Vichitrachitta*, *Chettakari*, *Gunabhara*, *Avanibhajan* etc.

Narasimha Varman I:

Narasimha Varman I succeeded Mahendra Varman in the year 630 A.D. He was the son of the earlier ruler. He carried on the administration probably till 680 A.D. Narasimha Varman continued the hereditary conflict with Chalukyas. He had defeated Pulakesin II, the Chalukya ruler. After the death of Pulakesin, Pallavas became all- sovereign in the south. Victory over Pulakesin had made him the greatest of the Pallava rulers. Pulakesin II lost his life on the battle- field and thereafter Narasimha assumed the title of *Vatapikanda* means the captor of Vatapi (capital of Chalukya). He had dispatched a naval expedition against Ceylon. In the first expedition he failed but in the second he was crowned with success.

Like his father Narasimha Varman also constructed several rock – cut temples at Pudukkottai and Trichinopoly district. The structures during his period were more proportionate and graceful. He built a beautiful sea beach town near Kanchi, called it after his own name Mahamallapuram (Mahabalipuram). During his period Hiuen Tsang visited Kanchi. According to him the capital Kanchi was a large city with monasteries and 1000 monks. Jain temples numbered 80 and about 100 Buddhist monasteries.

9.2.3 Paremesvara Varman I :

The Pallavas and the Cholas

Paremesvara Varman was the grandson of Narsimhvarman I. Before him his father Mahendra Varman II came to the throne. But he ruled only for a short period of two years (668 – 670 A.D). He was succeeded by his son Paremesvara Varman I, who ruled between 670 – 695 A.D. During his period Vikramaditya I, a Chalukya king got hold over Kanchi and destroyed it. To some extent Paremesvara Varman succeeded in safeguarding his empire. He was an ardent follower of Siva and had constructed a Siva temple near Kanchi.

9.2.4 Narasimha Varman II (695 – 722 A.D.) :

Narasimha Varman II, son of Paremesvara Varman succeeded him. He ruled from 695 to 722 A.D. His period was a peaceful one. That is the reason, during this period, the empire made tremendous cultural progress. He had sent his ambassador to China. He assumed the titles of Rajasimha (lion among kings), Agamapriya (loves of scriptures) and Sankarabhakta (devotee of Siva). He built the Kailasanaath temple at Kanchi. It is believed that the great Sanskrit poet Dandin lived in his period. He was succeeded by his son Pasmeshvaravarman II, who ruled till the year 730 A.D. During his period he had to wage a war with Yuvajiraja Vikramaditya, a Chalukya ruler. Pasmeshvarman settled the matter by giving money and presents to Vikramaditya-II.

Nandivarman II (730 — 800 A.D.) :

Nandivarman was supposed to be an elected ruler of the Pallava dynasty. With the death of Paremesvara Varman II the imperial line of Pallavas almost came to an end. Nandivarman was defeated by Chalukya emperor Vikramaditya II and occupied Kanchi but Nandivarman II was successful in getting back Kanchi. He also fought against Pandayas and Rashtrakutas. However, it resulted in matrimonial alliances between Nandivarman the daughter of Rashtrakuta king Dantidurga. Nandivarman constructed temple of Kanchi. He gave great importance to religion and literature and himself was a great scholar. Probably he also has performed Ashvamedha sacrifice to declare himself as king Emperor.

Nandivarman was succeeded by his son Danti Varman. From that time onward, the Cholas became supreme and Pallava kings sank into the position of mere feudatory nobles and officials in the service of others.

9.3 ADMINISTRATION UNDER PALLAVAS

The Pallavas organized their government well and promoted the welfare and happiness of the people. The benevolent hand of the rulers reached all fields political, social, economic religious and artistic. The king was the head of the administration. The administrative system was patterned, after the administrative system of the Mauryas with some modification. Kingship was hereditary, ran from father to son. Though king was a center figure in the administration he was assisted by council of ministers in day-

to-day administration. The important minister in the council of ministers was Purohit.

Decentralization of power can be seen during Pallava rule. The empire was divided in the provinces called Rashtras or Mandalam. They were governed by princes of the royal blood or a prominent personality of respectable family. Provinces were further divided into Kottam and Nadus had their own officials. Village or grama was the lowest unit. There were village assemblies and their committees to look after the village administration. Brahmins held the great position during Pallava rule. They managed temples, supervised water tanks and other public work such as to supervise the digging of tanks and canals, make road etc.

9.4 ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Under Pallavas art and architecture constitute a brilliant chapter in the history of south Indian art. Pallava art brought a revolution with its different architecture style. The Pallavas were tenderly attached to art and of culture. They got constructed temples manifesting different styles of art, the Guha temples and rock —cut temples. Roughly during Pallavas three of architectural style can be seen. The first is Mahendra architectural style introduced during the Mahendra Varman I period. He introduced rock —cut cave style temples during 600 to 630 A.D. The second style was introduced during the period of 625 to 674 A.D., known as Mamala architectural style. This period was marked by the construction of the famous five rathas named after Dharmaraja, Bhima, Arjun, Sahadev and Draupadi, descent of the Gangas cave temples of the Trimurti, Varaha, Durga and five pandavas. The third architectural style is called Rajasimha architectural style represented by the structural temples at Kanchi in the 8th century. Even in ninth century a style called Apasjita architectural style was famous.

Temples during Pallava times represent art in its trust and most sublime form. The temples of Nasasimhavarman are well decorated and painted. The Pallava art can be well seen in the Kailasa temple. The well chiseled temples of stone and bricks are highly important from artistic point of view. Besides music dance and painting made great progress.

9.5 LITERATURE AND LEARNING

The Pallavas were equally interested in literature. This capital Kanchi was a famous center of art and literature. There was a lot of literary activity during this period. Kanchi was a great center of Sanskrit learning in the south India. Dandin a great Sanskrit poet was adorned in the court of Narasimhavarman II. Except few inscriptions most of the Pallava inscription were written in the Sanskrit. Sanskrit language was greatly encouraged. A provision was made for the recitation of the Mahabharata in a Mandapa at Kurram near Kanchi. The royal patronage was also extended to the Tamil language. In seventh century Mahendra Varman wrote a Sanskrit farce. Dharmapala, the president of the Nalanda

University was from Kanchi. The Tamil Kura! of Triavalluvar was a rich work of learning. The Pallavas and the Cholas

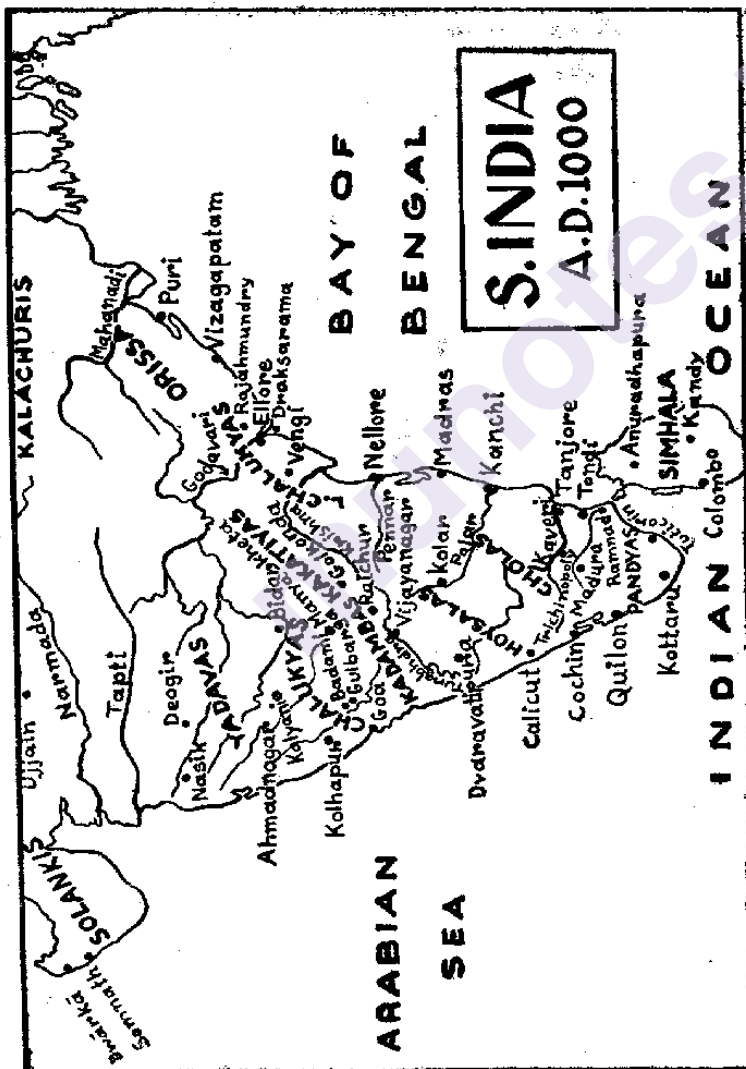
Check Your Progress

1. Sketch the history of the Pallavas and estimate their importance.
2. Describe the origin of Pallavas and write a detailed note on Pallavas art.

9.6 THE CHOLAS

9.6.1 Objectives:

1. To examine the history of the early rulers of the Cholas.
2. To briefly survey the rule of Paratanka I, Rajaraja and Rajendra Chola.



3. To assess the development done by Chola rulers in the field of administration and art and architecture.

9.6.2 Introduction:

Chola country or Chola mandalam between the rivers of Pennar and Velar constituted the modern districts of Tanjore and Trichinopoly and a part of Pudukoty, Uraganur (Uraipur) near modern Trichinopoly, Tanjore and Gangikonda-Cholapuram near Chola capital. The three prominent states in Tamil country were Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas. The Chola kingdom was a very ancient one. Their early history is, however, obscure. Cholas were the most civilized race of the Deccan. Regarding the origin of the Cholas historians hold divergent views. But it is beyond a shadow of doubt that the Cholas were the original inhabitants of the Deccan in comes of the inscriptions they have called themselves as suryavansi.

The history of Cholas is definitely ancient one. Since they are also mentioned in the account of Megasthenes and inscription of Ashoka. II and XII. Rock Edicts of Ashoka also refer to them. The sangam literature refers to many Chola princes who were models of justice. Chola rulers have been mentioned by the grammarian, *katyayana* (circa 4th century B.C.). The *periplus* and the geography of *Tolmy* further give us some information regarding the Chola country and its inland towns and ports. In *sabha* and *Bhishmaparva* of *Mahabharata* the name of the Cholas occurs. The kingdom of the Cholas included Madras, several other districts and the greater part of Mysore state. In the early medieval age, the Chola kingdom came to be known as *Cholamandalam* (coromandel)

9.7 CHOLA DYNASTY

Chola dynasty was a Tamil dynasty which was one of the longest-ruling dynasties in southern India. The earliest datable references to this Tamil dynasty are in inscriptions from the 3rd century BC left by Asoka, of Maura Empire; as one of the Three Crowned Kings, the dynasty continued to govern over varying territory until the 6th century AD.

The heartland of the Cholas was the fertile valley of the Kaveri River, but they ruled a significantly larger area at the height of their power from the latter half of the 9th century till the

Chola Empire

300s EC – 1219

Capital

Early Cholas
Poompuhar, Urayur,
Medieval Cholas:
Pazhaiyaarai, Thanjavur
Gangaikonda Cholapuram

Language(s)

Tamil

Religion

Hinduism

Government

Monarchy

King

-848-871

Vijayalaya Chola

beginning of the 6th century. The whole country south of the Tungabhadra was united and held as one state for a period of two centuries and more.

Under Rajaraja Chola I and his son Rajendra Chola I, the dynasty became a military, economic and cultural power in South Asia and South-east Asia. The power of the new empire was proclaimed to the eastern world by the celebrated expedition to the Ganges which Rajendra Chola I undertook and by the overthrow after an unprecedented naval war of the maritime empire of Srivijaya, as well as by the repeated embassies to China.

During the period 1010-1200, the Chola territories stretched from the islands of the Maldives in the south to as far north as the banks of the Godavari River in Andhra Pradesh. Rajaraja Chola conquered peninsular South India, annexed parts of what is now Sri Lanka and occupied the islands of the Maldives. Rajendra Chola sent a victorious expedition to North India that touched the river Ganges and defeated the Pala ruler of Pataliputra, Mahipala. He also successfully invaded kingdoms of the Malay Archipelago. The Chola

-1246-1279
Historical era
- Established
- Rise of the

Rejendra Chola III
Middle Ages
300s BC
848

The Pallavas and the Cholas

medieval Cholas

- Disestablished 1279

Today part of

India
Sri Lanka
Bangladesh
Malaysia
Indonesia
Singapore
Maldives

List of Chola kings

Early Cholas

ElaraChola - 235 BC – 161 BC
Ilamcetcenni - Karikala
Chola

Nedunkilli*Killivalavan*

Kopperuncholan

Kocengannan* Perunarkilli

Interregnum (c. 200-848)

Medieval Cholas

848 – 871
Vijayalaya Chola ?
Adityal 871 - 907
Parantaka Chola I 907-950
Gandaraditya 950-957

dynasty went into decline at the beginning of the 6th century with the rise of the Pandyas, who ultimately caused their downfall.

The Cholas left a lasting legacy. Their patronage of Tamil literature and their zeal in building temples has resulted in some great works of Tamil literature and architecture. The Chola kings were avid builders and envisioned the temples in their kingdoms not only as places of worship but also as centres of economic activity. They pioneered a centralized form of government and established a disciplined bureaucracy.

Arinjaya Chola	956-957
Sundara Chola	957-970
Uttama Chola	970-985
Rajaraja Chola I	985-107
Rajendra Chola I	1012-107
Rajendraraaja Chola	1018-1054
Rajendra Chola II,	1051-1063
Virarajendra Chola	1063-1070
Athirajendra Chola	1067-1070

Later Cholas

Kulothunga Chola I	1070-1120
Vikrama Chola	1118-165
Kulothunga Chola	163-180
Rajaraja Chola II	176-1173
Rajadhiraj a Chola II	1166-1178
Kulothunga Chola III	1178-1218
Rajaraj a Chola III	1216-1256
Rajendra Chola III	1246-1279

The heartland of the Cholas was the fertile valley of the Kaveri River, but they ruled a significantly larger area at the height of their power from the latter half of the 9th century till the beginning of the 6th century. The whole country south of the Tungabhadra was united and held as one state for a period of two centuries and more.

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Check Your Progress

1. Which was the longest ruling dynasty in South India

9.8 EARLY RULERS OF CHOLAS

To trace the chronology of Cholas is a difficult task. The sangama literature throw some light on the early political history of the Cholas. In the middle of the second century B.C. A Chola king by name Elara conquered Ceylon and ruled it over it for about fifty years. Chola gained territory and influence in the reign of Karikala who ruled in the 2nd century AD. Accordingly to the Tamil and Telugu legends, the foremost achievement of Karikala Chola was the defeat of his Chera or Kerala and Pandya. Other prominent rulers of Cholas were Songannan Vijayalaya at Tanjore and Aditya. Vijayalaya founded his own dynasty in 850 AD. He was feudatory his own dynasty of the Pallava king. He was succeeded by his son Aditya I (871-907), who defeated the Pallava king. Aparajita, conquered Coimbatore and Salem district. He was a devotee of Shiva. He built many temples of Shiva near Kaveri.

9.9 PARATANKA 1 (907 TO 946 AD)

Aditya's son Paratanka I was the real founder of the Chola supremacy. They had ruled from 907 to 946 AD. He annexed the territories of the Pandya king who ran away to Ceylon for safety. By 930 the Cholas

become the master of almost the whole of the south extending from the north Pennar to Cape Common. Paratanka I assumed the title of Madurajkonda to commemorate his victory over the Pandya king. He also wiped out the remains of Pallava power and conquered the country as far north as Nellore. Chola kingdom received a set back of the hands of Krishna III of Rashtrakuta during Paratanka I. The inscription of Paratanka throw light on the self-governing village communities under Chola kingdom. He was great patron of learning. Paratanka constructed a temple at Tondaimanad in honour of his father.

9.10 RAJARAJA CHOLA (985-1012 AD)

The greatest king of the dynasty was Raja I (985-1012AD). The rule of Rajaraja gave Cholas, the paramount power in India. He was the most famous and important among the Cholas. Rajaraja carried on the administration of his country very efficiently and successfully. As successful conqueror Rajaraja within twelve years of his accession destroyed the independence of the eastern Chalukyas Vengi, the Pandyas of Madurai, the Gangas of Mysore and the chiefs of Malabar coast. Through his inscriptions we get the information that he had conquered the (Ceylon). His conquest established his authority in the Deccan. He built a powerful navy and with its help he was able to bring under his control the Arabian sea and Indian ocean. It is claimed that his conquests included Kalinga and 12000 islands which have been regarded as the Lacadiuves and Maldives. Thus Rajaraja was one of the greatest sovereigns of south India. He was great conqueror and empire builder.

Rajaraja Chola was an able administrator also. His government was humane and benevolent. He made a thorough survey of the country for the purpose of assessing land revenue on a fair basis under him savism was greatly encouraged but he was not intolerant towards other religion. He patronized fine arts and spent lavishly on architectural masterpieces like Rajkarayashwas temple of Siva at Tanjore. He gave toleration to all, as testified by the grant of the village of Nagapatnam for the constructions of a Buddhist Vihara by Sailendra king of Java.

9.11 RAJENDRA CHOLA (1017-1044)

Rajraya Chola was succeeded by his son Ranjendra Chola I. He consolidated the empire built by his father and also extended it. He was a brave warrior and successful ruler he was not only resourceful and powerful in the south but also in north. In the south he defeated Keralas, Pandyas and Simhaldip and in north he had won victory over Orissa, West Bengal and Kaushat. The military campaigns of Rajendra Chola did not enlarge the Chola empire but it proved his martial glory. To commemorate the stupendous expedition, he assumed the title Gangaikonda. He also had naval fleet and thus could establish his authority over the islands of Andaman, Nicobar and Malaya. About Rajendras expedition against Sailendra king of Java, Dr. R.C. Mjumdard comments, the mighty Sailendra Empire, the biggest naval power in the East lay prostrate before

the victorious Chola army and Rajendra Chola had the proud satisfaction of seeing his banner floating from the bank of the Ganga to the island of Ceylon and across the bay of Bengal over Java, Sumatra and the Malaya peninsula.

The Pallavas and the Cholas

Rajendra was an efficient administrator and a benevolent king. He maintained peace and order and patronized learning art and architecture. Under him art and literature flourished he constructed his new capital Gangikjonda Cholapuram, in which grand temples and palaces were raised. He also constructed the big irrigation tank sixteen miles long for the welfare of the people.

9.12 SUCCESSOR OF RAJENDRA CHOLA

After the death of Rajaraja Chola, his son Rajadhiraja become ruler. He had faced with frequent revolts which broke out in his empire he was the last able ruler, among the Cholas. In 1052, he was killed while fighting with the Chalukyas. But his younger brother Rajendra Deva (1052-1063) who was crowned on the battlefield. He led the battle to final victory and then successfully ruled the empire until his death in 1063 AD. Among the others successor were Vira Rajendra (1063-70) Adhi Rajendra (1070) and Kalottunga I (1070-1122 AD). After his death the Chola empire began to decline many smaller federal barons also asserted their independence. The invasion Malik Kafur uprooted the Chola power in 1200.

9.13 ADMINISTRATION UNDER CHOLAS

The three centuries of Chola rule marked great progress in all fields. The Chola developed a highly effected system of administration. The Cholas developed a highly efficient system of administration. The Cholas are remembered for their innovative and efficient administrative systems. The Chola kings like Rajaraja, Rajendra were great warriors and far-sighted and wise administrator.

9.13.1 Central administration :

The king was the pivot of the whole administration. He was the chief law giver and established peace and order in the country. King gave close attention to the details of the administration. For the convenience of administration the king had appointed ministers and high officials. His orders were recorded by his secretaries who communicated them to the viceroys. A viceroy was appointed to rule the Mandalam. The Chola ruler always cared for public welfare and travelled through different parts of the country to know about the condition of the people. This they were loved by their subjects and were worshipped as Gods.

9.13.2 Provincial Administration:

To achieve the efficient and excellent administration Chola kingdom was divided into six provinces called Mandalam. Each Mandalam or province was divided into a numbers of kottam, or valanadu. Each kottam again

was subdivided into numbers of districts called Nadus. In each Nadus there were many village union called Kurrams and Tar-Kurram and then there were villages. Each mandalam was under a governor, who mostly belonged to high families the village administration was carried on through the panchayats. They also had legal rights and administered justice. There are ample evidences to show that these divisional had their own popular assemblies.

9.13.3 Popular Assemblies :

The unique feature of the Chola administration was the local administration of the villages. Their administration was based on sound democratic principles. The Kurrams were self-governing units. All powers of administration was vested in a general assembly of the union elected by the people. There were number of popular assemblies in the state to look after the administration. These assemblies also used to look after the state revenues. Even Nadus or the districts had an assembly that looked after the problems of the districts. The cities had separate assemblies known as Nagarhars. The village assemblies or Kurnas collected the land revenue and dispensed – justice.

The Chola records mentions the existence of two types of villages-Ur and Brahmadeya villages. The village assembly of Ur consisted of representative from all castes of villages excluding the untouchables. It carried out all functions and duties connected to the villages. The Brahmadeyas were the Agraharas. The members of the assemblies in Brahmadeyas were Brahmans. These assemblies made provision for the public education. For teaching Sanskrit and Tamil in the monasteries arrangement were made by the rural assemblies. These assemblies were called as Mahasabhas which were completely autonomous. The Mahasabha even collected the land revenue either in cash or kind and paid to royal treasury. It also administered justice. However right to appeal to the king was given to the king. The Sabha had many committees such as committees for looking after gardens irrigation tanks, cultivated fields, disposal of kinds, temples, charities, roads, education, general managements etc. The meetings were held in temples and works of public welfare were given due consideration. Thus popular assemblies almost enjoyed autonomous powers in the management of rural affairs. The Chola ruler adhered to the democratic principles.

9.13.4 Revenue Administration :

The agriculture was the main occupation of the people, so the land revenue was the chief source of income of the Cholas. Usually, 1/ 6 of the gross product was collected as the land tax. During crises and famines it was not levied. It could be paid by the peasants both in cash or in kind. The other sources of income for the state were taxes on trade and professions, salt tax, water cases and fines, customs duties. Remission were granted where necessary. The currency was the golden kasu, weighing 1/ 6 of the ounce. The main items of expenditure were public administration and public welfare.

Under the Cholas art, in Deccan reached the height of its glory. The Cholas greatly encouraged sculpture, architecture and painting. They founded many new cities and constructed many palatial buildings. The Chola kings were great builders and undertook vast irrigational projects. They constructed wells, tanks, mighty stone dams across the Kaveri and other rivers, cut out channel to distribute water to large areas of land. King Rajendra I built a huge tank near his new capital Gangaikonda Cholapuram. The Chola also constructed grand trunk roads which was of great help to commerce as well as military expedition.

Cholas beautifully erected temples which also served as the conference houses for the assemblies. The imperial Cholas succeeded to the hegemony in the south in about first half of the ninth century after the displacement of the Pallavas. They continued the tradition of temple — building with many improvements in the technique use of the hard stones and equally good but more embellished sculpture which became bolder. This period marks the peak of temple — building activity. Many earlier temples of brick and timbers were renovated in stone. A typical early Chola temple- unit is the Sundaresvara at Tirukkattalai (Thiruchchirappalli District). The temple was built by Aditya I in 873 A.D. It is complete unit built to stone throughout and consists of the main square two- storied vimana.

The Korangantha temple at Srinivasanallur (Thiruchchirappalli District) is an elegant example of the time of Parantaka I (907 –55). It is a square vimana with a mandapa in front and contain fine sculpture and rich miniature panels above and below them.

The great temple in Thanjavur, also called Brihadisvara or Rajarajasvara after its builder Rajaraja I (985 – 107 A.D.) is the most ambitious undertaking of Tamil architecture. It combines all that is mature and best in the temple – building tradition – architecture, sculpture, painting and allied arts. It is a large complex, with an enormous monolithic Nandi. It has the loftiest known vimana 60 m. high standing over a basal square of about 30 m side, which forms an appropriately high and amply moulded platform. The temple stands within a walled quadrangle 500 feet by 250 feet. The main structure of the temple is 180 feet with a great shikhara or tower, which consists of as many as 7 successive storeys rising to 9 dome of a single block of stone, 25 feet high and weighing about 80 tones. The entire temple is covered with beautiful sculptures and decorative mouldings. Apart from sculptures, some of them of immense iconographic interest, paintings and illustrations of dance and music of which this temple is a unique. Its long and well –inscribed epigraphs are most interesting and informative of the history of the temples, its builders and donors, and the endowment of jewels bronzes and other details. The Brihadisvara temple, begun about 1003, and completed by 1010.

Within about 20 years by Rajendra Chola (1012 – 44), in his new capital Gangaikond Chola puram (District Thanjavur) built almost on the same plan and model, a temple also known as Brihadisvara. This temple – complex had only two entrances, a gopura on the east and 9 plain torana-door on the north. It consist of 9 large Mandapa 175 feet by 90 feet and massive Vimana measuring 1000 feet square. The vimana is just 160 feet high. The sculpture are bold and almost cut out in the round, is perhaps of greatest excellence. The Cholas also encouraged plastic art and the metal and stone images cast in their time are exquisitely executed and display wonderful vigorous, dignity and grace. The Nataraja and the various images and portraits of the saints and Hindu Gods and Goddesses are considered to be masterpieces of the world. Thus Cholas dynasty made long lasting impression in the annals of Indian history.

Check Your Progress:

1. What were the contribution of Cholas to village administration, art and architecture?
2. Give the brief account of political condition of south India during Chola period.

9.15 SUMMARY

In short the Pallava dynasty was great from cultural as well as political point of view. Under the Pallavas art, literature, architecture, sculptor and painting witnessed great progress. The Pallavas got constructed a number of temples. During the Pallavas, the Indian civilization spread far and wide. They had dispatched two military expeditions against cyclone. Important rulers of Pallava dynasty include Sivaskanda, Vishnu Gopa, SimhaVishnu, Mahendra Varman, Narasimha Varman I, Pasmesavarman I, Narsinhavarman II and Nandi Varman II. Thus Pallava dynasty was great from cultural as well as political viewpoint. Under them culture and civilization considerably progressed and reached far off places.

Cholas were the most civilized race of the Deccan. Regarding the origin of the Cholas historians hold different views. They had many brilliant rulers. Like Elara, Karikala, Vijayalaya Aditya I, Paratanka I, Rajaraja I, Rajendra I, Rajadhiraja, Rajendradeva king was central figure, Empire was divided into Mandalas. Each Mandalas was sub — divided into districts. Their system of administration was democratic. Land revenue was their main source of income. The Cholas greatly encouraged sculpture, architecture and painting. They founded many cities and constructed many palatial buildings. The Cholas rules always cared for public welfare. They developed many roads and irrigation projects. Cholas beautifully erected temples which also served as the conference houses for the assemblies. The Brihadisvara temples at Tanjavur is a masterpiece of Chola art. Many metal and stone image in various forms are excellent.

9.16 QUESTIONS

1. Sketch the history of the Pallavas and estimate their importance.
2. Describe the origin of Pallavas and write a detailed note on Pallavas art.
3. Describe the contribution of the Pallavas to the Indian culture.
4. Discuss the achievements of the Pallavas in administration, literature, art and architecture.
5. Examine the role of the leading Cholas in the history of south India.
6. Write a critique on the contribution of the Cholas to the Indian culture.
7. Briefly describe the political career of Cholas and bring out their contribution to Indian history and culture.

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SPREAD OF INDIAN CULTURE IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

Unit Structure:

10.0 Objectives

10.1 Introduction

10.2 Agencies of Cultural interaction between India and South East Asia.

10.3 Overseas Political expansion

10.4 Influence of Indian culture in South East Asia

10.5 Summary

10.6 Questions

10.7 Additional Reading

10.0 OBJECTIVES:

- To introduce students to Cultural interaction between India and South East Asia
 - To understand Overseas Political Expansion
 - To orient learners about influence of Indian culture in South East Asia.
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10.1 INTRODUCTION

Right from ancient times, Indians never lived in splendid isolation from the rest of the world. They had cultural and trade contacts with the outside world. The transmission of Indian culture in distant parts of Central Asia, China, Japan, and especially Southeast Asia has been one of the greatest achievements of Indian history or even of the history of mankind. None of the other great civilizations had been able to achieve a similar success without military conquest.

By the beginning of the first century of the Christian era, the civilization and culture of India began to penetrate slowly across the Bay of Bengal into both inland and mainland of South-East Asia. By the fifth century AD, Indian religions such as Sanatana Dharma, Buddhism, and cultural traditions took deep roots in the regions of Burma, Thailand, Indo-China, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Check your progress:

- 1] Describe India's contacts with the outside world.
- 2] Examine how Indian religions took root in other countries.

10.2 AGENCIES OF CULTURAL INTERACTION BETWEEN INDIA AND SOUTH EAST ASIA

Southeast Asia was in the Indian sphere of cultural influence from 290 BCE to the 15th century CE, when Hindu-Buddhist influences were incorporated into local political systems. Kingdoms in the southeast coast of the Indian Subcontinent had established trade, cultural and political relations with Southeast Asian kingdoms in Burma, Thailand, Indonesia, Malay Peninsula, Philippines, Cambodia and Champa. This led to the Indianisation and Sanskritisation of Southeast Asia within the Indosphere, Southeast Asian polities were the Indianised Hindu-Buddhist Mandala (polities, city states and confederacies).

Indian culture itself arose from various distinct cultures and peoples, also including early Southeast Asian, specifically Mon Khmer influence onto early Indians. A reason for the acceptance of Indian culture and religious traditions in Southeast Asia was because Indian culture already had similarities to indigenous cultures of Southeast Asia, which can be explained by earlier Southeast Asian (specifically Austroasiatic, such as early Munda and Mon Khmer groups), as well as later Himalayan (Tibetic) cultural and linguistic influence onto various Indian groups. Several scholars, such as Professor Przyluski, Jules Bloch, and Lévi, among others, concluded that there is a significant cultural, linguistic, and political Mon-Khmer (Austroasiatic) influence on early Indian culture and traditions. India is seen a melting pot of western, eastern and indigenous traditions. This distinctly Indian cultural system was later adopted and assimilated into the indigenous social construct and statehood of Southeast Asian regional polity, which rulers gained power and stability, transforming small chieftains into regional powers.

Unlike the other kingdoms which existed on the Indian subcontinent, the Pallava empire which ruled the southeastern coast of the Indian peninsula did not impose cultural restrictions on people who wished to cross the sea. The Chola empire, which executed the South-East Asian campaign of Rajendra Chola I and the Chola invasion of Srivijaya, profoundly impacted Southeast Asia. This impact led to more exchanges with Southeast Asia on the sea routes. Whereas Buddhism thrived and became the main religion in many countries of Southeast Asia, it became a minority religion in India.

The peoples of maritime Southeast Asia — present-day Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines — are thought to have migrated southward from South China sometime between 2500 and 1500 BC. The influence of the civilization which existed on the Indian Subcontinent gradually became predominant among them, and it also became predominant among the peoples which lived on the Southeast Asian mainland. South East Asia was a region of special attraction for the Indian mercantile class. The fertile soil and abundant wealth of the area had earned the region titles like Suvarnabhumi or the Land of Gold, Tokkola or the Land of Cardamom, Narikeldweep or the Island of Coconuts etc.

Southern Indian traders, adventurers, teachers and priests continued to be the dominating influences in Southeast Asia until about 1500 CE. Hinduism and Buddhism both spread to these states from India and for many centuries, they existed there with mutual toleration. Eventually the states of the mainland mainly became Buddhist. The process of Indian cultural expansion in South East Asia received further impetus from the missionary activities of the Buddhist and Hindu monks. These missionaries from India accompanied the mercantile class in their maritime activities and took a leading role in spreading the message of Indian thought and culture in those far-off regions.

Check your progress:

- 1] Describe the reasons for the Indianization of South East Asia.
- 2] Describe the role of missionaries in the Indian cultural expansion in South East Asia.

10. 3 OVERSEAS POLITICAL EXPANSION

During this era, Hindu and Buddhist religious establishments of Southeast Asia came to be associated with economic activity and commerce as patrons entrusted large funds which would later be used to benefit local economy by estate management, craftsmanship and promotion of trading activities. Buddhism, in particular, travelled alongside the maritime trade, promoting coinage, art and literacy.

In Java and Borneo, the introduction of Indian culture created a demand for aromatics, and trading posts here later served Chinese and Arab markets. The *Periplus Maris Erythraei* names several Indian ports from where large ships sailed in an easterly direction to Chryse. Products from the Maluku Islands that were shipped across the ports of Arabia to the Near East passed through the ports of India and Sri Lanka. After reaching either the Indian or the Sri Lankan ports, products were sometimes shipped to East Africa, where they were used for a variety of purposes including burial rites.

Maritime history of Odisha, known as Kalinga in ancient times, started before 350 BC according to early sources. The people of this region of eastern India along the coast of the Bay of Bengal sailed up and down the Indian coast, and travelled to Indo China and throughout Maritime Southeast Asia, introducing elements of their culture to the people with whom they traded. The 6th century *Manjusrimulakalpa* mentions the Bay of Bengal as 'Kalingodra' and historically the Bay of Bengal has been called 'Kalinga Sagara' (both Kalingodra and Kalinga Sagara mean Kalinga Sea), indicating the importance of Kalinga in the maritime trade. The old traditions are still celebrated in the annual Bali Jatra, or Boita-Bandana festival held for five days in October / November.

The Chola dynasty (200—1279) reached the peak of its influence and power during the medieval period. Emperors Rajaraja Chola I (reigned 985-1014) and Rajendra Chola I (reigned 1012-1044) extended the Chola kingdom beyond the traditional limits. At its peak, the Chola Empire

stretched from the island of Sri Lanka in the south to the Godavari basin in the north. The kingdoms along the east coast of India up to the river Ganges acknowledged Chola suzerainty. Chola navies invaded and conquered Srivijaya and Srivijaya was the largest empire in Maritime Southeast Asia. Goods and ideas from India began to play a major role in the "Indianization" of the wider world from this period.

Quilon or Kollam in Kerala coast, once called Desinganadu, has had a high commercial reputation since the days of the Phoenicians and Romans. Fed by the Chinese trade, it was mentioned by Ibn Battuta in the 14th century as one of the five Indian ports he had seen in the course of his travels during twenty-four years. The Kollam Port became operational in AD.825. Desinganadu's rulers were used to exchange the embassies with Chinese rulers and there was flourishing Chinese settlement at Quilon. The Indian commercial connection with Southeast Asia proved vital to the merchants of Arabia and Persia between the 7th and 8th centuries CE.

The kingdoms of Vijaynagara and Kalinga established footholds in Malaya, Sumatra and Western Java.

The Cholas excelled in foreign trade and maritime activity, extending their influence overseas to China and Southeast Asia. Towards the end of the 9th century, southern India had developed extensive maritime and commercial activity. The Cholas, being in possession of parts of both the west and the east coasts of peninsular India, were at the forefront of these ventures. The Tang dynasty (618–907) of China, the Srivijaya empire in Maritime Southeast Asia under the Sailendras, and the Abbasid caliphate at Baghdad were the main trading partners.

During the reign of Pandya Parantaka Nedumjadaiyan (765–790), the Chera dynasty were a close ally of the Pallavas. Pallavamalla Nadivarman defeated the Pandya Varaguna with the help of a Chera king. Cultural contacts between the Pallava court and the Chera country were common. Indian spice exports find mention in the works of Ibn Khurdadbeh (850), al-Ghafiqi (1150 CE), Ishak bin Imaran (907) and Al Kalkashandi (14th century). Chinese traveler Xuanzang mentions the town of Puri where "merchants depart for distant countries."

Check your progress:

- 1] Describe the Kingdoms which expanded in South East Asia.
- 2] Examine the role of the Cholas in South East Asia.

10.4 INFLUENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

In Cambodia, Thailand and Indonesia or Burma today, many symbolic remnants of India's influence are clearly visible in their art, culture and civilisation. Through the centuries, India has been a source of inspiration for art and architecture in countries belonging to the present day ASEAN. The eleven countries of ASEAN are Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore,

Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Brunei, the Philippines and recently added Timor Leste.

Spread of Indian Culture in South East Asia

Temples of Angkor Wat, Pagan, Borobudur and Prambanan bear evidence to the deep penetration of Indian art and architectural forms in these famous Southeast Asian monuments.

Some of these monuments surpass the grandeur of Indian temples from the same period because of their scale, extensive stone bas relief carvings and expanse. Thanks to the contact with Indian civilisation, the Southeast Asia also created many literary works based on the Ramayana but with something distinctively their own being discernable in them. It must be said that Southeast Asia did not accept all foreign influences in an indiscriminate manner. Two notably important external influences came from China and India, but Southeast Asia accepted only those influences and practices that were suitable to their local cultures. Almost every country accepted Ramayana because it is easy to retell, understand, modify and apply to contemporary culture.

Folklore singers and artistes played a very important role in popularising and modifying Indian literary works in Southeast Asia and it was the most popular and effective way of propagating Indian culture. Through retelling of the stories from generation to generation, the great epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata could be edited and retold to attract bigger and bigger audiences. The artistes who popularised these were called 'dalangs' and contributed to the process of adaptation of these epic works originating outside their country by adding or changing them to make them more contextual and localised. This was the beginning of the formation of new texts like Seri Rama (Malaysian adaptation of Ramayana) and RamKer (Ramayana Khmer) in Cambodia. These are regarded as some of the highest literary works of Southeast Asia.

Similarly sculptors and artists copied and combined original Indian motifs with local artistic motifs to arrive at something distinctively Southeast Asian and produced stylised masterpieces of their own. Modelled after Gupta period icons, the Cambodian (Khmer) sculpture of 8th to 13th centuries are very different in appearance and form yet they are beautiful creations representing stylised figures of gods, goddesses, Buddha, Apsaras and demons with Southeast Asian features.

India's civilisation and culture spread in many parts of the world through trade but struck firm roots in Southeast Asia including in dance forms. Yet India's cultural conquests were peaceful and without forced conversions. There was no evidence of violence, colonisation and subjugation and there was no extensive migration from India to the countries of Southeast Asia. The Indians who went there did not go to rule nor had any interest in controlling from afar.

Southeast Asia was particularly attractive to Indian mercantile class and they named the faraway lands Swarnabhumi or land of gold, Tokola or land of cardamoms or Narikeldeep, land of coconuts. They followed two routes—one through land via Bengal, Assam, Manipur and Burma to

reach different parts of Southeast Asia. The other route was the maritime route from Coromandel coast or the coast of Bay of Bengal to Cape Comorin and via Malacca strait to reach the Malay Peninsula.

India during Gupta period was a land of riches and people possessed great skills at weaving textiles, crafting gold jewellery, metal, sculpture and beautiful objects. There was much demand for Indian goods and trade between India and Southeast Asia which was seen as a land of spices and rice growing fertile lands, flourished. Funan in the Mekong Delta in Vietnam was the first trading post of Indian traders. Traders took residence there and from there spread to other countries of the region.

Hindu priests and Buddhist monks accompanied mercantile class and assumed a leading role in spreading the message of Indian thought and culture to the entire Southeast Asian region. Since they had no political ambitions and were living in hermitages and ashrams, the local people welcomed them. Thus merchants, monks and Hindu Brahmin priests travelled to faraway kingdoms like Cambodia and Indonesia in large numbers and India's culture, religion and civilisation spread to different parts of Southeast Asia. The kings of the region wore Indian made silk and brocade textiles during ceremonious occasions and donned jewels imported from India. Printed and woven textiles were eagerly sought after by the common people.

Indian religion, political thought, literature, mythology, artistic motifs and style, were absorbed deeply into local culture as greater interaction with Indians who settled in the courts of South East Asia took place. Buddhism came to Southeast Asia from India in 3rd century BCE when Buddhist monks were sent by king Ashok. In medieval times, from sixth to fourteenth century, there existed a great maritime empire based in the Indonesian islands of Java and Sumatra. Many Indian artisans came to work temporarily in the courts and were from Kalinga (modern day Orissa). They helped in building great temples and monuments. Many of the motifs on the walls of Borobudur and Angkor Wats resemble carvings of Konarak and other medieval temples of eastern India.

Brahmins also played an important role in the Siamese court as experts in Astrology and in conducting ceremonies. They were not only experts in performing religious rites but were also knowledgeable in political affairs, art and architecture. They were invited by rulers to serve as advisors, administrators and priests. They were experts in Sanskrit. Sanskrit scripts are the first form of writing known to have reached Southeast Asia. Similar alphabets were adopted for local languages as well. The alphabets used today for Burmese, Thai, Laos and Cambodia derive originally from Indian prototype. A large number of ancient inscriptions which have been discovered are in Sanskrit.

Sanskrit terminology was used in all legal aspects of court procedures and only the factual aspects were described in vernacular. The use of Indian framework of code of law was mentioned by these inscription. Codes of law and public administration especially the concept of "God King" was

adopted by many kings of Southeast Asia. They considered themselves to be incarnation or a descendant of one of the Hindu deities. Later when Buddhism came, this view was modified. The kings of Cambodia, Jayavarman VII (the founder of Angkor) and his successors were addressed by the people as king of the mountain and they built their palaces and temples on hill peaks (Bayon temples).

Traders were also accompanied by Shudras (the lowest caste according to the Hindu caste hierarchy) who migrated in search of a better life from India and many settled in Bali. The caste system was modified when adopted by Southeast Asians as they had a class system of their own. They also did not adopt the Manusmriti which relegates women to an inferior place. The Indonesians still have matriarchal society in Sumatra (Minangkabau) where women are head of the family and inheritance is through the daughters' lineage.

Finally, the decline of India's influence in Southeast Asia began from around 13th century when conversions to Islam took place in many major countries like Malaysia and Indonesia. But within Indonesia, Bali practices Hinduism even today. The rise of India's influence had taken place when the Khmer kings spread it to other regions and decline began with the coming of Islam. But even though it was a long time ago that India's influence on Southeast Asia's culture and civilization more or less halted, the impact can be seen and felt even today on its customs, culture, architectural designs.

The syncretic culture of Southeast Asia is evident in Buddhism being practiced in Hindu temples in Cambodia, Muslim wedding rituals and dress in Malaysia which are based on Hindu rituals and attire, Garuda –the vehicle of Hindu God Vishnu, is the name of Indonesian Airlines, and Naga and Kuber which are prevalent in both Hindu and Buddhist cultures can be seen carved in many places. A Mahabharata Monument depicting Krishna and Arjun riding a chariot pulled by eleven horses is placed prominently in a park in central Jakarta. Southeast Asia absorbed and retained its past Indian influence in a very distinctive manner over the centuries and today it has melded into the Southeast Asian culture.

In Indonesia shadow play involving leather puppets with moveable arms and legs on a screen narrating scenes from Ramayana is very popular even today. It is also a popular art form in Orissa. There was reverse exchange of ideas and artistic techniques in the last century when Rabindranath Tagore travelled to Southeast Asia and brought the art of Batik from Indonesia to India and taught it to the students in Santiniketan. The influence of India can also be felt in the food and flavours of South East Asia. There are many spices in common between Indian and Southeast Asian foods. Nearly all the people of Southeast Asian region eat rice and curry like the people of Eastern India with many common ingredients. Indian herbal medicines also reached Southeast Asia from ancient times and are used even today in many countries.

Check your progress:

- 1] Discuss the influence of Indian culture on religion in South East Asia.
- 2] Examine the impact of Indian culture various aspects of life in South East Asia.

10.5. SUMMARY

The impact of Indian culture was profound, especially in parts of Burma (Myanmar), Thailand, Cambodia, and the Indonesian archipelago. Local rulers adopted concepts of state and kingship as well as urban development and hydraulic engineering. They also embraced a script and literature in the Sanskrit language. Indic elements were integrated and authenticated by both Hindu and Buddhist metaphysical ideologies. Those ideologies claimed to be universal, embracing all human diversity within a cosmic frame of reference. That probably explains why the culture was adopted, for there was no Indian conquest of terrain and no imposition of a populace or doctrine. India never established colonies in Southeast Asia, and the transmission was more a movement of ideas rather than peoples.

10.6 QUESTIONS

1. Examine the agencies of cultural interaction between India and South East Asia.
2. Trace the influence of Indian culture in South East Asia.
3. Discuss the impact of Indian culture on religious and social life as well as literature and art and architecture of the people of South East Asia.

10.7 ADDITIONAL READING

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