# General Knowledge

*Compiled & Edited*
**Research & Editorial Deptt.**



V&S PUBLISHERS

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*Published by:*

V&S PUBLISHERS

F-2/16, Ansari road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002
☎ 23240026, 23240027 • *Fax:* 011-23240028
✉ info@vspublishers.com • 🌐 www.vspublishers.com

**Online Brandstore: amazon.in/vspublishers**

**Regional Office : Hyderabad**
5-1-707/1, Brij Bhawan (Beside Central Bank of India Lane)
Bank Street, Koti, Hyderabad - 500 095
☎ 040-24737290
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ISBN 978-93-711954-7-8
**New Edition**

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***Printed at :*** Param Offsetters, Okhla, New Delhi–110020

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**V&S Publishers** is constant in its effort to identify the problems faced by the aspirants of various competitive examinations held at state and national levels, and to sort out those problems effectively. After a thorough search in the market, we realised that there are a few books available on comprehensive General Knowledge, which are too costly and too large to go through in short span of time during preparation. The present book, **'General Knowledge'** with all genres of general awareness has been designed to meet the specific needs of the contestants of various entrance exams and competitive exams as well. Not only does the book spreads awareness, but also can be a facilitator of change in life.

The book has been strategically planned in order to be user friendly. It covers up-to-date knowledge on *History (India and World), Geography (India and World), Indian Polity and Governance, Indian Economy, General Science, Computer and Information Technology, Games and Sports, World Panorama, Indian Panorama, and Miscellany.* The primary goal is to fulfil the quest for knowledge on various topics of study at national and international levels.

The book is recommended for various competitive examinations such as:

- Civil Services
- Staff Selection Commission (SSC)
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- Indian Engineering Services
- Railway Recruitment Services
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

We hope that the book will be of immense help to the readers to upgrade their knowledge on various topics of general knowledge. A regular revision of all the topics covered in the book is advised to get up-to-date with the required information. We wish all aspirants good luck for their future endeavours.

Copy Right.indd 3 08-02-2017 10:28:51

Copy Right.indd 4 08-02-2017 10:28:51

# CONTENTS

**INDIAN HISTORY** 1-160

**Ancient India**

1. Harappan/Indus Civilization (2500 BC–1750 BC) 2. Vedic Age (1500 BC – 600 BC) 3. The Mahajanapada Period (600 BC–325 BC) 4. Religious Movements (600 BC – 400 BC) 5. The Maurya Period (322 BC – 185 BC) 6. Post-Maurya Period (185 BC – 319 AD) 7. The Sangam Age 8. The Gupta Period (319 AD – 540 AD) 9. Post-Gupta Period/Vardhana Dynasty (550 AD – 647 AD)

**Medieval India**

1. Early-Medieval Period (650-1206) I. North India (Rajputa Period) II. South India (Cholas and Others) 2. Sultanate Period (1206-1526AD) I. The Delhi Sultanate II. Vijayanagar and Other Kingdoms 3. Religious Movements in 15th-16th Centuries I. Bhakti Movement II. Sufi Movement 4. Mughal Empire (1526 40 and 1555 – 1857) 5. The Maratha Age (1674 –1720) and Maratha Confederacy (1720 – 1818)

**Modern India**

1. The Advent of the Europeans 2. Expansion of British Power 3. Economic and Commercial Impact of British Rule 4. Formation of Indian National Congress (INC) 5. Socio-Religious Movements in 19th-20th Centuries 6. Freedom Struggle 7. Moderate Phase (1885-1905) 8. Extremist Phase (1905-17) 9. The Gandhian Era (1917-47) 10. Partition of India and Pakistan 11. Golden Years of Independence 12. Achievements

**Miscellaneous**

1. Important Places 2. Important Foreign Travellers/Envoys 3. Important Battles 4. Reforms/Acts 5. Educational Committees/Commissions 6. Important Congress Sessions 7. Governor-General and Viceroys 8. Abbreviated or Alternative Names 9. Timelines

**WORLD HISTORY** 161-192

**Ancient World : Down to 500 AD**

1. Mesopotamian Civilization 2. Egyptian Civilization 3. Chinese Civilization 4. Iranian Civilization 5. Greek Civilization 6. Macedonian Empire 7. Roman Civilization 8. Seven Wonders of Ancient World

**Medieval World (500 AD – 1500 AD)**

1. Byzantine Empire 2. Medieval Europe 3. Islamic Civilization 4. Medieval China 5. Medieval Japan 6. Seven Wonders of Medieval World 7. Geographical Discoveries

Copy Right.indd 5 08-02-2017 10:28:51

**Modern World (1500 AD Onwards)**

1. Renaissance 2. Reformation 3. Glorious Revolution : 1688, England 4. Industrial Revolution in Europe 5. The French Revolution 6. The American Civil War 7. Unification of Italy : 1848-70 8. Unification of Germany : 1848-71 9. First World War (Aug. 4, 1914 – Nov. 11, 1918) 10. Russian Revolution: 1917 11. Chinese Revolution 12. Turkish Revolution: 1923 13. Economic Depression of the World: 1929-34 14. Fascism in Italy 15. Nazism in Germany 16. Militarism in Japan 17. Second World War (Sep. 3, 1939 – Aug. 14, 1945) 18. India's Standing in World History

**Miscellaneous**

1. Important Battles 2. Important Places 3. Abbreviated or Alternative Names 4. Important Dates

**GEOGRAPHY** **1-96**

**World Geography**

1. The Universe 2. The Solar System 3. Continents of The World 4. Biosphere 5. Lithosphere 6. Hydrosphere 7. The Earth 8. Atmosphere 9. Layers of the Atmosphere 10. Winds 11. Cyclones and Anticyclones 12. Climate 13. Clouds 14. Latitude and Longitude 15. Heat Zones of The Earth 16. Effect of the Tilted Axis on Day and Night 16. Weather and Climate 17. Internal Structure of The Earth 18. Rocks 19. Earthquakes and Volcanoes 20. Various Landforms 21. World Around Us

**Miscellaneous**

1. Major Seas 2. Important Rivers 3. Important Lakes 4. Important Mountain Peaks 5. Important Plateaus 6. Major Islands 7. Important Canals 8. Major Gulfs 9. Important Straits 10. Countries 11. Highest Life Expectancy (as per the 2011 census) 12. National Emblems of Different Countries 13. National Monuments of Some Countries 14. Parliaments of Different Countries 15. Major Political Parties of the World 16. Most Populated Cities of the World 17. Major Industrial Countries of the World 18. Major Newspapers of the World 19. Major News Agencies 20. Geographical Epithets 21. Important Boundaries around the World 22. Races and People 23. Great Races of the World 24. People and Religions of the World 25. Largest Religions of the World 26. Countries with Their Capital & Currency 27. Wonders of the World 28. Countries and their main Produces/ Industries 29. Famous Sites (India) 30. Famous Sites (World) 31. Changed Names of Cities, States and Countries 32. Some Tribes and their Homeland (World)

**Indian Geography**

1. Indian Subcontinent 2. River System of India 3. Climate 4. Forests 5. Types of Soils and Agriculture 6. Landmarks in Indian Agriculture 7. Mineral Resources in India 8. National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries 9. Indian States and Union Territories 10. Demography/Census/Language/Literacy/Sex Ratio 11. Important Towns and Locations 12. Important Sites and Monuments

**INDIAN POLITY AND GOVERNANCE** **1-96**

1. Evolution of Indian Constitution 2. Constituent Assembly and Making of the Constitution 3. The Constitution of India 4. Different Sources of the Indian Constitution 5. Important Articles of the Constitution 6. Important Amendments to the Constitution of India 7. Special Features of the Indian Constitution 8. Federal and Unitary Features of the Indian Union 9. The Preamble 10. Lapse of

Copy Right.indd 6 08-02-2017 10:28:51

Paramountcy 11. Integration and Merger of Indian States 12. The Union and its Territories 13. Reorganization of States 14. Citizenship 15. Fundamental Rights 16. Directive Principles of State Policy 17. Fundamental Duties 18. Procedure for Amending the Constitution 19. Executives of Union Government 20. The Parliament 21. Executive of the States – The Governor 22. Inter-State Relations 23. Special Position of Jammu & Kashmir 24. Panchayats 25. Municipalities 26. Union-State Relations 27. The Supreme Court and the High Courts 28. The Political Processes in India 29. Order of Precedence 30. Offices under the Government of India 31. Inter-State Council 32. Finance Commission 33. NITI Aayog 34. National Development Council (NDC) 35. National Integration Council 36. Public Service Commissions 37. Election 38. Delimitation Commission of India 39. The Official Languages 40. National Symbols 41. Glossary of Constitutional Terms

**INDIAN ECONOMY** **97-176**

1. Indian Economy 2. Characteristics of Indian Economy 3. Types of Economies in the World 4. Agriculture and Land Development 5. National Income 6. Planning in India 7. Unemployment 8. Trade and Commerce 9. New Economic Policy 10. The Policy of Liberalisation 11. Indian Financial System 12. Indian Fiscal System 13. Banking in India 14. Adoption of Banking Technology 15. Tax System 16. Industry 17. Foreign Trade

**GENERAL SCIENCE** **1-169**

**Physics**

1. Unit 2. Motion 3. Work, Energy and Power 4. Gravitation 5. Pressure 6. Floatation 7. Surface Tension 8. Viscosity 9. Elasticity 10. Simple Harmonic Motion 11. Wave 12. Sound Wave 13. Heat 14. Light 15. Static Electricity 16. Current Electricity 17. Magnetism 18. Atomic & Nuclear Physics 19. Electronics

**Miscellaneous**

1. Scientific Instruments 2. Inventions 3. Important Discoveries in Physics 4. S.I. Units of Physical Quantity 5. Conversion of Units (From One System to Another System)

**Chemistry**

1. Introduction 2. Atomic Structure 3. Periodic Classification of Elements 4. Chemical Bonding 5. Oxidation and Reduction 6. Acids, Bases & Salts 7. Behaviour of Gases 8. Electrolysis 9. Fuels 10. Metallurgy 11. Important Facts About Some Metals 12. Non-metal 13. Common Facts 14. Man made substances

**Biology**

1. Introduction 2. What is Living? 3. Classification of Organism 4. Study of Cell 5. Genetics 6. Sex Determination in Human 7. Organic Evolution

**Botany**

1. Classification of Plantae 2. Plant Morphology 3. Plant Tissue 4. Photosynthesis 5. Plant Hormones 6. Plant Diseases 7. Ecology 8. Nitrogen Cycle 9. Pollution

**Zoology**

1. Classification of Animal Kingdom 2. Animal Tissue 3. Human Blood 4. System of the Human Body 5. Nutrients 6. Human Diseases

Copy Right.indd 7 08-02-2017 10:28:51

**Miscellaneous**

1. Medicinal Discoveries 2. Common Drugs 3. Milestones in Medicine 4. SI Units or the International System of Units 5. Scientific Instruments and their Uses


**COMPUTER AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY 170-184**

1. Introduction to Computer 2. Generations of Computer 3. Computer Networking and Internet 4. Computer Terminology 6. Abbreviations Associated with Computer

**GAMES AND SPORTS 1-40**

1. Olympic Games 2. Commonwealth Games 3. ASIAN Games 4. SAF Games 5. AFRO-ASIAN Games 6. Major Disciplines in Sports 7. Sports Terminologies 8. Venues Associated with Sports 9. Cricket and World Cup 10. Football 11. Hockey 12. Volleyball 13 Table Tennis 14. Basketball 15. Badminton 16. Lawn Tennis 17. Polo 18. Wrestling 19. Chess 20. Golf 21. Water Polo 22. Baseball 23. Billiards 24. Rifle Shooting 25. Kho-Kho 26. Swimming 27. Boxing 28. Marathon 29. Cups and Trophies (Associated with Sports /Games) 30. Famous Stadium and Sports 31. National Games and Sports of Some Countries 32. Court, Campus or Field Associated with Sports 33. Number of Players in Some Popular Sports/Games

**WORLD PANORAMA 41-56**

1. Firsts in the World (Male & Female) 2. Superlatives : World 3. International Boundaries 4. News Agencies 5. Political Parties 6. Intelligence Agencies 7. Parliaments of Some Countries 8. Signs or Symbols 9. Some Official Books 10. Newspapers & Their Place of Publication (World) 11. United Nations 12. World Organisations and Their Headquarters 13. International Decades 14. International Years 15. Designated SAARC Years 16. International U.N. Weeks

**INDIAN PANORAMA 57-87**

1. Firsts in India (Male) 2. Superlatives : India 3. Important Monuments 4. National Emblems 5. National Animals 6. India's World Heritage Sites 7. Famous Tourist Spots of India 8. Defence of India 9. Internal Security of India 10. Defence Training Institutions of India 11. Foundation day of some States 12. Research Centres of India 13. Nuclear And Space Research Centres in India 14. Health and Medicinal Research Centres in India 15. Defence Institutes in India 16. Government Industrial Undertaking 17. Famous Musical Instruments and their Exponents 18. States and Their Folk Dances 19. Famous Places Associated with Eminent Persons 20. Crematorium of Famous Persons 21. Famous Nicknames of Eminent Persons 22. Great Works Associated with Famous Persons 23. Awards and Honours 24. National Awards 25. Gallantry Awards 26. Recipients of the Bharatiya Jnanpith Award 27. Recipients of Dada Saheb Falke Award

**MISCELLANY 88-120**

1. Great Personalities of the World 2. Books and Authors 3. Countries/Capitals/ Currencies 4. Important National & International Days 5. Abbreviation


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# INDIAN HISTORY

## Ancient India

### 1. Harappan/Indus Civilization (2500 BC–1750 BC)


*Harappan Site*

- The Harappan culture was spread over the whole of Sind, Baluchistan, almost the whole of Punjab, northern Rajasthan, Kathiawar and Gujarat.
- Harappa, the first Indus site was discovered by Dayaram Sahni in 1921. It is situated in the province of West Punjab, Montgomery district in Pakistan.
- Harappa is located on the bank of river Ravi.
- Mohenjodaro was excavated in 1922 by R.D.Banerjee. It is situated in the Larkhana district in Sind on the right bank of river Indus (Now in Pakistan).
- The Great Granary, the Great Bath, a piece of woven cotton, a bearded man in steatite and a bronze dancing girl are found in Mohenjodaro.
- An assembly hall was also discovered from Mohenjodaro.
- The most important feature of Harappan civilization was town planning and urbanism.
- Mohenjodaro is believed to have been destructed by a flood.
- The Harappans knew the art of growing cereals, wheat and barley.
- Chanhudaro, discovered by N. Gopal Majumdar and Mackey, is situated in Sind on the bank of river Indus.
- Kalibangan (black bangles), another famous Indus city discovered in 1953 by A. Ghosh, is situated in Rajasthan on the banks of river Ghaggar.
- Lothal, the first man-made port in the world and dockyard made of burnt bricks, was discovered in 1953 by S.R. Rao, and it is situated in Gujarat on Bhogava river near the Gulf of Cambay.
- Ropar is the site situated in Punjab on the banks of river Sutlej. It was discovered in 1953 by Y.D. Sharma.
- The Harappan people were the earliest people in the world to grow cotton and rice.
- People cultivated rice at Lothal and Rangpur and barley at Benawali.
- The Harappan people domesticated oxen, buffaloes, goats, camel, sheep, domestic fowls and pigs.
- Humped bulls were given special importance.

- Horses were unknown to the Harappan people.
- Indus people had trade contacts with Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia.
- The ancient name given to the Indus region was *Meluha*.
- The Indus people used a gold-silver mixture called the *Electrum*.
- They used bronze and copper but iron was unknown to them.
- The Indus people were the first to use copper in India.
- The Harappans used a system of weights and measures based on 16 and its multiples.
- The chief male deity of the Indus people was Pashupati Mahadeva (Porto Siva).
- Their chief female deity was the Mother Goddess.
- They also worshipped fire, pipal trees and the unicorn.
- The Harappan script was *pictographic* in nature, which has not been deciphered so far.
- The Harappan seals were made of *terracotta*.
- A chess - like game of the Harappans was called the *sent*.
- The Indus Valley Civilization belonged to the Chalcolithic period dated between 3000 BC and 1500 BC. It was a Bronze Age civilization or a proto Historic civilization.
- The largest number of Harappan sites in the post independent India have been discovered from Gujarat.
- The Harappan civilization extended from Jammu in the North to Narmada in the South and from the Makran coast of Baluchistan in the West to Meerut in the East.
- The northernmost point of the Indus Valley Civilization was Gumla in Jammu and the southernmost was Daimbad.
- Floods and Earthquakes, change in the course of river Indus, aridity of the area, or drying up of river Ghaggar, and the invasion of the Aryans were the supposed reasons for the decline of the civilization towards 1500 BC.


*Pashupati Mahadeva*

## 2. Vedic Age (1500 BC – 600 BC)

### Original Home of the Aryan

- The location of the original home of the Aryans still remains a controversial point. Some scholars believe that the Aryans were native to the soil of India and some other scholars believe that the Aryans were migrated from outside [Central Asia (*Max Muller*)/Europe/Arctic legion (*B. G. Tilak*)].
- According to popular belief, the Aryans are supposed to have migrated from Central Asia into the Indian subcontinent in several stages or waves during 2000 BC — 1500 BC.
- *Boghazkai Inscription* (Asia Minor, Turkey), which mentions four vedic gods *Indra, Varuna, Mitra* and *Nasatyas*, proves Central Asian Theory as their homeland.

- The group that came to India first settled in the present Frontier Province and the Punjab – then called *Sapta Sindhu* i.e. region of seven rivers. They lived here for many centuries and gradually pushed into the interior to settle in the valleys of the Ganges and the Yamuna.

## Vedic Literature (1500 BC–600 BC)

- It is presumed that the Rig Veda was composed while the Aryans were still in the Punjab.
- Vedic Literature comprises four literary productions: (i) *The Samhitas orVedas* (ii) *The Brahamans* (iii) *The Aranyakas* (iv) *The Upanishads*.
- Vedic Literature had grown up in course of time and was really handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. Hence, these are called *Shruti* (to hear).
- The most important of Vedic Literature are *Vedas*. *Vedas* are called *Apaurasheya* i.e. not created by man but God-gifted and *Nitya* i.e. existing in all eternity.
- There are four Vedas – *Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda* and *Atharva Veda*. The first three Vedas are jointly called *Vedatrayi* i.e. trio of Vedas.
- Of the four Vedas, the *Rig Veda* (Collection of lyrics) is the oldest text in the wold, and therefore, is also known as 'the first testament of mankind'. The Rig Veda contains 1028 hymns, divided into 10 mandalas. Six mandalas (from 2nd to 7th mandalas) are called *Gotra/Vamsha Mandalas (Kula Granth).* The 1st and 10th mandalas are said to have been added later. The 10th mandala contains the famous *Purushasukta* which explains the four Varnas – Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. The hymns of Rig Veda were recited by *Hotri*.
- The *Sama Veda* (book of chants) had 1549 hymns. All hymns (excluding 75) were taken from the Rig Veda. The hymns of the Sama Veda were recited by *Udgatri*. This Veda is important for Indian music.
- The *Yajur Veda* (book of sacrificial prayers) is a ritual veda. Its hymns were recited by *Adhvaryus*. It is divided into two parts-*Krishna Yajur Veda* and *Shukla Yajur Veda*. In contrast to the first two which are in verse entirely, this one is in both verse and prose.
- The *Atharva Veda* (book of magical formulae), the fourth and the last one, contains charms and spells to ward off evils and diseases. For a very long time, it was not included in the category of the Vedas.
- The *Brahmans* explain the hymns of the Vedas. They are written in prose and ritualistic in nature. *Brahma* means 'sacrifice'. The various sacrifices and rituals have been elaborately discussed in the Brahamanas. Every Veda has several Brahamanas attached to it:

  Rig Veda — *Aitareya* and *Kaushitikij Sankhyan*.

  Sam Veda — *Panchvisha (Tandya Maha Brahamana), Shadvinsh, Chhandogya* and *Jaiminaya*.

  Yajur Veda — *Shatapatha* (the oldest and the largest Brahamana) and *Taittariya*.

  Atharva Veda — *Gopatha*.

- The word *Aranya* means 'the forest'. The 'forest texts' were called *Aranyaka*, because they were written mainly for the hermits and the students living in jungles. The Aranyaka are the concluding portions of the *Brahmanas*.
- The *Upanishadas* are philosphical texts. They are generally called *Vedanta* as they came towards the end of the Veda. There are 108 Upanishadas. *Vrihadaranyaka* is the oldest Upanishada.

## Literature of Vedic Tradition (600 BC – 600 AD)

- Literature of Vedic Tradition (*Smriti* i.e. rememberance literature) comprises six literary works : (i) Vedangas/Sutras (ii) Dharmashastras (iii) Mahakavyas (Epics) (iv) Puranas (v) Upvedas (vi) Shad-Dharshanas.
- **There are six Vedangas :**
  - (i) Shiksha (Phonetics): '*Pratishakhya*'– the oldest text on phonetics.
  - (ii) Kalpa Sutras (Rituals) : (a) *Shrauta Sutras/Shulva Sutras*– deal with the sacrifices, (b) *Grihya Sutras* — deal with family ceremonies, (c) *Dharma Sutras* — deal with Varnas, Ashramas etc.
  - (iii) Vyakarana (Grammar): *'Ashtadyayi' (Panini)*-the oldest grammar of the word.
  - (iv) Nirukta (Etymology) : *'Nirukta' (Yask)* based on *'Nighantu' (Kashyap)*– a ('Nighantu'— the oldest word-collection of the world; 'Nirukta' — the oldest dictionary of the world).
  - (v) Chhanda (Metrics): *'Chhandasutras' (Pingal)*– famous text.
  - (vi) Jyotisha (Astronomy): *'Vedanga Jyotisha' (Lagadh Muni)*–the oldest Jyotisha text.
- There are six famous Smritis : (i) *Manu Smriti* (Pre-Gupta Period) — the oldest Smriti text; Commentators : *Vishwarupa, Meghatithi, Gobindraj, Kulluk Bhatt*, (ii) *Yajnvalkya Smriti* (Pre-Gupta Period) — Commentators : *Vishwarupa, Vijnyaneshwar, Apararka* (a king of Shilahar Dynasty) (iii) *Narad Smriti* (Gupta period), (iv) *Parashara Smriti* (Gupta period), (v) *Brihaspati Smriti* (Gupta period), (vi) *Katyayana Smriti* (Gupta period).
- There are mainly two *Mahakavyas* (Epics):
  - (i) The Ramayana *(Valmiki)* : It is known as '*Adi Kavya*' (the oldest epic of the world). At present, it consists of 24,000 shlokas i.e. verses (Originally 6,000, Later – 12,000, Finally – 24,000) in 7 Kandas i.e. sections. 1st and 7th Kandas were the latest additions to the Ramayana.
  - (ii) The Mahabharata *(Ved Vyasa)*: The longest epic of the world. At present, it consists of 1,00,000 shlokas i.e. verses (Originally – 8,800-Jay Samhita, Later – 24,000 – Chaturvinshati Sahastri Samhita/Bharata, Finally – 1,00,000-Shatasahastri Samhita/Maha Bharata in 18 Parvans i.e. chapters, plus the Harivamsa supplement. *Bhagavad Gita* is extracted from Bihshma Parvan of Mahabharata. Shanti Parvan is the largest parvan (chapter) of the Mahabarata.
- The *Purana* means 'the old'. There are 18 famous 'Puranas'. The *Matsya Purana* is the oldest Puranic text. The other important Puranas are the

*Bhagavata, The Vishnu*, *The Vayu* and *The Brahamnda*. They describe genealogies of various royal dynasties.

- *The Upavedas* (the auxiliary vedas) were traditionally associated with vedas :

| SN. | Upavedas | Associated with |
|---|---|---|
| (i) | Ayurveda i.e. Medicine | Rig Veda |
| (ii) | Gandharvaveda i.e. Music | Sama Veda |
| (iii) | Dhanurveda i.e. Archery | Yajur Veda |
| (iv) | Shilpveda/Arthaveda i.e. the science of craft/wealth (Vishwakarma) | Atharva Veda |

- There are six schools of Indian philosophy known as *Shad-Darshanas*.

| SN. | Darshana | Founder | Basic Text |
|---|---|---|---|
| (i) | Sankhya Darshana | Kapila | Sankhya Sutra |
| (ii) | Yoga Darshana | Patanjali | Yoga Sutra |
| (iii) | Nyaya Darshana | Akshapada Gautama | Nayaya Sutra |
| (iv) | Vaishesika Darshana | Uluka Kanada | Vaishesika Sutra |
| (v) | Mimansa/Purva-Mimansa | Jaimini | Purva Mimansa Sutra |
| (vi) | Vedant/Uttara-Mimansa | Badarayana | Brahma Sutra/ Vedant Sutra |

## Rig Vedic/Early Vedic Period (1500 BC – 1000 BC)

### Geographical Area

- Rig Veda is the only source of knowledge for this period.
- From the names of rivers, mountains (*Himvanti* i. e. *Himalaya, Munjavant* i.e. *Hindukush*) and ocean in Rig Veda we have a clear idea of the geographical area in which Rigvedic people lived.
- Rig Veda mentions 40 rivers. The *Nadisukta* hymn of the Rig Veda mentions 21 rivers which include the Ganges in the east and the Kubha (Kabul) in the west.
- Rigvedic people, who called themselves Aryans, were confined in the area which came to be known as *Sapta Sindhu* i.e. land of the seven rivers. Sapta Sindhu comprises *Sindhu* and their five tributaries– *Vitasta*, *Asikani, Vipas*, *Parushni & Sutuadri* and *Saraswati*.
- According to the Rig Veda, the most mentioned river — Sindhu, the most pious river — Saraswati, mention of the Ganges are – one time, mention of Yamuna – 3 times.
- **The Dasrajan War (The Battle of Ten Kings)**

  According to Rig Veda, the famous Dasrajan war was the internecine war of the Aryans. The Dasrajan war gives names of ten kings who participated in a war against *Sudas* who was *Bharata* king of *Tritsus*

family. The ten kings were of the states of Purus, Yadus, Turvasa, Anus and Druhyus along with five others viz. Alinas, Pakhtas, Bhalanas, Sibis and Vishanins. The battle was fought on the bank of Parushni (Ravi) in which *Sudas* emerged victorious.

| Rigvedic Name | Modern Name | Region |
|---|---|---|
| Sindhu | Indus | Punjab |
| Vitasta | Jhelum | Punjab |
| Asikani | Chenab | Punjab |
| Vipas | Beas | Punjab |
| Parushni | Ravi | Punjab |
| Sutudri | Sutlej | Punjab |
| Saraswati | Sarsuti | Rajasthan |
| Drishadvati | Ghaggar | Rajasthan |
| Kubha | Kabul | Afghanistan |
| Suvastu | Swati | Afghanistan |
| Krumu | Kurram | Afghanistan |
| Gomati | Gomal | Afghanistan |

## Polity

- The Kula (the family) was the basis of both social and political organisations. Above the Kula were *the Grama, the Vis, the Jana* and *the Rashtra*. A group of Kula (families) formed a Grama (the village) and so on.

| Unit | Head |
|---|---|
| Kula (the family) | Kulapa |
| Grama (the village) | Gramani |
| Vis (the clan) | Vispati |
| Jana (the People) | Gopa/Gopati |
| Rashtra (the country) | Rajan |

- Regarding the form of government, it was of patriarchal nature. Monarchy was normal, but non-monarchical polities were also there.
- The Rashtra was ruled by a King or Rajan and the royal descent was chosen by hereditary based on the law of primogeniture. Probably elective monarchy was also known.
- Very little is known about ministers of the king. *The Purohita* or domestic priest was the first ranking official. He was the king's preceptor, friend, philosopher and guide. Other important royal officials were *Senani* (army chief) and *Gramani* (head of village).
- The army consisted of foot-soldiers and charioteers. Wood, stone, bone and metals were used in weapons. Arrows were tipped with points of metal or poisoned horn. References are made to the moving fort *(Purcharishnu)* and a machine for assaulting strongholds.

- The king had religious duties also. He was the upholder of the established order and moral rules.
- Rig Veda speaks of assemblies such as the *Sabha, Samiti, Vidath, Gana*. Sabha was committee of few privileged and important individuals. Two popular assemblies, Sabha and Samiti, acted as checks on the arbitrary rule of kings. Later Vedas record that the Sabha functioned as a court of justice.
- Theft, burglary, stealing of cattle and cheating were some of the then prevent crimes.

## Society

- The Rigvedic society comprised four varnas, namely *Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya* and *Shudra*. This classification of society was based on the professions or occupations of the individuals.
- Teachers and priests were called *Brahamanas*; rulers and administrators were called *Kshatriyas*; farmers, merchants and bankers were called *Vaishyas*; and artisans and labourers were reckoned as *Shudras*.
- These vocations were followed by persons according to their ability and liking, and the occupations had not become hereditary as they became later on.
- Members of the same family took to different professions and belonged to different varnas as well illustrated by a hymn of the Rig Veda. In this hymn a person says: *'I am a singer; my father is a physician, my mother is a grinder of corn.'*
- The unit of society was family, primarily monogamous and patriarchal.
- Child marriage was not in vogue.
- A widow could marry the younger brother of her deceased husband *(Niyoga)*.
- The father's property was inherited by son.
- Right to property existed in respect of moveable things like cattle, horse, gold and ornaments and also in respect of immovable property like land and house.
- The home of the teacher was the school where he taught the particular sacred texts.
- Milk and its products – curd, butter and ghee-formed an important part of the diet. There is also the mention of grain cooked with milk *(Kshira-pakamodanam)*.
- The meat of fish, birds and animals was eaten.
- The cow was already deemed *Aghanya* i.e. not to be killed.
- Rig Veda prescribes a penalty of death or expulsion from the kingdom to those who kill or injure cows.
- Alcoholic drinks, *Sura* and *Soma* were also consumed.
- Aryans were primarily agricultural and pastoral people who reckoned tneir wealth in terms of cows.
- Amusements included music, dancing, chariot-racing and dicing. One

stanza in the Rig Veda known as the gambler's lament says : 'My wife rejects me and her mother hates me'.

## Religion

- During the Rigvedic time the gods worshipped were generally the personified powers of Nature. It was believed that divine powers were capable of conferring both boons and punishments on man. Fire was sacred as it was regarded to be the intermediary between man and God.
- There were nearly thirty three gods. Later day tradition classified them into three categories of terrestrial *(prithvisthana)*, aerial or intermediate *(antarikshasthana)* and celestial *(dyusthana)* god.
  - (i) **Terrestrial** *(Prithvisthaniya) : Prithivi, Agni, Soma, Brihaspati* and *rivers.*
  - (ii) **Aerial/Intermediate** *(Antarikshasthaniya): Indra, Rudra, Vayu, Vata, Parjanya*.
  - (iii) **Celestial** *(Dyusthaniya)* : *Daus, Surya* (In five forms : *Surya, Savitri, Mitra, Pushan, Vishnu*), *Varuna, Aditi, Suha* and *Asvin*.
- *Indra, Agni* and *Varuna* were the most popular deities of Rigvedic Aryans. *Indra* or *Purandara* (destroyer of fort) : The most important god (250 : Rigvedic hymns are devoted to him); who played the role of warlord and was considered to be the rain god.

  ***Agni:*** The second most important god (200 Rigvedic hymns are devoted to him); fire god was considered to be the intermediary between the gods and the people.

  ***Varuna:*** Personified water; was supposed to uphold 'Rita' or the natural order ('Ritasyagopa') – Surya (Sun) was worshiped in five forms : *Surya, Savitri, Mitra, Pushan* and *Vishnu*.

  ***Surya (Sun):*** God who used to drive daily across the sky in his chariot driven by seven horses.

  ***Savitri (the god of light):*** The famous *Gayatri Mantra* is addressed to her.

  ***Mitra :*** A solar god.

  ***Pushan :*** The god of marriage; main function-guarding of roads, herdsmen and straying cattle.

  ***Vishnu :*** A god which covered earth in three steps *(Upakrama)*.
- ***Soma :*** Originally a plant producing a potent drink during; courses of *Agnishtoma* sacrifice, could be hemp/*bhang* called king of plants; identified later with the moon. The 9th mandala of Rig Veda, which contains 114 hymns, is attributed to the *Soma*. That's why it is called 'the *Soma Mandala*'
- **Other Gods/Goddesses :** *Rudra* (the god of animals), *Dyaus* (the oldest god and the father of the world), *Yama* (the god of death). Ashwin/ Nastya (the god of health, youth and immortality); Aditi (the great mother of gods), *Sindhu* (river goddess).
- Sometimes gods were visualised as animals but there was no animal worship.

- The nature of Rigvedic religion was Henotheism i.e. a belief in many gods but each god standing out in turns as the highest.
- Their religion primarily consisted of the worship of gods with a simple ceremonial known as *Yajna* or sacrifice. Sacrifices consisted of offerings of milk, ghee, grain, flesh and soma.

### Iconomy

- The Aryans crossed the nomadic stage. Yet, great importance was attached to herds of cattle. Various animals were domesticated.
- The vedic people were probably not familiar with cat and camel. Tiger was not known, but the wild animals like lion, elephant and boar were known to them.
- In all probability, very-little of trade was there.
- Money and markets were known but they were not extensively used. Cows and gold ornaments of fixed value were the media of exchange. Coins were not known.
- Complexity in producing goods made its appearance. Men of various professions like carpenters, smiths, tanners, weavers, potters and grinders of corn were there.
- The art of healing wounds and curing diseases were in existence. There were experts in surgery. Along with herbs and drugs, charms and spells were regarded as equally potential in healing diseases.
- OCP (Ochre Coloured Pottery) Culture : 1500 BC–1000 BC.

## Later Vedic Period : 1000 BC – 600 BC

### Geographical Area

- During the later Vedic Period, the Aryan settlements covered virtually the whole of Northern India *(Aryavarta)*.
- The centre of culture now shifted from Saraswati to Ganges *(Madhya desa)*.
- There was mention of more rivers such as *Sarmada, Sadanira* (modern Gandak), *Chambal* etc.
- The expansion of people towards the east is indicated in a legend of *Satapatha Brahamana* – how *Videha Madhava* migrated from the Saraswati region, crossed Sadanira and came to the land of Videha (modern Tirhut).
- Emergence of *Janapadas* — *Kuru* (Combination of *Purus* and *Bharatas*), Panchala (Combination of *Turvashas* and *Krivis*), *Kashi* etc. in Doab region.
- Later Vedic literatures mention Vindhya mountain (Southern mountain).
- Reference to the territorial divisions the later Vedas gives three broad divisions of India, viz. *Aryavarta* (Northern India) *Madhya desa* (Central India) and *Dakhinapath* (Southern India).

### Polity

- Large kingdoms and stately cities made their appearance in the later Vedic Period.
- In *Taittariya Brahmana* we notice the theory of the divine origin of kingship.

- The governmental machinery became more elaborate than before, as a sequel to the growth of the power of the king. New civil functionaries, besides the only civil functionary of the Rigvedic period, the purohita came into existence. These were: the *Bhagadudha* (Collector of taxes), the *Suta/Sarathi* (the Royal herald or Charioteer), the *Khasttri* (Chamberlain), the *Akshavapa* (Courier).
- The military officials of the Rigvedic times, the Senani (the general) and the Gramani (the head of the village) continued to function.
- The period also saw the beginning of a regular system of provincial government. Thus, we find *Sthapati* being entrusted with the duty of administering outlying areas ocupied by the aboriginals and *Satapati* being put over a group of one hundred villages.

  *Adhikrita* was the village official. *Ugras*, mentioned in the Upanishada, was probably a police official.
- The popular control over the affairs of the kingdom was exercised through *Sabha* and *Samiti*, as in the Rigvedic period. *Vidatha* had completely disappeared by now.
- Even during the later vedic times, kings did not possess a standing army.
- Judiciary also grew. The king played a great role in administering criminal law. The killing of an embryo, homicide, the murder of a Brahmana, in particular, stealing of gold and drinking sura were regarded as serious crimes. Treason was a capital offence.

| 12 Ratninas (Satapatha Brahamana) | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Prohita | the Priest |
| 2. | Mahishi | the Queen |
| 3. | Yuvaraja | Crown prince |
| 4. | Suta/Sarathi | the Royal herald/ the Charioteer |
| 5. | Senani | the General |
| 6. | Gramani | Head of the village |
| 7. | Kshata | Gateman/ Chamberlain |
| 8. | Sangrahitri | Treasurer |
| 9. | Bhagadudha | Collector of taxes |
| 10. | Akshavapa | Courier |
| 11. | Palagala | Friend of King |
| 12. | Govikarta | Head of forest department |

## Society

- As the time passed by *Yajnas* became elaborate and complicated ceremonial leading to the emergence of learned men known as *Brahmanas*.
- And as the Aryans expanded to the east and south, group of people known as *Kshatriyas* emerged to conquer territories and administer them. The remaining Aryans formed a separate class known as *Vaishyas*, a word derived from *Vis* meaning 'people'. The non-Aryan formed the fourth class known as *Shudras*.
- Nevertheless, these divisons of society were not rigid.

- The institution of *Gotra* i.e. the clan appeared in later Vedic Period.
- The higher castes could marry with the lower ones, but marriage with shudras was not permitted. The idea of pollution appeared in society.
- The earliest reference to the four *Ashramas* (the stages of life) — *Brahmacharya*, *Grihastha*, *Vanprastha* and *Sanyasa* – is found in the *Jabala Upanidshad*. The Ashrama system was formed to attain four *Purusharthas (Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha)*.
- The status of women declined. According to *Aitareya Brahamana* a daughter is the source of misery but a son is the protector of family.
- According to *Maitrayani Samhita* there are three evils — liquor, woman and dice.
- Though monogamy (a man having one wife) was the ideal but polygamy (a man having more than one wife) was frequent.
- Woman were prohibited to attend the political assemblies.
- *Yajnavalkya – Gargi dialogue (Vrihadarnyaka Upanishada)* indicates that some women had got higher education.

## Types of Hindu Marriage *(Vivaha)*

| | |
|---|---|
| *Brahma Vivaha* | Giving the girl to a man with dowry. |
| *Daiva Vivaha* | Giving the girl to the priest himself in lieu of his fees. |
| *Arsha Vivaha* | Giving the girl to a man after accepting a bride-price. |
| *Prajapatya Vivaha* | Giving the girl to a man without demanding a bride-price. |
| *Gandharva Vivaha* | Love marriage. |
| *Asura Vivaha* | Marriage with a purchased girl. |
| *Rakshasa Vivaha* | Marriage with the daughter of a defeated king or with a kidnapped girl. |
| *Paishacha Vivaha* | Marriage to a girl after seducing or raping her. |

- *Anuloma Vivaha*: Marriage between a bridegroom from an upper caste and a bride from a lower caste; *Pratiloma Vivaha*: The reverse of Anuloma Vivaha.
- **16 Sanskaras**

  1. Garbhadhana 2. Pumsavana 3. Simantonnayan 4. Jatakarma 5. Namakaran 6. Nishkramana 7. Annaprashana 8. Chudakarma 9. Karnachhedana 10. Vidyarmbha 11. Upanayana 12. Vedarambha 13. Samavaratana 14. Vivaha 15. Vanprastha 16. Antyesti.

## Religion

- The earlier divinites *Indra* and *Agni* were relegated into the background while *Prajapati* (creator of the Universe, later known as *Brahma*), *Vishnu* (Patron god of Aryans) and *Rudra* (God of animals, later identified with *Shiva/Mahesha*) rose in prominence. Now *Prajapati* became supreme God.

- *Pushana* who protected cattle in the early Vedic Period now became the god of *Shudras*.
- *Brihadaranyaka Upanishada* was the first work to give the doctrine of transmigration (*Punarjanma/Samsara-chakra*) and deeds (*Karma*).
- The early simple ceremonial of Rigvedic Period gave place to elaborate sacrifices requiring the services of as many as 17 priests. In the later Vedas and Brahamanas sacrifices *(Yajnas)* came into prominence.
- There were two varieties of sacrifices:
  (i) *Laghuyajnas* (simple sacrifices) : Performed by householder e.g. *Pancha Mahayajna*, *Agnihotra, Darsha Yajna* (on *Amavasya* i.e. on the last day of the dark fortnight), *Purnamasa Yajna* (on *Purnima* i.e. on the day of full moon) etc.
  (ii) *Mahayajnas* (Grand sacrifices) : Sacrifices that could only be undertaken by an aristocratic and wealthy man and the king.
    (a) *Rajasuya Yajna* : Royal consecration, which in its full form comprised a series of sacrifices lasting over a year. In later days, it was replaced by simplified *Abhisheka* i.e. anointment.
    (b) *Vajapeya Yajna* : Drink of strength, which lasted for a period of seventeen days upto full one year.
    (c) *Asvamedha Yajna* : Horse sacrifice, which lasted for three days.
    (d) *Agnishtoma Yajna*: Sacrifice of animals dedicated to Agni, which lasted one day, although Yajnika (performer of Yajna) and his wife spent ascetic life for a year before Yajna. On the occasion of this Yajna, *soma rasa* was consumed.
- Towards the end of the Vedic Period, there was the emergence of a strong reaction against cults, rituals and priestly domination; Reflection of this mood is found in the *Upanishadas*.

**Economy**

- Agriculture began to replacle rearing of cattle. The plough was at times drawn by 24 oxen. Manure was known.
- Rice, barley, beans, sesame and wheat were cultivated.
- Production of goods advanced as indicated by new occupations like fisherman, washerman, dyers, door-keepers and footmen.
- Indicating specialisation distinction was drawn between the chariot-maker and the carpenter and the tanner and the hide-dresser.
- Considerable advance was made in the knowledge of metals. Mention of tin, silver and iron was made apart from gold and *ayas* (either copper or iron) in the Rig Veda.
- Evidence was there regarding organsiation of merchants into guilds because of reference to corporations *(Gansa)* and aldermen *(Sreshtins)*.
- PGW (*Painted Grey Ware*) Culture : 1100 BC – 600 BC.

## 3. The Mahajanapada Period (600 BC–325 BC)

| | 16 Mahajanapadas (Modern Area) | Capital |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | **Anga** (districts of Munger and Bhagalpur in Bihar) | Champa/Champanagri |
| 2. | **Magadha** (districts of Patna, Gaya and Nalanda in Bihar) | Girivraj, Rajgriha/Rajgir (Bimbisara), Patliputra (Udayin), Vaishali (Shishunaga), Patliputra (Kalashok) |
| 3. | **Vajji** (districts of Muzaffarpur & Vaishali in Bihar) | Videha, Mithila, Vaishali |
| 4. | **Malla** (districts of Deoria, Basti, Gorakhpur and Siddharthnagar in U.P.) | Kuishinara and Pawa |
| 5. | **Kashi** (district of Varanasi in U.P.) | Varanasi |
| 6. | **Kosala** (districts of Faizabad, Gonda, Bahraich in U.P.) | North Kosal–Sravasti/Sahet-Mahet South Kosal-Saket/ Ayodhya |
| 7. | **Vatsa** (districts of Allahabad, Mirzapur etc. in U.P.) | Kausambi |
| 8. | **Chedi** (Bundelkhand area) | Shaktimati/Sotthivati |
| 9. | **Kuru** (Haryana and Delhi area) | Indraprastha (modern Delhi) |
| 10. | **Panchala** (Ruhelkhand, Western UP.) | North Panchal–Ahichhatra South Panchal–Kampilya |
| 11. | **Shurasena** (Brajmandal) | Mathura |
| 12. | **Matsya** (Alwar, Bharatpur and Jaipur in Rajastlian) | Viratnagar |
| 13. | **Avanti** (Malwa) | North Avanti-Ujjayini South Avanti-Mahishmati |
| 14. | **Ashmaka** (between the rivers Narmada and Godavari) | Potana/Patali |
| 15. | **Gandhara** (western part of Pakistan and Afghanistan) | Taxila (near Rawalpindi, Pakistan) and Pushkalavati |
| 16. | **Kamboja** (Hazara district of Pakistan) | Rajapur/Hataka |

➪ Buddhist literature *(Anguttara Nikaya, Mahavastu)* and Jain literature *(Bhagavati Sutta)* present a list of 16 Mahajanapadas with minor variation of names.

- There were two types of states — monarchical and non-monarchical/ republican. Monarchial states – Anga, Magadha, Kashi, Kosala, Vatsa, Chedi, Shursena, Matsya, Avanti, Gandhara.

  Republican States — Vajji, Malla, Kuru, Panchal, Kamboja, Shakya (Kapilvastu), Koliyas (Ramgrama), Moriya (Pipplivana).

## Rise of Magadha

- The political history of India from 6th century BC onwards is the history of struggle between four states — Magadha, Kosala, Vatsa and Avanti– for supremacy.
- Ultimately the kingdom of Magadha emerged to be the most powerful one and succeeded in founding an empire.
- **Causes of Magadha's success**
  (i) Magadha enjoyed an advantageous geographical position in the age of iron, because the richest iron deposits were situated not far away from Rajgir, the earliest capital of Magadha and could be used for making weapons.
  (ii) Magadha lay at the centre of the middle Gangetic plain. The alluvium, once cleared of the jungles, proved immense fertile and food surplus was thus available.
  (iii) Magadha enjoyed a special advantage in military organisation. Although the Indian states were well acquainted with the use of horses and chariots, it was Magadha which first used elephants on a large scale in its war against its neighbours.

## Haryanaka Dynasty : 544 BC – 412 BC

### Bimbisara (Shronika) : 544 BC – 492 BC

- He was the founder of Haryanka dynasty.
- Magadha came into prominence under the leadership of *Bimbisara*.
- He was a contemporary of *Gautama Buddha*.
- He married the princesses of Kosala (*Kosaldevi/Mahakosala*-sister of Kosal King Prasenjit), Lichchhavi (Chellana — sister of Lichchhavi Head Chetaka) and Madra (Khema – daughter of Madra king), which helped him in his expansionist policy.
- He gained a part of *Kashi* as the dowry in his marriage with the sister of king Prasenjit of Kosala.
- He conquered *Anga*.
- He sent a royal physician, *Jivaka* to Ujjain, when Avanti King *Pradyota* was attacked by jaundice.
- Known as *Seniya*. He was the first Indian king who had a regular and standing army.
- He built the city of New Rajagriha.

### Ajatashatru (Kunika): 492 BC – 460 BC

- Bimbisara was succeeded by his son Ajatashatru. Ajatashatru killed his father and seized the throne.

- Ajatashatru followed a more aggressive policy. He gained complete control over *Kashi* and broke the earlier amicable relations by attacking his maternal uncle Prasenjit, the king of Kosala.
- The *Vajji* confederation was Ajatashatru next target of attack. This war was a lengthy one and tradition tells us that after a long period of 16 years, he was able to defeat the Vajji only through deceit, by sowing the seeds of discord amongst the people of Vajji.
- The three things who played important role to defeat the Vajji — (i) *Sunidha* and *Vatsakar* — Ajatashatru's diplomatic ministers, who sowed the seeds of discord amongst Vajjis, (ii) *Rathamusala* — a kind of chariot to which a mace was attached (iii) *Mahashilakantaka* — a war engine which catapulted big stones.
- In this way *Kashi* and *Vaishali* (the capital of Vajji) were added to Magadha, making it the most powerful territorial power in the Ganges Valley.
- He built the fort of *Rajagriha* and a watch-fort (*Jaladurga*) at a village calledl *Patali*, on the banks of the Ganges.

### Udayin : 460 BC – 440 BC

- Ajatshatru was succeeded by his son Udayin.
- His reign is important because he laid the foundations of the city of *Patliputra* at the confluence of the Son and the Ganges and shifted the capital from Rajagriha to Patliputra.
- Udayin was succeeded by *Anuruddha, Munda* and *Naga-Dasak* respectively who all were weak and parricides.

### Shisunaga Dynasty : 412 BC – 344 BC

- *Nag-Dasak* was unworthy to rule. So the people got disgusted and elected Shisunaga as the King, the minister of the last king.
- The most important achievement of *Shisunaga* was the destruction of the Pradyota dynasty of *Avanti*. This brought to an end the huudred year old rivalry between Magadha and Avanti. From then on Avanti become a part of the Magadha rule.
- Shisunaga was succeeded by *Kalashoka (Kakavarna).* His reign is important because he convened *the Second Buddhists Council* in *Vaishali* (383 BC).

### Nanda Dynasty : 344 BC – 323 BC

- The Shisunaga dynasty was overthrown by Mahapadma who established a new line of kings known as the Nandas.
- Mahapadma is known as *Sarvakshatrantak* i.e. Uprooter of all the Kshatriyas (Puranas) and *Ugrasena* i.e. Owner of huge army (Pali texts).
- The Puranas call Mahapadma *Ekrat* i.e. the sole monarch. He seems to have overthrown all the dynasties which ruled at the time of Shisungas.

He is often described as 'the first empire builder of Indian history'.

- Mahapadma was succeeded by his eight sons. *Dhanananda* was the last one.
- The last king Dhanananda is possibly identical with the *Agrammes* or *Xandrames* of the Greek texts.
- It was during the rule of Dhanananda that the invasion of Alexander took place in north-west India in 326 BC.
- According to Greek writer Curtius, Dhanananda commanded a huge army 20,000 cavalry, 200,000 infantry, 2,000 chariots and 3,000 elephants. It was the might of Dhanananda that terrorised Alexander and stopped his march to the Gangetic Valley.
- The Nanda dynasty came to an end about 322-21 BC and was supplanted by another dynasty known as Mauryas, with *Chandragupta Maurya* as the founder.

## Foreign Invasions

**I. Iranian/Persian Invasion — Darius's Invasion (518 BC)**

- The Achaemenian rulers of Iran (Persia), who expanded their empire at the same time as the Magadhan princes, took advantage of the political disunity on the North-West Frontier of India.
- The Achaemenian ruler *Darius I (Darayabahu)* penetrated into North-West India in 518 BC and annexed Punjab, West of the Indus and Sindh. This area constituted the 20th province *(Kshatrapi)* of Iran, the total number of provinces in the Iranian empire being 28. This province was the most fertile area of the Iranian empire. From this province the empire received 360 talent gold as revenue.
- The Indo-Iranian contact lasted for about 200 years.

## Effects of Iranian Invasion

1. It gave an impetus to Indo-Iranian trade and commerce.
2. Through the Iranian, the Greeks came to know about the great wealth of India and this eventually led to Alexander's invasion of India.
3. The Iranian scribes brought into India a form of writing which came to be known as the *Kharosthi* script. It was written from right to left like the Arabic.
4. Iranian influence on the Mauryan Sculpture is clearly perceptible, especially in the bell shaped capitals. Iranian influence may also be traced in the preamble of Ashoka's edicts as well as in certain words used in them.

**II. Macedonian Invasion — Alexander's Invasion (326 BC)**

- In the 4th century BC, the Greeks and the Iranian fought for the supremacy of the world. Under the leadership of Alexander of Macedonia the Greek finally destroyed the Iranian empire.
- Alexander succeeded his father Philip to the throne of Macedonia. He was then only 20 years of Age.

- From his very childhood he used to dream of world-conquest. He quickly conquered many areas.
- As a preliminary step to conquer India, the Kabul valley and the hilly area of North-West frontier were conquered, and he reached Ohind near Attock in 326 BC.
- The rulers of Taxila and Abhisara submitted but *Porus (Puru)* refused to do so.
- Alexander then crossed the Jhelum by a trick. Porus was defeated in the battle that followed, but Alexander treated him very generously for his bravery. (*Battle* of *Vitasta* i.e. modern *Jhelum*, Greek-*Hydaspes* – 326 BC).
- This was how the Indians were defeated because of their disunity.
- After a brilliant victory at Sakala, the Greek forces reached the *Beas*. Alexander had to return from this place as his soldiers refused to go any further. The battle of Jhelum and Sakla had opened their eyes and they were afraid of the great Magadhan empire across the Beas.
- After making administrative arrangements for the conquered territory, Alexander marched back in Sep. 325 BC.
- He reached Babylon in 323 BC where he died at the age of 33.

### Effects of Alexander's Invasion

1. By opening up both the land and sea routes between India and Europe, it brought both of them closer to each other.
2. Indirectly this invasion made possible the establishment of Indo-Bacterian and Indo-Parthian states, which at a later stage considerably influenced Indian architecture (Gandhara school of sculpture), astronomy, coinage etc.
3. The invasion opened the eyes of Indian politicians to the necessity of creating a unified empire.
4. The date of the Invasion of Alexander is the 'first reliable date in early Indian history' and considerably helps us in solving chronological difficulties.

## 4. Religious Movements (600 BC – 400 BC)

Various religious movements – Buddhism, Jainism etc. were born and grew up in the Post-Vedic Period known as the Period of Second Urbanisation or the Age of Buddha (6th Century BC to 4th Century BC).

**Causes of Religious Movements**

1. The vedic philosophy had lost its original purity.
2. The vedic religion had become very complex and had degenerated into superstitions, dogmas and rituals.
3. Supremacy of the Brahmans created unrest in the society and Kshatriyas reacted against the Brahmanical domination.
4. Introduction of a new agricultural economy in Eastern India.
5. The desire of Vaishyas to improve their social position with the increase in their economic position due to the growth of trade.

## Buddhism

### Buddha's Life

- *Gautama Buddha*, founder of Buddhism, was born in 563 BC (widely accepted), on the *vaisakha purnima* day at *Lumbinivana* in *Kapilvastu* (now situated in the foothills of Nepal) in the *Sakya Kshatriya* clan.
- His father *Suddhodhana* was the republican king of Kapilvastu and mother *Mahamaya* was a princess of Kosala dynasty.
- After his mother's early death, he was brought up by his step mother and aunt *Mahaprajapati Gautami*.
- His father married him at an early age to *Yasodhara* (Princess of Kolli dynasty) from whom he had a son *Rahul*.
- Four sights–an old man, a diseased person, a dead body and an ascetic – proved to be a turning point in his career.
- At the age of 29, he renounced home, this was his *Mahabhinishkramana*
- (great going forth) and became a wandering ascetic.
- His first teacher was *Alara Kalama* (Sankhya philosopher) from whom he learnt the technique of meditation.
- His next teacher was *Udraka Ramputra*.
- At the age of 35, under a pipal tree at *Uruvella (Bodh Gaya)* on the bank of river Niranjana (modern name Falgu) he attained *Nirvana* (enlightenment) after 49 days of continuous meditation; now he was a fully enlightened *(Buddha or Tathagat).*
- Buddha delivered his first sermon at *Sarnath* (Dear park) to his five deciples, this is known as *Dharmachakra Pravartana* (Turning of the wheel of law).
- He died at the age of 80 in 483 BC at *Kushinagar* (identical with the village Kasia in Siddharthanagar Janapada of Deoria district of U.P.). This is known as *Mahaparinirvana* (Final Blowing out).

| Great Events of Buddha's Life | Symbols |
|---|---|
| Janma (Birth) | Lotus and Bull |
| Mahabhinishkramana (Renunciation) | Horse |
| Nirvana/Sambodhi (Enlightenment) | Bodhi tree |
| Dharmachakra pravartana (First Sermon) | Wheel |
| Mahaparinirvana (Death) | Stupa |

- Kanthaka – Budhha's horse, *Channa* – Buddha's charioteer, *Devadatta* – Buddha's cousin, *Sujata* – the farmer's daughter who gave him rice milk at Bodh Gaya and other names of Buddha – Gautama (Clan name), Siddharta (Childhood name), Shakya Muni.

## Doctrine of Buddhism

### Chatwari Arya Satyani (Four Noble Truths)

It is the essence of Buddhism.

1. Life is full of sorrow *(Dukha)* : Sabbam Dukkam .
2. There are causes of sorrow *(Dukha Samudaya)* : *Dwadash Nidan/ Pratitya Samutpada*.

3. This sorrow can be stopped *(Dukha Nirodha)* : Nirvana.
4. There is a path leading to the cessation of sorrow *(Dukha Nirodha Gamini Pratipada) : Ashtangika Marga.*

**Note :** (i) Pratitya samutapada is also known as *Hetuvada* (theory of cause-effect) and *Kshanabhanga Vada* (theory of momentariness/ impermanence).

(ii) Desire is root cause of sorrow.

(iii) The ultimate aim of life is to attain *nirvana*, the eternal state of peace and bliss, which means liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

(iv) *Ashtangika Marga* (Eight fold path) are : right observation, right determination, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right exercise, right memory and right meditation.

(v) *Madhya Marga/Madhyama Pratipada* (the middle path) — Man should avoid both extremes, i.e. a life of comforts and luxury, and a life of severe asceticism.

***Triratna* i.e. Three Jwels of Buddhism**

**1. *Buddha* (the enlightened) 2. *Dharma* (doctrine) 3. *Sangha* (commune)**

| Buddhist Council | Year | Venue | Chairman | Patron | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st Buddhist Council | 483 BC | Saptaparni Cave, Rajgriha | Mahakassapa | Ajatashatru (Harayanka Dynasty) | Compilation of Sutta-Pitaka and Vinaya Pitaka by Ananda and Upali respectively |
| 2nd Buddhist Council | 383 BC | Chullavanga Vaishali | Sabbakami | Kalashoka (Shisunaga Dynasty) | (i) The monks of Vaishali wanted some change in rites.<br>(ii) Schism into Sthavira-vadins and Mahasanghikas |
| 3rd Buddhist Council | 250 BC | Ashokarama Vihar, Patliputra | Mogaliputta Tissa | Ashoka (Maurya Dynasty) | (i) Compilation of Abhidhamma Pitaka<br>(ii) Decision to send missionaries to various parts of the word |
| 4th Buddhist Council | 98 AD | Kundala Vana, Kashmir | Chairman-Vasumitra Vice-chairman-Ashvaghosa | Kanishka (Kushana Dynasty) | (i) Compilation of Mahavibha sha shastra (Sanskrit comment on Tripitaka<br>(ii) the division of Buddhists into Hinayanists and Mahayanists |

## Buddhist Literature

**I. Pali Texts**

***Tripitaka :*** Pitaka literally means 'basket' and it was called so, because the original texts were written on palm-leaves and kept in baskets. *Sutta Pitaka* — Buddha's sayings, *Vinay Pitaka* — monastic code, *Abhidhamma* pitaka — religious discourses of Buddha (Abhidhamma Pitaka comprises of Dighgha Nikaya, Majhim Nikaya, Sanyukta Nikaya, Anguttar Nikaya and Khuddak/Kshudraka Nikaya).

*Milindapano* (i.e. Questions of Milinda) — a dialogue between *Milinda* (identical with Indo-Greek ruler *Menander*) and Buddhist saint Nagasena.

*Dipavamsha* and *Mahavamsha* — The great chronicles of Sri Lanka.

**II. Sanskrit Texts**

Buddha Charita, Saundarananda, Sutralankar, Sariputra Prakaran and Vajra Suchi – *Ashwagosha*; Mahavibhasha Shastra – Vasumitra; Visudhamagga, Atthakathayen and Sumangalvasini – *Buddhagosha*; Madhyamika Karika and Prajnaparimita Karika – *Nagarjuna* etc.

**Sects of Buddhism**

***Hinayana* (i.e. the Lesser Vehicle) :** (i) Its followers believed in the original teaching of Buddha (ii) They sought individual salvation through self discipline and meditation. (iii) They did not believe in idol-worship. (iv) They favoured *Pali* language. (v) It is known as 'Southern Buddhist Religion', because it prevailed in the South of India, e.g. Sri Lanka, Burma (Myanmar), Syam (Thailand), Java etc. (vi) There were two subsects of Hinayana – *Vaibhasika* and *Sautantrika*.

***Mahayana* (i.e. the Greater Vehicle)** : (i) Its followers believed in the heavenliness of Buddha (ii) They sought the salvation of all through the grace and help of Buddha and Bodhisatva (iii) They believed in idol-worship (iv) They favoured *Sanskrit* language (v) It is known as 'Northern Buddhist Religion', because it prevailed in the North of India, e.g. China, Korea, Japan, etc. (vi) There were two subsects of Mahayana — *Madhyamika/ Shunyavada* (founder – Nagarjuna) and *Yogachar/ Vijnanavada* (founder-Maitreyanath and his disciple Asanga).

***Vajrayana :*** (i) Its followers believed that salvation could be best attained by acquiring the magical power, which they called *Vajra*. (ii) The chief divinities of this new sect were *the Taras*. (iii) It became popular in Eastern India, particularly Bengal and Bihar.

**Bodhisattvas**

**(i) Vajrapani :** like Indra, he holds a thunderbolt, foe of sin and evil.

**(ii) Avlokitesvara** (the lord who looks down) also called *Padmapani* (the lotus bearer) :kind-hearted.

**(iii) Manjushri** (Stimulator of understanding) : He holds a book describing 10 paramitas (spiritual perfections).

**(iv) Maitreya :** The future Buddha.

**(v) Kshitigriha :** Guardian of purgatories.

**(vi) Amitabha/Amitayusha :** Buddha of heaven.

**Sacred Shrines**

➪ Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath and Kusinagar, where the four principal events of Buddha's life, namely Birth, Enlightenment, First Sermon and

Death took place. To these are added four places Sravasti, Rajgriha, Vaishali and Sankasya–these eight places have all along been considered as the eight holy places (Ashtasthanas).

- Other centres of Buddhism in Ancient India – Amaravati and Nagarjunikonda in Andhra Pradesh; Nalanda in Bihar; Junagadh and Vallabhi in Gujarat; Sanchi and Bharhut in M.P.; Ajanta-Ellora in Maharashtra; Dhaulagiri in Orissa; Kannauj, Kaushambi and Mathura in U.P.; and Jagadala and Somapuri in West Bengal.
- Buddhist architecture developed in three forms :
  (i) Stupa — relics of Buddha or some prominent Buddhist monks are preserved
  (ii) Chaitya — prayer hall
  (iii) Vihara — residence

| Buddhist Universities | Place | Founder |
|---|---|---|
| Nalanda | Badagaon, Bihar | Kumargupta I (Gupta ruler) |
| Odantpuri | Biharsharif, Bihar | Gopala (Pala ruler) |
| Vikramshila | Bhagalpur, Bihar | Dharmapala (Pala ruler) |
| Somapuri | North Bengal | Dharmapala (Pala ruler) |
| Jagadal | Bengal | Ramapala (Pala ruler) |
| Vallabhi | Gujarat | Bhattarka (Maitrak ruler) |

**Royal Patrons :** Bimbisara and Ajatashatru (Magadhan ruler), Prasenjit (Kosala ruler), Udayan (Vatsa ruler), Prodyota (Avanti ruler), Ashoka and Dasharatha (Mauryan ruler), Milinda/Menander (Indo-Greek ruler), Kanishka (Kushana ruler), Harshavardhana (Vardhana ruler); Gopala, Dharmapala and Rampala (Pala ruler).

**Note** *(i) Ashoka, the greatest patron of Buddhism, called 3rd Buddhist council and sent mission comprises his son Mahendra and his daughter Sanghamitra to SriLanka.*
*(ii) Kanishka called 4th Buddhist council and sent mission to China, Korea and Japan.*
*(iii) Palas of Bengal and Bihar were last great patrons of Buddhism.*

## Jainism

- According to Jain tradition there were 24 *Thirthankaras* (literally Ford maker, across the stream of existence), the first being Rishabhadeva/Adinatha and last being Mahavira.
- The *Vishnu Purana* and the *Bhagavat Purana* describe Rishabha as an incarnation of *Narayana*.
- The name of two Jain Tirthankaras – *Rishabha* and *Arishtanemi* – are found in the *Rig Veda*.
- We have historical proof of only the last two – *Parshwanath* (23rd) and *Mahavira* (24th).
- *Parshwanath* was a prince of Benaras who abandoned the throne and led the life of a hermit and died at *Sammet – Shikar/Parshwanath (Parasanath)*

Hill, *Giridih, Jharkhand*. His four main teachings (Chaturthi) were: 1. *Ahimsa* (non-injury) 2. *Satya* (non-lying) 3. *Asteya* (non-stealing) 4. *Aparigraha* (non-possession). *Mahavira* adopted all these four teachings and added one more, that is Brahmacharya (Chastity) to it.

**Mahavira's Life**

- Mahavira was born in 540 BC in a village *Kundgrama* near *Vaishali* in *Bihar*.
- His father *Siddhartha* was the head of the *Jnathrika Kshtriya* clan under Vajji of Vaishali and his mother *Trishala* was the sister of Chetaka, the king of Vaishali. Mahavira was also related to Bimbisara, the ruler of Magadha, who had married Chellana, the daughter of Chetaka.
- Mahavira was married to *Yashoda* (daughter of Samarvira king) and produced a daughter *Anonja Priyadarshini* whose husband *Jamali*, became the first disciple of Mahavira.
- At the age of 30, after the death of his father, he renounced his family, became an ascetic and proceeded in search of truth. He was accompained by *Makkhali Gosala*, but later due to some differences Gosala left him and founded *Ajivika* sect.
- At the age of 42, under a sal tree at *Jambhikagrama* on the bank of river *Rijupalika*, Mahavira attained *Kaivalya* (supreme knowledge).
- From now onwards he was called *Kevalin* (perfect learned), *Jina* or *Jitendriya* (one who conquered his senses), Nrigrantha (free from all bonds), *Arhant* (blessed one) and *Mahavira* (the brave) and his followers were named jain.
- He delivered his first sermon at *Pava* to his 11 disciples (known as *11 Gandharas/ Gandharvas).* Later, he founded a *Jain Sangha* (Jain commune) at Pava.
- At the Age of 72 in 468 BC, he passed away at *Pavapuri* near *Biharsharif*

| 24 Tirthankaras | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Name** | **Symbol** |
| 1. | Rishabha | Bull |
| 2. | Ajitnath | Elephant |
| 3. | Sambharnath | Horse |
| 4. | Abhiaandam | Monkey |
| 5. | Sumatinath | Curlew |
| 6. | Padmaprabhu | Red Lotus |
| 7. | Suparswanath | Swastik |
| 8. | Chandraji Prabhu | Moon |
| 9. | Suvidhinath | Crocodile |
| 10. | Shitalnath | Srivatsa |
| 11. | Shreganath | Rhinoceros |
| 12. | Vasupujya | Buffalo |
| 13. | Vimalnath | Boar |
| 14. | Anantnath | Falcon |
| 15. | Dharmanath | Vajra |
| 16. | Shantinath | Deer |
| 17. | Kuntunath | He-Goat |
| 18. | Arnath | Fish |
| 19. | Mallinath | Waterpot |
| 20. | Muniswasth | Tortoise |
| 21. | Neminath | Blue Lotus |
| 22. | Arishtanemi | Conch Shell |
| 23. | Parshwanath | Serpent |
| 24. | Mahavira | Lion |

in *Bihar*. *Sudharma* only one of 11 Ganadharas who survived after the death of Mahavira.

**Doctrines of Jainism**

***Triratna i.e. Three Gems of Jainism***

The aim of existence is to attain through the triratna of

1. ***Samyak Shradhal Viswas* (Right faith)** : It is the belief in Thirathankaras.
2. ***Samyak Jnan* (Right knowledge) :** It is the knowledge of the Jain-creed.
3. ***Samyak Karma/Acharana* (Right action/conduct):** It is the practice of the 5 vows of Jainism.

***Pancha Mahavaratas* i.e. Five Vows of Jainism**

Five vows of Jainism are : (i) *Ahimsa* (non-injury) (ii) *Satya* (non-lying) (iii) *Asteya* (non-stealing) (iv) *Aparigraha* (non-possession) (v) *Brahmacharya* (chastity). The first four vows were laid down by Parshwanath. The fifth one was added by Mahavira.

**Types of Knowledge**

**There are five types of knowledge :** (i) *Mati jnana*–Perception through activity of sense organs, including the mind (ii) *Shruta jnana* – Knowledge revealed by scriptures (iii) *Avadhi jnana* – Clairvoyant perception (iv) *Manahparyaya jnana* – Telepathic knowledge (v) *Kevaljnana* – Temporal knowledge or Omniscience.

***Syadvada* i.e. The Theory of May Be/Perhaps :** All our judgements are necessarily relative, conditional and limited. According to Syadavada seven modes of prediction (*Saptabhangi Nayavad*) are possible. Absolute affirmation and absolute negation both are wrong. All judgements are conditional. Syadvada is also known as *Anekantvada* i.e. the theory of plurality or multi-sidedness.

**The Principles of Jainism as Preached by Mahavira:** (i) Rejected the authority of the Vedas and vedic rituals (ii) Did not believe in the existence of God. (iii) Believed in Karma and transmigration of soul (iv) Laid great emphasis on equality.

| Jain Council | Year | Venue | Chairman | Patron | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | 300 BC | Patliputra | Sthulabhadra | Chandragupta Maurya | Compilation of 12 Angas. |
| 2nd | 512 AD | Vallabhi | Devardhi Kshmasramana | — | Final compilation of 12 Angas and 12 Upangas |

**Jain Literature**

- The sacred literature of the Svetambaras is written in a type of Prakrit called *Ardhamagadhi Prakrit*, and may be classified as follows : (i) 12 *Angas* (ii) 12 *Upangas* (iii) 10 *Parikarnas* (iv) 6 *Chhedasutras* (v) 4 *Mulasutras* (vi) 2 *Sutra-Granthas*.

**Note:** *14 Purvas/Parvas — It is the part of 12 Angas and the oldest text of Mahavira's preachings.*

- Besides this, the important jain texts are: (i) *Kalpasutra* (in Sanskrit) Bhadrabahu (ii) *Bhadrabahu Charita* (iii) *Parishishta Parvan* (an appendix of *Trishashthishalaka Purush)* – Hemchandra.

**Sects of Jainism**

- In 298 BC, there was a serious famine in Magadha (South Bihar) leading to a great exodus of many Jain monks to the Deccan and South India (*Shravanbelgola*) along with *Bhadrabahu* and *Chandragupta Maurya*. They returned back after 12 years. The leader of the group, which stayed back at Magadha was *Sthulabhadra*. When the Jains (Bhadrabahu and others) returned from South India, they held that complete nudity be an essential part of the teachings of Mahavira, while the monks in Magadha began to put on white clothes.
- Thus arose the two sects *Shvetambaras* (white clad) and *Digambaras* (sky-clad).
  - (i) *Shvetambaras* (i.e. those who put on white robes)–*Sthulabhadra*
  - (ii) *Digambaras* (i.e. those who were stark naked)–*Bhadrabahu*.

**Examples of Jain Architecture**

1. Gumphas i.e. Caves e.g. Hathigumpha, Baghagumpha etc., Udaigiri and Khandagiri (Orissa) – Kharvela
2. Dilwara temples e.g. Vimalavasahi temple, Tejapala temple – Mount Abu (Rajasthan)
3. Temples – Giranar and Palitana (Gujarat)
4. Temples e.g. Pavapuri temple, Rajagriha temple – Bihar
5. Statue of *Gometeshwar/Bahubali* – Shravanbelgola (Karnataka).

**Royal Patrons**

**I. North India :** (i) Nandas; Bimbisara, Ajatshatru and Udayin (Haryank); Chandragupta Maurya, Bindusara and Samprati (Mauryan) – Magadha (ii) Pradyota (Avanti) (iii) Udayan (Sindhu-Sauvira) (iv) Kharavela (Kalinga).

**II. South India :** (i) Ganga Dynasty (ii) Kadamb Dynasty (iii) Amoghavarsha (Rashtrakuta Dynasty) (iv) Siddharaj Jai Singh and Kumarpala (Chaulukya/Solanki)– the last great patron of Jainism.

## 5. The Maurya Period (322 BC – 185 BC)

### Sources of Mauryan History

**1. Literary Sources**

- ***Kautilya's 'Arthasastra':*** It is the most important literary source for the Mauryas. It is a treatise on government and polity. It gives a clear and methodological analysis of political and economic conditions of the Mauryan period.
- ***Megasthenese' s 'Indica':*** Megasthenese was the ambassador of Selecus Nikator in the court of Chandragupta Maurya. His 'Indica' is foremost among all the foreigners' accounts for Maurya. But its original copy is lost, and it has survived only as quotations in the text of classical Greek writers, such as *Strabo, Diodorous, Arrian, Plutarch* and Latin writers such as *Pliny* and *Justin*. It refers to Mauryan administration, 7-caste system, absence of slavary and usuary in India etc.

- ***Visakha Datta's 'Mudra Rakshasa' :*** Though it was written during Gupta Period, it describes how Chandragupta Maurya get Chanakya's assistance to overthrow the Nandas. Besides this, it gives an excellent account of the prevailing socio-economic conditions.
- ***Puranas :*** Though they are a collection of legends interspread with religious teachings, they give us the chronology and lists of Mauryan kings.
- ***Buddhist Literature :*** (i) Indian Buddhist text *Jatakas* (a part of Khuddaknikaya of Suttapitaka which describes 549 stories of Buddha's previous births) reveal a general picture of socio-economic conditions of Mauryan period. (ii) Ceylonese Buddhist chronicles *Dipavamsa* and *Mahavamsa* describe the part played by Ashoka in spreading Buddhism to Sri Lanka. (iii) Tibetan Buddhist text *Divyavadana* gives information about Ashoka and his efforts to spread Buddhism.

**2. Archaeological Sources**

- ***Ashokan Edicts and inscriptions :*** There are Rock Edicts, Pillar Edicts and Cave Inscriptions located at several places in the Indian sub-continent. Their importance came to be appreciated only after their decipheration by *James Princep* in 1837 and also the identification of Ashoka as the author of these edicts in the beginning of the 20th century. Majority of them are in the nature of Ashoka's proclamations to the public at large, and only a small group of them describe his own acceptance of Buddhism and his relationship with the Sangha (Commune). Though Prakrit was the language used in them, the script varied from region to region (*Kharoshti* in the North-West, *Greek* and *Aramaic* in the West and *Brahmi* in the East of India).
- ***Other Inscriptions :*** Junagadh Rock Inscription of Rudradaman, Sohgaura Copper Plate Inscription in Gorakhpur district of U.P., Mahasthan Inscription in Bogara district of Bangladesh. – All these are directly concerned with the Mauryan Period, though they are believed to be not necessarily those of Ashoka.
- ***Material Remains :*** Wooden palace of Chandragupta Maurya, Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW), Silver and Copper punch-marked coins found in Kumharar (Patna) and other places are the material remains of the Mauryan peirod.

| Ashokan Edicts and Inscriptions | Contents | Found at |
|---|---|---|
| **I. Rock Edicts** | | |
| (i) 14 Major Rock Edicts | Various Principles of Dhamma | Manshera (Hazara, Pakistan) Shahbajgarhi (Peshwar, Pakisttan), Kalsi (Dehradun, Uttarakhand), Junagadh (Girnar, Gujarat), Sopara (Thana, Maharashtra), Yerragudi (Kurnul, Andhra Pradesh), Dhauli (Puri, Orissa), Jaugada (Ganjam, Orissa) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (ii) 2 Kalinga Rock Edicts | New system of administration after the Kalinga war | Dauli or Tosali (Puri, Orrisa), Jaugada (Ganjam, Orissa) |
| (iii) Minor Rock Edicts | Personal history of Ashoka and summary of his dhamma | Sasaram (Bihar), Maski (Andhra Pradesh), Bhabru-Bairat (Rajasthan), Rupanath (MP), Gavimath, Palkig-undu, Siddhpur, Jating Rameshwar, Brahmagiri (Karnataka) |
| (iv) Bhabru Bairat Rock Edicts | Ashoka' conversion to Buddhism | Bhabru-Bairat (Rajasthan) |
| **II. Pillar Edicts** | | |
| (i) 7 Pillar Edicts | Appendix to rock Edicts | Merrut-Delhi (Chhoti Lata), Topra-Delhi (Badi Lata), Allahabad (UP); Lauriya Nandangadh, Lauriya Areraj and Rampurva (Bihar) |
| (ii) 4 Minor Pillar Edicts | Signs of Ashoka's fanaticismn to Dhamma | Sanchi (MP), Sarnath and Allahabad (UP) |
| (iii) 2 Tarai Pillar Edicts | Ashoka's respect for Buddhism | Rummandei/Lumbini and Nigaliva (Tarai of Nepal) |
| **III. Cave Edicts** | | |
| 3 Barabar Cave Edicts | Ashoka's toleration | Barabar Hills (Gaya, Bihar) |

**Ashokan 14 Major Rock Edicts**

| | **Contents** |
|---|---|
| I. | Prohibition of animal sacrifices and festive gatherings. |
| II. | Measures of social welfare. |
| III. | Respect to Brahamanas. |
| IV. | Courtesy to relatives, elders, consideration for animals. |
| V. | Appointment of Dhamma Mahamatras and their duties. |
| VI. | Need for efficient organisation of administration (orders to Dhamma Mahamatras). |
| VII. | Need for tolerance among all religious sects. |
| VIII. | System of Dhamma-yatras. |

| | |
|---|---|
| IX. | Attack on meaningless ceremonies and rituals. |
| X. | Conquest through Dhamma instead of war. |
| XI. | Explanation of Dhamma-policy. |
| XII. | Appeal for tolerance among all religious sects. |
| XIII. | Kalinga war, mention five contemporary Hellenic (Greek) kings. |
| XIV. | Inspiration to spend religious life. |

**Origin of the Mauryas**

- The Puranas describe them as *Shudras*.
- 'Mudrakshasa' of Vishakhadatta uses the terms *Vrishal/Kulhina* ( of low clan).
- The Classical writers, such as Justin, describe Chandragupta only as a man of humble origin.
- The Junagarh Rock Inscription of Rudradaman (150 AD) has some indirect evidence, suggesting that the Mauryas might have been of Vaishya origin.
- The Buddhist work, on the other hand, try to link the Mauryan dynasty with the *Sakya Kshatriya* clan to which Buddha belonged. According to them, the region from which the Mauryas came was full of peacocks (Mor), and hence they came to be known as *Moriyas* . It is obvious from this that the Buddhists were trying to elevate the social position of Ashoka (their patron) and his predecessors.
- In conclusion, we can say that the Mauryas belonged to the *Moriya* tribe and were certainly of a low caste, though it is not clear as to which low caste.

**Chandragupta Maurya : 322 BC – 298 BC**

- Chandragupta dethroned the last Nanda ruler *Dhananand* and occupied Patliputra in 322 BC with the help of *Kautilya (Chankya)*.
- In 305 BC, Chandragupta Maurya defeated *Selecus Nikator*, who surrendered a vast territory including Aria (herat), Arachosia (Kandhar), Gedrosia (Baluchistan) and Paropanisade (Kabul), in return for 500 elephants. According to treaty between Chandragupta and Selecus, the Hindukush became boundry between their states.
- *Megasthenese* was a Greek ambassador sent to the court of Chandragupta Maurya by Selecus Nikator.
- Chandragupta became a jain and went to *Chandragiri Hill Sravanbelgola* (Karnataka) with Bhadrabahu, where he died by slow starvation *(Kaya-Klesha /Salekhan)*.
- Under Chanragupta Maurya, for the first time, the whole of Northern India was united.
- Trade flourished, agriculture was regulated, weights and measures were standardised and money came into use.
- Taxation, sanitation and famine relief became the concerns of the state.

**Bindusara : 298 BC – 273 BC**

- Chandragupta Maurya was succeeded by his son Bindusara.

- Bindusara, known to the Greeks as *Amitrochates* (derived from the Sanskrit word *Amitraghata* i.e. slayers of foes), is said to have carried his arms to the Deccan (upto Mysore).
- Bindusara asked *Antiochus I* of *Syria* to send some sweet wine, dried figs and a sophist. Antiochus I sent wine and figs but politely replied that Greek philosphers are not for sale.
- Bindusara patronised *Ajivikas*

**Ashoka : 273 BC – 232 BC**

- It appears from the available evidence (Buddhist literature mainly) that there was a struggle for the throne among the princes on the death of Bindusara.
- According to Buddhist tradition, Ashoka usurped the throne after killing his 99 brothers and spared *Tissa*, the youngest one. Radhagupta, a minister of Bindusara helped him in fratricidal struggle.
- This war of succession accounts for interregnum of four years (273-269 BC), and only after securing his position on the throne, Ashoka had himself formally crowned in 269 BC.
- Under Ashoka, the Mauryan Empire reached its climax. For the first time, the whole of the sub-continent, leaving out the extreme south, was under imperial contro.

| | |
|---|---|
| Ashoka | Maski minor rock-edict |
| Devanampriyas Ashoka Rajas | Gurjara minor rock edict |
| Raja Ashoka | Nitlur minor rock edict |
| Raja Ashoka Dewanampiya | Udegolum minor rock edict |
| Piyadassi Raja Magadh | Bhabru-Bairat minor rock edict |
| Piyadassi Raja | Barabar cave inscription |
| Piyadassi | Kandhar major rock edict and Deepvamsa |
| Ashoka Maurya | Rudradaman's Junagarh rock edict |
| Ashoka Vardhan | Puranas |

- Ashoka fought the *Kalinga war* in 261 BC in 9th year of his coronation. The king was moved by the massacre in this war and therefore abandoned the policy of physical occupation in favour of policy of cultural conquest. In other words, *Bherighosa* was replaced by *Dhammaghosa*.
- Ashoka was not an extreme pacifist. He did not pursue the policy of peace for sake of peace under all conditions. Thus, he retained Kalinga after his conquest and incorporated it into his empire.
- Ashoka sent missionaries to the kingdoms of the Cholas and the Pandyas, and five states ruled by Greek kings (Antiochus II, Syria; Philadelphos Ptolemy II, Egypt; Antigonus, Mecedonia; Maggus, Syrina; Alexander, Epirus). We also know that he sent missionaries to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Suvarnbhumi (Burna) and also parts of South-East Asia.

**Ashoka's Dhamma**

- Ashoka's Dhamma cannot be regarded as a sectarian faith. Its broad objective was to preserve the social order it ordained that people should

obey their parents, pay respect to Brahmanas and Buddhist monks and show mercy to slaves and servants.

- He held that if people behaved well they would attain Swarga (heaven). He did never say that they would attain Nirvana, which was the goal of Buddhist teachings.

**Later Mauryas : 232 BC – 185 BC**

- The Mauryan dynasty lasted 137 years.
- Ashoka's death was followed by the division of the Mauryan Empire into two parts–Western and Eastern.
- The Western part came to be ruled by *Kunala* (son of Ashoka) and the Eastern part came to be ruled by *Dasaratha* .
- The last Mauryan ruler, *Brihadratha*, was assassinated in 185 BC by his commender-in-chief, *Pushyamitra Sunga*, who established his own Sunga dynasty.
- **Causes for the Decline :** 1. Highly centralized administration *(Romila Thapar)* 2. Pacific policy of Ashoka *(HC. Raychaudhuri)* 3. Brahmanical reaction *(H.P. Sastri)* 4. The partition of the Mauryan Empire 5. Weak later-Mauryan Rulers 6. Pressure on Mauryan economy 7. Neglect of North-West Frontier.

| Mauryan kings | Other names of the king | Ambassdor (Greek king) |
|---|---|---|
| Chandragupta | Sandrocottus-Strabo, Justin Androcottus-Arrian, Plutarch VrishalaiKulahina(i.e. of low clan)–Vishakhadatta (Mudrarakshasa) | Megasthenese (302-298 BC) (Selecus Nikator-Persia and Babylonia) |
| Bindusara | Amitrochates–Greek texts Vindupala–Chinease text Sinhasena–Jain text Bhadrasara–Vayu Purana | Dimachos (Antiochus I - Syria) Dionysius (Philadelphos I Potlemy 11-Egypt) |

## Mauryan Administration

**I. Central Administration**

- **The king :** The Mauryan government was a centralized bureaucracy of which the nucleus was the king. According to Kautilya/Chanakya, there are seven elements of states *(Saptanga theory)–Raja* (the king), *Amatya* (the secretaries), *Janapada* (territory), *Durg* (Fort), *Kosha* (the treasure), *Sena* (Army) and *Mitra* (Friend). The king was regarded as the soul among all the seven elements of the state.
- **The Mantri Prishad :** The king was assisted by Mantri Parishad, whose members included: (i) *The Yuvaraja* (the crown prince) (ii) *The purohita* (the chief priest) (iii) *The Senapati* (the commander-in-chief) (iv) a few other ministers.

**Important officials**

| | |
|---|---|
| Sannidhata | Chief treasury officer |
| Samaharta | The collector general of revenue |
| Vyavaharika (Dharmastha) | Chief Justice of Dharmasthiya Nyayalaya (Civil Court) |
| Pradeshta | Chief Justice of Kantakashodhan Nyayalaya (Criminal Court) |
| Dhamma Mahamatra | A new post created by Ashoka, empowered with the dual functions of propagating Dhamma and taking care of the common folk for their material well-being. |
| Rashtrapala/Kumara | The viceroys in charge of a province |
| Pradesika | They were the modern district magistrate |
| Rajukas | They were the later day Patwaris and responsible for surveying and assessing the land |
| Yukta | A subordinate revenue officer of the district level |
| Sthanika | The collecting officer directly under the control of the Pradeshika |
| Gopa | Responsible for accounts |
| Nagaraka | The officer in charge of the city administration |
| Akshapatala | Accountant General |
| Sitaadhyaksha | Supervised agriculture |
| Panyadhyaksha | Superintendent of commerce |
| Samsthaadhyaksha | Superintendent of Market |
| Pautavadhyaksha | Superintendent of weights and measures |
| Navaadhyaksha | Superintendent of ships |
| Sulkaadhyaksha | Collector of tolls |
| Akaradhyaksha | Superintendent of mines |
| Lohadhyaksha | Superintendent of Iron |

## II. Provincial Administration

| Province | Capital |
|---|---|
| Uttarapatha i.e. Northern Province | Taxila |
| Avantirashtra i.e. Western Province | Ujjain |
| Prachi i.e, Eastern and Central Province | Patliputra |
| Kalinga i.e. Eastern Province | Toshali |
| Dakshinapatha i.e. Southern Province | Suvarnagiri |

**Note :** *According to the Junagadh Rock Edict of Rudradaman, Saurashtra was governed by Pushyagupta, the vaishya, at the time of Chandragupta Maurya and by the Yavan king Tushaspa at the time of Ashoka.*

| Administrative Unit | Head |
|---|---|
| Chakra (i.e. province) | Rashtrapala/Kumara |
| Ahar/Vishaya (i.e. District) | Pradeshika (administrative) and Rajuka (land revenue) |
| Sangrahana (a group of 10 village) | Gopa |
| Gram (i.e. village) | Gramika |

## III. Municipal Administration

- Kautilya devotes a full chapter to the rules of the *Nagarak* i.e. city superintendent. His chief duty was maintenance of law and order.
- Megasthenese account of the system : Six committees of five members each, and their functions; 1st - Industrial Arts, 2nd – Entertainment of Foreigners, 3rd – Registration of Births and Deaths, 4th – Trade and Commerce, 5th – Public sale of manufactured goods, and 6th – Collection of taxes on the articles sold (1/l0th of purchase price).

## IV. Army

- The most striking feature of Mauryan administration was the maintenance of a huge army. They also maintained a Navy.
- According to Megasthenese, the administration of Army was carried by a board of 30 officers divided into six committees, each committee consisting of five members. They are (i) Infantry (ii) Cavalry (iii) Elephants (iv) Chariots (v) Navy (vi) Transport.
- In the Mauryan period, there were two types of *Gudhapurushas* (detectives)- *Sansthan* (Stationary) and *Sanchari* (Wandering).

## Economy

- The state controlled almost all economic activities.
- Tax collected from peasants varied from 1/4 to 1/6 of the produce.
- The state also provided irrigation facilities (*Setubandha*) and charged water-tax.
- Tolls were also levied on commodities brought to town for sale and they were collected at gate.
- The state enjoyed monopoly in mining, forest, salt, sale of liquor, manufacture of arms etc.
- *Sohgaura* (Gorakhpur district, U.P.) copper plate inscription and *Mahasthana* (Bogara district, Bangladesh) inscription deal with the relief measures to be adopted during a famine.
- **Important ports :** *Bharukachch/Bharoch* and *Supara* (Western coast), Tamralipti in Bengal (Eastern coast).
- During Mauryan period, the punch-marked coins (mostly of silver) were the common units of transactions.

**Society**

- *Kautilya/Chanakya/Vishnugupta* is not as rigid on the Varna system as the earlier Smriti writers.
- Kautilya's 'Arthashastra' looked upon the *Shudras* as an Aryan community which is distinguished from Malechha or non-Aryan community.
- Reduction of gap between the *Vaishyas* (most of whom were now concentrating on trade though others continued cultivation) and the *Shudras* (quite a few of whom were now agriculturists and others being artisans).
- *Magasthenese* states that Indian society was divided into seven classes : (i) Philosophers (ii) Farmers (iii) Soldiers (iv) Herdsmen (v) Artisans (vi) Magistrates (vii) Councillors. The 'classes' mentioned above appear to have been more economic than social.
- Though Megasthenese stated that there were no slavery in India; yet, according to Indian sources, slavery was a recognised institution during Mauryan reign. It appears that Megasthenese was thinking of slavery in full legal sense as it existed in the West.
- Women occupied a high position and freedom in the Mauryan society. Accoording to Kautilya, women were permitted to have a divorce or remarry. Women were employed as personal body-guards of the king, spies and in other diverse jobs.

## Mauryan Art

- Anand Coomarswamy classified Mauryan Art into two groups :
  - **(i) Royal/Court Art :** The Royal Palace of Chandragupta Maurya (Kumharar, Patna) and City of Patliputra, Ashokan Pillars, Caves, Stupas etc.
  - **(ii) Folk/Popular Art :** (i) Figure Sculpture of Yaksha-Yakshini etc. e.g. Yaksha of Parkham (Mathura), Yakshini of Besanagar/ Vidisha (M.P.), Chanwar-bearer Yakshini of Didarganj' (Patna). (ii) Terracotta objects.
- The Mauryas introduced stone masonry on large scale during Ashoka.
- Fragments of stone pillars and wooden floor and ceiling indicating the existence of an 80-pillared hall have been discovered at Kumhrar on outskirts of Patna. Seeing this *Fahien* remarks as follows: *'These palaces are so beautiful and excellent that they appear to be the creation of God rather than of men'.*
- The pillars represent the masterpieces of Mauryan sculpture. Each pillar is made of single piece of sandstone, only their capitals, which are beautiful pieces of sculpture in form of lion or bulls, are joined with pillar on the top.
- Four lion capital at Sarnath and Sanchi. Lioned capital of Sarnath was adopted as 'National Emblem' of India on 26th January, 1950.

- Single lion capital at Rampurva and Lauriya Nandangarh.
- Single bull capital at Rampurva.
- A carved elephant at Dhauli and engraved elephant at Kalsi.
- The Mauryan artisans who started the practice of hewing out caves from rocks for monks to live in. The earliest example are *Barabar caves* (Sudama, World Hut, Chaupada of Karna, Rishi Lomesh) in Gaya (Ashokan). The other examples are *Nagarjuni caves* in Gaya *(Dasharath).*
- Stupas were built throughout the empire to enshrine the relics of Buddha. Of these, the most famous are at Sanchi and Bharhuta.

## 6. Post-Maurya Period (185 BC – 319 AD)

**I. Native Successors of Mauryas**

**Sunga Dynasty: 185 BC– 73 BC**

**[Capital-Vidisha (M.P.)]**

- Sunga Dynasty was established by Pushymitra Sunga, a Brahmin Commander-in-Chief of last Mauryan ruler named Brihadratha in 185 BC.
- Pushyamitra was a staunch adherent of orthodox Hinduism. However, the great Buddhist stupa at Bharhut (in M.P.) was built during the reign of Sungas.
- Pushyamitra was succeeded by his son Agnimitra , the hero of Kalidasa' s drama 'Malvikagnimitra' .
- After Agnimitra, a series of weak rulers such as Vasumitra, Vajramitra, Bhagabhadra, Devabhuti, followed, leading to the decline of the dynasty.
- During their rule there was a revival of Brahminical influence . The Bhagavata religion became important.
- *Patanjali*, author of the 'Mahabhasya', was born at Gonarda in Central India. Patanjali was the priest of two Asvamedha Yajnas, performed by Pushymitra Sunga.
- In arts, the Bharhut Stupa is the most famous monument of the Sunga period .
- The fine gateway railing which surrounds the Sanchi stupa, built by Ashoka, constructed during the Sunga period.
- Other examples of Sunga Art: Vihar, Chaitya and Stupa of Bhaja (Poona), Amaravati Stupa, Nasika Chaitya etc.

**Kanva Dynasty: 73 BC– 28 BC**

**[Capital – Patliputra]**

- In 73 BC, Devabhuti, the last ruler of the Sunga dynasty, was murdered by his minister Vasudeva, who usurped the throne and founded the Kanva dynasty.
- The period of Kanva rule came to an end in 28 BC.

**Satavahana Dynasty : 60 BC – 225 AD**

**[Capital – Pratishtana/Paithan (Maharashtra)]**

- The most important of the native successors of the Mauryas in the Deccan and Central India were the Satvahanas.

- The Satvahanas are considered to be identical with the Andhras who were mentioned in the Puranas.
- The early Satvahana kings appeared not in Andhra but in Maharashtra where most of their early inscriptions have been found.
- *Simuka* (60 BC- 37 BC) was the founder of the Satvahana dynasty.
- *Satakarni I*, its 3rd ruler, raised its power and prestige by conquests.
- *Hala* , its 17th ruler, was the author of 'Gathasaptasati' or, 'Sattasai' in Prakrit. *Gunadhya*, the author of 'Vrihat Katha' (in Prakrit), was the contemporary of Hala.
- It was *Gautamiputra Satakarni* (106-130AD) who revived the Satavahana power and defeated the Saka Ksatrap Nahapana. He was the greatest Satavahan ruler (23rd Satavahana ruler).
- *Vasishthiputra Sri Satakarni*, its 24th ruler, was married to the daughter of Saka Kstrapa Rudradaman, but defeated by him twice:
- *Yajna Sri Satakarni*, its 27th ruler, was the dynasty's last great ruler.
- *Pulamavi III,* its 30th ruler, was the last Satavahana ruler.
- Satavahanas were finally succeeded by the Ikshvakus in 3rd Century AD.
- Satavahanas started the practice of donating land with fiscal and administrative immunities to Brahmanas and Buddhist monks, which eventually weakened their authority. The earliest inscriptional evidence of land grant in India belongs to 1st century BC.
- Under the Satavahanas, many Chaityas (worship halls) and Viharas (monasteries) were cut out from rocks mainly in North-West Deccan or Maharashtra. The famous examples were *Nasik, Kanheri* and *Karle*.
- Stupas (large round structure erected over a sacred relic) were seen scattered all around Ellora. The most famous of these attributed to the Satavahana period are *Amravati*, a sculptural treasure house, and *Nagarjunakonda*.
- The official language of the Satavahanas was *Prakrit*.
- The Satavahanas issued their coins in lead (mainly) copper, bronze and potin.

**Cheti/Chedi Dynasty of Kalinga**

- The history of Kalinga after the death of Ashoka is shrouded in obscurity. A new dynasty, known as the Cheti or Chedi dynasty, rose in the region probably in the 1st century BC.
- Our information about this dynasty is derived solely from the *Hathigumpha inscription* (near Bhubaneshwar, Orissa) of *Kharavela*, the 3rd ruler of dynasty.
- A follower of Jainism, Kharavela was liberal patron of Jain monks for whose residence he constructed caves on the *Udayagiri* hill, near Bhubaneshwar in Orissa.

**II. Foreign Successors of Mauryas**

**The Indo-Greeks : 2nd Century BC**

- Indo-Greeks (Bacterian Greeks) were the first foreign rulers of North-Western India in the Post-Maurya period.

- The most famous Indo-Greek ruler was *Menander* (165 BC-145 BC) also known as *Milinda*. He was converted to Buddhism by Nagasena or Nagarjuna.
- The Indo-Greek rule is important in the history of India because of the large number of coins which they issued.
- The Indo-Greeks were the first rulers in India to issue coins which can definitely be attributed to the kings.
- They were the first to issue gold coins.
- They introduced Hellenic i.e. Greek features in art giving rise to *Gandhar school* in the North-Western India.

**The Sakas : 1st Century BC - 4th Century AD**

- The *Sakas*, also known as *Scythians*, replaced the Indo-Greeks in India.
- Among the five branches of Sakas with their seats of power in different parts of India, the most important was the one which ruled in Western India till the 4th Century AD.
- The most famous Saka ruler in India was *Rudradaman* (130 AD-150 AD). He is famous not only for his military conquests (particularly against the Satavahanas) but also for his public works (he repaired the famous Sudarsan lake of the Mauryan period) and his patronage of Sanskrit (he issued the first-ever long inscription in chaste Sanskrit).
- Other important Saka ruler in India were Nahapana, Ushavadeva, Ghamatika, Chashtana etc.
- In about 58 BC a king of Ujjain – Vikramaditya – is supposed to have fought effectively against the Sakas. An era called *Vikrama Samvat* is reckoned from 58 BC.

**The Parthians : 1st Century BC – 1st Century AD**

- Originally the *Parthians (Pahlavas)* lived in Iran, they replaced the Sakas in North-Western India, but controlled an area much smaller than the Sakas.
- The most famous Parthian king was *Gondaphernes* in whose reign *St. Thomas* is said to have come to India for the propagation of Christianity.

**The Kushans : 1st Century AD - 3rd Century AD**

- The Kushans were one of the five Yeuchi clans of Central Asia.
- They replaced the Parthians in North-Western India and then expanded to the lower Indus basin and the upper and middle Gangetic basin.
- The first Kushan dynasty was founded by *Kadphisesi I/Kujul Kadhphises*. The second king was *Kadphises II/ Vema Kadphises* who issued gold coins.
- The second Kushan dynasty was founded by *Kanishka*. Its kings extended the Kushan power over upper India. Their capitals were at *Peshawar (Purushapura)* and *Mathura*.
- The most famous Kushan ruler was Kanishka (78 AD- 101 AD), also known as 'Second Ashoka'. He started an era in 78 AD which is now known as the *Saka era* and is used by the Government of India.
- Kanishka was a great patron of Mahayana Buddhism. In his reign, *4th*

*Buddhist council* was held in *Kundalavana, Kashmir* where the doctrines of the Mahayana form of Buddhism were finalised.

- The last great Kushan ruler was Vasudeva I.
- The Kushans controlled famous *silk route* starting from China, passing through their empire on to Iran and Western Asia. This route was a source of great income to the Kushans.
- The Kushans were the first rulers in India to issue gold coins on a wide scale.
- In the royal court of Kanishka a host of scholars found patronage. *Parsva, Vasumitra, Asvaghosha, Nagarjuna, Charak* and *Mathara* were some of them.

**Facts About Post Mauryas**

**Three schools of Sculpture : 1.** *Amaravati* School (150 BC - 400 AD) – Satvahanas 2. *Gandhar* School (50 BC – 5th Century AD) – Saka – Kushans 3. *Mathura* School (150 AD – 300 AD) – Saka Kushans.

**Note :** The influence of Greek sculpture is very evident in the Gandhar school, while Mathura school, evolved an indigenous form.

- In 46-47 AD, *Hippalus*, a greek sailor, discovered the monsoon sea-route to India from West Asia.
- **Important ports:** *Barygaza (Bharoch)* and *Barbairicum* (Western Coast); *Aricamedu* (*Podeku*-according to 'Periplus') – near Pandicheri – Eastern Coast.
- 'Bullion was flowing out of Rome to India' — *Pliny*.
- 'Geographica' — *Strabo*, 'Geography' — *Ptolemy*, 'Natural History' — *Pliny*, 'Periplus of the Erithryan Sea'–Unknown.
- India had contacts with Central Asia, China, Graceo-Roman World and South-East Asia.

## 7. The Sangam Age

**Three Early Kingdoms**

| Kingdom | Emblem | Capital | First Ruler | Famous Ruler |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Chera | Bow | Vanjji/Karayur; Main Ports :Muzris and Tondi | Udiyangeral | Senguttuvan (Red Chera) |
| The Chola | Tiger | Uraiaur-lnland capital–famous centre for cotton trade; Puhar/Kaveripattanam – coastal capital-main port | Elara | Karikala |
| The Pandya | Fish | Madurai–Inland capital–venue of Ist and IIIrd sangam; Korkai I Colchoi–coastal capital–famous for pearls. | Mudukudumi | Nendujeliyan |

## The Cheras

- The Chera country occupied the portion of both Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- The capital of Cheras was *Vanjji*.
- Its main ports were *Muzris* and *Tondi*
- The Romans set up two regiments at *Muzris* (identical with *Cranganore*) in Chera country. They also built a temple of Augustus at Muzris.
- One of the earliest and better known among Chera rulers was *Udiyangeral* It is said that he fed both the armies of Kurukshetra war and so earned the title Udiyangeral.
- The greatest of Chera king, however, was *Senguttuvan* or *Red Chera*.
- It is said that he invaded the North and even crossed the Ganges.
- He was also the founder of the famous *Pattini cult* related to worship of goddess of chastity–*Kannagi*.

## The Cholas

- The Chola kingdom called as Cholamandalam was situated to the North-East of Pandya kingdom between Pennar and Vellar rivers.
- The Chola kingdom corresponded to the modern Tanjore and Tiruchchirap-palli districts.
- Its inland capital was *Uraiyaur*, a place famous for cotton trade. One of the main sources of wealth for Cholas was trade in cotton cloth.
- Puhar identical with *Kaveripattanam* was the main port of Cholas and served as alternative capital of Cholas.
- The earliest known Chola king was *Elara* who conquered Sri Lanka and ruled over it for nearly 50 years.
- Their greatest king was *Karikala* (man with charred leg) who founded *Puhar (Kaveripattanam)* and constructed 160 km of embankment along the Kaveri river with the help of 12,000 Sri Lankan slaves.
- They maintained an efficient navy.
- The Cholas were wiped out in the attack of Pallavas from the North.

## The Pandyas

- The Pandyas were first mentioned by Megasthanese, who said their Kingdom was famous for pearls.
- The Pandya territory included modern districts ofTirunelvelli, Ramand and Madurai in Tamil Nadu. It had its capital at Madurai, situated on the banks of Vaigai river.
- The Pandya king profited from trade with Roman Empire and sent emissaries to Roman emperor *Augustus* and *Trojan*.
- The Pandyas find mention in the Ramayana and Mahabharata.
- The earliest known Pandyan ruler was *Mudukudumi*.
- The greatest Pandya king, *Nendujelian* , accused *Kovalan* of theft. As a result, the city of Madurai was laid under a curse by *Kannagi* (Kovalan's wife).

## The Sangam Administration

- The king was the centre of administration. He was called *Ko, Mannam, Vendan Korravan* or *Iraivan*.
- *Avai* was the court of the crowned monarch.

- **Important officials (Panchmahasabha):** (i) *Amaichchar* (Ministers) (ii) *Purohitar* (Priests) (iii) *Dutar* (Envoys) (iv) *Senapatiyar* (Commander) (v) *Orar* (Spies).
- The kingdom was divided into *Mandalam/Nadu* (Province), *Ur*(town), *Perur* (Big village), *Sirur* (Small village).
- *Pattinam* (Narne of coastal town), *Puhar* (Harbour areas), *Cheri* (Suburb of town).
- **Revenue Administration :** *Karai* (Land Tax), *Irai* (Tribute paid by feudatories and booty collected in war), *Ulgu* (Custom duties), Iravu (Extra demand or forced gift), *Variyam* (A well known unit of territory yielding tax), *Variyar* (Tax collector).
- It is said that in Chola territory, watered by Kaveri, the space in which an elephant could lie down produced enough to feed seven persons. It implies the lands were very fertile with irrigation facilities.

## Sangam Literature

| Sl. No. | Venue | Under the Chairman-ship of | Surviving Texts | Patron (Pandya Rulers) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ist Sangam | Ten-Madurai (Old capital of Pandyas, engulfed in sea) | Agastasya (Agattiyar) | X | 89 |
| IInd Sangam | Kapatapuran/ Alvai (engulfed in sea) | Agastaya (founder chairman); Tolakapiyyar (later chairman) | only 'Tolkappiyam' | 59 |
| IIIrd Sangam | North Madurai | Nakkirar | Ettutogai, Pattu-pattu, Patinenki-lakanakku etc. | 49 |

- Sangam was an assembly of Tamil poets held under royal patronage of Pandyan kings in Madurai. According to tradition, the assembly lasted for 9,990 years and was attended by 8,598 poets and 197 Pandyan kings.
- *The first Sangam* was attended by Gods and legendary sages. All its works have perished.
- Of *the second Sangam*, the only surviving work is *Tolkappiyam*, an early work on Tamil grammar written by *Tolakapiyyar*.
- Of *the third Sangam*, the mostly works are surviving. These are *Ettutogai* (i.e. eight anthologies), *Pattupattu* (i.e. ten idylls), *Patinenkilakanakku* (i.e. 18 didactical texts) etc.
- Ettutogai and Pattupattu are called Melakanakku (eighteen major works) and narrative in form. Patinenkanakku is called Kilakanakku (eighteen minor works) and didactive in form.

- *Kural* or *Muppal*, a part of Patinenkilakanakku and written by *Tiruvalluvar* is called 'The Bible of Tamil Land'. It is treatise on polity, ethics and social norms.

**The Epics :** Silappadikaram, Manimekalai, Sivaga Sindamani etc.

- **Silappadikaram *(the story of the Anklet) :*** Written by Ilango Adigal, it deals with the story of Kovalan and Madhavi of Kaveripattinam. It is called 'Illiyad of Tamil poetry'.
- **Manimekalai :** Written by *Sittalai Sattanar*, it deals with the adventures of Manimekalai, the daughter born of Kovalan and Madhavi. It is a sequel of Silappadikaram and strongly tinged with Buddhism.
- **Sivaga Sindamani *(Jivaka Chintamani):*** Written by Jain *Tiruttakrdevas* and strongly tinged with Jainism.
- **Bharatam :** Written by *Perudevanar*.

| Panchtinai (five Tamil regions) | Occupation | Inhabitants |
|---|---|---|
| Kurinji (hilly backwoods or montane) | Hunting, Gathering | Kurvar, Vetar |
| Palai (Parched or arid zone) | Cattle lifiting, Highway robbery | Eyinar, Maravar |
| Mullai (Pastoral tract) | Shifting Agriculture, Animal husbandry | Ayar, Idaiyar |
| Marutam (Wetland | Plough Agriculture | Ulavar, Vellalar |
| Neital (littoral/coastal) | Fishing, Salt extraction | Paratavar, Valayar |

## 8. The Gupta Period (319 AD – 540 AD)

- In 4th Century AD a new dynasty, the Guptas, arose in Magadha and established a large kingdom over the greater part of Northern India (though their empire was not as large as that of the Mauryas). Their rule lasted for more than 200 years.
- This period is referred as the 'Classical Age' or 'Golden Age' of ancient India and was perhaps the most prosperous era in the Indian history.
- According to epigraphic evidence, the founder of the dynasty was a person named Gupta. He used the simple title of Maharaja.
- Gupta was succeeded by his son Ghatotkach who also inherited the title of Maharaja.

| The Gupta Dynasty | |
|---|---|
| Chandragupta I | 319-334 AD |
| Samudragupta | 335-380 AD |
| Ramgupta | 380 AD |
| Chandragupta II (Vikramaditya) | 380-414 AD |
| Kumargupta (Mahendraditya) | 415-455AD |
| Skandagupta I | 455-467 AD |
| Purugupta | |
| Kumargupta II | |
| Buddhgupta | |
| Narsirnhagupta | |
| Kumargupta III | 467-540 AD |

## Chandragupta I : 319 – 334 AD

- He was the first Gupta ruler to assume the title of *Maharajadhiraja*.
- He strengthened his kingdom by matrimonial alliance with the powerful family of Lichchhavis who were the rulers of Mithila. His marriage to Lichchhvi princess *Kumaradevi*, brought to him enormous power, resources and prestige. He took advantage of the situation and occupied the whole of fertile Gangetic Valley.
- He started the *Gupta Era* in 319-20 AD.
- Chandragupta I was able to establish his authority over Magadha, Prayaga and Saketa.
- **Original type of Gold Coins** *(Dinaras) :* Chandragupta I-Kumaradevi type.

## Samudragupta : 335 – 380 AD

- Samudragupta was the greatest king of the Gupta dynasty.
- The most detailed and authentic record of his reign is preserved in the *Prayaga Prasasti/ Allahabad pillar inscription,* composed by his court poet Harisena .
- According to Prayaga Prasasti, he was a great conqueror.
- In the Gangetic Valley and Central India, Samudragupta annexed the territories of the defeated monarchs, but in South India he remained content with victories alone and did not annex the territories of the vanquished rulers.
- Samudragupta's military campaigns justify description of him as the '*Napoleon of India'* by *V.A. Smith.*
- The reference to his dominion over Java, Sumatra and Malaya islands in the sea shows that he had a navy.
- When he died, his mighty empire bordered that of the Kushan of Western province (modern Afghanistan and Pakistan) and Vakatakas in Deccan (modern Southern Maharashtra).
- His greatest achievement was the political unification of most of India or Aryavarta into a formidable power.
- **Titles :** *Kaviraja* i.e. king of poets (Prayaga Prasasti), *Param Bhagavat* (Nalanda copper plate), *Ashvamedha-parakrama* i.e. whose might was demonstrated by the horse-sacrifice (coin), *Vikram* i.e. prowess (coin), *Sarva-raj-ochchetta* i.e.uprooter of all kings (coin) etc. Note :Only Gupta . ruler had the title of *Sarva-raj-ochehhetta.*
- **Original types of Gold Coins *(Dinars):*** Garud type, Dhanurdhari i.e. Archer type, Axe type, Ashvamedha type, Vyaghrahanan i.e. Tiger killing type, Veenavadan i.e. lute playing type.
- Samudragupta was a Vaishnavite.
- According to the Chinese writer Wang-Hiuen-Tse, Meghavarna, king of Sri Lanka, sent an embassy to Samudragupta for his permission to build a monastery for Buddhist pilgrims at Bodh Gaya.

**Chandragupta II 'Vikramaditya': 380 – 414 AD**

- According to 'Devi Chandragupta' (Vishakhadatta), Samudragupta was succeeded by *Ramgupta*. It seems Ramgupta ruled for a very short period. He was 'the only Gupta ruler to issue copper coins'.
- Ramagupta, a coward and impotent king, agreed to surrender his queen *Dhruvadevi* to Saka invader. But the prince Chandragupta II, the younger brother of the king, resolved to go to the enemy's camp in the guise of the queen with a view to kill the hated enemy. Chandragupta II succeeded in killing the Saka ruler.
- Chandragupta II also succeeded in killing Ramgupta, and not only seized his kingdom but also married his widow Dhruvadevi.
- Chandragupta II extended the limits of empire by matrimonial alliances (with the Nagas and Vakatakas) and conquests (Western India). He married *Kubernaga* of Naga dynasty and married his daughter *Prabhavatigupta* with Vakataka prince *Rudrasena II*
- As a result of the overthrow of Saka rule in Western India, the Gupta empire extended upto Arabian sea. He issued silver coins in the memory of victory over Sakas. He was 'the first Gupta ruler to issue silver coins' and adopted the titles *Sakari* and *Vikramaditya. Ujjain* seems to have been made the second capital by Chandragupta II.
- *Mehrauli* (near Kutub Minar, Delhi) Iron Pillar inscription says that the king defeated the confederacy of Vangas and Vahilkas (Bulkh).
- ***Navaratna* (i.e. nine gems) of Chandragupta II :** (i) *Kalidasa* (Poetry Ritusamhar, Meghadutam, Kumarsambhavam, Raghuvamshama; Dramas–Malvikagnimitra,Vikramorvashiyam,Abhijnan–Shakuntalam) (ii) *Amarsinh* (Amarsinhkosha) (iii) *Dhanavantri* (Navanitakam-medicine text) (iv) *Varahmihira* (Panch Sidhantaka, Vrihatsarnhita, Vrihat Jataka, Laghu Jataka) (v) *Vararuchi* (Vartika-a comment on Ashtadhyayi) (vi) *Ghatakarna* (vii) *Kshapranak* (viii) *Velabhatt* (ix) *Shanku*.
- It was in Chandragupta's time that the Chinese pilgrim Fahien visited India.
- **Titles:** *Devagupta/Devaraja/Devashri, Parama Bhagavata, Narendra Chandra, Sinh Vikram* etc.
- **Original types of Gold coins *(Dinaras) :*** Ashvarohi type, Chhatradhari type, Chakra–Vikram type etc.

## Kumaragupta I: 415 – 455 AD

- Chandragupta II was succeeded by his son Kumaragupta I.
- Towards the end of his reign, the Gupta empire was threatened from the North by the *Huns*, who were temporarily checked by his son Skandagupta.
- Kumaragupta was the worshipper of god *Kartikeya*.
- He founded the *Nalanda Mahavihara* which developed into a great centre of learning.
- **Titles :** *Mahendraditya, Mahendra Sinh and Ashvamedha Mahendrah (coins)* etc.

- **Original types of Gold Coins *(Dinars) :*** Khadgadhari type, Gajarohi type, Gajarohi Sinh-nihanta type, Khang-nihanta i.e. rhinoceros – slayer type, Kartikeya type, Apratigh -mudra type etc.

## Skandagupta : 455 – 467 AD

- Skandagupta, the last great ruler of the Gupta dynasty.
- During his reign the Gupta empire was invaded by the *Huns*. He succeeded in defeating the *Huns*. Success in repelling the *Huns* seems to have been celebrated by the assumption of the title 'Vikramaditya' (Bhitari Pillar Inscription).
- The continuous attacks of the *Huns* weakened the empire and adversely affected its economy. The gold coinage of Skandagupta bears testimony to this.
- The decline of the empire began soon after his death.
- **Titles:** *Vikramaditya and Kramaditya* (coins), *Param Bhagavat* (coins), *Sharkropama* (Kahaum Pillar Inscription), *Devaraja* (Arya Manjushri Mula Kalpa) etc.

**The Huns : 500 – 530 AD —** Huns were primitive pastoralists owing herds of cattle and horses but knowing nothing of agriculture. They roamed in the Steppe in search of pasture and water. From the Oxus, the white Huns came into Afghanistan, destroyed the local power and, after establishing themselves there, began to pour into India in 458AD. However, Skandagupta who was at the time ruling in Northern India, checkmated them effectively. When the Gupta empire's resistance collapsed, the Huns occupied the areas upto Central India and Malwa about 500AD. There were two powerful Hun rulers *Toramana* and his son *Mihirkula*. They ruled during 500 – 530 AD. Mihirkula, a Shaivite, was a persecutor of Buddhism. In 530 AD, the Huns were uprooted by Yashodarmana of Mandsaur.

**Vakatakas: 3rd Century – 5th Century AD** — The Vakatakas were the most important power that held sway over parts of Deccan and Central India after the fall of the Satavahanas and before the rise of Chalukyas. The founder of the Vakataka dynasty was *Vindhyasakti* (255 – 75 AD). Vindhyasakti was succeeded by his son *Pravarasena* I (275 – 335 AD), who was the real founder of the Vakataka empire. He performed four *Ashuvamedha Yajnas*. After his death, the empire was divided. *Rudrasena I* took over the reigns of main branch i.e. Northern branch. He was the contemporary of Samudragupta. *Rudrasena I* was succeeded by Prithvisen I. He was contemporary of Chandragupta II. Chandragupta married his daughter Prabhavatigupta to the prince *Rudrasena II*. Prithvisena I was succeeded by his son Rudrasena II.Rudrasena II died after a short reign of five years, leaving behind two minor sons *Divakarasena* and *Damodarsena*. Prabhavatigupta ruled as a regent of her son. Later, Damodarsena, became ruler, with the name *Pravarasena II.* Pravarasena II composed 'Setubandh/ Ravanaho' (Poetry) in Marathi Script.