

Govt. Arts & Science College

Nagercoil – 4

STUDY MATERIAL FOR B.A HISTORY

SEMESTER - I, ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-21

History of India upto 647 A. D. (AMHI11)

Unit I: Geographical features of India- Survey of the sources for Ancient India- Prehistoric India – Indus valley civilization – Vedic Civilization – Vedic Literature – Caste System.

Unit II: Condition of North India during 6th century B. C.- Rise of new religions – Buddhism – Jainism – Foreign invasions – Greek and Persian – effects.

Unit III: The Mauryan Empire – Chandra Gupta Maurya – Asoka – Edicts of Asoka – Asoka’s Dharma – Mauryan Administration – Causes for the downfall of Mauryan Empire – Kushans – Kanishka – Gandhara Art.

Unit IV: The Gupta Dynasty – Chandra Gupta I – Samudra Gupta – Golden Age of Guptas – Gupta Administration – Causes for the downfall – Fahien’s report.

Unit V: Vardhana Empire – HarshaVardhana – Political, Social, Economic and Religious life – HieunTsan’s account

UNIT - I

GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF INDIA

India occupies a strategic position in Asia. India consists of the territories now forming part of the Indian Union and Pakistan. It has acquired the name „India“, because of its river Sindhu. In the ancient times, the Persians called the river, Sindhu as the river “Hindu” or “Indu”. They called the people as the “Hindu” people of the Hindu religion. The Greeks who came know „Hindu“ river through the Persians called it as the „Indus“ river. The land of the „Indus“ river was called by them as India. India is described as Italy of the East. Because Italy is bounded by water on three sides and by the Alps mountain on the north. Like wise Island Srilanka is at the southern tip of India. India is vast country. It is the seventh largest country in the world. On account of its vast size, India is often called sub-continent. The Indian sub-continent is divided into three independent countries, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. India extends from the Himalayas to the Indian Ocean is known as Bharatavarsa or the land of Bharata. According to the Puranic legend, Bharatavarsa was named after the legendary emperor, Bharata.

Location and Area

India is situated in the middle south of the continent of Asia. In the north-west, India is adjoined by Pakistan and Afghanistan. In the north, she is adjoined by China, Nepal, In the north, she is adjoined by China, Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan. In the east, she is adjoined by Bangladesh and Burma. The Gulf of Mannar and the Palk Strait separates India from Srilanka. India has a total area of over 18 lakh square miles. It is 2,500 miles in the East to the West and 2,000 miles in the North to the South. It has 6,000 miles of land frontier and 5,000 miles of sea frontier. India is a Peninsula, because it is bounded on the South by the Indian Ocean and on the east by the Bay of Bengal, on the west by the Arabian Sea and on the north by the Himalayas. India lies to the north of the equator between 8° 4" to 37° 6" North latitude and 68° 7" to 97° 25" East Longitude. At 23 1/2 ° North latitude (The Tropic of Cancer) passes almost through the middle of the country and divides it horizontally into northern half and southern half. Similarly the 80° East longitude divides vertically into the Eastern half and Western half.

Geographical Divisions Geographically, India can be divided into four natural regions or physical divisions. They are 1. The Himalayan regions. 2. Indo-Gangetic Plains 3. The Deccan Plateau and 4. Coast Ghats.

The Himalayan Region

On the North of the country, India has the largest mountain range in the world, the Himalayas. It is a Sanskrit term, meaning the “abode of snow”. The Himalayan region extends from Kashmir in the west to Assam in the east for a distance of about 2500kms. With a width of 320 kms. In the West and 240kms. In the east. It covers an area of about 5, 00,000 square kms. The Himalayas form India’s natural land frontiers in the north. It provides the northern boundary wall for India and separates India from Central Asia. A series of mountain ranges like the Patkai, the Naga, the Mizo, the Khasi, the Jaintia and the Garo Hills form India’s natural land frontiers in the north-east. The hills like Hindukush, Suleiman, Safedkoh and Kirthar lie in the north-western region. The mountains located in the North are comparatively high. The eastern ranges though not quite high are covered with dense forests. This is mainly due to the excessive rains in these regions.

The Himalayan Region comprises three parallel mountain ranges, Imadri Range, Himalayan Range and Siwalic Range. Imadri Range is the inner range of the Himalayas. The entire range of Imadri is covered externally with snow. Mount Everest (8900 metres), the highest peak in the world is situated in the Imadri range. The other peaks such as Kanchenjunga, Devalagiri, Nandadevi, Nanga Parvath are also situated on these ranges. It is also called the “Jasker Range”. The Himalayan Range is the central range of the Himalayas. It lies to the south of the Inner Range. Summer resorts such as Simla, Nainital, Darjeeling and Mussoori are situated in the central Himalayas. It is also called the “Peer Panjal”. The Siwalic Range is known as the outer Himalayas. It lies to the south of the central Himalayas. It is also called the “Salt range”. Tarai Forest is found in this range and wild beasts live in it.

In the north-west mountainous ranges, there are important passes like Khyber, Tochi, Kara, Kurram, Gomal and Bolan. These passes served as channels of commercial and cultural exchange between India and countries on the other side. Through these passes, almost all the invaders came to India. Some of the Indian missionaries, travellers also left through these

passes to spread the Indian culture and civilization abroad. The north-eastern ranges did not allow any contact with the eastern world. In the eastern side of India are the Arakan mountain ranges and the forests of Assam. This region is very high. Though there are several passes in the eastern ranges, it is impossible to cross them. This area is covered by thick forest. The climate of this region is not suitable for human life on account of malaria and other tropical diseases.

The Himalayan Region is a source of the perennial North Indian Rivers. They are snow-fed rivers. So, they have continuous flow of water throughout the year. They are long, wide and deep. The rivers like Sindhu, the Brahmaputra, the Yamuna, the Ganges originate from the Himalayas. The Indus or Sindhu rises in Mount Kailash in Tibet, flows through the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, then enters Pakistan and finally falls into Arabian Sea. Its main tributaries are the Jhelum, the Chenab, the Ravi, the Beas and the Sutlej, which pass through Punjab. The tributaries of the Indus rise in the Himalayas, flow through the Indian states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab and join the Indus in Pakistan. The Ganges is the largest river of India. The Ganges rises near the Clacier Glacier Gangotri in the Garhwal range of the Himalayas, enters the Indo-Gangetic plains at Hardwar, passes through the plains of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal and falls into the Bay of Bengal. Its main tributaries are the Alaknanda, the Yamuna, the Gandak, the Gomati, the Ghaghra, the Kosi and the Yamuna (with its feeders, such as the Chambal, the Betwa, the Ken and the Sone). The Brahmaputra rises in Mount Kailash in Tibet, flows eastwards through Tibet, bends round the eastern end of the Himalayas and enters India. Then it flows through Arunachal Pradesh and Assam, joins the Ganga in Bangladesh and falls into the Bay of Bengal together with the Ganga.

Effects of the Himalayan Region

Himalayas serve as a natural barrier to India's defence. It acts as natural frontiers and protects the country from foreign invasions from the north. The areas in the Himalayan region are separated from each other by the internal natural barriers like rivers and mountains. Himalayas give rise to a number of perennial and mighty rivers like Ganges, Brahmaputra and Indus. In the ancient times, when the means of communications had not developed as they are in the modern times, it was very difficult for the conquerors to conquer India. It prevents the cold winds of Central Asia in winter from entering to India. It checks the south west monsoons and gives heavy rainfall in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh,

Manipur, Tripura, west Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in the latter half of summer. It is a source of many North-Indian rivers. It is a treasure house of useful trees, minerals, herbs and wild beasts.

Indo –Gangetic Plains and Brahmaputra region

The Indo-Gangetic Plains lie just below the Himalayan region. The Indo-Gangetic plain extends from Indus river to the Brahmaputra river and from Punjab in the west to West Bengal in the east. They are about 2,400kms. In length and 240 to 320 kms.in width. They cover an area of 6, 52,000sq.kms. They are formed by the basins of the rivers Indus, Ganges, Brahmaputra and their tributaries. River Indus, „the Indian Nile“brings alluvium and spreads to the friest part of the Indian Territory and makes it fertile. River Ganges divided itself into two branches namely Hoogly and Padma and drains into the Bay of Bengal. Extensive marshy forests known as Sundarbans are found in the Ganges delta. These rivers water the areas of Bengal, Punjab and Sind. They are one of the largest plains in the world. They have deep fertile alluvial soil. They also enjoy fairly good rainfall and favourable climate, The richness and fertility if the land resulted in the establishment of a number of big towns, centres of trade and capitals of the mighty kingdoms. This region was also a centre for the great religious movements like Jainism and Buddhism. Some of the important battles took place in this region, Mahabharta, Tarain, Karnal and Panipat. Thar Desert is in the north west of Rajasthan. It covers an area of 1,80,000 sq.kms.It is a vast sandy region with oases here and there. The scarcity of rainfall has not encouraged economic activities and human settlement in this region.

Effects of Indo – Gangetic Plains

The Indo-Gangetic Plains also played a vital part in shaping te hisstory of India. The plains of Indus and Ganges rivers provided a very fertile ground. A number of agricultural crops, such as wheat, rice, sugar-can, jute and cotton are cultivated on these plains. They are rich in mineral deposits, especially coal and iron ore. The rivers of these plains also are useful for navigation. It was the cradleof Indus Valley and Aryan civilizations. The Indus-Valley civilization or the Harappan civilization flourished on the banks of the Indus river. The Vedic civilization or the Aryan civilization was flourished on the valleys of the Indus and Ganges rivers. A number of industries such as iron and steel, jute, sugar and cotton textiles are developed

in these regions. Plans are suitable for human settlement. Many empires also rose and fell in this region, such as the Mauryan empire, the Kushan Empire and Gupta empire. Thus it was the seat of power of many ancient empires.

The river of Indo-Gangetic valley provided the easiest means of communications. This in course of time paved the way for the rise of many cities like Pataliputra (Patna), Kasi, Agra, Delhi, Thaneswar, Kanauj, Multan, Taxila, Mathura and Lahore. The Indus rivers and Ganges rivers did not flow in the same directions. They used to change their direction during the time of flood. Besides these regions provided the ground for many battlefields from the days of Mahabharata. The Indus rivers and the Ganges rivers did not flow in the same directions. They used to change their directions during the time of flood.

Besides, these regions provided the ground for many battlefields from the days of Mahabharata. The Indo-Gangetic Valley always attracted the eyes of the foreigners. This led to frequent invasions of the foreigners through the passes in the North Western Himalayas. This region became a bone of contention between the native rulers and foreigners. Many foreigners came to India when they heard about the fabulous riches of the country. Deccan Plateau The Deccan Plateau is triangular in shape. The Deccan Plateau lies to the south of the Gangetic plain is separated by the Vindhyas and Satpuras. This area stretches from Vindhyas to Cape Comorin. Its maximum length is about 1,600 kms and its maximum width is about 1,400 kms. It is 300 to 700 metres above the sea level. It is uneven and rocky.

The Deccan Plateau or the Peninsular Plateau consists of two parts—the Malwa Plateau and Deccan. The river Narmada is the line of demarcation between these two parts. The Malwa Plateau is bounded by the Aravallis in the North-West and by the Vindhyas in the South. The Deccan Plateau is bounded on the east by the Eastern Ghats or Mahendra ranges and on the west by the Western Ghats and on the north by the Vindhya Satpura ranges, the Aravali, Maikala and Ajanta. The Western Ghats or Sahyadris ranges run from the Gulf of Cambay to Cape Comorin (Kanyakumari) for about 1,600 kms long. It is above 3,000 to 8,000 feet above sea level. The Anaimalai hills, the Palani hills, the Cardamom hills and Kodaikanal hills are situated in the south of the Western Ghats. In the Western Ghats, “Thalghat” gap lies to the North of Bombay and “Bhorghat” pass lies in the South. The “Palghat” pass lies to the South of the Nilgiris. The Eastern Ghats run from the Mahanadi river valley in the north to the Nilgiri Hills in the South.

The Eastern Ghats are not high as Western Ghats. Most of the rivers that originate in the western ghats cross the Eastern Ghats. The eastern ghats cut into discontinuous hills by several rivers. The Javvathi hills, Shervaroy hills and Nellamalai hills are situated in the Eastern Ghats. Yercuad in Sherveroy hills is a hill station.

The Western Ghats meet at the Nilgiri hills. The highest peak in the Nilgiris is Doddabetta. The hill stations like Ootacamund, Coonoor and Kothagiri are situated here. As the Deccan Plateau slopes from west to east, rivers in the Deccan Plateau flow from west to east. The rivers of Narmada, Tapi, Netravati, Sharavati, Kali, Ponnani Aliyar and Periyar which originate from the Vindhyas and the western Ghats, flow westwards and fall into the Arabian Sea and the rivers Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna, Cauvery, North Pennar, South Pennar and Palar rivers originate from the Western Ghats, cross the Eastern Ghats and fall into the Bay of Bengal. The river Godavari is the largest river in South India and the second largest river in India. The rivers of Vaigai and Thamiraparani originate in Cardamom Hills, flow through Tamil Nadu and drain into the Gulf of Mannar. The South Indian Rivers are useful to get Hydro-electric power.

The Deccan Plateau comprises the North-Western Deccan, the North-Eastern Deccan and the Southern Deccan. The North-Western Deccan covers parts of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. It receives moderate rainfall. It has black cotton soil. So, it is quite suitable for the growth of cotton, wheat, oil-seeds and millets. The North-Eastern Deccan includes parts of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. It receives good rainfall. Rice is the principal crop of this region. The Southern Deccan includes parts of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. This region is a rain shadow area and soil also is poor. Oil-seeds and millets are cultivated in this region. The northern part of the Deccan contains the vast deposits of lava.

Impact of Deccan Plateau

Dakshinapatha is an integral part of India as Aryavarta. India is divided clearly into the Northern and Southern India by the Vindhya Mountain ranges. The Deccan Plateau played a vital part in the history of India. More or less it remained aloof from the political condition of North India. Moreover it served as the boundary line between North India and South India. Unless a ruler conquers the Deccan, he could not be able to conquer and control South India. The Aryan civilization did not penetrate much into South India due to the presence of Deccan

Plateau. The Ghats system in South India also played a vital role in the history of South India. The rivers of South India namely Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri have their origin in these mountains. Most of the rivers flow from west to east. These rivers watered the place of South India. They are mainly responsible for the prosperity of South India. Black soils are formed by the weathering of lava. These soils are black in colour due to the presence of lava. They are best suited for the cultivation of cotton. The Western Ghats has a few passes like Shencottah pass and Plaghat pass. These Passes connect the lands in the west of the Western Ghats with the lands in the east of the Western Ghats. Thus the plains of South India are connected together.

Coastal Ghats

The coastline of India is unbroken and is of not much use for a vigorous maritime activity. The Western Coastal plain lies between the western Ghats and the Arabian Sea. It is about 50 to 60 kms. wide. It extends from the Gulf of Cambay in the north to Kanyakumari in the south. The northern part of this plain (from Surat to Goa) is called the Konkan coast and the southern part of the plain from (Goa to Cape Comorin) is called the Malabar Coast. The West coastal plain receives heavy rainfall from the South-West monsoon. The soil of this region is also fertile. Rice, sugar-cane and coconut are grown in this region. The coast has good harbours like Cochin and Bombay. The East Coastal plain lies between the Eastern Ghats and the Bay of Bengal. It is about 80 to 120 kms. wide. The eastern coastal plain is broader than the western coastal plain. It stretches from the delta of Ganges to Kanyakumari. The plain is fertile due to the deposition of alluvium soil by the rivers such as Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Cauvery. The whole of this coastal plain is called the Coromandal Coast. The river delta of this region is a granary of the south.

Impact

India has about 6,100 kms. of coastlines. There are 10 major ports and many minor ports. The coastlines encourage fishing. Most of the commercial fishing is carried on along the coastlines. The coastlines have contributed to the development of ship-building industry. Ship-building yards are developed along the coastlines. As India has seas on three sides, they serve as natural means of transport for international as well as internal trade. They moderate the temperature of the coastal regions. They influence the rainfall of the coastal regions. They serve

as good natural frontiers for the defence of the country. They supply salt, sea weeds, sponges, corals and pearls. They are the reservoirs of potential energy. Alluvial soils are formed by the sediments brought by the rivers. They occur in the river basins and deltas and coastal plains. These soils are generally grey, light brown or yellow in colour. They are rich in potash and lime. India is a vast peninsula with a rich cultural heritage. India, the seat of an ancient civilization, still reminds the people of the splendor that she was.

The sources of ancient Indian History had to be culled out from the following (1) Literary, (2) Archaeology –(a) Inscriptions, (b) Numismatics and (c) Monuments and (3) Foreign Accounts given by Greek writers, Chinese travellers and Arab writers. It is quite unfortunate that a historical chronicle is not available for the ancient period. To put it in other words the various events which occurred in different parts of the country were not arranged in a chronological order. That does not mean that the people lacked any historical sense.

Recording of events in chronological order lay scattered in different parts of the country. What was lacking on the part of the historians of the past was either their inability or lack of enthusiasm to arrange the scattered and isolated materials available in a cogent, connected and historical setting. In spite of the many intellectual and literary outbursts of the period. India produced no Herodotus or Thucydides to record the events in a historical perspective. Literary evidence can at the most corroborate but cannot form a reliable source of information.

Literary Sources

The Vedic literature supplies the main source of information for the study of the political, social, economic and religious condition of the Aryans. The two great epics – Ramayana and Mahabharata – give an account of the political, social, economic and religious condition of the Aryans in the post-Vedic age. The Dharmasastras such as the smritis or law books of Manu, Yajnavalkya, Vishnu, Brihaspati, Narada, etc., supply valuable information about Hindu Society. The Puranas such as Vishnu Purana, Vayu Purana, Matsya Purana, Brahma Purana and Bhavishy Purana constitute the main source of information between the beginning of the Epic Age and the period before the sixth century B.C. The Buddhist literature such as the Jatakas or the stories of the previous lives of the Buddha, the Tripitakas (three baskets) and the

Ceylonese Chronicles – Deepavamsa and Mahavamsa – furnish a lot of information. The Jain literature also supplies valuable information.

The Arthashastra – a treatise on statecraft –written by Kautilya is a mine-house of information about the reign of Chandragupta Maurya. The Mudra –Rakshasa of Visakhadatta is also another piece of information about the Maurya Period. Kalidasa’s immortal works such as Sakuntalagive an account of the social condition of the people during the Gupta period. Devichandraguptam is a political drama which states that Samudra –gupta had an elder son by name Rama –gupta who immediately succeeded him and Chandra –gupta II came after him. The Harsha –charita of Bana is one of the main sources of information about Harsha. The three dramas of Harsha – Ratnavali,Pradyotsika and Nagananda – throw light on the condition of India in the 7th century A.D. “The Gauda – Vaho” or “Slaying of the King of Gauda” of Vakpatiraja gives an account of the Digvijaya of Yasovarman of Kanauj. Vikramankadevacharita of Bilhana deals with the reign of Vikramaditya VI, the Western Chalukya ruler of Kalyani. The Rajatarangini of Kalhana is a historical text of the first order. Written in 1149 -50, it forms a reliable source of information about the history of Kashmir from the seventh century A.D. onwards.

Archaeology

The department of archaeology is hardly a century old. The Europeans were the forerunners in the field and they took a keen interest in unraveling the history of the past. The work, now, is carried on by Indians. But for the archaeological evidences, the history of India for a period of one thousand years since the fall of the Satavahanas in the third century. A.D. would have been scanty. Wherever literary sources lack, archaeology supplies the necessary material to reconstruct the history of the past. It is true that the information furnished by archaeology may be vague and imperfect. But in the absence of other sources, we have to mainly depend upon archaeological evidences such as inscriptions, coins and monuments.

(a) Inscriptions

Inscriptions on stones and metals serve as a valuable source of information to reconstruct the history of the past. The history of Indian Inscriptions begins with the rock and pillar edicts of Asoka. The inscriptions are an invaluable source of information for the reign of Asoka. They help us to know the extent of Asoka's empire, the accurate regnal periods of his contemporaries in Syria, Egypt, Macedon, etc., about his Dhamma, the steps taken by him to propagate Buddhism abroad, his administrative system, high percentage of literacy, the culture of the people and above all his character and personality. The post-Asokan inscriptions are of two types, viz., official and private. The official records were only panegyrics or conventional eulogies of kings written by their court-poets, the historical value of which is hypothetical. But they do throw light on the political history of the country. Some of the inscriptions are the Girnar or Junagarh Rock Inscription of Rudradaman I, the Hathigumpha Inscription of Kharavela of Kalinga, the Nasik Inscription of Gautami Balasri, the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta, the Mandasor Pillar Inscription of Yasodharman of Malwa and the Aihole Inscription of Pulakesin II. Among official records, charters pertaining to sale or gift of lands engraved mostly on copper plates constitute the largest number. They supply invaluable historical facts. While the official records form only a very small portion of the inscriptions, the private records constitute the bulk. They help the historian to know the art, religion, and language of the people. The inscriptions as a whole, are the main source of information of ancient India with regard to the political history of the times with ample side support furnished by literary evidence to know the social, religious and economic conditions.

(b) Coins

Coins also serve as an important source of information to know the political, chronological, administrative, economic, religious and cultural history of ancient India in a much humbler scale. It patches up a few gaps left out in the general structure of history. Though the evidence supplied by coins is subsidiary, it is substantial. It is from the study of coins that we are able to know that nearly thirty Indo-Bactrian Greek rulers held sway in India. The Gupta rulers issued a variety of coins from which we are able to know the economic prosperity of the country. The Roman coins found in South India give us a clue to the Indo-Roman commercial relations.

(c) Monuments

Ancient monuments in the form of buildings, statues of stone and of metal, pottery and other material remains of the past supply concrete evidence to the artistic taste of the people. The excavations conducted in Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa have revolutionized the conception of ancient Indian history, and takes the history of India as far back as 3,000 B.C. In fixing up the Kushan chronology archaeological evidence was of immense help. In the absence of historical records, archeological evidence is the only last resort to the historian to reconstruct the history of the past. The Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain monuments help up to know the history of these sects. They also serve as a clue to the evolution of Indian culture on the artistic side.

Foreign Accounts

Foreign accounts given by Greek writers, Chinese travelers and Arab writers also supply valuable information about the ancient period. The information supplied by Greeks writers such as Herodotus and Ctesias is indirectly derived from Persian sources. The „Indika“ of Megasthenes is a valuable source of information for the study of Chandragupta Maurya. Though the accounts of Greek writers cannot be accepted in toto, they do contain some authentic and interesting information. Special mention must be made of classical writers who made a sincere attempt to picture the geographical and natural history of India. The author of Periplus gives an account of the trade and maritime activities in ancient India. Ptolemy pictured the geographical position of India. Pliny gave an account of the natural resources of India.

The travel accounts of Chinese travelers like Fa-hien (5th century A.D.) and Hiuen Tsang and I-tsing (7th Century A.D.) form a valuable source of information about the condition of Buddhism in India. The Chinese travelers visited a number of places in India. The main mission in their lives was to visit the sacred places connected with the life of the Buddha and search for the sacred tenets. Fa-hien was so much preoccupied with and immersed in the search and study of the sacred books of Buddhism, that he did not even mention the name of the Emperor in whose empire he spent six years. But here and there he flashes some sidelight on the economic, social and moral life of the people and the administration prevailing under the Guptas. The travel accounts of Fa-hien in spite of their drawbacks and limitations form a valuable source of information for the study of the Gupta period. Among the Chinese travelers, Hiuen Tsang was

the only person to record secular matters. His accounts throw a flood of light on Harsha, his system of administration and the political, social, economic and religious condition of the people.

Arab writers began to take interest in the history of India from the 8th century A.D. With the Arab conquest of Sind early in the 8th century A.D. the border lands of India find special mention in Arab historical chronicles. Alberuni, a contemporary of Mahmud of Ghazni, gave a vivid description of the culture of ancient India.

THE PRE-HISTORIC PERIOD

Ancient India was popularly called Hindu period of Indian History. The history of India is classified into Prehistoric and historic. Indus Valley Civilization is a pre-historic civilization. History is a record of the achievements of man. Certain portions of this record are available in written shape in the form of various documents and literary works and are known as History. There are unwritten sources like the physical remains of the people, tools and implements and other artifacts monuments and paintings. India was inhabited by various races before the arrival of the Aryans, Pre-Aryan or non-Aryan races.

According to the science of Geology in the ancient times, India was connected by land with the countries of Africa and Australia. Due to geographical changes, the lands between India and Africa and India and Australia subsided beneath the sea waters after some centuries. The historians think that when these lands were connected with each other, India was inhabited by the Pre-Dravidian people, who belonged originally to either Africa or Australia. Of the present day Indian society, the people who are called as the Kols, the Bhils and the Santals are regarded as the Pre-Dravidian people. Their languages are known as the Munda or the Kolarian group of languages. Due to their defeat by the Dravidian people, they retreated for their safety in the hill and forests.

In the Pre-History or Pre-Historic period, no written records of the people exist. The records consist almost solely of the rude implement which the people used in their daily lives. It is held by the Anthropologists and Biologists that man the Homo-sapien (having consciousness) and the Homo-faber (using tools) got originated in the world by the period of 50,000 B.C. Thus from the origin of man to the Proto-Historic Period, from 50,000 to 3250 B.C. is the Pre-History or Pre-Historic Period of ancient Indian History. [Proto – Historic Period or Proto-History,

3250B.C. to 2500 B.C. has to no written records but whose information is available in the written records of the outer people. The Rigveda of 2,500B.C.,Aryan literature described the wars which the Aryans fought against the Dravidian people who were the makers of the Indus Valley Civilization. Thus, though the information of the Dravidian people and their civilization is not available in their own written records, it is available in the Aryan literature]. The Pre-Historic period is divided into Stone Age and Metal Age. Again Stone Age is classified into Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age) and Neolithic Age (New Stone Age). The Metal Age is divided into Copper Age and Iron Age.

Stone Age, 50,000 B.C. to 5,000B.C

On the basis of the tools found of different Periods of human life in India, the historians divided the Stone Age into two, Paleolithic Age and Neolithic Age.

Palaeolithic Age, 50,000 B.C. to 15,000B.C.

The term Palaeolithic is derived from two Greek words, “Palaeo” and “lithic” meaning Old Stone. The tools used by the old stone age people were of two types, Flake tools, and Core tools. Flake tools were made out of hard rock called quartzite. They were of pebbles with sharp edges. They were used to injure or kill animals and to scrap the flesh from the bones. Core wood. These tools with thin edges were used as knives, choppers and axes. Flake tools were found in the valley of the river Sohan, Punjab and in the upper Narmada Valley. Core tools Arcot, Chingleput, Bellary, Cuddapah, Nellore, Karnool and Godavari districts. Most of the Palaeolithic remains in India were made of a peculiar kind of rock called „quartzite“. Hence the Palaeolithic men in India are also known as “Quartzite men”. The Palaeolithic remains are mainly found in Madra, Tanjore, Kadur, Madars, Kadappaand Chengalpat districts of South India. In Northern India, old stone implements are found in Bengal, Bhiar, Orissa and MadhyaPradesh. The people mainly lived in the caves river-beds and lakes. Most of them had no fixed homes. They wandered from place and in night took shelter in the hollows of the trunks or tops of the trees. Few made huts with tree and leaves. They lived in constant dread of wild animals like tigers, lions,elephants and the rhinoceros. The Palaeolithic men belonged to the Negrito race. They had short stature, dark skin, woollly hair and flat noses.

Food and Dress

The Palaeolithic men in India were savages and barbarians. They ate roots, fruits, vegetables and nuts and took the flesh of the wild animals and birds. They were mere food – gatherers. But they did not know the use of metals. They also did not know to cultivate the land. They knew about the use of fire about 15,000 B.C. The fire was produced by the artificial friction of combustible pieces of wood. Evidences for the use of fire are found out in Kurnul caves. To secure protection from the evil effects of rain and cold, the men of this period covered their bodies with the help of tree leaves, bark and skin of the animals.

Stone implements

The Palaeolithic men used a number of rude stone implements. They were not well polished. These are small pieces of rough undressed stones, clipped into various forms, which were originally fitted with handles made of sticks or bones. The chief implements used, consisted of darts, scrapers, axes and throwing stones. Tips of stones sharpened were used as heads of spears, lances or daggers. They served as weapons for hunting wild animals and could also be used as hammers or for purposes of cutting and boring.

Painting

Painting was known to the Palaeolithic men and the evidences are found out in some caves in Madhya Pradesh. Bamboo brushes were used for such painting. Red pigment was used. Hunting scene and dancing human figures were painted.

Disposal of the dead

The Palaeolithic men did not bury the dead bodies. They left the dead to natural decomposition or to be devoured by beasts. The larger human remains found in different parts of India at the end of the Palaeolithic Age proved the formation of group life.

Mesolithic Age

The Palaeolithic stage of culture was followed by the Mesolithic stage („Meso“ – Middle and lithic-stone). The most of the implements used by the Mesolithic men are called microliths (tiny stone tools). They were used primarily for fishing purposes. The technique for the making

of these implements was also different. The relics of this age are found all over India. The people of this age knew the art of pottery.

Neolithic Age, 15,000 -5,000 B.C.

Next to the Mesolithic, we have the Neolithic stage of culture. The term, Neolithic is derived from two Greek words, „Neo” and „lithic“ meaning New Stone. As men used new types of stone tools during this period, this Age is called as the New Stone Age. The remains of the Neolithic men are found in Bellary, Anantapur, Cuddapah, Hyderabad, Mysore, Malabar, Salem, Karnul Districts of Madras and Gujarat, Raichur Doab, Kathiawar, Sind and Baluchistan in the Mirzapur district in Northern India. Neolithic findings which are found out are classified into 78 distinct types. Ancient factories for the manufacture of stone implements are discovered in the Bellary district and Madras. Most of the people of the age lived in caves by the side of sea or lake near mining and fishing areas such as Maski and Tinnevely. They decorated the walls of caves by painting scenes of hunting and dancing.

Stone Implements

The stone implements were made of black-coloured stone (granites). The implements were decently executed and polished. They made beautiful articles serving different purposes used for axes, sickles and hammers, bows and arrows from bamboos were used as their weapons. The use of these stones made it easy for him to cut down trees to obtain wood for fire. He also carved the wood logs to prepare small boats and canoes to cross the rivers and to catch fish.

Pottery

The Neolithic men made pottery, at first by hand and then with the potter’s wheel. These potters were made out of different kinds of clay. They stored grains and water and used it to cook food. The pottery of Neolithic age was of two types –plain and decorated. Another feature of the Neolithic pottery is the variety of colours used. Pigments were applied for giving colours. The popular colours are red, yellow, brown, or purple –grey. The figures chiefly used on the pottery are natural objects such as leaves and flowers.

Food and Dress

The Neolithic men solved the basic problem of food supply by herding cattle and ploughing earth. This turned a mere wandering food gatherer into a settled food producer. The Chief foods of the Neolithic people were fruits, vegetable, roots, nuts, wild pulses and cereals. They also took flesh of animals, fish and milk products. The process of making curd from milk by fermentation and producing butter and ghee was also known to the people. They cultivated land and grew fruits and corn. In the beginning, the people used barks and skins of animals to cover the body. In course of time, they knew the art of weaving and spinning. They could spin cotton and wool and weave cloth. Men tied a piece of cloth round the loins and threw a piece over the shoulders. The women wore a sort of petticoat coming to the knees. Occupations With the ease of food production, he had much leisure. Hence he could find scope for handicrafts and trade. Hunting and fishing were the main occupations. A large number of netsinkers are discovered on the sea coasts. It suggests that fishing was done on large scale. Agriculture was known to them at the end of the Neolithic period. For the purpose of agriculture, the people constructed huge reservoirs. They even discovered the art of constructing wells and rope-making. The people domesticated animals like dog, cow, ox, buffalo and goat. Besides, they knew carpentry, masonry, pottery weaving and dyeing. They knew the art of producing fire by the friction of bamboos or pieces of wood. The people started baking animal food and secured warmth with the help of fire.

Worship

The Neolithic people worshipped the ancestral spirits. A number of rituals were performed at the time of death. The chief form of worship was stone worship. Stone monuments were erected in memory of the dead. Human and animal sacrifices were given. The people had rudimentary knowledge of astronomy and stars. They fixed the time for secular or religious works by noticing the shadows of sticks.

Disposal of the dead

The people used to bury their dead. Along with the body, they buried the tools and other material used by the dead person. On the buried bodies, they erected tombs. The tombs are known as Dolmens or Megalithic tombs. It consists of three or more stone props in a circle,

supporting a massive roof stone. This shows that they believed in the supernatural powers of Gods. Sometimes the dead body was put in large urn. Urns were discovered at Adichanallur. The cultivation of land was the great revolution in the Neolithic period. New rituals and myths originated for increasing the fertility of the soil and bringing sufficient rains. Men came out of their caves and began to build villages besides the tilled ground. Villages began to emerge as economic and cultural units. The problem of storing the grains was solved by making pottery, granary and baskets.

The Later Stone age (9000 B.C to 1000B.C) is characterized by microlithic industries throughout India and Ceylon. A microlithic is a very small stone tool, often less than an inch long. Sometimes they occur in geometric shapes-triangles and trapezes. They were used as tips of arrows. They were also set edge to edge in grooved hafts of bone, wood or antler. It brought about changes in the tool typology and hunting methods.

The Metal Age, 5000 B.C to the Present time

A new age was developed after Stone Ages with the discovery of metals to prepare tools in the human civilization. It was called the Metal Age. The use of the metals in different parts of Indian was not uniform. It is generally classified into Copper Age and Iron Age.

The Copper Age, 5,000 B.C. to 4,000 B.C.

Copper was the first metal used by the descendants of Neolithic men. Copper was used for the manufacture of tools and weapons. Axes, swords, spear-heads and various other objects were made of copper. The people of Copper age constructed cottages with the help of wood and grass. These settlements gave shape to villages and started the period of human civilization and culture. The earliest copper tools may be as old as fourth millennium B.C.

The Chalcolithic Age, 4000 B.C.- 2750 B.C.

When man conducted processes on the metallic ores found in the world, he mixed copper with tin and discovered the metal bronze by 4000B.C Thus man started using the metal bronze, which is harder than the soft metal copper during this age. It was used to prepare tools and utensils and to construct bigger houses for his dwelling. As man used both the metals, this age is called as the Chalcolithic Age.

The Bronze Age, 2750 B.C. to 2500 B.C.

The People of this age mainly used bronze. Copper is a very soft metal. So bronze, an alloy of copper and tin was discovered. Out of this bronze, swords, daggers, and spearheads were made. People in the areas of Sind and Jabalpur were the larger users of bronze in this age. They wore cotton clothes. They improved their dwelling houses. They had improvised ventilators ad windows. The bronze age came to an end when the Aryans introduced the use of iron tools in Northern India by 2500B.C Among the technical contributions of the Bronze Age are mining and melting copper ore, harnessing of animal power, wheeled vehicles, the potter's wheel, the sail boat and making bricks. Till then pottery was made by women and they were handmade. With the introduction of the potter's wheel, this work was also taken over by man. Varieties of potteries were made high polis and designs engraved or painted on them. During the Bronze Age, there was an increasing trend towards specialization of craft and technology. It led to the expansion of trade and accumulation of wealth and that made the birth of civilization possible.

The Iron age, 2500 B.C. to the present time The discovery of Iron was a turning point in the history of mankind. It brought about great progress in Indian culture. It changed the mode of the warfare and use of tools. In North India, the New stone Age succeeded by the Copper Age and in South India by the Iron Age. It was introduced in the first millennium B.C. from Babylonia. It is mentioned in the Atharva Veda. In South India, the use of iron was introduced much later. The people came to be divided into different occupations and classes such as wood-worker, iron-smith, stone worker, weaver and fisher-man. The people buried their dead and constructed tombs, usually surrounded by stone circles. Hundred of such tombs containing iron objects found in the south belong to the early Iron age. The people of Iron age are now represented by the Kols, the Bhills, Santhals, Mundas, Oraons and other sub-nosed and dark-skinned isolated jungle tribes found in various parts of Northern and Southern India. They followed a primitive form of worship and spoke a language which is utterly different from the Indo-Aryan languages. They used bow and arrow and long lances. Iron age rock cut caves exist near Tellicherry (Malabar district) containing pottery, iron implements, grinding stones and pestles and a polished red jar with four legs. At Perumber (Chengleput district), pottery and iron Implements and chank shell ornaments were found.

The Iron-age people led a rural life. Their chief occupation was agriculture. There was a great progress in ploughing. They developed various new arts. They witnessed a great development in spinning, weaving, tanning, carpentry and pottery. A distinctive pottery they developed was known as painted greyware in which black and red colours were used. They lived in mud houses and worshipped earth. They witnessed the birth of many states and kingdoms in India. With the advent of the Aryans, the Pre-historic India came to an end.

INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION

HARAPPA CIVILIZATION

The discovery of the Indus Valley civilization in 1922 is an epoch-making event in the annals of the History of India. The earliest centres of civilization were river valleys. The discovery of Mohenjodaro was made by R.D.Banerjee in 1922 and Harappa by R.B.Dayaram Sahni in 1921. Later on, Sir John Marshall, Director General of Archaeology personally took up this work and announced in 1924 that a new civilization was discovered. India is considered as one of the cradles of ancient civilizations. The period of the Indus Valley civilization was from 3250 -2750 B.C. The area of civilization was from Delhi to Gujarat, During this period copper and stone were used and so the Indus Valley Civilization was a Chalcolithic culture.

Features of the Indus Valley Civilization

Municipal organization and town planning

The Indus valley or the Harappan people were primarily urban people. They lived in well-planned towns and took great care to look after their cleanliness. The cities grew according to set scheme. The cities of Mohenjodaro, Harappa and other cities like Chanhu Daro in Sind, Lothal in Gujarat, near Ahmedabad, Kali Bangam in Northern Rajasthan, Alamgir near Hastinapur in Uttar Pradesh and Mitahal in Hissar district of Haryana were built according to a well-laid plan. The remarkable town planning, adequate water supply and efficient system of drainage and street-lighting were the unique features of Municipal organization and town planning and speak of extraordinary engineering skill.

Mohenjodaro

The city of Mohenjodaro is situated on the banks of river Indus in Sind. Sind is a fertile region and is known as “Garden of Sind”. The word Mohenjodaro means the “Mound of the Dead”, because here a number of human skeletons were found out. Probably it was the capital of the southern region. Mohenjodaro was a well-planned city. The city was square in shape. There were number of streets which were broad and wide. The width of the streets varied from three metres to four metres. The streets cut each other at right angles. There were several lanes constructed from the streets. All the streets and roads ran from north to south and from east to west so that they could be cleaned automatically by the prevailing winds. Dust pins were provided in front of every house to receive waste articles. There was a Great Tank. Nevertheless the Indus Valley people developed a high level of sanitation and hygiene.

Houses are built on either sides of the lanes. Buildings were not allowed to encroach upon the public highways. All houses were constructed on raised platforms in order to meet the constant danger of floods. Sun-baked bricks were used for the foundation. The foundations were usually very deep. Almost every house had wells, drains, bathrooms, kitchens and courtyards. The individual drain of every house was connected with the main drains on the streets and lanes. No house was allowed to have a door or a window facing the road. There were small houses and big houses. The small houses consisted of two rooms while the bigger ones had large number of rooms like palaces. The houses were built of brick, lime and gypsum or mud. They had thick and strong walls which were plastered and coloured. Their roofs were flat. There were ventilators in the houses. There were multistoreyed houses also. They constructed a large number of wells. Only defect of the wells was that big walls were not constructed and it became a source of danger.

Harappa

The city of Harappa is situated on the banks of river Rabi. It was probably the capital of the northern region. One railway workshop was constructed by the bricks from the ruins at Harappa. The most striking features of Harappa were the Great Granary and Workers Quarters. The Great Granary is 42 metres long and 48 metres broad and consists of two blocks. Every block is divided into six halls and each hall in turn is divided into four small rooms. There grains

were stored. The entrance of these was towards the river showing the use of rivers for transportation purposes. The Worker's Quarters consist of 14 small houses, each with a courtyard and two rooms. The interest of the workers was well cared for in those days. In addition to the dwelling houses, certain spacious and large buildings also existed in every city. Some of these possessed large pillard halls about 80 feet square. These building were supposed to be temples, Municipal or assembly halls.

Drainage System

The people of the Indus Valley civilization had an efficient Sweage system (underground drainage). It was indeed a unique achievement of the people. Each house had its own small drains which were directly connected with the street drain which ran under the main streets and below many lanes. Cess-pits were provided for the flow of rain water and sewage from the houses to flow into them. Longer drains were provided at intervals with sumps so that the channels may be cleaned without muchndifficulty. The drains were made of mortar, lime and gypsum. They were covered with bricks and stones. There were manholes at regular intervals for inspection.

Great Bath

The Great bath at Mohenjodaro is the most important building which impresses us. The size of the swimming bath was 30 x23 x 8 feet and this was surrounded by verandhas, galleries and rooms on all sides. Burnt bricks were used for the construction of the bath and it was connected with a fine drainage system for filling and emptying it. The swimming bath was filled through the wells. Provision for the horse-shoe shaped tunnel. There was also another provision for the removal of used water with the help of another tunnel. There were several rooms surrounding the swimming pool. Probably they were dressing rooms. People used to bath in these public baths at the time of festivals, religious and otherwise. On the North-West side of the Great Bath is a „hummam“, hot air bath.

Art and Writing

The Indus Valley people had developed great artistic skill and the fine craftmanship particularly in the arts of sculpture and engraving and also in toy-making. They are known for simplicity and utilitarianism.

Sculpture

The human and animal figures as well as nude or half nude figures of gods and goddesses sculptured on clay, grey and yellow limestone, bronze, copper, alabaster, ivory and terracotta were discovered from the Indus sites. The most striking and beautiful is the figure of a dancing girl in the nude form, with her hand on her hip and wearing bracelets is a masterpiece of the Indus Art of sculpture. It indicates their taste for dance. Probably the dancing girls is a representative of a class of temple dancers and prostitutes. The stone figure of a shawl-clad yogi is also a fine example of their art. The statues of a young bull, a strong watch dog and a dancer standing on her right leg while raising her left leg in front are really praiseworthy. As regards music, several objects such as the small statues of birds, having the tails like flutes show their love for music. A high aesthetic sense is indicated by the beautiful designs of ornaments, the super relief figures on the seals and the execution of fine stone statues.

Crafts

Some of the important crafts which flourished during the Indus Valley civilization were that of pottery, carpentry, masonry, gold smithy, jewellery, blacksmithy, ivory work and stone cutting. The people also knew about spinning. It is proved by the presence of large number of spindle wheels. The art of pottery had reached its high water-mark. Pottery was made on the wheel. They produced plain, coloured and glazed pottery. The Indus pottery was famous for its colour, shape, rich design and perfect finish. A great advance in technical knowledge is indicated by the potter's wheel and kiln-burnt bricks. Precious stones were used for jewellery. The domestic vessels such as heaters, store-jars and offering stands were made.

Painting

The Indus Valley people were very fond of painting. They were quite skillful in drawing the figures of men, animals and objects of nature on earthenwares and utensils. A

painted pot from Lothal bears the paintings of a crow-like bird sitting on the branch of a tree holding fish in its mouth while a fox-like animal is sitting under the tree raising its mouth upward in expectation of grabbing the falling fish. They had also achieved a high standard in the art of painting which is illustrated by large number of seals. The figures of gods and goddesses, different animals and human figures are found engraved.

The Indus Script

The Indus people had developed the art of writing and they used pictographic script. The innumerable seals and coins discovered at Mohenjodaro contain many pictographic inscriptions which unfortunately are still undeciphered. The writers are of the opinion that the script found on the seals is similar to that was used in Egypt, Sumeria and other countries of Western Asia. In some cases, the direction of the writing was from left to right and in other cases it was from right to left. (poustrophedon). Father Rev. Heras and Sir John Marshall are of the opinion that the script and the language of the Indus people were pre-Aryans and that they were Dravidians. However, their views are not accepted by all. Prof. Langdon is emphatically of opinion that the script is the parent of the Brahmi script of Asoka's inscriptions.

Seals

The Indus Valley seals are made out of terracotta. These seals vary from 1/2 inch to about 2 1/2 inches in size and generally were in square or rectangular and cylindrical shape. There is pictographic script with as many as 300 characters. More than 2,000 seals were found at various sites of the Indus Valley Civilization. These seals are of invaluable help to know political, social economic and religious aspects of this civilization. The seals are made of various materials such as pottery, steatite, faience and ivory. Inscriptions, animals and birds and various designs were engraved on seals. The most important seal is that of Siva Pashupati which was found at Mohenjodaro. An interesting seal from Harappa is that of a nude female figure turned upside down, without spread legs and plant issuing from the belly. The reverse side has a man with a sickle-shaped knife in hand and a woman seated on the ground with hands raised in supplication. It identified the human sacrifice to the Mother Goddess. The most artistic seal is that on which is engraved a nude three headed male god wearing a large trident sitting in a yogic posture and surrounded by seven different animals namely an elephant, a tiger, a buffalo, a

rhinoceros a humped bull, a bison and a deer. At the top of the seal, short inscriptions in a kind of pictorial writing are found. The purpose of the seals is not clear. Probably they were utilized as trade marks and medium of exchange.

Social Life

In the absence of written records, the archaeological findings helped to discover the social life. The people of the Indus Valley appear to have built of burnt bricks. There were different groups of persons in the society of the Indus Valley Civilization. They differed from each other in status and economic matters. As the people of Harappa Civilization worshipped the female deities, they gave good and respectful treatment to the women of their society. But the details about the position of women can not be understood due to the absence of written literature of the Indus Valley Civilization. Their food was very simple. They ate wheat, barley, rice, milk and milk products, fruits, vegetable, fish, eggs, beef, mutton, pork poultry and the flesh of turtle and tortoise. The Indus people did not know the use of iron.

Dress and Ornaments

Clay spindles and the dress of the statues and carvings on pottery and seals throw some light on their dress. Cotton as well as woollen clothes were used by the people. Men used a shawl for the upper body and dhoti for the lower portion. The dress of the female covered the left shoulder and passing behind the right shoulder. They used fan-shaped head dress. Both men and women were fond of wearing ornaments, Necklaces, fillets, finger-rings and armlets were used by both the sexes. Girdles, anklets bangles, ear-rings and nose-studs were worn by women alone. There was great variety in the shape and designs and were exceedingly beautiful. The ornaments were made of gold, silver, ivory, copper, bronze, shells, bones, and both precious and semi-precious stone like jade, crystal, agate, carnelian and lapis lazuli. The art of dyeing and printing cloth was known. It exhibits a fairly advanced civilization. The Indus people were familiar with various styles of hair dressing. Men kept long hair, women in a lock at the back or collected as a bun (Joor) in the middle of the head. Men kept beards and whiskers in different fashions. The women kept their hair in order and tight with the help of fillets and hair pins. They knew the use of mirrors, combs, face paint, lipsticks, collyrium (Surma) and perfumery. The discovery of

various jars made of ivory, metal pottery and stone show that young maidens took keen interest in beauty and toilet culture.

Amusements

The Indus valley people had great interest in indoor amusement and they did not like outdoor games much. Dancing and singing were their popular amusements. This is proved by the figure of a bronze dancing girls and terracotts figures. A large number of dice of various kinds were discovered. It shows that they were very fond of playing dice. Hunting, fishing, bull-fighting and cock-fighting were some other means of amusements for men. Children amused themselves with various kinds of toys, such as toys of men, women, children, animals, birds, whistles, rattles, toys-carts and water-jugs. They were made of marble, clay and terracotta. The girls played with dolls. People were also fond of keeping birds for seeing their fights. The people were also delighted in birds fighting.

Domesticated Animals

The remains of skeletons prove that the Indus people domesticated humped bull, the buffalo, cow, pig, sheep, elephant, camel and dogs. The people also knew about wild animals like lion, tiger, monkey, black rat, deer, bison, boar, hare, tiger, bear and rhinoceros. They also knew similar animals and birds like mongoose, squirrel, parrot, peacock and cat.

Household articles

A number of household articles include cake moulds, dippers, beakers, bowls, dishes, gobles, basins, pans, saucers, certain needles, axes, sickles, knives, fish hooks, chisels were discovered in the Indus valley sites. These articles are made of stone, shell, ivory, copper, bronze, silver and porcelain. The earthenware vessels were made with the potters wheel and were either plain or painted. In rare cases they are glazed. The spindles and spindle whorls were made of baked earth, porcelain and shell. The needles and combs were made of bone or ivory. The axes, chisels, knives, sickles, fish hooks and razors were made of copper and bronze. Small cubical blocks of hard stone were used as weights. The small wheeled carts and chairs were used in actual life.

Weapons of War

The weapons of war were all offensive in character. They are mostly made of copper and bronze. Few are made out of stone. The weapons of war are axes, spears, daggers, maces, slings, bows and arrows. But defensive weapons such as shields, helmets and chest-plate were absent.

Disposal of the Dead

The Discovery of two prehistoric cemeteries at Harappa had thrown a flood of light on the method of disposal of the dead and the eschatological beliefs of the people of the Indus Age. Three methods were used for the disposal of the dead person. Firstly, the dead body was buried. Secondly, after burning the dead body, the remains of the dead body were buried under earth. Thirdly, the dead bodies were left for the wild animals. According to Sir John Marshall, the second method was the most popular. The graveyard was separated from the city. Some of the graves were square in the form of brick chambers or cists, other were small circular pits with large urns. The graves contained household pottery, ornaments and mirrors. It seems that the Indus people believed in life after death.

Economic Life

The economic life of the Indus valley centered round agriculture, industry, trade commerce. As the land of the Indus valley was very fertile and had sufficient irrigation facilities, the agriculture occupied an important part in the daily life of the common people. Wheat, barley, vegetables and cotton were cultivated on a large scale. The pictures of the humped bull, agricultural implements and domesticated animals like sheep, goat, cow, dogs, boars, and buffaloes, bear clear evidence that agriculture was the main occupation. There were big warehouses to collect food grains. The accessories of cotton and wollen textiles reveal the existence of textile industry, spinning, weaving, dyeing pottery, carpentry, jewellery, blacksmithy, masonry and ivory and stone-cutting were the important industries existed in the Indus valley. Other crafts were toy-making, making of the seals and weapons of war.

Trade and Commerce

The city of Mohenjodaro was a great trading centre and carried on both the internal and external trade. The internal trade was mainly carried on by the land routes. Bullock-carts were the main means communication. The discovery of Indus seals in Babylon and Egypt reveals the commercial relationship with outside countries. The seals were most probably used in connection with trade. The trade with foreign countries was mainly carried through water routes. This was proved by the representation of a boat on a seal. Trade was particularly carried with countries of western Asia, like Sumeria, Babylonia and Egypt. The Indus people secured tin, copper and precious stones from beyond India. They used systematic and accurate weights and measures. Some of the weights were so big that they were lifted by ropes. Others are of a small size to be used by jewelers. Small weights were cubical in shape while heavy ones were conical. The people of the Indus valley also knew about the footage system. It appears that the state exercised strict control over weights and measures.

Religion

Stone images, figurines and engravings on seals help us to know the religious ideas and beliefs of the Indus valley people, Much importance was given to the worship of Mother Goddess, Pasupati (the Lord of animals) and original the proto-type of Siva. (three headed deity). The discovery of cylindrical and conical stones leads us to believe that Siva was also worshipped in the form of Linga. Certain statues of seminude female figure, wearing a girdle round her loins with fan shaped dress was discovered. Sir John Marshall calls it Mahadevi. Human sacrifices were offered to the Mother-Goddess as proved by the seal. The animal sacrifices were quite common. The cult of animal worship was also quite common. The animals were not only worshipped but were also regarded as vahana of the Gods. Bull was regarded as the vehicle of Lord Siva. They also worshipped the pipal and neem trees. It was regarded as the abode of Gods. Dove was considered as sacred bird. They were afraid of demons. So they had faith in charms and amulets. They believed in life after death. Purification by both was considered to be a religious duty. Certain scholars have suggested that the Great Bath was the temple of the River God. The wheel and swastika on some of the seals discovered indicate the worship of Sun god. Likewise the indication of worship of God of Fire and the gift of sacrifices

to Him are also found. In brief, the people worshipped Siva and Sakthi. Bull was an animal of veneration for the people.

Conclusion

The Indus valley civilization lasted about thousand years. It disappeared in 2000B.C. When the Aryans began to arrive in India. Scholars have given various reasons for its collapse. It might have been destroyed due to regular floods. The climate changes led the people to evacuate the cities. The rest of the Indus population might have been sacked by the invading barbarians from the hilly areas of Central Asia or South-West Asia, who were perhaps Aryans.

History of India Original Home of the Aryans The Aryans

Introduction

Many questions in history of ancient India baffle the students. One such question is regarding the origin of Aryans. The place and period of their origin is still a matter of uncertainty. There are different theories put forward by different scholars and researches. It is hard to arrive at any unanimous opinion on this question. The researchers make their assumptions on the basis of certain factors like language, climate and flora and fauna.

Theory of Europe as homeland Sir William Jones, Chief Justice of Calcutta was a scholar in Sanskrit, Latin, Gothic Celtic and Persian languages. By his vast knowledge in different languages he made a comparative linguistic study and found certain similarities among these languages. Hence he came to the conclusion that the speakers of these languages might have lived together. The people who came to India were a group of European Aryans. Fillippa Sassetti also supports this view. Dr. P. Giles and Prof MAC Donell identify the present region of Austria, Hungary and Bohemia as the homeland of Aryans. They arrive at the conclusion on the basis of a study of the flora and fauna as well as their profession Brandenstein concludes Germany as the original homeland of Aryans. Dr. B.K. Ghosh concluded Southern Russia as the original homeland of Aryans on the basis of a linguistic study. His conclusion was supported by certain archaeological evidences. The theory of Europe as homeland of Aryans is on accepted by many scholars. The differences and similarities in languages do not hold a strong proof for the contention made by different writers who consider Europe as the homeland of Aryans .

Moreover, different scholars point out different regions in Europe. Some scholars point out the possibility of the movement of the Aryans from central Asia to Europe. Hence the theory of Europe does not hold good.

The Theory of Central Asia as homeland Max Muller of Germany made a comparative study of the languages spoken by the ancestors of the Indians, Greeks, Persians, Romans, Germans and the Celts. He came to the conclusion that these people might have lived together. He made assumptions on the migration of Aryans and decided the central Asiatic region as the original homeland of Aryans. Max Muller relied much on Vedic literature and Zend-Avesfa, an Iranian literary work. The geologists and philologists have also proved that the things which were known to Aryans are available in central Asia. This fact is also used to support the theory that the central Asiatic region was the original homeland of Aryans. This theory is also opposed by certain scholars on certain grounds. They point out the smallness of the area which could not accommodate such a vast mass of people. Secondly, the region was not fertile enough to foster a civilization. Thirdly, the absence of honey is raised as a point of objection. The Aryans were found of it. Its absence in the region proves the unfoundness of the theory. However, among all the theories of origin of the Aryans, this seems to be nearer to truth.

Other theories Bal Ganga Dhar Tilak tried to prove Arctic region as the original homeland of the Aryans. He based his conclusion on the similarities found between the natural phenomena of the Arctic region and those of the region described in Rig Veda, Swamy Dayanand writes in his book „Satyarth Prakash“ that the Aryans came from Tibet. F.E. Pargitar also supports this view. Dr. Avinage Chandra Dass holds the view that India was the original homeland of Aryans. This theory of indigenous origin is opposite to other theories. Rig Veda does not make any mention about the migration of Aryans from outside. Moreover the descriptions of the region suit the region of Sapt Sindhu. Modern Punjab, Kashmir, Kabul and Khandara might have been the region of Sapt Sindhu where the Aryans originally lived. Later, they might have migrated to other parts of India. This view is supported by some other scholars. However the theory of indigenous original homeland of Aryans they must have has knowledge about eastern and southern India. But Vedic literature makes no reference to these regions. The Aryans could not have migrated from a fertile region to a comparatively unproductive region.

Aryan literatures speak about elephant and oak trees. They are not found in Punjab. On such other grounds this theory is opposed.

Conclusion

The question of the origin of Aryans has been taken up by different scholars of different periods. They have made different approaches to find out and establish their views. However, the certainty of their place of origin has not been proved beyond doubt by any scholar. Each theory suffers from certain defects. Hence the question still remains unresolved.

Vedic Civilization Early Vedic Civilization

The period of history in which the Vedas were created and revered is called the Vedic Age. The early Vedic civilization might have lasted between 2000 and 1000 B.C. Though there are different opinions on this, the above period is conveniently agreed upon due to certain reasons. The facts about the people and their way of life could be understood by a study of the Vedic literature.

The Vedic literature

Veda means knowledge. There are four Vedas namely Rig-Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda Rig-Veda is the older. It has 1028 hymns divided into ten chapters. The hymns are addressed to deities like agni, Varuna Indra etc. Yajur Veda throws light on the social life of the Aryans. The Sama Veda Samhita is collection of hymns sung by udgator, a particular class of priests. These were simply used for melody. The Atharva Veda deals with charms and magic spells. Brahmanas are the works which try to explain the meanings of the hymns. Each Veda has its own Brahmana. Upanishads describe the religious thoughts of Aryans. There are about 300 upanishads. They expose the Hindu philosophy. Aranyakas are generally called forest books. Aranyakas do not give much importance to rites and rituals but they stress the importance of mysticism and philosophy. Each Veda contains an Upaveda. There are six vedangas or sastras. They describe the social life of Aryans. There are three Sutras namely Dharma Shrauta Sutra and Grihya Sutra There are other important works called Darshans. They are philosophical. There are many Puranas. They are stories about Gods. The Vedic literature helps historians to study about Vedic civilization.

Vedic polity

The Aryans of the Vedic Possessed vast territories. The form of government was monarchical. Kingship was usually hereditary. However, there are references of elected monarchs. Such a references could be seen in Atharva Vede. The King was called “rajan”. Later the word “Samrat” was also used. Perhaps smarar meant a great ruler. The king was considered as the unquestionable leader. He wore shining robes. He was easily distinguishable from the common folk He lived in a big palace. The palace was surrounded by other offices. The king was attended by many offices singers and musicians. The foremost duty of the king was to protect the tribe. He fought against the external enemies. He had spies to watch his people. He had a body of priests to perform sacred rites. The Purohita was the most important officer who not only advised his ruler but also, used his magic power to help him. Senani was the leader of the army. Sena was the army which was composed of foot soldiers and warriors who fought from chariots. Though the king was the over lord of the land, he did not rule arbitrarily. He ruled with the consent of the people.

The grama was the smallest unit of the country. The „vis was the next unit. It might have been a collection of gramas. Janas were the biggest units. The gramani was in charge of the administration of a grama. There was Samiti or assembly to help the king. It was a kind of a popular assembly. Sabha as a place where all the people of the tribe assembled. However certain references in Rigveda confirm the view that the Sabha was a council of Elders. The king might have used the Sabha and the Samiti to rule for the benefit of the people. The King himself was the fountain of Justice. The Vedic literature makes references of the existence of republics too.

Vedic society

The foundation of the structure in the Rig-Vedic age was the family. The members of the family lived in the same house. The master of the house was grihapati. The father was the leader of the family. He had all powers over his family members. He had right to inflict any kind of punishment on his children. Child marriage was not known to them. Monogamy was the usual practice. However the princes enjoyed the right of polygamy. But polyandry was unknown. The marriage was considered as a sacred bond. The wife was given equal importance in rituals and

rites. Widows were allowed to remarry if they had no child. The people preferred sons to daughters. Their property was given to sons only. Dowry system was also present.

The people wore three kinds of garments. Some of them wore garments of various colours. Rich had embroidered garments. The embroidery was done with gold. They used ornaments like necklaces, ear-rings, bracelets and anklets. Both men and women used ornaments. They combed their hair. Oil was used to keep the hair shining. The women arranged their hair in plaits. Men were used to grow beards. But they knew shaving.

The people of Vedic Age lived a settled life. They built cottages of wood and thatch. Milk and its products constituted their main food. Cakes of rice and barley were eaten up with ghee. They ate mutton. The cow was considered as sacred. So they did not eat beef. Soma and Sura were their drinks. The people were amused in chariot racing, horse racing, music, dancing and dicing. Dicing was done with stakes. Both men and women participated dancing.

Vedic Economy

The people of Rig Vedic civilization were mainly Agriculturists. Agriculture was carried on with the help of bulls and oxen. The plough was drawn by oxen in teams of six, eight or twelve. The harvest was made with the help of sickles. They raised two crops a year. There were herdsmen. The wealth of the people was calculated in terms of cattle and good sons. The grain and insects which affected the crop. Carpenter played an important role. He made carts and chariots. The tanner made many useful things out of the leather and hides of animals. Weaving was generally done by men. The Vedic literature mentions about metalworkers, potters and smiths. There were markets to buy and sell things. Barter system was practiced. They made contracts on debts and sale. They paid interest for their debts.

Vedic religion

The Vedic religion was simple. The people worshipped many Gods. Varuna was considered as the God of the sky. Indra, the God of thunderstorm was a favourite God of the Aryans. There were many minor Gods. The Rig Vedic Aryans offered things like ghee, milk, grain, soma, sura and flesh in sacrifices to Gods. There were procedures of sacrifices. They

believed that their Gods also behaved like human beings. Rig Vedic religion was optimistic. The people believed in life after death.

Later Vedic Civilization

The Aryans were concentrated in a limited area in the Vedic age. Later, they started to spread. New territories came under their habitation. Inevitably many changes took place in their civilization. It is called the later Vedic civilization. The period of later Vedic civilization is generally fixed as between 1000 and 600 B.C.

Political condition

The Kingdoms grew in size. The growth of the kingdoms and the increase in the population made the king more powerful. The king became the absolute master. The idea of imperialism gained momentum. The terms like, Rajadhiraj, Janarta, Samrat and Sarvarat occur in many literary works. This proves the emergence of imperialism. The references about sacrifices like Ashvamedha confirm this. The king was usually a Kshatriya. The Kingship was hereditary. There were instances of election of Kings. Though the king had absolute powers, he was unable to ignore the officers like purohit and the bodies like samiti and Sabha. With the expansion of the Kingdom the Machinery of administration was elaborated. In the later Vedic period we come across the names of many new officials like treasurer, collector of taxes, charioteer, superintendents etc. A system of regular provincial government might have been started in this period. The King enjoyed vast judicial powers. Sometimes he referred certain cases to the tribe for adjudication. There were certain judicial officers who were given power to hear certain cases. The case in villages was decided by village judges.

Social condition

The society underwent very little changes. There were no remarkable changes in the mode of dress. Meat eating was gradually hated. New kinds of entertainment came into practice. The position of women became worse. Daughters were considered as a source of misery. Polygamy affected the life of women of the upper classes. There were instances of child marriage. The class distinctions in the society became more evident. Brahmanas and Shatriyas were considered high classes. The privileges enjoyed by them were denied to Vaisyas and

Sudras. Who were considered as lower classes. The power and prestige of the brahmanas increased considerably. The Sudras were considered impure. Besides these classes of people there were certain Aryans outside the brahminical fold. We have some information regarding the system of education. Teaching was mostly oral.

Economic condition

Agriculture continued to be one of the important occupations of the people. They made considerable development in implements. They were able to cultivate new kinds of grains and fruit trees. Trade and industry flourished. Commerce was improved by the usage of certain coins like nishka, Satamana and krishnale. Certain specializations were made in professions. The chariot maker was distinguished from carpenter. The tanner was different from hide-dresser. The bows and bow-strings were made by different persons. Women entered the industrial world as makers of embroidered garments and dyers. The people used metals like gold, bronze, iron, copper, lead, tin etc. The people had the practice of domesticating elephants.

Religious condition

During this period the number of sacrifices increased. The Gods who were prominent in the early vedic age became less prominent. Varuna and Indra were pushed back. The Godlike Siva, Rudra, Vishnu came to the forefront. Sacrifices became important. The common people had to seek the help of the brahmanas to perform the sacrifices and yagas properly. The brahmanas became indispensable for religion. The people offered not only milk and grain to Gods but also flesh of animals. Human sacrifice was also practised. The learned persons started to think about the life after death. Hence many philosophical ideas of Hinduism were born. The ideas of soul, karma and heaven were discussed. The misery of one's life was considered as a punishment of his misdeed in his previous life. One was to do good deeds to lead a happy life in the next birth. The ascetic life was considered sacred. Many persons tried to lead ascetic life in the forests.

Rig Vedic and later Vedic civilizations

Comparison on the Rig Vedic and later Vedic civilizations would reveal the changes which brought development in all aspects. In the Rig Vedic Civilization the king had a limited territory to rule. But in the later vedic age imperialism came into existence. The administrative

machinery was more organized in the later vedic age. Women were given less regard in the later vedic society. Class distinctions became more evident education developed. The economic condition in the later vedic civilization was better than that of the early vedic civilization New industries came into force. Specialisations in professions emerged. Varuna and Indra dominated in the pantheon of Gods during Rig Vedic age whereas Siva, Rudhra and Vishnu came into prominence in the later Vedic age. Sacrifices and rituals became more important in later vedic age than in the early Vedic Civilization. Thus, there were changes in all aspects.

The early Vedic Civilization and the later vedic civilization reveal the role of the Aryans in Indian history. Their expansion had deeper impact. A study of the two Civilizations would also reveal the change in the role of religion and rituals. The literary works of the two ages contribute much to the richness of Hindu philosophy.

UNIT-II

CAREER OF GAUTAMA BUDDHA (567 – 487 B.C.)

Early life

Siddhartha Gautama was the founder of Buddhism. He was born in Lumbinivana at Kapilavastu in 567 B.C. He belonged to an aristocratic family of the Sakya clan of Kapilavastu. He was the son of Suddhodana, the chief of the Sakya clan. Suddhodana's wife Mayadevi died seven days after the birth of the child. So he was brought up by Prajapati Gautami, the sister of Mayadevi. Gautama married Yasodhara and had a son Rahula by name. Born luxuries and bred in affluence, Siddhartha led a life of ease and pleasure. After seeing an old man, a diseased man, a dead man and saint, he gave up the comforts and pleasures of princely life and took to the life of a wandering hermit at the age of 29. He determined to find out the cause of sorrow and the way of release from it. His early attempt in his experiment with truth under two teachers failed. He practised severe penance and asceticism. But pain and starvation failed to satisfy his inner urge. So he took to deep meditation. At the age of 35 while seated under a papal tree Gaya in deep meditation, the light of knowledge flashed on him. Thenceforward, he came to known as the „Buddha” or the “enlightened one”.

Buddha's Teachings

Buddha delivered his first sermon at Sarnath near Benaras to five Brahmin ascetics. He taught his followers the four truths concerning suffering, the cause of suffering, the destruction of suffering and the way of the path to be adopted for the destruction of suffering. According to him, all the sorrows of mankind were due to selfish desire of three kinds. They were the desire to give pleasure to the senses of the body, the desire to live long in this world and the desire to own property and to be respected by others. If a man can conquer all these desires, he can live happily even in this world. The way to get rid of the pleasures of life does not lie either in the pursuit of pleasure or in inflicting pain into the body. There is a middle path between the two extremes, viz., "the Noble eight-fold path". The eight steps are Right Views, Right Aims, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right in fulness and Right Contemplation. This path leads to Nirvama which means a peaceful state free from all desires. It is the final result of the extinction of the desire. Buddhism lays stress on Ahimsa and the Hindu doctrines of Karma and transmigration of souls. For 45 years Buddha roamed about as a wandering teacher proclaiming his gospel to princes and people of North India. He died at the age of 80 at Kusinagara.

Sacred Literature of the Buddhists

Buddha laid the foundation of the Buddhist Sangha or the order of monks and nuns. The sacred literature of the Buddhists is collectively known as the Tripitaka (three baskets). The Sutta-pitaka deals with the religious discourses of the Buddha. The Vinaya-pitaka lays down rules and regulations for proper conduct of the Buddhist monks and nuns and the management of the Buddhist Church. The Abhidhamma-pitaka expounds the philosophical principles enshrined in Buddhism. Among the sacred literature of the Buddhists mention should be made of the Jataka or stories of the previous lives of the Buddha.

The Four Buddhist Councils

Shortly after the death of the Buddha, the First Buddhist Council was convened at Rajagritha by his disciples. The teachings of the Buddha were collected and classified. The second Buddhist Council was held at Vaisali, a century after the death of the Buddha. The Council aimed at settling the differences in the practices observed by the monks. In spite of the

attempts, the Buddhist Church got divided into two sections. The Third Buddhist Council was convened at Pataliputra by Asoka. The abhidhamma –pitaka was incorporated with the sacred literature of the Buddhists during the occasion. The Fourth Buddhist Council was held in Kashmir or Jullundur during the rule of Kanishka. The Council patched up the differences among the rival sections and prepared their authoritative commentaries on the Pitakas known as Vibhashas.

Progress of Buddhism

The Buddhist Sangha was a powerful body which spread the religion in the distant parts of the world. It had the royal patronage of Kings like Asoka, Kanishka and Harsha. It was Asoka who raised Buddhism to the status of a State religion and made it universal. He undertook many effective steps to spread Buddhism in every nook and corner of the world. He organized missions for the propagation of Buddhism. Missionaries were sent to Ceylon, Egypt, Macedonia, Syria and other places. He sent his own son and daughter on a mission to Ceylon. Devanampiyatissa, the ruler of Ceylon, was converted to the Buddhist faith. The greatest contribution made by Asoka to Buddhism was that he raised a local religion from the relative neglect into which it had fallen to the status of a world religion. Buddhism took deep roots in China by the end of the 6th century A.D. The famous Chinese pilgrims – Fa-hien, Hiuen Tsang and I-tsing – came to India to see the holy places of Buddhism. China acted as a stepping –stone for the dissemination of Buddhism in Japan in the 6th century A.D. In due course, Buddhism spread to other places like Burma, Tibet, Sumatra and Java.

Buddhist Heritage

The Buddhists made some notable contributions to the development of art, architecture, sculpture and literature. In the field of architecture, their valuable contributions were the Stupas and Chaityas. The Stupas are shrines where the relics of the Buddha are preserved. The Chaityas are rock – cut temples meant for religious meetings and worship. Some of the famous Stupas are at Sanchi, Sarnath, Amaravata and Nagarjunikonda. Some of the famous Chaityas are at Barabar, Junnar, Bhaja and Ajanta. The Asokan pillars through which Asoka propagated Buddhism are the best specimens of the sculpture of the period. The Gandhara School of Art which flourished during the time of Kanishka produced some fine specimens of sculptural

works. The Nalanda University served as a literary centre for the diffusion of Buddhist doctrines.

Downfall of Buddhism

Buddhism exercised a profound influence on Hindu life and thought the adoption of Ahimsa as a code of conduct by the Hindus was directly taken from Buddhism. It failed to take deep roots in the land of its own birth. It did not effect any change in the social structure. So, in course of time, the best principles in Buddhism were absorbed by Hinduism. Buddhism got divided into two sects – Hinayana and Mahayana. In the Hinayana form of Buddhism, Buddha was not worshipped as a God. The deification of Buddha is an important feature of the Mahayana form. With the passage of time, the Buddhist Sangha became corrupt beyond measure. The alvars and Nayanmars revived Vaishnavism and Saivism. The final overthrow of Buddhism was effected by Sankaracharya and Ramanuja. The loss of royal patronage led to the decline of Buddhism. With the advent of the Huns and the Muslim, the caste system became very rigid and led to the downfall of Buddhism.

Estimate of the Buddha

In an age of religious unrest, Buddha stood forth as the first apostle who preached peace and piety among one and all. He possessed an extraordinarily striking personality. He moved among the masses and set up an example to them by practicing what he preached. By returning good for evil he became “the Great Tamer of the untamed hearts”. His simple parables and similes had a telling effect on the people who approached him for comfort and consolation. Like Jesus Christ, Buddha appealed to the people to conquer hatred by love. Both Buddha and Jesus laid emphasis on the purity of the mind, blessed the peace-makers and stood forth as champions of the down-trodden and the oppressed. While the teachings of Jesus touched the conscience of the people, those of the Buddha appealed to the intellect. The Dharma of the Buddha which emphasized Ahimsa or non-injury to living beings exercised a profound influence on the life of the people. With malice towards none and with charity for all, Buddha relentlessly carried on his mission of mercy and campaign for compassion among the laymen and the laity. Buddha, “The Light of Asia”, richly deserves to be called by the better and exalted title “The Light of the World”.

Buddha was a pioneer in organizing monasteries. These monasteries became the fore – runners of their counterparts started under the shadow of different religions. The democratic spirit of Buddha is revealed in the fact that he threw open his religion to all castes. In the words of Havell, “The success of Gautama’s vision must have been due partly to his own magnetic personality and the deep human feeling which inspired his teachings and partly to the fact that he opened wide the doors of Aryan religion and satisfied the spiritual desires of masses by offering them a religious law easy to understand and accessible to all, free from elaborated and costly ceremonial, raising the social status of the lower orders, giving them their spiritual freedom and making the life of the community healthier and happier.

Jainism

Introduction

The origin of Jainism is obscure. Earlier Mahavira was considered as the founder of Jainism. However later findings reveal that Jainism might have been founded earlier. It is said that Rishaba founded Jainism. He was a King. He renounced his kingdom and became an ascetic. There were twenty-four Tirthankaras who were engaged in preaching Jainism. Among them Mahavira was the last. There are historical references only about Parsva Nath and Mahavira the twenty-third and the twenty-fourth Tirthankaras. Certain Jain people claim their religion as old as vedic religion.

Parsva Nath

Parsva Nath, the twenty –third Tirthankara was the son of Asvasena, the king of Banaras. He became an ascetic at the age of 30. He performed penance for about 84 days and got enlightened. He preached Jainism for about 70 years and died. He lived 150 Years before Mahavira. Parsva Nath was against the worship of Gods and Goddesses. He opposed rituals and caste system. He believed that every one could attain salvation. He emphasized self control.

Mahavira (599 B.C -527 B.C.)

Mahavira was born in 599 B.C. at Kundagram to Siddhartha and Trisala. Kundagram was a village in Vaijji. His original name was Vardhaman. Vardhaman spent his early life in royal luxuries. He married Yashodara, a beautiful princess. He had a daughter. From his childhood he had a liking on meditation. When he was 30, his parents died, with the permission from his family members, he renounced the world and become an ascetic. He wore clothes for some time. Later he became naked and stretched his arms for alms. He spent twenty years of self-mortification. In the thirteenth years he got enlightenment at village called Trimbhikagrama. Then he was called Jaina Mahavira. Hence his followers are called jains. Mahavira continued preaching for about 30 years. He met Brimbisara and Ajatasaatru. In 527 B.C at the age of 72 Mahavira died in a village called Pava.

Principles of Jainism

Ahimsa: Jainism believes in non violence or Ahimsa. Had been practiced by them strictly. The sains of Jainism did not even kill insects. To avoid harm without knowledge they walked with a duster to remove creatures like ants on the way. They did not take food in the night and they tied their mouth with a piece of cloth.

Tri Ratna: The three principles of Jainism are called Tri Ratna. They are Right faith, Right knowledge and Right conduct. 2) The Theory of knowledge: There are five types of knowledge a) Nati-ordinary knowledge b) Sruti-knowledge attained by listening c) Avadhi –divine knowledge d) Mana Prayay –knowledge of the views and feelings of other people e) Kewalcomplete knowledge 3) Theory of karma and Rebirth: According to Jains every things has soul. Animals, plants, stones, rocks, water, and man other objects have soul. One's deeds are called Karma. One's rebirth depends on his Karma. Like Hinduism Jainism also believes in rebirth. Nirvana: To escape from transmigration of soul one should annihilate Karma. Penance is the right way to annihilate Karma . When one frees his soul, he attains Nirvana. 4) God and universe : Jainism does not believe in God. They don't believe in any creator of this universe. Man is considered the maker of his destiny. The best life of enlightenment. 5) Emancipation of women: Women are given equal status. Mahavira admitted women in Jain Sansha. 6) Nudity: Mahavira insisted Nudity, according to him people had attachment on clothes. Besides, nudity

would help self-mortification 7) Five Vows: The five vows are applicable to ordinary people also. But their adherence was strict to bhikshus. The five vows are a) Ahimsa b) Not telling a lie c) Not to take anything which is not freely given d) Non-attachment and e) Selfcontrol.

8) Sins: Jainism 13 sins. Himsa, telling a lie, Stealing. Using intoxicants, Jealousy, Anger, Pride are some among them.

Jainism in later Years

Jainism greatly flourished after the death of Mahavira. It had royal patronage. Some rulers of the Nanda dynasty and Chandra Gupta Maurya were followers of Jainism. Jaina Sanghs were formed to propagate Jainism. Later, about 100 years after the death of Mahavira Jainism split into two sects namely Digambara and Svetambara. The Svetambaras used clothes while the Digambaras remained naked.

Jains Art and Literature

The Jains built many cave-dwellings for their mount. Such cave dwellings could be seen at Udayagiri. Ellora, Mount Abu, Girnar, Chittoor and Nagamalai near Madurai. There are fine Jain shrines at SaravanaBelgola, Mudabidri and Gurnvgayankeri. There are traces of Jain temples which have been converted into Mosques. The Gomateswara temple at Sravana Belgola in modern Karnataka celebrated its 1000th year. There are many Jaina literary works. There are 12 Angas, 12 Unpangas, 10 Parkirnas, 6 chheda Sutras 4 Mula Sutras and 4 miscellaneous texts. These works deal with the Jain doctrines, rules of conduct of the monks and other aspects of Jainism, Many commentaries were also written in Sanskrit and Prakri. There are charitas which depict the life stories of sages. In Tamil JivagaChinthamani is a Jain work. An old dictionary and grammar work in Tamil were done. Jains. Some Jains claim Tiruvalluvar to be Jain. Later works in Telugu and Karnarese are also found.

Conclusion

Jainism came to the forefront as a revolt against the caste ridden ritualistic Hinduism. Within a short span of time it spread to many places in India. However it could not spread to foreign countries. It was not a missionary religion. Its principals were extreme. Hence it could not spread to foreign states. However it had its effect on the Indian People.

Buddhism and Jainism compared

There is a similarity in the life of Buddha and Mahavira. Kshatriyas by birth, both of them founded their religions as a reaction against the Vedic religion. Buddhism and Jainism were branches of Hinduism. Buddha and Mahavira accepted the doctrines of Karma and Transmigration of souls. They rejected the authority of the Vedas and condemned the bloody sacrifices involved in them. Philosophically both religions had „sorrow“ as the starting point. Both laid special stress on the practice of Ahimsa. They preached in the vernacular languages which appealed to the masses. Both threw open their religion to all classes and depended upon the support of their respective sanghas for spreading their doctrines.

In spite of these similarities, there are some fundamental differences between the two religions. Mahavira advocated extreme asceticism and self-mortification. Buddha laid stress on the Middle Path between extreme asceticism and extreme worldliness. Both religious leaders had no veneration for the Vedic Gods. While Mahavira denied the existence of God, Buddha did not mention God. While Jainism followed some of the religious ceremonies of the Hindus, Buddhism totally abandoned them.

PERSIAN INVASION

The sixth century B.C. was important in three respects. It witnessed the rise of Jainism and Buddhism, the ascendancy of Magadha and the Persian Invasion of India. From time immemorial Iran or Persia had commercial contact with India. The commercial contact in due course developed into political domination in the 6th century B.C. The political condition of North –West India offered a fertile ground for the foreigners to fish in troubled waters. “While the interior of India had been undergoing a process of political unification under Magadha, her undefended and insecure frontiers on the north –west invited foreign invasions”.

Cyrus the Great (558 -530 B.C.) The founder of the Achaemenian empire of Persia, conquered Gandhara. As Cambyses (530-522B.C.), the successor of Cyrus, was preoccupied with the conquest of Egypt, he found no time to divert his attention to India. His successor Darius I (522-486B.C.) annexed the Punjab and Sind. These two regions constituted the 20th Satrapy of the Persian empire . During the rule of his successor, Xerxes (486-465B.C.), Greece invaded Persia. The resounding victory of Greece over Persia prevented the latter from

following a forward policy in India. It seems quite probable that Persian hold on India was lost during the reign of Artaxerxes II (405 -358 B.C.) and never lasted till 330 B.C. when Darius III, the last King of Achaemenian empire died.

Effects of the Persian Invasion

The Persian Invasion of India was not without its results. The Macedonian Invasion of India came in its wake. It gave a boost to Indo- Iranian commerce. The introduction of the Kharoshthi script may be traced to the Achaemenian domination. The Maurya art was influenced on a modest scale by the Persian influence. Some Persian ceremonials crept into the Maurya Court.

MACRDNIAN INVASION

Macedonia was a small kingdom situated to the north of Greece. The two important city-states in Greece were Athens and Sparta. The imperial ambitions of Athens were shattered by Sparta in the Peloponnesian War (431-404B.C.) The fall of Athens left Sparta once again supreme in the Greek world for some time. It was followed by the Theban supremacy from 370 to 362 B.C. The Theban supremacy was replaced by the Macedonian supremacy under Philip II. Alexander was born to Philip II in 356 B.C. He conquered a number of kingdoms in Asia within a short span of 13 years.

Conquest of the Persian Empire and Central Asia

Entrusting the government of Macedonia into the hands of Antipater, his father's trusted minister, Alexander launched into a career of conquest. He crossed the Hellespont and invaded Asia Minor. In the battle of Granicus River (334B.C.), he won a resounding victory over the Persians. Then he defeated the Persian King Darius II in the battle of Issus (333B.C.). The victory at Issus practically brought the whole of Asia Minor under his control; it opened new vistas for the conquest of Syria and Egypt. The fall of Tyre brought the whole of Syria under his control. From Syria, he marched into Egypt. The Persian Satrap surrendered. The victorious army entered Memphis and Alexander assumed the title of Pharaoh of Egypt. At mouth of the river Nile, he laid the foundation of the great harbour city of Alexandria. From Egypt, Alexander marched through Syria, crossed the rivers Euphrates and Tigris and defeated Darius III at Arbela in 331 B.C. Darius fled from the battle-field. He was murdered by Bessus, the Satrap of Bactria

in 330 B.C. Alexander became the undisputed master of the whole of Persia. He married Statira, the daughter of Darius III. The comparative ease with which he humbled the Persian Emperor turned his head. He then cherished the bold design of fresh pastures. He marched his army into Central Asia and conquered Bactria, Sogdiana, Aria, Gedrosia, Drangiana and Arachosia.

Conquest of India

As heir Darius III, Alexander decided to regain the Satrapy of the Persian Emperor in India. The political condition of north-western India and the Punjab presented a confused picture on the eve of Alexander's invasion. There was nought among the rulers of north – western India. The important Kings of this region were Ambi of Taxila, the ruler of Abhisara in the Swat valley, Purushothama (Porus), the ruler of Sind, and Sophytes, the ruler of the Salt Range. The state of Nysa situated between the Kunar and Swat Valleys had a republican form of government. The other republican tribes were the Malavas or Malloi who lived in the valley of the Ravi, the Abastanoi or Ambashtha in the Lower Chenab, the Oxydrakoi or the Kshudraka who lived between the Ravi and Beas, and the Siboi who lived below the confluence of the Jhelum and the Chenab. These kingdoms and republics were frequently engaged at war with one another. Even though there was no recognised leader of the first order, Porus was making a bold bid for political supremacy in the region. To conquer the mushroom of warring kingdoms and warlike tribes was an uphill task indeed.

Alexander crossed the Hindukush in 327 B.C. and brought to subjugation the wild tribes of the Swat and Bajaur valleys. He crossed the Indus in 326 B.C. and reached Taxila where Ambi gave him a warm welcome with rich presents. Thus Alexander got a base in Taxila for his future operations in India. From Taxila, Alexander marched eastwards and reached the banks of the river Jhelum (Hydaspes). Porus, the ruler of the land between the Jhelum and the Chenab was a man of different stamp, unlike Ambi. He put up a stiff resistance against the Macedonian conqueror (the plain of Emathia was a part of Macedonia). In spite of the gallant resistance put up by Porus, he was defeated by Alexander in the battle of the Jhelum of Hydaspes. Porus was taken captive. The fallen foe was treated with great magnanimity by Alexander. He not only restored to him his kingdom but extended it by new additions. After the battle of Jhelum, Alexander advanced up to the river Beas (Hyphasis) bringing under subjection the warlike tribes on the way. Though the conquest of the Gangetic valley was within his easy reach, his soldiers mutinied and

refused to proceed further. After making arrangements for the administration of the newly conquered territories, Alexander ordered for the retreat of the army. He left India in 325 B.C. with a part of his army through Gedrosia. The rest of the army left by sea under his admiral Nearchus. Alexander reached Babylon where he died in 323 B.C. in the 33rd year of his age.

Effects of the Macedonian Invasion

The temporary subjection of some of the warlike tribes and shedding of much innocent blood were the only direct results of the invasion. The defeat of Porus was no great victory because he was not a great ruler. Had Alexander defeated Dhana –Nanda, it would have gone down in history as a signal victory. Immediately after the death of Alexander, all traces of Greek rule were wiped out from India. The triumph of Alexander ultimately proved to be as ephemeral as a dew. “Even in military science Indians showed no disposition to learn the lessons taught by the sharp sword of Alexander”. But the Macedonian invasion was not without its indirect, commercial and cultural effects. The invasion indirectly paved the way for the political unification of north-western India under the Mauryas. The hammering blows given by Alexander to the small states and republics of the Punjab made the work of Chandragupta Maurya in extending the sway of Magadhan hegemony to the Punjab lighter. On the cultural side, the Hellenistic influence could be found in the Indian system of coinage and art in a subsequent period. The opening of new trade routes gave a fillip to commerce between India and the western world.

UNIT III

THE MAURYAN EMPIRE

The Mauryan Epoch –Sources

Introduction

The Foundation of the Mauryan Empire is a unique event in Indian History. For the first time, a major portion of India was brought under political unity. The advent of the Mauryan dynasty marks the passage from darkness to light for the historian. Chronology suddenly becomes definite, almost precise says V.A. Smith. A regular and continuous political history

begins with the advent of the Mauryan Empire. There are many sources of information which throw light on the Mauryan Empire.

Epigraphic and Archaeological Sources

There are many inscriptions which say about the social, political and religious developments under the Mauryas. Asoka made many pillar inscriptions, rock inscriptions and monuments. These help us to know much about Asoka. Many stupas, viharas and caves tell about the development of art and architecture under the Mauryas. The Junagadh rock inscription of Rudradaman also throws light on the history of the Mauryans.

The Puranas furnish a brief account of the early life of Chandragupta Maurya and assign him a regnal period of 24 years. The Buddhist and the Jain traditions and the Ceylonese Chronicles supply scrappy information about the Mauryas. The Buddhist tradition give a more probable date (324 B.C.) for the accession of Chandragupta Maurya. The Jain tradition throws a flood of light on the closing years of Chandragupta Maurya. The Ceylonese Chronicles – Deepavamsa and Mahavamsa – give a brief account of the reign of Chandragupta Maurya in general and Asoka in particular. The Girnar Rock Inscription of Rudradaman gives a clear picture of the extent of Chandragupta's empire.

Arthashastra of Kautilya

The most important source of information about Mauryas is the Arthashastra written by Kautilya. Kautilya was the Prime Minister to Chandra Gupta Maurya. Some scholars like Ketand Dr. Bandarkarkar claim it to be a work of a later age. Arthashastra is a treatise on statecraft. It is more a manual than a theoretical work. The author describes the various aspects of governing the nation. Kautilya advises the king on political and social matters. He shows the ruler the ways of success in reigning and waging wars against the enemies. The work is historically valuable as it throws much light on the social, political and economic conditions of its period. One could also understand the system of administration to some extent. Kautilya was also known as Chanakya. He is called the Machiavelli of India.

Indika of Megasthenes

Megasthenes was the Greek ambassador sent by Seleucus to the court of Chandra Gupta Maurya. He wrote Indika. The Original text of Indika was lost. But some other Greek writers had taken certain portions of Indika which supply information about Mauryans. Megasthenes might have stayed in India between 302 and 288 B.C. Indika describes about Pataliputra. It says about the king and his military. Megasthenes mentions about the system of administration and the divisions in the society. Being a foreigner who stayed in India not for a very longer period Megasthenes might have added certain wrong information without his knowledge. A careful study of Indika would enable us to gather valuable information.

Religious sources

The Puranas tell about the early life of Chandra Gupta Maurya. Though we can not fully rely on Puranas, they can also be used as a source. The Buddhist and Jainist traditions also help us to know about Chandra Gupta Maurya and Asoka.

Foreign Sources

There are Greek sources on the history of Mauryans. Nearchus was sent by Alexander to explore the coast between the Indus and the Persian Gulf. Onesicritus accompanied him. Aristobuius was sent to India by Alexander to do some work. All these three officers of Alexander had written about India. These works and the Ceylonese chronicles Deepavamsa and Mahavamsa serve as sources on Mauryan History.

Mudrarakshas of Visakhadatta

Visakhadatta wrote the historical drama Mudrakshas. Though this drama was written during the period of Guptas, its theme is about Chandra Gupta Maurya. The author had collected all available information and tells the way in which Chandra Gupta Maurya overthrew the Nandas. The drama has high historical value.

Conclusion

The Mauryan epoch has abundant sources of historical information. These sources help not only in writing the history of the Mauryas, but also in constructing the early part of Indian History. A systematic and chronological structure of Indian History begins with the Mauryas.

Asoka

Early life and accession

The reign of Asoka forms one of the most brilliant chapters in the history of India. He is the greatest King of the Maurya dynasty. He was the grandson of Chandragupta and the second son of Bindusara. His inscriptions, the Ceylonese Chronicles – Deepavamsa and Mahavamsa – and Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain traditions are the main sources of information for his reign. He served his father as Viceroy of Taxila and Ujjain. It was at Ujjain that he married Mahavidehi. The offsprings of the union were Mahendra (son) and Sangamitra (daughter). Asoka quelled the rebellions in Ujjain and Taxila. The inscriptions throw very little on his early life. The Buddhist and Ceylonese chronicles are the only sources of information for his early life. The Ceylonese chronicles depict Asoka as a cruel and ferocious tyrant who came to power after killing his 99 brothers and thereby earned the notorious title „Chandasoka“. The story cannot be accepted as an historical fact because it was mainly intended to glorify Buddhism by drawing a glaring contrast between the warlike career of Asoka in the beginning and the path of peace followed by him after his conversion to Buddhism. Though Asoka came to power in 273 B.C., his coronation took place only four years after his assumption of power. The intervening period between his assumption of power and coronation might have been a trying one for him. During this period, he engaged himself in the fratricidal feud. But there is no conclusive evidence to prove the fact that a war of succession ensued after his father's death and that he killed his 99 brothers including his eldest brother Susima. But he spared the life of his last brother, Tishya. Anyhow, the first four years of Asoka's reign form "one of the dark spaces in the spectrum of Indian history".

Kalinga war

Like his illustrious grandfather Chandragupta, Asoka also entered into a career of conquest and consolidation. During the ninth year after his coronation, he effected the conquest of Kalinga. Rock Edict XIII gives a graphic account of the horrors and terrors of the Kalinga war and its results. It reads as follow: “One hundred and fifty thousand persons were carried away captive, One hundred thousand were slain persons many times that number perished”. Kalinga was incorporated with the dominions of the Maurya empire. Asoka was struck with sorrow at the horror and bloodshed caused during the war. The Kalinga war was a turning point in his life. Immediately agter the war, he was converted to Buddhism by Upagupta. He renounced war once for all and decided to conquer the world by the arts of peace, rather than by the feats of war.

Extent of the empire

The Inscriptions of Asoka, spread over the length and breath of the country, give a clue to the extent of his empire. In the north – west frontier, the territories ceded by seleukos to Chandragupta remained unaltered. Kalhana’s Rajatarangini testifies to the fact that Kashmir was a part of his empire. From the Rummidei Pillar Inscription, we are given to understand that the Nepalese Tarai was a part of the empire. The Stupas of Asoka erected in different parts of Bengal testify to the inclusion of Bengal as an imperial territory. Rock edict II mentions the independent kingdoms of the Cholas, Pandyas, Keralaputra (Cheras) and Satyaputra. From that we are able to glean that Chittaldurg district in Mysore marked the southernmost limit of his empire.

Asoka as an administrator

Asoka was a brilliant administrator. There was a high degree of centralization. The King was the pivot of the administrative machinery. He was assisted by a Council of Ministers in the day-to-day administration of the country. Though the King had great powers, he never acted as a despot. The state under Asoka was a “Welfare State” and not a “Police State”. The following quotation clearly proves Asoka’s welfare conception. “In the welfare of his subjects lies his welfare; in their happiness his happiness; whatever pleases himself, he shall not consider as good; but whatever pleases his subjects, he shall consider as good”, For the Sake of

administrative convenience, Asoka divided the country into five provinces. The capitals of the five provinces were Taxila, Ujjain, Suvarnagiri, Tosali and Pataliputra. Kalinga with its capital at Tosali was created during the reign of Asoka. Judicial administration was very severe. But Asoka made the punishments lighter. A standing army was kept and it was divided into four divisions consisting of infantry, cavalry, elephants and chariots. The spy system was very efficient which kept the King informed about the day-today happenings in nook and corner of the empire. The city of Pataliputra was administered by a council consisting of 30 members divided into six committees of five members each. Each committee looked after a particular business.

An important change introduced by Asoka in the administration was the appointment of a new class of officers known as Dhamma Mahamatras (Dhamma Mahamatras) for the establishment and promotion of the Dharma or Law of Piety and the happiness of those devoted to Dharma. An equally important change was that he instituted quinquennial and triennial tours of high officers like Pradesikas, Rajukas, Yutas and Mahamatras. In addition to their usual duties of inspection, they were expected to spread the message of the Dhamma or dharma in such a way as to reach the remotest parts of the empire.

Asoka as a patron of art and letters

Asoka was a great builder. He substituted stone for wood and brick. He built a palace at Pataliputra, the capital of the Imperial Mauryas. Tradition credits Asoka with the construction of 84,000 stupas or viharas. The artistic excellence of the period is also reflected in the rock-cut caves and the monolithic pillars. He constructed the Sudarsana reservoir near Girnar for irrigational purposes. Public education received a great stimulus during his period.

Inscriptions of Asoka

Asoka is mentioned in the inscriptions as Devanampiya (Beloved of the Gods) or Priyadarsi (Of Amiable appearance). His name is mentioned only in the Maski Edict. The Language used in the inscriptions is Prakrit and the script Brahmi. In two inscriptions, the Kharoshthi script is used. The inscriptions located throughout the country fall under three divisions. They are the Rock Inscriptions, the Pillar Inscriptions and Cave Inscriptions. These three can be again sub-divided into eight divisions in chronological order.

1. Two types of Minor Rock Edicts The first type of Minor Rock Edicts deals with the personal life of Asoka. The second type lists the sacred principles of Dhamma or Law of Piety. The Maski Minor Rock Edict unique by itself is the only one which mentions the personal name of the King. 2. Bhabru Rock Edict The Bhabru Rock Edict proves beyond doubt that the personal religion of Asoka was Buddhism. 3. The fourteen Rock Edicts The fourteen Rock Edicts located in different places mention Asoka's principles of government and ethical system. 4. The Kalinga Rock Edicts The two Kalinga Rock Edicts deal with the method of administration to be followed in the newly conquered province of Kalinga. 5. The three Cave Inscriptions in the Barabar Hills These caves dedicated by Asoka to Ajivikas (Jain Monks) speak volumes of his religious toleration. 6. The two Tarai Pillar Inscriptions These two Pillar Inscriptions which are of commemorative nature prove that Asoka went on Dharmayatra to holy places connected with the life of the Buddha. 7. The seven Pillar Edicts The seven Pillar Edicts deal with the Dhamma and the steps taken by Asoka for the propagation of Dhamma. 8. The four Minor Pillar Edicts These inscriptions mention the punishments to be meted out to schismatics in the Buddhist Church.

Historical importance of the Inscriptions

The inscriptions are an invaluable source of information for the reign of Asoka. They help us to know the extent of his empire, the accurate regnal periods of his contemporaries in Syria, Egypt, Macedon, etc., about his Dhamma, the steps taken by him to propagate Buddhism abroad his administrative system, high percentage of literacy, the culture of the people and above all his character and personality.

Asoka's Dharma

The Kalinga war was a turning point in the life of Asoka. He decided to dedicate himself for the service of humanity. He was of the conviction that the prosperity of the people was linked with morality. So he presented a code of morality to his people. His code of morality is called the law piety or Asoka's Dharma. Asoka's Dharma had two aspects namely practical and Doctrinal. His Dharma stressed the code of moral duties comprising kindness, Liberality, Truthfulness, Inner and outer Purity, Gentleness, Saintliness, Moderation in spending and saving, self-control, Gratitude, Firm Devotion and Attachment to morality. Asoka stressed Ahimsa, Toleration was

also an essential principle of Asoka's Dharma. Asoka practiced what he preached. He made no more war after the Kalinga war. Instead of winning territories by his fierce swords he started to win over hearts by his kind words and deeds. He followed his policy of Dharma. Some other writers think that Asoka's Dharma was based on Buddhism. Some other writers identify it with vedic religion. However it is believed that Asoka formed these forms of morality on the basis of virtues which are generally accepted, acquired and admired.

Service to Buddhism

Asoka was the greatest benefactor of Buddhism. He rendered glorious and meritorious services to Buddhism. He undertook many effective steps to spread Buddhism in nook and corner of the country. He introduced Buddhist principles in the government of the country. He removed some of the harsh features in judicial administration. The punishments were made light and more humane. Asoka himself set an example as to how people should lead a Buddhist way of life. The greatness of Asoka lies in the fact that he practiced what he preached. He gave up war once for all and the Bherighosha was replaced by the Dharmaghosha. He abolished royal hunts. The Viharayatras or pleasure trips were substituted by Dharmayatras. Meat-eating was prohibited in the royal kitchen. He appointed religious officers called Dharma Mahamatras to propagate the new faith. He gave wide publicity to Buddhism by engraving the Buddhist precepts on rocks and pillars which lay scattered in different parts of the country.

According to tradition, Asoka convened a Buddhist Council at Pataliputra to settle the disputes among the monks and to compile the scriptures. But with all his faith in Buddhism, Asoka was not intolerant of other creeds. He showered gifts on Buddhists as well as Brahmins and Jains. He undertook many works of public utility. The most important works of Asoka was the construction of hospitals for people and beasts.

Buddhism flourished in India due to the royal patronage extended to it by Asoka. He began to spread Buddhism to countries outside his own empire. Missionaries were sent to Ceylon, Egypt, Macedonia, Syria and number of other places. Of all the missions, the one that was sent to Ceylon was crowned with splendid success. He sent his own son and daughter – Mahendra and sangamitra. They converted Devanampiya –Tissa, the ruler of Ceylon, to the Buddhist faith. Sangamitra took along with her a branch of the bo-tree under which Buddha got

enlightenment and transplanted it at Anirddhapura, the ancient capital of Ceylon. That tree still stands as the oldest historical tree in Ceylon. Perhaps, the greatest contribution made by Asoka to Buddhism was that he raised a local religion from the neglect into which it had fallen to the status of a world religion. He left no stone unturned to make Buddhism a world religion. There is a controversy about the personal religion of Asoka. While some scholars say that he was not a Buddhist, others consider him a Brahminical Hindu. But the Bhabru Edict proves beyond doubt that the personal religion of Asoka was Buddhism.

Estimate

Asoka is one of the greatest Kings of history. He made no difference between practice and practice. He practiced what he preached. His title to fame rests on his religious catholicity and his high sense of duty to the people. As Koppen says in the Encyclopedia Britannica: "If a man's fame can be measured by the number of hearts who revere his memory, by the number of lips who have mentioned and still mention him with honour, Asoka is more famous than Charlemagne or Caesar". Asoka has been compared with Alexander, Caesar, Constantine and Napoleon. Asoka was more than all these people and in actual achievement, he outdistanced all of them. His cosmopolitan and humanitarian ideals speak volumes of his greatness and mightiness. "Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majesties and graciousness and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Asoka shines and shines almost alone, a star. From the Volga to Japan his name still honoured. China, Tibet and even India, though it has left his doctrine, preserve the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish his memory today than have heard the name of Constantine or Charlemagne".

Mauryan Administration

Introduction

The Mauryan Empire was vast. It needed an organized administration. The Indika of Megasthense, the Arthasastra of Kautilya and the inscriptions of Asoka help to know about the Administrative system of the Mauryas. It had many features seen in the modern system of administration.

The King

The King was the head of the state. He had legislative, executive and judicial powers. Though powerful, he was not despotic. He ruled in accordance with the will and wish of the people. The Mauryan state was more or less a welfare state. The king considered himself as the father of his citizens. The parental care of the king was appreciated much by the people. The king devoted the whole day in attending the affairs of the state and people. He had no time to rest and leisure. There were many officers to assist him in the administration.

Ministers and the Council

Ministers were important officers of the state. Mantri Parishad was a council inferior in status. The king consulted the ministers often. But he convened the Mantri Parishad rarely. The ministers got 48,000 panas as salary per year. The members of the Mantri Parishad got 12,000 panas as salary per year.

Other Officers

Amatyas were judicial officers. They served in civil and criminal courts. Atyaya were in charge of administration. There were certain officers called Yuktas. Their official function is not correctly known. Dr. F. W. Thomas considers them as Revenue officers. R.K. Mookerji says that they codified the orders of Mahamatras. Dr. D.R. Bandarkar opines that they were responsible for the welfare of the affected people. Rajukas were revenue officers and Pradesikas were tax collectors. They performed certain police functions too. Pradesika is considered as provincial governor by Dr. Mookerji. There was a well organized and effective system of espionage. The king appointed spies from people of different professions

The Provincial Administration

The country was divided into many provinces. Taxila, Ujjain, Tosali, Suvarnagiri were some of the capitals of the provinces during the reign of Asoka. There was a Governor in each province. Sometimes the royal princes were also appointed as provincial governors. When a prince acted as a governor he was called Kumara. The province was divided into Agaras, Vishayas and Pradesas. Sometimes the provincial governors were permitted to assume the title „Raja“. There were many officers to help the governor.

Municipal Administration

Megasthenes describes the administration of Pataliputra. The municipal administration was run by a council consisting thirty members. They were divided into six boards, each consisting five members. One of the boards was in charge of industry. The other boards were responsible for the regulation of foreigners, registration of births and deaths, trade, manufacture and collection of sales tax. The markets, temples, ports and public works were controlled by the municipal council. The municipal administration followed in Pataliputra might have been adopted in other cities also.

Village Administration

Gramika was in charge of the village administration. He might have been elected by the people of village. Gramavidhas or elders assisted him. The officers who were in charge of villages which were five and above in number were called Gopas. Stanika was an officer superior to Gopas.

Judicial Administration

The king was the fountain of justice. There were courts presided over by Mahamatras and Rajukas. Petty cases were resolved at village level either by Gramikas or village elders. The Criminal Code under the Mauryas was very harsh. Hence the offences were limited. Such a view is expressed by Megasthenes Asoka instructed Mahamatras to prevent unnecessary punishments awarded to citizens.

Army

The Mauryan Army was very big. According to Pliny the Army of Chandragupta included 600,000 soldiers, 30,000 cavalry, 9,000 elephants and many chariots. The Army was often led by the King himself. The king had an Amazonian bodyguard of armed women. There was a governing body of 30 members to supervise the army. They were divided into six boards, each consisting 5 members. The boards were responsible for the navy, transport and commissariat, the cavalry, the infantry, the chariots and elephants.

Revenue Administration

The taxes were received both in cash and kind. The land revenue was the main source of income. In villages two kinds of taxes namely bhaga and bali were levied. Bhaga was normally fixed at one- sixth of the produce. Sometimes it was raised to one-fourth or reduced to one-eighth. Bali was a kind of a special tax. Land taxes were collected by an officer called Agronomoi. In urban areas the main sources of revenue were taxes on birth and death, fines and tithes on sales.

Changes made by Asoka

Asoka made certain important changes in the system of Administration. He appointed a new kind of officers of high rank called Dharma Mahamatras. Their duty was to propagate the Dharma. He introduced the system of periodical tours by officers. The officers like Pradesikas, Rajukas, Yuktas and Mahamatras were directed by him to undertake quinquennial and triennial tours. These tours of officers enabled proper supervision of government servants at the lower level. The tours also helped to propagate the Dharma of Asoka.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Agriculture was the main profession. Those who worked in the farm fields were not to go to battlefields. The tillers of the soil continued their work without break. Those who were engaged in Agriculture were divided into three namely husbands-men herdsman and hunters. The husband men stayed away from towns and engaged in the cultivation. The herdsman and hunters stayed in tents and hills. They helped the husbands-men to protect the seeds and crops from animals and beasts. The Agriculturists were helped by the Government. They were supplied with seeds. In times of drought and flood they were not only exempted from taxes, but also provided with assistance. There were special artisans to produce the implements needed for Agriculturists. The land was ploughed with oxes. The state made arrangements for irrigation facilities. The agriculturists had the use of canals, tanks, wells, ponds and rivers for irrigation. They used buckets and leather bags to draw water from wells. There were dams for irrigation purposes. Kautilya mentions about powdered fish. Generally the soil was fertile. Wheat, gram, maize, rice, barley, sugarcane, mustard, cotton, tobacco and potatoes were some of the important crops.

Art and Architecture

The age of the Mauryas constituted a noble epoch in the field of art architecture. It flourished well in the reign of Asoka. Some historians concluded that the Mauryan emperors invited Craftsmen from Persia. But this view is opposed by Havell. Havell distinguishes two phases of sculptured art of the Mauryan epoch. The first phase was a cultured form of expression with nobility of design. The stone pillars of Asoka belong to this base. The sculpture of the stupas of Bharhut and Sanchi which recorded current events and legends connected with the life of Buddha as told in Jatakas constitute the other phase. According to Havell this phase is less cultured. This was the work of the craftsmen of lower grade. It was less pure in style. Sir John Marshall also distinguished two types of sculpture. The statue from Parkham in the Mathura Museum was regarded by him as the specimen of the earlier undeveloped class. The sculpture at Sarnath was considered to be well training given to the craftsmen who created Sarnath sculpture. Marshall concluded that emperor Asoka might have given training to the indigenous craftsmen by the craftsmen from Greece. Dr. Smith disagrees with him. According to Dr. Smith the sculpture at Sarnath might have been produced entirely by Indians without any training from Greek craftsmen. Besides the pillars there are other works which stand as specimens of the Mauryan Art. The seven rock-cut sanctuaries belong to the period of Asoka and his successors. Four of them is on the Barabar hill and three others are on the Nagarjun hill. These places are near Gaya. It is believed that a cave at Sitamarhi near Gaya was also created during the Mauryan epoch.

The Greek writers have mentioned the artistic importance of the Mauryan palace at Pataliputra. Fahien, the Chinese traveler had also made a note of the huge size and artistic beauty of the Mauryan palace. The marvelous caves of Ajanta and Ellora are glowing testimonies of this age. It is said that Asoka raised 84,000 stupas. Yuan Chwang says that there were fascinating stupas in Taxila, Srinagare, Thaneshwar, Mathura, Kanauj, Ayodhya, Kausambhi, Saravasti, Vaisali Banaras, Gaya etc.

THE KUSHANS

Kanishka I

Kanishka I was the greatest ruler among the Kushans. There are different views regarding the date of ascendance of Kanishka I. According to Dr. Fleet, Cuningham, Frank and Kennedy, Kanishka I ruled before Kadphises group and he, started the Vikram era, Dr. Smith Marshall, sten know and some other scholars hold the view that Kanishka ruled from 125 A.D. to the second half of the second century. Dr. R.C. Majumdar concludes that Kanishka founded the Traikutaka – Kalachouri – Chedi era of 248 -249 A.D. This view could not be maintained. Bhandarkar considers his year of ascendance as 278 A.D.

It is also said that Kanishka ascended the throne in 78 A.D. and initiated the Saka era. This view is held by Banerjee, Rapson, Ferguson, R.D.Thomas and others. This view is objected on certain grounds. However, there are more points which support this view. Hence it is concluded that Kanishka I ascended throne in 78 A.D. and initiated the Saka era.

At the time of his succession and accession to the throne the empire consisted of Afghanistan, a large part of Sindh. Portions of Punjab, Bactria and Parthia. Kanishka was not satisfied with what he inherited. He wanted to include more territories. According to Smith he won over Kashmir, the territory over which he had much desire. Out of his love for the region, he created a town known as Kanishapura with many Monuments. His successful war with Magadha is mentioned in Buddhist literature. Perhaps, he might have won over a part of Magadha. The western straps of Ujjain were won by him. It is said that Kanishka had a victory over the Chinese by which he got certain territories. It is also said that he brought a son of the Chinese emperor as a captive. This point is disputed by some scholars. Purushapura was the capital from which Kanishka I ruled. His empire included Afghanistan, Bactria, Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan outside India. In India, it was extended from Kashmir in the north to the Narbada in the south and upto Benaras in the east.

Kanishka and Buddhism

Kanishka's early religion is not clear. He might have believed in many Gods. Later, he was converted to Buddhism, probably by Asvagosha. Like Asoka, Kanishka also did a lot to

propagate Buddhism. Kanishka spent a lot of money to build a lot of monasteries. He generously distributed money to Buddhist monks to propagate Buddhism. Many Stupas were erected. Many religious people were sent abroad on missionary purpose. Those missionaries helped to spread Buddhism to China, Japan, Tibet and Central Asia. He convened the Fourth Buddhist Council to compile the doctrines of Buddhism. It is said that this Council was attended by not less than 500 monks. Many commentaries were prepared by the Council. The treatises prepared by this Council were copied down on copper plates. They were put in stone boxes and the boxes were buried under a Stupa which was specially created for the purpose. During the reign of Kanishka I Buddhism was divided into two sects namely Mahayana and Hinayana. Mahayana sect of Buddhism was declared the state religion by Kanishka. Mahayanism believed in the divinity of Buddhism. Many Hindu ideas were assimilated and a new life was infused.

Kanishka fostered literature to foster the growth of Buddhism. Many great writers like Asvagosha, Nagarjuna, Vasumitra and Charak were patronized by him. Buddha Charita, Sariputra Prakarna and Vajrasanchi are the important works of Asvagosha. Nagarjuna was a great writer on Mahayanism. Vasumitra wrote on Buddhist philosophy. These literary works helped much in the propagation of Buddhism. Though Kanishka was an ardent Buddhist, he was not hostile towards other religions.

Gandhara Art

The period of Kushans is remarkable for the development of Gandhara Art. Kanishka's contribution was the greatest. Gandhara was the region which was accessible for contacts of Persian, Greek and Roman. This region was ruled over by Greek rulers for about 300 years. Jalalabad, Hadda, Bamiyan the Swat valley and Peshawar were centers of Gandhara Art. According to Smith the Gandhara style is Graeco-Roman and many of the works of this style were executed in the second century A.D. According to Paul Masson and others the Gandhara Art is more Greek than Indian. However, the Gandhara Art is certainly Indian in content and subject matter. It follows the Indian tradition. The Gandhara School of Art might have existed from the middle of the First Century to the Fifth century A.D.

The figures made under Gandhara Art reflected certain Hellenistic ideas. The sculptures of Buddha were added with Greek features. The figures of Buddha and Bodhisattvas were

adorned with turban, moushtache, ornaments etc. The drappers of the figures of Buddha was based on Hellenic style. The folds of the garment, the physique of the body represented by the figure and the representation of light behind Buddha were all Graeco-Roman features. The features of Zeus and Apollo, the members of Greek Pantheon were added to the figures of Bodhisattvas. The works of Gandhara Art could be seen in Preshawar district and places around it. The Stupas and sculptures found at Taxilla also belonged to this school of Art. The extent of influence of the Gandhara Art is a point of controversy. According to Havell its influence was purely technical and not spiritual or intellectual. Will Durant considers the influence of Gandhara Art as very namely Mathura Art also existed. After some years the Gandhara Art lost its importance. The Indian Art was revived under the hindu rulers. The Gandhara Art became very successful outside India, in countries like Chinese Turkistan Mongolia China, Korea and Japan.

UNIT-IV

GUPTA DYNASTY

GUPTA EMPIRE

Samudra Gupta

Samudra Gupta was a great conqueror. He was land thirsty and his sword was blood thirsty. Hence he fought many wars and brought many kingdoms under his sway. The Allahabad inscription lists out the rulers of North India who were defeated by Samudra Gupta. They were Rudredeva, Matila, Naga-Dutta, Chandravarman. Ganpati- Naga NagaSena, Achyuta, Nandin and Balavarman. These kings were subdued in two expeditions under took by Samudra Gupta. These kings were supposed to be Naga kings. After defeating these Naga kings, Samudra Gupta might have taken up Garuda as his emblem. In North India Samudra Gupta followed the policy of Digvijay. The invasion and incursion of alien territories was followed by extermination and extension by annexation. He annexed the defeated territories. It is said that after defeating the nine Kings mentioned above Samudra Gupta attacked Atvika states or forest states in the region of Jubbalpore and Chhota Nagpur. They were about eighteen in number.

After subjugating them, he undertook a Southern expedition. In the South, he defeated about twelve kings. They were Mahendra of Koala, Vyashraraja of Mahakantra, Mantaraja of Kurala, Swamidatta of Kottura, Daman of Erandapalla, Vishnugopa of Kanchi, Nilaraj of Avamukta, Hostivarman of Vengi, Mahendra of Pistapura, Ugrasna of Palleke, Kubera of Devarashtra and Dhananjaya of Kushthalapura. It is difficult to identify many places mentioned above. It is also said that Samudra Gupta was defeated by Vishnugopa of Kanchi, who led a confederacy to face the Northern ruler. Samudra Gupta adopted a different policy in the South. His expedition in the North was based on the policy of Digvijay whereas it was based on Dharma Vijay in the South. He defeated the Kings in the South. But he did not annex the kingdoms. He put the defeated kings back on the throne as his vassals. Samudra Gupta's valour subdued certain tribes like Sanakanikas, Kakas and Kharaparikas. Then the empire of Samudra Gupta extended from the Himalayas in the North to the Nerbada in the South, from the Brahmaputra in the east to then Chambal in the west. Many states were dependents. To declare his victories he performed Ashvamedha sacrifice. He maintained good diplomatic relations with Ceylon.

CHANDRA – GUPTA II

Samudra –gupta was succeeded by his son Chandra gupta II. Just as Chandra – Gupta I selected Samudra –Gupta to occupy the throne, Samudra – Gupta chose Chandra –Gupta II, a younger son to succeed him. Chandra –gupta II was the worthy son of a worthy father. Certain literary traditions like Devichandraguptam and numismatic evidence point out that Samudra-gupta was immediately succeeded by Ramagupta and not by Chandra –gupta II. So Rama-gupta may be considered as the immediate successor to samudra-gupta.

Matrimonial Alliances

Before Chandra-gupta II launched into a career of conquest, he strengthened his position by matrimonial alliances. He conciliated the Naga chieftains of Upper and Central Provinces by marrying Kuberanaga, a Naga princess. Chandra-Gupta's daughter, Prabhavathi-gupta through Kuberanaga, was married to Rudrasena II, the Vakaraka King of Berar. These matrimonial alliances earned for him the goodwill and support of his matrimonial allies.

Conquests of Chandra –Gupta II Like his illustrious father, Chandra –gupta II Vikramaditya also entered into a career of conquest and consolidation. His military accomplishments earned for him the epithet “Vikramaditya”(Son of valour). He extended the western frontier of the Gupta Empire. He conquered the whole of Malwa and Saurashtra from the Western Satraps. It was he who gave a fatal blow to the Western Satraps. He defeated and killed Rudrasimha III, the last Western Satrap and annexed Western Indian in 395A.D. Thus by extending the limits of the western frontier to the Arabian Sea, he paved the way for greater cultural and commemrical contact with the Roman Empire. From the finds of his coins as far as the banks of the Chenab, it seems probable that he extended the authority of the Guptas upto the banks of then Chenab. He performed a horse-sacrifice to signalize his victories in Western India.

Visit of Fa-hien

The renowned Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien visited Indian during the reign of Chandra – Gupta II. He spent 15 years of his life in travel out of which he spent 9 years in India. The places he visited in India were Peshawar, Mathura, Kanauj, Sravasti, Benaras, Kapilavastu, Kusinagara, Vaisali, Pataliputra, and other places. The main mission in his life was to visit the sacred places connected with the life of the Buddha and search for the sacred tenets and relics of Buddhism. The pilgrim was so much preoccupied with the with and immersed in the search and study of the sacred books of Buddhism, that he did not even mention the name of the Emperor in whose empire he spent 6 years. But here and there, he flashes some sidelights on the economic, social and moral life of the people and the administration prevailing under the Guptas. The travel accounts of Fa-hien in spite of their drawbacks and limitations form a very valuable source of information for the study of the Gupta period.

Fa-hien spent three years of his travels at Pataliputra. In the city, he found two large Buddhist monasteries which attracted students from all over India and acted as centers of Mahayana andHinayana learning. Asoka’s magnificent palace at Pataliputra evoked the awe and admiration of the Chinese pilgrim. According to him, it was “all made by spirits which Asoka employed”. In the cities of Magadha, the people led a rich and prosperous life. They competed with one another in excelling in such moral virtues like munificence and righteousness. The country was strewn with a number of rest-houses. The hospital at Pataliputra gave medical aid.

Fa-hien gives a graphic description of the condition of the people in the Middle Kingdom (Upper Gangetic Valley). He says: "The people are numerous and happy; they have not to register their households, or attend to any magistrates and their rules; only those who cultivate the royal land have to pay a portion of the gain from it. If they want to go, they go; if they want to stay on, they stay. The King governs without decapitation or other corporal punishments. Criminals are simply fined, lightly, or heavily, according to the circumstances of each case. Even in cases of repeated attempts at wicked rebellion, they only have their right hands cut off". Though the facts furnished in the above passage cannot be taken in their entirety, yet they throw some light on the administrative system of Chandra-Gupta II. Fahien gives an account of the hold of Buddhism which was very popular in North Western India, flourished in Bengal and was making strides in Mathura. In Madhyadesa, it was fast losing its ground and Brahminical Hinduism was gaining the upper hand.

Gupta Age Golden Age

Introduction

The Gupta age was a great epoch in the history of India. There was development in all the fields. Hence the Gupta age is called the Golden Age. The people lived in peace and prosperity. There are many other factors which earn such a name and fame to the Gupta age.

Gupta Literature

The Gupta age is rightly called the Golden Age of Sanskrit literature. Dr. Smith compares the Gupta age to the Elizabethan age of England. Kalidasa lived in this age. Sakuntala, Ritusamhara, Malavikagnimitram, Kumarasambavam, Meghaduta, Raghuvamsha and Vikrama – Urvashiya are his eternal works. Sakuntala is considered the best drama in Sanskrit. Kalidasa has been called the Indian Shakespeare. Bhasa was another writer of this age. He also wrote many dramas. Mrichchakatika, an interesting play in Sanskrit was written by Sudraka. Visakhadatta wrote Mudra-Rakshasa which tells about the ascendance of Chandragupta Maurya. It is believed that Devi-Chandragupta was written by the same author. Bhatti wrote Bhattikavya or Ravanavada. Besides the story of Rama, certain grammar rules are given by it. Vishnuvarman composed Panchatantra during the Gupta period. This work has been translated into fifty languages all over the world. The translations in English, German, Latin, Greek,

French and Spanish are important among them. The smritis of Yajnavalkya, Naradha, Katyayana and Brihaspati were written in this period. Thus the gupta period witnessed the growth of literature.

Scientific Works

The gupta age was notable for the scientific development. Many scientific works were written in this period. Aryabhata, Varahamitra and Brahmagupta the foremost astronomers and mathematicians of the world lived in this period. (Aryabhata wrote SuryaSiddhanta. In it he wrote the true causes of solar and lunar eclipses. Aryabhata was the first Indian astronomer who declared that the Earth revolves around its axis. Varahmitras Brihat Samhita deals with astronomy, botany and geography. Brahmagupta declared the law of gravity before Newton. Palakapya wrote Hastayurvedha. It deals with veterinary science. The Navanitakam written during this period is a work on medicines. Thus many pioneers in the fields of different sciences lived in the period of guptas and contributed for the growth of scientific knowledge in the country. The scientific development under the guptas is undoubtedly a remarkable feature.

The Gupta Art and Architecture

The Art During the period of the guptas, the Art had an unprecedented development. Mathura, Benares and Patna were the centers of artistic activities. The Gupta Art gave importance to the concept of beauty. The gupta artist relied more on elegance. The paintings in Ajanta caves depict the figures of gods, sages, kings, queens and their attendants. There are certain caves in a village called Bagh near Gwallior. These caves contain certain paintings of the Gupta period which make certain the artistic achievement of the age. Many of the paintings of the caves are destroyed. However some of them are protected. Their copies have been displayed in museums.

The Sculpture

The sculptural beauty of the age is also remarkable. Nudity as a rule was eliminated. The gupta artists employed drapery to conceal the beauty of the flesh. The seated Buddha at Sarnath, the standing Buddha in the Mathura museum and the copper statue of Buddha from Sultanganj are the specimens of the sculptures of the gupta age. The images of Buddha of the gupta period

bear beautiful and divine look There are some images of Siva which belong to this period. The guptas created the figures of Ekamukhi and Chaturmukhi Sivalingas. The artists of this age introduced the Ardhanareesvara form of siva. The images of Vishnu reveal the popularity of Vishnu worship. The great varaha image of Udayagiri is regarded as a monument to the genius of Gupta sculptures. The stories of Rama and Krishna are depicted in certain sculptural works.

Architecture

There are certain architectural specimens of the age. The Vishnu temple at Tigawa, the Siva temple at Bhumara, the Parvati temple at Nachnakuthara, the Buddhist shrines at Sanchi and Bodh Gaya are some among them. There are certain temples made of bricks. The Dasavadhara temple at Deogarh stands as a rare monument. Many Buddhist monuments like stupas, buildings, monasteries etc., of this age are found at Jaulian. The excavations at Sarnath have brought to light a number of monasteries. The main cave structures of the age are at Ajanta and in Andhra. These caves stand as the best monuments. Each cave has many pillars.

The Terracotta art was an important branch in the gupta period. The clay modelers of the period created fine figures made of clay. The terracotta figures represented gods, goddesses, men, women and Ganga have been found the figures of foreigners, elephant riders, jesters and dwarfs are fascinating.

UNIT V

VARDHANA EMPIRE

HARSHA VARDHANA

Early life

Harsha was born in 590 A.D. He received education and training at an early age. He accompanied his brother in the campaign against the Huns. He ascended the throne at the age of sixteen due to the tragic ends met by his father and his elder brother. Some scholars say that Harsha hesitated to ascend the throne where as some other conclude that he ascended the throne without any hesitation and sworn to avenge the treacherous Gandas.

Harsha's Campaigns

The tender shoulders of Harsha, the teen aged ruler had to bear much burden. His immediate task was to recover Rajyasri, his widowed sister. He came to know that she had escaped from the prison and entered into the Vindhya forest. Harsha made a hectic search and recovered his sister who was preparing to burn herself. The kingdom of Kanauj was in confusion. Harsha annexed it to Thanesar and shifted his capital to Kanauj. Sasantha was the Ganda ruler who had treacherously killed Harsha's brother. Hence Harsha wanted to take revenge on him. He made an alliance with Bhaskaravarman, the ruler of Assam and attacked Bengal. As Sasantha could not withstand the attack, he ran away. However he gave troubles until his death. After his death in 620A.D. his kingdom was divided between Harsha and Bhaskarawarman. Harsha defeated and annexed Malwa. Vallabhi was an important state and Surat and Anandpur were its dependents. These were defeated and annexed by Harsha.

From Bana's Harsha charita we come to know that he amassed huge wealth from Sindh. There is a reference about his victory over Nepal. But some scholars doubt the authenticity of his campaigns against Sindh and Nepal. As all his campaigns in the north were successful, Harsha made preparations for southern campaigns. He clashed with Pulakesin II near the Naarbada. The Aihole inscription of Pulakesin says that Harsha was defeated. The Hyderabad grant says that Pulakesin II assumed the title Parameswar after defeating Harsha. This war might have been fought in 634 or 635 A.D.

Extent of Harsha's empire

Harsha's empire was undoubtedly vast. He was the master of almost the whole of northern India. His empire might have been extended from the Himalayas in the north to the Narbada in the South and from the Brahmaputra in the east to Gujarat in the West. The north western and southern parts of India were not under him. There are differences of opinion among the scholars over the extent of Harsha's empire. According to R.C. Majumdar Harsha's kingdom was comprised of Thanesar and Kananj in the beginning. Later, the eastern Punjab and Uttar Pradesh were added. Towards the end of his reign, Orissa and Kongode were annexed. Dr. Smith considers that Harsha's empire included Malwa, Gujarat, Kutch and Kathiawar, Dr. Smith says that Vallabhi was also a vassal state of Harsha. R.C. Majumdar rejects Smith's view.

Harsha's religion

Prabakara vardhan was a devotee of the Sun god. Rajyavardhan was a Buddhist. Harsha Vardhana worshipped Siva, Surya and Budha in his early years. But he became an ardent Mahayanist later. Yuan Chwang might have influenced Harsha to adopt Buddhism. In 643 A.D. Harsha convened a Buddhist Assembly at Kananj. Yuan Chwang presided over it. Many monks, scholars and kings attended it. Harsha spent huge amounts of money for the success of this assembly. The assembly preached Mahayanism. In the same year, another assembly was arranged by him at Prayaga. It is said that Harsha convened an Assembly every year. Like Asoka and Kanisha, he devoted much for the spread of Buddhism. All the rulers of vardhana dynasty were religiously tolerant.

Harsha's Administration

Harsha had all powers of the government. He considered the people as his children. It is said that he divided a day into three parts and spent them for state purposes, religious and cultural pursuits and the care of his subjects. There were ministers to assist him. His empire was divided into provinces called Bhuktis. Each Bhukti was divided into visyas. It was like the district of modern times. Pathakas came next to visyas. Each pathaka was comprised of many villages. At Each level there were government officers. The punishments to the criminals were

severe. Taxes, customs duties and fines brought wealth to the government. Harsha kept a big army.

Social, Economic and Religious Conditions under Harsha

The society was based on castes. Besides the major four castes there were many mixed castes. The Brahmins were highly regarded. The people liked white clothes more than colourful clothes. They wore many ornaments like ear rings, bangles, necklaces etc. The common food comprised milk, ghee, sugar, cakes and parched grain with mustard oil. The birth of a son was considered to be a matter of joy. Chess was a means of recreation. The dramas were also staged. Early marriage of woman was in practice. Women were permitted to have education. Polygamy was prevalent. Sati was also practiced. Agriculture was the main profession. Commerce was the profession of the vaishyas. There was internal and external trade. The barter system was in use. There were coins made of gold and silver. During Harsha's reign Buddhism, Jainism and Brahmanism were propagated. The idols of Vishnu and Siva were worshipped in temples. The brahmins regarded the cow sacred. Vaisali and Pundravardhana were important centers of Jainism. Harsha patronized Buddhism. Mahayanism was prominent.

Education art and literature

The system of education under Harsha was well developed. There were universities at Vallabhi and Nalanda. The Nalanda University had about 10,000 students. Harsha gave financial assistance to the universities. He patronized art and letters. Harsha himself wrote Ratnavali, Priyadarsika and Nagananda. The royal court was adorned by great scholars and poets. Kadambari and Harsha Charita were remarkable works of his time written by Jaisena and Bana Bhatta respectively. Harsha was a great lover of art and music. He built many monasteries and viharas. The monasteries were made centers of learning. The Vedas, Grammar, Palmistry, Astronomy, Mathematics and Ethics were generally taught.