

Introduction:

In this chapter we will discuss several developments that were established in different parts of the subcontinent during the long span of 1,500 years following the end of the Harappan civilisation. This was also the period during which the Rigveda was composed by people living along the Indus and its tributaries. Agricultural settlements emerged in many parts of the subcontinent, including north India, the Deccan Plateau, and parts of Karnataka. Besides, there is evidence of pastoral populations in the Deccan and further south.

1. Political And Economic History- How Inscriptions Tell A Story

After the fall of the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC), the Indian subcontinent underwent several significant changes.

The Vedas (Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda, and Atharva Vedas) and other religious and literary works are an invaluable source for learning the history of that period.

During the 1st century BC, many changes took place in central and southern India regarding the burial of the dead. During this period, bodies were buried in tombs and around these tombs were large boulders called megaliths.

In the 6th century BCE sixteen large kingdoms known as the Mahajanapadas came into existence.

Magadha, Kosala, Vatsa and Avant are the most powerful of these sixteen Mahajanapadas.

In the 5th century BCE, powerful Mahajanapadas became powerful kingdoms. Magadha is a very powerful Mahajanapadas. There are many reasons for this. Chandragupta Maurya was the founder of the Mauryan Empire. He defeated Mahajanapadas, the last ruler of the Nanda dynasty and established the Mauryan Empire.

The economics of Megasthenes Indica and Kautilya provided valuable information about the Mauryan Empire.

After the death of Chandragupta Maurya's son, Bindusara became the next ruler from 298 to 272 BCE.

After Bindusara, Ashoka ascended the throne in 272 and ruled until 231 BCE.

After the Battle of Kalinga, Ashoka abandoned the policy of war and expansion.

The inscriptions of Ashoka are the most relevant source for learning about the Mauryan period. These inscriptions are written in Brahmi (Prakrit) script.

After the decline of the Gupta dynasty, many new dynasties came and ruled over many parts of India. Some dynasties were Satavahanas, Shakas, Pandyas, Cholas, Cheras and Kushans.

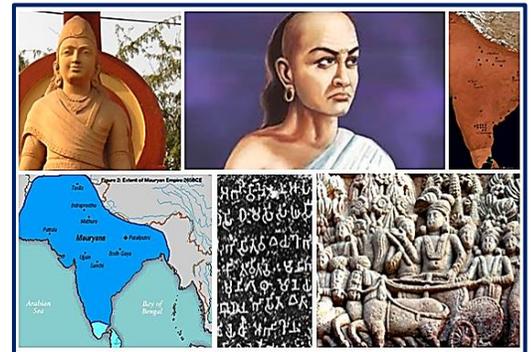
The emergence of the Guptas ushered in a new era in ancient Indian history.

Sri Gupta was the founder of the Gupta dynasty. He founded this dynasty in 275 CE and ruled until 300. After his death his son Ghatotkacha ruled from 300 CE to 320 CE.

Ghatotkacha successor I Chandragupta ascended the throne in 320 and received the title of Maharaja. He ruled until 335 AD.

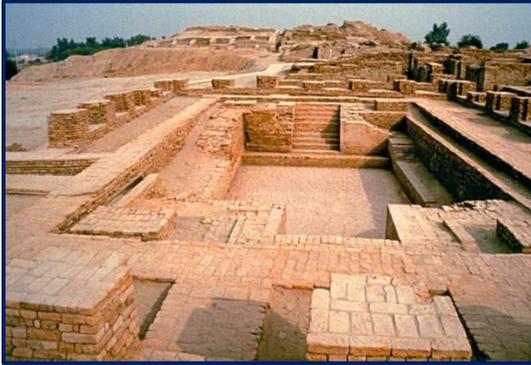
Samudra Gupta was one of the great rulers of India and the son of Chandragupta. He ruled from 335 to 375 AD. After his death Chandragupta-II ruled till 415.

The Gupta ruler established a magnificent empire with his tireless efforts. His reign is known as the Golden Age in Indian history. This vast empire began to disintegrate in the late 5th century AD.

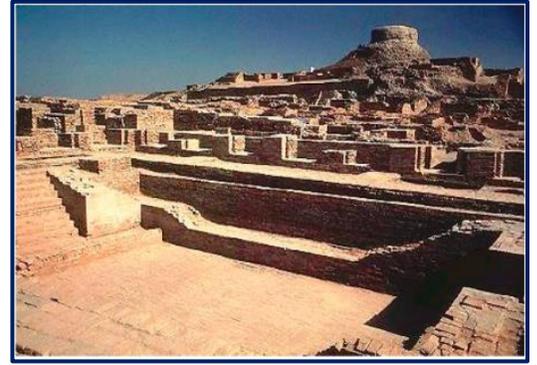


After the Harappan civilization:

After the decline of the Harappan civilization, many developments took place in the Indian subcontinent, including the creation of the Rig Veda. Evidence has been found for the emergence of new methods of disposing of farmland, religious communities, and the dead.

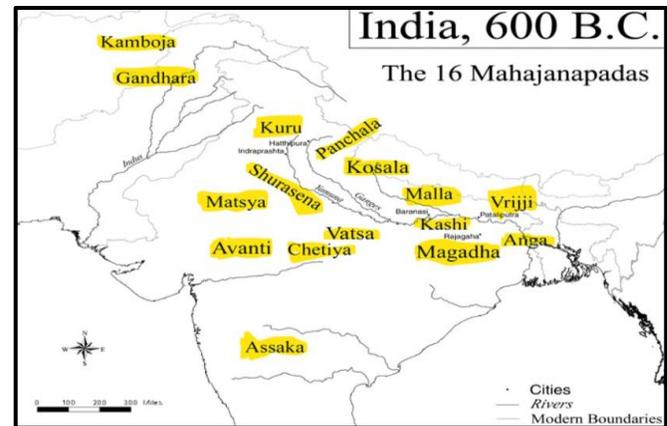
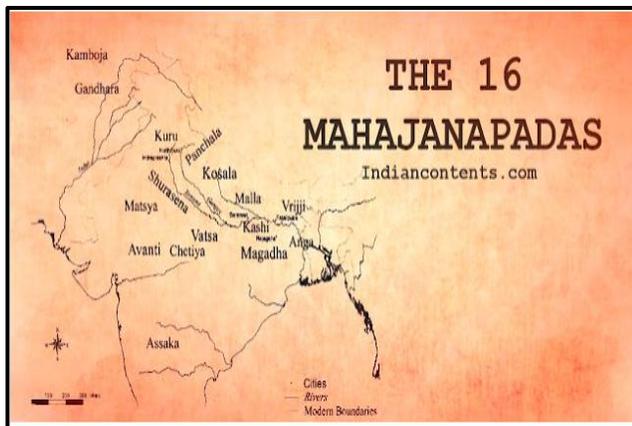


The most significant development took place in the wards when different kingdoms and empires emerged from the sixth century BCE. In 1830, James Prince understood the Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts used in early inscriptions and coins.



Many inscriptions refer to the king as Piyadassi, which means 'pleasant to look at' and some inscriptions describe the king as Ashoka, one of the most famous rulers known from Buddhist scriptures. It gave a new direction to early Indian political history, economic and social development research.

2. Mahajanapadas:



Early kingdoms originated in the 6th century BCE and are mentioned in early Buddhist and Jain texts. The early 16 states were known as the Mahajanapadas. The most important of these are Viji, Magadha, Kosala, Kuru, Panchala, Gandara and Avanti. There was a capital for the Mahajanapadas, which was often solid.

Brahmins started writing Dharma Sutras from the 6th century BCE. Magadha became the most powerful Mahajanapadas, Bimbisara, Ajatashatru and Mahapadam Nanda were the most prestigious kings of Magadha. The capital of Magadha was at Rajagriha (Rajgir), which was fortified and later shifted to Pataliputra (Patna).

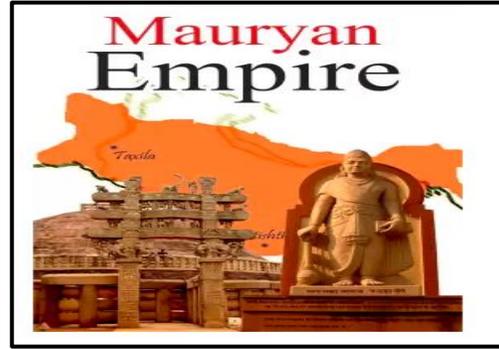
DO YOU KNOW?

- 600-500 BC:** Emergence of Mahajanapadas
- 544-492 BC:** Bimbisara rule
- 492-460 BC:** Ajatashatru period
- 269-231 BC:** Reign of Ashoka
- 201 BC:** The battle of Kalinga took place

DO YOU KNOW?

- 335-375 BC:** Samudra Gupta rule
- 375-415:** Reign of CE Chandragupta-II
- 1784:** Asiatic Society (Bengal) founded
- 1810:** Colin McKenzie collects 8,000 inscriptions in Sanskrit and Dravidian languages.
- 1838:** James Prinsep Understanding the Brahmi Script.

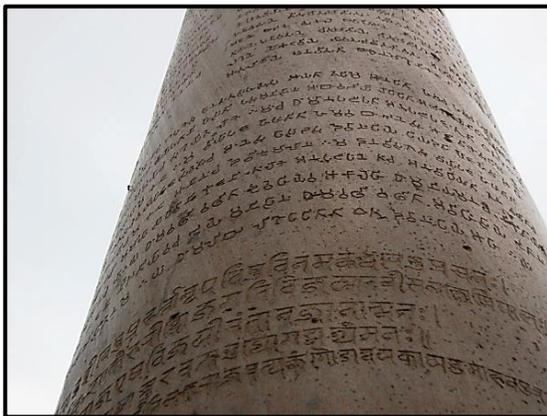
3. Mauryan Empire:



The development of Magadha resulted in the formation of the Mauryan Empire founded by Chandragupta Maurya in 321 BC. Apart from sculptures, historians have used various sources such as Megasthenes, Kautilya (economics), Buddhist, Jain and mythology, and the inscriptions of Ashoka to reconstruct the history of the Mauryan Empire.

Pataliputra, Taxila, Ujjain, Tosali and Suvarnagiri were the five major political centers of the Mauryan Empire. The vast empire was not controlled by a uniform system of government. Ashoka tried to keep his vast empire together by preaching Dharma. He appointed special officers called Dhamma Mahamattas to spread the message of Dhamma.

4. Ashoka's edicts:



In understanding Brahmi, European and Indian scholars have compared the Devanagari and Bengali scripts to the Brahmi script. In 1838, James Prinsep worked hard and succeeded in understanding Ashoka Brahmi.

Kharosthi was understood by studying the coins in the Greek and Kharosthi scripts. The inscriptions refer to Ashoka as 'Devanampiya' which means 'beloved of God' and 'Piyadassi' which means 'pleasant to see'.

Ashoka's edict describes the ruler's suffering and the change in his attitude towards war. These inscriptions were found in Orissa.

DO YOU KNOW?

- Folklore:** Land inhabited by a clan or tribe.
- Dhamma Mahanatta:** An officer appointed by Ashoka to spread his message of Dharma.
- Marriage:** This term is used when identifying lineage by mother.
- Tamil:** Name of an ancient Tamil country comprising parts of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala.

Activity

- Q1. Write a difference between before and after Harappan civilization?
- Q2. Make a short note on the Mahajanapadas?
- Q3. See the political Indian map and find out the sixteen Mahajanapadas?
- Q4. Write a note on the King Ashoka The Great?

5. Legislative Limitations:

Archival evidence has technical limitations, such as indistinctly engraved, damaged, or missing letters. Sometimes what we consider to be politically and economically important is not recorded in the records.

The content of the statutes always reflects the perspective of the person who appointed them.

The statutes fail to reflect the lives of various social groups, including the lower classes. Therefore, new strategies of analysis must be followed.

Concept Rise of Monarchy:



Different rulers established their empires in different parts of India. It gave birth to new states, new communities and towns.

Growth of new states:

New kingdoms emerged in the Deccan and further south, including the Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas. Satavahanas and Shakas were those who earned income through long distance trade. The Kushans ruled over a vast kingdom and received the title of Deva Putra (Son of God) and considered themselves gods.

The history of the Gupta rulers has been reconstructed from literature, coins and inscriptions, including the title. The Prayag Prasasti (also known as the Allahabad Pillar Inscription) by Harisena is the most important source of knowledge about the Gupta rulers.

Growth of new communities:

Historians examine horoscopes and Panchatantra stories to find out about the attitude of the common people towards the rulers. Strategies have been developed such as the use of plows with iron tips and the use of irrigation through wells and tanks to increase agricultural production.

The progress of agriculture led to the emergence of different sections of the population such as large landowners, small farmers and landless agricultural laborers. From early Tamil literature and Pali texts, groups of people known as Ganapati (landlord), Weller (large landlord), Ujavar (Jotwala) and Adimai (slave) were known.

The inscriptions give details about the allotment of land to Brahmins and farmers. Chandragupta II's daughter Prabhavati Gupta acquired the land, which she later granted, but ordinary women had no access to the land. Some historians view land grabbing as a strategy to expand agriculture to new areas; Others saw them as a sign of weakening political power.

6. Towns and trade growth:

Many urban centers have sprung up on the subcontinent since the 6th century BC. People living in these areas traded fine polished utensils such as northern black polished utensils, jewelry, tools, utensils, gold, silver, copper, bronze, ivory, glass, shell and terracotta figurines.

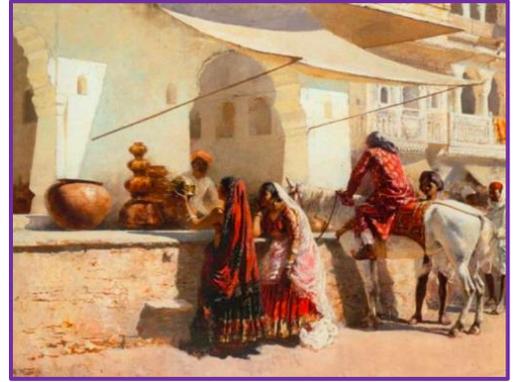
The guild or shrine collects the raw materials, controls the production and markets the final product. Trade extends beyond the subcontinent, Central Asia, East and North Africa, Southeast Asia and China.



It was established by successful merchants called Masattuvan in Tamil and the Satavahanas became very rich in Prakrit. The introduction of silver, copper and gold coins facilitated the exchange.

The first coins bearing the names and images of the rulers were issued by the Indo-Greeks, who established control over the northwestern part of the subcontinent in the 2nd century BC.

The first gold coins were minted in AD. Issued in the 1st century; the most luxurious gold coins were issued by the Gupta rulers. The use of gold coins declined from the 6th century CE.



DO YOU KNOW?

Megaliths: Stone structures built on the tombs of the dead by some communities in South India.

Waler: Big landlord.

Agrahara: Land allotted to Brahmins.

DO YOU KNOW?

1877: Alexander Cunningham publishes Asoka's set of statutes.

1886: First edition of Epigraphical Cometic, Journal of South Indian Legislation.

1888: The first issue of Epigraphical Indica.

1965-1966: The government has published Indian Epigraphy and Indian Epigraphical Glossary.

Questions For Practice

1. Who read the Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts?
(a) James Prinsep
(b) Cunningham
(c) Wheeler
(d) John Marshall
2. Who are the descendants of nomadic people living in China?
(a) Unani. (b) Xiongnu
(c) Aztec. (d) Huain Xie
3. Who among the following is the author of Economics?
(a) Kalhan. (b) Kalidas.
(c) Chanakya (d) Arestroculus.
4. What was the word 'Sovanika' used for in ancient India?
(a) Carpenter. (b) Goldsmith.
(c) Pottery. (d) Sculptor.
5. Who founded the Mauryan Empire?
(a) Ashoka
(b) Chandragupta Maurya
(c) Bindusara
(d) Ajatashatru
6. Sangam is the literature of the _____ language?
(a) Tamil (b) Malnutrition
(c) Sanskrit (d) Marathi
7. Harisena is the _____ court poet?
(a) Samudra Gupta
(b) Chandragupta II
(c) Ashok
(d) Chandragupta Maurya
8. Consider the following statements about the Mauryan Empire?
1. There are 5 major political centers in the empire.
2. Megasthenes wrote about the Mauryan Empire in his book Indica.
3. Ashoka founded the Mauryan Empire in 321 BC
4. Ashoka used his resources to propagate Buddhism.
Which of the above statement (s) is correct?
(a) 1, 2 and 3 (b) 1, 2 and 4
(c) 2, 3 and 4 (d) 1, 3 and 4
9. Who read the Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts?
(a) James Prinsep
(b) Cunningham
(c) Wheeler
(d) John Marshall
10. How many Mahajanapadas are there?
(a) 17 (b) 14
(c) 18 (d) 16
11. What are the large stones placed on the tombs in Central and South India called?
(i) Northern Black Polished Ware
(ii) Pillar
(iii) Boulder
(iv) Megalith
12. Who are the descendants of nomadic peoples living in China?
(a) Unani. (b) Xiongnu
(c) Aztec. (d) Maya.
13. Who among the following is the author of Economics?
(a) Kalhan. (b) Kalidas.
(c) Chanakya: (d) None.
14. What was the word 'Sovanika' used for in ancient India?
(a) Carpenter. (b) Goldsmith.
(c) Pottery. (d) Sculptor.
15. Who belonged to Mauryan Empire?
(a) Ashoka
(b) Chandragupta Maurya
(c) Bindusara
(d) Ajatashatru
16. Sangam literature was flourished in which century?
(a) 1st Century (b) 5th Century
(c) 3rd Century (d) None
17. Vishnugupt was the courtier of?
(a) Chandra Gupta Maurya
(b) Chandragupta II
(c) Ashok
(d) Samudra Gupta
18. Consider the following statements about the Mauryan Empire?
1. There are 5 major political centers in the empire.
2. Megasthenes wrote about the Mauryan Empire in his book Indica.
3. Ashoka founded the Mauryan Empire in 321 BC
4. Ashoka used his resources to propagate Buddhism.
Which of the above statement (s) is correct?
(a) 1, 2 and 3 (b) 1, 2 and 4
(c) 2, 3 and 4 (d) 1, 3 and 4
3. Ashoka founded the Mauryan Empire in 321 BC
4. Ashoka used his resources to propagate Buddhism.
Which of the above statement (s) is correct?
(a) 1, 2 and 3 (b) 1, 2 and 4
(c) 2, 3 and 4 (d) 1, 3 and 4
19. Who read the Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts?
(a) James Prinsep
(b) Cunningham
(c) Wheeler
(d) John Marshall
20. Which Mahajanapadas was present in modern day Madhya Pradesh?
(a) Ghadhara (b) Magadha
(c) Kuru (d) Avanti
21. Was there a monarchy in the 6th century BC?
(a) Anga, Magadha, Vatsa, Vajji
(b) Kaushal, Chedi, Kashi, Vajji
(c) Anga, Magadha, Kuru, Matala.
(d) Anga, Magadha, Kashi, Kosala
22. Which of the following was a Mahajanapadas in the 6th century BCE, where the monarchy was located, but later the republic was established.
(a) Punjab (b) Lichchavi
(c) Viji (d) None
23. In which Mahajanapadas did the kingdom 'Pushkarasarin' rule in the 6th century BC?
(a) Magadha (b) Gandhara
(c) Kosala (d) Avanti
24. The city 'Pataliputra' was established at the confluence of the rivers Ganga and Putra?
(a) By Bimbisara
(b) By the Ajatashatru
(c) By Udayin
(d) By the trunk
25. The capital of Gandharan Mahajanapadas?
(a) Patliputra (b) Kosala
(c) Kuru (d) Taxila

26. Which deity was worshiped by the inhabitants of the Indus Valley Civilization?
 (a) Indra: (b) Shiva
 (c) Vishnu (d) Fire
27. When was the Rig Veda written?
 (a) 800 to 600 BCE
 (b) 600 to 200 BC
 (c) 1500 to 1000 BC
 (d) 1000 to 800 BC
28. How many verses are there in the Rig Veda?
 (a) 1028 Sukta (b) 1050 Sukta
 (c) 1000 verses (d) 870 Sukta
29. How many theologians are there?
 (a) 5 (b) 4
 (c) 6 (d) 7
30. What is "writing" related to?
 (a) From the Vedic religion
 (b) From Buddhism
 (c) From Jainism
 (d) Shakti is from religion
31. Who wrote the Prayaga Praise in praise of Samudra Gupta?
 (a) Kumar Gupta
 (b) Harisena
 (c) Kautilya
 (d) Bana Bhatta
32. Who appointed the Dhamma Matamatas?
 (a) Bimbisara
 (b) Samudra Gupta
 (c) Ashoka
 (d) Pandya
33. Alexander Cunningham published a set of Asoka inscriptions?
 (a) 1874. (b) 1875.
 (c) 1876. (d) 1877.
34. What are the associations of traders and artisans called?
 (a) Shreniso (b) Ur
 (c) Primitive (d) Ujavar
35. Literature of Sangam language?
 (a) Tamil (b) Malnutrition
 (c) Sanskrit (d) Marathi
36. The first ruler to propagate the principles of Dharma?
 (a) Bimbisara.
 (b) Chandragupta II.
 (c) Chandragupta Maurya.
 (d) Ashoka.
37. Which of the following traders' ventures are risky but highly profitable?
 (a) Peddlers
 (b) Sailor
 (c) Traders with ox carts and pack-animals
 (d) All of the above
38. Harisena is a ____ court poet?
 (a) Samudra Gupta
 (b) Chandragupta II
 (c) Ashoka
 (d) Chandragupta Maurya
39. According to an inscription in Sanskrit dating to around the 2nd century AD, Sudarshan Lake was repaired by a king.
 (a) Indo-Greek. (b) Cushions.
 (c) Percentage. (d) Rudradaman I
40. What are the large stones placed on the tombs in Central and South India called?
 (a) Northern Black Polished Wear
 (b) Pillar
 (c) Boulder
 (d) Megalith

Solutions

- | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---|
| 1. (a) | 2. (b) | 3. (c) | 25. (d) |
| 4. (b) | 5. (b) | 6. (a) | 26. (b) |
| 7. (a) | 8. (b) | 9. (a) | 27. (c) |
| 10. (d) | 11. (d) | 12. (b) | 35. (a): Show the answer
Tamil |
| 13. (c) | 14. (b) | 15. (b) | 36. (d): Show the answer
Ashoka. |
| 16. (a) | 17. (a) | 18. (b) | 37. (b): Show the answer
Sailor |
| 19. (a) | 20. (d) | 21. (a) | 38. (a): Show the answer
Samudra Gupta |
| 22. (b) | 23. (b) | 24. (b) | 39. (d): Show the answer
Rudradaman I |
| | | | 40. (d): Show the answer |
31. (b) Show the answer
Harisena
32. (c): Show the answer
Ashoka
33. (d): Show the answer
1877.
34. (a): Show the answer
Shreniso

