
Chapter – 10 History

Traders Kings and Pilgrims

- Around 1,000 BC when the Second Urbanisation characterized North India, the area around Deccan Peninsula and South India saw the eco-habitation of both Iron Age and Megalithic Age leading to a strong civilization.
 - **Sangam Age:**
 - (i) The Iron Age laid roots of a golden period in South India from 300 BC to 300 AD, popularly known as the Sangam Age.
 - (ii) The rich poetry of this period reflects the glory of the Tamil culture and society.
 - (iii) Tamils had good contacts and trade relations with distant lands like Rome and Cambodia.
 - **Sangam Literature:**
 - (i) The word 'Sangam' means assembly.
 - (ii) The Tamil literature reveals of three literary gatherings of poets and scholars around 2,200 years ago under the patronage of the Pandyan Kings.
 - (iii) Of the second assembly, only the Tamil grammar 'Tolkappiyam' has survived. The third assembly at Madurai led to creation of over 2,000 poems together which is called the Sangam Literature.
 - **Southern Kingdoms:**
 - (i) The Sangam literature mentions three Kingdoms in the Tamilakam territory: The Cheras, the Cholas and the Pandyas.
 - (ii) The Cheras were also called Keralaputras and traded in spices, cattle and turmeric.
 - (iii) The Cholas ruled Kaveri delta and even captured parts of Sri Lanka.
 - (iv) The Pandyas centered around Madurai. Madurai was famous for its third Tamil assembly.
 - **Foreign Trade:**
 - (i) Tamilakam had extensive trade with distant lands.
 - (ii) Greek text like Pliny's Periplus History also confirm these trade relations.
 - (iii) The Sangam literature uses the word 'Yavana' for Greek and Romans.
 - (iv) Historians confirm that Christianity came to South India due to these contacts.
 - (v) Trade route was through North India from Taxila to Pataliputra via Ujjain which linked to Tamralipti seaport.
 - (vi) Tamil Kingdom even had trade with South and South-East regions of Ceylon, Malaya, Java, Cambodia, Sumatra, etc.
 - **Conquerors from Distant Lands:**
 - (i) In North-West India, the main conquerors were Sungas, Indo-Greeks, Parthians, Kushanas and Shakas.
 - (ii) Sungas came in 185 BC, after defeating the last Mauryan ruler Brihadratha and captured Magadha. They spread Buddhism.
 - (iii) The Indo-Greeks or Bactrians were from Northern Afghanistan. They captured Punjab.
 - (iv) The Parthians came from Central Asia and established Gandhara as their capital.
 - (v) The Kushanas were nomadic Yüeh-chi tribes of North-West China. They defeated the Indo-Greeks, Parthians and Shakas. Their greatest ruler was Kanishka.
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- (vi) Shakas came through Hindu-kush mountains and established Ujjain as their capital. The most famous Shaka ruler was Rudradaman.
 - (vii) In central India, the Satavahanas were the main rulers. Gautamiputra, Sri Satkarni was their most important ruler.

- **Trade:**

- (i) Trade flourished during this period. All the kingdoms issued a number of gold, silver and copper coins to promote trade.
- (ii) Broach, Sopara and Kalyan were the important port cities.
- (iii) The most important reason for development and prosperity during the age was the Silk Route which linked India to Rome via Central Asia.

- **Religion:**

- (i) In India, Buddhism and Hinduism were the two main religions.
 - (ii) Buddhism was divided into two cults Hinayana and Mahayana.
 - (iii) Menander, the Indo-Greek king and Kanishka, the Kushana ruler helped in promotion of Buddhism.
 - (iv) Bamiyan, one of the tallest statues of Buddha.
 - (v) Hinduism was patronized by Satavahana ruler who worshipped Vishnu, Shiva and Mother Goddess.
 - (vi) Emphasis was now laid on loving devotion to God called Bhakti.
 - (vii) Deities were kept in special homes called temples.
 - (viii) Bhagvad Gita became famous text during this period.
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