



6. Discuss the main features of the Mauryan administration. Which of these elements are evident in the Asokan inscriptions that you have studied?

Ans: Asokan inscriptions mention all the main features of the administration of the Mauryan Empire. Thus, the features of the administration are evident in the inscriptions of the Asokan age. The important features of the same are as follow:

1. The capital of the Mauryan Empire was Pataliputra. Apart from the capital there ' were four other centres of political power in the empire. They were Taxila, Ujjaini, Tosali and Suvamagiri.
2. Committee and subcommittees were formed to run the administration and safety of boundaries. Megasthenes has mentioned that there were one committee and six sub-committees. The six subcommittees and their areas of activities are as follows:
  - (i) The first sub committee looked after navy.
  - (ii) The second sub committee looked after transport and communications.
  - (iii) The third sub committee looked after infantry.
  - (iv) The fourth sub committee had the responsibility of horses.
  - (v) The fifth had the responsibility of chariots.
  - (vi)The sixth had the responsibility of elephants.
3. Strong network of roads and communications were established. It is notable that no large empire can be maintained in the absence of the same.
4. Asoka made an attempt to keep the empire united by the philosophy of Dhamma. Dhamma are nothing but moral principles that actuated people towards good conducts. Special officers called Dhamma Mahamtras were appointed to propagate Dhamma. In fact Romila Thapar has made it the most important element of the Asokan state's governing principle.

7. This is a statement made by one of the best-known epigraphists of the twentieth century, D.C. Sircar: "There is no aspect of life, culture, activities of the Indians that is not reflected in inscriptions." Discuss.

Ans: The statement of eminent epigraphist D.C. Sircar has highlighted the importance of inscription as single source of information that touch upon all areas of our life. Following are the main areas we get information about from the inscriptions

1. Determination of state's boundaries: the inscriptions were carved in the territories of the kings and even more important is not often close to the borders. This help us find out boundaries of kingdoms and their expansions thereto.
2. Names of Kings: The names of the kings are mentioned in the inscriptions. The names and titles used by Asoka the Great got revealed through inscriptions only.
3. Historic events: The important historical events are mentioned in the inscriptions. The best example is how the event of the Kalinga war is mentioned in the inscription and how Asoka takes to Dhamma.
4. Information about conduct of Kings: Inscriptions describe the conduct and character of the kings quite well. It is through the inscriptions only that we know Asoka worked for the welfare of the masses.

5. Information about administration: Inscriptions gave information about administration. It is through the inscription. We know that Asoka appointed his son as a Viceroy.

6. Land settlement and Taxes: inscriptions mention how land were granted or gifted. It also talks about various taxes imposed by the ruler.

There is hardly any area of governance of our life that is not mentioned in the inscriptions. Hence, we are inclined to agree with D.C. Sirkar who says, "There is no aspect of life, culture, activities of Indians that is not reflected in the inscriptions."

8. Discuss the notions of kingship that developed in the post-Mauryan period.

Ans: In the post-Mauryan age, the idea of kingship got associated with divine theory of state. Now, the monarchs began to talk about divine sanction to rule the people. Kushan rulers propagated the idea of the same at the unprecedented scale. They ruled from central Asia to western India. We can discuss the kingship based on the dynasties.

1. Kushan Kings: Kushan Kings called themselves Devputra and hence, godly status. They built great statues of themselves in temples.

2. Gupta Rulers: Second development of kingship is found during Gupta dynasty. It was a period of large-sized states. Such states were dependent on Samantas who sometimes became powerful enough to usurp the power of kings too.

3. Literature: coins and inscriptions helped us in creating history of those days. Very often poets would describe the monarch often to praise them but giving insight into the history and kingship too. A good example is of Harisena who praised Samudragupta, the great Gupta ruler.

9. To what extent were agricultural practices transformed in the period under consideration?

Ans: The demand for taxes increased in the post 600 BC. In order to meet the demand of excessive taxes, without taking lesser produce, forced the farmers to increase productivity. This resulted in the use of new tools and practices of agriculture. The important ones are as follows:

1. Use of plough: Ploughs became commonplace. They were hardly heard of in the past. The use of ploughs began in the Ganga and Cauvery basins. In places where rain was abundant, the plough was used with iron tip. This increased the paddy production manifold.

2. Use of spade: Another tool that changed the system of agriculture is spade. Those farmers who lived in the areas of harsh land used spade.

3. Artificial Irrigation: Apart from rainfall, the farmers now began to look at artificial form of irrigation. This prompted farmers to build wells, ponds, and - canals often collectively. This increased the agricultural production.

The production increased due to new technology and tools. This created a new strata in the society. In the Buddhist literature, there is a description of small and big farmers. They were called Grihpatas. Similar description is given in the Tamil literature too. The position of village head was often hereditary. In such a situation the ownership of land became very important.

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