

## MAURYA DYNASTY

- Mauryan Empire was the largest empire in the whole of the ancient world. It was governed by a centralized form of government.
- Kautilya's Arthashastra, Ashoka's inscriptions, and Megasthenes's accounts collectively are the important sources of the information on various aspects of administration, economy, society, and religion of the people.

## Polity and Administration

- The king was the head of the state. The king used to issue ordinances known as '*Sasana*'. He possessed the judicial, the legislative, and the executive powers.
- *Sasanas* are available in the form of '*Edicts of Ashoka*'.
- The Mauryan king had to follow the law of the country given by law givers and had to govern according to the customs of the land. He could not do whatever he liked.
- The King was assisted in administration by '*Mantriparishad*', which was a Council of Ministers.
- *Adhyakshas* (superintendent) were officers who performed a special task.
- Kautilya mentioned a large number of *Adhyakshas*, such as *Adhyakshas* of gold, store houses, commerce, agriculture, ships, cows, horses, elephants, chariots, infantry, passports etc.
- *Yukta* was the officer in-charge of the revenues of the king.
- *Rajjukas* were the officers for land measurement and fixing their boundaries. They were also given power to punish the guilty and set free the innocents.
- The Mauryan Empire was divided into provinces. *Pradeshikas* was another officer of the Mauryan administration. He was the provincial governor.
- Bindusara appointed his son Ashoka as Governor of the Avanti region and posted him at Ujjain.
- Ashoka's elder brother Susima was posted at Taxila as the Governor of the northwestern provinces.
- The important provinces were directly under *Kumaras* (princess); however, the total number of provinces is not known.
- Junagarh rock inscription of Rudradarman mentions that Saurashtra (Kathiawar) was governed by Vaisya Pushyagupta at the time of Chandragupta Maurya and by Yavanaraia Tushaspa at the time of Ashoka, both were the provincial governors.
- The Mauryan kingdom was divided into different provinces, which were subdivided into the districts and each district was further divided into groups of five to ten villages.
- The village was the smallest unit of an administration.

- The *pradeshika* was the head of the administration. He used to tour the entire district every five years to inspect the administration of areas under his control. A group of officials worked in each district under him.
- *Gramika* was the head of the village. He was assisted in village administration by the “village elders”
- The villages, during this time, enjoyed substantial autonomy. Most of the disputes of the village were settled by Gramika with the help of village assembly.
- The Arthashastra mentions the highest salary being 48,000 *Panas* and the lowest 60 *Panas*. There was a wide range of scales in salary.

## City Administration

- The Arthashastra has a full chapter on the administration of cities.
- The Edicts of Ashoka also describe name of the cities such as Pataliputra, Taxila, Ujjain, Tosali, Suvarnagiri, Samapa, Isila, and Kausambi.
- Megasthenese had described the administration of Pataliputra in details.
- Megasthenese described that Pataliputra city was administered by a city council comprising 30 members. These 30 members were divided into a board of 5 members each.
- Each of the 5 member boards had specific responsibilities towards the administration of the city. For example –
  - One such board was concerned with the industrial and artistic produce. Its duties included fixing of wages. Check the adulteration etc.
  - The second board dealt with the affairs of the visitors, especially foreigners who came to Pataliputra.
  - The third board was concerned with the registration of birth and death.
  - The fourth board regulated trade and commerce, kept a vigil on the manufactured goods and sales of commodities.
  - The fifth board was responsible for the supervision of manufacturing goods.
  - The sixth board collected taxes as per the value of sold goods.
- The tax was normally one-tenth of sold goods.
- Officers were appointed by the ‘City council’ and accountable for the public welfare such as maintenance and repairs of roads, markets, hospitals, temples, educational institutions, sanitation, water supplies, harbors, etc.
- Nagaraka was the officer in-charge of the city.
- There were numerous departments that regulated and controlled the activities of the state.
- Kautilya mentions several important departments such as accounts, revenue, mines and minerals, chariots, customs, and taxation.