**RENAISSANCE LAW COLLEGE**

**Indian History for Law students**

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**Chapter – I**

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**Concept and Meaning of History**

History is the study of life in society in the past, in all its aspect, in relation to present developments and future hopes. It is the story of man in time, an inquiry into the past based on evidence. Indeed, evidence is the raw material of history teaching and learning. It is an   
Inquiry into what happened in the past, when it happened, and how it happened. It is an inquiry into the inevitable changes in human affairs in the past and the ways these changes   
affect, influence or determine the patterns of life in the society. History is, or should be an attempt to re-think the past. Collingwood (1945) is particularly interested in this concept of history.

History aims at helping students to understand the present existing social, political, religious and economic conditions of the people. Without the knowledge of history we cannot have the background of our religion, customs institutions, administration and so on. The teaching of history helps the students to explain the present, to analyze it and to trace its course. Cause- and-effect relationship between the past and the present is lively presented in the history.

History thus helps us to understand the present day problems both at the national and international level accurately and objectively.

**Concept of History**

History is the analysis and interpretation of the human past enabling us to study continuity and changes that are taking place over time. It is an act of both investigation and imagination that   
seeks to explain how people have changed over time. Historians use all forms of evidence to examine, interpret, revisit, and reinterpret the past. These include not just written documents, but   
also oral communication and objects such as buildings, artifacts,photographs, and paintings.

Historians are trained in the methods of discovering and evaluating these sources and the challenging task of making historical sense out of them.

History is a means to understand the   
past and present. The different interpretations of the past allow us to see the present differently   
and therefore imagine—and work towards—different futures. It is often said to be the “queen” or “mother” of the social sciences. It is the basis of all subjects of study which fall under the   
category of Humanities and Social Sciences. It is also the basis of the study of philosophy,politics, economics and even art and religion. No wonder, it is considered an indispensible subject in the complete education of man.

**MEANING OF HISTORY**

The English word ‘History’ is derived from their Greek noun ‘Historia’. ‘History’ or ‘Historia’ simply means ‘enquiry’ or ‘research’.

The popular meaning of the word  
" History " is "a narrative or recording or inquiry of past events of men in socity."

The term ‘History’ has been taken from the German word ‘Geschichle’ means an intelligible and significant narration of the past events.

Infact development of history started with the ancient Greek historians such as Herodotus and Thucydides.

Herodotus popularly known as the ‘Father of History’ wrote about the Graeco-Persian wars this contains a mine of information including those relating to the ancient Egyptians and Persians. Thucidides developed this subjects on scientific lines. He wrote the “Pelopenesian Wars’ on the basis of evidence and showed the relation between causes and effects or results.

Thomas Charlyle.   World History is a biography of great men”.

Prof. Renier:   “History is the memories of societies.”

Will Durant:   “History is a narrative of what civilized men have thought or done in past time.”

E.H. Carr:   “History is an unending dialogue between the present and the past and the chief function of historian is to master and understand the past as a key to the understanding of present.”

Prof. G.R. Elton:   “History is concerned with all those human sayings, thoughts, deeds and sufferings which occurred in the past and have left present deposit; and it deals with them from the point of view of happening change and particular.”

Lord Acton:   "History is the unfolding story of human freedom.”

Prof. A.L. Rowse:   “History is essentially the record of the life of men in societies in their geographical and their physical environments. Their social and cultural environments arises from the interaction of the one with the other, the society and its geographical condition.”

Prof. Carl G. Gustavson:   “History is a mountain top of human knowledge from whence the doings of our own generation may be scanned and fitted into proper dimensions. History enables a person to see himself as part of that living process of human growth which has emerged out of the past and will inexorably project itself out beyond our own life time. We are the product of the past but not the complete product.”

From the above definitions one can easily assume the scope, value and objectives of history which will be discussed in proceeding topics.

**Nature Scope and Importance in human life**

**Nature of History**

**1. A study of the present in the light of the past**: The present has evolved out of the past. Modern history enables us to understand how society has come to its present form so that one may intelligently interpret the sequence of events. The causal relationships between the selected happenings are unearthed that help in revealing the nature of happenings and framing of general laws.

**2. History is the study of man:** History deals with man’s struggle through the ages. History is not static. By selecting “innumerable biographies” and presenting their lives in the appropriate social context and the ideas in the human context, we understand the sweep of events. It traces the fascinating story of how man has developed through the ages, how man has studied to use and control his environment and how the present institutions have grown out of the past.

**3. History is concerned with man in time:** It deals with a series of events and each event occurs at a given point in time. Human history, in fact, is the process of human development in time. It is time which affords a perspective to events and lends a charm that brightens up the past.

**4. History is concerned with man in space**: The interaction of man on environment and vice versa is a dynamic one. History describes about nations and human activities in the context of their physical and geographical environment. Out of this arise the varied trends in the political, social, economic and cultural spheres of man’s activities and achievements.

**5. Objective record of happenings**: Every precaution is taken to base the data on original sources and make them free from subjective interpretation. It helps in clear understanding of the past and enables us to take well informed decisions.

**6. Multisided:** All aspects of the life of a social group are closely interrelated and historical happenings cover all these aspects of life, not limited only to the political aspect that had so long dominated history.

**7. History is a dialogue between the events of the past and progressively emerging future ends.** The historian’s interpretation of the past, his selection of the significant and the relevant events, evolves with the progressive emergence of new goals. The general laws regulating historical happenings may not be considered enough; attempts have to be made to predict future happenings on the basis of the laws.

**8. Not only narration but also analysis**: The selected happenings are not merely narrated; the causal relationships between them are properly unearthed. The tracing of these relationships lead to the development of general laws that are also compared and contrasted with similar happenings in other social groups to improve the reliability and validity of these laws.

**9. Continuity and coherence are the necessary requisites of history:** History carries the burden of human progress as it is passed down from generation to generation, from society to society, justifying the essence of continuity.

**10. Relevant:** In the study of history only those events are included which are relevant to the understanding of the present life.

**11. Comprehensiveness:** According to modern concept, history is not confined to one period or country or nation. It also deals with all aspects of human life-political, social, economic, religious, literary, aesthetic and physical, giving a clear sense of world unity and world citizenship.

**Scope of History**

 History is the study of past human events and activities. Although this broad discipline has often been classified under either the humanities or the social sciences, it can be seen to be a bridge between them, incorporating methodologies from both fields of study.   
  
Traditionally, historians have attempted to answer historical questions through the study of written documents, although historical research is not limited merely to these sources. In general, the sources of historical knowledge can be separated into three categories: what is written, what is said, and what is physically preserved, and historians often consult all three. Historians frequently emphasize the importance of written records, which universally date to the development of writing. This emphasis has led to the term prehistory, referring to a time before written sources are available. Since writing emerged at different times throughout the world, the distinction between prehistory and history often depends on the topic.   
  
As a field of study, history encompasses many subfields and ancillary fields. These include chronology, historiography, genealogy, paleography, and cliometrics, among many others.   
  
The scope of the human past has naturally led scholars to divide that time into manageable pieces for study. There are a variety of ways in which the past can be divided, including chronologically, culturally, and topically. These three divisions are not mutually exclusive, and significant overlap is often present, as in "The Argentine Labor Movement in an Age of Transition, 1930–1945". It is possible for historians to concern themselves with both very specific and very general locations, times, and topics, although the trend has been toward specialization.   
  
Traditionally, the study of history was limited to the written and spoken word. However, the rise of academic professionalism and the creation of new scientific fields in the 19th and 20th centuries brought a flood of new information that challenged this notion. Archaeology, anthropology and other social sciences were providing new information and even theories about human history. Some traditional historians questioned whether these new studies were really history, since they were not limited to the written word. A new term, prehistory, was coined, to encompass the results of these new fields where they yielded information about times before the existence of written records.   
  
In the 20th century, the division between history and prehistory became problematic. Criticism arose because of history's implicit exclusion of certain civilizations, such as those of Sub-Saharan Africa and pre-Columbian America. Additionally, prehistorians such as Vere Gordon Childe and historical archaeologists like James Deetz began using archaeology to explain important events in areas that were traditionally in the field of history. Historians began looking beyond traditional political history narratives with new approaches such as economic, social and cultural history, all of which relied on various sources of evidence. In recent decades, strict barriers between history and prehistory may be decreasing.   
  
There are differing views for the definition of when history begins. Some believe history began in the 34th century BC, with cuneiform writing. Cuneiforms were written on clay tablets, on which symbols were drawn with a blunt reed called a stylus. The impressions left by the stylus were wedge shaped, thus giving rise to the name cuneiform ("wedge shaped").   
  
The Sumerian script was adapted for the writing of the Akkadian, Elamite, Hittite (and Luwian), Hurrian (and Urartian) languages, and it inspired the Old Persian and Ugaritic national alphabets.   
  
For others history has become a "general" term meaning the study of "everything" that is known about the human past (but even this barrier is being challenged by new fields such as Big History).   
  
Sources that can give light on the past, such as oral tradition, linguistics, and genetics, have become accepted by many mainstream historians. Nevertheless, archaeologists distinguish between history and prehistory based on the appearance of written documents within the region in question. This distinction remains critical for archaeologists because the availability of a written record generates very different interpretative problems and potentials.   
  
The term history entered the English language in 1390 with the meaning of "relation of incidents, story" via the Old French histos, from the Latin historia "narrative, account." This itself was derived from the Ancient Greek ἱστορία, historía, meaning "a learning or knowing by inquiry, history, record, narrative," from the verb ἱστορεῖν, historeîn, "to inquire."   
  
This, in turn, was derived from ἵστωρ, hístōr ("wise man," "witness," or "judge"). Early attestations of ἵστωρ are from the Homeric Hymns, Heraclitus, the Athenian ephebes' oath, and from Boiotic inscriptions (in a legal sense, either "judge" or "witness," or similar). The spirant is problematic, and not present in cognate Greek eídomai ("to appear").   
  
ἵστωρ is ultimately from the Proto-Indo-European \*wid-tor-, from the root \*weid- ("to know, to see"), also present in the English word wit, the Latin words vision and video, the Sanskrit word veda, and the Slavic word videti and vedati, as well as others. (The asterisk before a word indicates that it is a hypothetical construction, not an attested form.) 'ἱστορία, historía, is an Ionic derivation of the word, which with Ionic science and philosophy were spread first in Classical Greece and ultimately over all of Hellenism.   
  
In Middle English, the meaning was "story" in general. The restriction to the meaning "record of past events" in the sense of Herodotus arises in the late 15th century. In German, French, and indeed, most languages of the world other than English, this distinction was never made, and the same word is used to mean both "history" and "story". A sense of "systematic account" without a reference to time in particular was current in the 16th century, but is now obsolete. The adjective historical is attested from 1561, and historic from 1669. Historian in the sense of a "researcher of history" in a higher sense than that of an annalist or chronicler, who merely record events as they occur, is attested from 1531.   
  
Historiography has a number of related meanings. It can refer to the history of historical study, its methodology and practices (the history of history). It can also refer to a specific body of historical writing (for example, "medieval historiography during the 1960s" means "medieval history written during the 1960s"). Historiography can also be taken to mean historical theory or the study of historical writing and memory. As a meta-level analysis of descriptions of the past, this third conception can relate to the first two in that the analysis usually focuses on the narratives, interpretations, worldview, use of evidence, or method of presentation of other historians.   
  
The historical method comprises the techniques and guidelines by which historians use primary sources and other evidence to research and then to write history.   
  
Although the "father of history" has generally been acclaimed as Herodotus of Halicarnassus (484 BC – ca.425 BC), it is his contemporary Thucydides (ca. 460 BC – ca. 400 BC) who is credited with having begun the scientific approach to history in his work the History of the Peloponnesian War. Thucydides, unlike Herodutus and other religious historians, regarded history as being the product of the choices and actions of human beings, rather than as the result of divine intervention. In his historical method, Thucydides emphasized chronology, a neutral point of view, and that the human world was the result of the actions of human beings.   
  
In the preface to his book the Muqaddimah, historian and early sociologist Ibn Khaldun warned of seven mistakes that he thought that historians regularly committed. In this criticism, he approached the past as strange and in need of interpretation. The originality of Ibn Khaldun was to claim that the cultural difference of another age must govern the evaluation of relevant historical material, to distinguish the principles according to which it might be possible to attempt the evaluation, and lastly, to feel the need for experience, in addition to rational principles, in order to assess a culture of the past.   
  
Other historians of note who have advanced the historical methods of study include Leopold von Ranke, Lewis Bernstein Namier, Geoffrey Rudolph Elton, G.M. Trevelyan and A.J.P. Taylor. In the 20th century, historians focused less on epic nationalistic narratives, which often tended to glorify the nation or individuals, to more realistic chronologies. French historians introduced quantitative history, using broad data to track the lives of typical individuals, and were prominent in the establishment of cultural history (cf. histoire des mentalités). American historians, motivated by the civil rights era, focused on formerly overlooked ethnic, racial, and socio-economic groups. In recent years, postmodernists have challenged the validity and need for the study of history on the basis that all history is based on the personal interpretation of sources. In his book In Defence of History, Richard J. Evans, a professor of modern history at Cambridge University, defended the worth of history.

**Importance of History**

**History** is such an important subject and plays a very vital role when it comes to shaping of our society. History is the study of past events. We refer to the past when comparing it with the present times and deduce the changes that have taken place. These actions of the past also shape our future actions. Therefore, history plays a vital role in preparing us for the future.

**History is such an important part of our everyday lives.** Not only because there are certain past events and occurrence’s that shaped our present world, but also due to the fact that humanity tends to go through the same challenges over and over again. The only difference is that people learn from what has already happened and develop better problem-solving mechanisms. Read on and find out **why history is an important part of our life**.

**1. History promotes patriotism and enhances responsible citizenship.**By studying history, one finds out how his/her nation emerged, the problems encountered and also the nation’s values. He /she also discovers how the country interacted with other societies. This information enables him to appreciate his nation and becomes a responsible citizen.

**2. Learn important lessons:**The study of history helps us understand the present and predict the future.’History repeats itself’ is a statement we hear on a regular basis. This means that some trends and patterns in our lives tend to repeat themselves. Statistics and experiences from the past can be the roadmap for national planning and sharing of resources. This is through studying the various dynamics that shaped certain phenomena. Business professionals can study past recessions in order to avoid one. Even at a person level, people can avoid unnecessary pain and suffering just by learning from history.

**3. History helps us understand what informed the actions of those before us.** Sometimes we try to understand why certain things happened in the past, or why particular individuals who greatly affected the course of history acted in the manner that they did. Studying history will help as understand the reasoning that informed such actions. In the same breath, we can try to use the lessons learnt to do better.

**4. History equips us with vital skills:** Skills that can be acquired from the study of history include data analysis, research expertise and evaluation skills. These skills can be applied in other fields other than history itself.

**5. History is fun:** Many people like exploring and discovering new things. Studying history gives you an opportunity to explore activities that occurred in the past. And by exploring, you find out what used to happen yet still not known to other people. People have different opinions about facts. Find your opinion.

**6. History is a good subject for career and professional development.** The study of history helps create good political leaders, professionals (teachers, lawyers) and business people. One can study history in order to teach at any stage of school. The best lawyers base their legal arguments on past cases. Journalists study history in order to report news in a more informed way.

**7. It creates a sense of moral understanding:** When you read the stories of past individuals and situations, you put yourself in a position to question your own moral sense, improve it so that it can face the real world around you.

**8. To find inspiration:** There are people who overcame adversity and surmounted several obstacles in the past with very minimum resources. We can draw inspiration from such people and imitate their strength in solving the challenges that face us today. It’s always nice to know that the problems that we face are not unique, or that some people faced even greater problems but still managed to succeed.

**9. Cultural consciousness and cross-cultural appreciation can be realized through the study of historical events.**Sometimes people behave in certain ways and we quickly rush to judge them without understanding why they are that way. When we study history, we come across many societies that have different cultures and norms and you may want to learn those cultures. We develop a deeper understanding of our society and live in harmony with those that seem different from us. We make sense of it all and forge ahead, fully aware of how far we’ve come.

**10. It provides information about genealogy:** It is a common practice to find people studying their family history. This important because you get to know your family tree which in turn helps you avoid taboos such as marrying from your clan. People also like to identify with their forefathers and mothers especially if they were reputable concerning wealth, royalty and so on.

**11. History makes us better citizens:** As we learn about governance in history, we are compelled to be responsible citizens by participating in democratic activities such as voting, community work, as well as vying for leadership positions.

**12. Better society:**It’s important to know where we came from, and the journey that our ancestors traveled in search of a new home. Cultivating a sense of identity makes us appreciate who we are, and use our diversity and uniqueness to build a better society.

**13. To preserve important memories and events:**The future generations will need to know about those who came before them and influenced the world in one way or another. We study history so that we can pass on stories to the next generation.

**14. To make the better world:** All these reasons only lead us to one thing; creating a better world by doing better than those who came before us. That should be the ultimate aspiration of every individual, to make the world a better place.

**15. Many historical personalities are role models of many.** For example, Mahatma Gandhi was instrumental in promoting the use of non-violence as a tool of airing discontent voices in the society. Similarly, a student who want to be good in poetry may read the work of Rabindranath Tagore, Robert Frost and many more.

The value of history cannot be underestimated. The study of history is not irrelevant as some people project it to be. We don’t have to live in the past, but we can definitely do better by learning from it and using the lessons learnt to lead more meaningful lives.

History plays a critical role in promoting one’s intellectual growth and development. Let’s learn to embrace our history, learn from the mistakes our ancestors made, appreciate their achievements and have fun while discovering more.

**Relationship of History with other Social Sciences**

History is a study of the various facts of human life and is closely linked with other social sciences which make a specific study of different facts of human life.

Many scholars held a view that history is the centre of the social sciences which feeds other social sciences.

#### Relationship of History and Political Science

Prof. Seeley summed up the relationship between history and political science beautifully that,

*“History without political science has no fruit and political science without history has no root.”*

A historian is not merely concerned with the tracing of the history of the political process by a narration of the episodes.

But he has to learn the nature of fundamental political principles and basic forms of political institution. In the view of this closeness between two subjects, the development of political institutions, rules, regulations, right and duties, law and mode of justice, executive, legislative and administrative functions, economic and financial implications, nature of bureaucracy, fundamental principles of state policy are all defined under the constitution history.

Diplomatic history is a specialized branch of political history which deals with the principles of international relations. Ambassadors are the links between nations and they were custodians and practitioners of diplomacy.

The issue like—balance of power, cold war, international peace, disarmament have assumed great importance in recent times. The military history is an important chapter in political history where in wars, battles, campaigns and conquests figures very prominently. It deals with the causes of a war, strategy and war tactics, war weapons etc.

History is very helpful to politics because the political aspects is a part of the whole range of activity recorded by historian and knowledge of history would enable the politicians to know the politics better and play their role effectively. Prof. Acton has correctly pointed out, “the science of politics is the one science that is deposited by the stream of history like grains of gold in the sand of a river.”

#### History and Economics:

History is also closely related to Economics. As the activities of a man in society are very closely related with the economic matters, the historian of any period must possess at least a rudimentary knowledge of the economics. In fact, the economic history of any period is an important branch of history and its understanding is absolutely essential for the proper understanding of history of any period.

There has been a new orientation in our historical outlook from the days of the materialistic interpretation of history by Marx and such class struggle, man’s skill in earning, arts and crafts, trade, business and commerce, land revenue, taxes and a host of all other economic activities of the past figure very prominently in history.

No doubt, it is true that during the last few years economics has become very complex and difficult subject, mostly dependent on mathematics, and a modern historian cannot acquire basic working knowledge of economic theory without devoting a lot of time and leaving little time for the study and writing of history.

Therefore, a new set of economic history by the use of economic historians have emerged who try to study the economic history by the use of the economic tools. At present, history is so closely interlinked with the study of economic problems that it would not be possible to reconstruct history without knowledge of the relevant economic problems.

#### History and Statistics:

In the present century the writing of history has been greatly influenced by the statistical data. With the invention of computers, the collection of statistical data has become possible. The historians have given up the former practice of using the in exact term like majority of historians or people, “wide support” etc., and have started quoting the exact percentage of the people or the help of the computer and processing of enormous data can be completed within a short span and a systematic information can be collected.

Though the conclusion drawn on the basis of the data may be known to the historians on the basis of the impressionistic evidence, which does reduce the value because it provides a concrete evidence for a previously held thesis.

On the same line the use of the historical demography ‘viz-information regarding the movement of people, births and deaths, fertility rates, immigrations, etc., cannot be possible without the means to process and correlate the vast and complex data made available by various official records.

This type of detailed investigation enables the historians to understand the different facts of the past life. A new branch called “Cliometrics” has come into vague, according to which the use of mathematics has come into greater play in the writing of history and interpretation of the numerous sources.

**A good historical writing is described as:**

A = a + b

“A” stands for the net result that flow from the historian’s mind and pen. “a” is the statistical “d” data and facts which he finds in the records or source “b” is the interpretative and explanatory skill of historian which are essential to make history meaningful. The proper of “Cliometrics” has resulted in what called “Quantified History”.

#### History and Sociology:

History and sociology are intimately related and a number of sociologists like Auguste Comte are also important figure in the development of historical studies. Karl Marx was also a great historian and sociologist. Both History and Sociology are concerned with the study of man in society and differed only with regard to their approach.

In the recent years it was realized that a fruitful interaction between the two disciplines was possible and Emile Durkheim, Max Weber acknowledge the initial dependence of sociology upon history. Although, history too benefits from the synthesis produced by the sociologists.

Sociologists exercised profound influence on the study of history by developing the certain narrow areas of human activity. They adopted the sampling techniques and develop their tools with a view to minimize the subjective element. In brief, sociology is helping history to study ‘social dynamics’ which is a study not of society at rest but constantly in social change and development social processes and social causation are giving a new perspective to history. India too our historians are now giving increasing attention to social history.

#### History and Ethics:

History and ethics have a close relationship. Although a true historian is not expected to pass distinct and sensitive judgments on the historical incidents and characters, yet he must know about the ethical principle of the time which influenced the conduct of the people in the past. Probably in the past, there was not reliable ethical science and much of followed were merely a reflection of the bigotry, partial and complexes of the different writers.

In the recent times an attempt has been made to evolve an ethical theory on the basis of biology, psychology and sociology by the scholars like Stephen, Duprat, Dewey etc. A science of conduct has been evolved. A historian must understand and master this science of ethics to have a wider perspective of the issue.

#### History and Psychology:

History and Psychology are also closely linked. A historian must have to show some psychological insights while making an analysis of the motive and actions of men and societies. Historian work would be mere fiction unless he uses the discoveries of modern psychology. The personal life and the environment of a historian has a direct bearing in his decision and often import a bias to his account and renders the much desired objectivity impossible.

The impact of psychology on history is evident from the fact that in the past historian inquired primarily into the origins of war and ignored the result of war. As a result of the influence of psychology historians have under taken the study of the results and impacts of war. An understanding of the group psychology can enable a historian to determine the role of masses in the various revolutions such as Jingoistic patriotism has been described as the cause of certain wars but historian can discuss this cause with the help of the social psychology.

#### History and Geography:

Universally it is accepted that History and Geography have very close ties. In fact it would be practically impossible to study; certain branches of history without rudimentary knowledge of geography e.g., the diplomatic or military history cannot be fallowed without necessary geographical knowledge of the region. Geography is one of the eyes of history the other eye being chronology. Time and space factors give history its correct perspective.

Prof. Michelet was of the opinion that history was in essence found upon geography. He says “Without a geographical basis the people, the makers of history, seek to be walking.” German philosopher Kant said, “Geography lies at the basis of history.” Herder said that “history is geography set in motion.”

There are others like American geographer, Ells Worth Huntington, and Allen Sample who emphasise the importance of climate as having crucial influence on the course of history as well as on race temperament.

It is a fact that many geographical factors such as climate, social, rivers, mountains, sea, coastline and mineral resources aided the development of river in valley. Cultures as in early Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and China. Herodotus, the early Greek historian describes that “Egypt is the gift of the Nile”.

Even Aristotle and Montesquieu have emphasized the influence of climate on man. The physical formation of the country such as Britain, Japan and Greece with broken coastlines had a very powerful impact on its history. This facilitated their naval strength and empire building activities.

Similarly, the Himalayas and the jungles of Assam have acted as barriers against invasions from the North and East of India. The Himalayas and the Gobi and Mangolian deserts were responsible for the isolation of China. The geographical discoveries of America and a new route to India determined the character of World History since the Renaissance.

Geography also plays an important role in the national character formation and influence the human behavior. As we know that climate of a country greatly affected the civilization of a country. Hence the knowledge of geographical is very essential for historians. It would be wise to accept the limited interpretation of geographical influence on man’s conduct or on his history.

### Sources of Indian History

### 1. Literary Sources:

Amongst literary sources, we include all written records in the form of texts, essays or descriptions.

**It has been mainly divided into two parts, religious and secular as follows:**

#### (A) Religious Literature:

This includes religious texts of Hindus, Buddhists and Jains.

**1. Hindu Religious Texts:**

The first literary sources of Hindus are Samhitas which includes four Vedas — the Rig-veda, the Sam-veda, the Yajur-veda and the Atharva-veda. Besides these are Brahmanas (the Satapatha, the Panchavis, the Aitreya etc.), Upanishads (the Kathaka, the Isa, the Svetasvatra etc.), Aranyakas, Vedanga (Total No. 6), Upo-veda (the Aur-veda, the Danur-veda etc.), Sutras (the Dharam-Sutra, the Graha-Sutra etc.), Smiritis (the Manu, the Vishnu, the Narad, the Brahaspati etc.), Puranas (the Vishnu, the Vayu etc. 18 in all) and Epics (the Ramayana and the Mahabharata) which throw light mostly on the history and culture of India from the Vedic up to Gupta age.

The Rig-veda provides us information about the civilization of the early Vedic Age while the rest of the three Vedas are useful to know about the civilization of the later Vedic age. Brahmanas provide us knowledge concerning the expansion of the Aryans towards east India during the later Vedic age and also religious beliefs and rituals of the Aryans.

Upanishads concern the philosophical speculations and beliefs of the Aryans such as the trans-migration of soul, Brahma, salvation of soul etc. Sutras tell us the rituals while performing different Yajnas and the religious, social, moral and political responsibilities of an individual. Smiritis reveal to us the social and religious conditions of the Indians between 200 B.C. to 600 A D.

The Ramayana and the Mahabharata are useful for knowing the living conditions of the Aryans during the later Vedic age while Puranas help us in finding out the history of the rulers and their kingdoms which existed in India after the war of Mahabharata till the 6th century A.D.

**2. Buddhist Religious Texts:**

The original Buddhist texts are known as Tripitakas.

**They are three in number:**

(i) The Vinyapitaka describes rules and regulations for the guidance of the Buddhist monks and the general management of the Church;

(ii) The Sutt-Pitaka is a collection of the religious discourses of the Buddha, and

(iii) The Abhidhamma-pitaka contains an exposition of the philosophical principles underlying the religion.

Afterwards, the Mahayana and the Tantrika sects of Buddhism created vast religious literature of their own and Jataka stories (nearly 549 in number) of Mahayanism describing various life-stories of Mahatma Buddha were also written Some later written Buddhist texts like Anuguttar-Nikay which provides us useful information concerning the political, social and religious condition of the 6th century B.C., Mahayana-Sutra, Satsharika, etc. written by Buddhist scholar, Nagarjuna, Mahayana-Sutra Lamkar written by Asanga, Abhidharma-Kosha written by Vasubandhu and several other books like Milinda-Panha, Divya-dana, Manjusrimulakalpa, Lalit- Visitar etc. written by other scholars provide us useful historical material.

All of them constitute sources of knowing the contemporary culture and history of India. These Buddhist religious texts provide useful information to us concerning the polity, political life, different rulers, their dynasties, their rule and their kingdoms up to 6th century B.C. and also social, economic, religious and cultural life of the people in that age. The religious texts, the Mahavansa and the Dipavansa, prepared by the scholars of Sri Lanka also provide us useful information concerning the history of Ancient India.

**3. Jain Religious Texts:**

The original Jain religious texts were called Agams, Afterwards these were compiled into 14 Purvas and further, the first ten Punas were re-arranged in 12 Angas in the fifth century A.D. Now only 11 Angas are available. Besides, a vast literature was created by Jain scholars afterwards, which also provide us useful knowledge concerning history, culture and civilization of Ancient India.

The Bhadrabhahu Charita refers to several events of the reign of Chandra Gupta Maurya. The Vasudeva Hindi, the Vrahat Kalpa Sutra Bhasya, the Kalika Purana Katha Kosh and alike other Jain religious texts also provide us useful historical material. Among the later Jain religious texts, one of the most prominent ones is the Parisista Parva which was prepared during the 12th century.

#### (B) Secular Literature:

**It includes:**

(i) Writings by foreigners,

(ii) Biographical works of great historical persons and historical texts, and

(iii) Literary compositions.

The Greeks, Romans, Chinese and Muslim writers and travellers have left fairly interesting sources of information in their accounts. Amongst Greek and Roman writers Strabo, Skylex, Justin, Herodotus, Curtius, Diodorus, Arrian, Plutarch, Ptolemy and the anonymous author of the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea have left useful accounts of India. But the most popular account amongst them is the Indica written by Megasthenes who lived for some time in the court of Chandra Gupta Maurya as an ambassador of Seleucus.

Amongst Muslims, Sulaiman and Al Masudi left brief records of India while Alberuni who came to India with Sultan Mahinud of Ghazni wrote the best foreign accounts of India.

The Tahkika-i-Hind of Al-Baruni provides us good information concerning political, social and cultural condition of northern India in the 11th century. The Chinese travellers, Fa-hien, Hiuen Tsang and I-tsing recorded their experiences in fairly bulky volumes which provide us with much useful information.

Their writings provide us useful information concerning social, religious and cultural condition of contemporary India. Besides these important writers and travellers there are many other Greek, Muslim and Chinese whose accounts also provide us with useful information of Indian history and culture.

The contemporary biographical works also provide us with good information. The most important of these works are the Harsha-charita of Banabhatta, the Gandavaho and the Vikramankadeva-charita of Vakpati and Bilhana describing the exploits of Yashovarman and Vikramaditya of the later Chalukya dynasty, the Kumarapala-charita of Jayasimha, the Kumarapala-charita of Hemachandra, the Hammir-Kavya of Nayachandra, the Navashasanka-charita of Padma Gupta, the Bhojaprabandha by Ballala, the Prithviraja-charita of Chand Bardai, the Rama-charita of Sandhyakar Nandi and the Prithviraja-Vijaya by an ano­nymous writer.

Amongst historical writings, the most famous is the Rajatarangini. It is a history of Kashmir written by Kalhana. After him Jonaraja, Srivara, Prajya Bhatta and Suka carried on this work and brought the history of Kashmir till a few years after its conquest by Mughal emperor Akbar.

The Gujarat chronicles like the Ras-Mala, the Kirtikaumudi, the Hammira-mada-mardana, the Vasanta- vilasa, the Persian translation of the Chachnama which gives a detailed account of Arab conquest of Sind, the Vansavalis of Nepal and Tamil literature, particularly of the Sangam age, also throw valuable light on contemporary history and culture of their respective places.

Pure literary works as dramas and poems and works on polity, economy and even grammar carried on by scholars in other branches of knowledge are also of valuable help.

Amongst them the most notable are the Arthasastra of Kautilya, the Mahabhashya of Patanjali, the Ashtadhaya of Panini, the Mudra-Rakshasa of Visakhdatta, the Kamasutra of Vatsyayana, the Priyadarshika, the Ratnavali and the Naganand (dramas) by emperor Harsha Vardhana and extensive writings of Kalidas and Bhavbhuti.

The Arthasasira of Kautilya, the Muudra Rakshasa of Visakhdatta and the Kathasarit-Sagar of Khemendra provide us useful historical information concerning the period of the Mauryas; the Nitisara written by Kamandaka provide us information regarding the polity of the Gupta rulers; the Mahabhashya of Patanjali and the Malvikagnimitra written by Kalidas help us in finding out the material concerning the history of the Sungas; and the Mrachakatika of Sudraka and the Das Kumara-Charita written by Dandin throw useful light on the contemporary social life.

The same way, the writings of some later times, viz., the Kumarpala-Charita written by Jayapala, the Nava-Sahasanka-Charita of Padma Gupta and the Prithvi-Raja-Vijya prepared by Jayanaka provide us much information concerning the history of the rule of Kumarpala. ruler of Gujarat, the history of the Parmaras and the history of the Chauhan ruler, Prithviraja respectively.

The same way, the Sangam-literature written in Tamil language provide us good information concerning the history of the Chera, Chola and Pandya dynasties of the far South up to 3rd century A.D.

However, this list is not complete. Different scholars wrote religious and secular texts in Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrat, Tamil and other languages at different times. Amongst them many are well known and many more might have been missed by the modern scholars.

Besides, a student of history should be cautious while going through this literature, whether religious or secular, in an effort to dig out ancient Indian history, because religious texts are no historical chronicles and the object of biographical works was mainly the glorification of kings while the writings of foreigners are mostly based on second-hand information. Yet, though suffering from these handicaps, the literary sources certainly provide valuable help to students of Indian history.

### 2. Archaeological Sources:

**The archaeological sources can be divided as follows:**

(i) Inscriptions,

(ii) Coins, and

(iii) Monuments, remnants of cities, art-pieces, pottery, weapons and tools of stone or metals etc.

The inscriptions, being contemporary records, have proved a source of the highest value for reconstruction of the political history of ancient India. These are mostly engraved on stone and metal, particularly copper Practically all of them are either commands, records of conquests, descriptions of achievements or sale and gift of lands by different rulers. The earliest of these inscriptions have been found on the seals of Harappa belonging to about 3,000 B.C.

But. their script has not been deciphered so far. After them are those of emperor Asoka engraved on rocks and pillars throughout his vast empire. These inscriptions were engraved in Brahmi script barring a few which were engraved in Kharoshthi script which was written from right to left.

The inscriptions which were engraved after the reign of Emperor Asoka have been divided into two categories, viz., inscriptions engraved by emperors or kings and inscriptions engraved by certain other people or local officers.

The inscriptions engraved by emperors or kings are either Prashastis composed by court-writers or grants of land assigned to individuals. Among the Prashastis of emperors, the most prominent ones are the Prashasti of the emperor Samudra Gupta engraved on the Asoka-pillar at Allahabad which was prepared by his court-poet, Harisena, the Hathigumpha- Prashashti inscription of king Kharavela of Kalinga, the Nasik-inscription of king Gautami Balsree, the Gwalior-inscription of king Bhoj, the Girnar- inscription of king Rudrudaman, the Aohole inscription of the Chalukya king, Pulkesin II, the Bhitri and Nasik-inscriptions of the Gupta ruler Skanda Gupta and the Deopara-inscription of the Sen ruler, Vijaya Sen.

The inscriptions which were used for the grant of lands were mostly engraved on copper-plates. These inscriptions describe the area of land, by whom it was granted, to whom it was granted and also the date when it was granted. Some of them also describe the achievements of rulers who granted lands.

These inscriptions, besides many more, of private individuals or local officers, have furnished us with the names of various kings, boundaries of their kingdoms and sometimes useful dates and clues to many important events of history.

The inscriptions of private individuals or that of local officers are mostly engraved in temples or images of stones or metals. These have provided us information concerning dates of construction of temples, the development of architecture and sculpture at various places during different times and also the growth of regional languages.

Some of them give descriptions of the rule of contemporary rulers, the duties and rights of their different officers and their revenue-system as well which help us in knowing the political condition existing under the rule of different rulers. Some of these inscriptions help us in verifying those facts which we find in contemporary literary works.

Thus, inscriptions have been found very much useful in finding different facts of the history of ancient India. The history of Satavahana rulers has been based mostly on their inscriptions.

The same way the inscriptions of the rulers of south India such as that of the Pallavas, the Chalukyas, the Rashtrakutas, the Cholas and the Pandyas have been of great help in finding historical facts of the rule of their respective dynasties.

Certain inscriptions found outside India have also helped in finding facts concerning the history of ancient India. One among such inscriptions is that of Bogajkoi in Asia-Minor which was inscribed in 1400 B.C.

Hoards of gold, silver and copper coins have been unearthed in different parts of the country which provide us valuable information regarding Indian history till the Gupta age. Most of them were issued by rulers and contain dates and figures of rulers or their gods but many were issued by trading-guilds as well. The history of the Bactrian, Parthian and Scythian princes of India has been recovered almost solely from a careful study of coins issued by them.

Also, coins have helped us in finding out the names and dates of various rulers besides helping us indirectly in assessing the economic and religious conditions of the time when they were issued.

Different coins of different rulers help us in assessing the extent of territory of their kingdoms, their tastes, religious views, dress used by them and the economic condition in general under their rule etc. The coins of different metals, the quality of metals etc. help us in finding out the economic life of the people in ancient India.

Remnants have been found in India even of the prehistoric age. These remnants have proved that man existed in India even during the palaeolithic age. On the basis of remnants found at Hastnapur, Dr B.B. Lai has expressed the opinion that the war of Mahabharat was fought in nearly 900 B.C. It has also helped us in fixing the time of the beginning of the iron-age in India.

The remnants of the iron-age have been found in India at Baluchistan, north-west India, Ganga-Yamuna Doab, Madya-Bharat and south India. On the basis of these remnants Dilip Kumar Chakravarty has expressed the opinion that the iron- age began in India nearly 1100 B.C. These remnants found at different places in India have helped us in finding out the process of social and economic development of the Indian people at different times in different parts of India.

Remnants, monuments, buildings, idols, wall-paintings etc. have helped us in finding the culture and civilization of India during the later period as well. The monuments are undying witnesses of the artistic skill of India in various fields and testify its wealth and grandeur at different epochs of history.

They constitute one of the most important sources of information regarding the cultural history of ancient India. Different stupas, temples, pillars, wall-paintings, statues, toys, ornaments, pots etc. have been found at different places in India.

The remnants of cities of the Indus valley, pillars of Asoka, wall-paintings of Ajanta caves, different statues of Buddha, clay-seals and pots of the Indus valley are but a few such examples which help us in discovering ancient Indian culture. The excavation at the Indus valley have taken the history of Indian culture back to 3000 B.C. and have placed the Indian civilization among the most ancient civilizations of the world.

The Indian pottery excavated from different parts of India have contributed to much extent in exploring Indian history. After examining them, it has been possible to fix up different dates of the events of Indian history. Besides, these clay-pots are beautiful pieces of art as well.

By utilising all these available sources it has been possible to throw some light on the culture and civilization of India since the third millennium before Christ and also to draw an outline of its political history from the sixth century B.C. There is no doubt that there are many shortcomings and details are to be filled in at many places

**Chapter – II**

**Ancient History**

* **Ancient Indian cultural Heritage**
* **Indus Valley Civilization**
* **Aryan Civilization with special study of social and political**
* **Study of ancient Republic**
* **Maurya Administration**
* **Central, Provincial Administration, Revenue Policy**

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**Ancient Indian cultural Heritage**

India is a land of ancient civilization. India's social, economic, and cultural configurations are the products of a long process of regional expansion. Indian history begins with the birth of the Indus Valley Civilization and the coming of the Aryans. These two phases are usually described as the pre-Vedic and Vedic age. Hinduism arose in the Vedic period.

The fifth century saw the unification of India under Ashoka, who had converted to Buddhism, and it is in his reign that Buddhism spread in many parts of Asia. In the eighth century Islam came to India for the first time and by the eleventh century had firmly established itself in India as a political force. It resulted into the formation of the Delhi Sultanate, which was finally succeeded by the Mughal Empire, under which India once again achieved a large measure of political unity.

The History of India begins with the Indus Valley Civilization and the coming of the Aryans. These two phases are generally described as the pre-Vedic and Vedic periods. The earliest literary source that sheds light on India's past is the Rig Veda. It is difficult to date this work with any accuracy on the basis of tradition and ambiguous astronomical information contained in the hymns. It is most likely that Rig Veda was composed between 1,500 B.C. and 1,000 B.C. In the fifth century, large parts of India were united under Ashoka.

The 6th Century B.C. was a period of great tumult in India. The kingdom of Magadha, one of the 16 great Janapadas had become paramount over other kingdoms of the Ganges Valley. This period also saw the emergence of various heterodox sects in India. This was the time when Buddhism and Jainism emerged as popular protestant movements to pose a serious challenge to Brahmanic orthodoxy.

This period was followed by the Mauryas of whom the most famous was Ashoka the Great. The boundaries of his empire extended from Kashmir and Peshawar in the North and Northwest to Mysore in the South and Orissa in the East - but his fame rests not so much on military conquests as on his celebrated renunciation of war.

For the next four hundred years (after the great Mauryas), India remained politically disunited and weak. It was repeatedly raided and plundered by foreigners. Stability was restored by the Guptas. The Gupta age was the period of peace and prosperity and witnessed an unprecedented flowering of art, literature and the sciences. This period also saw the beginning of Hindu temple architecture.

After the Guptas there was only a brief afterglow, in the time of Harshavardhana of Kannauj. A Chinese traveler, Huen-tsang visited India from (629 - 645 A.D.) during the reign of Harshavardhana. His account gives us an opportunity to note the changes that had taken place in the lives of the Indian people since the days of the Guptas.

[**Ancient Indian Art**](https://www.culturalindia.net/indian-history/ancient-india/ancient-art.html)

Each era is unique in its distinctive culture. In the same way Indian art forms have continuously evolved over thousands of years. In ancient India, various art forms like paintings, architecture and sculpture evolved. The history of art in ancient India begins with prehistoric rock paintings.

[**Ancient Indian Geography**](https://www.culturalindia.net/indian-history/ancient-india/ancient-geography.html)

India and its surrounding countries are so similar in culture and climatic conditions that the region is sometimes called the Indian sub-continent. In ancient times the geography of India was a little different than what it is today. In the northern part of India stand the Himalayan Mountains and the Hindu Kush stand in the North West.

[**Ancient Government**](https://www.culturalindia.net/indian-history/ancient-india/ancient-government.html)

In the beginning of the Vedic age people did not have a settled life and were nomads but with development in agriculture people started to settle down in groups. The organization was mainly tribal and the head of the tribe was supposed to be the raja or the King, though the concept of King had yet not developed.

[**Ancient India Religion**](https://www.culturalindia.net/indian-history/ancient-india/ancient-religion.html)

The predominant religion in ancient India was Hinduism. The roots of Hindu religion can be traced back to the Vedic period. Hinduism is believed to be the oldest of major religions and originated in northern India. Early Aryan, or Vedic, culture was the early Hinduism whose interaction with non-Aryan cultures resulted in what we call Classical Hinduism.

[**Ancient India Facts**](https://www.culturalindia.net/indian-history/ancient-india/facts-ancientindia.html)

According to Greek philosophers slavery did not exist in ancient India. Aryabhatta, the great astronomer and scientist, discovered zero. The number system was also invented in ancient India. The Indus valley civilization was one of the most advance civilizations in terms of town planning etc. During the ancient period there were many famous and important centers of learning in India- Taxila and Nalanda, where thousands of students from all over studied different subjects.

[**Ashoka**](https://www.culturalindia.net/indian-history/ancient-india/ashoka.html)

Asoka was one of the most powerful kings of the Indian subcontinent. A ruler of the Mauryan Empire, Ashoka ruled over the country from 273 BC to 232 BC. The reign of Emperor Asoka covered most of India, South Asia and beyond, stretching from present day Afghanistan and parts of Persia in the west, to Bengal and Assam in the east, and Mysore in the south.

[**Chandragupta Maurya**](https://www.culturalindia.net/indian-history/ancient-india/chandragupta-maurya.html)

Chandragupta Maurya was the founder of the Maurya Empire in India. He is credited with bringing together the small fragmented kingdoms of the country and combining them into a single large empire. As per the Greek and Latin accounts, King Chandragupta Maurya is known as Sandracottos or Andracottus.

[**Harshavardhan**](https://www.culturalindia.net/indian-history/ancient-india/harshavardhan.html)

Harshavardhana was an Indian Emperor, who ruled over the northern parts of India for a period of more than forty years. His empire was spread over the states of Punjab, Bengal, Orissa and the entire Indo-Gangetic plain, lying to the north of the Narmada River.

[**Indus Valley Civilisation**](https://www.culturalindia.net/indian-history/ancient-india/indus-valley.html)

Indus Valley Civilization was an ancient civilization that thrived in the Indus and Ghaggar-Hakra river valleys, now in Pakistan, along with the northwestern parts of India, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan. The civilization, which is also known as Harappan Civilization, lasted from 3300 BC to 1700 BC. The discovery of the Ancient Indus River Valley Civilization was made, when the Harappan city, the first city of Indus Valley, was excavated.

[**Vedic Age**](https://www.culturalindia.net/indian-history/ancient-india/vedic-civilization.html)

The Vedic Period or the Vedic Age refers to that time period when the Vedic Sanskrit texts were composed in India. The society that emerged during that time is known as the Vedic Period, or the Vedic Age, Civilization. The Vedic Civilization flourished between the 1500 BC and 500 BC on the Indo-Gangetic Plains of the Indian subcontinent.

# Art in Ancient India

Each era is unique in its distinctive culture. In the same way Indian art forms have continuously evolved over thousands of years. In ancient India, various art forms like paintings, architecture and sculpture evolved. The history of art in ancient India begins with prehistoric rock paintings. Such rock paintings can be seen in the Bhimbetaka paintings, belonging to the prehistoric age. Thereafter, an advanced town planning is seen in Harappa and Mohenjodaro, with their centrally planned cities indicating a highly developed architecture. Another remarkable example of sculpture from Harappan civilization comes in the form of the dancing girl from Mohenjodaro.

The use of symbolic forms in India is as old as the Harappan seals. The fire altars of the Vedic period, with their astronomical and mathematical significance also play an important role in the evolution of the later temples. It was followed by a period in the history of Indian art that is important for rock-cut caves and temple architecture. The Buddhists initiated the rock-cut caves, Hindus and Jains started to imitate them at Badami, Aihole, Ellora, Salsette, Elephanta, Aurangabad and Mahabalipuram. The rock-cut art has continuously evolved, since the first rock cut caves, to suit different purposes, social and religious contexts, and regional differences.

Alongside the art forms like architecture, paintings and sculpture, there have been evolving, changing, transforming, folk and tribal art traditions in India. These art forms are expression of people belonging to different cultural and social groups of India. It is the expression of people whose life is tuned to the rhythms of nature and its laws of cyclic change and whose life is knotted with natural energy. It's been a tradition in India that gods and legends are transformed into contemporary forms and familiar images. Fairs, festivals and local deities play a vital role in the development of these arts forms.

It is an art where life and creativity are inseparable. The tribal arts have a unique sensitivity, as the tribal people possess an intense awareness very different from the settled and urbanized people. Their minds are supple and intense with myth, legends, snippets from epic, multitudinous gods born out of dream and fantasy. Their art is an expression of their life and holds their passion and mystery.

# Religion In Ancient India

The predominant religion in ancient India was Hinduism. The roots of Hindu religion can be traced back to the Vedic period. Hinduism is believed to be the oldest of major religions and originated in northern India. Early Aryan, or Vedic, culture was the early Hinduism whose interaction with non-Aryan cultures resulted in what we call Classical Hinduism. It is interesting to note that much of ancient, classical and modern Indian culture has been greatly shaped by Hindu thought.

The Mahabharata and Ramayana, both sacred Hindu texts, served as India's main motivating base for a great deal of literary, artistic and musical creations in subsequent millennia. The Epic Period was a golden era in Indian philosophical thought because of the tolerance of different opinions and teachings. The most popular form of Indian medicine, Ayurveda, was developed by Vedic saints and Jyotish, Hindu astrology, is the most popular form of astrology in India today. Yoga, an internationally-famous system of meditation, is one of six systems of Hindu thought.

Besides Hinduism, other main religions during ancient India were Buddhism, and Jainism. Buddhism originated in northern India in what is today the state of Bihar. It rapidly gained adherents during the Buddha's lifetime. Up to the 9th century, Indian followers numbered in the hundreds of millions. Buddhism, known in ancient India as Buddha Dharma, originated in northern India in what is today the state of Bihar. It rapidly gained adherents during the Buddha's lifetime. Up to the 9th century, Indian followers numbered in the hundreds of millions.

There also developed many heterodox religious sects in ancient India. One such sect was Ajivika, founded by Mahavira's rival Goshala Maskariputra. Ajivikas did not believe in karma and thought that the destiny was predetermined and could not be changed. There were also several other religious contemporaries to Buddha and Mahavira during the 6th century B.C. Another preacher of the same period was Pakuda Katyayana, who also taught that the soul was superior to good and evil, thus unchanged or untouched by it. He classified everything into seven categories, i.e. earth, water, fire, air, pleasure, pain and soul, which were eternal. Ajita Kesakambalin, another contemporary of Buddha taught complete materialism. He did not believe in the afterlife and considered death as the final phase of all souls.

# Ancient India Geography

India and its surrounding countries are so similar in culture and climatic conditions that the region is sometimes called the Indian sub-continent. In ancient times the geography of India was a little different than what it is today. In the northern part of India stand the Himalayan Mountains and the Hindu Kush stand in the North West. The southern region of India is surrounded by three bodies of water. They are the Arabian Sea to the south west; the Indian Ocean on the southern side and to the southeast lay the Bay of Bengal.

In ancient times, India was much more extended to the North West and west (consisting of parts of modern Pakistan and Afghanistan). The Himalayas lay to the north as they are today. In ancient period there were many other rivers besides the preset ones. The most important of them was River Saraswati, which is not traceable now. The geography of India is one of great extremes, encompassing desert, mountains, forest, and jungle. All of these environments are susceptible to unpredictable periods of flood, drought, and monsoon.

Although India may bear some of the most extreme geological and climatic features, these difficult conditions were also a great asset to the development of India's early civilizations. The Himalayas provided a great deal of protection from nomadic and military invasions from the north, and other mountain ranges provided similar protection in the west and east. The water ways of the Indus valley provided an excellent source for trade and commerce all through India's history.

**The Harappan civilization ( Indus vally civilization)**

Harappan civilization is one of the most ancient civilizations of the world. It was believed to be a hub of art and culture and architecture. The discoveries made at these architectural sights give us great insight into the lives and lifestyles of our ancestors. Let us learn about this very important part of our history. Harappa is known to be a 4700 years old city in the subcontinent which was discovered around the time 1920. Soon after the discovery of cities like Lothal, Dholavira, Mohenjodaro, and Kalibangan have also been discovered and were come to be known as the Harappan cities or also the advent of Harappan Civilization. These cities were discovered around the river Indus, henceforth proving the existence of the Indus Valley Civilization.

**Architecture**

The Harappan city was divided into two or more parts of which the part to the west was smaller, however higher, known to be as a citadel. Also, the part to the east was comparatively larger but lower and the archaeologists called it ‘the lower town’. The citadel comprised granaries, religious buildings, public buildings and assembly halls while the lower town was divided into rectangular sections cut by wide roads at right angles to each other.

Harappan objects were made of stone, Shell, and metal. Copper and bronze were used to make tools, weapons, ornaments and vessels. Gold and silver were used to make ornaments and vessels. Harappans also made stone seals. They made pots with beautiful black designs. Bricks were so well made that they had seemed to have lasted for thousands of years and were laid in an interlocking pattern which made the walls strong. About a hundred and fifty years ago, many of these bricks were taken away by engineers.

People built one or two-story houses on either side of the roads with rooms built around a courtyard. The Harappan city had a well-planned drainage system where every house had a drain connected to the street drains which further were connected to the bigger drains. The drains were also covered with the stone slabs that were laid in straight lines along with inspection holes for the cleanup purpose.

**Farming**

Some of the farming methods and rearing as followed by the Harappan farmers and herders are –

1. Harappans grew wheat, barley, pulses, peas rice sesame linseed and mustard. They also developed some new tools known as plough and was used to dig earth for planting the seeds and turning the soil. A method of irrigation was used due to less rainfall.
2. The Harappan reared cattle sheep, goat and buffalo. Water and pastures were present around many sites. People collected fruits, fish and hunted wild animals.

Mohenjodaro, Harappa, and Lothal also had huge storehouses used for storing grains and hence were called granaries. Big fire altars are found at Kalibangan and Lothal used for performing sacrifices. Lothal also has revealed a huge dockyard for loading and unloading of goods.

**The vedic civilization (Aryan Civilization**

**with special study of social and political)**

The Vedic culture occupies the most prominent place in Indian history. Its impact even on modern India is widely prevalent. The religion, philosophy and social customs of the Hindus who constitute the majority in India have their principal source in the Vedic culture.

It has also contributed fairly towards world culture in terms of religious philosophy and spiritual speculations. It has been contended by several scholars that the village culture of the Vedic age was inferior to the city-culture of the Indus valley.

But the contention is not accepted by the majority. The contribution of the Vedic culture to human progress has far exceeded that of the Indus valley culture and that alone is sufficient to justify its superiority. The Vedic culture definitely occupies a proud place among the cultures of the world and adds a brilliant chapter to Indian history. The authors of this culture were the Indo-Aryans, an anglicized version of the original word Arya.

### The Origin of the Aryans:

The origin of the Aryans is controversial. Different scholars have expressed different opinions regarding the original homeland of the Aryans and have tried to justify their contentions on the basis of history, philology, racial anthropology and archaeological discoveries. India, Central Asia, South Russia, plateau of Pamir, Scandinavia. Germany, Austria, Hungary etc. have been alternatively suggested as the original home of the Aryans, and yet there is no consensus on this question.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati described Tibet as the original home of the Aryans. But there are no proofs to justify this contention.

The Indian nationalist leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak expressed the view that the Aryans w ere the indigenous people of India. He tried to support his arguments on the basis of the Vedas. Many other Indian scholars have tried to support this view.

Ganganath Jha maintained that the original home of the Aryans was Brahmarishi-Desh, that is, India. D.S. Trivedi expressed the view that the area near Multan and Devika river was their original place. D.S. Kala says that it was the hilly region of the Himalayas and Kashmir.

Avinash Chandra Das has maintained that it was Saptasindhu Pradesh, that is the Punjab and the Ganges-Jamuna Doab and, Rajbali Pandey contends that it was Madhya-desh, that is, modern Uttar Pradesh. These scholars have tried to justify their contention on various grounds. They argue that Vedic literature gives no description of any other land or country outside India.

The central feature of the Aryan religious life was sacrifice of animals to god, the practice which originated in north Punjab and, the rivers, the mountains, the climate, the jungles and the rest, described in Vedic literature are all Indian. It is also argued that the Aryans themselves described Saptasindhvah — the land between and nearby the six rivers of Punjab and Saraswati (Sursuti in modern Haryana which has disappeared now) as their home-land.

It included Kashmir in the north and touched the boundary of Rajasthan in the south while in the west it included Gandhara-Pradesh and banks of the river Ganges in the east. There are numerous references of this land in the Rig-Veda.

Yet, the contention of these scholars is not accepted by the majority of scholars. Probably, this view has been upheld as a reaction against the view expressed by western scholars that the original home of the Aryans was Europe.

The first European who declared that there existed a definite relation between Sanskrit, the literary language of the Indo-Aryans and some of the principal languages of Europe was Fillippo Sassetti who for five years (1583-88 A.D.) lived in Goa. However, that this relation is due to their origins from a common source was first suggested by Sir William Jones in his address to the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1786.

He maintained that languages like Greek, Latin, Gothic, Celtic, Persian and Sanskrit have the same source of origin. For example, the Sanskrit words pitar and matar are essentially the same as pater and mater in Latin, pater and mater in Greek, father and mother in English, and vater and mutter in German.

On the basis of this similitude of languages, western scholars maintained that Europe was the original homeland of the Aryans. The argument was further supported on the basis of racial physical similarities and the description of flora and fauna in the Vedic texts.

P. Giles argued that all animals, birds and vegetation described in the Vedic texts are not found in India but at different places in Europe. Therefore, Hungary, Austria, Bohemia or the valley of Danube was the probable home of the Aryans. Another scholar Penka compared the physical features of the bodies of different races and declared that Germany or most probably Scandinavia was the home of the Aryans.

Nehring, after making a comparative study of vegetations, declared that south Russia was the original home of the Aryans. Brandenstain maintained that it was the grassy steppes and the region in the south of Yural mountain and Gordon Childe, on the basis of archaeological findings, declared that it was south Russia or Scandinavia.

However, the argument of the similitude of language is no valid argument because the similitude of language does not necessarily prove the similitude of blood or a common homeland.

Similarly arguments of similarity of physical features have also been discarded by scholars and so is the case with the argument put forth by P. Giles. There is no evidence to prove that the flora and fauna described in the Vedic texts existed in European countries at that time.

There is another set of scholars who have argued that central Asia was the original home of the Aryans. Max Muller supported this argument. He claimed, that one group of them established itself in Iran while the other group marched as far as India. There is similarity of gods such as Indra, Varun and Nastya as described in the Vedas and the Iranian Avestan Gathas.

These scholars maintain that the climate of the original homeland of the Aryans ought to have been such where the cow and the horse, the principal animals of the Aryans could be found and exist, and such climate existed only in central Asia. K.M. Panikkar has also supported the opinion of Mr Max Muller.

Edward Mayer has expressed the view that the original home of the Aryans was the plateau of Pamir. Mr. Oldenburg and Prof. Keith have supported this view.

The latest researches, particularly that of Prof. Schrader, have tried to prove that the original home of the Aryans was south Russia. Dr. B.K. Ghosh has accepted this view.

He writes – **“In spite of the enormous increase in knowledge since the days of Schrader it would be best, therefore, to adhere to his conclusion that south Russia, more than any other region, can claim to be regarded as the cradle-land of the Aryans (Indo-Europeans.)”**

Thus, we find that different opinions have been expressed by different scholars regarding the original home of the Indo-Aryans and still there is no consensus. Therefore, it is difficult to say positively about it. However, the majority is of the view that the great steppe land which stretched from Poland and south Russia to Central Asia was inhabited by the Aryans who were tall, comparatively fair and mostly long-headed.

They were mainly pastoral people but practised a little agriculture. Probably, the natural increase of population or the search for pasture lands forced them to move towards East, West and South. They had tamed the horse which they used in light chariots with spoked wheels which gave them superiority over their enemies.

They migrated in bands. Some invaded Europe to become the ancestors of the Greeks, the Latins, the Celts and the Teutons, while others reached Anatolia where, from the mixing of these and the original inhabitants, the great empire of the Hittites grew up.

Some others moved southwards and, from the Caucasus and the Iranian tableland, attacked the Middle Eastern civilizations. The Kassites who conquered Babylon and the Mitannis who conquered Syria belonged to this stock. Yet, there were others who remained in their homeland to remain ancestors of the later Baltic and Slavonic peoples. Those who had established themselves in Central Asia and Iran marched further eastward and entered India through Afghanistan near about 2000 B.C.

These were called the Indo-Aryans. The Aryan invasion of India was not single concerted action, but one covering centuries. The Dravidians who were then occupants of India resisted them and a fierce and protracted struggle ensued. It was not merely a struggle between two nationalities, but a conflict between two types of civilization. The Dravidians, no doubt, put up a brave fight, but ultimately succumbed to the attacks of the invaders.

The victory enabled the Aryans gradually to conquer the greater part of North India and the vanquished natives, Dravidians as well as others, either submitted to them, found shelter in the South or retreated towards the north, south and the east in hills and forests. In India the Aryans created their religious texts and laid the foundations of not only Vedic culture but Indian culture as well.

### The Early Vedic or the Rig-Vedic Civilization:

The only source of Vedic culture is the Vedic literature. Amongst it are the four Vedas (called Samhitas also), the Rig-veda, the Sama-veda, the Yajur-veda and the Atharva-veda; Brhamanas, Aranyakas and the Upanishads.

The Rig-veda is a collection of hymns; the Sama-veda is a collection of songs mostly taken from the Rig-veda; the Yajur-veda is a collection of sacrificial formulas; the Atharva-veda is a collection of spells and charms; Brahmanas contain observations on various sacrificial rites and ceremonies; Aranyakas contain philosophic speculations about the nature of truth; and Upanishads elaborate further philosophic speculations of Aranyakas.

Upanishads marked a reaction against sacrificial religion and revealed the ultimate truth and reality, a knowledge of which was considered indispensable for the emancipation of man. Besides, certain other Hindu scriptures too have been included in Vedic literature.

Six vedangas, Sutras and Smritis are included in it. Among Sutras important ones are the Graha-Sutra and the Dharma-Sutra and among Smritis are- the Manu-Smriti, the Narada-Smriti, the Brahaspati-Smriti etc. Certain other Hindu philosophical texts i.e., the Sankhya-Darshana by Kapil, the Yoga-Darshana by Patanjali, the Nyaya-Darshana by Gautam etc. are also included in it.

The above mentioned Vedic and other allied Hindu religious literature has been regarded most useful for human knowledge. The Hindus, therefore, have claimed that their religious texts contain every aspect of human knowledge. Besides, several of these texts provide us useful historical material as well

During the early stage of their settlement in India, the Aryans had composed only samhitas (hymns) of the Rig-veda. Therefore, the only source of early Vedic culture is the Rig-veda. Its present text consists of 1,028 hymns which are divided into ten mandalas or books. There is no unanimous opinion amongst scholars regarding the period of its composition.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak believed that it was composed during 6000 B.C. Jacobi fixed the time as 2500 B.C. and Max Muller opined that it was composed sometime between 1200-1000 B.C. However, the majority of scholars accept that most of its hymns were composed between 1500 and 1000 B.C. although many of its hymns might have been composed a century or two later.

**The Rig-veda gives us the following idea about the political, social economic and cultural life of the people during the Vedic Age:**

#### 1. Geographical Expansion:

The implication of the term Saptsindhavah as used in the Rig-veda means a definite country. It meant the country of seven rivers and according to Max Muller, the seven rivers are the Indus, its five tributaries and the Saraswati (Sursuti in modern Haryana which has now disappeared) which is also the most accepted view. River Yamuna has been referred to very little, while reference to the Ganges has been made only once.

Thus, during this period, the Aryans were mainly confined to Punjab though their outer settlements towards the East reached up to the banks of the Yamuna and the Ganges. However, references to Kabul, the Swat, the Kurram and the Gomal river indicate that some Aryan tribes still lingered on the western side of the river Indus.

Thus, Afghanistan, the North­west Frontier province, Punjab, Kashmir, parts of Sind and Rajputana and Eastern India up to the river Sarayu were inhabited by the Aryans during this period.

#### 2. The Aryans and Non-Aryans:

There was continuous fighting among the Aryans themselves and between the Aryans and non-Aryans who were called Dasas, Dasyus, Asuras etc., by the Aryans. There are many hymns in the Rig-veda which prove that the Aryans constantly sought the help of their gods against non-Aryans. Indra was the main Aryan god who was credited with honour of destroying forts or Puras of non- Aryans in large numbers.

The Aryans were themselves divided into various tribes and fought amongst themselves for extension of their territories and power. They often sought help of non-Aryan rulers as well. The Rig-veda describes one such important battle as the Dasrajana or the battle of the ten kings.

Sudas was a Bharata king of the Tristsu family which was settled in the country which later came to be known as Brahmavarta, the land lying between the rivers Sarasvati and Drishadvati. Sudas dismissed his priest Visvamitra and appointed Vasishtha in his place. Thereupon a bitter and long rivalry ensued between the two priests, and in revenge Visvamitra led a tribal confederacy of ten kings against Sudas.

The federation consisted of the five well-known tribes — Puru, Yadu, Turvasa, Anus and Druhyu, along with five of minor importance, that is, Alma, Paktha, Bhalanas, Siva and Vishanin. Dr D.D. Kosambi gave another reason of this battle. He has opined that the primary cause of this war was the attempt of the confederation of ten rulers to change the course of the river Purushni (modern Ravi).

Sudas won this battle. He had to fight yet another important battle in which the three non- Aryan tribes, Ajas, Sigrus and Yakshus had united against him under king Bheda. He again emerged victorious and, thus, became the most powerful Aryan king of his time. Such references in the Rig-veda give us some idea about political condition, kingdoms and various tribes of the Aryans and non-Aryans at that time.

The Aryans fought among themselves and also against non-Aryans at that time. Among the non-Aryans primarily were the Dravidians though other races were also there. In Rig-veda, these different races have been called by different names. Mostly, the Aryans called them Dasyu, Dasa, Ajur, Rakyash, etc. All of them were regarded enemies of the Aryans and their gods. The fight between them and the Aryans was very bitter.

In Rig-veda many hymns have been devoted to invoke the gods of the Aryans for providing their help in destroying the forts and settlements of these non-Aryans. Indra was the primary god of the Aryans who destroyed the forts of these non-Aryans. Finally, the Aryans who used horses in their chariots and had sharp weapons emerged victorious in this struggle and the non-Aryans either accepted their supremacy or went to hills, forests or towards south India.

#### 3. Political Organization:

The state was called the Rashtra (tribal kingdom). The head of the state and the tribe was called Rajan or the king. In later days the expression Samrat was also used which meant emperor.

It might have been used for a king who had several kings under his rule. However, it is not accepted that somebody assumed the title of Samrat at that time because the kings were mostly tribal chiefs at that time. Rashtra, probably, was divided into Janas.

The officer of a Jana were called Gop. Every Jana was divided into smaller units called Visa. The administrative head of a Visa was called Vispati. The smallest unit was the village called Grama whose chief officer was Gramani. The village consisted of a group of families or Kulas. The head of a Kula or family was called Kulapa, Kulpati or Grahpati.

**(i) The King:**

Hereditary monarchy was the prevailing system of political organization though there are references to election of the king by the people or when a cruel king was deprived of his kingdom by the people. There are also references to the Gana with the Ganpati or jyeshtha (elder) as its head. Therefore, it is possible that republican states also existed in certain cases at that time.

There are differences among scholars as to how the institution of monarchy grew up in India. Narayanchandra Bandopadhyav expressed the view that war begot the king. Beni Prasad says that kingship was bestowed on people by God while the necessities of war strengthened it. K.P. Jayaswal contends that the Aryans adopted it from the Dravidians and V.M. Apte says that it was the logical result of the patriarchal organization of Aryan society and the necessity of unity and organization under a successful leader created the institution of monarchy.

The majority, however, believes that the necessity of successful leadership in wars created the institution of monarchy. There are references to the fact that when gods were defeated by the demons they chose a king from among themselves who led them in the war and got success.

The head of the state was the king. There were no legal limits to the powers of the king but, in practice, his powers were limited by his own duties (Rajva Dharam) and by the powers of his chief officers and popular assemblies. The king’s primary duties were to protect the lives, honour and property of his subjects, lead them in war, punish the guilty and maintain priests for the performance of sacrifices.

He derived his income from the tribute paid by the conquered tribes and the voluntary tribute called bali by his own subjects. However, the king was not the owner of the land. It was joint property of the tribe. At that time, mostly kingdoms were small.

Yet, the king occupied a position of dignity. He was appointed king at a formal ceremony, wore gorgeous robes and valuable ornaments and lived in a much bigger and more gaily decorated house than houses of the commoners. Mostly kingship was hereditary though we find some instances when the king was elected or a cruel king was deposed from the throne.

**(ii) Chief Officials:**

The Purohita, the Senani and the Gramani were the chief officers of the king. The Purohita was the chief priest and wielded good influence with the king. Examples of powerful Purohits like Vasistha and Visvamitra are there to prove it.

The Senani was the head of the army after the king and Gramani was the king’s chief officer to look after the administration of the villages. The king employed Dutas (envoys) and spies as well. There must have been many more officers besides these but nothing is known about them.

**(iii) Army Organization:**

The main elements of the army were charioteers and infantry. Sometimes three to four horses were used in chariots. The main weapons of the soldiers were bow s and arrows, spears, lances and strings. They were protected by helmets and coats of mail. The Aryans also used a moving engine, pur charishnu for assaulting strongholds of enemies.

**(iv) Justice:**

There were no regular legal institutions at this stage. Custom was law and the arbiters were the king and his purohita, sometimes advised by certain elders of the community. Theft, burglary, robbery and cattle-lifting were the principal crimes.

The common punishment was to tie the criminal to a stake. Murder was probably punished by a system of wergild and the usual payment for killing a man was a hundred cows. There are a few references to prison-houses. It means that mostly offenders were punished and set free. Capital punishment was a later idea.

**(v) Popular Assemblies:**

Two assemblies called the sabha and the samiti formed an essential feature of the government. Scholars have differed regarding their origin, constitution and powers. N.C. Bandopadhyay regarded the samiti as the assembly of all the tribal people and the sabha as a committee of a few privileged and important individuals. K.P. Jayaswal described the samiti as a representative body of villages and the sabha as a central committee of a few- important individuals working under the supervision of the samiti.

Dr. Altekar accepted the samiti as a political committee of the central government and the sabha as a representative body of villages and V.M. Apte regarded the samiti as a larger body representing the people and the sabha a small committee of less importance.

However, the majority view seems to be that the samiti was an assembly of a larger group of the people for the discharge of tribal business and was presided over by the king, while the sabha was a body of a few selected people to help the king in administration and was less popular and political in character than the samiti.

It is difficult to define exactly the powers and functions of these assemblies but it is accepted that both exercised considerable authority and must have acted as healthy checks on the power of the king. It is also not acceptable that the king carried the administration on their advice but it is certain that their advice was sought on important matters of the state.

**(vi) Republics and Oligarchies:**

There were certain Rashtras which were called republics or Ganas. Therein the rulers were chosen by the people and they were called Ganpati or Jyeshthas. There were certain other type of states as well where some people ruled jointly. These were called oligarchies. However, the number of Ganas and oligarchies was very little. Mostly the states were ruled by hereditary kings.

#### 4. Social Life:

The patriarchal family was the basis of social life. The joint-family system was the normal form. Father was the head of the family and after him his eldest son took over. The mother also occupied a respectable place till her husband was alive. The birth of a son was regarded auspicious.

**The practice of adopting a child was also prevalent but mostly it was avoided:**

**(i) Marriage and Status of Women:**

Marriage was regarded as a sacred tie between husband and wife. The primary aim of marriage was to fulfill the desire for children. Monogamy was the prevalent form of marriage but there was no restriction on polygamy. There is no reference to polyandry at that time. Child- marriages were not in practice and there was considerable freedom on the part of young persons concerned with the selection of a wife or a husband as they generally married at a mature age.

Marriage connections with Dasyus or non- Aryans were, probably, prohibited. Among the Aryans, only the marriage of brother and sister and of father and daughter were banned. It is not clear whether widow-marriages were permitted or not.

However, widows were permitted to have Niyog (temporary marriage) with any of the brothers of the dead husband in order to beget a son. The custom of Sati did not exist. Hardly a few examples existed and those too were limited to royal families.

There was no dowry-system. It was given or taken only when the concerned party suffered from some physical defect. There was no purdah system. The women did not always remain indoors and moved freely and attended public feasts and entertainment parties and even went to battle-fields.

There was no restriction on their education though, in practice, it was limited to upper strata of society. Some ladies like Visvavara, Apala and Ghosha composed mantras and rose to the rank of Rishis. Thus women occupied a more respectable place among the Aryans as compared to other people of contemporary civilizations.

However, women did not enjoy equal rights with men, socially and legally. They had no property rights. They had to remain in the care of male members of the family; in the care of their fathers or brothers until marriage and in their husband’s after marriage. The women enjoyed respect only as a daughter or wife or mother.

**(ii) The Varna-System:**

When the Aryans came to India they were divided into three social classes, the warriors, the priests and the common people. At that time, professions were not hereditary nor were there any restrictions regarding marriage or dining within these classes. It is only when the Aryans came in contact with non-Aryans and allowed them a place within their society that the necessity to maintain class-distinctions arose.

However, the early Aryans divided the society only in two parts — Dvija or twice-born and Advija. All Aryans whether warriors, priests or common people were called dvija while non-Aryans and those of mixed blood were called Advija. The distinction was maintained not only on the basis of culture but primarily on the basis of the colour of the skin or what is called varna in Sanskrit .However, during the later period of Rig-veda the fourfold division, that is chaturvarna-system had started to take its form.

Among the Aryans, the priestly class was called the Brahmana, the warriors were called the Kshatriyas, the common people devoted to agriculture, pastoral pursuits, trade and industry were called the Vaisyas and the Dasas or the non-Aryans and people of mixed blood were assigned the status of the Sudras.

Thus, the chaturvarna-system which has been gradually distorted in shape and meaning and replaced by the prevalent caste- system in India, had its beginning during the later Rig-veda period. Besides, except that the Sudras were distinguished from the rest, there was no rigidity in the system. Change in varna was quite often possible with change in profession and-there was no restriction on interdining and intermarriage within the three upper varnas of the society.

There are rare references in the Rig-veda of males being given in donation to others while there are many references of females being donated to others. Therefore, it seems that, probably, the rich people kept slaves in their homes as a mark of social respect. But it is certain that slavery as a means of production either in agriculture or in production of any other article did not exist during the early vedic age.

**(iii) Food, Dress etc.**

Yava which probably meant wheat, bailey and beans were the chief vegetarian food stuffs of the Aryans. They made bread and cakes of flour. Milk and its various preparations, such as ghee, butter and curd together with fruits, vegetables and sugarcane were also favourite commodities of food. The flesh of ox, sheep and goat was normally eaten. Horse-flesh was eaten only on the occasion of horse-sacrifice and so was the case with beef and there, too.

Only barren cows called Vasas were sacrificed. Probably, rice was eaten by them while nothing can be said definitely about fish. Dr R.S. Sharma has opined that the Rig-vedic-Aryans did not produce rice as we find no reference to rice in the Rig-veda.

Probably, rice became known to the Aryans only at a later stage of the Rig-veda. Sura and Soma were favourite drinks with the Aryans. Probably Soma was bhang and it was a sacrificial drink while Sura was popular intoxicating drink like wine or whisky and was brewed from grain.

Both males and females wore practically the same dress. The upper garment was called adhivasa and the lower garment was called Vasa. Another under­garment called nivi was used probably by females only. An embroidered garment called pesas seems to have been used by female dancers. A special garment was worn by the bride at a marriage ceremony.

According to R.S. Sharma, cotton- plant was not known to Rig-Vedic Aryans and therefore, they did not use cotton- cloth. But other scholars have maintained that both cotton and woolen garments of different colours were used at that time. Probably, the Aryans had discovered cotton during the later period of the Rig-Veda. Sometimes, garments were made of animals’ skins also.

Several kinds of ornaments, both of gold and precious stones, were worn by members of both the sexes. Ear-ring, finger-ring, armlet, necklace etc. were normally worn by men as well as women. The Kurira was some kind of head- ornament worn specially by brides. Nishka, Rukma and Mani were other popular ornaments.

Both men and women oiled and combed their hair, which was plaited or braided. Women kept long hairs while men mostly kept short hairs. The men grew beards and moustaches, but sometimes also shaved them.

By this time, the Aryans had not built up cities. They lived in villages. The houses were built of clay and bamboo. Roads were built up and carts and chariots were the popular means of transport and communication though riding on horseback was also much in vogue.

The chariot race, hunting, gambling and dicing, dancing and music were the main sources of entertainment of the Aryans. Music, both vocal and instrumental, was well known. The drum, the lute and the flute was very much familiar to them. Both men and women enjoyed themselves in festive assemblies with music and dance.

**(iv) Morality:**

The Aryans, on the whole, led a merry and easy-going life but they also observed dutiful and moral life. Truth, honesty, good thoughts, good deeds, helping the poor, hospitality to guest, etc., were observed by them while theft, robbery, telling lies, sorcery, witchcraft, seductions were not only denounced but were punishable offences. They prayed to God-Agni to urge them on to holy thought and to God-Varuna to loosen the bonds of sins committed by them.

**(v) Education:**

By this time, the Upanayana-ceremony i.e. initiation of studies of a child by producing him before the teacher, had not become popular. The father provided early education to his children at home and afterwards they were sent to live with their teacher for further studies. The instructions were provided orally by the teacher and the students had to memorise them. The Aryans had no art of writing at this stage. Probably a script came to be used by them only near about 700 B.C. The basic aim of education was the development of mind and character-building.

#### 5. Economic Life:

The Aryans followed a mixed pastoral and agricultural economy. They ploughed their fields by means of pair of oxen bound to the yoke though, in later stages, they used heavy ploughs drawn by six, eight, twelve, and even twenty-four oxen. There are references to artificial waterways which make it certain that the system of irrigation was known to them.

Their other chief source of income was cattle rearing. Rather, it would be much proper to say that, in early stages, the primary occupation of the Rig-Vedic Aryans was cattle-rearing because we find heavy impact of tribal organization on their early social and political set up. It was only afterwards that agriculture got priority over cattle-rearing.

The cow occupied an important place in it and was used as a means of exchange and value as well. It as well as other domesticated animals were regarded as property. The horse was also greatly valued. Other domesticated animals were sheep, goats, asses, oxen and dogs.

Hunting also served a useful economic purpose. They hunted lions, bear, buffaloes, deer, birds and antelopes. They also used nets to capture them. The plough was of wood but its use was, certainly, a novelty at that time. They used means of irrigation as well and dug out deep wells for that purpose.

The Aryans had not discovered iron during the Rig-Vedic age.

Another important occupation was weaving, both in cotton and wool, which supplied garments to the people. Other professions were those of priest, carpenter, goldsmith, leather-worker, physician, butcher, dancer, musician, etc.

Dr R.S. Sharma has expressed the view that sea-trade was not carried on by the Rig-vedic Aryans. They, being constantly busy in wars, were not able to produce so much as would have left sufficient surplus for export. But Dr R.C. Mazumdar and B.M. Apte have opined that these people engaged themselves in sea-trade and had trade relations with Babylon and other countries in Western Asia. However, all scholars agree that internal trade was carried on both by river and land.

The Aryans had no coins and barter system was pursued for the exchange of commodities. However, cow had become a unit of value and a medium of exchange. There is reference to one more medium of exchange called nishka which was probably a piece of gold of a fixed weight and was used as a sort of currency.

On the whole, having natural facilities for agriculture and cattle breeding, the Aryans enjoyed a prosperous economic life.

#### 6. Religion:

Thirty-three gods have been referred to in the Rig-veda. Among them the male-gods enjoyed predominance. There was no hierarchy and no recognised chief among them though Indra was the most prominent god as nearly one-fourth of the total hymns of the Rig-veda have been sung in his prayer. The basis of the religion was the worship of nature in its various forms as all of their gods represented one or another phenomenon of nature.

**Broadly, the Rig-vedic gods were classified into the following three categories:**

(a) The terrestrial gods, such as Prithvi, Agni. Brihaspati. Soma. etc.

(b) The atmospheric gods, such as Indra, Rudra, Marut, Vayu, Parjanya, etc., and,

(c) Celestial gods, such as Surya, Usha, Savitri, Vishnu, Moon, Varuna., etc.

Indra, Varuna, Agni, Soma, and Surya were definitely prominent gods among them. Indra was the most powerful god whose exclusive weapon was Vajra. He was regarded primarily a god of rain and thunderstorm but now most scholars believe that he was the god of light.

Now Parjanya is regarded as the god of rain and Marut as the god of thunderstorm. Varuna was the god of power and un-holder of moral order. Agni was the god of food and the mouth of all gods with which they ate the goods offered to them in sacrifice. Surya was the god of light and Soma, the popular drink of the Aryans, was also assigned a place among the gods.

The religion of the Aryans was pre-eminently ritualistic and the worship of gods was looked upon as the first duty of man. Performance of Yajnas, prayer to gods and sacrifice of various articles, food and animals, formed the basic contents of their religious rituals by which they tried to please gods and expected honour, wealth, power and comforts of life in return. Though the Aryans had many gods yet, on philosophical basis, they were monist. They had started to believe in a supreme God, the ultimate power, of which other gods were different manifestations.

The Aryans had contemplated life after death and believed in the existence of hell and heaven but they did not attach much importance to life after death. They loved this life and prayed to their gods to make their life prosperous and happy.

That this life is false (Maya) and miserable was not their concept so far. The principle of Karma, that is, the law of good or bad effects flowing from good or bad conduct is binding on gods and mortals alike, was yet not well established but was recognised by them.

**Thus, the Rig-vedic religion possessed certain features as follows:**

I. The religion was utilitarian as the Aryans always expected power and prosperity by pleasing their gods.

II. The Aryan-gods were liberal and they provided them everything if pleased.

III. Amongst gods, the male-gods occupied a predominant position.

IV. There was absence of image-worship.

V. The religious attitude was optimistic towards life. The joys and pleasures of this life attracted them more than the life after death in heaven.

VI. The priestly class was yet not effective in religion as most of the religious rites were performed by the master of the house, Grahpati himself.

VII. The principles of Karma and that of the transmigration of soul, that is, the soul never dies and takes rebirth every time after the death of an individual unless it gets Nirvana, were yet not well established.

Thus, the Rig-vedic period has its own distinct features which distinguishes itself from the later Vedic period and has its own importance. Describing the importance of Rig-veda, Dr R.C. Mazumdar writes, “The Rig-veda is, therefore, justly regarded as a source-book of first rate importance for the study and appreciation of the gradual development of Hindu culture, and no wonder it is revered by three hundred million Hindus today as the holiest of the holy.”

### The Later Vedic Civilization

The period from 1000 to 600 B.C. is regarded as the period of later Vedic age. It also covers the period of the epics, the age of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. Attempts of some earlier authorities to create an “Epic Age” in the history of India, as distinct from the later Vedic Age, are quite unconvincing.

There is no distinct Epic age in Indian history. Probably, the great war of Mahabharata took place near about 850 B.C. while the story of the Ramayana refers to the penetration of the Aryans towards the South earlier than that period.

Similarly, probably the heroes of the Mahabharata have some historical justification to be different rulers of various kingdoms. It is not certain that Rama, the hero of the Ramayana, was a king of Kosala though, of course, his father- in-law, Janaka, king of Videha is accepted as an historical figure. However, in every case the period of the Epics is covered within the period of the later Vedic Age and there is no reason to treat it separately from historical and cultural point of view.

The archaeological sources of this period are practically nil so far. Very recently sites of the ancient cities of Hastinapur, Alamgirpur, Batesar etc. have been excavated, the lowest level of which has been fixed at between 1000 and 700 B.C , the time of the later vedas. Only a few copper implements, some iron-arms and tools, traces of houses of unbaked bricks and a little of painted grey pottery- have been unearthed. Remains of such pottery have also been found in the valley of the Sarasvati river in the east.

But these findings help us very little. Besides, there are several scholars who have opined that these remnants discovered at these places and several other places scattered all over India do not belong to the later Vedic-age but to village-civilizations existing in India during the later Chalcolithic age and wherein iron was also know n to inhabitants of some places.

These civilizations existed in India even after the destruction of the Harappa- civilization and prior to the entry of the Aryans in India. Therefore, the main sources of this period are still almost entirely sacred texts, later Vedas, viz., Brahmanas, Aranvakas and Upanishads.

#### 1. Geographical Extension:

During this period the Aryans penetrated towards the East up to Bengal and the far South. By 400 B.C., the Aryans had moved to farthest corner of India even in the South. We, however, find references to independent existence of certain clans like the Andhras, the Shabars, the Pulinda, etc. in south India which remained free from the influence of the Aryan culture.

Therefore, we conclude that primarily the later Vedic civilization was limited only to north India. However, the centre of their culture and civilization moved from the West to the East and the territory between the rivers Sarasvati and the Ganges became the seat of their civilization while the Punjab and the North Western provinces lost their importance. Brahmana texts the Satapatha and the Aitareya refer to the Aryans of Punjab as of impure descent.

#### 2. Political Organization:

The progress of the Aryans all over India led to changes in dynasties and structural changes in the constitution and organisation of states. The ideal of imperialism or universal empire crept up and attempts were made by powerful rulers to build up extensive empires.

The frequent references to Asvamedha and Rajasuya yajnas in religious texts testify it. Therefore, small states gave way to large and powerful states and many of the famous earlier tribes lost their importance and new ones took their place.

The famous tribes of Rigvedic age like Bharatas and Purus disappeared and their place was taken up by Kurus and Panchalas and after the war of Mahabharata even the Kurus lost their importance and its place was taken by royal dynasties of Kosala, Kashi, Videha, Kalinga, etc. Another important change was that the states were now organised not on the basis of tribes but on territorial extension.

Certainly, the finding of iron in this age must have helped in building up of large kingdoms. Iron-armament of this age have been found mostly at the excavations at Hastinapur, Alamgirpur, Atranji-khera, Batesar etc., which were in the territory called Kuru-Panchal at that time and we also find that mostly the rulers of this very territory had performed Asvamedha yajnas.

**(i) The King:**

With a few exceptions states were monarchical. There are a few references to elected kings, otherwise mostly the office was hereditary. The Aitareya-Brahmana puts forth the view that king was elected by common consent primarily to lead his followers in war while the later Samhitas and Brahmanas stated that the king had divine origin.

This demonstrates that even in those remote days Indians had a scientific spirit of inquiry into the origin of political institutions. During this period large kingdoms were established and efforts were being made by powerful rulers to build up big empires. These circumstances increased the power, glory and prosperity of kings.

King was the head of the state and was above law but he was not a despotic ruler. He ruled according to laws of Rajya-Dharma and his powers were limited by advice given by popular assemblies and his councilors. Kings had built up extensive kingdoms.

They performed Rajasuya and Asvamedha yajnas which proved that they always attempted extension of territories of their kingdoms. It enhanced the power, prestige and prosperity of the king. The king was regarded above law. The Atharva veda described that let the Rashtra be in the hands of the king and let Varun, Brah spati, Indra and Agni strengthen it.

The Tatiriya Samhita and the Satapatha Brahmana have also referred that the king got the Rashtra after performing complete religious rituals and he is its protector. Several other texts of this period refer to the divine origin of the king as well. All this helped in enhancing the power and prestige of the king during the later Vedic age. However, the increase in the powers of the king had not diminished his duties towards his subjects in any way.

The duties of the king included administration, justice, protection of the weak against the strong, extension of kingdom, leading the army in wars and making constant efforts for the welfare of his subjects. The king was not the owner of the land though he had a right to dispossess anybody of his land. The subjects paid Bali, Sulk and Bhag as taxes to the king. These taxes roughly constituted l/6th of their income.

**(ii) The Officials:**

The Purohita, the Senani and the Gramani were still prominent officers of the king. Besides, we find other important officials like Suta (Charioteer), Samgrahitri (treasurer), Akshavapa (superintendent of dicing), Takshan (carpenter), Rathakara (chariot-maker), Kshattri (chamberlain) Bhagadugha (collector of taxes or distributor of food) and several others also whose exact functions can not be ascertained.

These officials were known as Ratnins or Virs. The presence of these officials and other references regarding administration indicate that the administrative machinery was efficiently organized to look after large kingdoms.

**(iii) Law and Punishment:**

It is was nearly the same as during the Rig-vedic period. Punishments were severe. Private vengeance was permitted to serve the ends of justice. Theft, robbery, adultery, abduction, killing of a man, treachery and drinking intoxicating liquor were offences punishable with death. The sense of justice was high. In certain cases the offenders were turned out of the state, fined or put to physical torture.

Individual ownership of land for the purpose of cultivation was recognized. However, neither women nor the Sudras had any right to property.

**(iv) Military Organisation:**

By this time, the Aryans had improved their military organisation and arms as well. Besides, cavalry, charioteers and infantry, elephants were also used in wars now and. besides the use of bow and arrow, swords, clubs etc. the Aryans had, probably, developed certain types of fire-arms as well.

**(v) Sabha and Samiti:**

The popular control in the affairs of the states was exercised as in the Rig-vedic period, through two popular Assemblies, the Sabha and the Samiti. But as the power of the king was on the increase, the influence of these assemblies had diminished. A.L. Basham writes, **“The old tribal assemblies are still, from time to time, referred to but their power was waning rapidly, and by the end of this period the king’s autocracy was in most cases only limited by the power of Brahmanas, the weight of tradition, and the force of public opinion, which was always of some influence in ancient India.”**

However, it did not mean that the king had become anthoritarian. The king always attempted to get the co-operation of these assemblies. The Satapatha Brahmana mentions these assemblies as daughters of Prajapati (the lord of all creatures).

In the later period, the council of Brahmanas also wielded good influence over the king. Panini has referred to a council of ten Brahmanas to assist the king in administration, justice, religion and politics. He has regarded the king as ‘power of the council.’

#### 3. Social Life:

During the later Vedic period important changes took place in the Aryan society.

**The following features distinguished it from the Rig-vedic period:**

**(i) The Varna or Caste-System:**

In this age, the term Varna is used definitely in the sense of caste without reference to colour of the skin. The system of caste, whose beginnings may be traced in four-fold classification of society in the Rig- vedic age was perfected during this period in various directions. The Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas emerged as the two leading classes. The Brahamanas claimed superiority over all other Varnas but the Kshatriyas remained their contenders.

Later on, however, these two Varnas compromised with each. Both the Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas in no way participated in productive activities of society but desired to draw maximum economic advantage to themselves. Probably, the primary cause of their rivalry was the economic one. Therefore, they thought it wise to compromise among themselves by which Brahmanas were provided superior social status and Kshatriyas were gradually accepted owners of the land.

Therefore, we find that, during this period, though the king was not regarded as the owner of the land, yet, got the right to dislodge anybody from his land. The Vaisyas, as the remaining Aryans were called, were, no doubt, much superior to the Sudras, but their position was steadily deteriorating while the position of the Sudras had definitely gone down.

However, untouchability had not yet reared its ugly head. Sub-castes and other caste divisions were, of course, coming up. The tradition of gotra which meant that a man should normally marry a woman of equal birth, i.e., within his caste but not within the same gotra, was also developing.

Yet, the caste-system had not become rigid by that time. The caste of an individual was not solely determined by birth and the professions normally laid down for the different castes were not scrupulously followed in practice. The same way, barring the Sudras, there was no prohibition to interdining and intermarriages among different castes. A man of an upper class could marry a woman of lower class. However, a male of a lower class could not marry a woman of an upper class.

**(ii) The Four Asramas:**

During this period, life span of 100 years of a man was divided into four equal parts of 25 years each and different duties were assigned to him in different parts of life. A man was expected to remain with his teacher for studies up to the age of 25 years, from 25 to 50 years of age he was expected to marry and remain a householder, from 50 to 75 years of age he was expected to live in the jungle as an ascetic with his wife and from 75 to 100 years of age he was expected to pass his life alone as a hermit.

These orders or Asramas were called Brahmacharya, Grahastha, Vanprastha and Sanyas respectively and for each order certain definite and different duties were assigned to the individual.

For example, during the first order the primary duties of an individual were to get education, to obey his teacher and observe celibacy; during the second order, he had to earn his livelihood, get married, rear children, and honour guests; during the third order, he had to observe celibacy and concentrate on philosophic meditation; and, during the fourth order, he had to observe religious rituals and try to attain Nirvana.

By dividing the life of an individual into these four orders, the Aryans had beautifully attempted to combine both the material and spiritual progress of man during one’s life time. Normally, every individual was expected to pass through these four orders but it was one’s free will to make a choice of any order any time once he had crossed the first one i.e., Brahmacharya.

This organisation of the four orders was unique feature of the Aryan society. It provided an individual not only an opportunity to satisfy his physical desires and spiritual ambitions but also to benefit society with the knowledge, experience and sacrifice of ascetics and hermits.

**(iii) Position of Women:**

The society was still free from many of those evils from which women suffered afterwards. Marriage was regarded a sacred bond and its main purpose was to rear children. Woman was the mistress of the house as wife and enjoyed a respectable position in the household. According to the Satapatha Brahmana she is half her husband and completes him. The marriage of women normally took place after puberty and they had the right to choose their husbands.

Normally monogamy was prevalent but polygamy also prevailed. But the practice that a woman could have several husbands was only nominal and that too was limited to a few places and certain sections of society. Child marriages were absent and widows had a right to remarry.

The practice of Sati was not prevalent though a few instances confined to royal families are there. Parda- system was absent and women participated in educational and social functions. They participated in dancing, singing and other fine arts and also maintained a high position even in the learned world.

Women like Gargi and Maitreyi participated in scholarly discourses and were highly respected as learned scholars. In certain cases women enjoyed a privileged position. As compared to Smritis, Dharma-Sutras held liberal opinion regarding women. The Vasistha Dharma Sutra states that a woman is not to be abandoned by her husband in any case.

It states, “A wife shall not be abandoned even though she be quarrelsome or tainted by sin, or have left the house, or have suffered criminal force, or have fallen in the hands of thieves.” The same way, an outcast father was to be abandoned by the son but not the mother and while the son of an outcast father was declared outcast the daughter was not declared so.

Yet, in general, the status and dignity of women were lowered during the later period of this age particularly during the age of Smritis. Many religious ceremonies, formerly left to the wife, were now performed by priests. Their participation in political assemblies was also stopped and while the birth of a son was welcomed, the birth of a daughter was regarded as a source of misery.

The sale of a daughter was known though it was dis-favoured. Dowries were also given. Certain virtues, different from man’s were assigned to woman. According to the Aitareya Brahmana a good woman is one who does not talk back.

The Satapatha Brahmana states that an ideal woman is one who dines after her husband. The Maitrayani Samhita classed woman with dice and wine as one of the three chief evils and the Gautam-Dharam-Sutra advised that a girl should be married before the age of puberty.

**(iv) Food, Garments, Ornaments, Entertainments, etc.:**

Rice, wheat, barley and eatables made from them, milk and its various products like ghee (clarified butter), butter, dahi (sour milk), fruits and vegetables formed the staple diet of the Aryans. Flesh of sheep, goat and ox, the common sacrificial victims, was also a fairly common diet. It appears that the killing of cow gradually came into disfavour. Sura and Soma were still the common drinks.

There was improvement in the quality and variety of garments. Not only cotton and wool but now silk was also used for making garments. Skins of animals were also used as garments. Besides Vasas, Adhivasas and Nivi we now find the use of turban, undergarment and over-garment also. Shoes were also used by the people.

Both men and women wore different ornaments. Besides gold and precious stones, the Aryans had started to use silver ornaments as well.

The science of medicine had progressed. The Atharvaveda has mentioned that various diseases such as consumption, dysentery, ulcer, headache, jaundice, etc. Fractures, wounds and snake-bite were also attended to by physicians.

Music, both vocal and instrumental, dancing, dicing, hunting and chariot- racing continued to be the principal means of entertainment of this age. However, horse-racing was also added to them as a favourite amusement.

The Aryans had built up cities during this period. Indraprastha, Hastinapur, Kosambi and Banaras had grown up as principal cities though not so big as the cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro.

The Aryans still practised high moral virtues. Good deeds and good behaviour formed the basis of their lives.

**(v) Education:**

Education was not the responsibility of the state. It was provided independently by teachers in their Asrams maintained by them outside cities and villages though, of course, kings and rich people gave learned teachers large donations in the form of land, cows etc. The education of a child started with Upanayana (initiation) ceremony. Henceforth he had to live with his guru (teacher).

He got free boarding and lodging at his house and in return did personal service to him and paid his fee (guru-dakshina) after the completion of his studies. Study of vedic texts, service to the teacher and observance of celibacy were the principal duties of a student.

Normally, the study period continued for twelve years. The art of writing had become known to the Aryans but so far literary education was provided only orally. Probably, the Aryans developed their script by nearly 700 B.C. because we find that by 500 B.C. it was in perfect use.

Physical and moral training was emphasized along with literary education while arms training was provided to those who desired it. Arithmetic, logic, astrology, grammar, medicine and language were other important subjects of study besides religion and philosophy. Women were free to get education and there were women teachers also. Of course, music and dance were their main subjects of study but there were no restrictions on them to get the sort of education they wanted.

However, female education seemed to be restricted to women of upper castes and rich families. Sanskrit was the language of the Aryans but it was the language of learning and not the spoken language of the masses.

There were many great centres of learning under famous teachers at that time. The students were taught both by percepts and examples of the teacher. Discourses and discussions were the principal methods of teaching and learning and the formation of character and development of personality formed the backbone of the educational system.

#### 4. Economic Life:

The Aryans had progressed and prospered economically. The growth of cities was one of the best proofs of it. Agriculture was still their principal occupation and great improvement was made in this regard. The Aryans had come to know about iron and heavy ploughs were made from it. Even twenty-four oxen were used to drag heavy and large ploughs. They used artificial means of irrigation and also manures to increase the fertility of their lands.

Two crops were produced in a year. Wheat, barley, rice, cotton and various pulses were their principal agricultural products. The land under plough was regarded the personal property of the farmer while the pasture-land was the property of the village. The peasants paid 1/10 to 1/6 of the produce as revenue to the state.

Cattle-rearing was their another important occupation. Cow, ox, sheep, goat, dog, horse and donkey were their favourite domesticated animals. Besides, elephant was also tamed during this age.

The hunter, the fisherman, the potter, the goldsmith, the jeweller, the metal-worker, the blacksmith, the carpenter, the weaver, the basket-maker, the ropemaker, the washerman, the haircutter, the dancer, the musician, the astrologer, the physician etc., represented other various occupations.

Both internal and foreign trade had progressed. There is no doubt that now sea-borne trade was carried on by the Aryans. The repeated reference to the word Sreshthin indicates that there were rich traders and, probably, they were organised into guilds.

Money-lending was also a flourishing business. However, the Aryans had not started to use coins. Instead, satamana, and nishka which were gold pieces of a certain definite weight were used as units of value and means of currency.

The Aryans had now more extensive knowledge of different kinds of metals. Besides, gold, bronze and copper, they used silver and iron also.

#### 5. Religion and Philosophy:

Changes of far greater significance took place in religion and philosophy during this period. Hindu religion and philosophy are largely the heritage of the later Vedic age and it has been correctly remarked that the organisation of Hinduism is the main achievement of the later Vedic age.

In this period many of the old gods of Rig-Veda became comparatively unimportant while others rose in popularity. Gods like Indra, Varuna, Agni and Surya lost their greatness while Rudra or Shiva, Vishnu or Narayana and Brahma or Prajapati became the most respected gods.

Some new deities also arose and the number of gods increased. Many of them were assigned places as Dikpala, Gandharva, Yaksya etc. Yaksyanis and Apsaras were also recognised. Besides, the various gods lost their contact with nature which was the basis of their origin. Instead, gods were considered primarily as heroes and killers of demons.

Elaborate rituals and performance of different Sanskaras were emphasized during this period and therefore, Yajna and sacrifices became the most important religious duty of the Aryans. The simple religious ceremonies which could and were performed by Grahpati gave place to complicated rituals which could be performed only by priests.

The main spirit behind the prayer was lost. Instead, emphasis was placed on right performance of rituals and correct pronunciation of Mantras or prayers. It was believed that by these means it was possible not only to please the gods but also to control them to get the desired results.

Yajnas were performed and different sort of sacrifices given to gain success in different fields of life. By this time a new attitude to the sacrifice had developed and it had become a supernatural mystery. Amongst different Yajnas and sacrifices, four of them deserve special notice.

The one was Vratya stoma-yajna by means of which non-Aryans were assigned a place amongst the Aryans: the second was the Rajsuya-yajna which was performed at the coronation of the king and marked the beginning of a period of wars for conquests; the third was the Asvamedha- yajna which again marked the beginning of a period of conquest by great kings and which finished with the sacrifice of the Yajna-horse; and the fourth was the Purushmedha yajna which ended with the sacrifice of the yajna-Purusha or male after a year.

The one basic reason which had resulted in elaborate rituals was to maintain the supremacy of the Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas in the society. The rituals could be performed by the Brahamanas alone. They, therefore, got a special status in the society. The Kshatriyas also supported performance of the rituals and Yajnas because that gave them religious sanction in keeping their power and superiority in society against other Varnas.

Similarly a man was expected to perform different samskaras during his life­time. At least forty samskaras, beginning from his conception in the mother’s womb upto his death, were performed by every individual and every Samskara was an occasion for a yajna and family-festival.

The elaborate rituals, yajnas and sacrifices created a reaction and led to the philosophy of Tap as emphasized mainly by Aranyakas. Tapas, to a consi­derable extent, was a substitute for sacrifices in yajnas. It meant meditation of God accompanied by physical tortures to one’s ownself in various forms with a view to attaining Nirvana.

However, another section of the people emphasized the attainment of Nirvana through Gyana or true knowledge. The Upanishads declared that Nirvana is possible only by acquiring true knowledge and laid down the doctrine that ‘he who knows God, attains God, nay he is God!’

The basic philosophy of the Upanishads is that ‘the universe is Brahman (God), but the Brahman is the Atman.’ The Upanishads held that, of course, good deeds, yajnas, sacrifices etc. could provide an individual a good life in future but could not help one in the attainment of Nirvana or Moksha which could be possible only by Gyana.

The concepts of hell and heaven, and those of Brahman, Nirvana, transmigration of soul and Karma grew up and were perfected during this period. Brahman or God is one; to attain Him is the highest goal of life: the soul does not die but is reborn again and again in various forms until it attains Nirvana; and, the principle of Karma, i.e., every individual gets the results of one’s Karma (deeds) of one’s present life in one’s next life are all heritage of later Vedic age to modern Hindus.

It has been opined by many scholars that Hinduism is a synthesis of religion particularly of the Aryans and non-Aryans during the later Vedic Age. It is correct to a great extent. The Aryans, no doubt, successfully defeated those non- Aryans with whom they came in contact in India but did not destroy them altogether.

Instead, they accepted them within their society though, of course, as Sudras or Dasas. The Aryans were also free to marry the females of the non- Aryans which led to mixing of blood between the two and helped in bringing about synthesis of ideas, particularly in religion.

Some scholars say that the religion of magic and spells of the Atharvaveda were the results of the influence of the religion of non-Aryans on the religion of the Aryans. This might be true. But, further attempt to justify that his influence brought about deterioration in the religious ideals of the Aryans in unwarranted.

The synthesis between the religion of the Aryans and non-Aryans was definitely there but the philosophy of the Brahmanas, the Aranvakas and the Upanishads which developed later on, justify not deterioration but progress and further enlightenment of the religion of the Aryans.

In fact, a grand compromise with the non-Aryans religion and customs was forced on the conquering Aryans by the circumstances. The old Vedic religion, which was entirely ritualistic and the special possession of particular tribes, gave place to that all-embracing system of toleration or synthesis which we call Hinduism and which shelters within its bosom every form of belief and practice that will agree to its few general conventions.

The clearest evidence of this synthesis in religion between the Aryans and non-Aryans is the reduced status of a few most important gods of the Rigvedic age in the later Vedic and post-vedic age. The Varuna is reduced to the position of a Dikpala and the most powerful god of the Rigvedic age, Indra became a constant petitioner for protection to new and more powerful gods, Siva and Vishnu.

Among these new gods, Siva or Mahadeva is definitely a god who became prominent because of the synthesis of the Aryans and the non-Aryans. The snake-worship and the worship of Siva as Linga (phallus) are other important examples of this synthesis. Besides, origin of different female gods, their acceptance as wives of different gods and their worship in different forms is another clear evidence of the influence of non- Aryans on the religion of the Aryans.

The Aryan society being patriarchal, the worship of female gods which is widely prevalent among modern Hindus clearly justifies the deep influence wielded by matriarchal society of the non-Aryans on the Aryan society and religion.

The same way, the most popular gods of the Hindus, Brahma (Prajapati) Vishnu and Siva are the gods who were accepted as the most powerful gods by the Aryans during the later Vedic age and were the result of the synthesis of religion between the Aryans and the non-Aryans.

Thus, it is mostly accepted that Hinduism as a synthesis of religions between the Aryans and the non-Aryans is a heritage of the later Vedic age though, of course, none denies that changes in Hindu religion constantly took place even afterwards.

**Vedic Literature**

The Vedas are elaborate texts containing thousands of hymns. They are believed to be divine revelations and not manmade (apaurusheya). They said to exist eternally in the highest heaven, revealed to the human beings for their welfare and to facilitate the nurturing of gods who cannot make food of their own. The sacrifices are the means by which the order and regularity of creation can be maintained and social order can be continued. Hence the Vedas are imperative for the welfare of the world. The Vedas are divided into four parts:

1. The Samhitas

2. The Brahmanas

3. The Aranyakas

4. The Upanishads

Their significance in the religious and spiritual practices of Hinduism and Hindu philosophy is briefly explained below.

## The Samhitas

These are the main textual portions of the Vedas containing the hymns or the suktas. The Rigveda Samhita contains 1017 or 1028 suktas or hymns, divided into ten divisions or mandalas. Each Mandala correspond with the name of a Rishi who was probably instrumental in its creation. These divisions however do not correspond with the order in which they were created. For example the first and the tenth Mandalas are considered to be latter day compositions compared to the rest.

The Samaveda Samhita is known as the Book of Chants. It contains 1549 (or according to some 1810) hymns which are meant to be sung by a special class of priests known as Udgatris at the time of soma sacrifice. Most of the hymns in this Samhita are copied verbatim from the Rigveda and the remaining few from other existing sources. The hymns contained in this Samhita are more lyrical in nature and suggest to the early musical traditions of the Vedic people.

The Yajurveda Samhita is known as the Book of the Yajus (sacrificial prayers). The mantras are meant to be chanted by a special class of priests called Adhavaryus during sacrificial ceremonies. The Samhita is divided into Black Yajurveda, which is a disorderly mixture of prose and chants, and the White (Vajasaneyi) Yajurveda, which consists of only chants and contributed extensively by sage Yajnavalkya. The Black Yajurveda is considered to be older of the two and composed around 1200 BC.

For a long time the Atharvaveda was not considered a Veda at all. Kautilya's Arthashastra, for example, mentions only the first three. Atharvaveda Samhita contains mostly magical chants which alludes to the growing influence of the native kings over the Aryan traditions. The Samhita is divided into 20 books and about 75 hymns which are essentially spells, marriage and burial songs and curses. The Atharvaveda Samhita is the oldest document of the Indian medicine and magical formulas to deal with disease and sickness. The priests who chanted these hymns were prized by the royalty for their special ability to cure diseases and drive away the evils spirits or curse their enemies.

## The Brahmanas

These are explanatory books or guide books providing information about the Samhitas and the procedures to observe in the performance of rituals. They serve as reference books for the Brahman priests to understand the purport of the Samhitas. For the practicing Brahmanas, they are important because they explain the meaning of the hymns and the procedures to be followed to perform various types of sacrifices. For ordinary people many procedures followed in the Vedic rituals do not make sense. The Brahmanas provide justification or rationale for the actions performed during each sacrifice. Each Veda (Samhita) has one or more Brahmanas.

The Rigveda has two Brahmanas, Kaushitaki Brahmana and Aitareya Brahmana. The Samaveda has three Brahmanas, Tandya-maha Brahmana, Sadavinsa Brahmana and Jaiminiya Brahmana. These Brahmanas contain information about the then existing native people of India and the methods by which they should be admitted into the Aryan fold. The Satapatha Brahmana belongs to the Vajsaneya or White Yajurveda and believed to be composed by Yajnavalkya. The Satapatha Brahmana is the most important of all the Brahmanas. It's title literally means the Brahmana of 100 paths. The Brahmana contains information about the important sacrificial ceremonies of the Vedic kings such as the Asvamedha and Rajasuya yajnas. It also deals with the relationship between the priests and the rulers. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is attached to this Brahmana.

## The Aranyakas

These are forest books, which according to some were originally part of the Brahmanas and later were recognized as a separate section. Some of the Aranyakas also form part of the Upanishads, as in case of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. They are provide explanatory notes about the external and internal aspects of certain esoteric Vedic rituals, meant especially for those who have an advanced knowledge of the sacrificial rituals. In the Aranyakas one may discern the gradual shift in emphasis from the ritual aspects of the religion emphasized in the Samhitas to the spiritual and philosophical aspects presented in the Upanishads. The knowledge contained in the Aranyakas was also meant originally for those who retired from active householder's duty and entered into ascetic mode of living (vanaprastha). Some of the information in them pertain to advanced aspects of sacrificial rituals that are not usually performed in public. As the name suggests, the Aranyakas were meant for people who lived in forests and performed Vedic sacrifices for the welfare of the world or the benefit of the kings.

## The Upanishads

The Upanishads constitutes the end part of the Vedas (Vedanta). They deal with philosophical and mystical aspects of Vedas and deal with subjects like Brahman, atman, nature of reality, the meaning of true knowledge, the state of oneness, the four states of consciousness, the constitution of the worlds, the nature of highest reality, the nature of true sacrifice and so on. They contain disjointed and loosely organized pieces of metaphysical and speculative truths about Brahman and Atman. Some of them are mere expositions, some are composed in narrative form and some in the form of conversations. Each Vedas has its own set of Upanishads. Some of the Upanishads are very ancient, while some are more recent. The Upanishads lack coherent approach to spiritual subjects, but contain profound philosophy regarding existence, bondage and liberation. Their number is uncertain. However, about 12-15 are considered very important. The Chandogya and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads constitute the largest of the Upanishads and account for more than 60% of the Upanishadic knowledge. They are also two of the oldest Upanishads. While the Upanishads are predominantly Brahmanical, extolling the supremacy of Brahman and Atman, some of them represent the sectarian philosophies of Vaishnavism and Saivism. There are also subject specific Upanishads such as the Yoga Upanishads.

## Significance of the Vedas

Most of the hymns in the Vedas do not make sense today because of the changes that took place in the Vedic religion in the last 3000 years. Many gods of the old Vedic religion have vanished or yielded place to new gods of the subcontinent. It was the price the priests of the later Vedic period had to pay to withstand the popularity of the non Vedic traditions and continue their own by securing the support of the kings and the nobility with some compromises here and there. We have no idea how much of the Vedas were compromised and how much of it was kept intact. We know for sure that many of the ancient gods were sacrificed to keep the tradition alive and the priests in power.

Whatever might be the truth, the Vedas constitute the base as well as the hub of the Hindu tradition. For centuries they served as the source book of standards (pramana) to test the validity of a philosophical statements. If a truth was not supported by the Vedas it was not accepted as a philosophical truth. Those who disregarded this principle were considered as heretics and outside the fold of Hinduism. Even today many scholars tend to define a person as a Hindu only if he or she accepts the authority of the Vedas.

## The Vedangas

Vedangas means limbs of the Vedas. They are useful in the study of the Vedas as ancillary subjects. They are six in number, namely Siksha (pronunciation), Kalpa (explanations regarding rituals), Vyakarna (grammar), Nirukta (etymology), Chhanda (metrics) and Jyotisha (astrology). No knowledge of the Vedas is complete without their proper study. In the ancient times a student had to learn these six subjects invariably to complete his education. For a more detailed information on the Vedangas please read this article available in another section.

## Sutra literature

The Hindu Sutra literature was composed much later than the Vedas and belong to a later period. They are manuals of instructions for people to follow in their social, religious, economic and political affairs. They are a diverse body of literature, containing many scriptures which are loosely grouped together as sutra literature. It consists of Strauta Sutras which deal with ceremonies and the Grihya Sutras, which deal with domestic rules, duties, rites and sacrifices. They contain information about the samskaras (sacraments), types of marriages, the five kinds of sacrifices and the seven types of pakayajnas, the four types of ashramas, the duties of various castes and so on.

## Smriti - Dharmasastras

The Dharmashastras, books of dharma, constitute the smriti literature. They are religious law books named after their composers, such as Gautama, Baudhayana, Apastamba and Vashishta. The deal with code of conduct and how to practice dharma by various classes of people and in various social and religious situations. The Dharmashastras are more like books of guidelines rather than law books, because their enforcement depended upon the patronage of the king and their reach. Not all people in ancient India practiced Hindu traditions and therefore the law books were not applicable to all. Even among the Hindus, not all had equal access to the religious scriptures or religious knowledge. Therefore, they were observed strictly by the Brahmanas who practiced Vedic rituals and to some extent by the Kshatriyas and Vaisyas who had access to such knowledge.

## Darsanas

The schools of Hindu philosophy are known as Darsanas. Darsana means, sight, vision, a point of view or a perspective. Each school of Hindu philosophy approaches the knowledge, reality, existence and creation from a different perspective. Hence a study of each school is necessary to develop a complete picture of the Hindu philosophical thought. Hindu tradition recognizes six schools of Hindu philosophy, grouped into three pairs. They are: Nyaya and Vaisheshika, Samkhya and Yoga, and Mimansa and Vedanta. Each of these schools has a history, teacher tradition, sub-sects and original literature in the form of sutras and their commentaries (bhasyas).

### The Caste-System in the Period of Vedic Civilization

Division of individuals based on differences in disposition, capacity and character is a common feature of every society but the evolution of the caste-system postulating hereditary orders, rigidity of social intercourse and yet sharing the life of the community is peculiar to the organisation of the Hindu society.

In other communities, the principal feature determining class and status are wealth and professions but among the Hindus caste and, thereby, class and status are determined by birth and, while in others it may change, among the Hindus it would not change.

No body hopes to raise his caste in India but everyone stands in danger of lowering it. However, the most extraordinary characteristic of the Indian institution of caste is denial of certain civil and religious rights to a large number of people.

When the Aryans first came to India they were divided into three social classes the warriors, the priests and the common people. However, there was no consciousness of caste, professions were not hereditary, nor were there any rules limiting marriages within these classes, or taboos on interdining.

The three divisions simply helped social and economic organization. But when the Aryans came in contact with non-Aryans in India who were of a dark complexion and whom they called Dasas or Dasvus and gave them a place in their society they divided it into two parts primarily on the basis of the colour of the skin. Actually, the Sanskrit word for caste is Varna which means colour.

However, it was maintained that the division was on the basis of knowledge or ignorance of the Vedas. Those who had the knowledge of the Vedas were called the dvija (twice born). These were the Aryans. Those who had no knowledge of the Vedas were called advija. These were non-Aryans. Later on caste-system evolved on the basis of professions.

The priestly class was called the Brahmana. Its main profession was to study, to teach and to perform religious ceremonies and rituals. The warrior class was called the Kshatriva. The trading and agriculture class was called the Vaisya. All the Aryans were accommodated within these three classes. Non-Aryans and those of mixed Aryan-Dora blood were called the Sudras who were assigned the lowest rank in the society and were expected to serve the upper three classes.

Initially, it was called Varna-system. In the earlier Vedic age, this fourfold division of the society was not rigid Interdining and marriages of upper class males with females of lower class than theirs were permitted. In the later vedic age too, the system did not become rigid. The prohibition of interdining among the different classes was not even thought of and intermarriages between different classes were in vogue.

The marriage of three upper classes with the Sudras is was indeed disfavoured but not positively prohibited. The position of the Sudras certainly deteriorated but as yet they were not reduced to the position of abject humiliation nor was the supremacy of the Brahmanas unquestioned.

The fourfold division of the society by the Aryans was magnanimous and had practical utility. In all other contemporary civilizations the conquerors either destroyed the conquered absolutely or made them their slaves. The Indian Aryans alone put forth a different example. They gave the conquered a place in their own society though, of course, it was inferior to theirs.

Originally this fourfold division was practised liberally, professions formed the basis of distinctions among individuals, interdining and intercaste marriages were permitted and even change in caste could be possible.

This helped in building up a society in which the synthesis between the Aryans and non-Aryans took place and the Hindu society was built up in which both the Aryans and non-Aryans participated. The system provided individuals the facility to acquire status in the society according to their capabilities but also kept their destructive attitudes within limits so that solidarity of the society was maintained.

However, the system underwent changes with the passage of time. Even by the end of the Vedic period each of the four original orders had evolved itself into a separate distinct order. Slowly the system became rigid, particularly during the period of Sutras when it was defended on the basis of religion and other different reasons.

A late hymn of the Rigveda, known as the Purushasukta, had described that when the gods divided Purusha (the creator), the Brahmana was his mouth, the Rajanya was made his arms, the Vaisya was his thighs and the Sudra sprang from his feet.

This hymn was interpreted afterwards for the support of this system and also for the distinctions and priorities of ranks within it. However, it was not found sufficient. Kapila defended it and fixed the ranks of various orders in priority on the basis of differences of nature among individuals.

He divided human nature into three distinct parts and made it the basis of the division of society into different castes. He maintained that people of Satvik nature or Gunas were assigned the place of Brahmanas, people of Rajas nature that of the Kshatriyas while people of Tamas nature were accepted as Vaisyas and Sudras.

It was an attempt to provide a rational explanation of the system. Further, the principles of transmigration of soul and karma were also interpreted to support the system. It was held that the soul takes rebirth every time till it attains salvation and one’s status or caste in society in this life is determined by God on the basis of one’s Karmas (deed) in one’s former life. Therefore, it was argued that salvation of one’s soul depended on the due observance of one’s caste dharma (duty).

This doctrine of caste-dharma laid on every individual the obligation to do one’s duty to oneself and to society in that station of life, that is caste, in which it has pleased Providence to place him or her. It was upheld that ‘better is one’s own duty, though defective, than another’s well-performed’, and ‘death in performing one’s own duty is preferable, performance of the duty of others is dangerous’. Thus, the system and its gradation, that the Brahmanas were first in social status, the Kshatriyas stood second, the Vaisyas stood third and the Sudras at the lowest level was defended on various grounds.

The continuance of caste was secured by its being made hereditary; the system became rigid; intercaste marriages and interdining were stopped; caste distinctions and divisions went on increasing; the absorption of foreigners within the Hindu society and multiplication of professions led to the formation of various subcastes or jatis and, thereby, further fragmentation of the Hindu society. Eventually, the fourfold division of the Aryan society that is Farwa-system lost its relevance and in the day-to-day working the Hindu society accepted the sub- caste system that is jati-system or the caste-system of the present times.

**This present caste-system has the following basic features:**

1. The social status of an individual is decided by his or her birth, that is, by the caste in which he takes his or her birth.

2. His profession is determined by his caste.

3. Intercaste marriage and interdining are prohibited.

The absence of a power which could frame social laws, foreign invasions and domination, backwardness in education and lack of intellectualism and narrow- caste interests are some of the reasons which have nourished this caste-system in its present form. It. has divided and sub-divided the Hindu society into thousands of sub-castes called Jatis.

In India, at present there are at least 3,000 castes or sub-castes among whom social intercourse, particularly interdining and inter­marriages, are prohibited. Besides, the system has kept a large section of the people in India even outside the fold of the society. This section is called the untouchables in India.

This caste-system which exists even at present in India is a big obstacle in social unity, national solidarity, individual freedom, intellectual and economic progress and therefore, in the progress of India in every sphere of its national life.

On the contrary, it helps in maintaining social, religious and economic injustices and is responsible for mutual caste hatred and conflicts. Thus, a system which at first was instrumental in evolving a socio-economic system on the basis of class collaboration and the rule of law has been turned into a system to perpetuate social injustice and even tyranny.

However, in modern times the caste system has become weak and it would be in the interests of India if it is completely given up. It is impossible to support it on the basis of religion, reason or social justice. In the Bhagvata Gita Lord Krishna has expressed, “I have created different varnas on the basis of Karmas and capabilities.”

Thus, he himself did not mean to create castes on hereditary basis. K.M. Panikkar has argued that the present caste-system is the result of the joint family-system in India and it cannot be supported either on the basis of religion or reason. Most of the modern Indian scholars, philosophers and social reformers have also severely criticized this system.

Various factors have contributed to the weakening of this system. Western ideas, modern education, changing economic circumstances, modern social, economic and political ideologies and the Independence struggle in India have attacked it from all sides.

Industrial development and the developing urban life are also destroying it because it is not possible to adhere to this system in city- life. In fact, there is no place for this system in a society which is trying to seek social justice for its members.

It has been opposed by all enlightened sections of the Indian society. All Hindu religious and social reformers of the nineteenth century in India like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayanand and Swami Vivekanand led a crusade against this system. Swami Vivekanand argued that it had no concern whatsoever with Hindu religion. He said, “Beginning from the Buddha to Ram Mohan Roy, every one made the mistake of holding caste to be a religious institution.”

In the twentieth century Mahatma Gandhi (M.K. Gandhi), the father of the Indian nation, constantly made efforts to eliminate casteism and untouchability. Yet, the greatest challenge to caste-system has been put up by Communism.

While all other political philosophies, in one way or other, have made compromise with it and, ultimately, have tried simply to reform it, Communism is one which is not prepared to compromise with social and religious traditions of the Hindu society including the caste-system. Instead it has openly and directly attacked each of them and therefore, has participated in weakening this system to a great extent.

The Indian constitution has also helped in weakening this system. The Fundamental Rights assigned to Indian citizens do not discriminate between citizens on the basis of caste. The Directive Principles of State Policy aim to build up Indian society on the basis of equality and social justice wherein there will be no place for caste-system based on inequality of citizens. Untouchability has been declared illegal and the 25th article of the Constitution declares that the state would endeavour to frame laws in order to build up a society based on social equality.

All these efforts are commendable and they point out that there is no future of caste-system in India. Yet, universal education, enlightened public opinion and abolition of poverty and large economic inequalities from among the Indian masses are a few pre-requisites for complete elimination of not only this system but all other social evils of the Indian society.

Unless reason replaces faith, the Indian masses will not develop the courage to fight against injustice prevalent in every field of their society, and reason can prevail over faith only by enlightenment and economic equality in the society. In that case the elimination of caste-system and also all other injustices of the society would not be an ideal but a necessity of the Indian people which would lead them to progress in every field of their lives.

**Study of ancient Republic**

In the sixth century B.C., we find a large number of states in northern India and many of these were not ruled by kings but formed petty republics or oligarchies. That was the age of the Buddha and therefore, the republican states of this period have been called ‘Republics of the age of the Buddha’. These were the most ancient existing states not only of India but of the world and, so India is also one of those countries which can feel proud of having experimented with the republican form of constitution in ancient times.

While the existence of republican states in India, at that time, has been accepted by all scholars, they are divided on the form of their organisation. There is no unanimity among scholars regarding the method of election and qualifications of voters. The Buddhist sources provide sufficient information regarding the then republican state of the Lichchhavis, yet the scholars are not unanimous regarding its form and constitution.

A few scholars have expressed the opinion that every adult of the population participated in the administration; some others maintain that only Kshatriyas had this right; and yet others have expressed the view that only head of a joint-family was allowed to participate in the administration. Mostly the opinions of scholars are divided on the basis of the above mentioned differences of views.

**Dr Jayaswal maintains that these republics were divided into the following three categories:**

a. Democracies or pure Gana, wherein the total adult-population participated in the administration;

b. Aristocracies or pure Kula, wherein only some selected families participated in the administration; and

c. Mixed aristocracies and democracies or a mixure of Kula and Gana, wherein the administration was the mixure of the two.

According to Dr Bhandarkar, the republics were basically divided into two types, viz., pure republics and Kshatriya aristocracies. Then each of them was further divided into two parts. Both the republics and the aristocracies were of two types, viz., unitary and federal. The republican states which had a unitary character were called City-republics or Nigamas, while the republics having a federal character were called State-republics or Janapadas.

Thus, opinions of scholars have differed on the basis of voting qualifications, methods of elections and areas under the administration of the republican states. However, scholars agree that the fundamental basis of all these states was republican. Thus, it can be agreed upon that all these states were republican states, though they differed from each other in matters of detail.

In certain states, only Kshatriya families were given the right to frame laws and elect the members of the executive; in certain others, the heads of joint-families were given this right; while in still others, all the male-adults of the population had this right.

Besides, in certain states, the local assemblies enjoyed wide autonomy to look after their respective local administrations and the matters concerning the entire state were decided by all the elected representatives of the local assemblies; in certain others, the powers to govern the entire state were handed over to an elected central assembly and executive.

But with all these differences among them each of them was a republican state because in each state the members of the assembly to frame laws and the executives were elected directly or indirectly by a large number of the populace. In all these states, the people who had the right to rule according to settled laws of the state used to assemble at an assembly-hall called the Santhagara, discussed all important matters concerning the state, decided on issues by a majority vote, either by open or secret ballot, if there was no unanimity of opinion and elected the members of the executive.

The members of this assembly, which was constituted of these representatives, enjoyed certain special privileges also. The members of this assembly elected the members of the executive, the Commander-in-Chief of the forces, the Treasurer, etc. They were consulted in all important matters of the state such as that of peace and war. The members of the executive were called Rajana and the head of executive was sometimes given the title of Raja (King).

In many republics the office of the Raja and also that of other executive members had become hereditary but they could be displaced by election. In certain other republics the head of the executive was not called Raja but Ganapati and he as well as other members of the executive were elected for a fixed period.

Thus, we find that these republican states differed in matters of detail but all of them followed the broad pattern of elections, permitted all respectable citizens or their groups to participate in administration and framing of laws and, thus, pursued democratic procedures as primary conditions for the governance of the state. Of course, they were not democracies in the modern sense but having them at that time was not feasible either. But whatever these states practised was sufficient to entitle them to be called Republics.

**The most ancient republics in India were those of the sixth century B.C. These were as follows:**

**1. The Sakyas of Kapilavastu:**

This was an important republican state of that time. It was situated near the border of Nepal in the Terai region of the Himalayas. Mahatma Buddha belonged to the family of the Sakyas. The republican state of the Sakyas had a federal constitution. Its head was elected and was given the title of King.

Every Sakya adult participated in its administration and all important matters were decided by the assembly of all. Attendance of a fixed number of members was necessary to complete the quorum. The Sakya republic had eighty thousand families living within its territories and had several cities as well. It was ultimately occupied by the state of Kosala near the end of the sixth century B.C.

**2. The Lichchavis of Vaisali:**

It was the largest and the most powerful republican state of that time. It included nine republican states of Mallas and eighteen republican states of Kasi and Kosala. Vaisali was the capital of the Lichchhavis, wherein lived nearly 42,000 families and was a beautiful and prosperous city. The head of the state was elected and was titled King.

It had another 7,707 Rajans who were, probably, the chief officers of their territories. It was such a powerful state that Ajatasatru, the ruler of the powerful state of Magadha, had to make military and diplomatic preparations for years before he could succeed in annexing it and that, too, could be achieved when his diplomacy succeeded in dividing the Lichchhavis.

**3. The Mallas of Pava:**

It was a republican state of the Kshatriyas, the capital of which was Pava.

**4. The Mallas of Kushinara:**

This was another branch of the Mallas.

**5. The Koliya of Ramagrama:**

This state was in the east of the state of the Sakyas and its capital was Ramagrama. The Koliyas and the Sakyas constantly fought against each other on the use of the water of the river Rohini. However, permanent peace was arranged between the two states by mediation of Mahatma Buddha.

**6. The Bhagya of Sunsamagiri:**

This state belonged to Aitreya Brahmanas. It was near the territories of modern Mirzapur district and its capital was Sunsamagiri.

**7. The Mauryas of Piphalivana.**

This state was in the foot-hills of the Himalayas. Probably, emperor Chandra Gupta Maurya of Magadha belonged to this family.

**8. The Kalama of Suputa:**

Its capital was Suputa.

**9. The Videhas of Mithila:**

It was situated near the boundary of Nepal state and its capital was Mithila.

**10. The Ghvatrikas of Kollanga:**

This state was also situated in the Terai-region of the Himalayas near the boundary of Nepal and its capital was Kollanga.

These were the important republican states in India at that time. Each of them drew their name from the name of its ruling family. These included both great and small states. A few of them were aristocracies, a few others were pure republicans while a few had federal-republican constitutions and were called Janapadas.

Most of them brought about their ruin because of their mutual conflicts and the rest of it was completed by the rising power of Magadha which was able to annex them all.

After the sixth century B.C. we find the existence of republican states in the north-west of India. The Greek king Alexander had to fight against them during his campaign in India.

The republican states, which fought against Alexander, were the Asmakas, the Malavas, the Kshudrakas, the Arjunayanas, the Mushikas, etc. Most of them gave serious resistance to the invader and their role in defending their country remained more creditable than their contemporary monarchical states.

After the return of Alexander, Chandra Gupta Maurya conquered all these republican states. Both he and his minister, the famous Chanakya, favoured the policy of imperialism in order to bring about political unity to India and therefore, adopted a systematic policy to annex these republican states.

But, again, after the downfall of the Maurya empire, we find the existence of republican states in Western India. Among them the kingdoms of the Malavas, the Arjunayanas, the Yaudheys and the Madrakas were quite important. Each of them played an important role in defending the country against foreign invaders. Probably, in each case the head of the state was elected and was called Maharaja or Mahasenapati.

They were defeated by the Sakas but they fought successfully against the Kushanas. The Arjunayanas were settled in the territory near modern Jaipur, the Malavas in the territory of eastern Rajputana, the Yaudheys near Bahawalpur state while the Madrakas occupied the territory between the rivers Ravi and Chinab.

Besides, the Sivis established their kingdom near Chittor; the republican state of Kuluta was in the Kullu valley; the state of Audutnbar was situated in the Kangra-valley and the districts of Gurudasapur ana Hoshiyarpur in the Panjab; the Bhadrakas had their kingdom at Sialkot; the Abhiras had their kingdom in Central India; the Sanakonikas were established near Bhilra; the Prarjunas inhabited part of Madhya Pradesh; the Kokas had their state near Sanchi; and the republican state of Kharaparikas was near district Damoh in Madhya Pradesh.

All these republican states were destroyed by the imperial Guptas who pursued the policy of extension of the empire and that of annexing the neighbouring states. A few of them were destroyed by Chandra Gupta I, most of them by Samudra Gupta and the rest of them by Chandra Gupta II.

We find no existene of republican states in India afterwards. Sometimes, the mighty Guptas have been held responsible for this tragedy. But this view is not justified. Of course, the expansionist policy of the Guptas was primarily responsible for their destruction but their internal weaknesses and mutual conflicts were also, certainly, responsible for their extinction.

Besides, the republican states had not only failed to provide political unity to India or north India but even a part of it. In contrast to them, the monarchical states had been more successful in this attempt. And, at that time or, rather at every time, India needed unity and political solidarity more than the attempts of fulfilling the ideal of republicanism.

Therefore, the ideal of an extensive and strong empire pursued by the Guptas was advantageous for India and, thus, the extinction of the republican states should not be accepted at all as a regrettable event in Indian history and no blame should be assigned to the Guptas. The extinction of the republican state was natural and advantageous to the country and it should be accepted as such.

**Mauryan Administration**

The establishment of the Mauryan empire in contrast to the earlier smaller kingdoms ushered in a new form of government, that of a centralized empire.

The Mauryan Empire indicates the triumph of monarchy as a political system over tribal republics. A study of the Arthasastra in conjunction with the edicts provides information regarding the administrative structure.

At the centre of the structure was the king who had the power to enact laws. Kautilya advises the King to promulgate dharma when the social order based on the varnas and ashramas (stages in life) perishes.

The king is called by him dharmapravartaka or promulgator of the social order. There was a council of ministers or mantri- parishad to advise the king and at times this may have acted as a political check.

The Mauryan centralized monarchy became a paternal despotism under Ashoka. Ashoka in his 1st separate Edict (Dhauli and Jauguda) says “Savve Munisse Paja Mama”. (All men are my children). The Mauryan king did not claim any divine origin yet they attempted to emphasize the connection between kinship and divine power.

#### Council of Ministers:

The council of ministers or mantri-parishad advised the king and at times may have acted as a political check. But the powers of the council were limited owing to the fact that it was the king who appointed the ministers in the first instance. Three qualities of a minister that the Arthasastra stresses are those of birth, integrity and intelligence.

There was no fixed numberforthe members of the council and it varied according to the need. The Arthasastra lists the Chief Minister or the mahamantri and also distinguishes between the ministers and the assembly of ministers (mantrinomantriparisadamca).

It would seem that the ministerial council or mantri-parisad, a small group of perhaps three or four councillors, together with the Chief Minister, was selected to act as an inner council or a close advi­sory body. It’s important members included the Purohita, Senapati (Commander-in-chief), the Mahamantri and the Yuvaraja.

#### Amatyas:

Amatyas were some sort of administrative personnel or civil servants who filled the highest admin­istrative and judicial appointments. Their pay scales, service rules and method of payment were clearly laid down. Their role and functions were very important, for all governmental work proceeded from them.

#### Superintendent or Adhyaksha:

The Central administration was conducted by a highly skilled Superintendents or Adhyakshas who looked after various departments. Kautilya in the second book of his Arthasastra, Adhyakshaprachara, gives an account of the working of nearly 27 adhyaksas. Some of the important officials are mentioned below.

The Akshapataladhyaksha was the Accountant-General who was in charge of the two offices of currency and accounts. The Sitadhyaksha was the superintendent of the agriculture of crown lands or government agricultural farms.

The Akaradhyaksha was the superintendent of mining and possessed scientific knowledge of mines, metallurgy, gems and precious stones. Lavananyadhyaksha was the salt superintendent, as the manufacture of salt was a government monopoly.

Navadhyaksha was the Superintendent of Ports who controlled traffic and transit by waterways. The Panyadhyaksha was the controller of commerce who was in the charge of the control of supply, purchase and sale of commodi­ties.

The Sulkadhyaksa was the collector of customs and tolls. TheSuradhyaksha was the Superin­tendent of Excise who controlled the manufacture and sale of liquor. Pautavadhyaksha was the super­intendent of weights and measures. The Lakshanadhyaksha was the superintendent of the mint, etc.

#### Military and Espionage Department:

The army was often led by the king himself. It was only in the days of the last Maurya that we find a Senapati overshadowing the king and transferring the allegiance of the troops to himself. The army of Chandragupta, according to Pliny, included 6, 00,000 foot soldiers, 30,000 cavalry and 9,000 elephants, besides chariots.

It was under the control of the Senapati under whom there were several adhyakshas of different wings and units of the army such as those of infantry (Padadhyaksha), cavalry (asvadhyaksha), war elephants (hastyadhyaksha), navy (navadhyaksha), chariots (rathadhyaksha), and armoury (ayudhagaradhyaksha).

Kautilya classifies troops into the hereditary ones (Maula), the hired troops (bhritakas), troops supplied by forest tribes (atavivala), and those furnished by the allies (mitravala). The first were of primary importance and constituted the standing army of the king.

They were probably the troops referred to by Megasthenes in describing the fifth class, that of the soldiers. Kautilya’s also talks about the salaries of different ranks of military commanders. For example, the Senapati received a salary of 48,000 panas per annum.

Megasthenes describes the administration of the armed forces as comprising of six committees with five members on each. The first committee was concerned with naval warfare, second equivalent to the modern commissariat supervising the transport of war materials, third supervising the infantry, the fourth supervising cavalry, the fifth was concerned with chariots and the sixth supervised the elephant corps.

The espionage department was manned by guddhapurushas (secret agents) under the control of mahamatyapasarpa, both stationary (Samsthan) and wandering (Sanchari). Officials formed the per­sonnel of this cadre.

Different types of agents, from recluses and students to householders and ‘poi­sonous’ girls (vishkanyas) were employed. They correspond to the ‘overseers’ of Megasthenes and the Pativedakas or special reporters and Pulisanis or king’s agent of Asokan edicts.

#### Revenue Department:

The central administration was conducted through a number of offices largely relating to the con­trol of the revenue, and each under particular officer.

**Sannidhata:**

The treasurer was responsible for the storage of royal treasure, and of the state income both in cash and kind.

**Samaharta:**

He was in charge of collection of revenue from various parts of the kingdom and looked after the income and expenditure by supervising the works of the akshapataladhyaksha (Accountant General). Sources of revenue as listed in the Arthasastra, include that of cities, land, mines, forests, roads, tolls, fines licences, manufactured products, merchandise of various kinds and precious stones.

Kautilya refers to some other kinds of income such as Senabhaktam, the punitive tax imposed by the army on the region through which it passed, and Pindakara, a fixed commuted tax contributed by the villages from time to time.

The Accountant-General kept the accounts both of the kingdom and the royal household. He was assisted by a body of clerks (Karmikas). The chief source of revenue was the land tax which was one-sixth to one-fourth of the produce and was collected by the revenue officer, agronomoi, who measured the land, levied the tax and collected it.

The second major source of income was toll- tax which was imposed on all articles (except grain, cattle and a few other items). This tax was approximately 10 percent. Shudras, artisans and others who survived on manual labour had to work free for one day in each month.

Strabo mentions that craftsmen (except royal craftsmen), herdsmen and husbands men all paid taxes. The king’s own estate or royal lands yielded income called sita. Two kinds of taxes, bali and bhaga, are referred to in the Ashokan edicts.

The Rummindei Edict records that the village of Lumbini, where the Buddha was born, was exempted from bali and was to pay only one eighth of the bhaga. Bhaga was levied on agricultural produce and the cattle at the rate of one-sixth (Shadabhaga) whereas Bali was a religious tribute. According to the Arthasastra, the Brahmins, women, children, armourers, sons and the king’s men were exempted from paying tax.

#### Judicial and Police departments:

The King was the head of justice – the fountain head of law and all matters of grave consequences were decided by him. Kautilya refers to the existence of two kinds of courts – dharmasthiyas (dealing with civil matters) and kantakasodhanas (dealing criminal cases). There were special courts in the cities and villages presided over by the pradesika, mahamatras and rajukas. Kautilya mentions about the four sources of law.

They are dharma (sacred law), vyavahara (Usage), charitam (customs and precedents) and rajasasana (royal proclamations). The Pradesika were the principal police officers, whose duty was to investigate the crimes com­mitted in the region within their jurisdiction. Police headquarters were found in all principal centres.

There was a sthaniya in the midst of 800 villages, a dronamukha in 400 villages, a kharvatika in 200 villages and a sangrahana in 10 villages. The jail proper bandhanagara was different from the police lock-up called Charaka.

#### Provincial and Local Administration:

Apart from the metropolitan area which was directly governed, the empire was divided into four provinces, each under a prince or member of the royal family (Kumara and Aryaputra). Under Asoka, there were four provinces: the Northern Province (Uttarapatha) with the capital at Taxila, western prov­ince (Avantiratha) with the headquarters at Ujjain, eastern province (Prachyapatha) with the centre at Tosali and the southern province (Dakshinapatha) with its capital as Suvarnagiri.

The central province Magadha, with its capital at Pataliputra was also the headquarters of the entire kingdom. The viceroy had the power to appoint some of his officials such as the Mahamattas, who went on tour every five years.

The most important provinces such as Taxila and Ujjain were directly under the command of the princes (Kumaras). Provinces were subdivided into districts for purposes of administration and groups of officials were in charge of a district. The three major officials of the provinces were thepradesika, the rajuka and the yukta.

The pradesika was in charge of the overall administration of a district – supervising the collection of revenue and of maintaining law and order both in the rural areas and in the towns within his district. The rajuka was responsible for surveying and assessing land.

Megasthenes probably referred them as agronomoiand they formed the backbone of the rural administration. The yuktas appear to have been subordinate officials whose duties were largely secretarial work and accounting.

There was an intermediate level of administration between the district level and that of the village. The unit here was formed by a group of five or ten villages. The two important officials concerned with the administration of this unit were the gopa and the sthanika.

The gopa worked as an accountant to the unit. His duties included the setting up of village boundaries, keeping a census of the population of each village according to their tax-paying capacity, their professions and their age, noting the live­stock of each village, etc. The tax was collected by the sthanika who worked directly under the Pradesika.

Village (grama) was the smallest unit of administration and enjoyed autonomy to a great extent. Individual villages must have had their own set of officials who were directly responsible to the gopas.

The head of the village was called gramika who was assisted by gram-viddhas or village elders. Gramika was not a paid servant; he was chosen from amongst the village elders. He may have supervised the tax collection of the village and other matters such as discipline and defence.

#### Municipal Administration

The Arthasastra mentions the nagaraka or city superintendent who was responsible for the main­tenance of law and order in the city. He was assisted by two subordinate officials, the gopa and the sthanika. Asokan inscriptions mention the nagalaviyohalaka mahamattas and refer to them largely in their judicial capacity.

In describing city administration, Megasthenes outlines a more elaborate sys­tem. According to him, the officials were divided into six committees each with a membership of five. The first committee was concerned with matters relating to industrial arts.

The second occupied it with the facilities to the foreigners. The third kept a register of births and deaths both by way of a census and for purposes of taxation. The fourth committee was in charge of matters of trade and commerce.

The fifth committee supervised the public sale of manufactured articles. The sixth commit­tee collected the tax on the articles sold, this being one-tenth of the purchase price.

# Provincial Administration in Ancient India

In ancient India big empires were divided into provinces and districts for the sake of administrative convenience, while small kingdoms like Pallavas, Vakatakas and Gahadawalas had only one type of division viz. the districts known by different names like vishaya or rashtra.The provincial administration during the times of the Mauryas and Guptas was organised on elaborate basis, and was modelled on the pattern of the central government.

The governors of the provinces were the chief channels of communication government and its administrative unit. Each province was under-a Governor directly appointed by the King, and was usually a member of the royal family.

Under the Mauryas, Bindusara, Ashoka and Kunala had all served as viceroys in different provinces of the empire. Similarly, under the Sungas the crown prince Agnimitra served as a Governor of Malwa. The Gujarat viceroys under the Chalukyat and the Rashtrakutas were also scions of the royal family.

There are also instances to show when the office of the Governor was offered to the senior and trusted officers of the empire—usually the military generals.The Governors or Viceroys of the provinces maintained their own courts and ministers, but they had to carry out the policy communicated to them through imperial writs or through special messengers. In view of the very primitive means of communication the Viceroys successfully used discretion in numerous matters.

The general duties of the viceroys included the maintenance of law and order, supervision of revenue collection, construction and repair of works of public utility like irrigation tanks and canals and strengthening the foundations of the empire by promoting public confidence.

Each province was further sub-divided into units like bhukti (under Guptas), rashtra (under Rashtrakutas), mandala (under Cholas and Chalukyas) etc. This division roughly corresponded to the size of Commissioner’s Division consisting of three or four districts.

The Officers in-charge of these units enjoyed extensive powers over sub­ordinate officers. The Divisional Commissioners also maintained strong contingents of military forces and often used it for controlling their subordinate officers and local feudatories. The Divisional Commissioners also performed revenue functions and were responsi­ble for revenue settlement of villages.

It is not known for certain if there was any popular councils at the Divisional headquarters levels to guide and advise the Divisional Commissioners. We get only two references about the existence of a council known as rashtramahattaras, which guided and advised the Divisional Commissioners, but it would be difficult to generalize that it existed in all the divisional headquarters.

The district was the next unit of administration. It was under the district officers which were designated differently in different states. Some of the common titles applied to them include vishayapati (Mauryan administration), Sahastradhipa (Smritis) etc.

The district officers were appointed by the provincial viceroys and were responsible for the maintenance of law and order in their district. They also supervised the collection of the government taxes and revenues. The District Officers were assisted by a large number of subordinate staff. This included the yuktas, ayuktas, niyuktas, and vyapritcs.

The district officer also maintained a small military force for the maintenance of law and order. The officers of the police department known as dandapasikas probably also worked under the directions of the district officer. It is not known for certain whether the district officer enjoyed any judicial powers also.

At the district level, at least in certain parts of India, the government was assisted by a council consisting of the chief banker, chief merchant, the chief artisan and the chief Kayastha (writer). The district officer usually took decisions in consultation with this body.

The members of the council were no doubt heads of the guilds or castes, and most probably held office by hereditary right. Under the Cholas especially the district councils enjoyed very extensive powers. They levied local taxes and exercised judicial functions with the concurrence of the representative of the central government.

Another unit of administration existed between the village and the district, but its nature and dimensions varied a great deal in different periods. This organisation was also given different names in different periods and parts viz. pathaka, peta, sthali or bhukti.

It corresponded very much with the modern Tehsil or Taluka. It must have been under the charge of a Tehsildar or Mamlatdar. They were assisted by hereditary revenue officers. Most probably there were popular councils on the pattern of the d strict council to help the sub-divisional officers. But how the popular councils were consti­tuted is not fully known.

#### Town Administration

We have very little knowledge about the administration of cities and towns during the Vedic period. This is probably due to fact that the Vedic civilization was primarily a rural one and there were not many cities. We do not get sufficient information about the town administration during the later Vedic period also.

It is only on the eve of the invasion of Alexander that we learn that a large number of towns and cities flourished in Punjab. Most of these cities and towns were autono­mous units of administration and were governed by their own coun­cils.

However, we do not know for certain as to how these councils were constituted. Most probably the members of these councils were co-opted from amongst experienced and elderly people with the general consensus of public opinion.

Magasthenes has given us very interesting information about the municipal administration under the Mauryas. While giving a description of the government at Pataliputra Magasthenes says it was under a mayor known as Nagaraka. He was assisted by a number of subordinate officers.

The general administration was carried on by a municipal commission consisting of thirty members, further sub­divided into six sub-committees of five members each. These commit­tees looked after the artisans, foreigners, census, trade and manufac­ture and collection of taxes due to the city. The Nagaraka was person­ally responsible for the maintenance of law and order within the juris­diction of the city.

In this regard he received valuable assistance from an official known as dandanayaka. The nagaraka was also responsi­ble for the collection of the revenue. Arthasastra tells us that the nagaraka received great assistance from a petty part-time official gopa in matters regarding the collection of revenue.

Each gopa was expected to keep supervision on forty house-holds and kept a careful note of the births, deaths, income and expenditure in the families under his charge. He was also expected to keep a note of the important visitors and other developments in the households. The gopas passed on this information to the town office where it was permanently recorded.

The chief duties of the city governor included cleaning of the streets, prevention of disasters like faming, flood and plague and take other welfare measures. We get more detailed information about the city administration from the times of the Guptas onwards.

The city was under a purapala who was usually a military leaded, but sometimes they were selected from amongst the scholars as well. The purupala was assisted by a non-official committee called goshthi, panchakula or chaukadika in various parts of the country. This committee contained representatives of different classes and ‘interests. How these members were selected or elected is not known for certain.

#### Village Administration

Village has been the pivot of administration in India since earliest times. The village government was usually carried under the supervision of the village headman called gramani in the Vedic literature. Even the Jatakas and Arthasastra testify the important position of the village head-man in the administration of the village.

The post of the village head-man was usually hereditary though he was frequently looked on as the king’s representative,, who could displace him at his pleasure. Usually the headman was a military leader and belonged to the Kshatriya caste, but the Vaisyas also succeeded in acquiring this office.

As life was most unsettled in ancient India, the primary duty of the village headman was the defence of the village against raids of bandits and robbers. He was also responsible for the collection of government revenue and kept the necessary records for the purpose.

The headman was assisted by a village council, of which he was the ex-officio president. In the Arthasastra we find references to village elders acting as trustees, but do not hear about the village council or its sub-committees. It appears that the village councils as regular bodies were evolved only during the Gupta period.

In addition to this council there was a popular body or the Primary Assembly of the Village. All the respectable householders of the village were the members of this Primary Village Assembly. But as it was a petty large body, it transacted its business only through an executive committee or council, about which we have referred above. In certain areas the Primary Village Assembly con­sisted of all the village residents.

In South India the village institutions were organised on democratic lines during the Chola period which has been described as the Golden Age of the Village Assemblies. There were two types of assemblies the Ur and Sahba. While the former was the general type the latter one was peculiar to the Brahmadeya villages.

The precise rules regarding the conduct of elections and qualifications of members are mentioned in the Utteramerur Inscriptions of the Chola King Parantaka I. The Village Assemblies exercised full powers in all departments of administration.

They were absolute proprietors of village lands collected taxes, evicted cultivators for non-payment of taxes, received deposits of money and grants of land for charitable purposes. They also enjoyed certain judicial powers. The existence of the democratic institutions at the lowest level encouraged the communal life of the people and developed among them a sense of civic duty and love for liberty. It also contributed a great deal to the efficiency and purity of administration.

**Chapter – III**

**Pre-Islamic History of India**

* **Gupta Period-Central provinces, Deccan policy of administration**
* **Development of feudal System**

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**Gupta Period-Central provinces, Deccan policy of administration**

In contrast to the Maurya rulers, the Gupta kings adopted pompous titles such asparameshvara, maharajadhiraja, and paramabhattaraka which signify that they ruled over many lesser kings in their empire.

Kingship was hereditary, but royal power was limited by the want of a firm adherence to primogeniture.

The throne did not always go to the eldest son, creating uncertainties of which the chiefs and high officials took advantage.

The Guptas made munificent gifts to the brahmanas, who expressed their gratitude by comparing the king to different gods. He was looked upon as Vishnu, the protector and preserver. The goddess Lakshmi is invariably represented on Gupta coins as Vishnu’s wife. The numerical strength of the Gupta army is not known. Evidently the king maintained a standing army, which was supplemented by the forces occasionally supplied by his feudatories. Horse chariots receded into the background, and cavalry came to the fore. Horse archery became an important element in military tactics.

During the Gupta period land taxes increased in number, and those on trade and commerce decreased. Probably the king collected taxes varying from one-fourth to one-sixth of the produce. In addition, whenever the royal army passed through the countryside, the local people had to feed it. The peasants had also to supply animals, food grains, furniture, etc., for the maintenance of royal officers on duty in rural areas. In central and western India, the villagers were also subjected to forced labour called vishti by the royal army and officials.

The judicial system was far more developed under the Guptas than in earlier times. Several law-books were compiled during this period, and for the first time civil and criminal laws were clearly demarcated. Theft and adultery fell under criminal law, disputes regarding various types of property under civil law.

Elaborate laws were laid down about inheritance. As in earlier times, many laws continued to be based on varna differentiation. It was the duty of the king to uphold the law, and try cases with the help of brahmana priests. The guilds of artisans, merchants, and others were governed by their own laws. Seals from Vaishali and from Bhita near Allahabad indicate that these guilds flourished during Gupta times.

The Gupta bureaucracy was not as elaborate as that of the Mauryas. The most important officers in the Gupta empire were the kumaramatyas. They were appointed by the king in the home provinces and possibly paid in cash. As the Guptas were possibly vaishyas, recruitment was not confined to the upper varnas only, but several offices were combined in the hands of the same person, and posts became hereditary. This naturally weakened royal control.

The Guptas organized a system of provincial and local administration. The empire was divided into divisions called bhukth, and each bhukti was placed under the charge of an uparika. The bhuktis were divided into districts (vishayas), which were placed under the charge of a vishayapati. In eastern India, the vishayas were divided into vithis, which again were subdivided into villages. The village headman gained in importance in Gupta times, managing village affairs with the assistance of elders. With the administration of a village or a small town, leading local elements were associated. No land transactions could be effected without their consent.

In the urban administration, organized professional bodies were given a considerable say. The sealings from Vaishali show that artisans, merchants, and the head of the guild served on the same corporate body, and in this capacity they obviously conducted the affairs of the town. The administrative board of the district of Kotivarsha in north Bengal (Bangladesh) included the chief merchant, the chief trader, and the chief artisan. Their consent to land transactions was considered necessary. Artisans and bankers were organized into their own separate guilds. We hear of numerous guilds of artisans, traders, etc., at Bhita and Vaishali.

At Mandasor in Malwa and at Indore, silk weavers maintained their own guilds. In the district of Bulandshahar in western UP, the oil-pressers were organized into guilds. It seems that these guilds, especially those of merchants, enjoyed certain immunities. In any event, they looked after the affairs of their own members and punished those who violated the laws and customs of the guild.

The system of administration described above applied only to north Bengal, Bihar, UP, and some adjoining areas of MP, which were ruled directly by the officers appointed by the Gupta kings. The major part of the empire was held by feudatory chiefs, many of whom had been subjugated by Samudragupta. The vassals who lived on the edge of the empire had three obligations to fulfill.

As subordinate princes, they offered homage to the sovereign by personal attendance at his court, paid tribute to him, and presented to him daughters in marriage. It seems that in return they obtained charters to rule their areas, and these, marked with the royal Garuda seal, seem to have been issued to the vassals. The Guptas thus controlled several tributary princes in MP and elsewhere.

The second important feudal development that surfaced under the Guptas was the grant of fiscal and administrative concessions to priests and administrators. Started in the Deccan by the Satavahanas, the practice became a regular affair in Gupta times, particularly in MP. Religious functionaries were granted land, free of tax, for posterity, and they were authorized to collect from the peasants all the taxes that once went directly to the emperor. The villages granted to the beneficiaries could not be entered by royal agents, retainers, and others, and the beneficiaries were also empowered to punish criminals.

Whether state officials were paid by grants of land in Gupta times is not clear. The abundance of gold coins would suggest that higher officials continued to be paid in cash, but some of them may have been remunerated by land grants. As much of the imperial administration was managed by feudatories and beneficiaries, the Gupta rulers did not require as many officials as did the Mauryas, and also because, in contrast to the Maurya state, the Gupta slate did not regulate economic activities on any substantial scale.

The participation of leading artisans, merchants, elders, and others in the rural and urban administration also lessened the need to maintain a large retinue of officers. The Guptas neither needed nor had the elaborate administrative machinery of Maurya times, and in some ways their political system appears to have been feudal.

The period of the rule of the Guptas has been regarded as one of the m glorious periods of Indian history. After the fall of the Maurya empire, Kushanas certainly succeeded in providing unity to a large part of the No West India and the Satvahanas in the South also kept alive the ideal of big emp but the aim could not be fulfilled till the rise of the Guptas in Magadha in fourth century A.D. After the fall of the Kushanas, most part of Northern I was divided into a number of small kingdoms and autonomous tribal states. Guptas destroyed most of these small kingdoms both, monarchical and monarchical, and established a big empire in North India which provided political unity for at least two centuries. The Guptas finally eliminated the for rule of the Sakes and the Keshena’s from the North-West of India and success checked the invasions of the Huns from the North-West for a long time. after another, the great Gupta rulers not only provided political administrative unity to North-India alone but also forced the Vakataka and Pallava rulers of South India to accept their superiority and therefore, influe their polity and administrative system. Besides, economic prosperity intellectual progress were other important features of the Gupta age N; brought about progress in science, arts, religion and literature and every field of life. The revival of Hinduism. the spirit of religious toleration, the gr of Sanskrit literature, fine arts and science which all enriched the Indian c took place during this age. Thus, strengthened in all fields, the Indian c infiltrated in the countries of North-West and South-East Asia which helped the formation of Greater India. All these achievements in various fields placed the Gupta age amongst the most remarkable periods of Indian history it has been rightly regarded the golden age of ancient India.

**Sources, Emperors and Extension of the Empire**

Literature, both religious and secular, writings of foreign travelers, in scrip coins, monuments etc. constitute various sources of the history of the G Purina’s, such as the Vayu-Purana, the Alatsya-Purana and the Vishnu-P Smritis such as the Narada-Smriti, and the Brahaspati Smriti, dramas such as the Kaumudi-Mahotsava and the Devi-Chandra-Gupta, lit6rary works of Kalidasa g., the Raghuvansa and the Abhigyana Shakuntalam, the Kavya-Mimansa of jashekhar, the Rajatarangani of Kalhana,the Harsh-Charita of Banabhatta, le Katha-Saris-Sagar of Somadeva, the Vrahat-Kasha-Manjari of Kshmendra, -na-text the Kuvalaya-Mala, and many others are its literary sources. The \*tings of the Chinese travellers Fa hien, and Hiuen Tsang and I-tsing also rovide us some useful information. Coins, inscriptions, different monuments d pieces of fine arts of the Gupta age are other valuable sources of the history this period. Rulers like Samudra Gupta, Chandra Gupta II, Kumar Gupta and inda Gupta issued coins of varied types which help us in understanding their sonalities and achievements. The different inscriptions such as the Allahabad-ar-inscriptions of Samudra Gupta, iron-pillar at Delhi near Kutub Minar and ither pillar inscriptions at Mathura, Sanchi, Bhitri, Junagarh, etc. and some done-inscriptions as well help us in knowing the history of the Guptas. Besides, large number of seals of this age too have been discovered at Vaisali in district uzzafarpur. Among them one seal is that of the wife of king Chandra Gupta II .Mahadevi Dhruvaswamini. Seals of different administrative officials too have n discovered from there which has helped scholars in preparing a list of civil d military officers of the Gupta rulers. Besides, temples, idols, paintings of this also constitute good sources of information. Thus, variety of sources and in ite good number are available to scholars for knowing the history and culture the age of the Guptas.

**Origin, Emperors and Extension of the Empire**

Yet, the origin of the Guptas is obscure. Dr Romila Thapar has observed that, obably, the family wz,s one of wealthy landowners who gradually gained litical control in the region of Magadha. It is also possible that the family longed to one of the many petty ruling families in the area of Magadha or under Magadha. Also nothing is certain about the caste of the family. Some olars have expressed the view that it was a Vaisya family. Dr Altekar, Dr angar and Allen are of this view. Dr. K.P. Jayaswal has maintained that it was Jat family of Punjab. He has given several references from the drama, the umidi-Mahotasava to support. his view. He contends that in this drama, ichchhavis have been referred as Mlechha (base-born) and as Chandra Gupta married a Lichchhavi princess, he was also a Mlechha i.e. Jai. But his view has t been accepted by modern historians. Mostly historians have accepted ichchhavis as Kshatriyas. Dr H.C. Raychoudhury says that it was a Brahamana lily related to Dharni, wife of Agnimitra Sunga. Dr S. Chattopadhaya has -pressed the view that it was a Kshatriya family. He says that in the tyamanjusrimulakalpa. the Gupta rulers have been described as Kshatrivas. handra Gupta I married a Kshatriya-Lichchhavi princess and therefore, the upta rulers were Kshatriyas. However, there is no clear evidence to justify any if these opinions. Probably they were Kshatrivas. Historians have differed with gard to their place of origin as well. According to Dr K.P. Jayaswal, they were he original inhabitants of sonic place near Allahabad. Dr Allan and some others have observed that they lived somewhere in Magadha near Pataliputra its& Dr D.C. Ganguli says that they belonged to the district of Murshidabad in Bengal\_ and Dr R.C. Majumdar and Dr S. Chattopadhaya have opined that their origi place was Varendri in Bengal. Therefore, it is assumed that the family origin lived near the boundaries of Magadha and Bengal. On the eve of the rise of the Guptas, India was politically divided into s kingdoms. Iranian Sassanians had occupied Afghanistan and the Indus val Central and west Punjab was occupied by different Sakas and Kushana nil Malwa and Gujarat were also in the hands of the Saka rulers and the rest of No India was also divided into many monarchical and non-monarchical states. In South the most influential ruling family was that of the Vakatakas and in the South was that of the Pallavas. At that time, the Guptas too, probably, ruled a small kingdom in Magadha which comprised a portion of Bengal as well The first ruler of the dynasty was Sri Gupta (240-280 A.D.) who ruled a petty kingdom though he had assumed the title of Maharaja. He was succe by his son Ghatotkacha Gupta (280-320 A.D.) who was also titled Maharaja. these first two rulers made no significant contribution towards the extension the empire. The foundaf on of the greatness of this family was laid by its ruler, Chandra Gupta I.

**The Central Government**

**The King**

The King was the sovereign ruler and the head of the state. The succession to the throne was hereditary. The divine right of kings was emphasised. The titles assumed by the Kings were Maharajacihiraja. Paramabhattarka etc. The Guptas did not possess a big army. The feudatories supplied the troops. The kings were not despots. They ruled according to Rajadharma and with the advice of ministers. The king was assisted by the council of ministers whose office was mostly hereditary. They were mostly drawn from the cadre of Kumararnatyas which denotes either the son of an amatya. the minister or prince. Amongst the highest officials of the central government were the maha-mantri, the maha-b aladhikrita. the maha-dandanayaka, the maha-pratihara. Two new classes of officers were introduced by the Guptas. These were Sandhivigrahika—The minister of peace and war (modern foreign minister) and Kurnaramaiyas—a body of top ranking officials attached not only to the king but also to the crown-prince and sometimes placed as in-charge of districts. Another class of important officials were Ayuktas. The Maha-baladhikrita (Commander-in-chief) was supported by Maha-asvaptai (Commander of the Cavalry). Bhatti-asvapati, Maha-pilupati (Commander of elephant force) Senapati. Baladhikrita ranabhandagarika (Master general of military stores). Vinayasthitisthapaka (Censor). The same way, Mah.a-dandartayaka (Chief Justice) had subordinate Dandanayakas and Maha-pratih.ara had subordiante pratiharas. The Gupta period provided a landmark in the history of the administration of law and justice in early India. It produced a rich corpus of legal literature, which reflects a distinct advance in the legal system. For the first time law givers of the period demarked between civil and criminal law The Brihaspati smriti enumerates eighteen titles of land and adds that fourteen of these have their origin in property (dhanarnuia) and four in injury (himsamula). On account of

the growth of private property in land, which could be sold for money, we find detailed laws about partition, sale, mortgage and lease of land in law-books and in inscriptions of the period. Proper attention was given to the dispension of justice. Mostly fines were imposed on law-breakers and capital punishment was given only in extreme cases of repeated offences. In general. the punishments were light. The duties of state in the reign of Guptas include not only to protect the frontiers, to maintain law and order and to help in the material progress of its subjects but also to help them in their moral and spiritual progress. The police duties were, probably, looked after by the dandanayakas. The Gupta rulers also kept an efficient spy-system. Taxes were less in number than the taxes mentioned in Arthashastra of Kautilya. Total number of taxes were 18. The burden of taxation decreased in Gupta times because of the prosperity of the State. There were no emeregency taxes in that period. The primary source of the income of the state was land-revenue. Land tax was collected varying from one-fourth to one-sixth of the produce, both in cash and kind. Various officers mentioned in the inscriptions kept proper records of assessment and collection of revenues, land transaction etc. The important items of expenditure were the army, the expenditure of King's palace and public welfare. The government servants were paid in cash.

**Provincial Government (Decentralisation)**

The Gupta empire was divided into provinces called Bhuktis or desas and they were under uparika, maharajas, or goptris. The governors of provinces enjoyed wide powers. There were subordinate officers to assist them in matters of administration. The province was divided into a number of districts (prarleshas or vishayas). or Bhogas. each district having its own administrative offices. But local administration was for all practical purposes independent of the centre. Decisions whether of policy or in relation to individual situations were generally taken locally, unless they had a specific bearing on the policy or order of the central authority. The officers in charge of the districts (ayukta) and a yet higher provincial officials (kumaramatya) were the link between local administration and the centre. Vishayapathi was the head of Vishaya. He was assisted by a number of subordinate officers such as Nagara Srethin (President of guilds). The Stharavraha (chief merchant) the Prathama Kulika (chief artisan) and the Pratharria Kayastha F12

**The chief secretary**

Each Vishaya was sub-divided into gramns (villages). The important officers of village were Gramikas and Bhojakas. The village panchayats enjoyed wide powers regarding administrative and judicial functions. The gramadhyaksha was assisted by a Council—Panchamandala, which consisted of the Grama Vridhas, the village elders. In urban administration, each city had a council which consisted of the president of the City Corporation, the Chief representative of the Guild of Merchants, a representative of the artisans, and the Chief Scribe. The administration of the Guptas was efficiently organised, keeping in view the welfare of the people. The Gupta administration was followed by the contemporary and successor rulers. Politically the Gupta period is the age of integration in India. After more than three hundred years of divisions, dissension and foreign domination, India was again united under the rule of powerful monarchs of versatile talents.

**Social Conditions of Gupta Period**

**Caste System in Gupta Period**

The traditional caste system consisting of the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra existed during the Gupta Age. Though the Varna distinction in social life began to take shape, the caste system was not rigid. The foreign elements in Indian society were absorbed in the traditional social order. This caused a clear change in the brahamnical Dharmasastra works and Puranic literature. The Sakas, Yavanas etc. were regarded as Kshatriyas. The Hunas and Gujaras later became the Rajputs and were considered as degraded Kshatriyas. During the Gupta period, there was an increase in the number of Sudra castes and untouchables (slaves). This is largely due to the absorption of forest tribes and to the extension of agriculture in the reclaimed areas. The connection between the caste and occupation was not rigid. The guilds of craftsmen adopted different professions alien to their own caste such as archers, soldiers. bards, scholars etc. The new land management gave rise to a new caste known as Kayastas or scribes. They claimed higher status. Due to the resurgence of brahaminical religion and royal patronage, the Brahman's ritual status was emphasized. The term 'dvija' was increasingly used. The sastras, which were codified during this period lay stress on Brahrninical purity, thus underlining the impurity of the lower castes. There were discriminatory rules for the varnas. For example. son of a person belonging to a higher caste through sudra woman was entitled to the smallest share. The relation between the sudras and chandalas were regulated. A sudra married to a chandala spouse was given the status of a chant:Iran The epic and puranic literature gave importance to the theory of karma in preserving the social order. People followed the respective professions and duties to whichever caste they belonged.

**Position of Women in Gupta Period**

Women were given a subordiante position. The patriarchial socity was strengthened by the law. The joint family system was an essential feature of the society during this period. The inheritance laws gave equal ownership to the father and sons in the ancestral property. In the case of the property of the fahter, sons had equal right. Early marriages i.e., the pre-puberty type, were encouraged and practiced. The sati system was also encouraged as per the inscription at Eran dated 510 A.D. Widow marriage was becoming unpopular. In cities and urban centres, the courtesan was an accepted feature of society. The institution of Devadasi was in evidence during this period. Kalidasa refers to the women attached to the Mahakali temple at Ujjain. Women of upper-class were entitled to receive education to enable them to converse intellectually, not to participate in public life. There have been learned women like Sheel and Maharika, Bhattarika in Gupta period. Educated women were respected in the society. They also participated in debates. There was no purda system.

**EntertainmentsinGuptaPeriod**  
Theatrical entertainment was popular both in Court circles and outside. Dance performance and music concerts were held mainly in the homes of the wealthy and the discerning. Gambling continued to hold the attention of men. as did animal fights. particularly of the ram, the cock and the quail which were more common in rural areas, but the town people also enjoyed it, Athletics and gymnastics were an important part of sporting tournaments. Amusements of various kinds in which the general public participated were essential to the various festivals. The festival of spring was celebrated with much enthusiasm to the accompaniment of a great deal of eating, drinking, and general conviviality. Inspite of many evils in society, people were honest, tolerant, non-violent and charitable. The people regulated their lives according to Dharma. The social life in Gupta period was glorious, mighty and unique.

**Economic Conditions During Gupta Period**

The Gupta age was an age of economic prosperity. The wealth of the period was due to increased agricultural production, growth of handicrafts and expansion of trade and commerce.

**Agriculture**

The State encouraged agriculture. The reclamation of land was taken up by individuals. This brought large area under cultivation. According to Brihat Samhita two main harvests were found in the method of cultivation. The Persian water-wheel was used for irrigation. Water wheels were used to draw water from the tanks, wells and channels. Rice and wheat were produced. Further sugar-cane. fruits, vegetables and other crops were grown. Amarakosa contains special chapters on the study of plants and gardens, forest, crops and manure etc. Scientific methods were followed for better and more agricultural production. Increase in land grants was responsible for bringing large areas under cultivation. There was a tradition of giving land grants to the priests and temples, free of taxes. and villages were granted to officials with administrative rights. After the grants, the lands were cultivated property. The land grants weakened the central authority. Granting of villages to officers led to the growth of the feudal system. The granted lands were cultivated by peasants as the donee of the land was given the right to assign the land to tenants at will. There was imposition of forced labour (visthz) on all classes of people. The landed gentry and officials exploited village resources to a great extent.

**Trade and Trade Guilds**

There were several native professions such as garlanders. washermen, carpenters, blacksmiths, jewellers. goldsmiths, potters,, weavers, architects etc. Indian craftsmen produced fine quality of cotton, silk and woollen clothes. Trade was carried on by land and sea. Important cities and ports were connected by roads. Security was provided to travellers and traders.

During the Gupta age the increase in trade and commence had lost its pre-eminent position. Indo-Roman trade in silk and spices was affected. The navigation on rivers like Ganga, Yamuna. Narmada etc. increased trade with other places. Foreign trade took place with South-East Asian countries through Tamralipti, the sea-port in Bengal.

Metal work flourished and bronze was increasingly used. The prosperity of the period was due to favourbale foreign trade, though it was declined. The prices of essential commodities were very low.

Trade and industry were organised in guilds. Guilds were organised for traders, bankers and manual workers like weavers and stone cutters. The Guptas emphasised the autonomy and independence of economic and administrative units and organisations. Therefore. the guilds enjoyed autonomy.

The decline in foreign trade affected the urban centres like Vaisali. Patliputra, Sohagpur etc. However, there existed some more prosperous urban centres. The guilds of artisans and merchants did play an important role in the urban centres. People engaged in industries, the kulikas i.e. merchants formed into a nigama, an organisation. The sreshtis or the traders had their own nigama, while the sarthauaha the traders engaged in imports and exports also had their nigama.

During the Gupta age, the Buddhist Sangha was wealthy and it also participated in commercial activities. They gave money to the merchants on interest. Interest on loan was upto 20% per annum.

Ship building was another big industry which was well developed in the period that facilitated trade and communication activities.

The important trade items were silk, spices of various kind, textiles, metals, ivory, sea products etc. The highly flourishing trade and commerce made the country enormously wealthy and the reputation of the riches of India spread far and wide.

There was no decline in the urban and commercial centres nor any paucity of corns. The Guptas issued a large number of gold coins. But day to day exchange was probably done through copper and silver coins. According to the epigraphs, the gold coins were called dinara or suvama and the silver coins as rupaka. The copper coins were fewer in number.

The standard of living of the people was high. This was attested by the variety of copper and iron objects, spouted pottery, jewels and clothes of good quality found in that period. These were probably restricted to the upper-class people in the urban centres. But, the villages too were general well off as per the accounts of foreign travellers like Fahien.

**The Religious Condition During Gupta Period**

The transformation of the ancient Brahamanical faith into something ilk modem Hinduism, its final triumph against Buddhism and Jainism, its spirit c liberalism, its absorption of foreigners within its fold and the practice of tolerant by every religion, are regarded as the distinguishing features of the religious Id of the Gupta age.

* 1. **Hinduism**. Neo-Hinduism which mostly provided the base to mode! Hinduism was organised during the Gupta age. The Gupta rulers large! participated in it. They provided protection to the Bhagavata sect of Hinduisail called themselves Bhagavatas, worshipped god Vishnu and his spouse Lakshni marked Garuda (vehicle of Vishnu) on their state-flag, performed AsvainecIA sacrifices, gave large donations to Brahmanas and built many temples. Besidei a large number of scholars wrote different texts and revised or compiled the ei ones which certainly helped in the growth of Hinduism. Practically all Puranas were written during this age; the Sutras were prepared or compiled; the Mahabharata was given a new shape. Of course, the construction of temples, emphasis on Bhakti-Marg and concept of incarnation of God different forms started earlier than the Gupta age. But, now all these infil down to the masses and became their universal beliefs. The old Vedic religion formed the basis of Hinduism but its form was changed. The common forgot to practise the ancient Vedic religion based mostly on ritualism sacrifices which they neither understood nor had the economic means to p They were now attracted to a simple and economically less burdensome reli based on faith and worship. Absorbing within itself all the essentials of ancient and the new Brahamanic religion, Hinduism took a new shape during Gupta age, proved most attractive to the common people and became dominant religion in India once again. Dr R. C. Majumdar writes, "Hinduism already grown into that mosaic of various patterns combining the religious spiritual ideas, both old and new, high and low, losing nothing and ete adding more and more from new elements introduced into society." acceptance of what was attractive in Buddhism or Jainism, the adaptability to circumstances and ideas and the liberalism in accepting even the forei within its fold also helped in the popularity of Hinduism. It has been said it was the revival of Hinduism or 'Hindu Renaissance' that took place during age. However, it is better to suggest that the process did not start with the Gu It started much earlier and only found its culmination during the age of Imperial Guptas. Bhagavatism, which was a contemporary to Buddhism Jainism in origin and owed its birth to the stream of thought which began the Upanishads, reached its zenith and became the most popular religion d this age. The theory of ten Avataras or incarnations of the supreme god V. was accepted and, amongst them, Krishna was regarded as the most impo one. The Buddha was also accepted as one of the ten incarnations of Vishnu the worship of Rama, the hero of the Ramayana, also started, though it did not become much popular at that time. However, Saivism became more widespread, cularly in South India, and Siva-worship became as popular as that of u. Different rulers of the Vakatakas, the Nalas and the Kadambas accepted ism and built temples in honour of Siva. Mathura was an important place in North where Pasupata-cult of Saivism became most popular. Actually, gavatism and Saivism became so close to each other that both were accepted rt of the same religion, viz., Hinduism. Temples were built by the followers th the sects and image-worship became most popular in Hinduism.

Besides, Brahma, Surya, Kartikeya, Ganesa, Durga, Lakshmi, Sarasvati and lesser gods like Indra, Varuna, Yama, etc. also remained the objects of hip. The snakes, the Yakshas, the Gandharvas, the Apsaras also continued revered. Even animals (i.e. cow), plants (i.e. Tulsi), rivers (i.e. the Ganga the Yamuna) and mountains (the Himalayas) were looked at with reverence cities like Banaras and Prayag (Allahabad) became places of pilgrimage. The hip of Trimurti (Brahma, Vishnu and Siva) also started during this age. , all prominent features of modern Hinduism had virtually taken shape ng the Gupta-period.

Hinduism absorbed within its folds all foreigners like the Greeks, the Sakas the Kushanas. Besides, it spread itself beyond the frontiers of India. Hindu "onaries and religious preachers went as far as Syria and Mesopotamia in the and to the islands of Java, Sumatra and Borneo in the South-East Asia, drew converts and helped in the propagation of Indian culture there.

* 1. **Buddhism.** Buddhism was also widely supported during this period. Of e, Hinduism became the most popular religion in India and particularly seded Buddhism in Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, yet Buddhism 'nal popular in many parts of India. Dr A.S. Altekar writes, "The general that Buddhism was on the decline in the Gupta period, owing to the revival Hinduism under the Guptas, is not supported by the above survey of its osophical activity. Nor is it confirmed by the artistic evidence." Renowned hist scholars like Asanga, Vasubandhu, Kumarjiva and Dignaga wrote r best scholarly works during this time. Buddhghosh, the great Buddhist lar of Sri Lanka, also flourished during this age. Besides, the artistic tions of Ajanta and Ellora caves and the stupas and monasteries of Andhra esh and images of the Buddha of this ume justify the fact that Buddhism was quite popular. The account of Fa-hien testifies to the same. The Hinayana of Buddhism remained popular in Kashmir. Gandhara and Afghanistan by first half of the fifth century. Afterwards, it was replaced by Mahayanism sect s own. Thus, Buddhism remained quite popular at Mathura. Sanchi, Nalanda, abhi, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Pradesh during this period. However, it is pted that due to the increased popularity of Hinduism, Buddhism had ainly lost its first position in India.

Jainism also remained popular during this period and efforts were made to ngthen it further. Two Jaina councils were convened at Mathura and Vallabhi respectively, in 313 A.D. Another council was called again in 453 A.D. Vallabhi. Fresh commentaries were written on Jaina-texts which enriched J literature. While the Svetambara sect of Jainism remained popular at Ma and Vallabhi, its Digambara sect was popular in Karnataka and Mysore. J was also popular in some parts of Bengal and at Kanchi in the South. It provided patronage by the Kadatnba and Ganga dynasties of the South.

The one basic feature of the religious life of the Gupta age was the spirt religious toleration between different religious communities. The scholars Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism held religious and philosophical d amongst themselves, wrote their religious texts or gave them fresh interpreta and, thereby, tried to establish superiority of their respective religions over rivals. But, there was no religious animosity between them and their follow The people pursued their respective religions freely and did not mind changing them at will. Members of the same family could choose to a-different religions. The followers of the Hinayana and the Mahayana sect I in the same monasteries. Hinduism accepted the Buddha as one of incarnations of Vishnu. Thus, both the leaders and the followers of diff religions lived in peace and harmony with each other. The emperors practised religious toleration in their private and public life. Samudra himself believed in Hinduism but he had appointed a Buddhist Vasubandhu, as the tutor of his son. The Gupta rulers gave generous gr all scholars and religious institutions including Buddhism and Jainism: University of Nalanda was also patronised by the Gupta rulers.

Another important feature of this age concerning religion was the const of temples. The images were built even prior to the Gupta age but the constrtic of temples. where images were placed for worship, began during the pe of the Guptas and it was Hinduism which took the lead in it.

**Literature and Education** **During Gupta Period**

Literature, science and fine arts progressed tremendously during the age. This is the best proof that there existed a varied and sound cyst education during this period in the absence of which neither intellectualism grow nor progress could be achieved in different fields of life. Patali Vallabhi. Ujjayini. Padmavati, Avarapur, Vatsagulma, Kashi, Mathura, Kanchi, etc. were the centres of learning where universities were established rulers and the rich people gave large donations in cash, land or mate educational institutions, though they were all autonomous in their functi University education was provided only to meritorious students. The adn to a university was done on the past performance of a student. Once a student admitted to a university he was provided not only free education but also\_. boarding and lodging. In the sixth century. the university of Nalanda renowned all over Asia. The universities provided both religious and education to students according to their choice or capability. The existence of many universities suggests that institutions of the lower level existed in every part and education was quite widespread.

The age of the Guptas has been regarded as the age ofPericlean andAugustan cal age in India. It is primarily because of its progress in the field of e, both religious and secular. Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina scholars the best literature by their writings. By that time, Sanskrit language had virtually the national language of India and so most of the works were in Sanskrit. The beautiful Sanskrit in Kavya style which was in the of growth even prior to Gupta age reached its maturity by the fourth or century A.D. The Epics, the Ramayana and the iikfahabharata, received resent shape during this age. The Puranas, which were also in the process g earlier than the Gupta period, were completed in their present shape the Gupta age. Many Smrilis like Narada Smriti, the Brahaspati Smriti ntiferent Dharmashastras were also written or completed now. In the fourth A.D. Iswarakrishna wrote the Sankhyakarika, Vyas his commentary on :'gasutra of Patanjali and Vatsayana his Kamasutra. The Panchatantra, has now been translated into nearly 50 languages of the world, was also iled during this age. The Hitopadesa was also written. Asanga, dhu, Diganaga and Dharmapala, the vice-chancellor of the Nalanda ity were the famous Buddhist scholars of this age. Asanga wrote the ar-Bhumrisastra, the Mahayana-Sulralankar, the Mahayana-Sampari-etc. Besides, Vasubandhu and Diganaga also wrote many texts. Amongst na scholars Siddhasena, Bhadrabhanu II and Umaswati became very . All of them enriched literature by their scholarly writings. Amongst the written in Pali Dipavansa and Mahavansa proved very popular. Valuable e was produced in Tamil and Prakrat languages also and many Sanskrit were translated into these languages.

Seular literature also made tremendous progress during this period. Amongst nent works of this age the most notable are the Vasavadatta by Subandhu, 'anavadha by Bhattin, the Kiratarjuniyam by Bharavi, the Mudrarakshas the Devi-Chandraguptam by Visakhadatta, the Mrichchhakatikam by and the Dasakumara-charita by Dandina. Besides, there were a host of Ts, astronomers, scientists and grammarians who produced works of le merit. Bhartahari was a poet and philosopher, Virsasena Sava was a nent grammarian, Amarasingh wrote the Amarakosh, and probably -ana wrote the Kamasutra during this very period. The author of the asti of Asoka pillar at Al lahabad, Harishena, was also a reputed scholar at urt of Samudra Gupta. However, the greatest of these scholars in Sanskrit ture was Kalidasa who wrote many scholarly works. Kalidasa has been ded as the greatest poet and dramatist of ancient India. Probably, he was a mporary of Chandra Gupta II. Amongst his scholarly writings the amhara, the Meghaduta, the Kumara-sambhava, the Raghuvansa, the mvamsiya, the Malavikagnimitra and the Abhijnana Sakuntalam have been regarded as the best ones. Kalidasa has been sometimes compared with. English scholar Shakespeare of England. But now the opinion has veered to the view that he was even greater than Shakespeare as a literary man. Dr Majumdar writes of him, "Kalidasa was the most brilliant luminary in the firmament of the Gupta age who had shed lustre on the whole Sanskrit lite He is, by common consent, the greatest poet and dramatist that ever lived in and his works have enjoyed a high reputation and popularity through ages."

Thus, many. scholars of repute flourished during the Gupta age and certainly, made this age the classical age of Indian history by their s contributions towards learning and literature. Of course, Pali, Tamil and literature also progressed but the progress of Sanskrit literature re uncomparable. It has been commented upon by a scholar that, "in cleverness per square inch no poetry surpasses the Sanskrit Kavya." It applies to the Kavya which was produced during the age of the Guptas.

**Science, Grammar, Astrology, Medicine etc.** **During Gupta Period**

Many scholars of different sciences, astronomy, astrology, medicine and various other fields of knowledge flourished during the Gupta contributed to learning. Aryabhatta has been accepted as the greatest scie mathematician of this age. He wrote the Aryabhatiyam in which he solutions to many problems of Algebra, Geometry and Trigonometry. He first Indian astronomer to discover that the earth rotates on its axis. He also that it is the earth which rotates round the sun and not vice-versa. It believed that the decimal system was discovered by the Hindus. It is not cl found it but both Aryabhatta and Varahamihira have described it in their Aryabhatta contributed to many fields of learning including Ma '- Astrology and Astronomy. Among his writings, the Aryabhatiyam most famous one. Bhaskara I wrote commentaries on the writings of AT) and other several independent works also. Among his writings the Mahabh the Laghubhaskarya and the Bhasya became more renowned. Certain, scholars such as Lata, Pradyumna. Vijayanandin contributed further Aryabhatta did and, ultimately, Varahamihira took all that to the Varahamihira was the greatest astrologer of his age. His work on astro Vrihat Santhita is an encyclopaedia of useful information in various b knowledge. Besides, among his other writings, the Panch-Siddhan Brahmajataka and the Laghujataka also became famous. Brahma G composed the Brahmasiddhanta, was another famous astrologer of Besides, many other scholarly works such as the Shatpanchasika Vaisistha Siddhanta were also prepared during this age. The science of medicine also progressed during this age. The Navan the famous book of this age on medicine. Besides, we also find treatise the Hastyaayurveda and theAsvasastra on the diseases of animals which proves veterinary science was not neglected at that time. agarjuna, the famous Buddhist scholar, was also a great student of medicine, say and metallurgy. He discovered many new medicines. Probably, avantari, the most renowned physician of Ayurvedic medicines, also shed during this age. e science of metallurgy also made good progress during this age. The us Irou.Pillar near the Qutab Millar on the outskirts of Delhi belongs to this and iirthe best proof of the striking metallurgical progress of this period. gh the pillar has stood exposed to the sun and the rain for the last so many 'es, it has exhibited not the least sign of rusting which is surprising even odern metallurgists as to how it was prepared. us, the Gupta age witnessed progress in education, literature and science ther in every field of knowledge. It was an age of intellectualism which ed ogress and new inventions and innovations in every field of learning.

The Arts Different arts showed remarkable progress during the age of the Guptas. The sources of understanding the arts of the Gupta age are the coins, cave-lings and their frescoes, remnants of temples and monasteries, terracotta es and figurines and various images made of stone. All these prove that g the age of the Guptas, the Indians were able to give good expression to artistic and creative talents. (i) Coinage. The Gupta emperors issued coins of good gold and silver of is taste. On the obverse of the coins of Chandra. Gupta I, we find the king his queen Kumar. adevi standing face to face with each other while their es are engraved by their sides. On the reverse, there is Durga seated on a lion. the coins of Samudra Gupta, he has been shown in different poses—as an er with his queen Dattadevi, with the battle-axe or slaying a tiger. On certain rs, horse of Asvamedha yajna on the obverse and Laksluni on the reverse engraved. Chandra Gupta II added certain other types to them. He has been on some as slaying a lion, on some others as a horseman and on yet others a royal umbrella. The coins of Samudra Gupta and Chandra Gupta H exhibit foreign influence and are the best specimens of numismatic art. Of course, the began to decline in the reign of Kumara Gupta I, yet coins of varied types such Peacock type, Elephant-rider type and archer type were issued. The coins are in shape and the names and the picture-engravings of kings, queens, animals are remarkably artistic which prove that the art of coinage had acquired ection during the Gupta age. (ii) Music, Dance and Drama. Music, dance and the art of acting and drama e patronized by the Gupta emperors. The coins of Samudra Gupta justify it. men were trained in these fine arts, particularly the prostitutes, the Devdasis the Nagaravadhus. Besides, we find innumerable references of these arts in ary texts of this age.

**Art and Architecture of Gupta Period**

The Gupta art and architecture showed remarkable progress. The sources of Gupta art are monasteries, temples, caves, frescoes, coins. terracota figures and images of gods and goddesses.

**Temples and Architecture**

The rock-cut Viharas at Bagh which are nine in number, are dated to 6th century A.D. Here, a different or separate architectural tradition was introduced because of the presence of a chaitya (prayer hall) instead of the image of Buddha, and a Central Hall surrounded by the cells, except in the front. A new rock-cut tradition at Udayagiri was found. Here, though the sanctum (the inner room where the deity is there) is cut into the rock, the mandapa (front portion) with two pillars, is structural.

Along with rock-cut temples, the tradition of all stone structural temple construction began to take deep roots.These temples are small in size with unimpressive architectural features. The temples number 17 at Sanchi, Tigawa and Eran are dated to the first half of the 5th century A.D. In Parvati temple at Nachna and the Siva temple at Bhumra, a circumambulatory (pradakshina) passage was raised. The pillar with purnaghotn (pot-shaped) at the base. and door-carvings with Ganga-Yamuna symbols, are characteristic of these temples. In Dasavtara temple at the centre is located a square sanctum (garbhagudi) and beautiful sculptural specimens are to be seen on the panels and walls of the sanctum. The Brick temple at Bhitargaon has a rich sculptural wealth. Its superstructure is also pyramidical in shape.

**Sculpture**

The Gupta sculpture is completely free from foreign influences. It is typically Indian and classical in every sense. It exhibits naturalness and refinement in the use of drapery (dress) and ornaments. We do not notice excessive decoration. Mathura, Sarnath and Pataliputra were the primary centres of this art. Among the Hindu sculptures, the images of Siva and Vishnu are numerous. The characteristics of the Gupta sculpture are :

1. Beautiful curly hair. (b) A large halo around the face, (c) Transparent drapery. (d) Expression of peace. piety and calmness on the faces, (e) Elimination of nudity. The Gupta sculpture is the best example of external form with inner purity.

The Varaha image from Eran and the Varaha carving at Udayagiri, Ekamukhalinga from Khoh, Ganga from Besnagar, Mahishasura Mardini from Bhumra, are some of the examples of regional sculptural traditions of the Gupta times. The Gupta art is noted for the rich presentation of patterns with flowers and leaves in a geometrical proposition. The Dasavatara temple is good example of the Gupta art at its excellence with the Anantasaya, Narayana and the Gajendra Moksha. The notable examples of narrative art are found in the episodes from the Ramayana and the Bhagavata at the Dasavatara temple of Deogarh.

**Painting**

The paintings of the Gupta age survive only partially at Bagh. The Ajanta paintings in Caves XVI, XVII and XIX are the master pieces of the Gupta style. The ceilings in the Ajanta caves are painted with Buddhist Jataka stories, Buddhas, Bodhisatvas, designs of leaves and jewellery in geometrical proportions. The Ajanta paintings reflect the

religious theme and urban life. The Vishnu Dharmottara Purana describes the techniques of painting.

**Art**

The Gupta coins were made of gold and silver with I various figures of kings, queens, animals and birds engraved on them. The coins are of different artistic types—of the tiger type,the lion type,the peacock type,and theAsvamedha type.The figures on the coins are of very high artistic quality.

There was fine art of terracota. Beautiful figures of Hindu gods were prepared. The art was perfect and it helped in the development of sculpture.

**Music**

Kalidasa's Maiavikagnimitra refers to musical terms like Tala, laya, svara and ragas like lalita saranga. The contemporary literature mentions musical instruments like Veena (violin) , flute , pallaki etc. Te coin of Samuda gupta and Kumargupta show them as playing on the veena.

**Dance and Threatre**

Several rules for the theatre that have been prescribed by Bharata`s Natya shastra , a work of earlier period , seem to have been followed during this period . the Devdasis and prostitutes were especially trined in the fine arts of music , dance and drama. The number of playwrighters and their work judge tha plopularity of dramatic performance. The stage was arranged well . The ouadibility of the songs and the dialougue was capt in view while arranging in the stage.

**Metallurgy**

The casting of iron and bronze was highly advanced in the gupta age , The Buddha`s copper statue of 8ft . 1 inch at Nalanda, the bronze statue of 7 ½ ft at Sultangani and the Mehrauli iron pillar of 7.32 meters high with a diameter of 40 cm atbthe base to 30 cm at top and weight about 6 tonnes at Delhi which had not rusted by withstanding all the vagaries of nature such as rains, heat and cold for over all these 1500 years, indicate the excellence of the guptas in metal working.

**Science and Technology**

The Gupta era witnessed remarkable development of science, Aryabhatta wrote the book Aryabhathiya. The other famous mathe,atician was Brahmagupta who wrote Brahmsiddhanta in A.D. 628. His other well known work was Khandakhadya probably composed in A.D. 665**.**

**Chapter – IV**

**Islamic State**

* **Nature of Islamic State**
* **Advent of Islamic rule in India, Impact of Islamic rule on political, social religious and cultural life of India.**
* **Interaction between two diversified cultures.**

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The rise and growth of Islam has been regarded as one of the most important events of world history. Islam grew up in the desert of Arabia rl its first converts, the Arabs, made it a powerful force in the politics of Asia. lenvards, the Persians took up the cause of Islam and strengthened it and, then, Turks extended it towards both the West and the East and made it one of the emost religions of the world. Prophet Muhammad (570-632 A.D.), the founder Islam, propagated Islam, both by peace and war, and therefore, Islam was Tagated by his followers both by propaganda and force from its very ;inning. Islam inspired a war-like spirit and national consciousness among the rabs who decided to spread their new religion and carry on military conquests lover the world. Within less than a century, the Arabs established a vast empire Lich extended from the Atlantic Sea in the west to the banks of the river Indus the east and from the Caspian Sea in the north to the valley of the river Nile the south. The successors of Prophet Muhammad were called Khalifas aliphs). Abu Bala was the first Khalifa who. after the death of Prophet iharrunad, was elected as head of the Islamic faith and also that of the state. s family was called the .Umayyad. In 750 A.D., the Abbasids replaced the aayyad family of the Khalifas. The Khalifa continued to be the nominal head the Islamic faith till the abolition of the title by the British Government after World War I. It was under the Umayyad Khalifas that the Arabs succeeded conquering Sindh.

**Nature of Islamic State**

Politically, India was divided into rival states. However, the division of India s not its primary weakness. India is a sub-continent and it was not possible to eep it under one rule at that time. Besides, even after its division, there had been Lite a few extensive kingdoms at that time which were powerful enough to meet ; challenge of foreign aggressors. The weakness of India was not its division into many states but constant fighting among them for power and glory. At that time, Afghanistan was ruled by Hindu kings. Politically and culturally it had been a part of India since the period of the mighty Mauryas. Afterwards. it was divided into two kingdoms, viz., the kingdoms of Jabul and Kabul. kingdom of Kabul extended up to the borders of Kashmir in the north-east touched the borders of Persia in the west. The kingdom of Jabul was between territories of Baluchistan and the kingdom of Kabul. Being situated in the no west of India, these kingdoms had to meet the challenge of the Muslims f However, the Hindu rulers of these kingdoms succeeded in maintaining th independence till the end of ninth century A.D. Kashmir was also an independ state. It became a powerful state during the reign of Lalitaditya (725-755 A.D) who even succeeded in defeating Yaso Varman, the powerful Pratihara ruler Kannauj. Yaso Varman was also a powerful ruler of north India whose emp extended from east Punjab in the west to Bengal in the east and from Himalayas in the north to the banks of the river Narmada in the south. The P. dynasty ruled over Bengal. Thus, there were powerful states in north India at t time. The same way, the Vakatakas, the Pallavas, the Pandyas and the Cholas strong kingdoms in the South. Even Sindh was an extensive kingdom whose boundary touched the border of Kashmir in the North, the state of Kannauj in east and the Arabian Sea in the South. Baluchistan was also a part of territories. Sindh was ruled by Dahar, a brahmana by caste. His family captured the throne of Sindh quite recently and Dahar himself had captured throne after a contest against his cousin. Thus, he got little time to consoli his position when the invasion of the Arabs took place. Besides, his pol remained somewhat oppressive towards the Sudras from whom his family snatched away the throne of Sindh and also towards the fats of Sindh. Th Sindh suffered from internal dissensions and unstable rule and, thus, comparatively a weak state of India at that time. But beyond the border of Sin there were powerful kingdoms in India, both in the North and the South, whi though fought among themselves, were yet powerful enough to resist forei invaders. The Indian society was divided into castes and sub-castes and gener interdining and intercaste marriages were not permitted. Yet, the caste system: had not grown very much rigid. Intercaste marriages, change of caste absorption of foreigners among Hindus was possible. Women did not enjoy eq rights with men, yet they occupied a respectable place in society. There was Purdah system. Women received education, participated in social and religio functions and even in administration and had the right to choose their husban However, while a man could marry several women, the women enjoyed no suc right. Besides, the practice of Sati was getting popular among the ruling clams The people observed high morality and the common people led a simple lif Education was also widely prevalent and besides religious education all oth; subjects of study were also taught to the students. Nalanda, Vallabhi, Kas Kanchi etc. were the great centres of learning at that time. Hinduism was the m popular religion, though Buddhism was also fairly widespread. Economically, India was prosperous. Agriculture, trade and commerce, handicrafts and industries were all in a progressive stage which had brought all-round prosperity to India. Of course, the major share of this prosperity was enjoyed by the rich minority class, yet, the common people did not suffer :onomic hardships. Thus, politically, economically and culturally India did not suffer from any weakness at the time of the invasion of the Arabs. Yet, the rivalry and constant :fighting of different rulers among themselves, indifference to improvement of their arms and fighting skill as compared to foreigners and lack of emotional unity for the country as a whole were the weaknesses which were slowly coming up and, when these were not attended to properly, it weakened India in the coming centuries and, finally, led to her defeat and disgrace by foreigners.

**The Causes of the Invasion**

The Arabs had contacts with India prior to their attack on Sindh. They used to come for trade, particularly, in the south-west coast of India. Afterwards, with the growth of their military power their ambition also grew and they desired to capture territories in India. Their first attack took place in 636 A.D. when they tried to capture Thana near Bombay. The attempt did not succeed. Afterwards, they made frequent attempts to get some foothold in India through both sea and land. But mostly, they desired to capture the north-west territories in the border of Sindh, particularly Makarana. After a few unsuccessful attempts, the Arabs, ultimately succeeded in capturing Makarana (modern Baluchistan) in the beginning of the eighth century A.D. which paved the way for the conquest of Sindh.

The one cause of the attack of the Arabs was their religious zeal. The propagation of Islam by force and conquest had been the aim of all the Khalifas. The attack on Sindh was also a part of that policy. Secondly, the Khalifas were not only heads of Islamic faith but also heads of the Islamic state. Therefore, like all powerful rulers they also desired to extend their empire. The attack on indh was also a part of their expansionist policy. Thirdly, the Arabs, having ade relations with India, knew that India was a rich country. Therefore, the lure 'wealth through conquest was also one of the reasons of their attack on Sindh. owever, the immediate cause of their attack was the activity of sea-pirates of indh who looted certain Arab ships. Historians have expressed different pinions regarding this incident. Sir Wolseley Haig has observed that the king Ceylon sent to Hajjaj, the Muslim governor of Iraq, some Muslim women hose fathers had died and therefore, there was nobody to look after them. But e ship in which they were sailing was captured by pirates of Debal, a sea-port 'Sindh. Some other scholars have expressed the view that the pirates looted the 'esents and carried off women who were offered by the king of Ceylon to the halija. Some others have said that the king of Ceylon had embraced Islam and had sent some women and other presents to the Khalifa and those presents ere looted by sea-pirates. There is no conclusive evidence to prove that the king of Ceylon had embraced Islam but it is accepted by all historians that certain women, whosoever they might be, and some articles sent by the king of Ceylon to Hajjaj were captured by the sea-pirates of Sindh. Hajjaj demanded from Dahar, the then ruler of Sindh, to set free those women or to pay compensation. Dahar refused to do anything and replied that he had no control over those sea-pirates who had captured those women. Hajjaj felt very angry, decided to conquer Sindh\_ and sought permission for the attack from Khalifa \Valid, which was granted somewhat reluctantly.

**The Invasion**

The Arabs started their attempts to invade India from the time of Caliph Umar III (633-644 A.D.). The first attack under Ubaidullah failed. He was defeated and killed. Another army sent under Budail met the same fate. Then Hajjaj made elaborate preparations for the attack on Sindh and sent a powerful army under the command of his nephew and son-in-law, Muhammad-bin-Qasim, in 711 A.D Muhammad proceeded towards Sindh through Makarana and first conquered Debal where he received fresh reinforcement sent by Hajjaj through the sea. Then he conquered Nerun, Siwistan and a few other strongholds. By then Dahar offered no resistance to the Arabs. He left his fate and the fate of Sindh to be decided by one pitched battle against the Arabs. Ultimately, he came out of the fort of Brahamanabad and proceeded towards Raor to face the enemy. The Hindus and the Arabs remained facing each other for a few days without any battle. The battle took place on 20 June, 712 A.D. Dahar fought gallantly but just when the Muslim army was on the verge of collapse, his elephant, who got wounded, rushed away from the battlefield which created panic and confusion in the Hindu army. Still Dahar returned to the battlefield, fought with desperate courago, and ultimatley fell fighting in the midst of his enemies. The fort of Raor was thee defended by the widowed queen of Dahar. But when the provisions of the fort failed, the women performed Jauhar and the men came out of the fort to fig till death. The fort was, ultimately, captured by the Arabs. Jaisingha, the son Dahar, offered resistance to the Arabs at the fort of Brahamanabad but had leave it to the Arabs. Here Muhammad captured the entire treasury of Dahar a also one of his queens, Ladi, and her daughters. Suryadevi and Parmaldevi. himself married Ladi and sent her virgin daughters to the Khalifa as pre; e The Arabs also captured Alor and a few other forts which completed th conquest of Sindh. In 713 A.D., Muhammad proceeded to attack Multan. a few serious engagements with the enemies, he reached Multan and besiege fort. The people offered resistance for two months but, then, a traitor pointed to Muhammad the source of water-supply to the town. Muhammad cut it off Multan was forced to surrender. Muhammad got a vast quantity of gold in Mul and therefore, named it the city of gold. Multan, however, was the last city was conquered by Muhammad. Muhammad. the conqueror of Sindh, could live long after his successful campaigns. He met a tragic end. According Chahnanza. Suryadevi and Parmaldevi, daughters of Dahar, who were sent

presents to the Khalifa, accused Muhammad of having outraged them and of eping them in his harem for three days before sending them to the Khalifa. e Khalifa was enraged and ordered that Muhammad should be brought before m after sewing him in the skin of an ox. Muhammad obeyed the orders of the halifa and sewed himself in the skin of an ox and died. However, the daughters Dahar afterwards accepted that their charge against Muhammad was false and erefore, they too were killed by the orders of the Khalifa. Mir Masum has also :epted this story of Chahnama. But, modern historians have refused to accept s story. They claim that the cause of the downfall of Muhammad was political. cording to them, Khalifa Walid was succeeded by his brother, Sulaiman, in 15 A.D. Khalifa Sulaiman and his governor of Iraq were enemies of Hajjaj. But en, Hajjaj had died by that time. So their wrath fell on his son-in-law, uhammad, who was recalled from India and put to death along with several er adherents of Hajaj.

**causes of the Arab Invasion**

The causes of the Arab Invasion of India are:

1. Arab developed a craze of exploiting the wealth of India as they not economic resources; (2) To propagate Islam as per the Quran as they felt it as their duty and (3) the imperial ambitions of Arab rulers. The immediate cause for the invasion by Qasim was that a ship carrying presents to the ruler of Iran, Al Hajaj from the ruler of Ceylon was looted by the pirates in Sindh.

**The Causes of the Success of the Arabs**

The Arabs succeeded in conquering Sindh and Multan due to several reasons. manly, the internal weaknesses of Sindh were responsible for its fall. Sindh s a weak state of India. It was thinly populated, its economic resources were eagre and it was not strong militarily. There were sharp social divisions in ndh. Besides, the usual distinctions of Hindu society of being higher and lower tes, the rule of Brahamana kings had been oppressive towards war-like people e Jats and Meds which alienated them from their rulers. Sindh, of course, was t poor and it had good foreign trade. Yet, it was not so prosperous as to provide means to develop itself into a strong state militarily. The family of Dahar had ptured the throne quite recently and neither his family nor he had succeeded providing a stable, strong and popular government in Sindh. His provincial •ernors were virtually semi-independent and quite a large section of the pulace was not loyal to him, particularly, the Buddhists and the trading class ho did not cooperate with him. Therefore, Dahar could not utilise complete ources of Sindh against the Arabs. Sindh was located at the extreme west mer of India and therefore, other Indian rulers remained indifferent to its fate. e Arabs possessed superior arms, cavalry, military tactics and were inspired religious zeal as well. As compared to them, the Hindus lacked not only the itary resources but also emotional unity. The Hindus failed to develop that se of unity even on the basis of their religion and culture which could inspire m to fight the Arabs with emotional zeal to protect their country. Therefore, .r ideal remained limited and their conflict with the Arabs remained only a ggle against an aggressor to save their kingdom. Dahar committed many 'cal mistakes from the very beginning He could not foresee the danger of the b invasion, once they had conquered Makarana. He remained totally inactive en Muhammad was conquering Debal, Nerun and other places at lower Sindh. was a fatal mistake on his part that he left his fate to be decided by a single, pitched battle against the Arabs. He failed to divide the strength of his ere which he could do if he had chosen to attack him from different directions at different places, and he did not exploit the difficulties of Muhammad in favour when sickness prevailed in the Arab camp before the battle of Raor. Of course, Dahar was a brave and courageous fighter and he fought gallantly but was absolutely wrong on his part to risk his life in the battle as a common sol dier\_ Muhammad was certainly a more capable commander than him and that was fairly responsible for the success of the Arabs. The Arabs could get traitors also from the Indian side. At the battle of Raor, one Indian suggested to Muhammad some ways and means to bring down the morale of the Indian army; Nerun was surrendered to the Arabs without fighting; the Jats supported the Arabs after the battle of Sesam; and a traitor showed to the Arabs the source of water-supply to the fort of Multan. The treachery from the Indian side certainly helped in the success of the Arabs. Besides, the superior commandership of Muhammac religious zeal of the Arabs and their better arms and military tactics certainly responsible for their success.

**Mahmud Ghazni`s invasions in India**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Subuktigin, the founder of Ghaznavid dynasty, was a Turkish slave commander and led a number of expeditions against the frontier outpost of the Hindushahi dynasty. His son Mahmud Ghazni who became the king to Ghazni in 998 A.D. invaded India seventeen times between 1000 A.D. and 1027 A.D. As a reward for his services to Islam, He received the title Yaminal-Dawla (Right hand of the state) from the Abbasid caliph. His dynasty is also called as Yaminis.  Mahmud Ghazni first encountered Jaipal, the Hindushahi ruler in 1001 A.D. This was followed by a more decisive battle in 1008-09 at Waihind near Peshawar. Jayapala was defeated at Peshawar. Unable to bear the insult  he burnt himself to death.  Mahmud's next invasion was against Lahore. Many Rajput rulers aided the Hindushahis then led by Jaipal's son, Ananadapal. In a battle that took place on the bank of the Indus Ananadpal was defeated. Mahmud took with him a large booty. Hindushahi expended four generations (Jaipal, Anandapal, Trilochanapal and Bhimpal) in the struggle.  Punjab now passed into the hands of the Ghaznavids. Mahmud's cavalry of mounted archers possibly played a role in tilting the scales in his favour.  The attack against Nagarkot in Punjab in 1008 A.D. had been described as his first great triumph against idolatry and he acquired immense wealth from the plunder of the fort. Thanesar an important religious center, came next. Its chief icon was a nearly life size bronze of chakrasvamin, which has send to Ghazni and placed in the hippodrome .  Mathura, a city of one thousand temples, Kanauj, Gwalior, and Kalinjar were other place which became the target of Mahmud's attacks, Everywhere he ravaged temples, pillaged cities and collected untold wealth. In 1025, Mahmud embarked on his most memorable Indian campaign, the attack on the Somnath temple in Saurashtra. Under the leadership of Raja Bhima, the people of Somnath fought heroically to defend the temple. But after three days of war, Mahmud eon the war. He followed up his victory by looting the huge wealth in the town and the temple. The image was destroyed by Mahmud by saying that he would like to be known as idol-breaker (butshikan) and not an idol-seller (butfarosh), when the priest of Somnath temple requested him not to destroy the idol and take away all the wealth of the temple. He ordered the upper part of the idol to be broken and the reminder to be transported to his residence at Ghaznivi . Part of it was thrown into  the hippodrome of the town, together with the Chakrasvamin, the idol of bronze, that had been brought from Thaneshar. Another part of the idol from Somnath lies before the door of the mosque of Ghazni. It is said that gold to the tune of 6.5 tonnes accrued to the invader.  Later he returned to India one last time to settle scores with the Jats. He died in 1030 A.D. After Mahmud's death, his nephew Sayyid Salar Masud, Launched a fresh initiative with an attack on Awadh which, however, failed. In 1033, he reached Bahraich, where the Pasi king Suhel Dev offered stiff resistance. The Ghaznavids were overthrown by their vassals, the Ghurids, who came from Ghur, the mountainous region east of Herat.  To Muhammadans he is the champion of the faith and a destroyer of the infidels. But to Indians, he was an inhuman, a veritable Hun, who destroyed their sacred shrines, plundered and acted in an inhuman manner.  But, it has to be admitted that he was one of the great conquerors that the world has known. He was a patron of learning and art of Central Asia. He made Ghazni one of the beautiful cities in Asia. Magnificent mosques, places and a University, were built by Mahmud. The scholars whom he patronised included among others, Alberuni, Utbi and Firadausi.   |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  |   **Mahmud Ghori`s invasions in India** |  |  |

Mahmud, Ghori was not a great general and had to suffer humiliating defeats several times. He was defeated by Mularaja II, the ruler of Gujarat; by Prithviraj Chauhan in the first battle of Tarain and by Khwarizam Shah, the ruler of Persia. In fact, he was killed in his own camp by his Khokar enemies. But the greatness of Ghori was that none of these defeats could weaken his spirits or check his ambitions. He took his every failure as a valuable experience. He improved upon his weaknesses, removed them and ultimately got success.

The conquests of Ghori brought about more permanent results than the conquests of Mahmud. Mahmud was contented to plunder the wealth of India and did not think of establishing his empire. Mahmud kept himself busy in invading and looting but Ghori attempted to build -up an empire which lasted for centuries.

As Dr. Iswari Prasad has observed, “Wealth, not territory, .extirpation of idolatory and not conquest, were the objects of Mahmud’s raids, and when these were accomplished, he cared nothing for the myriad people of India.” According to Sir W.W. Hunter, “He (Muhammad Ghori) was no religious knight-errant of Islam like Mahmud of Ghazni but a practical conqueror. The objects of his distant expeditions were not temples but provinces.”

#### Ghori as a practical statesman:

Dr. Habibullab regards Ghori as a practical statesman who took the fullest advantage of the rotten political structure of India.

Ghori gave proof of his statesmanship while dealing with different Rajput rulers. After his victory over Prithviraj, instead of annexing Delhi and Ajmer to his territories, he handed over the administration of Delhi and Ajmer to the relatives of Prithviraj.

Ghori did not change the status of those Hindu chiefs who accepted his suzerainty and did not interfere in their administration. Of course, he established forts in these territories.

#### Political realism of Ghori:

Prof. K.A. Nizami puts stress on two qualities of Ghori i.e. his digged tenacity of purpose and his grim political realism. He wrote, “This Hero of three stupendous defeats at Andh-khud, Tarain and Anhilwara had to his credit the establishment of one of the greatest empires of the middle ages and in this he definitely rises above Mahmud of Ghazni.” According to Stanley Lane-poole, Ghori’s conquests in India were wider and far more permanent than Mahmud’s. He wrote, “of the two tides of Mohammedan invasion that surged into India, Mahmud’s had left little trace. It had been but a series of triumphant raids.”

Great ability to select officers

Ghori had the art of selecting the best men for his services. He trained generals and administrators like Qutab-ud- din Aibak, who proved quite competent to maintain his empire.

Appointment of governors

Ghori appointed governors of the provinces he conquered. These governors consolidated the position of Turks and they suppressed rebellions. After the death of Ghori, Qutub-ud-din Aibak, his most able military commander founded the Slave Dynasty that ruled India for about one hundred years.

**Invasion of India**

After having helped his brother in expanding the western frontiers of the Ghurid Empire, he began to focus on India. Mu'izz's campaign against the Qarmatians  rulers of Multan  in 1175 had ended in victory. He turned south, and led his army from Multan to Uch  and then across the desert towards the Chaulukya capital of Anhilwara (modern day Patan in Gujarat) in 1178. On the way, Muizz suffered a defeat at the Battle of Kayadara, during his first campaign against an Indian ruler. Gujarat was ruled by the young Chaulukya ruler Mularaja II ; the Chaulukya forces included the armies of their feudatories such as the Naddula Chahamana ruler Kelhanadeva, the Jalor Chahamana ruler Kirtipala, and the Arbuda Paramara ruler Dharavarsha.  Mu'izz's army had suffered greatly during the march across the desert, and the Chaulukyas inflicted a major defeat on him at the village of Kayadara (near to Mount Abu, about forty miles to the north-east of Anhilwara). The invading army suffered heavy casualties during the battle, and also in the retreat back across the desert to Multan.However, Mu'izz was able to take Peshawar and Sialkot.

In 1186, Mu'izz, along with Ghiyath, ended the Ghaznavid dynasty after having captured Lahore and executed the Ghaznavid ruler Khusrau-Malik

Mu'izz shortly returned to Ghor, and along with the rulers of Bamiyan and Sistan, aided his brother Ghiyath in defeating the forces of Sultan Shah at Merv  in 1190. He also annexed most of the latter's territories in Khorasan.

**The Effects of the Arab Invasion**

Colonel Tod, the famous historian of the history of Rajasthan. described i the invasion of the Arabs had a tremendous effect and the entire north India ' terrorised by it. Now, no historian accepts his view. It had a very limited of on the politics of India. Lane-Poole writes, "It was simply an episode in history of India." Wolseley Haig also writes. "It was a mere episode in the his of India and affected only a small portion of the fringe of that vast country." ' Arabs did not break the military strength of India and therefore, did not pave way for the conquest of India by Islam. They simply drew closer the contact Indians with the Arabs and the Islamic world. Besides, they were the first I established the rule of Islam in India and converted Hindus to Islam in q large numbers. The Arabs did not impress Indians culturally. Instead, they themselves v influenced by the culture of India. The Arabs learnt much from fine ; astrology, science of medicines and literature of India. They employed Hi artists and architects to construct their buildings. They also learnt from Buck and Hindu philosophy, literature and religious ideals. The Sanskrit texts, Brahma Siddhanta and the Khanda-Khadhyak were translated into Ai language during the period of Khalifa Al-Mansur. The Arabs learnt philosophy of Sanyas and Tapa from the Indians. The Arabs also gainer knowlede of numericals and profited from the science of medicine of Indian A.L. Srivastava has expressed the view that not only the Arabs but European drew advantage from the knowledge of the Indians in the eighth and centuries A.D. because of their contacts with them through the Arabs. thus, though the Arabs came to India as conquerors they failed to influence In ics and culture in any way. Instead they themselves and through them the ern world also drew advantage in many fields by coming in contact with the , which also justifies the view that by that time the Indian people and their re had not lost their vigour and were in a position to contribture ctively to the culture and knowledge of the world.

**Chapter – V**

**Administration and various forms – Growth**

* Administration During Sultanate age with reference to cultural administration.
* Administration during Mughal Period, central administration, provincial administration, local administration and land revenue policy.

**Chapter – V**

**Administration and various forms – Growth**

* Administration During Sultanate age with reference to cultural administration.
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**---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------Administration During Sultanate age**

The Sultans of Delhi were no exception. They were not head of a religion but only head of their state. But their primary duty was the observance of the laws of Shariat or Islamic laws in matters of state.

Therefore, the policy of the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate was largely influenced by their religion viz., Islam. Due to this reason, with the exception of some of them, their policies were influenced by the Ulema and Islam was accepted as the religion of the state making the Delhi Sultanate a theocratic state in theory though it could not be possible in practice.

Most of the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate called themselves as the Naib (deputy) of the Khalifah and accepted Abbasid Khalifahs as their overlords. Ala-ud-din Mubarak Khalji alone was an exception to it whiles his son Qutb-ud- din Mubarak Khalji went a step further and himself assumed the title of Khalifah.

Muhammad Tughluq did not give the Khalifah any importance in the early period of his reign but ultimately had to yield and accepted the Khalifah as his overlord with a view to gain support of the Ulema. However, the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate accepted the Khalifah as their overlord only in name.

They called themselves as Naibs of the Khalifah on their coins but for all practical purposes they all behaved as independent rulers. They accepted the Khalifah as their overlord with a view to win over to their side Sunni subjects and the Ulema which wielded large religious influence among the Muslim populace.

#### The Central Government

**The Sultan**

The head of the state was the Sultan who enjoyed unlimited powers in every sphere of state activity. There was no law of succession during the period of the Sultanate. It was not necessary that the eldest son or the daughter of the Sultan should succeed the father. However, tradition developed from the close of the reign of Sultan Iltutmish that the throne belonged to the eldest son or the daughter of the Sultan.

Besides, the Sultan had also the right to nominate anyone as his successor to the throne. Thus, the principle of hereditary succession and nomination of successor by the Sultan came into vogue. Razia, Shihab-ud-din Khalji and Tughluq Shah were accepted rulers on the basis of one or other of these principles. However, the experiment of placing of a woman or minor on the throne failed.

Therefore, the practice developed that the right of heredity was to be accepted only in cases of competent successor. In case a competent successor was not available, the nobles got the right to choose the Sultan. Iltutmish, all brothers of Sultana Razia, Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Khalji and Firuz Tughluq were chosen Sultans with the consent of the nobility. Besides, the sword also decided the issue of succession. Ala-ud-din Khalji, Khizr Khan and Bahlul Lodi got the throne by force.

The Sultan, according to his strength, behaved as an all-powerful despot. The Sultan was the absolute master of the state and all legislative, executive and judicial powers were concentrated in his person. He was also the highest commander of the army.

All ministers, nobles and other officers of the state were appointed, promoted and dismissed by him. His order was the law in his state. But, these were his legal powers. Their effectiveness in practice depended on his military strength. The nobility also wielded influence particularly if the Sultan was weak.

The Ulema, being interpreter of Islamic laws, also influenced the policy of the Sultan. Only Ala-ud-din Khalji and Mubarak Khalji refused to accept the interference of the Ulema in matters of the state. Apart from maintenance of peace and order within the empire and its protection from foreign invasions, one important duty of the Sultan was to extend its territories.

**Ministers and Other Officers**

Different ministers and other officials assisted the Sultan in administering the state.

**They were as follows**

**(i) The naib (Naib-i-Mamlikata)**

The post was created during the reign of Sultan Bahram Shah after the fall of Raziah. The nobles had chosen one among themselves as naib who, in fact, enjoyed all powers of the state. However, this post had purpose and meaning only during the reigns of weak rulers.

In such cases, the post of naib was next only to the Sultan and was above the vazir. The powerful Sultan either abolished this post altogether or gave it to a noble simply to honour him as was done by Ala-ud-din Khalji. In that case, naib enjoyed no special power in administration.

**(ii) The Vazir**

The Prime Minister was called the vazir. He was primarily the head of the finance department called the dewan-i-vizarat and was in a position to supervise not only the income and expenditure of the state but all other departments as well. Whenever there was no post of naib, the position of the vazir was next to the Sultan.

He, therefore, supervised the entire administration and looked after it whenever the Sultan fell ill or was out of the capital, appointed officers to different posts and performed various other duties. He was assisted by many officers and subordinates, most important among them being the naib-vazir, mushrif-i-mamalik (auditor-general) and mustaufi-i-mamalik (auditor-general).

**(iii) Ariz-i-Mumalik**

He was the head of the department of diwan-i-arz and in that capacity was the controller-general of the military department. He recruited soldiers, fixed their salaries, arranged for their supplies and inspection and maintained the descriptive rolls of horses and men. He was, however, not the commander of the army though the Sultan assigned him this responsibility on certain occasions.

**(iv) Davir-i-Khas (Amir-Munshi)**

He was the head of the department of diwan-i-insha. All formal or confidential correspondence between the Sultan and the rulers of other states or subordinate chiefs, governors and officials was carried on by his department. He was assisted by a large number of dabirs (writers) in his work.

**(v) Diwan-i-Risalat**

He was the minister of foreign affairs and looked after the diplomatic relations with foreign states and welfare of foreign diplomats and ambassadors.

**(vi) Sadr-us-Sudur**

He was the head of the religious department. The propagation of Islam, observance of its principles and protection of privileges of Muslims constituted his primary duties. He controlled the finances of the tax called zakat which was a religious tax on the Muslims. He provided financial assistance to mosques, maqtabs (educational institutions for the Muslims), Muslim scholars and religious saints. He also looked after the distribution of charity by the state.

**(vii) Qazi-ul-Quzat**

He was the highest judicial officer in the state after the Sultan. He had both original and appellate jurisdiction. Mostly, the offices of Sadr-us-sudur and Qazi-ul-quzat were combined in one person.

**(viii) Barid-i-Mumalika**

He was the head of the intelligence and postal department. He was responsible for the espionage system, collection of news and their quick despatch and disposal.

Besides, the Sultan created several other departments and appointed their officers to carry on certain specific duties. For instance, Muhammad Tughluq created the department of diwan-i-amir kohi or the department of agriculture. The Sultan also kept his personal bodyguards and other officers to manage his household.

The Vakil-i-dar-mahal looked after the officials of the palace; the Barbak maintained the tradition of the court and its glamour; Amir-i-hajib looked after the visitors to the Sultan; Amir-i-shikar-i-shahi arranged for the hunting parties of the Sultan; Amir-i-majlis-shahi looked after the festivals of the state; and Sar-i-jahandar was the head of the Sultan’s bodyguards. The Sultan also maintained different karkhanahs to manufacture different articles such as cloth, arms, etc. and various officers were appointed there.

Many officers among these were the trusted officers of the Sultan. They did not enjoy the rank of ministers but as a few of them looked after the personal security and comfort of the Sultan, they were very close to him and wielded good influence.

#### The Administration of Provinces (IQTAS)

The empire was divided into provinces for the convenience of administration. They were called Iqtas. The number of Iqtas was not fixed and there was no uniformity in their administration. The head of the Iqta was called by different names, i.e., naib Sultan, nazim. muqti or wali. During the reign of Ala-ud-din Khalji, Iqtas were divided into two categories.

Firstly, they were those Iqtas which were under the Delhi Sultanate from the beginning and, secondly, they were those Iqtas which were brought under the control of the Delhi Sultanate during the rule of Ala-ud-din Khalji. The muqtis or the walis of the second category of Iqtas were given a little more extensive powers so that the newly added territory could be brought about under the effective control of the Sultanate.

Besides, there were tributary states of south India. The Hindu rulers of the South who had accepted the suzerainty of the Sultanate were independent in matters of internal administration but paid yearly tribute to the Sultan. The walis or the muqtis enjoyed the same powers in relation to their Iqtas as the Sultan enjoyed in the empire.

However, they were under the supervision of the central government and carried on orders of the Sultan in their administration. They sent yearly report of their income and expenditure to the Centre and deposited the balance in the central treasury. They maintained large armies and were required to come to the support of the Sultan whenever needed.

They could not engage themselves in wars for extension of territory without prior permission of the Sultan and when they engaged in it they were required to pay part of the booty to the Sultan. The elephants and the members of the royal family captured during wars were the monopoly of the Sultan. No muqti was allowed to assume the title of the Sultan, to hold his own court, use a canopy or royal emblem.

They were not allowed to mint coins in their names and Khutba could not be read in their names. Yet, during the rule of a weak Sultan, the muqtis enjoyed extensive powers. During the period of Lodi Sultans they even kept elephants which was regarded as the exclusive monopoly of the Sultan. In general, the muqtis enjoyed wide powers during the period of the Sultanate.

That was one reason of occasional revolts and frequent dynastic changes during this period. Besides the mukti, there were other officers of the central government in every Iqta. There was a vazir, a ariz and a qazi in each Iqta. The revenue-officers, the news-reporters and similar officers were also appointed in Iqtas by the central government. The efficiency of administration of a Iqta depended on the power of the Sultan on the one hand and on the capability of mukti on the other.

There was no smaller administrative unit than Iqta by the end of the thirteenth century. After that Iqtas were divided into smaller units called shiqqs which were put under shiqqdars. When the empire decayed, the shiqq emerged as a sarkar and the officer incharge of a sarkar was called shiqqdar-i- shiqqdaran or the chief shiqqdar. The shiqqs were further divided into parganas.

The important officials of a pargana were the amil, the mushrif also known as amin or munsif the treasurer, the qanungo and two karkuns (clerks). The pargana was an important administrative unit because it was there that the government came into direct contact with the peasants. The smallest unit of administration was the village which was administered by local hereditary officers and the panchayat of the village.

The Chaudhri, the Patwari, the Khut, the Muqaddam and the Chaukidar were the hereditary officers of the village who helped the government in collection of the revenue and enjoyed certain privileges except during the reign of Ala-ud-din Khalji. The Panchayat of the village looked after education, sanitation, etc. and acted as a judicial body as well concerning disputes in the village.

#### Finance

The Sultan mainly collected five categories of taxes besides certain others.

**Those taxes were**

**(i) Ushr**

It was a land tax which was collected from Muslim peasants. It was 10 per cent of the produce on the land watered by natural resources and 5 per cent on the land which enjoyed men-made irrigation facilities.

**(ii) Kharaj**

It was a land tax charged from non-Muslims and ranged from 1/3 to 1/2 of the produce.

**(iii) Khams**

It was 1/5 of the booty captured in the war and 1/5 of the produce of mines or buried treasure that was found. Four-fifth of it went to the army which fought the war or to the person who found the treasure. But, except Firuz Tughluq, all Sultans collected 4/5 instead of 1/5 while Sikandar Lodi took nothing of the treasure that was found.

**(iv) Jizya**

It was a religious tax on non-Muslims. According to the Islam, a zimmi (non-Muslim) had no right to live in the kingdom of a Muslim Sultan. But this concession was permitted to non-Muslims after payment of the tax called Jizya. The non-Muslims were divided into three grades for the purpose of payment of this tax.

The first grade paid at the rate of 48 dirhams, the second at 24 dirhams and the third at 12 dirhams annually. Women, children, beggars, cripples, blind, old men, monks, priests, brahmanas (except during the period of Firuz Tughluq) and all those who had no source of income were exempted from this tax. All Sultans collected this tax on principle but, as a practical measure, nobody collected it with severity.

Dr Banarsi Prasad Saxena had expressed another view concerning Jizya He has opined that Jizya was a non-agricultural tax. Barni, Amir Khusrav and Nizamuddin Auliya expressed that the word Jizya was used for all taxes except land revenue.

**(v) Zakat**

This was a religious tax which was imposed only on rich Muslims and consisted of 2 ½ per cent of their income.

Besides above taxes, 2 ½ per cent was charged from the Muslims and 5 per cent from the Hindus as trade tax. There was 5 per cent tax on the sale and purchase of horses. Ala-ud-din Khalji imposed house-tax and grazing-tax as well, while Firuz Tughluq charged 10 per cent of the produce as irrigation tax from the land which enjoyed the advantage of the irrigation facilities provided by the state. Another important source of income were presents offered to the Sultan by the people, nobles, provincial governors and feudatory chiefs.

The main items of expenditure were expenses on the army, salaries of civil officers and the personal expenditure of the Sultan and his palace.

**Land Revenue**

**The land was of four kinds, namely**

(1) The land which was given to the people in gift or charity particularly to Muslim scholars and saints such as inam or waqf. This type of land was free of tax;

(2) The land which was in the hands of provincial governors, that is, walis or muqtis. The provincial governors collected land revenue from this land and after defraying the cost of their administration deposited the surplus in the Central treasury;

(3) The land was of the feudatory Hindu chiefs who paid fixed annual tribute to the Sultan; and

(4) The land which was directly administered by the Central government. It was called the Khalisah-land. Primarily, this fourth kind of land came under the revenue administration of the Sultan.

The Central government appointed amil or revenue-collector in each sub-division called the shiq. He collected the revenue with the help of hereditary officers of the village like chaudharis, muqaddams, patwaris, etc. The Sultan appointed one officer called Khwaja in every Iqta to look after the working of wali or muqti.

The walis or muqtis submitted the statements of their annual income and expenditure to the Sultan. Besides, the news-reporters and spies of the Central government informed the Sultan about the administration of provinces.

Normally, the peasants were asked to pay 1/3 of the produce to the state as land revenue. Ala-ud-din, however, collected ½ of the produce from certain territories. But, after him the revenue was again fixed at 1/3 of the produce while the attempt of Muhammad Tughluq to collect ½ of the produce from the Doab failed.

Mostly, the revenue was collected in cash but Ala-ud-din collected it in kind from Doab and the nearby territories of Delhi. Except Ala-ud-din and Muhammad Tughluq, no Sultan of Delhi collected revenue based on the measurement of land. Most of the Sultans collected it on the basis of rough assessment of the produce.

Ala-ud-din consfiscated all land given as gifts or as charity by previous rulers and redistributed it among his loyal subjects. He also abolished all privileges of hereditary officers of villages like chaudharis, khuts, Muqaddams, etc. and forced them to pay all taxes to the state like other peasants.

Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq decided in the interest of the peasants that in no case the land-revenue be enhanced more than 1/11 to 1/10 in any Iqta in any one year. Muhammad Tughluq prepared an estimate of the annual income and expenditure of the state. He desired that there should be uniformity in land- revenue in his entire empire.

He also established a separate agricultural department, appointed an officer diwan-i-kohi to look after it and carry on state- farming on a fixed piece of land for three years on experimental basis. But, his measures failed and were soon abandoned.

Firuz Tughluq made a rough assessment of the entire land-revenue of the state and on that basis fixed the land-revenue for the entire period of his reign. He made free the peasants from the payment of taqavi loans, enhanced the salaries of revenue officers, abolished nearly twenty-four taxes, planted fruit gardens, dug many canals, imposed irrigation tax, stopped the practice of imposing benevolences on the governors at the time of their appointments and also that of torturing officers to extract more money from them, the burden of which really used to fall upon the shoulders of the people.

The measures of Firuz, though defective in certain respects, certainly brought prosperity to the state and its people. The Lodi Sultans gave extensive lands as Jagirs to their nobles which reduced the area of Khalisa-land. The efforts of Sikandar Lodi to fix the revenue on the basis of measurement of land also failed. This reduced the income of the state.

The revenue-system during the period of the Delhi Sultanate suffered from certain defects. The assessment of revenue without the measurement of land could not be just to the peasants. This system gave the officials opportunities to make arbitrary decisions. The land was normally given to contractors to collect the revenue.

These contractors used to extract as much revenue from the peasants as could be possible so that they could have good surplus after depositing the required amount of revenue in the state-treasury. Besides, there were other taxes which the peasants had to pay besides the land-revenue and that certainly meant extra burden on them.

#### The Army

The power of the Sultan depended on the army. During the entire period of the Delhi Sultanate, there remained conflict of power between the Muslims and the Hindus. While every Sultan desired to establish and extend his power, the Hindu kings resisted them and the Hindu subjects engaged themselves in revolts. Besides, the Muslims were also not united.

The provincial Muslim governors also attempted to establish independent kingdoms and different Muslim rulers also fought against the Sultan. Most of the Sultans faced the challenge of invasions of the Mongols as well from the north-west.

Therefore, every Sultan was forced to keep a large army at the centre. Different Sultans improved the organisation of their army and methods of warfare though failed to come up to the mark with pace of time as compared to other rulers in foreign lands.

**The army consisted of four types of soldiers**

(1) The soldiers were recruited by the Centre as soldiers of the army of the Sultan. The army which was constituted by these soldiers was called Khasah- khail. Ala-ud-din Khalji kept a large standing army at the Centre which included 4,75,000 horsemen besides the infantry. Ghiyas-ud-din and Muhammad Tughluq also kept large standing armies at the Centre. But, the rest of Sultans, prior or after them, failed to keep such standing armies at the Centre.

This army was looked after by the Diwan-i-ariz who was responsible for its recruitment, organisation, maintenance, salary, etc. There was no regular course of training for these soldiers. Every soldier was responsible to improve his talents as he desired. However, Sultans like Balban trained them in hardship by carrying them on their hunting parties or like occasions.

(2) Those soldiers who were employed on permanent basis by nobles and provincial governors and who themselves were responsible for their recruitment, maintenance, training, etc. The nobles were assigned jagirs by the Sultan to maintain them while provincial governors met their expenses out of income of their Iqtas.

Arizs were appointed in provinces to look after this part of the army but the primary responsibility was that of nobles and governors themselves. It was expected that nobles and governors would place their armies before the Sultan for inspection every year but the rule was normally not observed. The nobles and governors brought their armies to the service of the Sultan only when ordered.

(3) Those soldiers which were recruited only in times of war on temporary basis and were paid only for that period, and

(4) Those Muslim soldiers who joined the army as volunteers at times of war against the infidels (Hindus). They regarded such war as a holy war, that is jihad. They received no pay but were given share out of the booty captured in the war.

The army consisted primarily of cavalry, infantry and elephants. The cavalry formed the backbone of the army. The cavalry-men were of two types, one, the Sawar who kept only one horse and the other, the do-aspa who kept two horses.

The horses were imported from distant foreign countries like Arabia, Turkistan etc. Ala-ud-din Khalji started the practice of branding the horses and that of keeping huliya (descriptive roll) of the soldiers so that the horses and soldiers could not be changed.

Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq maintained these practices. Sikandar Lodi also tried to revive these practices. But, the rest of the Sultans could not maintain these practices and Sultans like Firuz Tughluq allowed corrupt practices in this system because of their unwise generosity.

Every horse-man kept two swords, one javelin and a bow and arrows with him. They also kept a shield, armour and a head-gear for self-protection. The horses were also kept protected by armours. The success of the army largely depended on the strength and mobility of the cavalry.

The second important part of the army consisted of trained war-elephants. The Muslim rulers also accepted war- elephants as an essential part of their army once they settled down in India. Only Sultans had the privilege to keep elephants. No Sultan, except the Lodis, allowed their nobles or governors to enjoy this privilege.

However, only sometimes a noble or a governor was allowed to enjoy this privilege as a mark of special favour. There was a separate department for the training and maintenance of elephants. They were also armoured during the course of battle. The third part of the army was the infantry. The foot-soldiers were called payaks. They were armed with swords, spears and bows and arrows.

No Sultan of Delhi managed to keep something like modern artillery. However, there was a sort of mechanical artillery through which fire-balls, fire-arrows, snakes, stones, etc. were hurled on the enemy with the help of the gun-powder. But, gun-powder balls were not prepared at that time in India. The Sultan maintained a large number of boats as well primarily for transport purposes but for fighting as well.

The army of the Sultan consisted of soldiers of different nationalities and diverse faiths. The Persians, the Afghans, the Mongols, Indian Muslims, the Hindus, etc. were all recruited in the army but the higher offices were mostly given to foreign Muslims.

The efficiency of such an army which was constituted of so diverse elements depended largely on the leadership of its commander or that of the Sultan who was the chief commander of the army. Yet, as most of the soldiers were Muslims, they were certainly emotionally inspired and unified on the basis of one religion, that is, Islam.

The organisation of the army and the division of ranks rested primarily on decimal system. In the cavalry, ten horse-men constituted a unit whose officer was called sar-i-khail. There was a sipahsalar commanding units of ten sar- i-khails, an amir over units of ten sipahsalars, a malik over units of ten amirs and a khan over units of ten maliks. Probably, the infantry was divided likewise.

However, no Sultan observed this system strictly as the promotion and dismissal of every officer depended on the personal goodwill of the Sultan. Besides, certain offices had become hereditary and weak Sultans failed to keep merit as the basis of recruitment and promotion of their officers.

All Sultans of Delhi mostly pursued the same tactics in war. The spies were sent to find out the movements of the enemy and the advance-guard was sent to test its strength. The army was divided into four parts during the war, that is, the centre, the left, the right and the reserve. The elephants were kept in the centre and space was left, in between, for foot-soldiers. Way was also kept open for the attack by the cavalry.

The Sultan kept permanent armies in every fort and at all strategic points within his kingdom. The forts were regarded as the main line of defence and every care was taken of their safety.

The Sultan himself was the commander-in-chief of the army. However, when he could not go, he appointed others as commanders for different military campaigns. The strength and the efficiency of the army largely depended on the personality and capability of the Sultan.

Iltutmish, Ala-ud-din Khalji, Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq, Muhammad Tughluq and similar capable Sultans made their armies effective forces both in defence and offence while the same army weakened itself when led by incapable Sultans.

The army of Sultans of Delhi, of course, succeeded against Hindu rulers in India. But it cannot be accepted as an army of top quality. It lacked proper training, discipline and cohesion. The army which was organised by a noble or a governor mostly remained loyal to its master than the Sultan.

However, its greatest weakness was lack of a modern artillery. It lacked effective use of gun-powder. It was a great weakness, particularly, when we find that it was well-developed in foreign countries.

#### Justice and Police

The Sultan was the highest judicial authority within the empire. He used to hold his judicial court twice a week and decided all types of cases. He was helped in dispensation of justice by the chief Sadr (Sadr-us-Sudur) regarding cases of religious nature and by the chief Qazi (Qazi-ul-qazat) in all other cases. But, as the chief Sadr or the chief Qazi was mostly one person, he remained the chief adviser of the Sultan in judicial matters.

The chief Sadr, the chief Qazi and provincial Sadrs and Qazis were appointed by the Sultan himself. Most Sultans of the Delhi Sultanate were just. But as they were advised by the chief Sadr who was a religious man and as he had to follow Islamic principles while dispensing justice, it is doubtful that the non-Muslims received justice in the real sense from them.

The chief Sadr or the chief Qazi stood next to the Sultan in the judiciary and then were Sadrs and Qazis in provincial capitals and all important cities within the empire and they decided cases falling within their jurisdiction. The village-assemblies (Panchayats) decided cases of their respective villages.

The penal law was severe during the period of the Sultanate. Normally, the culprits were punished with seizure of their property and wealth, mutilation or death. Islamic laws were enforced not only in criminal cases but also in civil cases.

Thus, the judicial system during the period of the Sultanate was typical of medieval age and no Sultan had brought about any significant change in it. The nature of justice mostly depended on the personality and religious views of the Sultan. If the Sultan was justice-loving, the system worked well.

Otherwise, it was a duty imposed on the Sultan which was taken indifferently. The system suffered from a serious defect. No Sultan of the Sultanate attempted to enforce justice based on secular principles even when the majority of the subjects belonged to a different faith.

The Sultans did not establish a separate police department. The duties of police officials were carried on by military officers posted in their respective areas. The city-kotwal was also not a police official but was an official of the army.

#### Religious Policy

During the entire period of the Sultanate, Islam remained the religion of the state. Therefore, the Sultan performed a religious duty along with his political obligation while administering the state. That duty was to convert this dar-ul- harb (non-Muslim territory) into dar-ul-Islam (Muslim land).

Every Sultan pursued this aim according to his religious views, circumstances and power. Sultans like Ala-ud-din Khalji and Muhammad Tughluq regarded it their secondary duty but Sultans like Firuz Tughluq and Sikandar Lodi gave it preference over their political obligations and left nothing in their efforts to propagate Islam among their subjects.

All Sultans pursued a discriminatory policy between their Muslim and non- Muslim subjects, the majority of them being the Hindus. Mostly, the Muslims were not engaged in agriculture but those who were in it had to pay less revenue as compared to Hindu peasants.

The same way, the Hindu traders paid double trade-tax as compared to Muslim traders. Foreign Muslims alone were entitled to high offices of the state while the Hindus and even converted Muslims were not considered for them.

Different temptations were offered to the Hindus to accept conversion to Islam. The Hindus were unfavourably discriminated in the dispensation of justice. They had to pay the religious tax, Jizya. Restrictions were imposed on the religious pilgrimages of the Hindus.

The Hindus drew no advantage from the state charity-hospitals, maqtabs and help in cash and kind by the Sultan. Hindu educational institutions, temples and images were destroyed, mosques were raised in their places and the religion of the Hindus was disrespected during the rule of most of the Sultans.

Most Sultans of the Sultanate were Sunnis and therefore, discriminated against even Shias and other dissenting sects in Islam.

Many modern historians have tried to justify that Sultans did not pursue a policy of religious bigotry. They have given various arguments in their support. They contend that Hindu temples were destroyed with a view to plunder their wealth; the idols were broken to teach non-idolatory to the Hindus; contemporary historians exaggerated these events in their accounts to glorify the success of Sultans; etc.

The aim of these modern historians is practical and their intentions perfectly honest. In conditions of modern India when attempts are being made to establish a secular state and for that Indians need absolute toleration in religious matters and goodwill between the Hindus and the Muslims, there is no sense in emphasising facts of religious bigotry and persecution whether it be of medieval or that of modern age.

Yet, history is truth based on facts and not a means to propagate certain attitudes to suit a particular age. Besides, it is better to establish truth on concrete facts and then to build the present and the future on truth which alone can provide a solid base to them. From this point of view, it is correct to say that facts prove that the policy of the rulers of the Sultanate was that of religious discrimination between the Muslims and the Hindus.

All contemporary historians who were mostly Muslims praised the bigoted religious policy of the Sultans. They had no idea of the future and they did not consider it in their writings. Therefore, their accounts should be accepted as such. Of course, they might have exaggerated the events but the source of their narratives should be accepted as truth. Medieval age was the age of faith in religion.

If Sultans of Delhi Sultanate acted according to the spirit of their age, we have no right to doubt them. Neither we should be surprised of what they did, nor we should blame them in any way. The Sultans acted according to the spirit of their age and that was natural and practical for them. Besides, one more thing is in their favour. The Sultans did not have the sole objective of religious propaganda. They had established their empire in India. They had to defend it.

Therefore, politics and religion were interwoven with each other. The period of the Sultanate was the period of struggle between the Hindus and the Muslims and they contested fiercely against each other both in politics and religion. The only difference was that while the Muslims had acquired the position of being aggressors, the Hindus were put on the defensive.

Therefore, the efforts of the conquerors to establish the supremacy of their religion and convert the Hindus to Islam with a view to create a majority of people of their faith suited their circumstances, benefited their political motive and served their religion. Thus, it is not justified to decry the religious policy of the Sultans and it is unjust to assign any other motive to their intentions as some modern historians have tried to do.

The policy of the Sultans was that of religious intolerance and it was, certainly, neither incorrect nor surprising. However, it is a fact that no Sultan of the Sultanate could become great because none could have a vision of future and rise above the spirit of his age. One main reason of this was definitely their religious bigotry.

Otherwise, why have modern historians refused to accept even Ala-ud-din Khalji as a great ruler who was certainly a great and successful commander and administrator? No Sultan of the Sultanate could realise that it was impossible to convert all Hindus to Islam or to destroy the strength of Hinduism by sheer physical force.

If they could realize it they could avoid religious fanaticism and promote understanding between the Hindus and the Muslims which was automatically growing between their subjects of two faiths. The Mughul rulers who became masters of Delhi afterwards could understand it and that is why Akbar, the pioneer in this field, was titled **“The Great.”**

For the same reason the Mughul empire proved more enduring, prosperous and advantageous to India. Thus, the policy of religious bigotry of the Sultans of Delhi was certainly one of their blunders.

The administration of Sultans suffered from certain serious defects. Yet, it fulfilled the need of the time. However, there remained two primary defects. One was the policy of religious intolerance and the other was their failure to improve their military strength according to changed circumstances. The one kept them devoid of loyalty and cooperation of the majority of their subjects and the other, that is, the declining military strength resulted in the loss of their empire.

**Social life**

There was little change in the structure of the Hindu society during this period. Traditional caste system with the Brahmins on the upper strata of the society was prevalent.The subservient position of women also continued and the practice of sati was widely prevalent. The seclusion of women and the wearing of purdah became common among the upper class women. The Arabs and Turks brought the purdah system into India and it became widespread among the Hindu women in the upper classes of north India.  
 The Muslim society remained divided into several ethnic and racial groups. The Turks, Iranians, Afghans and Indian Muslims developed exclusively and there were no intermarriages between these groups. Hindu converts from lower castes were also not given equal respect. The Muslim nobles occupied high offices and very rarely the Hindu nobles were given high position in the government.The Hindus were considered zimmis or protected people for which they were forced to pay a tax called jiziya. In the beginning jiziya was collected as part of land tax.  
 FirozTughlaq separated it from the land revenue and collected jiziya as a separate tax. Sometimes Brahmins were exempted from paying jiziya.Autonomous Chieftains constituted the most prosperous rural section Though they were now a defeated ruling class, they were still powerful in their respective areas and continued to live a luxurious life as in the pre-Muslim period.  
 Maqaddams and Small Landlord had a better standard of life, for they readily misused their power in order to exploit the ordinary peasants.The peasantry, known as the balahars, paid one third of their produce as land revenue, sometimes even one half of the produce. Besides land revenue, they paid certain other taxes which prove that taxation during this period was as much, if not higher than, as in the previous period. The peasants were always living at the subsistence level which was easily denied by the frequent wars, thus resulting in large scale, and not so infrequent, famines.

**cultural administration During Sultanate age**

**Art and architecture**

The art and architecture of the Delhi Sultanate period was distinct from the Indian style.The Turks introduced arches, domes, lofty towers or minarets and decorations using the Arabic script. They used the skill of the Indian stone cutters. They also added colour to their buildings by using marbles, red and yellow sand stones.In the beginning, they converted temples and other structures demolished into mosques.  
 For example, the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque near QutubMinar in Delhi was built by using the materials obtained from destroying many Hindu and Jain temples, but later, they began to construct new structures.The most magnificent building of the 13th century was the QutubMinar which was founded by Aibek and completed by Iltutmish. This seventy one metre tower was dedicated to the Sufi saint QutbuddinBakthiyar Kaki. The balconies of this tower were projected from the main building and it was the proof of the architectural skills of that period.  
 Later, AlauddinKhalji added an entrance to the QutubMinar called Alai Darwaza. The dome of this arch was built on scientific lines.The buildings of the Tughlaq period were constructed by combining arch and dome. They also used the cheaper and easily available grey colour stones.The palace complex called Tughlaqabad with its beautiful lake was built during the period of GhyasuddinTughlaq. Muhammad bin Tughlaq built the tomb of Ghyasuddin on a high platform.The Kotla fort at Delhi was the creation of FirozTughlaq. The Lodi garden in Delhi was the example for the architecture of the Lodis.

**Music**

New musical instruments such as sarangi and rabab were introduced during this period.Amir Khusrau introduced many new ragas such as ghora and sanam. He evolved a new style of light music known as qwalis by blending the Hindu and Iranian systems.The invention of sitar and table was also attributed to Amir Khusrau.  
 The Indian classical work Ragadarpan was translated into Persian during the reign of FirozTughlaq. PirBhodan, a Sufi saint was one of the great musicians of this period.Raja Man Singh of Gwalior was a great lover of music. He encouraged the composition of a great musical work called Man Kautuhal.

**Administration during Mughal Period, central administration, provincial administration, local administration and land revenue policy**

The Mughal rule was not theoretic. The king was accepted as the arbiter in case of difference of opinion regarding Islamic laws.

Furthermore, the Mughal rulers also adopted the policy of religious toleration to consolidate the Mughal rule in India. Only Aurangzeb reversed the policy. Akbar had introduced an excellent system of administration to strengthen the nescient Mughal empire for which he has rightly been called as the true founder of Mughal rule in India.

**The King**

The King or the emperor was the head of the state. He was the chief executive, law-maker, the commander-in-chief and the final dispenser of justice. During the time of Akbar, the emperor was accepted as the final arbiter in case of difference of opinion regarding Islamic laws. The emperor became the highest authority in the state. The Hindu tradition of Divine Right was not forgotten and Akbar himself claimed to be “the shadow of God” or the “God’s representative on Earth”.

Hence Akbar started the practice of “Jharokha Darshan” and “Tula-dan”. The Mughal emperors wielded unlimited powers but they were not cruel or selfish. They believed that the prime duty of a king was to look after the welfare of his subjects. Akbar always used to listen personally to the complaints of the people. In the matter of administration, the king was assisted by several ministers. The ministers advised the Emperor collectively as well as individually.

**The Ministers of the Mughal government were**

**1.Vazir or Diwan (The Prime Minister)**

Prime Minister was next to the Emperor in the work of administration. Originally, the Prime Minister was given the work of Diwan but later on, the Diwan was titled as Vazir or Prime Minister. He was the head of the revenue department. He looked after the income and expenditure of the state. He also looked after the administration in the absence of Emperor. He was like other officials a mansab, sometimes commanded the army. He was assisted by several officers and subordinates.

**2. The Mir Bakhsi (The Paymaster)**

He exercised a general control over the army. He looked after the recruitment of the soldiers, branding of the horses and the elephants and also looked after all sorts of supplies to the army and training of the soldiers.

**3. Sadr-i-Sudur**

He advised the Emperor in all religious matters. He looked after religious education, charity, recommended stipends and jagirs to scholar, ulemas, Qazis. He advised the king for the appointment of sadrs in provinces and supervised their working.

**4. The Khan-i-Saman (Lord of High Steward)**

He was in charge of emperor’s household establishment. He looked after the personal necessities of the Emperor and his family. His important duty was to manage the Karkhanas of the Emperor.

**5. Qazi-ul-Quzat**

He was the highest judicial officer of the state. He also appointed the Qazis in the provinces and districts.

**6. The Muhtasib (Censorship of Public Morals)**

He looked after the moral development of the subjects. He also checked drinking of liquor, gambling and illicit relations between men and women.

**7. Mir-i-atish (Artillery)**

He was in charge of artillery.

**8. Daroga-i-dak-chauki (Intelligence and Post)**

He was in charge of intelligence department of the state. He collected news from the Waqia-Navises or the news recorder who were appointed by him in the provinces. It was his duty to inform the Emperor about every important affair within the empire. Thus the Mughal Emperors had a well organized system of administration at the Centre.

**Provincial Administration**

For the convenience of administration the Mughal Empire was divided into a number of provinces. These provinces were Allahabad, Agra, Awadh, Ajmer, Bihar, Bengal, Ahmedabad, Delhi, Kabul, Lahore, Multan, Malwa, Berar, Khandesh and Ahmednagar. Every prince had its provincial capital. The provinces were known as Suba.

The provincial governor of a Suba was designated as Subedar or Sipah Salar. He was the emperor’s representative in the Suba. He was the highest military officer in the province and commanded the provincial forces. He was the head of the judicial department. He helped the Diwan in the collection of revenue and also adopted measures for public welfare. The other important officers of the province were the Diwan, the Sadr the Amil or revenue collector, the Bitikchi, the Faujdar, the Kotwal and the Waqia Navis. The Provincial administration was an exact replica of Central administration.

For the convenience of administration each province was divided into a number of administrative units called Sarkars. The Faujdar was the chief executive and military officer of the Sarkar. His chief duty was to maintain peace and enforce laws and regulations passed by the Emperor in the district. The next important officer was the Amal Guzar or the revenue collector. His duty was to survey the land and to collect the revenue and other taxes. The Bittkchi maintained all necessary records regarding different categories of land with the help of the Quanugo. Khazanadar was the treasurer of the district.

Each Sarkar or district was divided into several Parganas. The Pargana was the lowest unit of fiscal and civil administration. The Shiqdar was the military officer and chief executive of Pargana. The Amil was the finance officer of the pargana. His duty was to collect revenue from the cultivators. Fotedar was the treasurer of the pargana.

The other important officer of the pargana was Quanugo. His duty was to prepare the papers regarding agriculture and collection of revenue. The Ain-i-Akbari refers to village administration during the reign of Akbar. The village administration was in charge of Village Council or Panchayat. The Panchayats looked after the sanitation, irrigation, education and public works. It also dispensed justice. Muqaddam was the headman of the village. His duty was to keep order in the village and the Patwari kept records of revenue.

**Administration of Revenue**

Sher Shah was the first Muslim ruler who laid down the principles for the administration of revenue. The state demand was fixed at the one-third of the produce and regulations were adopted for the collection of revenue. But the untimely death of Sher Shah his excellent land revenue system failed.

The system of collection of revenue was highly unsatisfactory during the reign of Babur and Humayun. Akbar was the first Mughal emperor who established a sound revenue system. He made various experiments during the early part of his rule in the field of revenue administration, but he did not achieve much success. But the revenue system was reorganised with the help of Raja Todar Mai.

Raja Todar Mai was appointed as Diwan-i-Ashraf in 1582 A.D. The revenue system introduced by Todar Mai was known as Ain-i-Dahshala and Zabti system. This Dahshala system was based on the classification, survey and measurement of lands and fixation of rates. Akbar proposed to assess land revenue by measurement.

Accordingly the cultivable land of the empire was surveyed and measured with the help of a jarib mads of bamboo pieces secured with iron rings. The jarib based on the Gaz was equal to thirty three inches in length. The unit of area for fields was the bigha equal to 3600 square yards. The land was divided into four classes on the basis of the continuity of cultivation and fixed rent in proportion to it.

Polaj was the first category of land which was cultivated annually for each crop in succession. It yielded revenue from year to year. Parauti was the second category of land. It was occasionally left fallow in order to recover its fertility. Tax was realized at the rate of Polaj from this land when it was cultivated. Chachar was the third category of land and it had been lying fallow for three or four years.

Banjar was the fourth category of land and it had not been cultivated for five years or more. The first two categories of land, namely the Polaj and Parauti were divided into three grades good, middle and bad according to their yield. The other two classes of land, namely Chachar and Banjar were dealt with differently. As they were not as fertile as the first two categories, their revenue was to be increased by progressive stages.

The average produce of the three categories of land was calculated for assessment of land revenue. The share of the state was fixed at one third of the average produce of all categories of land. The average produce per bigha of land was fixed on the basis of past year’s production. The farmers were asked to pay revenue in cash. For this reason Akbar had divided his empire into Dastars. The price of every cereal was fixed in different dastars on the basis of local prices. Each cultivator was given Patta and Quabuliaat mentioning the area of their land and stating the amount of revenue to be paid by them to the state.

This Dahsula system was introduced in Lahore, Multan, Agra, Allahabad, Awadh, Bihar and part of Ajmer. In some parts of the empire like Thatta, Kabul and in Kashmir the system of crop division was prevalent and it was known as Ghalia Baksha. According to this system the government collected 1/3rd of total crops after harvest.

**Revenue Officers**

The government dealt directly with the farmers. The Amal Guzar or the revenue collector of the district was assisted by subordinate officers like the Bitikchi, the Potdar, the Qanungo, the Patwari and the Muqaddams. The collector was given instruction to collect revenue in an amicable manner and “not to extend the head of demand out of season”. In times of natural calamities advances were made to the peasants and public works were constructed to provide relief to the poor.

**Mughal Architecture**

The Mughal emperors were interested in fine arts and they were great builders. Architecture made tremendous progress under the patronage of the Mughal emperors. According to Fergusson, the Mughal style of architecture was foreign in origin. But this view has been criticised by Havell. Sir John Marshall has opined that India is a vast country with manifold diversities so it cannot be said that architecture ever conformed to a single universal type. It was defended upon the personal tastes of the emperor. The Mughal architecture is a mixture of Persian and Hindu architecture.

Persian influence on Indian art increased after Babar, and continued till the end of the reign of Akbar. But during the reign of the successors of Akbar Indian architecture and painting became essentially Indian. Babur was not impressed with the buildings which he found at Delhi and Agra. As he had poor opinion of Indian art so he sought to improve the art of building by introducing required improvements. He invited the pupils of Sivan the famous architect from Constantinople to construct the mosques and other monuments in India.

In his memoirs he writes, “In Agra alone and of the stone-cutters belonging to that place only, I every day employed on my palaces 680 persons and in Agra, Sikri Biyana, Dholpur, Gwalior and Koil there were everyday, employed on my works 1,491 stone-cutters”. Most of the buildings of Babur have been destroyed, but two have survived to this day. One is a large mosque in the Kabul Bagh at Panipat and the other is the Jam-i-Masjid at Sambhal. No special progress have been made under Humayun in the realm of architecture.

Akbar took great interest in the construction of buildings. According to Abul Fazl, Akbar kept control over the price of building materials and fixed the wages of the crafts men. The first building during Akbar’s reign is the Tomb of Humayun at Delhi and it was constructed by Humayun’s widow, Haji Begum. It clearly exhibits the influence of Persian style. Akbar’s tomb at Sikandara is another building of the same class. Its style resembles a Hindu temple or Buddhist Vihara. Akbar had constructed excellent forts at Agra, Allahabad, Ajmer and Lahore.

The Agra Fort is a massive structure of red sandstones. But the most remarkable buildings of Akbar’s reign are located at Fatehpur Sikri. In 1569 he laid the foundation of this new city on the summit of a hill near Sikri in honour of Shaikh Salim Chisti. The most remarkable buildings at Fateh Pur Sikri are Jodhbai’s palace, Birbal’s palace, the Golden palace of Maryam-Uz-Zamani, Panch Mahal, Diwan-i-Am, Diwan-i-Khas, Buland Darwaza, Jami Masjid and the Mausoleum of Salim Chisti. Red stone was used for the construction of these buildings and Hindu and Islamic architecture have been applied in their construction.

The height of Buland Darwaza is 176 feet and it is still the highest gateway in India. It was constructed in 1576-79 to commemorate the conquest of Gujarat. The Jama Masjid has rightly been described as “glory of Fatehpur”. Two other magnificent buildings of this period are the Palace of Forty Pillars at Allahabad and the tomb of Akbar at Sikandara near Agra. The design of this massive tomb was inspired by the Buddhist Viharas of India.

Jahangir was more interested in painting so that architecture did not make much progress during his reign. Among the notable buildings of his reign the more remarkable are the Tomb of Etmad-ud-daula at Agra and the Khuram Bagh at Allahabad. Etmab-ud-daula was built by empress Nurjahan in the memory of his father. It is wholly built of white marble. It is a double storey building and has extensive garden around it.

The Begum died in 1630 and the following year the construction work was started. The master-architect under whose supervision the work was done was Ustad Isha. The main building has been constructed in white marble. E.B. Havell writes, “It is a great ideal conception which belongs more to sculpture than to architecture. It was completed in 22 years.”

Red Fort at Delhi, Jama-Masjid at Delhi is the contributions of Sahajahan. The notable work of Shahjahan was the peacock throne. It was in the form of a cot bed stead on golden legs. It was 7 yards in length, 4 yards in width and 5 yards in height and jewels worth 86 lakhs of rupees and one lakh tolas of gold valued at 14 lakhs of rupees were used in the making of this throne. In 1739 Nadir Shah of Persia carried away this throne during his invasion of India.

After Shahjahan’s death Mughal architecture declined because his successor Aurangzeb was hostile to all arts. The only notable buildings built by him are the little marble mosque in the fort of Delhi, the mosque at Varanasi built on the ruins of the Vishwanatha temple, and the Badshahi mosque in Lohore. These buildings are regarded as the latest specimen of the Mughal style of architecture.

**Cultural administration**

**Painting**

Prior to the advent of Turks, painting had made remarkable progress in India. But during the pre Mughal period, the Turk and Afghan rulers discouraged it. Again the Mughals revived the art of painting and under their patronage it reached the stage of perfection. The Mughal painting represents a happy blending of Persian and Indian elements.

Babur in his memoirs pays high tribute to Bihzad, the Raphael of the east. Babur was a great lover of beauty and art and he was gifted with the talent of a painter. But he did not have adequate time to develop his potentialities in this regard. Humayan developed a taste for painting while he was in exile in Persia and came in contact with painters like Min Saggid Ali and Khwaja Abdus Sanad.

He persuaded them to join his service when better times returned. He was still at Kabul when they joined him. Humayun and his little son Akbar took lesson from them in the art of painting. These two painters also came to India with Humayun. Hamayun engaged them in the task of preparing a fully illustrated copy of the Dastan-l-Amir Hamzah.

Akbar had a great liking for painting. He set up a separate department of painting and the head of the department was Khwaja Abdus Samed. The emperor extended his patronage to Hindu and Muslim painters, personally examined their work every week and gave them rewards according to their progress. According to Abul Fazl there were 100 good painters at the court of Akbar.

The eminent Muslim painters were Min Sayyad Ali, Abdus Samed and Farrukh Beg. The eminent Hindu painters were Daswant, Basawan, Sanwal Das, Taraihand, Keshva and Jagannath. In the reign of Akbar some mural painting was executed but it was miniature painting and portraiture that had received the attention.

Most of the paintings were intended to illustrate the books in the imperial library like Chingiznamah, the Zafarnamah, Razomnamah, Ramayan, Kaliyadaman, Naldaman, and Ayardanish. The Mughal painting reached the rise during the reign of Jahangir. He was a great lover of nature and beauty. During his period the painters produced much better work than the painters of the previous reign. Jahangir was a connoisseur and also collected many historical paintings. The most distinguished painters of his time were Abul Hassa, Aqa Riza, Mansur, Muhammad Nadir, Bishandas, Manohar and Govardhan.

Jahangir had conferred on Abul Hasa and Mansur the titles of Nadir-ul-Zaman and Nadir-ul-Asar respectively. Among the painters Bishandas was the ablest portrait painter while Mansur and Manohar had special aptitude for painting natural scenes and birds and animals. An important factor during Jahangir’s reign is the elimination of Persian influence. Painting becomes essentially Indian in character. With the death of Jahangir, Mughal art declined in importance.

Shahajahan lacked passion for painting. He was more interested in buildings. He reduced the number of court painters and did not patronize the Mughal painting. The eminent painters of Shahajahan’s period were Mir Hassan, Amg Chitra and Chintamani. Among his nobles Asaf Khan patronized the art of painting. Dara was a great patron of the pictorial art.

There was a distinct decline of pictorial art during the reign of Aurangzeb. He withdrew the royal patronage which was given to the artists. But the Mughal nobles continued to patronize the painters. There are pictures of Aurangzeb’s battles and sieges which clearly indicate that he did not wholly dis-coverage the art.

During the Mughal rule, the Rajput princes did not neglect the art of painting. The Rajput school of painting grew up. Religion is closely associated with art in this school. The Rajput paintings depict the life of the innocent villager, his religion, his pursuits and pastimes.

The Mughal School of painting occupies a respectable position in the history of Indian painting. Under the Mughal patronage it attained to a high level of excellence. The only defect from which the Mughal art suffered was that it remained confined to the court of emperors, provincial rulers and their nobles. Yet, the Mughal School of painting occupies a position unique in the history of Indian painting.

**Music**

The art of music was also patronized by the Mughal rulers. Babur was fond of music. Humayun also loved the company of musicians and used to listen music three times in a week. Akbar was a great patron of music. According to Abul Fazl, Akbar paid much attention to music and was the patron of all who practiced this enchanting art. There are numerous musicians at the court—Hindus, Iranis, Turanis, Kashmiris, both men and women.

Akbar had a large troupe of excellent musicians at his court. The most famous musician was Tansen of Gwalior. Noted musician Ramdas and his son Surdas also adorned the court of Akbar. The Mughal nobles also patronized music—Raja Bhagwan Das and Man Singh had great interest in music. Due to the joint efforts of both the Hindus and Muslims, Hindustani music made a great advance. New varieties of Ragas were introduced by the noted musicians.

The eminent musicians under Jahangir were Jahangir dad, Chatr Khan, Parwizdad, Khurramdad, Makhu and Hamza. Shahajahan was a great lover of music and heard music both vocal and instrumental. He was particularly fond of Dhrupad. During his reign the best singer of Dhrupad was Lai Khan, son-in-law of Tansen.

The Emperor bestowed on him the title of “Gunasamundar”. The most distinguished Hindu musicians were Pandit Jagannath and Janardan Bhatta. Pandit Jagannath was both a composer and singer and had received the title of Maha-Kaviraj. Aurangzeb banned music in his court. By his order poets and singers were banished from the court.

**Disintegration of the Mughal Empire**

The Rise and fall is the go of the world, and therefore, the Mughal empire was not an exception to it. The Mughal empire which was established by Babar in 1526 A.D. and which flourished during the regime of his worthy successors like Akbar, Jahangir and Shahajahan met its bitter end just after the reign of Aurangzeb. It is said, that the rise of the Mughal empire was a sensational event in history, its disintegration was equally a tragic tale.

However, its disintegration was not an event of any single day like the fall of Napoleon or of Hitler. It passed through different phases. The empire though began to crack during the reign of Aurangzeb; its disintegration became rapid after his death during the reign of his weak successors. They failed to encounter internal problems and foreign invaders. However, there were certain factors which contributed a lot for its disintegration.

**They are as follows**

**(1) Vastness of the empire**

It was the vastness of the Mughal empire which made the empire sink under its own weight. The far-flung Mughal empire embraced almost the whole of India. Such a vast empire could be kept under control by strong and powerful kings like Akbar. Shahajahan and Aurangzeb were weak and inefficient.

Moreover, communication was in a very rudimentary stage which was a great obstacle for the emperor and other administrative officers to move from one part of the empire to another part. It was seen that the emperor like Aurangzeb took long 27 years to solve the Deccan problem, but he could not do it, latter he lost control over the north. It was all due to the vastness of the empire. Therefore, the disintegration of the empire became inevitable.

**(2) Mughal rule was alien in India**

The Mughal rule was alien in India. The Hindu people were never friendly to the Mughal rulers except the emperor Akbar. S.M. Edwards says, ‘To the vast majority of the people of India, the Mughal empire was essentially a foreign Empire, and on that account could not expect to secure its existence upon a firm foundation of spontaneous popular support.

Alien in its nature and administrative organisation, it was powerless to evoke such feelings as those which led to the people of Maharashtra to follow and fight for Shivaji, it drew no strength from ancient tradition, which has always exerted so marked an influence upon Hindi ideals and sentiments”. The only exception occurred in the reign of Akbar. This alien feeling became stronger in the reign of Aurangzeb and his successors. Therefore the Mughal rule lacked the support of the majority and was unpopular.

**(3) War of Succession**

The Mughal rule lacked any firm Law of Succession and as a result there was frequent, War among the princes for the throne. Brothers of the royal family used to fight against one another to secure the throne. Such Wars of Succession gave the provincial governors golden opportunities to make themselves independent. This shook the very foundation of the Mughal empire.

**(4) Weak Successors of Aurangzeb**

It is a fact that the much success and stability of an empire depend on the ability and efficiency of an emperor. Fortunately the six Mughal emperors from Babur to Aurangzeb were by and large efficient and Powerful. But unfortunately all those who came after Aurangzeb were weak and inefficient out of the eleven rulers who ruled from 1707 to 1806, none of them was found efficient.

According to Michael Edwardes, “The customary struggle for power followed the death of Aurangzeb, but it was a struggle between the second rate and the third rate. Out of it a series of weak rulers emerged who permitted the empire to fall apart at the seas.

Further not only the successors of Aurangzeb were weak and inefficient, but also they possessed immoral character. Neglecting their own duties they had kept them indulged in wine and woman. They also lacked moral and physical strength of mind required for a strong ruler. This brought the fall of the empire.

**(5) Mughal Nobility**

During the reign of later Mughals, there were no such worthy Amirs and nobles like Bairam Khan, Asaf Khan, Munim Khan, Muzafar Khan and Mohabat Khan of the early periods. They were indeed the principal pillars of the Mughal empire. But the nobles and Amirs of the later Mughal period were power-loving, self-seeking and ungrateful.

They also kept them indulged in various immoral activities and were always after pleasure and luxury. The govt. become corrupt as the Amirs, noble, officers’ even emperors accepted bribes, in the name of gifts. They utterly neglected their duties which as a result hastened the disintegration of the Mughal empire.

**(6) Economic bankruptey**

A government in order to be stable one must have sound economy. The economic condition of the Mughal Empire was sound during the reign of Akbar. But after him, there came a steady decline in the economic condition of the empire. It is said that

Shahajahan had made the treasury almost half by waging wars and constructing palatial buildings. During the reign of Aurangzeb, its decline was rapid. The later Mughals drained the treasury by spending money in comforts and luxury.

**Responsibility of Aurangzeb**

Apart from all these, Aurangzeb himself infact was largely responsible for the disintegration of the Mughal empire. His anti-shia and anti-hindu policy alienated a major section of the society from his support. Many gifted shia muslims who were very capable and efficient become his enemies. Similarly his anti-Hindu policy not only alienated Hindus from the Mughal rule but also led to the rebellions of the Jats, the Bundelas, the Sikhs and the Rajput’s.

All these shook the very foundation of the Mughal empire. Further, he did not learn anything from the Rajput policy of Akbar. He reversed his policies and his hatred towards the Rajput’s forced them to fight against Mughal empire. Finally his own suspicious nature and long twenty five years Deccan campaign sounded the death knell of the Mughal empire.

Commenting on the responsibility of Aurangzeb for the disintegration of a Mughal empire, Jadunath Sarkar writes, “It is not true that Aurangzeb alone caused the fall of the Mughal empire, yet he did nothing to avert it, but deliberately quickened the destructive forces always present in rigid theocratic form of Government because he was a reactionary by instinct and no reforming statesman.”

**Rise of Provincial Powers**

It was after the death of Aurangzeb the provincial governors of different states declared their independence. They took the advantage of a weak Centre and declared their independence by disregarding the authority of Delhi. Nizam-ul-Mulk of Deccan was first among them who declared his independence. Similarly the ruler of Oudh as well as Alivardi Khan, the ruler of Bengal became independent. As a result of this the Mughal empire was gradually confined to Delhi and its periphery.

**Invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali**

The Mughal empire was invaded by a number of foreign invaders during the time of weak and unsuccessful, later Mughal rulers between 1739 to 1761. The invasions shook the roots of the empire. Nadir Shah’s invasion proved very fatal from political and economic points of view. He carried away a huge booty and crippled the Mughal empire economically. Ahmad Shah Abdali came to India after Nadir Shah. He also drained a lot of wealth from India and shattered the structure of the Mughal administration. The inefficient later Mughals failed to check them.

**Chapter – VI**

**Juridical Systems**

* Legal & Judicial system in ancient Indian Maurya Dynasty, Gupta, Harsh Dynasty.
* Legal & Judicial system during medieval India, 1206 to 1707 A.D. sultanate age & Mughal period.

**Chapter – VI**

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Legal & Judicial system in ancient Indian Maurya Dynasty, Gupta, Harsh Dynasty.

**Judicial Administration during Maurya Dynasty**

The king was the head of justice. The king's court was the final court of appeal. From the village to the cities, there was a gradation of courts. There were two sets of courts known as Dharmasthanas which dealt with civil cases and Kantaka Sodhana, which dealt with criminal cases. It is believed that the punishments were severe. Trial by ordeal was in vogue. Ashoka liberalised the criminal punishments and ordered the officials to be liberal in their judgments. Fines, imprisonment, whipping and execution were some of the punishments that were awarded by the courts. The law of the land was the de facto if not de jure sovereign of the country. The king was bound by it. In civil cases the Hindu Law as embodied in Sastras was administered. In Arthasastra also same punishments were prescribed for particular type of cases. There were special tribunals of justice both in the cities and the country. presided over by Mahamantras and Rajukas. The local or provincial courts were located in important towns of different administrative districts such as Janapadasandhi, Sartgrahana, Drenamukha and Sthantya. Three judges and three commissioners conducted the cases in each of these courts. The village courts were self-sufficient and independent of imperial control.

**Administration of Harsha**

**The King**

The king was the sovereign ruler in the monarchial form of government. Subordiante kings were called rajas or bhupalas but were mostly known as samantas. The also used the title Maharajas. They acted as officials also. For their services, the king granted villages and territories. Samantas provided military assistance in the time of war and paid tribute. Increase in the award of land grants in lieu of cash to the officials weakened central authority.

Harsha was the pivot of administration. He personally looked into the affairs of the state. He toured different parts of the empire and met people. Hiuentsang says that he was indefatigable and the day was too short for him.

**Council of Ministers**

The king was assisted by a Council of Ministers. The mantrin and mahasandhi-vigraha-adhikrit. the minister of peace and war, and the samantas formed the court. Mahadandanayaka was concerned with police duties.

**Military**

He maintained a vast standing army by which he not only maintained law and order in the state but also expanded his empire. The military consisted of infanty. cavalry. elephants and boats. The charriot force was not in use, though Hiuen-Tsang refers to it. Harsha's army consisted of 60,000 elephant soldiers and 100,000 cavalry. The army officers were known as mahadandanayak, senapati and baladhyaksha. Recruitment to the army was mainly done from Kshatriya. Sudra and tribal sections of the society. Cash salaries were paid for military services alone.

**Judiciary**

The administration of judiciary was efficiently organised. Trial by ordeal was in vogue. Criminal law was severe. The criminals were imprisoned, banished or their limbs were cut off, based on the severity of crime. There was no corporal punishment but there was life imprisonment. Inspite of such severity of punishments, the roads were not safe from robbers because Hiuen-Tsang was robbed more than once. The law courts were looked after by the Nyayadhikarana and the Dharmadhikarana. The guilds had their courts to settle the disputes.

**Revenue**

The sources of revenue to the government was land tax, sales tax and tolls. Taxation was light. 1/5 of the land's produce was taken as tax. Officials received grants of land.

**Divisions of Empire (Local Governments)**

Harsha's empire was divided into Desa; the largest territorial unit, with sub-divisions like the Bhukti (provinces) Vishaya (Distinct) Pathaka, (Taluka) and Grama (Village). The Desa was governed by the king's representative Rajasthaniya. The Bhuktis were administered by the Uparikas, who were appointed by the king. The Vishaya or the district was headed by the Vishayapati, who was appointed by the Uparika. The Grama had a Grarnadhyaksha.

In the administration of Vishaya. a council consisting of 20 members, called vishaya mahattaras was constituted. The members were drawn from the guilds and other walks of life.

The archival departments were in existence which were looked after by the Pustapaia. The superintendent of accounts, the Aksha Patalika supervised the land transactions besides other duties.

In the village, a council of Grama mahattaras assisted the Gramanayaka in day-to-day affairs and in administering law disputes. The Simakaras measured the lands, and Grarnadhyaksha patalikas and Karanis, were the other officials who looked after the accounts and records.

Harsha erected rest houses and hospitals for the travellers and the poor people and distributed food, medicine etc. freely. He made liberal donations to the people of all faiths and of all kinds.

The unique feature of his reign was the celebrations of five year assemblies known as Maha Moksha Parishads. During these Assemblies. the money that was accumulated in the Royal Treasury was distributed as charities. To quote Hiuen Tsang, all being given away, Harsha even gave his clothes and jewellery and begged his sister for ordianry second hand garments to put on and paid worship to the Buddhas of ten regions. Such examples of charity and benevolence cannot be found in the annals of Indian History.

Harsha maintained contact with public opinion both through his officers and by his own tours, which gave him the opportunity of supervising the administration. He took upon himself, as it were, the duties of a royal inspector and looked into the collection of taxes, listened to co taints, inspected the general working of the administration.

**Legal & Judicial system during medieval India, 1206 to 1707 A.D. sultanate age & Mughal period**

**Jludicial Administration under the Mughals**

**The Emperor's Court**

There was no elaborate system of judicial courts. As usual, the Mughal Emperor was the supreme of justice. His was the final decision on appeals and some time on the first instant cases. The clients had to file their petition for justice to the Emperor through the Mir Arz. The Emperor generally dealt with the cases related to nobles and officers and the appeals from the lower court. The emperor used to hold his court on a fixed day. The Mughal Emperors felt that their sacred duty was to do justice to all. During the Mughal period, the Emperor only could give death punishment.

**The Court of Qazi-ul-Quzat**

The Court of Qazi-ul-Quzat was next to the Emperor's Court. Quazi-ul-Quzat was the highest judicial officer appointed by the Emperor for the proper and efficient administration of justice. The Chief Quazi decided important cases and heard appeals from the lower courts. The Quzi had to possess knowledge of Islamic theory and narrow sectarian views.But Akbar used to appoint to this post men of liberal s outlook and broad mind to give justice to all sections people. The only appellate court on the decisions of the of Quzi-ul-Quzat was the Emperor's Court.

**The Court of Sadr-us-Sadar**

The Court of Sadr-us-Sudar was the one more Court of level to deal with only cases of religious matters. -us-sudar was appointed by the Emperor.

**Provincial Courts**

There were three types of Courts in Subas or provinces. Court of Sipah-Salar or Governor decided the Criminal and the Court of Diwan decided the Civil cases .wining to land and property. The Court of Qazi was the I Judicial authority in the province. Qazis or law officers with both Civil and Criminal cases. He had to decide the of both the communities. The cases of Mulims were -tied by Quaran and the cases of Hindus were tried •rding to Hindu Law. The Quazis were appointed by the • ror on the recommendation of Qazi-ul-Quzat. The Qazis expected to be honest and impartial.

Mufti and Miradi helped the Qazi in deciding cases of inces. The Mufti had to spend his days and nights in ng books on jurisprudence and the reports of cases from ch one could learn precedents. Miradi was required to &.hver the judgment.

**Courts of Sarkar**

In the Sarkar (District), the Qazi and Kotwal decided the portant cases. The Fatgdar and Amal Guzar had also the ht to decide some criminal cases.

**Courts of Pargana In Parganas**

Shigdar acted as Magistrate. He had to ==tide criminal cases. Most of the civil cases were decided by Amil.

**Village Panchayat**

The cases of village disputes were decided by the village council—the Panchayat, consisting of village elders. If people were not satisfied with the decisions of panchayats. they could move their cases to the other courts.

**Legal Profession**

During the Mughal Period, there was no institution of legal profession. Both the parties of the litigation appointed their vakils. This body decided case and they were paid a percentage of the amount in the suit. The Court had power to decide who should be allowed to appear as vakiL They acted as agents for principals but not as argumentators.

**Sources of Law**

During the period of Mughals, there was no codification of law as such. The chief sources of law were, the Quranic injunctions, Hadis or sayings of the prophet and Fatwas or decrees of the eminent judges. Qazi was used to decide the cases on the basis of his commonsense too. The Qazis were never "considered authority enough to lay down a legal principle, elucidate on obscurity in the Quaran or supplement the Quranaic law by following the time of its obvious intention in respect of cases not explicitly provided by it." Each community had its personal law. In dealing with civil cases, where parties were Hindus, the Hindu law or customary and traditional law was also consulted. The Emperor was above the law and he had full right to change the decisions of the judges and no one could question the decisions of the Emperor.

**Punishment**

The punishment depended on the nature of the crime. There were three groups of crimes (i) offences against God (ii) offences against the State and (iii) offences against private persons. For these crimes, there were four kinds of punishments (i) Hadd for the crimes against God: (ii) Tazir, a public reprimand, exposing the offender to public scorn and boxing of his ears: (iii) Qisas, the realisation of relatives of the victim; and (iv) Tashir, the public degradation in the form of shaving the head of the culprit and putting him on an ass, "with his face towrds its tail, covered with dust, sometimes with a garland of shoes placed round his neck."No Court except the Emperor could announce the death punishment.

**Defects**

The Mughal judiary system was not above the defects. Some important defects are :

(i) The Qazis were often corrupt. (ii) The punishments were inhman, sometimes. (iii) Judiciary was not separated from the executive. (iv) There was no proper hierarchy of Courts. (v) Many judgments were arbitrary as there were no written laws for the justice.

vi) Finally, there was no definite denarcation of ri jusdiction and powers of the courts.

**Judicial system during sultanate age**

The chief Qazi or the chief justice was also the Minister in charge of the Department of Justice, which was known as Diwan-i-quaza. Barid-i-mcunalik, who was the head of the Information and Intelligence Department, was also an important minister during the period of Delhi Sultanate.

The Sultan was the fountain of judicial authority and his word was law. His durbar constituted the highest civil and criminal court of justice, where original as well as appellate cases were heard. Next to the Sultan, the chief Qazi was the highest judicial authority. In the provinces, the Governors and the Quazi had judicial powers. Each town also had a QuazL The Shariat or the Muslim law was followed in the administration of justice. The penal code was severe in those days. Capital punishment and physical torture were frequently awarded as punishments. Cutting of the limbs, driving nails into the body, pouring molten lead into the throat, beating with stones and sucly other inhuman punishments were common in those days.

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