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TOPICS

8th Edition

# General Knowledge & Current Affairs

# CAPSULE

# 2025

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# General Knowledge & Current Affairs

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# CAPSULE

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# 2025



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Tel: 49842349/ 49842350

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# Pre-Historic Period & Indus Valley Civilization

## Pre-Historic Period

- Pre - historic period is divided into three sections- Stone age, Bronze age and Iron age.
- Stone age is divided into three periods, i.e. Palaeolithic Age, Mesolithic Age and Neolithic Age.

### Lower Palaeolithic Age

- The Lower Palaeolithic or the Early Old Stone Age covers the greater part of the ice age.
- The Early Old Stone Age may have begun in Africa around two million years ago, but in India it is not older than 600,000 years. This date is given to Bori in Maharashtra, and this site is considered to be the earliest Lower Palaeolithic site.
- People used hand axes, cleavers, and choppers. The axes found in India are more or less similar to those of western Asia, Europe, and Africa.

### Middle Paleolithic Age

- In Middle Paleolithic Age a bit change occurred in the shape of tools made of stones or bones.
- This culture consists of a variety of tools made on flakes; and these flakes are produced by specialized techniques. Therefore, it is widely referred to as flake tool industry

### Upper Paleolithic Age

- This age, in the world context, marks the appearance of new flint industries and men of the modern type.
- The Upper Palaeolithic is marked by technological advances in stone tool manufacture by the production of parallel sided blades which are finished into a variety of tools by blunting one side or by backing.

### Mesolithic Period

- Mesolithic, also known as Middle Stone Age, was an ancient cultural stage that existed between the Paleolithic (Old Stone Age) and the Neolithic (New Stone Age), with chipped stone tools.
- Mesolithic material culture is characterized by greater innovation and diversity than is found in the Paleolithic.

### Neolithic Period

- The term Neolithic Period refers to the last stage of the Stone Age
- The Neolithic period is significant for its megalithic architecture, the spread of agricultural practices, and the use of polished stone tools.

### Chalcolithic Period

- With the end of the Neolithic Age, several cultures started using metal, mostly copper and low grade bronze.

- The culture based on the use of copper and stone was termed as Chalcolithic meaning stone-copper Phase.
- The term Chalcolithic means “copper” and “stone” or Copper Age; it is also known as the Eneolithic or Aeneolithic.

## Indus Valley Civilization

### Town Planning

- The Harappan civilisation was characterised by its grid-based town planning system, in which streets and alleys cut across one another virtually at right angles, separating the city into many rectangular blocks.
- Harappa, Mohenjodaro, and Kalibangan each had their own castle erected on a high mud-brick pedestal.
- The Great Bath, which is 39 feet long, 23 feet wide, and 8 feet deep, is Mohenjodaro’s most significant public space.
- A flight of steps leads to the surface at each end. There are separate dressing rooms. The Bath’s floor was constructed of charred bricks.
- The biggest structure at Mohenjodaro is a granary 150 feet long and 50 feet wide.
- However, there are as many as six granaries in Harappa’s fortress.

### Indus Valley Sites and their Excavators

Sites	Excavators
Harappa	Dayaram Sahni (1921)
Mohenjodaro	R.D. Banerjee (1922)
Sutkagendor	Aurel Stein, George (1927)
Dalesamri	M.G. Majumdar (1929)
Chanhudaro	M.G. Majumdar (1931)
Rangpur	M.S. Vats (1931)
KotDiji	FazalKhan (1935)
Dabarkot	Maichke (1935)
Kili Ghul Mohammad	Fairservis (1950)
Kalibangan	A.Ghosh (1953)
Ropar	Y.D. Sharma (1953)
Lothal	S.R. Rao (1957)
Surkotada	Jagatpati Ghosh (1964)
Dholvira	J.P. Joshi (1967)

### Town Planning & Structures – Features

#### Streets and Roads

- Indus Valley’s streets and roadways were all straight and intersected at a right angle.



- All of the roadways were constructed with burned bricks, with the length of each brick being four times its height and the breadth being two times its height.
- They ranged in width from 13 to 34 feet and were fully lined.
- The city was split into rectangular blocks by the streets and roadways.

#### Drainage system

- One of the most notable elements of the Indus Valley civilization was the city's efficient closed drainage system.
- Cities of the Indus Valley Civilization possessed sophisticated water and sewage systems.
- Many Indus Valley sites have houses with single, double, and more rooms coupled to a very effective drainage system.
- Each residence had its own drainage and soak pit that was linked to the public drainage system. Every roadway was lined by brick-paved canals.
- To convey extra water, large brick culverts with corbelled roofs were built on the city's outskirts.

#### Great bath

- The Great Bath is the most notable feature of Mohenjodaro. It is made up of a big quadrangle.
- The discovery reveals that the Great Bath, which was located within the city, was a huge rectangular tank used for special rites or ceremonial bathing and resembled a modern-day swimming pool.
- There is a large swimming pool in the centre (about 39 feet long, 23 feet wide, and 8 feet deep) with the ruins of galleries and chambers on all four sides.
- It features a flight of stairs at either end and is supplied by a well in one of the neighbouring apartments.
- The water was released through a massive drain with a corbelled ceiling that was more than 6 feet deep.

#### Granaries

- The granary, which is 45.71 metres long and 15.23 metres broad, is the biggest structure at Mohenjodaro.
- Harappa has a set of brick platforms that served as the foundation for two rows of six granaries each.
- Brick platforms have also been discovered in the southern section of Kalibangan.
- These granaries protected the grains, which were most likely gathered as income or as storehouses to be used in crises.

#### Society and Political System

- Archaeological records provide no immediate answers regarding a centre of authority or depictions of people in power in Harappan society.
- The extraordinary uniformity of Harappan artefacts is evident in pottery, seals, weights, and bricks with standardised sizes and weights, suggesting some form of authority and governance.

- Experts have theorised that the Indus Valley Civilisation had no rulers as we understand the concept of a ruler today, with everyone enjoying equal status.

#### Technology

- The people of the Indus Valley achieved many notable advances in technology, including great accuracy in their systems and tools for measuring length and mass.
- Harappans were among the first to develop a system of uniform weights and measures that conformed to a successive scale.
- The smallest division, approximately 1.6 mm, was marked on an ivory scale found in Lothal, a prominent Indus Valley city in the modern Indian state of Gujarat.

#### Art

- Indus Valley excavation sites have revealed several distinct examples of the culture's art, including sculptures, seals, pottery, gold jewellery, and anatomically detailed figurines in terracotta, bronze, and steatite—more commonly known as Soapstone.
- Among the various gold, terracotta, and stone figurines found, a figure of a "Priest-King" displayed a beard and patterned robe.
- Another figurine in bronze, known as the "Dancing Girl," is only 11 cm. high and shows a female figure in a pose that suggests the presence of some choreographed dance form enjoyed by members of the civilization. Terracotta works also included cows, bears, monkeys, and dogs.

#### Script

- Harappans are believed to have used Indus Script, a language consisting of symbols. As many as 600 distinct Indus symbols have been found on seals, small tablets, ceramic pots, and more than a dozen other materials.
- The inscriptions are thought to have been primarily written from right to left, but it is unclear whether this script constitutes a complete language.

#### Religion

- It has been widely suggested that the Harappans worshipped a mother goddess who symbolised fertility.
- Some Indus Valley seals show a swastika symbol, which was included in later Indian religions including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism.

#### Trade And External Contacts

- The civilization's economy appears to have depended significantly on trade, which was facilitated by major advances in transport technology.
- Trade focused on importing raw materials to be used in Harappan city workshops, including minerals from Iran and Afghanistan, lead and copper from other parts of India, jade from China, and cedarwood floated down rivers from the Himalayas and Kashmir.
- There was an extensive maritime trade network operating between the Harappan and Mesopotamian civilizations.

### The Vedic Period

The Vedic Age was between 1500 BC and 600 BC. This is the next major civilization that occurred in ancient India after the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization by 1400 BC. The Vedas were composed in this period and this gives this age the name. The Vedas are also the chief source of information about this era. The Vedic Age started with the coming of the Aryans or Indo-Aryans.

### Vedic Civilization – Early Vedic Period (EVP) and Later Vedic Period (LVP)

Early Vedic Period or Rig Vedic Period (1500 BC – 1000 BC) Initially, the Aryans lived in the land known as “Sapta Sindhu” (Land of the Seven Rivers). These seven rivers were: Sindhu (Indus), Vipash (Beas), Vitasta (Jhelum), Parushni (Ravi), Asikni (Chenab), Shutudri (Satluj) and Saraswati.

#### Political structure

- Monarchical form of government with a king known as Rajan.
- Patriarchal families. Jana was the largest social unit in Rig Vedic times.
- Social grouping: kula (family) – grama – visu – jana.
- Tribal assemblies were called Sabhas and Samitis. Examples of tribal kingdoms: Bharatas, Matsyas, Yadus and Purus.

#### Administrative Divisions

- The lowest unit of the Rig-Vedic society was the patriarchal family or kula. A number of families bound together by kinship ties of blood formed a clan.
- The ‘grama’ consisted of several families. It was under a headman known as ‘gramani’. Several villagers formed a ‘vis’. It was placed under a ‘visapati’. He was a military leader.
- A group of ‘vishes’ formed a ‘jana’ (tribe) whose members were bound together by real or supposed ties of kinship. ‘Gopa’ was the head of one ‘jana’ „
- Several janas formed a ‘janapada’ or ‘kingdom’. The ‘Rajan’ or the king was the head of the Janapada. There were several tribal kingdoms during the Rig Vedic period, such as Bharatas, Matsyas, Yadus and Purus.

#### Social structure

- Women enjoyed a respectable position. They were allowed to take part in Sabhas and Samitis. There were women poets too (Apala, Lopamudra, Viswavara and Ghosa).

- Cattle especially cows became very important.
- Monogamy was practised but polygamy was observed among royalty and noble families.
- There was no child marriage.
- Social distinctions existed but were not rigid and hereditary.

#### Popular Assemblies

- The Aryans had their own folk assembly known as Vidhata meant for the economic, social and military purpose. Though the king enjoyed substantial power, yet he was not an autocrat. In the work of administration, he consulted two bodies and acted according to their decision. These were: „
- **Sabha:** It was a select body of elders and advised the king on administration. It also functioned as a court of law and tried criminal cases. The head of the sabha was known as ‘Sabhapati’ „
- **Samiti:** It was the most popular assembly and included common people. The Samiti mainly dealt with the political business of the state. It also used to elect the king. The head of Samiti was known as ‘Pati’.

#### Economic structure

- They were pastoral and cattle-rearing people.
- They practised agriculture.
- They had horse chariots.
- Rivers were used for transport.
- Cotton and woollen fabrics were spun and used.
- Initially, trade was conducted through the barter system but later on, coins called ‘nishka’ were in use.

#### Religion

- They worshipped natural forces like earth, fire, wind, rain, thunder, etc. by personifying them into deities.
- Indra (thunder) was the most important deity. Other deities were Prithvi (earth), Agni (fire), Varuna (rain) and Vayu (wind).
- Female deities were Ushas and Aditi.
- There were no temples and no idol worship.

#### Important Upanishads

- **Aitareya Upanishad:** Talks about the creation of Atman (Soul) and Consciousness..
- **Chandogya Upanishad:** Deals with rhythm and chanting of Mantras.
- **Katha Upanishad:** Tells the story of Nachiketa and Yama. Their conversation evolves into discussion of Man, Atman (soul), Knowledge, and Moksha (liberation).



- **Brihadaranyaka Upanishad:** Talks about the transmigration of Atman; passages on metaphysics and ethics.
- **Mundaka Upanishad:** Contains the mantra “Satyameva Jayate” (truth alone triumphs) which is borrowed in the National Emblem of India.

### Other Important Gods

<b>Varuna</b>	God of truth and moral order
<b>Maruta</b>	God of storm
<b>Usha</b>	Goddess of dawn
<b>Prithvi</b>	Goddess of grain and of procreation
<b>Vishnu</b>	God of three worlds
<b>Surya</b>	Destroyer of darkness

### Later Vedic Period or Painted Grey Ware Phase (1000 BC – 600 BC)

During this time, the Aryans moved eastwards and occupied western and eastern UP (Kosala) and Bihar.

#### Political structure

- Kingdoms like Mahajanapadas were formed by amalgamating smaller kingdoms.
- King’s power increased and various sacrifices were performed by him to enhance his position.
- Sacrifices were Rajasuya (consecration ceremony), Vajapeya (chariot race) and Ashwamedha (horse sacrifice).
- The Sabhas and Samitis diminished in importance.

#### Social structure

- The Varna system of social distinction became more distinct. This became less based on occupation and more hereditary.
- The four divisions of society in decreasing social ranking were: Brahmanas (priests), Kshatriyas (rulers), Vaishyas (agriculturists, traders and artisans), and Shudras (servers of the upper three classes).
- Women were not permitted to attend public assemblies like Sabhas and Samitis. Their position in society diminished.
- Child marriages became common.
- Sub-castes based on occupation also emerged. Gotras were institutionalised.

#### Economic structure

- Agriculture was the chief occupation.
- Industrial work like metalwork, pottery and carpentry work also was there.
- There was foreign trade with far off regions like Babylon and Sumeria.

#### Religion

- Prajapati (creator) and Vishnu (preserver) became important gods.

- Indra and Agni lost their significance.
- Importance of prayers diminished and rituals and sacrifices became more elaborate.
- The priestly class became very powerful and they dictated the rules of the rites and rituals. Because of this orthodoxy, Buddhism and Jainism emerged towards the end of this period.

### Vedic Literature

- The word ‘Veda’ originated from the root ‘vid’ which means spiritual knowledge/subject of knowledge/ means of acquiring knowledge.
- The four Vedas are: Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva.
- Rig Veda was composed during the Early Vedic Age. The other three were written in the Later Vedic Age.
- Rig Veda – this is the oldest religious text in the world. It contains 1028 hymns and is classified into 10 mandalas.
- Yajur Veda – this deals with the ways to perform rituals.
- Sama Veda – deals with music. Indian music is said to be originated from Sama Veda.
- Atharva Veda – contains spells and magical formula.
- Other Vedic texts were the Brahmanas (explains the meaning of sacrifices); Upanishads (also called Vedantas, 108 in number, source of Indian philosophy); and Aranyakas (books of instructions).
- The great Indian epics of Mahabharata and Ramayana were also composed during this period.

### Ancient and Modern names of Indian Rivers

Ancient Names	Modern Names
Kubhu	Kurram
Kubha	Kabul
Vitastata	Jhelum
Askini	Chinab
Purushni	Ravi
Shatudri	Satluj
Vipasha	Beas
Sadanira	Gandak
Drishdvati	Ghaghara
Gomti	Gomal
Suwastu	Swat
Indus	Indus
Saraswati / Drishtwari	Ghaghara/ Rakshi/ Chittag
Sushoma	Sohan
Marudvridha	Maruvarman

- Came into existence around 600 B.C.
- The main cause being reaction against domination of Brahmanas and spread of agricultural economy in North-East India.

### Vardhman Mahvira and Jainism

Jainism is an ancient religion that is rooted in the philosophy that teaches the way to liberation and a path to spiritual purity and enlightenment through disciplined nonviolence to all living creatures.

- Vardhamana Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankara, was born in 540 B.C. in a village called Kundagrama near Vaishali.
- There were 24 great teachers, the last of whom was Lord Mahavira.
- These twenty-four teachers were called Tirthankaras-people who had attained all knowledge (Moksha) while living and preached it to the people.
- The first Tirthankara was Rishabhnaatha.
- The word 'Jain' is derived from jina or jaina which means the 'Conqueror'.
- He belonged to Jnatriska clan and was connected to the royal family of Magadha.
- His father Siddharta was the head of the Jnathrika Kshatriya clan and his mother Trishala was a sister of Chetaka, the king of Vaishali.
- At the age of 30 years, he renounced his home and become an ascetic.
- He practised austerity for 12 years and attained highest spiritual knowledge called Kaivalya (i.e. conquered misery and happiness) at the age of 42 years.
- He delivered his first sermon at Pava.
- A symbol was associated with every Tirthankara and Mahavira's symbol was a lion.
- His missions took him Koshala, Magadha, Mithila, Champa etc
- He passed away at the age of 72 in 468 B.C. at the Pavapuri in Bihar.

### Sects/ School of Jainism

Jain order has been divided into two major sects: Digambara and Svetambara.

- The division occurred mainly due to famine in Magadha which compelled a group led by Bhadrabahu to move South India .
- During the 12 years famine, the group in South India stick to the strict practices while the group in Magadha adopted a more lax attitude and started wearing white clothes.
- After the end of famine, when the Southern group came back to Magadha, the changed practices led to the division of Jainism into two sects.

### Digambara:

- Monks of this sect believe in complete nudity. Male monks do not wear clothes while female monks wear unstitched plain white sarees.
- Follow all five vows (Satya, Ahimsa, Asteya, Aparigraha and Brahmacharya).
- Bhadrabahu was an exponent of this sect.

### Svetambara:

- Monks wear white clothes. Follow only 4 vows (except brahmacharya).
- Sthulabhadra was an exponent of this sect.

### Jain Literature

#### Jain literature is classified into two major categories:

Agam Literature: Lord Mahavir's preaching was methodically compiled by his followers into many texts. These texts are collectively known as Agams, the sacred books of the Jain religion.

Non-agam Literature: This consists of commentary and explanation of Agam literature and independent works, compiled by elder monks, nuns, and scholars. They are written in many languages such as Prakrit, Sanskrit, Old Marathi, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannad, Tamil, German, and English.

### Jain Council

- First Jain Council: Held at Patliputra in 3rd Century B.C. and was presided by Sthulbhadra.
- Second Jain Council: Held at Vallabhi in 512 A.D. and was presided by Devardhi Kshmasramana. Final Compilations of 12 Angas and 12 Upangas.

### Gautama Buddha & Buddhism

The Gautama Buddha was born to Suddhodana (chief of republican Sakya clan) as Siddhartha in 563 BCE on Vaishakha Poornima day at Lumbini (Nepal). He lost his mother (Mahamaya) just a few days after his birth and was brought up by his stepmother Gautami. There were 32 birthmarks on his body and Brahmanas predicted that either he would be a world conqueror or a world renouncer. He lived a life of luxury and comfort in his early years.

- He was married to Yashodhara at the early age of 16 and had a son named Rahula. At the age of 29, he left his palace and decided to become a wanderer.
- He first meditated with Alara Kalama and then Uddaka Ramaputta. They were considered to be the established teachers of that era.
- As Gautama sat in deep meditation – Mara, the Lord of illusions, recognising that his power was about to be broken, tried to distract him.
- At the age of 35, he ultimately attained Nirvana/

enlightenment at Gaya, Magadha (Bihar) under a peepal tree (Bodhi tree), on the banks of river Niranjana and came to be known as the Buddha – the Enlightened One.

- The Buddha delivered his first sermon at Sarnath. This event is known as Dhamma Chakka-Pavattana, which means turning the wheel of dharma.

#### The five forms that represent Buddha

Lotus and Bull	Birth
Horse	Renunciation
Bodhi Tree	Mahabodhi
Dharmachakra Pravartana	First sermon
Footprints	Nirvana

#### Eight-Fold Paths

- The Eight-Fold Path is more about unlearning rather than learning, i.e., to learn in order to unlearn and uncover. The Ashtangika-Marga consists of the following:
  - Right Vision (Samma-Ditthi) – it is about understanding the nature of reality and the path of transformation.
  - Right Thought or Attitude (Samma-Sankappa) – it signifies having emotional intelligence and acting from love and compassion.
  - Right or Whole Speech (Samma-Vacca) – it signifies truthful, clear, uplifting and unharmed communications.
  - Right or Integral Action (Samma-Kammanta) – it signifies an ethical foundation of life, on the principles of non-exploitation of oneself and others.
  - Right or Proper Livelihood (Samma-Ajiva) – it lays emphasis on livelihood based on correct action and on the ethical principles of non-exploitation. It is believed that this forms the basis of an ideal society.
  - Right Effort or Energy (Samma-Vayama) – it signifies consciously directing our life energy to the transformative path of creative and healing action that fosters wholeness thus moving towards conscious evolution.

- Right Mindfulness or Thorough Awareness (Samma-Sati) – it means knowing one’s own self and watching self behaviour. There is a saying by the Buddha, “If you hold yourself dear, watch yourself well”.
- Right Concentration or Meditation (Samma-Samadhi) – samadhi literally means to be fixed, absorbed in. It means getting one’s whole being absorbed in various levels or modes of consciousness and awareness.

#### Schools of Buddhism

##### 1. Hinayana (Theravada)

- It literally means “The Lesser path” and Theravada signifies “Doctrine of the Elders”.
- Theravada was the original school of Buddhist philosophy. Its scriptures are in Pali.
- Doesn’t believe in idol worship. Believes an individual can attain salvation through self-discipline & meditation.
- Ashoka patronised Hinayana.

##### 2. Mahayana

- It literally means “The Greater Path”. The terms Hinayana & Mahayana were given by the Mahayana school.
- Mahayana has two main philosophical schools – the Madhyamika & Yogachara.
- Its scriptures are in Sanskrit. This school of Buddhism considers Buddha as God and worships idols of Buddhas & Bodhisattvas.

##### 3. Vajrayana

- It literally means “Vehicle of Thunderbolt”. The Vajrayana or “Diamond Vehicle” is also called Mantrayana, Tantrayana or Esoteric Buddhism.
- It was established in Tibet in the 11th century. Much importance is given to the role of the guru called Lama who has mastered the philosophical and ritual traditions.
- Vajrayana believes that salvation can be attained by acquiring magical powers called vajra.

#### Buddhist Councils

Buddhist Council	Time	Place	Ruler	President	Specificity
First	483 BCE	Rajgriha	Ajatashatru	Mahakassappa	Buddha’s teachings were divided into 3 categories or baskets (Pitakas)
Second	383 BCE	Vaishali	Kalasoka	Sabbakami	<b>Division:</b> Sthaviravadins – they felt they were keeping the original spirit of the Buddha’s teachings. Mahasanghikas (The Great Community) – Interpreted Buddha’s teachings more liberally.
Third	250 BCE	Pataliputra	Ashoka	Mogaliputta Tissa	Sent Buddhist missionaries to other countries.
Fourth	1 <sup>st</sup> Century CE	Kashmir	Kanishka	Vasumitra	Buddhism divided into Mahayana and Hinayana sects.

#### Important Buddhist Writers

- (I) Asvaghosha, (II) Nagarjuna, (III) Asanga & Vasubandhu (brothers), (IV) Buddhaghosa

The Maurya Empire (322 – 185 B.C.E.), ruled by the Mauryan dynasty, was a geographically extensive and powerful political and military empire in ancient India. Chandragupta Maurya founded the Empire in 322 B.C.E., after overthrowing the Nanda Dynasty.

### Chandragupta Maurya (322BC-298BC)

- Chandragupta Maurya, the founder of Mauryan Empire, succeeded to the Nanda throne in about 321 B.C. Kautilya was his mentor and guide.
- The Seleucids, a contending dynasty for Alexander's legacy were defeated and, after the conclusion of a treaty, the Seleucids and the Mauryans maintained friendly relations.
- The victory of Chandragupta Maurya over Southern India is mentioned in Ashoka's inscriptions, Jain texts and Sangam literature. He gained control over the area of Northern Karnataka.
- According to Jain sources, Chandragupta embraced Jainism towards the end of his life and stepped down from the throne in favour of his son Bindusara.

### Ashoka (273BC – 232BC)

- He was the son of Bindusara. Right from his childhood Ashoka showed great promise in the field of administration.
- After becoming a ruler Ashoka fought a single battle that was the battle of Kalinga. This war is mentioned in the 13th Major Rock Edict.
- The bloodshed in this war, had a deep impact on Ashoka which ultimately changed his personality from a warrior, to a saint as a result of which he gave up the policy of Digvijaya and adopted the policy of Dhammavijaya.

### Ashoka's Dhamma

- Initially Ashoka followed Brahmin religion. But after the Kalinga war he converted himself to Buddhism.
- The definition of Dhamma is produced by Ashoka in his 2nd and 7th pillar edict.
- Ashoka mentioned a few good points of Dhamma in his inscriptions such as: (i) No killing of humans (ii) No destruction of properties (iii) To serve and respect parents and adults (iv) To respect the mentors and teachers (v) Good behavior with the slaves and servants (vi) To spend less (vii) To preserve less.
- For the propagation of Dhamma Ashoka appointed a new category of ministers named "Dhammamahamatras".
- In his 5th Major Rock Edict Ashoka mentions about the appointment of royal officials in the 13th year of his reign (256BC).
- Besides Dhammamahamatras other officials such as Yukta, Rajukka, Pradeshika etc., too were given the responsibility of propagating the principles of Dhamma.

### The Mauryan Administration

The Mauryas established a massive administrative system. A detailed account of it can be found in Megasthenes' Indica and Kautilya's Arthashastra.

- The king was the pivotal head of the state. He had legislative, executive and judicial power.
- He was the supreme commander of the army and planned military operations with Commander-in-chief.
- King was assisted by his council of ministers which was headed by Mantriparishad Adhyaksha.
- The Mantriparishada was also head of the civil servants called Adhyakshas or Amatyas who kept in touch with all sections of the society and made a highly skilled secretariat divided into several departments.
- Some of these departments and their Adhyakshas are listed below: (a) Sannidhata (Royal Treasury) (b) Akaradhyaksha ( Mines superintendent) (c) Suvarnaadhyaksha (gold superintendent) (d) Panyaadhyaksha (commerce superintendent) (e) Kupyadhyaksha (forest officer) (f) Lavanadhyaksha (Salt department) (g) Sitadhyaksha (Agriculture)
- The council of ministers is called Parishad.
- The Paura Janapada was the assembly of the people of the town and the country.
- In each province there was a governor or viceroy who was sometimes a prince of royal blood.
- The princes, when appointed as viceroys were called Kumar Mahamatras while the rest of the viceroys were simply designated as Mahamatras.
- Each was administered by officers i.e Pradeshika, Yukta and Rajukka.
- Pradeshika was senior and Rajukka was subordinate. Yukta was subordinate to both of them.
- It was duty of Pradeshika to tour the kingdom every five year and collect details of the administration.
- The village was the smallest unit of administration in charge of an official called Gramika
- According to Megasthenese, Patliputra was controlled by a municipal commission of 30 members who were divide into 6 boards of five members each.
- There were two classes of courts.
- Dharmasthiya (diwani) were civil courts which decided cases relating to contract, gift, agreement, sales, marriages, etc.
- Kantakshodhan (faujdari) courts were criminal courts which dealt with the cases of theft, robbery, murder, sex offences, etc
- The Supreme Court was at the capital and was presided by the king as the chief justice.

## Mauryan Art and Architecture

### Pillars

- The majestic free standing Ashokan pillars symbolize the axis of the world that separated heaven and earth.
- Ashoka mainly used these pillars for the propagation of Dhamma
- Ashoka's first pillar was found from Vaishali known as Koluha pillar.
- In terms of art and architecture Sarnath pillar of Ashoka is the best example of it
- Motifs associated with pillars:
  1. **One Lion** – It appears on the pillars of Vaishali, Lauriya Nandangarh and Rampurva pillars.
  2. **Elephant**– An elephant capital was found at Sankisha.
  3. **Bull**– It was found on the Rampurva pillars.
  4. **Four Lions**– On Sarnath and Sanchi pillars.

### Caves

- The Mauryan period saw the beginning of rock cut cave architecture.
- The Barabar and Nagarjuni hills contain several caves which are built by Ashoka and Dasharatha.
- The caves are simple but have highly polished interiors.
- The only sculpture ornamentation is a relief carving on the doorway of a cave known as Lomas Rishi Cave.
- These caves were dedicated by Ashoka and Dashratha to the Ajivakas.

### Stupas

- Stupas were burial mounds prevalent in India from Vedic period
- Stupas consist of a cylindrical drum with a circular dome and a Harmika and a Chhatra on the top.
- Sanchi stupa in Madhya Pradesh is the most famous of the Ashokan stupas.
- Piprahwa stupa in Uttar Pradesh is the oldest one.
- There are several important stupas which were built by Ashoka for example: Bharhut stupa, Sanchi stupa, Dharmarajika stupa at Sarnath and Taxila, Bodhgaya stupa and Bairat stupa.

### Mauryan Economy

- Revenue System and Taxation
- The primary source of revenue for the state was land revenue.
- The royal share of the produce of the soil is known as Bhaga, generally amounted to one-sixth.
- Rajukka did the measurement of land.
- Tax free villages were known as Pariharaka and tax free land was known as Udwalik or Parihar.
- There was also a concept of emergency tax known as Pranay tax.

### Communication and Transport

- Roads and ports were important ways of communication. There were mainly four roads:

- Uttarapath– Purushpur to Tamralipti. According to Megasthenese this road was 1300 miles long. It was constructed by Chandragupta Maurya and during the reign of Sher Shah Suri this road was known as Sadak-iazam. During the time of Lord Auckland it was known as Grand Trunk Road.
- Dakshinapath– Shravasti to Pratishthan.
- The third road connected Bhrigukacch to Mathura.
- The fourth road began from Champa to Kaushambi.

### Coins

- In Arthashastra coins were called as Roop.
- Other types of coins were: Nishaka/Suvarna- Gold coins. Karshapan/ Dharan/ Pann- silver coin Mashak/ kakini- there were copper coins.
- In Arthashastra it is mentioned that there were state minting factories also and its head was known as Lakshanadhyaksha.
- Rupdarshaka was known as the examiner of coins.

### Decline and Disintegration of the Mauryan Empire

- The Mauryan Empire was the first empire in the history of India.
- The empire turned unfortunate in its last few years and began to decline due to the following reasons:
  - The neutral policies of Ashoka failed to support supremacy of the Brahmins
  - Ashoka's policies agitated the Brahmins which led to their anti-reactions and ultimately to the Brahmanic revolution.
  - This is proved by the murder of Brihadratha the last Mauryan emperor by his Brahmin commander-in-chief Pushyamitra Sunga
- Exploitative rule of provincial Amatyas
  - There are evidences of local revolts during the time of Bindusara as well as Ashoka at Taxila.
  - This depicts that the Amatyas were turning despotic gradually.
- Extreme centralization of administration and power
  - There was a lack of sovereignty among all the administrative units as right from centre to the lowest unit of administration was intervened by the state.
  - A strong network of bureaucrats and spies established in every nooks and corners of the empire.
  - This complicated the whole system.
  - After the death of Ashoka the weak successors led to the weakening of the state which led to the transformation of administration from centralized to decentralized and ultimately contributed to the decline of the empire
- Weak successors and disintegration of the empire
  - This was the most important factor behind the success of the Magadha imperialism was the rise of strong rulers one after another but after Ashoka the graph declined and weak successors succeeded him one after another



**Sungas**

- The collapse of the Mauryan rule in 187 BCE paved the way for the emergence of several powers in the Indian subcontinent
- The period from the decline of the Mauryas to the rise of the Guptas (2nd century BCE to 3rd century CE) is known in Indian history as the post – Mauryan period.
- The Sunga Empire (or Shunga Empire) is a Magadha dynasty that controlled North-central and Eastern India as well as parts of the northwest (now Pakistan) from around 185 to 73 B.C.E.
- The capital of the Sungas was Pataliputra.
- The Sunga dynasty was established in 185 B.C.E., about 50 years after Ashoka's death, when the king Brhadrata, the last of the Mauryan rulers, was assassinated by the then commander-in-chief of the Mauryan armed forces, Pusyamitra Sunga.
- The Sungas were succeeded by the Kanva dynasty around 73 B.C.E.

**Kavas**

- Kanva dynasty, also called Kanvayanas, the successors of the Shungas in the North Indian kingdom of Magadha, who ruled about 72–28 BCE.
- The Kanva dynasty was established by Vasudeva Kanva in 73 BCE. Vasudeva was succeeded by his son Bhumimitra.
- According to the Puranas, the last king of the Kanva dynasty was killed by Balipuccha, who founded the Andhra dynasty.

**Satavahanas**

- Satavahana dynasty, was an Indian family that, according to some interpretations based on the Puranas, belonged to the Andhra jati (a tribe) and was the first Deccanese dynasty to build an empire in Dakshinapatha— i.e., the southern region.
- Satavahana rulers were identified through metronymics (names derived from that of the mother).
- Brihadaranayaka Upanishad one of the earliest Upanishads contains a list of successive generations of teachers and students, many of whom were designated by metronymics.
- Gotami-putra Satakarni is often credited with reviving the fortunes of the Satavahanas after acceding to the throne in 106 AD.
- He is described as the destroyer of the Sakas, Pahlavas and Yavanas .
- Gotami Putra passed on the throne to his son Vaishishtiputra Pulumavi, who ruled from c. AD 130-159.
- He was followed by Yajnashri Satakarni, who was the last significant Satavahana ruler.(170–199 CE)

**Indo Greek**

- The majority of historians consider Menander (reigned c.165/155 –130 BC) the most successful Indo-Greek king, and the conqueror of the greatest territory.
- He had his capital at Sakala(modern Sialkot) in Punjab, and he invaded the Ganga-Yamuna doab.
- He was converted to Buddhism by Nagasena, who is also known as Nagarjuna.
- An indirect testimony by the Chinese explorer Zhang Qian, who visited Bactria around 128 B.C.E., suggests that intense trade with Southern China went through northern India.

**Shaka**

- Indo-Scythians is a term used to refer to Scythians (Sakas), who migrated into parts of Central Asia and north-western South Asia, from the middle of the 2nd century BCE to the 4th century CE.
- In the second century BC, central Asian nomadic tribes and tribes from the Chinese region invaded the region of present-day Kazakhstan whose inhabitants were Scythians.
- This promoted the Scythians to move towards Bactria and Parthia. After defeating the Parthian king, they moved towards India. Scythians who migrated to India are known as Indo-Scythians.
- The Sakas had an Indian kingdom larger than the Indo-Greeks.

**Shakas – Rulers****Maues (Reign 98/50 BC – 60/57 BC)**

- Maues, also known as Moga was the earliest Indo-Scythian king.
- He ruled over Gandhara (present Pakistan and Afghanistan).
- He invaded the Indo-Greek territories but unsuccessfully.

**Chashtana (Reign 78 AD – 130 AD)**

- He was a Saka ruler of the Western Kshatrapas (Satraps) dynasty who ruled over Ujjain.
- The Saka Era is believed to have started at his ascension to power in 78 AD.

**Rudradaman I (Reign 130 AD – 150 AD)**

- He is considered the greatest of the Saka rulers.
- He is from the Western Kshatrapa dynasty.
- He was the grandson of Chastana.
- His kingdom included Konkan, Narmada valley, Kathiawar, other parts of Gujarat and Malwa.
- He conducted the repair work of the Sudarshana Lake at Kathiawar.



- He married a Hindu woman and had converted to Hinduism.
- He also issued the first long inscription in chaste Sanskrit.
- He took up the title of *Makakshatrapa* after becoming king.
- He supported Sanskrit literature and cultural arts.
- It was during Rudradaman's reign that Yavaneshwara, the Greek writer lived in India and translated the *Yavanajataka* from Greek to Sanskrit.

### Parthians

- In the mid 1st century CE, the Shakas' domination in northwest India was followed by that of the Parthians.
- In many ancient Sanskrit texts, they are mentioned together as the *Shaka-Pahlava*.
- In fact, they ruled on parallel lines for some time.
- Originally the Parthians lived in Iran, from where they moved to India and in comparison with the Greeks and the Shakas they occupied a small portion of north-western India in the 1st century.
- The most famous Parthian king was Gondopernes (mentioned in an inscription dated 45 CE found at Takht-i-Bahi, recovered from Mardan near Peshawar) in whose reign Saint Thomas came to India to propagate Christianity.
- In due course of time, the Parthians, like the Shakas, became assimilated into Indian society and became an integral part of it. The Kushanas ultimately ousted the successors of Gondopernes from north-west India.

### Kushans

Kushans or Kuei-Shang were one of the five Great Yueh-chi (tribes) principalities. In the 1st century CE, Kujula Kadphises (Kadphises I) brought together these five principalities and founded the Kushan Empire. The Kushans movement in India can be traced back to the first century CE during Kadphises I time.

### Kushan Empire – Ruler Kujula Kadphises or Kadphises I [AD 30-AD 80]

- Kujula Kadphises was the first Yuezhi chief to lay the foundation of the Kushana Empire in India.
- He established his supremacy over Kabul, Kandahar and Afghanistan.
- He was succeeded by his son Vima Taktu or Sadashkana (AD 80-AD 95) who expanded the empire into northwest India.

### Kushan Empire – Ruler Vima Kadphises [AD 95-AD 127]

- An inscription found at Rabatak in Afghanistan mentions that he was the son of Vima Taktu and the father of Kanishka.
- He has issued a large number of gold coins.
- He was a Shiva devotee as is clear from coins issued by him.
- A large number of Roman gold coins found from this era indicate the prosperity of India at that time and also the growing trade with the Romans.

### Kanishka of Kushan Dynasty [127 AD – 150 AD]

- Considered the greatest Kushana king and also a great king of ancient India.
- Son of Vima Kadphises.
- His kingdom included Afghanistan, parts of Sindhu, parts of Parthia, Punjab, Kashmir, parts of Magadha (including Pataliputra), Malwa, Benaras, perhaps parts of Bengal, Khotan, Kashgar, Yarkhand (last three in modern China). His empire covered Gandhara, Peshawar, Oudh, Pataliputra, Kashmir and Mathura. His kingdom also included parts of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.
- His main capital was Peshawar, then known as Purushpura.
- After the capture of Pataliputra, he is said to have taken away the Buddhist monk Ashvaghosha with him to Peshawar.
- The scholars in his court included Parsva, Ashvaghosha, Vasumitra, Nagarjuna, Charaka and Mathara. He also patronised the Greek engineer Agesilaus.
- Kanishka convened the fourth Buddhist Council at Kundalvana in Kashmir.

### Achievements of Kushanas – Significance of the Kushana Empire

- Sanskrit literature began to be developed during this time. The fourth Buddhist council was held in Sanskrit.
- Ashvaghosha is considered to be the first Sanskrit dramatist.
- During this time, three distinct schools of art flourished: Gandhara School in northwest India, Amaravati School in Andhra and the Mathura School in the Ganges valley.
- Trade prospered between India and China, and India and the Roman Empire.
- The Kushanas controlled large parts of the Silk Route which led to the propagation of Buddhism into China. It was during this time that Buddhism began to spread to Korea and Japan also.
- Many towers, Chaityas, towns and beautiful sculptures were built under the patronage of the Kushana kings.
- Kushanas were foreign invaders, to begin with, but they were completely Indianised in ways and culture.
- It is said that the Kushana period in Indian history was a perfect forerunner to the golden age of the Guptas.

### The decline of the Kushana Empire

- Kanishka was succeeded by his son Vasishka.
- Vasishka was followed by Huvishka and Kanishka II (son of Vasishka).
- Kanishka II was followed by Vasudeva I.
- Vasudeva I was the last great king of the Kushanas. After his death, the empire disintegrated away. He probably died in 232 AD.

In Ancient India, the Gupta Dynasty ruled the mid-to-late 3rd century (approximately) to 543 AD. Founded by Sri Gupta, the dynasty rose to fame with rulers like Chandragupta-I, Samudragupta, etc .

### Gupta Empire – Kings

A brief about the kings of the Gupta dynasty is given in the table below:

#### Chandragupta I (320 – 335 CE)

- Was the son of Ghatotkacha.
- Chandragupta I is considered to be the founder of the Gupta Era which started with his accession in 319 – 320 CE.
- He strengthened his position by a matrimonial alliance with the Lichchhavis (Nepal). He married Kumaradevi, a princess of the Lichchhavi clan and this added to the power and prestige of the Gupta family (Vaishyas).
- He extended his kingdom through conquests. His territory extended from the Ganges River to Prayaga by 321 AD.
- He issued coins in the joint names of his queen and himself.
- He assumed the title of Maharajadhiraja (great king of kings).
- He was successful in building a small principality into a great kingdom.
- His empire consisted of Uttar Pradesh, Bengal and parts of modern Bihar, with Pataliputra as its capital.
- He is considered the first great king of the Gupta Empire.

#### Samudragupta (c. 335/336 – 375 CE)

- The Gupta kingdom was enlarged enormously by Chandragupta's son and successor Samudragupta.
- The Allahabad Pillar Inscription (Prayaga – Prashasti) gives a detailed account of his achievements. He followed the policy of war and conquest. This long inscription was composed by his court poet, Harisena, in chaste Sanskrit. The inscription is engraved on the same pillar that carries the inscription of peace-loving Ashoka.
- Much of the Indian subcontinent was directly or indirectly under his control – from kingdoms in Nepal and Punjab in the north to the Pallava kingdom at Kanchipuram in the southeast. The last vestiges of the Kushana rule, like the Shakas, the Murundas and even the independent territory of Simhala (Sri Lanka) acknowledged his suzerainty. The places and the territories conquered by Samudragupta can be divided into five groups:
- Group I – Includes rulers of Ganga-Yamuna doab, who were defeated. He uprooted nine Naga rulers and annexed their territories.

- Group II – Includes rulers of the eastern Himalayan states and some frontier states such as the princes of Nepal, Assam, Bengal, etc. who surrendered to his might. It also includes parts of Punjab.
- Group III – Includes the forest kingdom situated in the Vindhya region (central India) known as atavika rajyas and forced their rulers into servitude. The conquest of this region helped him to move towards the south.
- Group IV – Includes twelve rulers of eastern Deccan and south India who were defeated and his power reached as far as Kanchi (Tamil Nadu), where the Pallavas were forced to recognise his suzerainty. It is important to mention that Virasena was the commander of Samudragupta during his southern campaign. In the south, he adopted the policy of political conciliation and reinstated the defeated kings on their thrones. These states acknowledged his suzerainty and paid him tributes and presents.
- Group V – Includes the Shakas of western India and Kushana rulers of north-west India and Afghanistan. Samudragupta swept them out of power.

Though he had spread his influence over a vast area, and even received tributes from many kings of south-east Asia, Samudragupta exercised direct administrative control mainly over the Indo-Gangetic basin. According to Chinese sources, Meghavarma, the ruler of Sri Lanka, sent a missionary to Samudragupta for permission to build a Buddhist temple at Bodhi Gaya.

After conquering the territories, Samudragupta celebrated by performing the asvamedha (horse sacrifice). He issued coins with the legend “restorer of the asvamedha”. It is because of his military achievements that Samudragupta was hailed as the ‘Indian Napoleon’.

#### Chandragupta II (c. 376 – 413/415 CE)

- Samudragupta was succeeded by his son – Chandragupta II. But according to some scholars, the immediate successor was Ramagupta, the elder brother of Chandragupta II. But there is little historical proof for this.
- During Chandragupta II's reign, the Gupta dynasty reached its peak by expanding territories through conquests as well as by marriage alliances. He married Kubera, a Naga princess and had a daughter, Prabhavati with her. He married Prabhavati to a Vakataka prince, Rudrasena II (Deccan). After the death of her husband, Prabhavati ruled the territory as regent to her minor sons with the help of her father. Thus Chandragupta II indirectly controlled the Vakataka kingdom.

- Chandragupta II's control over the Vakataka kingdom in central India proved quite advantageous for him. It helped him to conquer Gujarat and western Malwa, which was under the rule of Shakas for about four centuries by that time. The Guptas reached the western sea coast which was famous for trade and commerce. This contributed to the prosperity of Malwa and its main city Ujjain, which was also Chandragupta II's second capital.
- An Iron Pillar inscription at Mehrauli in Delhi indicates that his empire included even north-western India and Bengal. He adopted the title 'Vikramaditya' (powerful as the sun) and Simhavikrama.
- He issued gold coins (Dinara), silver coins and copper coins. On his coins, he is mentioned as Chandra.
- During his reign, a Chinese traveller, Fa-Hien visited India and wrote a detailed account about the life of its people.
- The Udaigiri cave inscriptions refer to his digvijaya, that is, his conquest of the whole world.
- His court at Ujjain was adorned by nine famous scholars known as the Navratnas (nine gems).
- **Kalidasa** – He wrote *Abhijnashakuntalam*, one of the best hundred literary works in the world and also the earliest Indian work to be translated to European languages.
- **Amarasimha** – His work *Amarakosha* is a vocabulary of Sanskrit roots, homonyms and synonyms. It has three parts containing around ten thousand words and is also known as *Trikanda*.
- **Varahamihira** – He wrote three important books-
  - He composed *Pancha Siddhantika*, the five astronomical systems.
  - His work *Brihadsamhita* is a great work in the Sanskrit language. It deals with a variety of subjects like astronomy, astrology, geography, architecture, weather, animals, marriage and omens.
  - His *Brihat Jataka* is considered to be a standard work on astrology.
- **Dhanvantri** – He is considered to be the father of Ayurveda.
- **Ghatakarapara** – An expert in sculpture and architecture.
- **Shanku** – An architect who wrote the *Shilpa Shastra*.
- **Kahapanaka** – An astrologer who wrote *Jyotishya Shastra*.
- **Vararuchi** – Author of *Prakrit Prakasha*, the first grammar of the Prakrit language.
- **Vetala Bhatta** – Author of *Mantrashastra* and was a magician.

### Kumaragupta I (c. 415 – 455 CE)

- Kumaragupta I was the son and successor of Chandragupta II.
- Adopted the titles of 'Shakraditya' and 'Mahendraditya'.
- Performed 'asvamedha' sacrifices.
- Most importantly, he laid the foundation of Nalanda University which emerged as an institution of international reputation.
- At the end of his reign, peace did not prevail on the north-west frontier due to the invasion of the Huns of Central Asia. After occupying Bactria, the Huns crossed the Hindukush mountains, occupied Gandhara and entered India. Their first attack, during Kumaragupta I's reign, was made unsuccessful by prince Skandagupta.
- The inscriptions of Kumaragupta I's reign are – Karandanda, Mandisor, Bilsad inscription (oldest record of his reign) and Damodar Copper Plate inscription.

### Skandagupta (c. 455 – 467 CE)

- Adopted the title 'Vikramaditya'.
- Junagarh/Girnar inscription of his reign reveals that his governor Parnadatta repaired the Sudarshan lake.
- After Skandagupta's death, many of his successors like Purugupta, Kumaragupta I, Buddhagupta, Narasimhagupta, Kumaragupta I and Vishnugupta could not save the Gupta empire from the Huns. Ultimately, the Gupta power totally disappeared due to a variety of reasons.

### Decline of Gupta Empire

The various reasons that led to the fall of the Gupta empire are discussed below:

#### Hun Invasion

The Gupta prince Skandagupta fought bravely and successfully against the early Huns' invasion. However, his successors proved to be weak and could not check the Huns' invasion. The Huns showed excellent horsemanship and were expert archers which helped them to attain success, not only in Iran but also in India. In the latter half of the 5th century, the Hun chief Toramana conquered large parts of western India, up to Eran near Bhopal in central India. By 485 CE, Huns had occupied Punjab, Rajasthan, Kashmir, eastern Malwa and a large part of central India. Toramana (in 515 CE) was succeeded by his son Mihirkula, who was a tyrant ruler as is mentioned in the *Rajatarangini* by Kalhana and Hieun-Tsang refers to him as a persecutor of Buddhists. Mihirkula was defeated and the Huna power was overthrown by Yashodharman of Malwa, Narasimha Gupta Baladitya of the Gupta empire and the Maukharis. However, this win over Huns could not revive the Gupta empire.

#### Rise of Feudatories

The rise of feudatories was another factor that led to the fall of the Gupta empire. Yashodharman of Malwa (belonged to the Aulikara feudatory family) after defeating Mihirkula successfully challenged the authority of the Guptas and set up, in 532 CE, pillars of victory commemorating his conquest of almost the whole of northern India. Although Yashodharman's rule was short-lived, it certainly gave a huge blow to the Gupta empire. The other feudatories too rose in rebellion against the Guptas and ultimately became independent in Bihar, Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Valabhi, Gujarat, Malwa and so on.

### Harshavardhana

King Harshavardhana was also known as Harsha. Harshavardhana is considered as one of the most prominent Indian emperors in the 7th century AD. He built a huge empire that extended from north & northwestern India till the Narmada in the South. His capital was Kannauj. His reforms and policies were generous and were always aimed at boosting the peace and prosperity of his people.

- Harshavardhana was born in 590 AD to King Prabhakaravardhana of Sthaneshvara (Thanesar, Haryana).
- He belonged to the Pushyabhuti also called the Vardhana dynasty.
- He was a Hindu who later embraced Mahayana Buddhism.

### Empire of Harsha

- On acquiring Kannauj, Harsha united the two kingdoms of Thanesar and Kannauj.
  - He moved his capital to Kannauj.
  - After the fall of the Guptas, North India was divided into many small kingdoms.
  - Harsha was able to unite many of them under his command. He had under his control of Punjab and central India. After Sasanka's death, he annexed Bengal, Bihar and Odisha.
  - He also defeated the Vallabhi king in Gujarat. (The Vallabhi king and Harsha came to a truce by a marriage between Harsha's daughter and the Vallabhi king Dhruvabhata.)
  - However, Harsha's plans to conquer lands to the south were hampered when the Chalukya king, Pulakesin II defeated Harsha in 618-619 A.D. This sealed Harsha's southern territorial limit as the Narmada River.
  - There were two types of territories under Harsha. One was directly under him and the other type was those that were feudatories.
1. **Direct territories:** Central Provinces, Bengal, Kalinga, Rajputana, Gujarat
  2. **Feudatories:** Jalandhar, Kashmir, Kamarupa, Sind, Nepal
- Hiuen Tsang visited India during Harsha's reign. He has given a very favourable account of king Harsha and his empire. He praises his generosity and justice.
  - Harsha was a great patron of the arts. He himself was an accomplished writer. He is credited with the Sanskrit works Ratnavali, Priyadarshika and Nagananda.
  - Banabhatta was his court poet and he composed the Harshacharita which gives an account of Harsha's life and deeds.
  - Harsha generously supported the Nalanda University.
  - He had a good tax structure. 1/4th of all the taxes collected were used for charity and for cultural purposes.
  - Harsha was a competent military conqueror and an able administrator.
  - Harsha was the last king to rule over a vast empire in India before the invasions by the Muslims.

### Pallavas

The Pallavas emerged as a formidable power in the South around the fourth century AD and reached their zenith in the seventh century AD. They were able to sustain their rule for about 500 years. They built great cities, learning centres, temples, and sculptures, and influenced a large portion of Southeast Asia's culture.

- The Pallava capital was Kanchipuram.
- Their territories at the height of their powers extended from the northern part of Andhra Pradesh to River Kaveri in the South.
- During the seventh century, the Cholas were reduced to a marginal state by the authority of the Pallavas.
- Vatapi (Badami) was occupied by the Pallava king Narasimhavarman who defeated the Chalukyas.
- The Kalabhra uprising was crushed by the Pandyas, Chalukyas and the Pallavas jointly. The Kalabhras were protesting against the numerous land grants (Brahmadeya) to Brahmanas made by the Brahmanic rulers of the three dynasties.

### Rulers of the Pallava Empire

#### Sivaskanda Varman

- Greatest among the early rulers. Ruled at the beginning of the 4th century AD.
- Performed Ashwamedha and other Vedic sacrifices.

#### Simhavarman/Simhavishnu (Reign: 575 AD – 600 AD)

- Was a Buddhist.
- Included Sri Lanka in his kingdom.
- Defeated the contemporary Tamil ruler. Pallava history assumes a definite character from this ruler onwards.

#### Mahendravarman (Reign: 600 AD – 630 AD)

- Succeeded Simhavishnu who was his father.
- He was a poet and composed Vichitrachita and Mahavilasa Prahasana.
- He introduced rock-cut temple architecture.
- Was a Jain who converted to Saivism.
- Had on-going rivalry and battles with Pulakesin II of Chalukya dynasty.
- Mahendravarman died in battle with the Chalukyas. He was an able and efficient ruler.

#### Narasimhavarman I (630 AD – 668 AD)

- Son and successor of Mahendravarman.
- Considered the greatest of the Pallavas. Also called Narasimhavarman Mahamalla/Mamalla.
- Defeated and killed Pulakesin II in 642 AD. He took control of Vatapi, the Chalukya capital and assumed the title 'Vatapikonda'.
- Also vanquished the Cholas, Cheras and the Pandyas.
- He sent a naval expedition to Sri Lanka and reinstated the Sinhalese Prince Manivarma.



- He founded the city of Mamallapuram or Mahabalipuram which is named after him.
- Hiuen Tsang visited the Pallava kingdom during his reign in about 640 AD and he describes the people living in his kingdom as happy.

#### Later rulers

- After Mahendravarman II, his son Parameswaravarman became the king.
- During his rule, Kanchipuram was occupied by the Chalukyas.
- Nripatunga was an important king who defeated a Pandya king.
- There were a few other rulers. The last ruler of the Pallava dynasty was Aparajitavarman who was killed in battle with the Cholas.

#### Chalukyas

The Chalukyas ruled parts of Southern and Central India between the 6th century and the 12th century.

- The Chalukya dynasty reached its peak during the reign of Pulakesin II.
- His grandfather Pulakesin I had created an empire around Vatapi.
- Pulakesin II subjugated the Kadambas, the Gangas of Mysore, and the Mauravas of North Konkan, the Latas of Gujarat, the Malavas and the Gurjars.
- He also succeeded in getting a submission from the Chola, Chera and Pandya kings.
- He had also defeated King Harsha of Kannauj and the Pallava king Mahendravarman.

#### Chalukya Rulers

Jayasimha was the first ruler of the Chalukyas.

##### Pulakesin I (Reign: 543 AD – 566 AD)

- Founded the empire with his capital at Vatapi.
- Performed Ashwamedha.

##### Kirtivarman I (Reign: 566 AD – 597 AD)

- Son of Pulakesin I.
- Conquered Konkan and northern Kerala.

##### Mangalesha (Reign: 597 AD – 609 AD)

- Brother of Kirtivarman I.
- Conquered the Kadambas and the Gangas.
- Was killed by his nephew and son of Kirtivarman, Pulakesin II.

##### Pulakesin II (609 AD – 642 AD)

- The greatest of the Chalukya kings.
- Extended the Chalukya rule to most parts of the Deccan.
- His birth name was Eraya. Information about him is obtained from the Aihole inscription dated 634. This poetic inscription was written by his court poet Ravikirti in Sanskrit language using the Kannada script.
- Xuanzang visited his kingdom. He has praised Pulakesin II as a good and authoritative king.
- Though a Hindu, he was tolerant of Buddhism and Jainism.

##### Vikramaditya I (655 AD – 680 AD)

- Son of Pulakesin II who plundered Kanchi, the capital of the Pallavas.

##### Kirtivarman II (746 AD – 753 AD)

- Great-great-grandson of Vikramaditya I.
- Last of the Chalukya rulers. Was defeated by the Rashtrakuta king, Dantidurga.

#### Sangam Age

- The period roughly between the 3rd century B.C. and 3rd century A.D. in South India (the area lying to the south of river Krishna and Tungabhadra) is known as Sangam Period.
- It has been named after the Sangam academies held during that period that flourished under the royal patronage of the Pandya kings of Madurai.
- At the sangams eminent scholars assembled and functioned as the board of censors and the choicest literature was rendered in the nature of anthologies.
- These literary works were the earliest specimens of Dravidian literature.
- According to the Tamil legends, there were three Sangams (Academy of Tamil poets) held in the ancient South India popularly called Muchchangam.
  - The First Sangam, is believed to be held at Madurai, attended by gods and legendary sages. No literary work of this Sangam is available.
  - The Second Sangam was held at Kapadapuram, only Tolkappiyam survives from this.
  - The Third Sangam was also held at Madurai. A few of these Tamil literary works have survived and are a useful sources to reconstruct the history of the Sangam period.

#### Sangam Literature: Major source giving details of Sangam Age

The Sangam literature includes Tolkappiyam, Ettutogai, Pattuppattu, Pathinenkilkanakku, and two epics named – Silappathikaram and Manimegalai .

- Tolkappiyam was authored by Tolkappiyar and is considered the earliest of Tamil literary work. Though it is a work on Tamil grammar but it also provides insights on the political and socio-economic conditions of the time.
- Ettutogai (Eight Anthologies) consist of eight works – Aingurunooru, Narrinai, Aganaooru, Purananooru, Kuruntogai, Kalittogai, Paripadal and Padirrupattu.
- The Pattuppattu (Ten Idylls) consists of ten works – Thirumurugarruppadai, Porunararruppadai, Sirupanarruppadai, Perumpanarruppadai, Mullaippattu, Nedunalvada, Maduraikkanji, Kurinjippattu, Pattinappalai and Malaipadukadam.
- Pathinenkilkanakku contains eighteen works about ethics and morals. The most important among these works is Tirukkural authored by Thiruvalluvar, the tamil great poet and philosopher.
- The two epics Silappathikaram is written by Elango Adigal and Manimegalai by Sittalai Sattanar. They also provide valuable details about the Sangam society and polity.

The Delhi Sultanate was an Islamic empire based in Delhi that stretched over large parts of the Indian subcontinent for 320 years (1206–1526). Five dynasties ruled over the Delhi Sultanate sequentially: the Mamluk dynasty (1206–1290), the Khalji dynasty (1290–1320), the Tughlaq dynasty (1320–1414), the Sayyid dynasty (1414–1451), and the Lodi dynasty (1451–1526).

The Slave dynasty ruled from c. 1206 – 1290 CE. It was also named the 'Mamluk' dynasty; the word Mamluk is an Arabic word that means "slave/owned".

### **Qutub-ud-din Aibak (c. 1206 – 1210 CE)**

- Qutub-ud-din Aibak founded the Slave dynasty. He was a Turkish slave of Muhammad Ghori who played an important part in the expansion of the Turkish Sultanate in India after the Battle of Tarain. Muhammad Ghori made him the governor of his Indian possessions.
- Muslim writers called Aibak "Lakh Baksh" or giver of lakhs because he donated liberally.
- He was titled "Sultan" and he made Lahore his capital.
- He also started the construction of the Qutub Minar (first storey only) after the name of the famous Sufi saint Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar. It was later completed by Iltutmish.
- Aibak died suddenly while playing Chaugan (horse polo) in c. 1210 CE.

### **Iltutmish (c. 1210 – 1236 CE)**

- Iltutmish belonged to the Ilbari tribe and therefore, his dynasty was named the Ilbari dynasty. His half brothers sold him as a slave to Aibak who made him his son-in-law by giving his daughter to him. Later Aibak appointed him as Iqtadar of Gwalior.
- In c.1211 CE, Iltutmish dethroned Aram Shah and became the Sultan with the name of Shamsuddin. He is regarded as the real consolidator of Turkish rule in India.
- In c. 1220 CE, the leader of the Mongols, Temujin, popularly known as Chengiz Khan, started his march towards Central Asia. He defeated Jalal-ud-din Mangabarni, the ruler of Khwarizm. Mangabarni escaped from the Mongols and sought asylum from Iltutmish.
- Iltutmish was a great statesman. In c. 1229 CE, he received 'mansur', the letter of recognition from the Abbasid Caliph by which he became the legal sovereign ruler of India.
- He completed the construction of Qutub Minar at Delhi, the tallest stone tower in India (238 ft).
- He also introduced the Arabic coinage in India and the silver tanka weighing 175 grams.
- Iltutmish organised Turkan-i-Chahalgani, a new class of the ruling elite of forty powerful military leaders, the Forty.

### **Raziya Sultan (c. 1236 – 1239 CE)**

- Raziya Sultan was the first and only female ruler of medieval India's Sultanate period.
- Raziya appointed an Abyssinian slave, Malik Jamal-ud-din Yaqut as master of the Royal horses (Amir-i-akhur). Raziya Sultan discarded the female apparel and held the court with her face uncovered which further created resentment. She even went hunting and led the army.
- In c. 1240 CE, Altunia, the governor of Bhatinda (Sirhind) revolted against her. Raziya alongside Yaqut marched against Altunia, but on the way, Turkish followers of Altunia murdered Yaqut and took Raziya prisoner. In the meantime, the Turkish nobles put Bahram, another son of Iltutmish on the throne. However, Raziya won over her captor, Altunia and after marrying him, proceeded to Delhi. But she was defeated and killed on the way by Bahram Shah.

### **Balban (c. 1266 – 1286 CE)**

- Balban's experience as a regent made him understand the problems of the Delhi Sultanate.
- According to Balban, the Sultan was God's shadow on earth, Zil-e-Ilahi and the recipient of divine grace, Nibabat-e- Khudai.
- Balban enhanced the power of the monarchy. He introduced rigorous court discipline and new customs like prostration (sajida) and kissing the Sultan's feet (paibos) to prove his superiority over the nobles.
- He introduced the Persian festival of Nauroz to impress the nobles and people with his wealth and power.
- To monitor the activities of the nobles he appointed spies and developed an efficient spy system.
- He established a separate military department, Diwan-e-arz and reorganised the army. Balban paid more attention to restore law and order instead of expanding his kingdom.

### **Khilji Dynasty (c. 1290 – 1320 CE)**

The Khilji or Khalji dynasty ruled from 1290 to 1320 CE after overthrowing the Slave dynasties, thus becoming the second dynasty of the Delhi Sultanate. They were Turko-Afghans who came from Afghanistan with Muhammad Ghori. Khaljis were the vassals of the Mamluk dynasty of Delhi.

### **Jalal-ud-din Khalji (c. 1290 – 1296 CE)**

- Jalal-ud-din Khalji was the founder of the Khalji dynasty. He was 70 years old when he assumed power.
- During the reign of Jalal-ud-din Khalji, Alauddin invaded Devagiri and accumulated enormous wealth.
- During the reception in c. 1296 CE, he treacherously murdered his father-in-law near Kara and usurped the throne of Delhi.