DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATON

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

MASTER OF ARTS - HISTORY

SEMESTER-IV

ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY (UPTO 650 A.D.):

POLITICAL HISTORY

ELECTIVE 403

BLOCK–2

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

Postal Address:

The Registrar,

University of North Bengal,

Raja Rammohunpur,

P.O.-N.B.U.,Dist-Darjeeling,

West Bengal, Pin-734013,

India.

Phone: (O) +91 0353-2776331/2699008

Fax:(0353) 2776313, 2699001

Email: regnbu@sancharnet.in ; regnbu@nbu.ac.in

Wesbsite: www.nbu.ac.in

First Published in 2019

FOREWORD

The Self-Learning Material (SLM) is written with the aim of providing simple and organized study content to all the learners. The SLMs are prepared on the framework of being mutually cohesive, internally consistent and structured as per the university's syllabi. It is a humble attempt to give glimpses of the various approaches and dimensions to the topic of study and to kindle the learner's interest to the subject

We have tried to put together information from various sources into this book that has been written in an engaging style with interesting and relevant examples. It introduces you to the insights of subject concepts and theories and presents them in a way that is easy to understand and comprehend.

We always believe in continuous improvement and would periodically update the content in the very interest of the learners. It may be added that despite enormous efforts and coordination, there is every possibility for some omission or inadequacy in few areas or topics, which would definitely be rectified in future.

We hope you enjoy learning from this book and the experience truly enrich your learning and help you to advance in your career and future endeavours.

ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY(UPTO 650):POLITICAL HISTORY

BLOCK 1

BLOCK 2

BLOCK-2 ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY (UPTO 650): POLITICAL HISTORY

In this block we will go through Land Grands and Expansion of Agriculture, Revival of Vedic and Puranic Religions Traditions, Sanskrit Literature, Coins and Currency, Huna Invasion. Vakatakas and Other Dynasties of Peninsular India and Land Grants, Harsha, Chalukya and Pallavas

Unit 8 focuses on Land Grands and Expansion of Agriculture,

Unit 9 focuses on Revival of Vedic and Puranic Religious Traditions.

Unit 10 focuses on Sanskrit Literature,

Unit 11 focuses on Coins and Currency

Unit 12 deals with on Huna Invasion,

Unit 13 focuses on Vakatakas and Other Dynasties of Peninsular India and Land Grants..

Unit 14 deals with on , Harsha, Chalukya and Pallavas, Extent of Kingdom, Cultural Activities.

UNIT-8 LAND GRANTS AND EXPANSION OF AGRICULTURE

STRUCTURE

8.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Able to understand Ancient Indian Agriculture
- Able to understand Land Grants and Its Expansion

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The excavation of the Mehrgarh period sites that is around 8000-6000 BC throws some startling facts about Indian agriculture that began as early as 9000 BC. The domestication of plants and animals are reported in the subcontinent by 9000 BC. Wheat, barley and jujube were among crops, sheep and goats were among animals that were domesticated. This period also saw the first domestication of the elephants.

With implements and techniques being developed for agriculture settled life soon followed in India. Double monsoons that led to two harvests

being reaped in one year in the country facilitated the settled mode of production.

Indus Valley civilization relied on the considerable technological achievements of the pre-Harappan culture, including the plough. The farmers of the Indus Valley grew peas, sesame, and dates. Rice was cultivated in the Indus Valley Civilization.

Indus civilization people practiced rainfall harvesting. At a recently discovered Indus civilization site in western India, archaeologists discovered a series of massive reservoirs, hewn from solid rock and designed to collect rainfall, that would have been capable of meeting the city's needs during the dry season.

The Indus cotton industry was well developed and some methods used in cotton spinning and fabrication.

Agricultural activity during the second millennium BC included rice cultivation in the Kashmir and Harrappan regions are noticed. Mixed farming was the basis of the Indus valley economy.

Several wild cereals, including rice, grew in the Vindhyan Hills, and rice cultivation, at sites such as Chopani-Mando and Mahagara, was underway as early as 7000 BC. Chopani-Mando and Mahagara are located on the upper reaches of the Ganges drainage system.

Irrigation was developed in the Indus Valley Civilization by around 4500 BC. The size and prosperity of the Indus civilization grew as a result of this innovation. It eventually led to more planned settlements making use of drainage and sewers.

Sophisticated irrigation and water storage systems were developed by the Indus Valley Civilization, including artificial reservoirs at Girnar dated to 3000 BC, and an early canal irrigation system in 2600 BC.

Archaeological evidence of an animal-drawn plough dates back to 2500 BC. Some animalsthought to be vital for survival were worshiped. Trees were also domesticated and worshiped. Pipal and Banyan tree was venerated. Others tress that had their medicinal uses found mention in the holistic medical system Ayurveda.

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.

After centuries of political disintegration an empire came to be established in A.D. 319, under the Guptas. Although the Gupta Empire was not as large as the Maurya Empire, it kept north India politically united for more than a century, from A. D. 335 to 455.

The ancestry and early history of the Gupta family are little known, and have naturally given rise to various speculations.

But very likely they were initially a family of landowners who acquired political control in the region of Magadha and parts of eastern Uttar Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh seems to have been a more important province for the Guptas than Bihar, because early Gupta coins and inscriptions have been mainly found in that region.

8.2 ANCIENT INDIAN AGRICULTURE IN MAURYAN EMPIRE

The Mauryan Empire (322–185 BCE) categorized soils and made meteorological observations for the agricultural use. Other Mauryan facilitation included construction and maintenance of dams and provision of horse-drawn chariots—that was quicker than traditional bullock carts.

The Greek diplomat Megasthenes (300 BC) in his book Indikaprovides an eyewitness account of Indian agriculture at that time.

He writers, “India has many huge mountains which abound in fruit-trees of every kind, and many vast plains of great fertility. The greater part of the soil is under irrigation, and consequently bears two crops in the course of the year.In addition to cereals, there grows millet, anddifferent sorts of pulse and rice throughout India. Since there are two monsoons in the course of each year the inhabitants gather in two harvests annually.

The mainstay of the economy under the Mauryas was agriculture, though trade was becoming increasingly more important. It would seem that cultivators formed a majority of the population and taxes on agriculture were the main source of revenue.

In some parts of the empire the gana sangha system with communal ownership of land continued. There are also references to state-owned lands called sita lands, which were worked under the supervision of the Sitadhyaksha either directly by hired labourers or they were leased out to individual cultivators.

In the latter case, a share of the produce had to be paid to the state. In addition to these were private owners of land who were required to pay taxes to the king. The village pastures were largely held by the entire community.

In the fertile Gangetic plain a variety of taxes are mentioned such as bali, bhaga, shulka, kara, etc. Megasthenes states that one-quarter of the produce had to be paid as tax. It is likely that this was the figure in the fertile region around Pataliputra.

Most Sanskrit texts, on the other hand, lay down that not more than one-sixth of the produce could be claimed by the king. It is very unlikely that a uniform tax was levied over the entire areas as the fertility of the soil varied from region to region, and it varied from one-fourth to one-sixth of the produce.

It was directly collected by the king’s officials from the individual cultivators without bringing in intermediaries. In addition, the Arthasastra states that the amount of tax would also depend on the nature of irrigation facilities and would range from one-fifth to one third.

The Rummindei inscription is the only Ashokan inscription which makes a precise reference to taxation. Here Ashoka says that he had reduced the amount of bhaga (produce of the soil) to one- eighth (atthabhagiya) as a concession to the people of the holy birth-place of the Buddha.

Another interesting fact which emerges from this inscription is that the king deals directly with the question of exemption from land tribute. The village that were exempted from taxation was called pariharaka, those that supplied soliders, ayudhiya, and those that paid their taxes in the form of grain, cattle, gold or raw material was called kupya. There were also the villages that supplied free services and dairy produce in lieu of taxes.

The Arthasastra refers to a state monopoly of mines (khani), and the manufacture of salt and wine. According to Megasthenes, shipbuilding and manufacture of arms were royal monopolies. Slave labour was employed in the mines and factories.

The state was also the biggest trader and made arrangements to check adulteration, provided for the correctness of weights and measures, and collection of tolls through officials like Panyadhyaksa, Mudradhyaksa, Kosthagaradhyaksa, Pautvadhyaksa and Sulkadhyaksa, all of them working under the Samaharta.

Megasthenes also refers to six boards of Astynomoi, some of which were entrusted with these duties. The state derived its revenue from seven main heads (ayasarira) viz., durga (fortified towns), rastra (country side), khani (mines) setu (buildings and gardens), vana (forest), vraja (herds of cattle), and vanikpatha (roads of traffic).

8.3 ANCIENT SOUTH INDIAN AGRICULTURE

The agriculture scene of South India was equally bright in Ancient India. The Tamil people cultivated a wide range of crops such as rice, sugarcane, millets, black pepper, various grains, coconuts, beans, cotton,

plantain, tamarind and sandalwood, Jackfruit, coconut, palm, areca and plantain trees etc.

Systematic ploughing, manuring, weeding, irrigation and crop protection was practiced for sustained agriculture in South India.

Water storage systems were designed during this period. Kallanai (1st-2nd century AD), a dam built on river Kaveri, is considered the as one of the oldest water-regulation structures in the world that is still in use.

Foreign crops were introduced to India and Indian products soon reached the world via existing trading networks. Spice trade involving spices such as cinnamon and black peppergained momentum and India started shippingthem to the Mediterranean. The detailed archaeological record and the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea show that India's trade with Roman Empire flourished. During the early centuries of the Common Era, Chinese sericulture attracted Indian sailors.

The Agrarian Society in South India

The agrarian societyThe earliest reference of candied sugar or crystallized sugar comes from the time of the Guptas (320-550 AD). Soon the traveling Buddhist monkstransmitted the process of making sugar to China. Chinese documents confirm at least two missions to India, initiated in 647 AD, for obtaining technology for sugar-refining.

Indian spice exports find mention in the works of IbnKhurdadhbeh (850), al-Ghafiqi (1150), Ishak bin Imaran (907) and Al Kalkashandi (fourteenth century).

Check Your Progress-1

1. Discuss the Ancient south Indian agriculture.

---

2. Write a short note on Mauryan Empire agriculture.

8.4 AGRICULTURE IN GUPTA EMPIRE

The provinces or divisions called bhuktis were governed by Uparikas directly appointed by the kings. The province was often divided into districts known as Vishayas which were ruled by Kumaramatyas, Ayuktas or Vishayapatis. His appointment was made by the provincial governors.

Gupta inscriptions from Bengal shows that the Municipal board – Adhisthanadhikarana associated with itself renresentation from major local communities: the Nagarasresthi (guild president), the chief merchant Sarthavaha, the chief artisan – Prathama Kulika and the chief scribe – Prathama Kayastha. Besides them were the Pustapalas – officials whose work was to manage and keep records.

The lowest unit of administration was the village. In eastern India, the vishayas were divided into vithis, which again was divided into villages. The Gramapati or Gramadhyaksha was the village headman. The Gupta inscriptions from north Bengal show that there were other units higher than the villages such as the Rural Board – Asthakuladhikarana which comprised of the village elders – Mahattaras and also included the village headman – Gramika and the householders Kutumbins.

With the absence of any close supervision of the state, village affairs were now managed by the leading local elements. No land transactions could be affected without their consent. The village disputes were also settled by these bodies with the help of Grama-vriddhas or Mahattaras (village elders). The town administration was carried on by the mayor of the city called Purapala.

The agricultural crops constituted the main resources which the society produced and the major part of the revenue of the state came from the

agriculture. It is argued by many scholars that the state was the exclusive owner of the land. The most decisive argument in favour of the exclusive state ownership of land is in the Paharpur copper plate inscription of Buddhagupta. It appears that though the land was to all intents and purposes that of the peasants, the king claimed its theoretical ownership.

Various types of land are mentioned in the inscriptions; land under cultivation was usually called Kshetra, Khila was the uncultivable land, Aprahata was the jungle or forest land, Gopata Sarah was the pasture land and Vasti was the habitable land.

Different land measures were known in different regions such as Nivartana, Kulyavapa and Dronavapa. The importance of irrigation to help agriculture was recognized in India from the earliest times. According to Narada, there are two kinds of dykes the bardhya which protected the field from floods and the Khaya which served the purpose of irrigation.

The canals which were meant to prevent inundation were also mentioned by Amarasimha as jalanirgamah. The tanks were variously called, according to their sizes, as the vapi, tadaga and dirghula. Another method for irrigation was the use of ghati-yantra or araghatta.

Land Grants:

The sources of the Gupta period suggest that certain important changes were taking place in the agrarian society. Feudal development surfaced under the Guptas with 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.

Religious functionaries were granted land, free of tax, forever, and they were authorised to collect from the peasants all the taxes which could have otherwise gone to the emperor. Religious grants were of two types: Agrahara grants were meant for the Brahmanas which meant to be perpetual, hereditary and tax-free, accompanied with the assignment of all land revenue.

The Devagrahara grants were made to secular parties such as writers and merchants, for the purpose of repair and worship of temples. The secular grants were made to secular parties and are evident from a grant made by the Uccakalpa dynasty.

According to it, two villages were bestowed as a mark of favour, in perpetuity with fiscal and administrative rights upon a person called Pulindabhatta. Epigraphic evidence of land grants made to officers for the administrative and military services is lacking, though such grants cannot be ruled out.

In fact, certain designations of administrative officers such as bhagika and bhogapalika suggest that some of the state officials may have been remunerated by land grants.

The land grants paved the way for feudal development in India. Several inscriptions refer to the emergence of serfdom, which meant that the peasants were attached to their land even when it was given away. Thus in certain parts of the country the position of independent peasants were under- mined, and they were reduced to serfs or semi-serfs. The repression of the peasantry was also caused by the right of subinfeudation granted to the recipients of land grants.

They were often authorised to enjoy the land, to get it enjoyed, to cultivate it or get it cultivated. The donated land could thus be assigned to tenants on certain terms. This also implied the donee's right to evict the tenants from their land. The practice of subinfeudation therefore reduced the permanent tenants to the position of ten- ants-at-will. The position of peasants was also undermined from the Gupta period onwards on account of the imposition of forced labour (Vishti) and several new levies and taxes.

8.5 LAND GRANTS IN INDIA DURING GUPTA AND POST GUPTA PERIOD

As a result of land-grants and some other factors gave birth to independent, self-sufficient economic units. The beneficiaries of land-

grants enjoyed the several economic rights which cut the economic ties between Central authority and the donated areas.

They were more dependent on the central government for the continuity and development of their economy. The Central idea behind this was to preserve the self sufficient village economy by typing down the peasants and artisans.

Furthermore, the conditions of the villagers, which were independent of the beneficiaries of land-grant and were placed under the charge of the village headman were not dissimilar.

The Headman might compel the peasants and women not only to work in his fields but also to spin yarn so that his clothes might be supplied to him locally "according to Vatsyayana's "Kamasutra". In this way, some of the commodities produced were put on safe to cater to the simple needs of the villagers.

Decline of commerce is demonstrated by tire paucity of coins in the post-Gupta period. The gold coins which were so abundant during the periods of the Kushanas and Gupta went out of circulation after the sixth century A.D. The absence of silver and copper coins also attracts attention.

However, the period under study was characterised by unprecedented agrarian expansion and this alone would have normally necessitated more metallic money. Secondly, decline of internal trade and consequently producing the local commodities to meet local needs and other weakening the power at the centre.

Naturally and gradually, the milers adopted the method of paying officials by grants of revenue or in kind. Unless the compulsions were serious enough, no ruler would have willingly forgone the privilege of minting coins in his own name.

It is indicative of the growing disuse of coins during the post-Gupta age the religious assignments which were made in cash by the princes and individuals in first two centuries of the Christian era replaced by grants of land.

In the post Harsha period hardly any coin can be ascribed without any doubt to any ruling house. Although legal text refers to the use of coins land charters indicate taxes levied in “hiranya” and some inscriptions speak of the cost of construction and purchase in terms of currency, but few actual finds can be assigned to this period.

In fact, several scholars have noted the absence of coins during the period 600 to 900 A.D. It is therefore evident that the coins were in general form from the time of Harshavardhana onwards. This leads us to the conclusion that trade suffered a decline and Urban life began to disappear.

The important changes in the Gupta and post- Gupta period was the decline of trade, both internal and external. Indian foreign trade registered a peak during the post-Mauryan period, when India traded with the Roman empire, Central Asia and South East Asia.

However, commercial decline set in during the Gupta period. It became more pronounced by the middle of the sixth century A.D. The inflow of Roman coins into India stopped after the early centuries of the Christian era.

Further Roman empire itself broke up at a later date. It seems that in the first half of the sixth century A.D. silk was as good an earner of bullion for India as spices in the first century A.D. The emergence of the Arabs and the Persians as competitors in trade did not augur well for Indian merchants.

Some Byzantine coins ranging up to sixth century have been found in Andhra and Karnataka. Silk and spices were important items in the Indo-Byzantine trade. The Byzantine however, learnt the art of growing silk worm in the middle of the sixth century A.D. Consequently the silk trade was badly affected.

The migration of silk weavers from Gujarat and their taking to other vocations, acquires meaning in this context. Gupta ruler’s ties with Central Asia were also weak. Whatever the little left of the contacts with Central Asia and Western Asia were completely wiped off by the invasions of Hunas.

he decline of foreign trade may also be by the expansion of Arab under the banner of "Islam". The Arabs expansion on the North-West frontiers of India in the seventh and eighth centuries. Their presence in the region made overland routes unsafe for Indian merchants. In this way, the coastal towns of India carried on some trade with countries of South-East Asia and China.

However, this interaction does not appear to have been of any intense kind. There is evidence for the spread of many cultural influences from India to South-East Asia in early historical and early medieval times but there is no evidence of pottery, coins or other objects of this kind to suggest vigorous commercial interactions.

After fourth century A.D. there is no evidence of trade in beads etc. with the areas of South-East Asia. Thus, we have clear indications of the decline of the foreign trade of North-Western India from the end of the Gupta age, and particularly from the first half of the seventh century A.D.

Whatever the internal trade and commerce existed had to be fitted into the emerging feudal structure. This evident from the detailed rules laid down in the law books regarding the functioning of the guilds of artisans and merchants.

Internally the fragmentation of political authority and the dispersal of power to local chiefs, religious grantees etc. seems to have had an adverse effect. King is required not only to observe the laws of the guilds but also to enforce them.

What actually existed can be concluded from three charters granted to guilds of merchants by the rulers of coastal areas of Western India.

The first charter was issued at the end of sixth century A.D. while second and third charters were issued at the beginning of the eighth century A.D. by 'Bhagaski', the Chalukya king of the Konkan area.

On the basis of these charters we can make the following observation about the condition of merchants and their guilds in the post Gupta-period.

According to the Charters, a few merchants were elevated to the position of managers of the endowment or the town as the case might be.

They tied down the merchants to the management of villages, which in one case were attached to a temple and in another to the rehabilitated town. The merchants enjoyed practically the same privileges and immunities as were enjoyed by priests. Perhaps by some feudal barons in the villages granted to them.

But since they were burdened with the management of villages, they could not pay full attention to their trade and commerce. Therefore, the charters show the feudation of merchants by turning them into some type of landed intermediaries.

In this way the activities of every guild were restricted to its locality so that it had no freedom of competition which was a characteristic of the restricted-closed economy of Europe in the Middle Ages.

8.5.1 Agrarian structure in the post Gupta Period

There is a great deal of confusion and innumerable controversies regarding the agrarian structure during the post-Gupta period. After the decline and disintegration of the Gupta Empire into a number of small states, several charters and deeds of land grants were issued by the royal and private donors of these states.

This confusion becomes more chronic on account of the contradictory picture provided by the commentators of the Smritis and other literary sources of the period. The whole confusion and all controversies hinge around the practice of land grants which were made during this period, both for the secular and religious purposes.

In the former category, the biggest beneficiaries were the high officials who were paid their salaries or remunerated through the grants of land, and in the latter category the grants were made to the Brahmins and temples for charitable and religious purposes.

Some scholars are of the view that the practice of land grants changed the land ownership pattern and reduced the status of free peasants to serfs, which finally led to the rise of feudalism. In this situation the free

peasants also lost their former status due to the imposition of several new taxes. Peasantry was largely composed of the Sudras or, perhaps, peasants were thought of as Sudras.

Another factor which reduced the peasants to the state of serfdom was the extension of the practice of forced labour (vishti). The granting of both virgin and cultivable land, transfer of peasants to the grantees, extension of forced labour, restric-tions on the movement of peasants, delegation of fiscal and criminal administration to religious beneficiaries, remuneration in land grants to offi-cials, growth of the rights of the grantees, multi-plicity of taxes, growth of a complex revenue system, and wide regional variations in the agrarian structure were some of the salient fea-tures of the agrarian system in the post-Gupta period.

But the main controversy on the subject centres on the nature and extent of the feudal system which is said to have come into existence on account of the practice of land grants.

Check Your Progress-2

3. What is Land Grants.

Write a short note on Agrarian structure of post Mauryan Empire.

8.6 LET US SUM UP

Agricultural activity during the second millennium BC included rice cultivation in the Kashmir and Harrappan regions are noticed. Mixed farming was the basis of the Indus valley economy.Several wild cereals,

including rice, grew in the Vindhyan Hills, and rice cultivation, at sites such as Chopani-Mando and Mahagara, was underway as early as 7000 BC. Chopani-Mando and Mahagara are located on the upper reaches of the Ganges drainage system. The Mauryan Empire (322–185 BCE) categorized soils and made meteorological observations for the agricultural use. Other Mauryan facilitation included construction and maintenance of dams and provision of horse-drawn chariots—that was quicker than traditional bullock carts.The Greek diplomat Megasthenes (300 BC) in his book Indikaprovides an eyewitness account of Indian agriculture at that time.

He writers, "India has many huge mountains which abound in fruit-trees of every kind, and many vast plains of great fertility. The greater part of the soil is under irrigation, and consequently bears two crops in the course of the year.In addition to cereals, there grows millet, anddifferent sorts of pulse and rice throughout India. Since there are two monsoons in the course of each year the inhabitants gather in two harvests annually.

The agricultural crops constituted the main resources which the society produced and the major part of the revenue of the state came from the agriculture. It is argued by many scholars that the state was the exclusive owner of the land. The most decisive argument in favour of the exclusive state ownership of land is in the Paharpur copper plate inscription of Buddhagupta. It appears that though the land was to all intents and purposes that of the peasants, the king claimed its theoretical owner-ship.Various types of land are mentioned in the inscriptions; land under cultivation was usually called Kshetra, Khila was the uncultivable land, Aprahata was the jungle or forest land, Gopata Sarah was the pasture land and Vasti was the habitable land.Different land measures were known in different regions such as Nivartana, Kulyavapa and Dronavapa. The importance of irrigation to help agriculture was recognized in India from the earliest times. According to Narada, there are two kinds of dykes the bardhya which protected the field from floods and the Khaya which served the purpose of irrigation. Naturally and gradually, the milers adopted the method of paying officials by grants of revenue or in kind. Unless the compulsions were serious enough, no ruler would have willingly forgone the privilege of minting coins in his own name.It is

indicative of the growing disuse of coins during the post-Gupta age the religious assignments which were made in cash by the princes and individuals in first two centuries of the Christian era replaced by grants of land.In the post Harsha period hardly any coin can be ascribed without any doubt to any ruling house. Although legal text refers to the use of coins land charters indicate taxes levied in “hiranya” and some inscriptions speak of the cost of construction and purchase in terms of currency, but few actual finds can be assigned to this period.In fact, several scholars have noted the absence of coins during the period 600 to 900 A.D. It is therefore evident that the coins were in general form from the time of Harshavardhana onwards. This leads us to the conclusion that trade suffered a decline and Urban life began to disappear.

8.7 KEYWORDS

- **Agriculture:** The agricultural crops constituted the main resources which the society produced and the major part of the revenue of the state came from the agriculture. It is argued by many scholars that the state was the exclusive owner of the land.
- **Land Grants:** Land-grants and some other factors gave birth to independent, self-sufficient economic units. The beneficiaries of land-grants enjoyed the several economic rights which cut the economic ties between Central authority and the donated areas.

8.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Describe about the Ancient South Indian Agriculture.
2. Analyse about the Land Grants In India.
3. Explain about the Agriculture in Gupta Empire.
4. Discuss critically about the Agriculture in Mauryan Empire.

8.9 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

1."The Development of Agriculture". National Geographic. 2016. Archived from the original on 14 April 2016. Retrieved 15 June 2016.

2. "Climate". National Climate Data Center. Retrieved 1 December 2013.

3."The Development of Agriculture". National Geographic. 2016. Archived from the original on 14 April 2016. Retrieved 20 June 2016.

4.Gammage, Bill (October 2011). The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines made Australia. Allen & Unwin. ISBN 978-1-74237-748-3.

5. Douglas John McConnell (2003). The Forest Farms of Kandy: And Other Gardens of Complete Design. p. 1. ISBN 978-0-7546-0958-2.

6. McConnell, Douglas John (1992). The forest-garden farms of Kandy, Sri Lanka. p. 1. ISBN 978-92-5-102898-8.

8.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. The agrarian societyThe earliest reference of candied sugar or crystallized sugar comes from the time of the Guptas (320-550 AD). Soon the traveling Buddhist monkstransmitted the process of making sugar to China. Chinese documents confirm at least two missions to India, initiated in 647 AD, for obtaining technology for sugar-refining.

2. The mainstay of the economy under the Mauryas was agriculture, though trade was becoming increasingly more important. It would seem that cultivators formed a majority of the population and taxes on agriculture were the main source of revenue. In some parts of the empire the gana sangha system with communal ownership of land continued. There are also references to state-owned lands called sita lands, which were worked under the supervision of the Sitadhyaksha either directly by hired labourers or they were leased out to individual cultivators.

3. Naturally and gradually, the milers adopted the method of paying officials by grants of revenue or in kind. Unless the compulsions were serious enough, no ruler would have willingly forgone the privilege of minting coins in his own name. It is indicative of the growing disuse of coins during the post-Gupta age the religious assignments which were

made in cash by the princes and individuals in first two centuries of the Christian era replaced by grants of land.

4. There is a great deal of confusion and innumerable controversies regarding the agrarian structure during the post-Gupta period. After the decline and disintegration of the Gupta Empire into a number of small states, several charters and deeds of land grants were issued by the royal and private donors of these states.

UNIT-9 REVIVAL OF VEDIC AND PURANIC RELIGIONS TRADITIONS

STRUCTURE

9.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Able to understand Vedic Religions Traditions
- Able to understand Puranic Religions Traditions

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The historical Vedic religion refers to the religious ideas and practices among most Indo-Aryan peoples of ancient India during the Vedic period (1500 BC - 500BC). These ideas and practices are found in the Vedic texts, and they were one of the major influences that shaped contemporary Hinduism.

According to Heinrich von Stietencron, in the 19th century, in western publications, the Vedic religion was believed to be different from and unrelated to Hinduism. The Hindu religion was thought to be linked to the Hindu epics and the Puranas through sects based on Purohita, Tantras and Bhakti. In the 20th century, a better understanding of the Vedic religion, its shared heritage and theology with contemporary Hinduism, has led scholars to view the historical Vedic religion as ancestral to "Hinduism". The Hindu reform movements and the Neo-Vedanta have emphasized the Vedic heritage and "ancient Hinduism", and this term has been co-opted by some Hindus.Vedic religion is now generally accepted to be a predecessor of Hinduism, but they are not the same because the textual evidence suggests significant differences between the two[b], such as the belief in an afterlife instead of the later developed reincarnation and samsāra concepts.

The Vedic religion is described in the Vedas and associated voluminous Vedic literature preserved into the modern times by the different priestly schools.The Vedic religion texts are cerebral, orderly and intellectual, but it is unclear if the theory in diverse Vedic texts actually reflect the folk practices, iconography and other practical aspects of the Vedic religion. The evidence suggests that the Vedic religion evolved in "two superficially contradictory directions", state Jamison and Witzel. One part evolved into ever more "elaborate, expensive, and specialized system of rituals", while another part questioned all of it and emphasized "abstraction and internalization of the principles underlying ritual and cosmic speculation" within oneself. Both of these traditions impacted Indic religions such as Buddhism and Jainism, and in particular Hinduism. The complex Vedic rituals of Śrauta continue to be practiced in Kerala and coastal Andhra.

Some scholars consider the Vedic religion to have been a composite of the religions of the Indo-Aryans, "a syncretic mixture of old Central Asian, new Indo-European elements", which borrowed "distinctive religious beliefs and practices" from the Bactria–Margiana culture, and the remnants of the Harappan culture of the Indus Valley.

The Puranas (Sanskrit: "of ancient times") are the scriptures of modem Hinduism, which assumed their present form slightly earlier than the time of Sankaracharya, the great Saivite reformer, who flourished in the eighth or ninth century. The Puranas which exist now were compiled in the Puranic Period [AD 600-1000], and have since been altered and considerably enlarged during many centuries after the Mahommedan conquest of India.

They are not authorities for Hinduism as a whole; they are special guides for separate and often conflicting branches and sects, written for the evident purpose of promoting either Vishnu or Shiva worship at the expense of the other god. In them the simple primitive fancies suggested by the operations of Nature have become supplanted by the wild imaginings of a more advanced civilisation, and of a more corrupt state of society. They are the stronghold of polytheism, pantheism, and idolatry. Legends about some of the Vedic gods and gods of later times abound. Together with the advocacy of the Puranic gods, each of which is honoured with separate chapters, in which he is supremely praised and lauded above the other gods, the worship of planets is developed, rivers are deified, and many animals and birds receive divine worship as the "Vahans" or vehicles of the gods and goddesses.

9.2 DEFINITION OF VEDISM

According to Indologist Jan Heesterman, the terms Vedism and Brahmanism are “somewhat imprecise terms”. They refer to ancient forms of Hinduism based on the ideologies found in its early literary corpus. Vedism refers to the oldest version, states Heesterman, and it was older than Brahmanism. Vedism refers to the religious ideas of Indo-Europeans who migrated into the Indus River valley region of the

subcontinent, whose religion relied on the Vedic corpus including the early Upanishads.Brahmanism, according to Heesterman, refers to the religion that had expanded to a region stretching from the northwest subcontinent to the Ganges valley. Brahmanism included the Vedic corpus and non-Vedic literature such as the Dharmasutras and Dharmasastras, and was the version of ancient Hinduism that gave prominence to the priestly (Brahmin) class of the society. According to the Encyclopædia Britannica, Brahmanism separately refers to both the predominant position of the priests (Brahmans) and also to the importance given to Absolute Reality (Brahman) speculations in the early Upanishads, as these terms are etymologically linked.

The word Brahmanism was coined by Gonçalo Fernandes Trancoso (1520–1596) in the 16th century, and is related to the metaphysical concept of Brahman that developed from post-Vedic ideas during the late Vedic era (Upanishads). The concept of Brahman is posited as that which existed before the creation of the universe, which constitutes all of existence thereafter, and into which the universe will dissolve into, followed by similar endless creation-maintenance-destruction cycles.

9.3 ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENTS

The Vedic religion was probably the religion of the Vedic Indo-Aryans, and existed in northern India from c. 1500–500 BCE.The Indo-Aryans were a branch of the Indo-European language family, which originated in the Sintashta culture and further developed into the Andronovo culture, which in turn developed out of the Kurgan culture of the Central Asian steppes. The commonly proposed period of earlier Vedic age is dated back to 2nd millennium BCE.

The Vedic beliefs and practices of the pre-classical era has been proposed to be closely related to the hypothesised Proto-Indo-European religion and shows relations with rituals from the Andronovo culture, from which the Indo-Aryan people descended. According to Anthony, the Old Indic religion probably emerged among Indo-European immigrants in the contact zone between the Zeravshan River (present-

day Uzbekistan) and (present-day) Iran. It was "a syncretic mixture of old Central Asian and new Indo-European elements"which borrowed "distinctive religious beliefs and practices" from the Bactria–Margiana Culture (BMAC).This syncretic influence is supported by at least 383 non-Indo-European words that were borrowed from this culture, including the god Indra and the ritual drink Soma.

The oldest inscriptions in Old Indic, the language of the Rig Veda, are found not in northwestern India and Pakistan, but in northern Syria, the location of the Mitanni kingdom.The Mitanni kings took Old Indic throne names, and Old Indic technical terms were used for horse-riding and chariot-driving.The Old Indic term r'ta, meaning "cosmic order and truth", the central concept of the Rig Veda, was also employed in the Mitanni kingdom. Old Indic gods, including Indra, were also known in the Mitanni kingdom.

The Vedic religion of the later Vedic period was consolidated in the Kuru Kingdom, and co-existed with local religions, such as the Yaksha cults, and was itself the product of "a composite of the Indo-Aryan and Harappan cultures and civilizations". White (2003) cites three other mainstream scholars who "have emphatically demonstrated" that Vedic religion is partially derived from the Indus Valley Civilization. The religion of the Indo-Aryans was further developed when they migrated into the Ganges Plain after c. 1100 BCE and became settled farmers, further syncretising with the native cultures of northern India.

9.4 CHARACTERISTICS

The idea of reincarnation, saṃsāra, is not mentioned in the early layers of the historic Vedic religion texts such as the Rigveda. The later layers of the Rigveda do mention ideas that suggest an approach towards the idea of rebirth, according to Ranade.

The early layers of the Vedas do not mention the doctrine of Karma and rebirth but mention the belief in an afterlife. According to Sayers, these earliest layers of the Vedic literature show ancestor worship and rites such as sraddha (offering food to the ancestors). The later Vedic texts

such as the Aranyakas and the Upanisads show a different soteriology based on reincarnation, they show little concern with ancestor rites, and they begin to philosophically interpret the earlier rituals. The idea of reincarnation and karma have roots in the Upanishads of the late Vedic period, predating the Buddha and the Mahavira.Similarly, the later layers of the Vedic literature such as the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (c. 800 BCE) – such as in section 4.4 – discuss the earliest versions of the Karma doctrine as well as causality.

Ancient Vedic religion lacked the belief in reincarnation and concepts such as Saṃsāra or Nirvana. Ancient Vedic religion was an complex animistic religion with polytheistic and pantheistic aspects. Ancestor worship was an important, maybe the central component, of the ancient Vedic religion. Elements of the ancestors cult are still common in modern Hinduism, see Śrāddha.

According to Olivelle, some scholars state that the renouncer tradition was an "organic and logical development of ideas found in the vedic religious culture", while others state that these emerged from the "indigenous non-Aryan population". This scholarly debate is a longstanding one, and is ongoing.

9.4.1 Rituals

Specific rituals and sacrifices of the Vedic religion include, among others.The Soma rituals, which involved the extraction, utility and consumption of Soma:

The Agnistoma or Soma sacrifice

Fire rituals involving oblations (havir):

The Agnihotra or oblation to Agni, a sun charm

The Agnicayana, the sophisticated ritual of piling the fire altar

The new and full moon as well as the Seasonal (Cāturmāsya) sacrifices

The royal consecration (Rajasuya) sacrifice

The Ashvamedha (horse sacrifice) or a Yajna dedicated to the glory, wellbeing and prosperity of the kingdom or empire

The Purushamedha

The rituals and charms referred to in the Atharvaveda are concerned with medicine and healing practices.

The Gomedha or cow sacrifice.

The Taittiriya Brahmana of the Yajur Veda gives instructions for selecting the cow for the sacrifice depending on the deity.

Panchasaradiya sava - celebration where 17 cows are immolated once every five years. The Taittiriya Brahmana advocates the Panchasaradiya for those who want to be great.

Sulagava - sacrifice where roast beef is offered. It is mentioned in the Grihya Sutra

According to Dr. R. Mitra, the offered animal was intended for consumption as detailed in the Asvalayana Sutra. The Gopatha Brahmana lists the different individuals who are to receive the various parts like Pratiharta (neck and hump), the Udgatr, the Neshta, the Sadasya, the householder who performs the sacrifice (the two right feet), his wife (the two left feet) and so on.

9.4.2 Pantheon

Though a large number of names for devas occur in the Rigveda, only 33 devas are counted, eleven each of earth, space, and heaven.The Vedic pantheon knows two classes, Devas and Asuras. The Devas (Mitra, Varuna, Aryaman, Bhaga, Amsa, etc.) are deities of cosmic and social order, from the universe and kingdoms down to the individual. The Rigveda is a collection of hymns to various deities, most notably heroic Indra, Agni the sacrificial fire and messenger of the gods, and Soma, the deified sacred drink of the Indo-Iranians. Also prominent is Varuna (often paired with Mitra) and the group of "All-gods", the Vishvadevas.

9.4.3 Sages

In the Hindu tradition, the revered sages of this era were Yajnavalkya, Atharvan, Atri, Bharadvaja, Gautama Maharishi, Jamadagni,Kashyapa, Vasistha, Bhrigu, Kutsa, Pulastya, Kratu, Pulaha, Vishwamitra Narayana, Kanva, Rishabha, Vamadeva, and Angiras.

9.4.4 Ethics

Ethics in the Vedas are based on concepts like satya and ṛta.

In the Vedas and later sutras, the meaning of the word satya (सत्य) evolves into an ethical concept about truthfulness and is considered an important virtue.] It means being true and consistent with reality in one's thought, speech and action.

Due to the nature of Vedic Sanskrit, the term Ṛta can be used to indicate numerous things, either directly or indirectly, and both Indian and European scholars have experienced difficulty in arriving at fitting interpretations for Ṛta in all of its various usages in the Vedas, though the underlying sense of "ordered action" remains universally evident.

Check Your Progress-1

5. Discuss the definition of Vedism.

---

6. Write about the Pantheon.

9.5 POST-VEDIC RELIGIONS

The Vedic period is held to have ended around 500 BCE. The period between 800 BCE and 200 BCE is the formative period for later Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. According to Michaels, the period between 500 BCE and 200 BCE is a time of "ascetic reformism".According to Michaels, the period between 200 BCE and 1100 CE is the time of "classical Hinduism", since there is "a turning

point between the Vedic religion and Hindu religions".Muesse discerns a longer period of change, namely between 800 BCE and 200 BCE, which he calls the "Classical Period", when "traditional religious practices and beliefs were reassessed. The brahmins and the rituals they performed no longer enjoyed the same prestige they had in the Vedic period.

Some scholars consider the term Brahmanism as synonymous with Hinduism and use it interchangeably. Others consider them different, and that the transition from ancient Brahmanism into schools of Hinduism that emerged later as a form of evolution, one that preserved many of the central ideas and theosophy in the Vedas, and synergistically integrated new ideas.Of the major traditions that emerged from Brahmanism are the six darshanas, particular the Vedanta, Samkhya and Yoga schools of Hinduism.

9.5.1 Vedanta

Vedic religion was followed by Upanishads which gradually evolved into Vedanta, which is regarded by some as the primary institution of Hinduism. Vedanta considers itself "the purpose or goal of the Vedas."

9.5.2 Śrauta

According to David Knipe, some communities in India have preserved and continue to practice portions of the historical Vedic religion, such as in Kerala and Andhra Pradesh state of India and elsewhere.

9.5.3 Bhakti

According to German Professor Axel Michaels, the Vedic gods declined but did not disappear, and local cults were assimilated into the Vedic-brahmanic pantheon, which changed into the Hindu pantheon. Deities such as Shiva and Vishnu became more prominent and gave rise to Shaivism and Vaishnavism.

9.5.4 Sramana Tradition

The non-Vedic śramaṇa traditions existed alongside Brahmanism. These were not direct outgrowths of Vedism, but movements with mutual influences with Brahmanical traditions,[140] reflecting "the cosmology and anthropology of a much older, pre-Aryan upper class of northeastern India".Jainism and Buddhism evolved out of the Shramana tradition.

In this view, Jainism peaked at the time of Mahavira (traditionally put in the 6th century BCE). Buddhism, traditionally put from c. 500 BCE, declined in India over the 5th to 12th centuries in favor of Puranic Hinduism and Islam.

9.6 PURANAS

The Puranas (Sanskrit: "of ancient times") are the scriptures of modem Hinduism, which assumed their present form slightly earlier than the time of Sankaracharya, the great Saivite reformer, who flourished in the eighth or ninth century. The Puranas which exist now were compiled in the Puranic Period [AD 600-1000], and have since been altered and considerably enlarged during many centuries after the Mahommedan conquest of India.

They are not authorities for Hinduism as a whole; they are special guides for separate and often conflicting branches and sects, written for the evident purpose of promoting either Vishnu or Shiva worship at the expense of the other god. In them the simple primitive fancies suggested by the operations of Nature have become supplanted by the wild imaginings of a more advanced civilisation, and of a more corrupt state of society. They are the stronghold of polytheism, pantheism, and idolatry. Legends about some of the Vedic gods and gods of later times abound. Together with the advocacy of the Puranic gods, each of which is honoured with separate chapters, in which he is supremely praised and lauded above the other gods, the worship of planets is developed, rivers are deified, and many animals and birds receive divine worship as the "Vahans" or vehicles of the gods and goddesses. Certain trees also are regarded as sacred and receive worship. We may therefore regard the Puranas as giving sanction to the later and more extravagant developments of Hinduism.

The Purana literature is very extensive. The 18 Mahapuranas are said to contain 400,000 verses. Over and above these, there are 18 Upa-puranas, and 18 more Puranas unsuccessfully claiming position among the 36

Maha and Upa-puranas. Besides these 54, there is a miscellaneous lot of Puranas bringing up the number nearly to one hundred.

To suppose that they are altogether concoctions of the Middle Ages is to place too great a strain on credulity. They can scarcely have been reconstructed from the fragmentary evidence supplied by Vedas and Brahmanas at a period when no one could have dreamed of treating Vedas and Brahmanas as historical documents — a task reserved for the nineteenth century. The only possible conclusion is that the Puranas have preserved, in however perverted and distorted a form, an independent tradition, which supplements the priestly tradition of the Vedas and Brahmanas, and which goes back to the same period. This tradition, as we may gather from the prologues, was handed down from one generation of bards to another and was solemnly promulgated on the occasion of great sacrifice.

The principal Puranas seem to have been edited in their present form during the Gupta period, when a great extension and revival of Sanskrit Brahmanical literature took place. The Vayu Purana in its present shape seems to be referred to the fourth century AD by the well-known passage describing the extent of the Gupta dominions, which is applicable only to the reign of Chandra-gupta I in 320-6 AD. The Vayupurana, Vishnupurana, Maisyapurana, and Brahmandapurana seems to stop with the imperial Guptas and their contemporaries, which indicates that the date of the redaction of the four works named cannot be very far removed from 500 AD, the imperial Gupta dynasty having ended about 480 AD. By 1000 AD the Puranas were, as now, eighteen in number, and were regarded as coming down from immemorial antiquity, when the mythical Rishis lived.

A very striking analogy to the mutual relations of the various Puranas is to be found in the case of the Saxon chronicle, which, as is well known, continued to be written up in various monasteries down to the reign of Stephen, though the additions made after the Roman conquest were independent of each other. Similarly the copies of the original verse Purana that were possessed by the priests of the great centres of pilgrimage were altered and added to chiefly by the insertion of local

events after the fall of a central Hindu government had made communication between the different groups of Brahmans relatively difficult In this way the Brahma Purana may represent the Orissa version of the original work, just as the Padma may give that of Pushkara, the Agni that of Gaya, the Varaha that of Mathura, the Vamana that of Thanesar, and the Matsya that of the Brahmans on the Narmada.

Every purana deals with at least the following five topics:

1. Sarga (original Creation, the evolution of the universe from its material cause),

2. Pratisarga (dissolution and Secondary Creation, the re-creation of the universe from the constituent elements into which it is merged at the close of each aeon (kalpa) or day in the life of the Creator, Brahma),

3. Vamsa / Vamsha / varnia (ancient genealogies of the Divinities, Demons, Rishis and so on),

4. Manvantara (the periods of the Manus, that is, Cosmic Cycles, the groups of ‘great ages’ (mahayuga) included in an aeon, in each of which mankind is supposed to be produced anew from a first father, Manu. The name Manvantara means time between the Manus, and Manu means "with one mind," that is to say, humanity.),

5. Vamsa Charitra / Vansacharita / Vamshanucharita / vamsanucarita / vamsyanucharita / vampanucharita (histories of the great dynasties, the royal families who rule over the earth during the four ‘ages’ (yuga) which make up one ‘great age’).

These appear to have been the original subjects of the Puranas, and were so specially their province that the epithet 'having five characteristic subjects' was an old synonym of the title Purana ; hence religious instruction apart from these subjects was not one of their primary aims, nor do they appear to have been composed for sectarian purposes originally. Sectarian designs seem rather to have been an after-modification, except in the latest Puranas, which are frankly sectarian. The first three of these subjects are closely connected and may be considered together. The teaching ia neither uniform nor consistent, but

seems to combine different schemes. It postulates the primordial essence called prakrti and prodhuna, spirit called purusa, and the god Brahma, with whom both prakrti and purusa are sometimes identified. Prakrti contained the three qualities, goodness (tattva), passion (rajas), and darkness (tamai), in equilibrium. It first evolved the great intellectual principle (mahat) as the first stage. From this was evolved the principle of individuality (ahankara), and from this the five subtle elements (tan-radtra), sound, touch, form, taste, and smell, which became manifest respectively aa the five elements (bhitta), ether, air, light, water, and solid matter. This was the second stage, the elemental creation (bhuta-sarga). In the third stage the ten organs of sense and action and the mind proceeded from the intellectual principle. These three stages were the creation from prakrti (prakrtasarga). All these principles and elements, through the influence of spirit, combined and formed an egg, the egg of Brahma, wherein he, assuming the quality of passion, became active, brought the world into existence as the fourth stage, and through meditation originated, fifthly, the animal kingdom, sixthly, the gods, seventhly, mankind, eighthly, the intellectual notions called anugrana, and, ninthly, Sanatkumara and other semi-divine mind-born sons who remained celibate, whence this creation is called kaumara. In all these the three qualities existed in different states of predominance.

Five out of the eighteen Puranas, namely, the Vayu, Matsya, Vishnu, Brahmanda, and Bhagavata contain king lists. The Brahmanda and Bhagavata Puranas being comparatively late works, the lists in them are corrupt, imperfect, and of slight value. But those in the oldest documents, the Vayu, Matsya, and Vishnu, are full, and evidently based upon good authorities. The latest of these three works, the Vishnu, was initially the best known in the West, having been completely translated into English in 1840; but in some cases its evidence is not so good as that of the Vayu and Matsya. It was composed, probably, in the fifth or sixth century AD, and corresponds most closely with the theoretical definition that a Purana should deal with the five topics of primary creation, secondary creation, genealogies of gods and patriarchs, reigns of various Manus, and the histories of the old dynasties of kings. The Vayu seems to go back to the

middle of the fourth century AD, and the Matsya is probably intermediate in date between it and the Vishnu.

The most systematic record of Indian historical tradition is that preserved in the dynastic lists of the Puranas. If some kind of annals of kings and dynasties existed, even in that ancient period, beyond what is found in the Brahmanas themselves, they have long since been lost. Probably such annals were preserved in the traditions of the people, and were altered and re-cast, and mixed up with legends from century to century, and from age to age, until, after about two thousand years, they finally assumed the shape of the modern Puranas.

The Puranas began to be recast when the worship of Hindu deities rose in popular estimation about the time of Wema-Kadphises circa 250 A D, and the process continued through the Gupta period to a much later date and new Puranas appeared from time to time ; and it has hardly ceased even to this day. They existed long before, since they are alluded to in the Upanishads and Brautasutras, but their contents must have been strictly in accordance with the rule given by Amarasimha in his lexicon, and embraced an account of the creation and dissolution of the world, of the different families of Bishis and princes, and of the deeds of the most heroio among them, and of the Manvantaras or different ages of the world. But now the necessity of glorifying the different gods and goddesses whose worship was rising in favour and of firmly inculcating other religious duties had been felt; and new Puranas were composed having the framework of the old but with new matter introduced on every occasion.

Check Your Progress-2

7. Discuss the Vedanta.

---

8. Write about the concept of Puranas.

9.7 LET US SUM UP

According to Indologist Jan Heesterman, the terms Vedism and Brahmanism are “somewhat imprecise terms”. They refer to ancient forms of Hinduism based on the ideologies found in its early literary corpus. Vedism refers to the oldest version, states Heesterman, and it was older than Brahmanism. Vedism refers to the religious ideas of Indo-Europeans who migrated into the Indus River valley region of the subcontinent, whose religion relied on the Vedic corpus including the early Upanishads.Brahmanism, according to Heesterman, refers to the religion that had expanded to a region stretching from the northwest subcontinent to the Ganges valley. Brahmanism included the Vedic corpus and non-Vedic literature such as the Dharmasutras and Dharmasastras, and was the version of ancient Hinduism that gave prominence to the priestly (Brahmin) class of the society. According to the Encyclopædia Britannica, Brahmanism separately refers to both the predominant position of the priests (Brahmans) and also to the importance given to Absolute Reality (Brahman) speculations in the early Upanishads, as these terms are etymologically linked. The Vedic religion was probably the religion of the Vedic Indo-Aryans, and existed in northern India from c. 1500–500 BCE.The Indo-Aryans were a branch of the Indo-European language family, which originated in the Sintashta culture and further developed into the Andronovo culture, which in turn developed out of the Kurgan culture of the Central Asian steppes. The commonly proposed period of earlier Vedic age is dated back to 2nd millennium BCE. According to Michaels, the period between 200 BCE and 1100 CE is the time of "classical Hinduism", since there is "a turning point between the Vedic religion and Hindu religions".Muesse discerns a longer period of change, namely between 800 BCE and 200 BCE, which he calls the "Classical Period", when "traditional religious practices and

beliefs were reassessed. The brahmins and the rituals they performed no longer enjoyed the same prestige they had in the Vedic period. The Purana literature is very extensive. The 18 Mahapuranas are said to contain 400,000 verses. Over and above these, there are 18 Upa-puranas, and 18 more Puranas unsuccessfully claiming position among the 36 Maha and Upa-puranas. Besides these 54, there is a miscellaneous lot of Puranas bringing up the number nearly to one hundred.

To suppose that they are altogether concoctions of the Middle Ages is to place too great a strain on credulity. They can scarcely have been reconstructed from the fragmentary evidence supplied by Vedas and Brahmanas at a period when no one could have dreamed of treating Vedas and Brahmanas as historical documents — a task reserved for the nineteenth century. The only possible conclusion is that the Puranas have preserved, in however perverted and distorted a form, an independent tradition, which supplements the priestly tradition of the Vedas and Brahmanas, and which goes back to the same period. This tradition, as we may gather from the prologues, was handed down from one generation of bards to another and was solemnly promulgated on the occasion of great sacrifice. They existed long before, since they are alluded to in the Upanishads and Brautasutras, but their contents must have been strictly in accordance with the rule given by Amarasimha in his lexicon, and embraced an account of the creation and dissolution of the world, of the different families of Bishis and princes, and of the deeds of the most heroio among them, and of the Manvantaras or different ages of the world. But now the necessity of glorifying the different gods and goddesses whose worship was rising in favour and of firmly inculcating other religious duties had been felt; and new Puranas were composed having the framework of the old but with new matter introduced on every occasion.

9.8 KEYWORDS

- **Vedic Religion:** According to Indologist Jan Heesterman, the terms Vedism and Brahmanism are “somewhat imprecise terms”. They

refer to ancient forms of Hinduism based on the ideologies found in its early literary corpus.

- **Puranic Religion:** The Purana literature is very extensive. The 18 Mahapuranas are said to contain 400,000 verses. Over and above these, there are 18 Upa-puranas, and 18 more Puranas unsuccessfully claiming position among the 36 Maha and Upa-puranas.

9.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Describe about the Origins and developments of Vedic religions.

2.Analyse the characteristics of Vedic religions.

3.Briefly discuss the Post Vedic religions.

4.Explain the Puranic religions.

9.10 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

1."Brahmanism". Encyclopedia Britannica.

2. "Vedic religion". Encyclopedia Britannica.

3. Bruce M. Sullivan (2001). The A to Z of Hinduism. Rowman & Littlefield. p. 9. ISBN 978-0-8108-4070-6.

4. Samuel 2010, pp. 97-99, 113-118.

5. "Vedic religion". Encyclopedia Britannica. It [Vedic religion] takes its name from the collections of sacred texts known as the Vedas. Vedism is the oldest stratum of religious activity in India for which there exist written materials. It was one of the major traditions that shaped Hinduism.

6.Jamison, Stephanie; Witzel, Michael (1992). "Vedic Hinduism" (PDF). Harvard University. pp. 2–4. Retrieved 4 August 2018.

7. Laumakis, Stephen J. (21 February 2008). An Introduction to Buddhist Philosophy. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 9781139469661.

8. Jamison, Stephanie; Witzel, Michael (1992). "Vedic Hinduism" (PDF). Harvard University. pp. 1–5, 47–52, 74–77. Retrieved 4 August 2018.

9.Sayers, Matthew R. (1 November 2015). McGovern, Nathan (ed.). "Feeding the Dead: Ancestor worship in ancient India". The Journal of Hindu Studies. 8 (3): 336–338. doi:10.1093/jhs/hiv034. ISSN 1756-4255.

10. Keown, Damien (2013). Buddhism: A very short introduction. Oxford University Press. pp. 28, 32–38. ISBN 978-0-19-966383-5.

11. Laumakis 2008.

12. Tull, Herman Wayne (1989). The Vedic Origins of Karma: Cosmos as man in ancient Indian myth and ritual. State University of New York Press. pp. 1–3, 11–12. ISBN 978-0-7914-0094-4.

13. "Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.5-6". Berkley Center for Religion Peace & World Affairs. Georgetown University. 2012. Archived from the original on 13 April 2013.

14. Sayers, Matthew R. (2015). "The Śrāddha: The Development of Ancestor Worship in Classical Hinduism". Religion Compass. 9 (6): 182–197. doi:10.1111/rec3.12155. ISSN 1749-8171.

15. Flood 2008, p. 273.

16. Prasoon, Shrikant, (Prof.) (11 August 2010). "Ch. 2, Vedang, Kalp". Indian Scriptures. Pustak Mahal. ISBN 978-81-223-1007-8.

17.Griffith, Ralph Thomas Hotchkin (1987) [1899]. The Texts of the White Yajurveda. Translated with a popular commentary (Reprint ed.). Benaras, IN: New Delhi : Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers. ISBN 81-215-0047-8.

18.Bloomfield, Maurice (1 June 2004). Hymns of the Atharva Veda. Kessinger Publishing. pp. 1–8. ISBN 1419125087.

9.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. The historical Vedic religion refers to the religious ideas and practices among most Indo-Aryan peoples of ancient India during the Vedic period (1500 BC - 500BC). These ideas and practices are found in the Vedic texts, and they were one of the major influences that shaped contemporary Hinduism.

2. Pantheon

Though a large number of names for devas occur in the Rigveda, only 33 devas are counted, eleven each of earth, space, and heaven.The Vedic pantheon knows two classes, Devas and Asuras. The Devas (Mitra, Varuna, Aryaman, Bhaga, Amsa, etc.) are deities of cosmic and social order, from the universe and kingdoms down to the individual. The Rigveda is a collection of hymns to various deities, most notably heroic Indra, Agni the sacrificial fire and messenger of the gods, and Soma, the deified sacred drink of the Indo-Iranians. Also prominent is Varuna (often paired with Mitra) and the group of "All-gods", the Vishvadevas.

3. Vedanta

Vedic religion was followed by Upanishads which gradually evolved into Vedanta, which is regarded by some as the primary institution of Hinduism. Vedanta considers itself "the purpose or goal of the Vedas."

4. The Puranas (Sanskrit: "of ancient times") are the scriptures of modem Hinduism, which assumed their present form slightly earlier than the time of Sankaracharya, the great Saivite reformer, who flourished in the eighth or ninth century. The Puranas which exist now were compiled in the Puranic Period [AD 600-1000], and have since been altered and considerably enlarged during many centuries after the Mahommedan conquest of India.

UNIT-10 SANSKRIT LITERARATURE

STRUCTURE

10.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Able to understand Sanskrit Literature
- Able to understand The Vedic Period
- Able to understand The Epics

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Literature in Sanskrit, the classical language of India, represents a continuous cultural tradition from the time of the Vedas in the second millennium B.C.E. until the present. Sanskrit has an extremely rich and complex grammatical structure and an enormous vocabulary. It was a spoken language for centuries before the Vedas were written down. Around 600 B.C.E., in the classical period of Iron Age Ancient India, Sanskrit began the transition from a primary language to a second

language of religion and learning, used by the educated elite. Literature in Sanskrit begins with the Vedas, and continues with the Sanskrit Epics of Iron Age India; the golden age of Classical Sanskrit literature dates to the Early Middle Ages (roughly the third to seventh centuries C.E.). Literary production in Sanskrit saw a late bloom in the eleventh century before declining after 1100 C.E.

Due to its extensive use in religious literature, primarily in Hinduism, and the fact that most modern Indian languages have been directly derived from or strongly influenced by Sanskrit, the language and its literature are of great importance in Indian culture, similar to the importance of Latin in European culture. There are contemporary efforts towards revival, with events like the "All-India Sanskrit Festival" (since 2002), which holds annual composition contests.

Sanskrit, the classical language of India, and its literature, represent a continuous cultural tradition from the time of the Vedas in the second millennium B.C.E. until the present. It is among the earliest Indo-European languages, closely related to Greek and Latin and most distantly to English and other modern European languages . It is the liturgical language of Hinduism and Buddhism primarily, and utilized occasionally in Jainism, and its position in the cultures of South and Southeast Asia is akin to that of Latin and Greek in Europe. It is an ancestor of the modern Indo-Aryan languages and has evolved into, as well as influenced, many modern languages of the world, including Hindi, Bengali, and Marathi.

As an early member of the Indo-European family, Sanskrit is closely related to Greek and Latin and most distantly to English and other modern European languages. Sanskrit is also the parent of the modern Indo-Aryan languages of north and central India, including Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, and many others.

Sanskrit has an extremely rich and complex grammatical structure and an enormous vocabulary. It appears in pre-Classical form as Vedic Sanskrit, which was a spoken language for centuries before the Vedas were written down. Around 600 B.C.E., in the classical period of Iron Age Ancient India, Sanskrit began the transition from a primary language to a

second language of religion and learning, used by the educated elite. Classical Sanskrit is defined by the oldest surviving Sanskrit grammar, Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī ("Eight-Chapter Grammar") dating to around the fifth century B.C.E..

The literature of Sanskrit embraces a vast number of books on nearly every imaginable subject. Important genres of Sanskrit literature include poetry, drama, religion and ritual, philosophy, law, grammar and linguistics, medicine, astronomy and astrology. Among the best-known masterworks of Sanskrit literature are the poems and plays of Kalidasa, the great epics Ramayana and Mahabharata, including the Bhagavad-gita which constitutes a section of the latter, and the Upanishads.

A number of Prakrits, or Middle Indo-Aryan languages, the vernacular dialects of ancient times, were derived from and closely related to Sanskrit, and are usually studied together with it. Several of these Middle Indo-Aryan produced important literature. The best known of these is Pali, which still serves as the canonical language of Buddhism in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. Other Prakrit languages such as Sauraseni, Maharastri, Magadhi, and Gandhari embody various facets of the literatures of both the Brahmanical/Hindu and Buddhist traditions.

10.2 VEDIC PERIOD

On the very threshold of Indian literature more than three thousand years ago, we are confronted with a body of lyrical poetry which, although far older than the literary monuments of any other branch of the Indo-European family, is already distinguished by refinement and beauty of thought, as well as by skill in the handling of language and metre. From this point, for a period of more than a thousand years, Indian literature bears an exclusively religious stamp; even those latest productions of the Vedic age which cannot be called directly religious are yet meant to further religious ends. This is, indeed, implied by the term "Vedic." For veda, primarily signifying "knowledge" (from vid, "to know"), designates "sacred lore," as a branch of literature. Besides this general sense, the word has also the restricted meaning of "sacred book."

In the Vedic period three well-defined literary strata are to be distinguished. The first is that of the four Vedas, the outcome of a creative and poetic age, in which hymns and prayers were composed chiefly to accompany the pressing and offering of the Soma juice or the oblation of melted butter (ghṛita) to the gods. The four Vedas are "collections," called saṃhitā, of hymns and prayers made for different ritual purposes. They are of varying age and significance. By far the most important as well as the oldest—for it is the very foundation of all Vedic literature—is the Rigveda, the "Veda of verses" (from ṛich, "a laudatory stanza"), consisting entirely of lyrics, mainly in praise of different gods. It may, therefore, be described as the book of hymns or psalms. The Sāma-veda has practically no independent value, for it consists entirely of stanzas (excepting only 75) taken from the Rigveda and arranged solely with reference to their place in the Soma sacrifice. Being meant to be sung to certain fixed melodies, it may be called the book of chants (sāman). The Yajur-veda differs in one essential respect from the Sāma-veda. It consists not only of stanzas (ṛich), mostly borrowed from the Rigveda, but also of original prose formulas. It resembles the Sāma-veda, however, in having its contents arranged in the order in which it was actually employed in various sacrifices. It is, therefore, a book of sacrificial prayers (yajus). The matter of this Veda has been handed down in two forms. In the one, the sacrificial formulas only are given; in the other, these are to a certain extent intermingled with their explanations. These three Vedas alone were at first recognised as canonical scriptures, being in the next stage of Vedic literature comprehensively spoken of as "the threefold knowledge" (trayī vidyā).

The fourth collection, the Atharva-veda, attained to this position only after a long struggle. Judged both by its language and by that portion of its matter which is analogous to the contents of the Rigveda, the Atharva-veda came into existence considerably later than that Veda. In form it is similar to the Rigveda, consisting for the most part of metrical hymns, many of which are taken from the last book of the older collection. In spirit, however, it is not only entirely different from the Rigveda, but represents a much more primitive stage of thought. While the Rigveda deals almost exclusively with the higher gods as conceived by a

comparatively advanced and refined sacerdotal class, the Atharva-veda is, in the main, a book of spells and incantations appealing to the demon world, and teems with notions about witchcraft current among the lower grades of the population, and derived from an immemorial antiquity. These two, thus complementary to each other in contents, are obviously the most important of the four Vedas. As representing religious ideas at an earlier stage than any other literary monuments of the ancient world, they are of inestimable value to those who study the evolution of religious beliefs.

The creative period of the Vedas at length came to an end. It was followed by an epoch in which there no longer seemed any need to offer up new prayers to the gods, but it appeared more meritorious to repeat those made by the holy seers of bygone generations, and handed down from father to son in various priestly families. The old hymns thus came to be successively gathered together in the Vedic collections already mentioned, and in this form acquired an ever-increasing sanctity. Having ceased to produce poetry, the priesthood transferred their creative energies to the elaboration of the sacrificial ceremonial. The result was a ritual system far surpassing in complexity of detail anything the world has elsewhere known. The main importance of the old Vedic hymns and formulas now came to be their application to the innumerable details of the sacrifice. Around this combination of sacred verse and rite a new body of doctrine grew up in sacerdotal tradition, and finally assumed definite shape in the guise of distinct theological treatises entitled Brāhmaṇas, "books dealing with devotion or prayer" (brahman). They evidently did not come into being till a time when the hymns were already deemed ancient and sacred revelations, the priestly custodians of which no longer fully understood their meaning owing to the change undergone by the language. They are written in prose throughout, and are in some cases accented, like the Vedas themselves. They are thus notable as representing the oldest prose writing of the Indo

European family. Their style is, indeed, cumbrous, rambling, and disjointed, but distinct progress towards greater facility is observable within this literary period.

The chief purpose of the Brāhmaṇas is to explain the mutual relation of the sacred text and the ceremonial, as well as their symbolical meaning with reference to each other. With the exception of the occasional legends and striking thoughts which occur in them, they cannot be said to be at all attractive as literary productions. To support their explanations of the ceremonial, they interweave exegetical, linguistic, and etymological observations, and introduce myths and philosophical speculations in confirmation of their cosmogonic and theosophic theories. They form an aggregate of shallow and pedantic discussions, full of sacerdotal conceits, and fanciful, or even absurd, identifications, such as is doubtless unparalleled anywhere else. Yet, as the oldest treatises on ritual practices extant in any literature, they are of great interest to the student of the history of religions in general, besides furnishing much important material to the student of Indian antiquity in particular. It results from what has been said that the contrasts between the two older phases of Vedic literature are strongly marked. The Vedas are poetical in matter and form; the Brāhmaṇas are prosaic and written in prose. The thought of the Vedas is on the whole natural and concrete; that of the Brāhmaṇas artificial and abstract. The chief significance of the Vedas lies in their mythology; that of the Brāhmaṇas in their ritual.

The subject-matter of the Brāhmaṇas which are attached to the various Vedas, differs according to the divergent duties performed by the kind of priest connected with each Veda. The Brāhmaṇas of the Rigveda, in explaining the ritual, usually limit themselves to the duties of the priest called hotṛi or "reciter," on whom it was incumbent to form the canon (çastra) for each particular rite, by selecting from the hymns the verses applicable to it. The Brāhmaṇas of the Sāma-veda are concerned only with the duties of the udgātṛi or "chanter" of the Sāmans; the Brāhmaṇas of the Yajur-veda with those of the adhvaryu, or the priest who is the actual sacrificer. Again, the Brāhmaṇas of the Rigveda more or less follow the order of the ritual, quite irrespectively of the succession of the hymns in the Veda itself. The Brāhmaṇas of the Sāma- and the Yajur-veda, on the other hand, follow the order of their respective Vedas, which are already arranged in the ritual sequence. The Brāhmaṇa of the Sāma-veda, however, rarely explains individual verses, while that of the

Yajur-veda practically forms a running commentary on all the verses of the text.

The period of the Brāhmaṇas is a very important one in the history of Indian society. For in it the system of the four castes assumed definite shape, furnishing the frame within which the highly complex network of the castes of to-day has been developed. In that system the priesthood, who even in the first Vedic period had occupied an influential position, secured for themselves the dominant power which they have maintained ever since. The life of no other people has been so saturated with sacerdotal influence as that of the Hindus, among whom sacred learning is still the monopoly of the hereditary priestly caste. While in other early societies the chief power remained in the hands of princes and warrior nobles, the domination of the priesthood became possible in India as soon as the energetic life of conquest during the early Vedic times in the north-west was followed by a period of physical inactivity or indolence in the plains. Such altered conditions enabled the cultured class, who alone held the secret of the all-powerful sacrifice, to gain the supremacy of intellect over physical force.

The Brāhmaṇas in course of time themselves acquired a sacred character, and came in the following period to be classed along with the hymns as çruti or "hearing," that which was directly heard by or, as we should say, revealed to, the holy sages of old. In the sphere of revelation are included the later portions of the Brāhmaṇas, which form treatises of a specially theosophic character, and being meant to be imparted or studied in the solitude of the forest, are called Āraṇyakas or "Forest-books." The final part of these, again, are philosophical books named Upanishads, which belong to the latest stage of Brāhmaṇa literature. The pantheistic groundwork of their doctrine was later developed into the Vedānta system, which is still the favourite philosophy of the modern Hindus. Works of Vedic "revelation" were deemed of higher authority in cases of doubt than the later works on religious and civil usage, called smṛiti or "memory," as embodying only the tradition derived from ancient sages.

We have now arrived at the third and last stage of Vedic literature, that of the Sūtras. These are compendious treatises dealing with Vedic ritual

on the one hand, and with customary law on the other. The rise of this class of writings was due to the need of reducing the vast and growing mass of details in ritual and custom, preserved in the Brāhmaṇas and in floating tradition, to a systematic shape, and of compressing them within a compass which did not impose too great a burden on the memory, the vehicle of all teaching and learning. The main object of the Sūtras is, therefore, to supply a short survey of the sum of these scattered details. They are not concerned with the interpretation of ceremonial or custom, but aim at giving a plain and methodical account of the whole course of the rites or practices with which they deal. For this purpose the utmost brevity was needed, a requirement which was certainly met in a manner unparalleled elsewhere. The very name of this class of literature, sūtra, "thread" or "clue" (from siv "to sew"), points to its main characteristic and chief object—extreme conciseness. The prose in which these works are composed is so compressed that the wording of the most laconic telegram would often appear diffuse compared with it. Some of the Sūtras attain to an almost algebraic mode of expression, the formulas of which cannot be understood without the help of detailed commentaries. A characteristic aphorism has been preserved, which illustrates this straining after brevity. According to it, the composers of grammatical Sūtras delight as much in the saving of a short vowel as in the birth of a son. The full force of this remark can only be understood when it is remembered that a Brahman is deemed incapable of gaining heaven without a son to perform his funeral rites.

Though the works comprised in each class of Sūtras are essentially the same in character, it is natural to suppose that their composition extended over some length of time, and that those which are more concise and precise in their wording are the more recent; for the evolution of their style is obviously in the direction of increased succinctness. Research, it is true, has hitherto failed to arrive at any definite result as to the date of their composition. Linguistic investigations, however, tend to show that the Sūtras are closely connected in time with the grammarian Pāṇini, some of them appearing to be considerably anterior to him. We shall, therefore, probably not go very far wrong in assigning 500 and 200 B.C.

as the chronological limits within which the Sūtra literature was developed.

The tradition of the Vedic ritual was handed down in two forms. The one class, called Çrauta Sūtras because based on çruti or revelation (by which in this case the Brāhmaṇas are chiefly meant), deal with the ritual of the greater sacrifices, for the performance of which three or more sacred fires, as well as the ministrations of priests, are necessary. Not one of them presents a complete picture of the sacrifice, because each of them, like the Brāhmaṇas, describes only the duties of one or other of the three kinds of priests attached to the respective Vedas. In order to obtain a full description of each ritual ceremony, it is therefore needful to supplement the account given by one Çrauta Sūtra from that furnished by the rest.

The other division of the ritual Sūtras is based on smṛiti or tradition. These are the Gṛihya Sūtras, or "House Aphorisms," which deal with the household ceremonies, or the rites to be performed with the domestic fire in daily life. As a rule, these rites are not performed by a priest, but by the householder himself in company with his wife. For this reason there is, apart from deviations in arrangement and expression, omission or addition, no essential difference between the various Gṛihya Sūtras, except that the verses to be repeated which they contain are taken from the Veda to which they belong. Each Gṛihya Sūtra, besides being attached to and referring to the Çrauta Sūtra of the same school, presupposes a knowledge of it. But though thus connected, the two do not form a unity.

The second class of Sūtras, which deal with social and legal usage, is, like the Gṛihya Sūtras, also based on smṛiti or tradition. These are the Dharma Sūtras, which are in general the oldest sources of Indian law. As is implied by the term dharma, "religion and morality," their point of view is chiefly a religious one. They are closely connected with the Veda, which they quote, and which the later law-books regard as the first and highest source of dharma.

From the intensely crabbed and unintelligible nature of their style, and the studied baldness with which they present their subjects, it is evident that the Sūtras are inferior even to the Brāhmaṇas as literary productions.

Judged, however, with regard to its matter, this strange phase of literature has considerable value. In all other ancient literatures knowledge of sacrificial rites can only be gained by collecting stray references. But in the ritual Sūtras we possess the ancient manuals which the priests used as the foundation of their sacrificial lore. Their statements are so systematic and detailed that it is possible to reconstruct from them various sacrifices without having seen them performed. They are thus of great importance for the history of religious institutions, But the Sūtras have a further value. For, as the life of the Hindu, more than that of any other nation, was, even in the Vedic age, surrounded with a network of religious forms, both in its daily course and in its more important divisions, the domestic ritual as well as the legal Sūtras are our most important sources for the study of the social conditions of ancient India. They are the oldest Indian records of all that is included under custom.

Besides these ritual and legal compendia, the Sūtra period produced several classes of works composed in this style, which, though not religious in character, had a religious origin. They arose from the study of the Vedas, which was prompted by the increasing difficulty of understanding the hymns, and of reciting them correctly, in consequence of the changes undergone by the language. Their chief object was to ensure the right recitation and interpretation of the sacred text. One of the most important classes of this ancillary literature comprises the Prātiçākhya Sūtras, which, dealing with accentuation, pronunciation, metre, and other matters, are chiefly concerned with the phonetic changes undergone by Vedic words when combined in a sentence. They contain a number of minute observations, such as have only been made over again by the phoneticians of the present day in Europe. A still more important branch of this subsidiary literature is grammar, in which the results attained by the Indians in the systematic analysis of language surpass those arrived at by any other nation. Little has been preserved of the earliest attempts in this direction, for all that had been previously done was superseded by the great Sūtra work of Pāṇini. Though belonging probably to the middle of the Sūtra period, Pāṇini must be regarded as the starting-point of the Sanskrit age, the literature of which

is almost entirely dominated by the linguistic standard stereotyped by him.

In the Sūtra period also arose a class of works specially designed for preserving the text of the Vedas from loss or change. These are the Anukramaṇīs or "Indices," which quote the first words of each hymn, its author, the deity celebrated in it, the number of verses it contains, and the metre in which it is composed. One of them states the total number of hymns, verses, words, and even syllables, contained in the Rigveda, besides supplying other details.

From this general survey of the Vedic period we now turn to a more detailed consideration of the different phases of the literature it produced.

Check Your Progress-1

9. Write a short note on the Vedic Period.

---

10. Describe the meaning of Sanskrit Literature.

10.3 THE SUTRA LITERATURE

Continuing the tradition of the late Vedic Shrautasutra literature, Late Iron Age scholarship (ca. 500 to 100 B.C.E.) organized knowledge into Sutra treatises, including the Vedanga and the religious or philosophical Brahma Sutras, Yoga Sutras, and Nyaya Sutras.

In the Vedanga disciplines of grammar and phonetics, no author had greater influence than Pāṇini with his Aṣṭādhyāyī (Eight-Chapter

Grammar," circa fifth century B.C.E.), the oldest surviving Sanskrit grammar. It is considered to have defined classical Sanskrit. It is essentially a prescriptive grammar, an authority that defines rather than describes correct Sanskrit, involving metarules, transformations and recursion. Pāṇini's grammar effectively fixed the grammar of Classical Sanskrit and became the basis for all later grammatical works, such as Patanjali's Mahābhāṣya. The Backus-Naur Form or BNF grammars used to describe modern programming languages have significant similarities with Panini's grammar rules.

10.4 THE EPICS

The period between approximately the sixth and the first centuries B.C.E. saw the composition and redaction of the two great epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, with subsequent redaction progressing down to the fourth century C.E.. They are known as itihasa, or "that which occurred."

10.4.1 The Mahabharata

The Mahabharata (Great Bharata) is one of the largest poetic works in the world. While it is clearly a poetic epic, it contains large tracts of Hindu mythology, philosophy and religious doctrine. Traditionally, authorship of the Mahabharata is attributed to the sage Vyasa.According to the Adi-parva of the Mahabharata (81, 101-102), the text was originally 8,800 verses when it was composed by Vyasa and was known as the Jaya (Victory), which later became 24,000 verses in the Bharata recited by Vaisampayana.

The broad sweep of the story of the Mahabharata chronicles the story of the conflict between two families for control of Hastinapur, a city in Ancient India. The impact of the Mahabharata on the development of Hinduism and Indian culture cannot be measured. Thousands of later writers have drawn freely from the story and sub-stories of the Mahabharata.

10.4.2 The Ramayana

While not as long as the Mahabharata, the Ramayana is still twice as large as the Iliad and Odyssey combined. Traditionally, its authorship is attributed to the Hindu sage who is referred to as Adikavi, or "first poet." Valmiki introduced the Anushtubh meter for the first time in Ramayana. Like the Mahabharata, the Ramayana was handed down orally and evolved through several centuries before being transferred into writing. It includes tales that form the basis for modern Hindu festivals and contains a description of the marriage practices still observed by contemporary Hindus.

The Ramayana is the story of Prince Rama (Indian vernaculars: Raam or Sri Ram), his exile and the abduction of his wife by the Rakshas king Ravana, and the Lankan war. Similar to the Mahabharata, the Ramayana also has several full-fledged stories appearing as sub-plots.

The Ramayana has also played a role similar and equally important to that of the Mahabharata in the development of Indian culture. The Ramayana is also extant in Ramayana: Southeast Asian versions and is the subject of dramas and religious dances.

10.4.3 Drama

Drama emerged as a distinct genre of Sanskrit literature in the final centuries B.C.E., influenced partly by Vedic mythology and partly by Hellenistic drama. It reached its peak between the fourth and seventh centuries, before declining together with Sanskrit literature as a whole.

Famous Sanskrit dramatists include Sudraka, Bhasa, Asvaghosa and Kalidasa. Though numerous plays written by these playwrights are still available, little is known about the authors themselves.

Classical Sanskrit drama was heroic comedy of a religious character, featuring triumphant gods and divine lovers united after various trials (as in the perennially popular romance of Rama and Sita), noble deeds, and mythological themes. The episodic nature of these dramas reflected the Hindu and Buddhist attitude that a human life is only one episode in a long journey towards enlightenment and the restoration of cosmic balance. [4] The simplicity of the Indian stage allowed Sanskrit

playwrights to exercise great liberty and creativity. Unrestricted by realism, they were able to create a fanciful and idealistic universe, appropriate to the Hindu aesthetic of blissful idealism in art.

One of the earliest known Sanskrit plays is the Mricchakatika, thought to have been composed by Shudraka in the second century B.C.E.. The Natya Shastra (ca. second century C.E., literally "Scripture of Dance," though it sometimes translated as "Science of Theatre"') is a foundational work in Sanskrit literature on the subject of stagecraft. Bhasa and Kalidasa are major early authors of the first centuries C.E. Kalidasa easily qualifies as the greatest poet and playwright in Sanskrit. His work deals primarily with famous Hindu legends and themes; three famous plays by Kalidasa are Vikramōrvaśīyam (Vikrama and Urvashi),

Late (post sixth century) dramatists include Dandi and Sri Harsha. The only surviving ancient Sanskrit drama theater is Koodiyattam, which has been in Kerala by the Chakyar community.

10.4.4 Tantras

"Tantra" is a general term for a scientific, magical or mystical treatise. Works on Hindu astrology (Parashara) and both Hindu and Buddhist mystical texts concern themselves with five subjects; the creation, the destruction of the world, the worship of the gods, the attainment of all objects, and the four modes of union with the Supreme Spirit by meditation. Tantric texts are found throughout the entire lifespan of Classical Sanskrit literature.

The Panchatantra is a collection of fables estimated to have reached its fixed form around 200 B.C.E.

10.4.5 Puranas

The corpus of the Hindu Puranas likewise falls into the classical period of Sanskrit literature, dating to between the fifth and tenth centuries, and marks the emergence of the Vaishna and Shaiva denominations of classical Hinduism. The Puranas are classified into a Mahā- ("great") and a Upa- ("lower, additional") corpus. Traditionally they are said to narrate five subjects, called pañcalakṣaṇa ("five distinguishing marks"), which are:

Sarga - The creation of the universe.

Pratisarga - Secondary creations, mostly re-creations after dissolution.

Vamśa - Genealogy of gods and sages.

Manvañtara - The creation of the human race and the first human beings.

Vamśānucaritam - Dynastic histories.

A Purana usually gives prominence to a certain deity (Shiva, Vishnu or Krishna, Durga) and depicts the other gods as subservient.

Check Your Progress-2

11. Write a short note on the Sutra Literature.

---

12. Describe the meaning of Puranas.

10.5 LET US SUM UP

Literature in Sanskrit, the classical language of India, represents a continuous cultural tradition from the time of the Vedas in the second millennium B.C.E. until the present. Sanskrit has an extremely rich and complex grammatical structure and an enormous vocabulary. It was a spoken language for centuries before the Vedas were written down. Around 600 B.C.E., in the classical period of Iron Age Ancient India, Sanskrit began the transition from a primary language to a second language of religion and learning, used by the educated elite. Literature in Sanskrit begins with the Vedas, and continues with the Sanskrit Epics

of Iron Age India; the golden age of Classical Sanskrit literature dates to the Early Middle Ages (roughly the third to seventh centuries C.E.). Literary production in Sanskrit saw a late bloom in the eleventh century before declining after 1100 C.E.On the very threshold of Indian literature more than three thousand years ago, we are confronted with a body of lyrical poetry which, although far older than the literary monuments of any other branch of the Indo-European family, is already distinguished by refinement and beauty of thought, as well as by skill in the handling of language and metre. From this point, for a period of more than a thousand years, Indian literature bears an exclusively religious stamp; even those latest productions of the Vedic age which cannot be called directly religious are yet meant to further religious ends. This is, indeed, implied by the term "Vedic." For veda, primarily signifying "knowledge" (from vid, "to know"), designates "sacred lore," as a branch of literature. Besides this general sense, the word has also the restricted meaning of "sacred book." Continuing the tradition of the late Vedic Shrautasutra literature, Late Iron Age scholarship (ca. 500 to 100 B.C.E.) organized knowledge into Sutra treatises, including the Vedanga and the religious or philosophical Brahma Sutras, Yoga Sutras, and Nyaya Sutras.

In the Vedanga disciplines of grammar and phonetics, no author had greater influence than Pāṇini with his Aṣṭādhyāyī (Eight-Chapter Grammar," circa fifth century B.C.E.), the oldest surviving Sanskrit grammar. It is considered to have defined classical Sanskrit. It is essentially a prescriptive grammar, an authority that defines rather than describes correct Sanskrit, involving metarules, transformations and recursion. Pāṇini's grammar effectively fixed the grammar of Classical Sanskrit and became the basis for all later grammatical works, such as Patanjali's Mahābhāṣya. The Backus-Naur Form or BNF grammars used to describe modern programming languages have significant similarities with Panini's grammar rules.

The period between approximately the sixth and the first centuries B.C.E. saw the composition and redaction of the two great epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, with subsequent redaction progressing down to the fourth century C.E.. They are known as itihasa, or "that which occurred."

10.6 KEYWORDS

- **Literature:** Literature in Sanskrit, the classical language of India, represents a continuous cultural tradition from the time of the Vedas in the second millennium B.C.E. until the present.
- **Vedic:** Indian literature bears an exclusively religious stamp; even those latest productions of the Vedic age which cannot be called directly religious are yet meant to further religious ends.
- **Epic:** The period between approximately the sixth and the first centuries B.C.E. saw the composition and redaction of the two great epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, with subsequent redaction progressing down to the fourth century C.E.. They are known as itihasa, or "that which occurred."

10.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Briefly discuss the Vedic Period.

2. Explain about the Epics.

3. Write about the Sanskrit Literature.

4. Discuss about the Sutra Literature.

10.8 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

1.A History of Sanskrit Literature. 2007. Gardners Books. ISBN 9780548113189 *Bhattacharya, J. N., and Nilanjana Sarkar. 2004. Encyclopedic dictionary of Sanskrit literature. Global encyclopedic literature series, 3. Delhi: Global Vision Pub. House. ISBN 818774684X

2.Dowson, John. 1961. A classical dictionary of Hindu mythology and religion, geography, history, and literature. London: Routledge & K. Paul.

3.Goswami, Bijoya and Manabendu Banerjee. 2004. Tragedy in Sanskrit literature. Kolkata: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar.

4.Langer, Susan K. Feeling and Form. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.

5.National Seminar on "Modern Sanskrit Literature: Tradition and Innovations," and Es. Bi Raghunāthācārya. 2002. Modern Sanskrit literature, tradition & innovations. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi. ISBN 8126014113

6.Oinas, Felix J. 1978. Heroic epic and saga an introduction to the world's great folk epics. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. ISBN 0253327385

10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. In the Vedic period three well-defined literary strata are to be distinguished. The first is that of the four Vedas, the outcome of a creative and poetic age, in which hymns and prayers were composed chiefly to accompany the pressing and offering of the Soma juice or the oblation of melted butter (ghṛita) to the gods. The four Vedas are "collections," called saṃhitā, of hymns and prayers made for different ritual purposes. They are of varying age and significance.

2. Literature in Sanskrit, the classical language of India, represents a continuous cultural tradition from the time of the Vedas in the second millennium B.C.E. until the present. Sanskrit has an extremely rich and complex grammatical structure and an enormous vocabulary. It was a spoken language for centuries before the Vedas were written down. Around 600 B.C.E., in the classical period of Iron Age Ancient India, Sanskrit began the transition from a primary language to a second language of religion and learning, used by the educated elite.

3. Continuing the tradition of the late Vedic Shrautasutra literature, Late Iron Age scholarship (ca. 500 to 100 B.C.E.) organized knowledge into Sutra treatises, including the Vedanga and the religious or philosophical Brahma Sutras, Yoga Sutras, and Nyaya Sutras.

4. The corpus of the Hindu Puranas likewise falls into the classical period of Sanskrit literature, dating to between the fifth and tenth centuries, and marks the emergence of the Vaishna and Shaiva denominations of classical Hinduism. The Puranas are classified into a Mahā- ("great") and a Upa- ("lower, additional") corpus.

UNIT-11 COINS AND CURRENCY

STRUCTURE

11.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Able to understand the Coinage of Ancient era in India.
- Able to understand Coins of Dynasties in Indian History

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Coins were introduced as a method of payment around the 6th or 5th century BCE. The invention of coins is still shrouded in mystery: According to Herdotous (I, 94), coins were first minted by the Lydians, while Aristotle claims that the first coins were minted by Demodike of Kyrme, the wife of King Midas of Phrygia. Numismatists consider that

the first coins were minted on the Greek island of Aegina, either by the local rulers or by king Pheidon of Argos.

Aegina, Samos, and Miletus all minted coins for the Egyptians, through the Greek trading post of Naucratis in the Nile Delta. It is certain that when Lydia was conquered by the Persians in 546 BCE, coins were introduced to Persia. The Phoenicians did not mint any coins until the middle of the fifth century BCE, which quickly spread to the Carthaginians who minted coins in Sicily. The Romans only started minting coins from 326 BCE.

The first coins were made of electrum, an alloy of silver and gold. It appears that many early Lydian coins were minted by merchants as tokens to be used in trade transactions. The Lydian state also minted coins, most of the coins mentioning king Alyattes of Lydia. Some Lydian coins have a so-called legend, a sort of dedication. One famous example found in Caria reads "I am the badge of Phanes" - it is still unclear who Phanes was.

In China, gold coins were first standardized during the Qin dynasty (221-207 BCE). After the fall of the Qin dynasty, the Han emperors added two other legal tenders: silver coins and "deerskin notes", a predecessor of paper currency which was a Chinese invention.

11.2 CONAGE OF ANCIENT ERA

11.2.1 Coins

The Maurya Empire was based upon a money-economy. The literary references to the use of coins are older than their actual finds. The Vedic term for a coin is taken to be Nishka Rv. I, 126, 2. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad speaks of a gift made to Yajnavalkya in the form of five padas of gold with which the horns of 1000 cows were hung, a total gift of 10,000 padas.

Weights of gold and probably a gold currency are indicated in such terms as Ashtaprud (Kathaka Samhita, Chapter XI, 1)or Satamana defined as “a weight of 100 krishnalas”, The Satpatha (XII. 2, 3. 2) also refers to

payment of sacrificial fee in terms of gold (hiranya) whether Suvarna or Satamana.

Gold (hiranya) being obtained from the beds of rivers like the Indus (Rv. X, 75, 8),or extracted from the earth (Av. XD, 1, 6, 26. 44) or from ore by smelting (Sata Br. VI, 1, 3, 5) or from washings (Jb. II, 1, 1, 5).

Panini (c. 500 BC) in his Grammar testifies to the continued use of some of these Vedic terms for coins. He knows of the gold coins Nishka, Satamana and Suvarna. Things valued in terms of Nishka are called Naishkika, Dvinaishkika, and so forth (V. 1, 20; 30). A man of 100 Nishkas was called a Naishka-Satika, a man of thousand a Naishka-Sahasrika (V. 2, 119). An article bought for a Satamana is called a Satamanam (V. I, 27).

It is interesting to note that Mr. Durga Prasad of Varanasi who had specialised in the study of punchmarked silver coins and handled thousands of them so far discovered, ascertained that 39 silver coins which were found in the earliest layers at Taxila weighed 100 rattis each =180 grains. These corns cannot be taken to be the double Persian sigloi mentioned below, for the Persian sigloi weighed not more than 36.45 grains and a double weighed 172.9 grains. They, therefore, are to be taken as indigenous coins called aptly Satamana coins in our texts.

It may be further assumed that weights of these coins followed a decimal system. The Satamanas had their Padas which may also be identified with certain broad pieces punched with 4 symbols and weighing 25 rattis or 1/4 of Satamanas.

Panini also refers to objects valued ill terms of Suvarna taken as a coin (IV. 3, 153; VI. 2, 55). He also knows of a gold coin Sana (V. 1, 35). In the Charaka-Samhita (Kalpa-Sthana, XII. 89) 1 sana = 4 mashas. Kautilya, as we have seen (II. 14), takes 1 Suvarna=16 Mashas and a pada of Suvarna = 4 mashas, the equivalent of a Sana.

The Karshapana, the established coin of ancient India, is fully known to Panini who refers to transactions made in terms of money taken to be the Karshapana (V. 1, 21; 27; 29, 34). He also knows of 1/2 (ardha) and 1/4 (pada) as denominations of Karshapana (V. 1. 48: 34). Karshapana, as

the standard coin, was in silver. Kautilya uses the form pana. Panini again knows of the small coin called Masha (V. 1, 34), Kautilya takes Masha as 1/16 of Karshapana, and as a copper coin (II. 19).

It would be too small in size in silver, though even some specimens of the silver Masha have been found at some places like Taxila. Therefore, as a copper coin, it admitted of smaller denominations known as 1/2 Mashaka, 1 Kakani = 1/4 Masha and 1/2 Kakani = 1/8 Masha. Kakani and Ardhakakani are known to Katyayana (Varttika on V. 1, 33) and also to Patanjali. Panini also uses the term Vimsatika in terms of Karshapana of twenty parts. This coin was in circulation in the country in some parts, along with the Karshapana of 16 parts, as known to Kautilya.

It appears that Mr. Durga Prasad found coins weighing 40 and 60 rattis corresponding to 20 and 30 Mashas, 1 Masha being = 2 rattis of silver. These coins may thus be taken as examples of coins called aptly by Panini Vimsatika and Trimsatika coins as known in his day. It may be noted that the Vinayapitaka (atthakatha. II Parajika) furnishes the information that at that time (of Bimbisara or Ajatasattu), at Rajagaha, there was in circulation the Karshapana of twenty Mashakas (Vimsatimasako Kahapano), whence the Pada was five Mashakas.

Buddhaghosha in his Samantapasadika dubs this coin as Nilakahapana and further states that the coin in circulation in the capital of the empire became the current coin in all its provinces (Sabbajanapadeshu). It is also stated that the coin was fashioned in accordance with the specifications of the old technical numismatic Sastra (Purana-Sastra) (Chatterji, 384-386).

Patanjali refers to the Karshapana of 16 Mashas as being older (purakalpa) than the one of 20 Mashas with which he was apparently more familiar, Kautilya knows of this older Karshapana as the standard of his days but refers to another silver coin called Dharana of 20 parts (on. Panini I. 2. 64). Both varieties of Karshapana seem to have been in circulation in different local areas in the country. It may be noted that the Buddhist tradition cited above regards the coin of 20 Mashas as being older than that of 16 Mashas.

Thousands of actual examples of the silver Karshapana have been found in different parts of India and are designated now as punch-marked coins. Their average weight is 32 Raktikas = 56 grains. This agrees with the standard mentioned by Kautilya, Manu (VIII. 136) or Yajnavalkya (I. 364) and also in Saratthadipani where the weight of a 'Rudradamaka' coin = 42 grains is stated to be 3/4 of a purana (old) Karshapana (Buddhistic Studies, Ibid).

Panini uses the term rupa (V. 2, 120) and explains the formation rupya as 'beautiful' or 'stamped' (ahata). The latter sense applies to a coin. The Arthasastra takes the term rupa in the sense of a coin alone and mentions an officer known as Rupadarsaka, 'the examiner of coins,' as we have already seen. It is interesting to note that Patanjali in commenting on Varttika on Panini's sutra, I, 4, 52, refers to a Rupatarka 'who examines (darsayati) the karshapanas'. It may be also recalled that Kautilya uses the terms Rupyarupa and Tamrarupa for silver and copper coins.

We shall now turn to the actual specimens of ancient Indian coins discovered so far. The oldest variety has been found in the parts of India in the northwest which belonged to the Achaemenian Persian Empire in the sixth and fifth century BC. Some of these coins were found in an early layer at Taxila along with a gold coin of Diodotus (250 BC), and, in another stratum, with the coins of Alexander the Great, looking "fresh from the mint," and one Achaemenid siglos of the 4th Century BC.

These weigh, as we have seen, 100 ratia =180 grains on as average. The sigloi weighs 86.45 grains, while the Attic standard = 67.5 grains. These coins are "thick, slightly bent bars of silver, stamped with wheel or sun like designs resembling the 6 armed symbol to be seen on the later punch-marked silver coins, while they form only a single type". It was probably these pieces in which Ambhi, the king of Taxila, had paid to Alexander his present of what the Greek writers describe as "80 talents of coined silver" (Curtius, VIII. 12, 42).

According to Durga Prasad (JRASB, Nunusmatic Supplement, XLVII, p. 76), these older per-Maurya coins are struck on a standard of 100 rattis as against the later Maurya coins of standard 32 rattis weight. This confirms

the truth of the Vinayapitaka that the older Karshapana of 20 Mashakas was of lesser weight.

Next, a hoard of coins was found at a deep stratum in Golakhpur at the site of ancient Pataliputra. These are taken to be the earliest known punch-marked silver coins and to be pre-Maurya, perhaps, Nanda, coins. They bear a pre-Maurya symbol, 'the hare or dog on hill', which may be taken as the Nanda symbol.

It may be noticed that many of these were punched by the Mauryas with their own symbol to make them 'legal tender,' or kosa-pravesya, as Kautilya calls them, as contrasted with the coinage current among the public for purposes of business transactions and aptly called by Kautilya vyavahariki panya-yatra, as we have already seen. We may recall that the Kasika mentions a tradition about Nandas inaugurating a royal measure (Nandopakramani manani), (II. 4, 21; VI. 21, 14) while their proverbial wealth as mentioned in literature may be due to their new coinage and currency system.

Following the Golakhpur find in the chronological order is a vast body of silver punch-marked coins found in thousands in different parts of India, from Panjab to Malwa, and from C.P. to the Deccan and up to Madras and Mysore. These may be grouped under six classes in accordance with the variations in their symbols and marks.

Yet they are all struck on a common standard, that of 32 rattis = 56 grains, like the pana or dharana. Another common feature they present is that "they have regularly on one side a group of five punches found in a great variety of combinations, and on the reverse have one or more punches, normally different from those found on the obverse" (Ib. xiii).

The five punches on the obverse show figures of (1) Sun, (2) Circle with 6 arms, 3 arrowheads, and 3 taurine symbols, (3) Mountain, (4) Peacock, dog (or rabbit), or tree on a hill, (5) Animals, such as elephant, bull, dog seizing a rabbit, rhino, and even fishes and frogs, and in some cases, sacred tree within a railing (perhaps a mark of Buddhist influence which was so widespread in the time of Asoka Maurya) (Ib. XX f.).

The symbols on tike reverse of these coins are only the marks of punching made by authorities and shroffs in checking them. It may be assumed that the larger the number of these punch-marks, the older must be the coins. This may supply a due to the dating of these coins. It may be noted that Kautilya's Mint-Master called Lakshanadhyaksha was in charge of the Lakshanas to be imprinted on the imperial coins.

Coins in circulation had also to be checked from time to time and this was done by the Rupadarsaka who punched his test marks each time on them. This means increase in the number, of these teat marks on the reverse, of which the maximum has been found to be 14 so far. Coins bearing larger number of marks appear to be older and more worn out.

It is difficult to comprehend fully the meaning of these symbols and punch-marks. That they have a meaning is indicated by Buddhaghosa who mentions in the Samantapasadika the ancient numismatic treatise known as Rupasutta as stating how a moneyer (Heranhako) could spot the village, the nigama or the nagara, and even the mint where a coin was manufactured, in the light of its marks, and whether it was "on a hill or on the bank of a river" (naditire va).

These puzzling punch-marks Buddhaghosa describes as chitta-vichitta, of various designs and forms. The mother of the boy Upali was full of fears that his eyes would be spoilt, if he chose the profession of a shroff (SBE, xiii. 201, f). Indeed, all eyes would suffer to this day if applied to find out the meaning of the bewildering punch-marks borne by these ancient Indian coins to which the key is lost in the absence of the old Rupasuttas.

Of the six Classes into which these coins are grouped, it is to be noted that Classes 2 and 6 are more closely connected and taken to be Maurya on grounds explained below. Indeed, a careful examination of the various symbols and marks borne by these numerous punch-marked silver coins found in so many parts of India, together with the evidence that they were in circulation in the country in the fourth, third, and second centuries BC, suggests the conclusion that they were "the coins of the Maurya Empire."

That these coins were issued by a government authority and not by private individuals, there is not the slightest doubt. Only a central authority could have carried out such an apparently complicated, but no doubt—if we had the clue—simple, system of Stamping the coins in regular series.

The regular recurrence of five symbols on the obverse naturally suggests a Board of Five, such as Megasthenes says was at the head of most departments of Mauryan administration. It can hardly be that the symbols are those of the five officials actually concerned in the issue of each piece, as some symbols like the sun and the six-armed symbol occur over a wide range of coins.

The punches, though not struck with one disc, were struck at one time. They may represent a series of officials of diminishing area of jurisdiction. The last and most frequently changing symbol would represent the actual issuer of the coin. The constant symbol, the sun, would represent the highest official, perhaps the king himself, and the next commonest, the various forms of six armed symbol, the highest officials next under him (Allan, lbid., Ixx, lxxi).

The Maurya connection of these coins is perhaps further attested by the figure of the peacock on a hill common on the coins of Group II under Class 2 and also on Group IV of the same Class, where it appears both on obverse and reverse. The peacock, as has been pointed out above, was the dynastic symbol of the Mauryas. We may also note that of all the animals portrayed on the coins, the elephant is the most prominent as the principal factor in Mauryan military strength.

Durga Prasad considers that the figure of 'Hill-with-crescent- on-top' was a specific Maurya symbol, apart from the peacock. This symbol, he points out, appears on most silver coins found all over the country, and also on known Mauryan Monuments (as mentioned above). It also appears on the base of the Maurya pillar recently excavated at Kumrahar in Patna. It is seen on the Sohagaura copper-plate of c. 320-300 BC bearing an inscription which states that at famines, grain was distributed from public granaries, a provision also mentioned by Kautilya, as we have seen.

Lastly, the symbol appears on a seal on three terracotta plates recently discovered at Bulandibagh at Mauryan level at the site of old Pataliputra, along with three other symbols. Jayaswal agreed with Durga Prasad in taking the seal to be the Maurya imperial seal, the Narendranka, by which, according to Kautilya, royal properties like weapons (V. 3) or cattle (II. 29) were marked. Durga Prasad also makes the ingenious suggestion that where a coin bears on the reverse this Maurya symbol of a Hill-with-crescent-on-top or a peacock, it is to be taken as a pre-Maurya coin which was rest ruck by the Maurya kings (Ibid. Num. Sup. P. 67 f).

As has been already stated, of the six Classes into which the above type of coins are grouped. Classes 2 and 6 are taken to be Maurya. “Their composition is almost everywhere the same,” though they are very different in style and fabric, Class 2 consisting of small thick pieces and Class 6 of large thin pieces. Yet the constant association of these two Classes is surprising.

It has been found that these two Classes of coins “circulated together thick Peshawar to the mouth of the Godavari, and from Palanpur in the west to Midnapore in the east.” The distinction between them is not one of place. The same authority must have issued them as current coins in all the localities under the control of that authority. “The authority that issued these coins must have ruled the Ganges valley, the upper Indus valley, thrust its way up the tributaries of Jumna to the west, and come along the east coast through Orissa and penetrated far into the Deccan. This is what the find-spots suggest” (Allan, Ibid. 1v, 1vi).

The find-spots also agree with die distribution of Asoka’s inscriptions and thus point unmistakably to the Maurya Empire as the authority that issued the coins of these two Classes which are found to be so closely connected.

11.2.2 Foreign Coins:

Since a part of the Punjab came under the dominion of the Achaemenian (Hakhamani) Emperors of ancient Persia, it was natural that their money must have come into India in the wake of their conquest. But it is not easy to prove it by actual finds of Persian coins in India.

The standard gold coin of ancient Persia was the Daric, weighing about 130 grains, probably first minted by Darius who first annexed to his empire the valley of the Indus. This coin is marked by the portrait on its obverse of the great king, armed with bow and spear, in the act of marching through his dominions.

The gold coin of Persia could not, however, obtain wide circulation in India for an important economic reason. India was known for its abundance of gold, so much so that its value relatively to silver was very low, as low as 1:8 as compared with the ratio of 1:13.3 maintained by the Imperial Persian Mint.

Therefore, the Darics that would find their way into India appeared to be an artificially inflated currency and would find no place in the India currency system, and would be exported at once. There was no profit in holding such Darics in India when they could be exchanged for more silver elsewhere. Therefore, Persian gold coinage has not been found in any appreciable quantity in India.

As regards the corresponding Persian-silver coinage, it consisted of what were called Sigloi or Shekels of which twenty were equivalent to a Daric. They weighed about 86.45 grains. Such silver coins would find their way into India where they had more value and would buy more gold.

Many sigloi coins have been found in India with peculiar counter marks closely resembling those found on the square pieces of silver constituting India's oldest native punch-marked coinage. The Persian sigloi, however, did not long survive the overthrow of Darius III by Alexander.

The Persian conquest of the Punjab was followed by the so- called Greek conquest, which was short-lived. The effect of Alexander's campaigns in the Punjab was only to unify the country all the more. Smaller principalities were brought together in the larger kingdom which, was Alexander's gift to his whilom adversary, Poros. Another consequence of the pressure of the foreign invasion was the formation of the confederacies of free peoples already described.

These unities, as we have seen, paved the way of Chandragupta Maurya in building up his great Empire. It is not easy to ascertain how far the currency of India was at all affected by this Greek contact. The disappearance of the Persian Sigloi from the field after Darius IV no doubt opened the way to Greek influence.

But it was slow to show itself. Imitation Athenian 'owl' coins first appeared in the period of Macedonian ascendancy, but the specimens at the British Museum from Rawalpindi were not of Indian but central Asian origin.

Nor is the Indian provenance established for the Greek coins found in India, whether tetradrachms or drachms. The proper Greek drachm minted on the Attic standard weighs 67.5 grains, whereas the drachm found in India weighs not more than 58 grains.

Further, in these smaller denominations of coins, whether drachms or diobols, the Athenian owl is replaced by eagle. A find of a series of silver drachms of Attic weight made in the Punjab by Cunningham perhaps proves that the smaller Athenian imitations were known in the north of India.

Their obverse shows the head of a warrior, wearing a close-fitting helmet, wreathed with olive, while the reverse shows a cock and a caduceus symbol. These coins give an impression that they were designed after an Athenian prototype. These are supposed to have been the issues of king Sophytes or Saubhuti, and, if so, these coins form a memorial of Alexander's invasion of India. It is doubtful whether Alexander as conqueror had issued any money of his own in India.

Some coins bearing the name of Alexander have been classed as Indian, of which the best example is a bronze piece. But it is doubtful whether their provenance is India. Even a number of silver tetradrachms showing Zeus and eagle and the significant satrapal tiara which were found at Rawalpindi were of Central Asian origin. The later issues of these coins were those of Antiochus I who had no connection with India after the defeat of his predecessor, Seleukos, by Chandragupta Maurya.

It is to be noted that these pieces do not bear the king's title. But both title and name appear on an extraordinary silver decadrachm of Attic weight now in the British Museum. Its obverse shows a horse-man, with lance at rest, charging down upon a retreating elephant carrying on its back two men who are turning round to face their pursuer. Its reverse shows a tall figure, wearing cuirass, cloak and cap, with a sword hanging by his side and holding a thunderbolt and, spear.

This figure is supposed by Head to be the figure of Alexander himself. Head interprets the obverse to represent the retreat of Poros, one of whose companions on the elephant, the rear-most one, wields the lance aimed at the pursuing horseman. It is Paurava mounted on the State elephant at the Battle of the Hydaspes and aiming his javelin at Ambhi, the traitor king of Taxila, galloping after him on horse.

The story is thus told by Arrian (Chap. XVIII)- "Taxiles, who was on horseback, approached as near the elephant, which carried Poros, as seemed safe, and entreated him, since it was no longer possible for him to flee, to stop his elephant and to listen to the message he brought from Alexander.

But Poros, on finding that the speaker was his old enemy, Taxiles, turned round and prepared to smite him with his javelin, and he would have probably killed him, had not Taxiles instantly put his horse to the gallop and got beyond the reach of Poros."

11.3 COINS IN MAURYAN DYNASTY

Ancient Indian coins became popular in the Mauryan Dynasty and were described in the famous Arthshastra by Kautilya. As per the Arthshastra, metals were first melted then purified with alkali and beaten into sheets and finally minted into coins after punching with the symbols.

In the earlier periods before Mauryan times several punches were used on the coins but the Mauryans, set the standard of the particular shape and size with fixed number of punch marks. The coins of the Mauryan Dynasty were round, oval or square with symbols punched on it. Various

symbols used were of different floral patterns, with hills, birds, animals, reptiles, human figures where particular symbol represented particular place or area.

Mauryan DynastyMauryan Dynasty also introduced silver punch marked coins in four denominations as `pana`, `ardha-pana`, `pada` and `asta-bhaga` or `ardhapadika`. These coins were circulated beyond Mauryan borders.

Historical collections of the coins from Mauryan Dynasty also reveal few smaller coins which are assumed to be the cut parts of the full coins. According to historians, these small coins were considered half denominations and were accepted as legal tender. There were also some minute coins weighing between 2 and 3 grains which were generally used for transactions in the period. These minute coins were referred as 'mashaka' which was one sixteenth of the `pana`.

11.4 COINS IN POST MAURYAN DYNASTIES

The coins were square or rectangular in shape and were made by either Copper or Silver. The coins have uneven texture and were one and a half inches in length and three fourth inches wide. These coins were punched with five bold symbols on one side and four on the other.

Post Mauryan CoinsAs the successors of Pushyamitra Sunga shifted to Vidisha, the coins sized about an inch and bore four or five symbols on one side of the coin and the other side remained blank and unpunched. In some of the coins one of the symbols was replaced by a legend of the names of their issuers. Some of copper coin bore only one or two symbols. Inscription was done to know the issuing authority. The later coins used animals in place of punch marked symbols.

The coins of the early tribal republics of the second century B.C bore the names of the tribes and the places on the coins in the Brahmi scripts. Tribal republic people issued coins mainly in copper, though some issued coins in silver also. The later coins of Surasena rulers bore symbols and a

figure of a standing female deity. The coins of Vatsa has a bull with a symbol on one side and a tree in railing with some other symbols on the other, with the name of the king inscribed on it.

Check Your Progress-1

13. Write about the coins in Mauryan Dynasty.

---

14. Write a short note on coins.

11.5 COINS IN KUSHAN DYNASTY

The Kushana Dynasty came up with the revolution in the coinage of the country as they were the first to introduce gold coins with the images of rulers of then time along with deities. The emperors of the dynasty believed that they are ruling the subjects because of God's wishes so started depicting figures of Gods who bestowed them. Prior to the origin of this type, there was the trend of punch marked silver coins with just few symbols but no images of rulers or deities.

Kushan Dynasty CoinsOne of the greatest ruler of the dynasty, emperor Kanishka minted coins during his reign which were distinct from the other earlier coins of dynasty in a way that he was the first one to mint the coins with the effigies of Buddha. Coins of Kanishka got the place among the rare coins of the world as only 5 gold coins exist all over the world with the portrait of Buddha.

The Kushna's coins became very popular and the trend of showing ruler on front and Hindu deities on reverse was followed for another 6 centuries by later Indian dynasties.

11.6 COINS IN GUPTA DYNASTY

The Gupta Dynasty is considered the golden age in Indian history. First coins of the Gupta Dynasty were minted by Samudragupta who is considered the father of Gupta monetary system. The first coins minted by him were called Dinara inspired by the Roman coins but later the coins were minted in the Indian style with the weight standard of 9.2 gms of gold and called Suvarna.

Samudragupta minted eight distinct types of coins namely Standard, Archer, Battle Axe (refers to his military activities), Chandragupta-I, Kacha, Tiger, Lyricist and Asvamedha type (commemorating the horse sacrifice ceremony). These coins depict lots of details about the Gupta Dynasty and its economy.

Later all the successors of the dynasty minted the similar type of gold coins which depicted their technical and sculptural excellence. Almost all coins had front side showing King in the acts, revealing his royal status and heroism while Goddess Laxmi's image on the reverse of coins with some phrases of Sanskrit legends.

11.7 COINS IN CHOLA DYNASTY

The coins issued during the reign of Chola Empire traced their roots back to Hindu Mythology and were a perfect mirror to the socio-cultural aspects of society at that point. The emblem of Chola, which is defined by a standing tiger with its tail upraised on one side and an elephant on the other side is inscribed on the coins.

Chola Dynasty CoinsThe coins bore an `anushka` like symbol and the legend `Atinan etiran Chandan` meaning Atinan, the son or the successor of Chanda on one side of the coin. The other side bore the emblem of the Chola. These coins were minted both in India and Sri Lanka. All metals

like gold, Silver and Copper were used as Coin's fabric. Some coins bore both the standing King and the sitting king on different sides of the coin. It was generally noticed that the coins contained the image of the legends that were highly respected by the kings at that time.

11.8 COINS OF SATAVAHANA

The coins of Satavahana Dynasty were built in various shapes, metals and weights. Lead, copper, potin, brass, bronze and silver were all the metals used for these coins. As far as the techniques were considered cast, die-struck and punch-marked coins were all very famous. These coins also dominantly displayed symbols such as the hill, river, tree, Goddess Lakshmi, lion, tiger, elephant, bull, horse, camel, wheel, Ujjain symbol and ship. Brahmni and Prakrit were the major scripts used for the coins.

Check Your Progress-2

15. Write about the coins in Gupta Dynasty.

---

16. Write a short note on Foreign Coins.

11.9 LET US SUM UP

Coins were introduced as a method of payment around the 6th or 5th century BCE. The invention of coins is still shrouded in mystery: According to Herdotous (I, 94), coins were first minted by the Lydians, while Aristotle claims that the first coins were minted by Demodike of

Kyrme, the wife of King Midas of Phrygia. Numismatists consider that the first coins were minted on the Greek island of Aegina, either by the local rulers or by king Pheidon of Argos.

The Maurya Empire was based upon a money-economy. The literary references to the use of coins are older than their actual finds. The Vedic term for a coin is taken to be Nishka Rv. I, 126, 2. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad speaks of a gift made to Yajnavalkya in the form of five padas of gold with which the horns of 1000 cows were hung, a total gift of 10,000 padas.

Since a part of the Punjab came under the dominion of the Achaemenian (Hakhamani) Emperors of ancient Persia, it was natural that their money must have come into India in the wake of their conquest. But it is not easy to prove it by actual finds of Persian coins in India.

The standard gold coin of ancient Persia was the Daric, weighing about 130 grains, probably first minted by Darius who first annexed to his empire the valley of the Indus. This coin is marked by the portrait on its obverse of the great king, armed with bow and spear, in the act of marching through his dominions.

The gold coin of Persia could not, however, obtain wide circulation in India for an important economic reason. India was known for its abundance of gold, so much so that its value relatively to silver was very low, as low as 1:8 as compared with the ratio of 1:13.3 maintained by the Imperial Persian Mint.

11.10 KEYWORDS

- **Coins:** Coins were introduced as a method of payment around the 6th or 5th century BCE
- **Foreign Coins:** This coin is marked by the portrait on its obverse of the great king, armed with bow and spear, in the act of marching through his dominions.

11.11 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Briefly discuss the coinage of Ancient era.

2. Explain about the foreign coins.

3. Write about the coins in Gupta Dynasty.

4. Discuss about the coins in Kushan Dynasty.

11.12 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

1.Hu, Di. "Experiments in Ancient Roman Coin Minting". Archived from the original on 2007-10-07.

2.Jere M. Wickens (1996). "The Production of Ancient Coins".

3. Bean, Simon C (1994). "Methodology". The coinage of Atrebates and Regni (PDF) (Ph.D.). University of Nottingham. pp. 28–29. Retrieved 14 July 2016.

4. http://www.harrybassfoundation.org HBCC-3014

5.http://www.seateddimevarieties.com/date_mintmark/1839_105cpage.htm

11.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Ancient Indian coins became popular in the Mauryan Dynasty and were described in the famous Arthshastra by Kautilya. As per the Arthshastra, metals were first melted then purified with alkali and beaten into sheets and finally minted into coins after punching with the symbols.

2. The Maurya Empire was based upon a money-economy. The literary references to the use of coins are older than their actual finds. The Vedic term for a coin is taken to be Nishka Rv. I, 126, 2. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad speaks of a gift made to Yajnavalkya in the form of five padas of gold with which the horns of 1000 cows were hung, a total gift of 10,000 padas.

3. The Gupta Dynasty is considered the golden age in Indian history. First coins of the Gupta Dynasty were minted by Samudragupta who is considered the father of Gupta monetary system. The first coins minted by him were called Dinara inspired by the Roman coins but later the coins were minted in the Indian style with the weight standard of 9.2 gms of gold and called Suvarna.

4. The standard gold coin of ancient Persia was the Daric, weighing about 130 grains, probably first minted by Darius who first annexed to his empire the valley of the Indus. This coin is marked by the portrait on its obverse of the great king, armed with bow and spear, in the act of marching through his dominions.

UNIT-12 HUNA INVASION

STRUCTURE

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Able to understand The Hunas
- Able to understand The Invasions of Hunas

12.1 INTRODUCTION

In the mid 5th century AD, the Huns, a fierce and warlike people from Central Asia invaded Northwest India. However about 460 AD they were repulsed by Skandagupta (454-467). The Gupta dynasty in India reigned in the Ganges basin with the Kushan empire occupied the area along the Indus. India knew the Hephthalite as Huna by the Sanskrit name. The Hephthaltes or Hunas waited till 470 rigth after the death of Gupta ruler, Skandagupta, and entered the Inda from the Kabul valley after the conquest of Kushan. They mopped on along the Ganges and ruined every

city and town. The noble capital, Pataliputra, was reduced in population to a village. They persecuted Buddhists and burned all the monasteries. Their conquest was accomplished with extreme ferocity and the Gupta regime was completely extinguished.

For thirty years the northwestern India was ruled by Hephthalite kings. We learned some of the Hephthalite kings ruling India from coins. The most famous ones were Toramana and Mihrakula ruling India in the first half of the 6th century. Unlike the previous invaders - Persians or Greeks - who had brought elements of civilization and culture, the Huns brought only devastation with them. Luckily the Huns were driven out in less than 75 years when several Indian armies collectively fought them off.

12.2 THE HUNAS

Hunas or Huna (Middle Brahmi script: Gupta ashoka huu.jpgGupta allahabad nnaa.jpg Hūṇā) was the name given by the ancient Indians to a group of Central Asian tribes who, via the Khyber Pass, entered India at the end of the 5th or early 6th century. Huna Kingdom occupied areas as far as Eran and Kausambi, greatly weakening the Gupta Empire. The Hunas were ultimately defeated by the Indian Gupta Empire and the Indian king Yasodharman.

The Hunas are thought to have included the Xionite and/or Hephthalite, the Kidarites, the Alchon Huns (also known as the Alxon, Alakhana, Walxon etc.) and the Nezak Huns. Such names, along with that of the Harahunas (also known as the Halahunas or Harahuras) mentioned in Hindu texts, have sometimes been used for the Hunas in general; while these groups (and the Iranian Huns) appear to have been a component of the Hunas, such names were not necessarily synonymous. The relationship, if any, of the Hunas to the Huns, a Central Asian people who invaded Europe during the same period, is also unclear.

In its farthest geographical extent in India, the territories controlled by the Hunas covered the region up to Malwa in central India. Their repeated invasions and war losses were the main reason for the decline of the Gupta Empire.

The Mongolian-Tibetan historian Sumpa Yeshe Peljor (writing in the 18th century) lists the Hunas alongside other peoples found in Central Asia since antiquity, including the Yavanas (Greeks), Kambojas, Tukharas, Khasas and Daradas.

Chinese sources link the Central Asian tribes comprising the Hunas to both the Xiongnu of north east Asia and the Huns who later invaded and settled in Europe. Similarly, Gerald Larson suggests that the Hunas were a Turkic-Mongolian grouping from Central Asia.The works of Ptolemy (2nd century) are among the first European texts to mention the Huns, followed by the texts by Marcellinus and Priscus. They too suggest that the Huns were an inner Asian people.

12.3 THE INVASIONS OF HUNAS

The nomadic Hunas inhabited the borders of China as far back as the second century B.C. Another nomadic tribe Yueh-chi was forced to migrate from their neighbourhood because of their pressure which ultimately led to the invasions of the Sakas and the Kushanas on India. Later, the Hunas themselves migrated to the west, and further dividing themselves into two parts, they proceeded towards the river Volga and the river Oxus respectively.

The one threatened the Roman empire and the other Persia and India. By the fifth century A.D. the Hunas became a powerful force in Central Asia and, proceeding towards India, they occupied Gandhara Pradesh on the north-west. Skanda Gupta, however, gave them a crushing defeat about 460 A.D. which checked their advance into India for nearly next fifty' years. However, they destroyed the Persian empire and by the end of the fifth century A.D. established a vast empire with its capital at Balkh.

In the beginning of the sixth century A.D. when the Gupta empire was disintegrating, they repeated their invasion under their ruler Toramana. Though there is no conclusive evidence that Toramana was a Huna yet, mostly he had been accepted so. This time the Hunas succeeded and occupied Kashmir, then Punjab, Rajasthan and parts of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Bhanu Gupta had to fight against Toramana.

It seems that Toramana was weakened during the later years of his reign and also lost most of his Indian territories. Toramana was succeeded by his son Mihirakula near about 515 A.D. Mihirakula was an ambitious ruler. His capital was Sakala or Sialkot.

He attacked up to the borders of Magadha. He forced Narsimha Gupta to pay tribute to him though afterwards he was also once defeated by him. Mihirakula was defeated once by Yasodharman of Malwa as well. Therefore, his empire in India remained limited only to Kashmir, Gandhara and certain other territories west of the river Indus.

The later invasions of the Hunas on India, of course, succeeded and it is also accepted that they also contributed to the fall of the Gupta empire. Yet, the success of the Hunas in India was neither wide-spread nor permanent. The primary credit for safeguarding India from their barbaric invasions goes to Skanda Gupta who checked their advance when they were at the height of their power.

The attacks of Toramana and Mihirakula were not so fierce and it is also doubtful that they had any connections with the central power of the Hunas in Balkh. Therefore, they did not succeed much in India and, at times, were defeated also. Afterwards, sometime between 563-567 A.D., the central power of the Hunas on the Oxus was broken by the combined forces of the Turks and the Persians and the Hunas, who remained in no position to threaten India, were finally absorbed within the Indian society.

The Hunas were finally absorbed in the Indian society, yet, they affected Indian polity and society in several ways. Of course, their role in the fall of the Gupta empire was only secondary' but they, certainly, encouraged the attitude of disintegration and regional autonomy which grew in India when the Gupta empire broke into pieces.

Emperor Harsha-Vardhana and the Gurjara-Pratihara rulers, no doubt, tried to protect the ideal of one empire in north India but they failed and north India was divided into several regional states. The Hunas, certainly, contributed towards it. Certain scholars have expressed the view that the Hunas introduced the tradition of despotic rule in Indian

polity as it was absent in India prior to their invasions though it, certainly, existed among the Tartars and the Mongols in Asia from where the Hunas came to India.

The Hunas also encouraged social divisions in India as their absorption in Indian society led to the formation of several sub-castes. The Hunas harmed Indian culture as well. During their invasions, they destroyed pieces of fine arts, educational institutions and particularly Buddhist monasteries. Thus, invasions of the Hunas harmed Indian polity and society in several ways.

Between the 5th and 13th century, a succession of invaders invaded and plundered the India. The White Huns were the first of these. They attacked India in several waves in 5th and the 6th century. They were a branch of the same tribe that marauded through Europe and challenged the Roman Empire. Based in an area around the Oxus River, the White Huns harassed the Persians and in turn were harassed by an alliance of Persians and Blue Turks

The Gupta King Skandra Gupta held back an invasion of the Huns who crossed the Hindu Kush around A.D. 466 and 467. The Huns returned again 20 years later and were able to establish a kingdom in Pakistan which they extended into central India.

The Huns were fierce horsemen and skilled archers, They sacked Gandhara and cities in India. The Hun chief Mihirakula is remembered as a tyrant who used to watch five elephants pushed off a cliff for entertainment.

In the A.D. mid 5th century, the Huns invaded Northwest India. In A.D. 460 they were repulsed by Skandagupta (454-467). The Gupta dynasty in India reigned in the Ganges basin with the Kushan empire occupied the area along the Indus. India knew the Huns as Hephthalite or Huna, the Sanskrit name. The Huns waited until 470 right after the death of Gupta ruler, Skandagupta, and entered the India from the Kabul valley after the conquest of Kushan. They mopped on along the Ganges and ruined every city and town. The noble capital, Pataliputra, was reduced in population to a village. They persecuted Buddhists and burned all the monasteries.

Their conquest was accomplished with extreme ferocity and the Gupta regime was completely extinguished.

For thirty years the northwestern India was ruled by Hun kings. We know some of the Hun kings ruling India from coins. The most famous ones were Toramana and Mihrakula. They ruled India in the first half of the 6th century. Unlike the previous invaders — Persians or Greeks — who had brought elements of civilization and culture, the Huns brought only devastation with them. Luckily the Huns were driven out in less than 75 years when several Indian armies fought together.

The Hun incursion was brief but had far-reaching impact, Buddhism was pushed into the into the Swat Valley of Pakistan. With the Gupta empire in disarray, India was lunged into a period of darkness. A number of tribes crossed the Hindu Kush and settled in India and Pakistan and added to South Asia's cultural diversity. Among the Huns themselves, many converted to Hinduism and they were the ancestors of the great Rajput families of Rajasthan.

Pratihara Empire

Akhilesh Pillalamarri wrote in The National Interest: "The Pratihara Empire (650-1036 C.E.), also known as the Gurjara-Pratiharas is little known in the West and hardly better known in India. Yet it is one of the most consequential states in South Asian history and its size and duration exceeded many other empires listed here. The empire originated among military clans in western India after the fragmentation of the Gupta Empire. This period saw the rise of the Rajputs in the deserts of parts of Gujarat and Rajasthan, who were to play an important role in subsequent Indian history. The Rajputs were Kshatriyas (a caste of warriors and rulers) who dedicated themselves to warfare, martial prowess, and fortification with a zeal previously not found in India; in this sense, they resembled the feudal knights emerging in Europe around the same time. Rajputs were fiercely independent and always held their fiefs autonomously while also allying themselves to the Mughals and British at various times. [Source: Akhilesh Pillalamarri, The National Interest, May 8, 2015

"Shortly after the rise of the Pratiharas, they defeated Arab invaders at the Battle of Rajasthan (738 C.E.), halting Muslim expansion into India for three hundred years. Later on, they set up a capital at Kannauj, near Delhi, and expanded into central India. In both western and central India, they set up a large number of fortifications, making these regions hard to conquer. More importantly, a more muscular form of Hinduism emerged in this period that provided the ideological basis for later resistance to Islam in a way that was not possible with Buddhism. Like most Indian empires, the Pratihara Empire eventually fragmented into multiple states and Mahmud of Ghazni, an invader from Afghanistan, who took away a lot of gold and demolished temples, sacked Kannauj in the early 11th century. The Pratiharas soon petered out.

Chola Empire

While most of India's empires have been primarily land-based powers, the Chola Empire is unique in that it was a naval empire. The historian John Keay noted "the idea that the sea could be political, a strategic commodity in its own right dominated by a state rather than by commercial competition, was a relatively new concept for Indians." The Cholas were based in Tamil Nadu and had been around as a minor state from the second century B.C.E. However, their imperial period began in the 10th century C.E, when they dominated all of South India.

"Due to geographic and topographic reasons, the projection of military power out of South Asia has always been difficult, leading to relatively little conquest of territories outside this region by South Asian states. However, South Asia's position on the sea is an exception to this rule, and a great naval power can use the region as a base to dominate the Indian Ocean. The Cholas knew this, as did the British later. The Cholas were famous for their maritime expeditions that gave them control over the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and the Malaysian-Indonesian archipelago by 1025 C.E. Large portions of northern India and Southeast Asia's coasts were tributary. After a period of decline, the Chola were overthrow by a vassal in 1279 C.E.

"After the defeat of a Hindu coalition by Muhammad of Ghor in 1192 C.E., Islamic rule began over much of northern India. At least two

Muslim empires worth the name of great powers existed during this period: the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526) and the Mughal Empire (1526-1858). Other prominent empires during this era include Vijayanagara in South India (1336-1646) and the Maratha Empire throughout most of South Asia (1674-1818). After 1757, the British Raj eventually came to dominate South Asia afterwards by defeating local rulers, the Mughals, Marathas, and Sikhs and ruled until 1947." <|>

Chola Dynasty

In 985, Maharajah Rajaraja the Great (who name roughly translates to King Kingking the Great) became the leader of the Chola kingdom of southern India. He built a huge stone temple dedicated to Shiva not so much out of piety but as means of unifying support against the Muslims and taking a stake in the trading empires in Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean and China.

The Chola dynasty had been around several centuries before it became a major player in India. It was mainly a regional power in southern India and didn't have much influence over India as a whole until later. Battles between the Chola kings and their rivals from Chera and the Pandyan kingdom are described in the poems and epic ballads of Sangam anthologies, the earliest surviving Tamil literature. The Chola Dynasty produced beautiful carved Indian goddesses from granite and bronze. See Art.

The Cholas are among the earliest of South Indian royal houses. The artifacts of the period found in South India, the Mahabharata and Ashokan inscriptions mention it. It is known that Karikala was a Chola ruler who reigned in the A.D. 2nd century. During Karikala's reign, the capital city was moved to Kaveripattanam from Uraiyur. Nedumudikilli seems to have been the successor of Karikala, whose capital town was set to fire by the sea pirates. The frequent attacks of Pallavas, Cheras and Pandyas decreased Chola's power. Cholas's glory began when Pallavas power declined.

Chola Sculpture

The golden age of Indian sculpture was during the Chola Dynasty (10th to 13th century). Works from this period included beautiful carved granite Indian goddesses and multi-armed bronze gods. The Chola rulers came to power at a time during the Hindu Restoration, when Hinduism was reasserting itself after a long period when Buddhism and Jainism were strong. Part of the revival was the production of images of Hindu deities. During the early years of the Chola dynasty granite was the favored material but it was heavy and difficult to transport. Bronze then became the material of choice because it could be be crafted into smaller, lighter objects and metal was one of the five elements of nature.

Favored images were the gods Shiva, his consort Parvati, Durga, Ganesha and Lord Rama. Describing a late 10th century bronze Shiva statue called "Lord Crowned with the Moon,"Souren Melikian wrote in International Herald Tribune: it "has a smile of ineffable contentment on its closed lips. It invites and at the same time defies scrutiny." A Vishnu bronze he wrote, stands "with one arm steadying his club while another peacefully salutes and the other two arms hold up symbols. Here, the deity, smiles with irrepressible glee." On a Durga made in 970 he wrote it "must have been inspired by a young woman in her teens. She stares with a soft almost timid expression at odds with the character of a goddess that tramples demons. Yet the longer you look at the masterpiece, the more you suspect something in eludes the profane."

Great Living Chola Temples

According to to UNESCO: "The Great Living Chola Temples were built by kings of the Chola Empire, which stretched over all of south India and the neighbouring islands. The site includes three great 11th- and 12th-century Temples: the Brihadisvara Temple at Thanjavur, the Brihadisvara Temple at Gangaikondacholisvaram and the Airavatesvara Temple at Darasuram. The Temple of Gangaikondacholisvaram, built by Rajendra I, was completed in 1035. Its 53-m vimana (sanctum tower) has recessed corners and a graceful upward curving movement, contrasting with the straight and severe tower at Thanjavur. The Airavatesvara temple complex, built by Rajaraja II, at Darasuram features a 24-m vimana and a stone image of Shiva. The temples testify to the brilliant

achievements of the Chola in architecture, sculpture, painting and bronze casting.

"The great Cholas established a powerful monarchy in the A.D. 9th century at Thanjavur and in its surroundings. They enjoyed a long, eventful rule lasting for four and a half centuries with great achievements in all fields of royal endeavour such as military conquest, efficient administration, cultural assimilation and promotion of art. All three temples, the Brihadisvara at Thanjavur, the Brihadisvara at Gangaikondacholapuram and Airavatesvara at Darasuram, are living temples. The tradition of temple worship and rituals established and practised over a thousand years ago, based on still older Agamic texts, continues daily, weekly and annually, as an inseparable part of life of the people.

These three temple complexes therefore form a unique group, demonstrating a progressive development of high Chola architecture and art at its best and at the same time encapsulating a very distinctive period of Chola history and Tamil culture. The Brihadisvara temple at Gangaikondacholapuram in the Perambalur district was built for Siva by Rajendra I (1012-1044 CE). The temple has sculptures of exceptional quality. The bronzes of Bhogasakti and Subrahmanya are masterpieces of Chola metal icons. The Saurapitha (Solar altar), the lotus altar with eight deities, is considered auspicious.

"The Brihadisvara temple at Tanjavur marks the greatest achievement of the Chola architects. Known in the inscriptions as Dakshina Meru, the construction of this temple was inaugurated by the Chola King, Rajaraja I (985-1012 CE) possibly in the 19th regal year (1003-1004 CE) and consecrated by his own hands in the 25th regal year (1009-1010 CE). A massive colonnaded prakara with sub-shrines dedicated to the ashatadikpalas and a main entrance with gopura (known as Rajarajantiruvasal) encompasses the massive temple. The sanctum itself occupies the centre of the rear half of the rectangular court. The vimana soars to a height of 59.82meters over the ground. This grand elevation is punctuated by a high upapitha, adhisthana with bold mouldings; the ground tier (prastara) is divided into two levels, carrying images of Siva.

Over this rises the 13 talas and is surmounted by an octagonal sikhara. There is a circumambulatory path all around the sanctum housing a massive linga. The temple walls are embellished with expansive and exquisite mural paintings. Eighty-one of the one hundred and eight karanas, posed in Baharatanatya,are carved on the walls of second bhumi around the garbhagriha. There is a shrine dedicated to Amman dating to c.13th century. Outside the temple enclosure are the fort walls of the Sivaganga Little Fort surrounded by a moat, and the Sivaganga Tank, constructed by the Nayaks of Tanjore of the 16th century who succeeded the imperial Cholas. The fort walls enclose and protect the temple complex within and form part of the protected area by the Archaeological Survey of India.

"The Airavatesvara temple at Tanjavur was built by the Chola king Rajaraja II (1143-1173 CE.): it is much smaller in size as compared to the Brihadisvara temple at Tanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram. It differs from themin itshighly ornate execution. The temple consists of a sanctum without a circumambulatory path and axial mandapas. The front mandapa known in the inscriptions as Rajagambhiran tirumandapam, is unique as it was conceptualized as a chariot with wheels. The pillars of this mandapa are highly ornate. The elevation of all the units is elegant with sculptures dominating the architecture. A number of sculptures from this temple are the masterpieces of Chola art. The labelled miniature friezes extolling the events that happened to the 63 nayanmars (Saiva saints) are noteworthy and reflect the deep roots of Saivism in this region. The construction of a separate temple for Devi, slightly later than the main temple, indicates the emergence of the Amman shrine as an essential component of the South Indian temple complex."

Check Your Progress-1

17. Write a short note on the Hunas.

---

18. Describe the Chola Dynasty..

12.4 HUNA INVASIONS OF INDIA

The nomadic savages or tribes who lived in the neighbourhood of China were the Hephthalites (the Sanskrit name of which is Hunas). Studies show that the Hunas extended their kingdom from the border of Persia to Khotan in Central Asia. There were two branches of Hunas that advanced towards the west. One branch of the Hunas moved towards the Roman Empire and the other towards India. This branch of the Hunas, which came to India, was referred to as the White Hunas. The invasion of India by the Hunas began about a hundred years after the Kushanas' invasion. In historical studies, one of the most warlike tribes, popular for their barbarism and cruelty, was the Huna tribe. There were two major invasions of the Hunas in the subcontinent.

12.4.1 The reasons that led to the invasions

While the Gupta Empire ruled over a major part of India, after the death of the Gupta emperor, Samudragupta, there was less control of the Guptas in Western India. During this time, the Hunas armed forces attacked the Gupta dynasty and they were able to win Jammu, Kashmir, Himachal, Rajasthan, Punjab, and parts of Malwa. This way, the Hunas established their kingdom in some parts of India and Tormana was the white Hun leader.

12.4.2 First major invasion of India by the Hunas: 458 AD

The Gupta Empire in India reigned in the Ganges basin during the 5th century, and the Kushan dynasty occupied the area along the Indus. After defeating the Kushanas, the Hunas entered the subcontinent from the Kabul valley. They entered Punjab and the Gupta Empire failed to protect the northeast frontier of the empire and this made easier for the

Huns to enter an unguarded entrance in the Gangetic valley, just into the heart of the Gupta Empire. This was in 458 AD. The Hephthalites, known as the Hunas in India kept on invading India until the Gupta ruler Skandagupta repulsed them. The Hunas, under the leadership of Toramana, suffered a crushing defeat by the Gupta emperor Skandagupta.

12.4.3 Second invasion of India by the Hunas: About 470 AD

The Hunas waited till 470 AD, till the death of the Gupta ruler Skandagupta to invade India again in a proper manner. During this time, the Guptas had been ruling over a greater part of India. This time Hunas were under the leadership of Mihirkula (also known, as Mihirgula or the "Indian Attila"). He was the successor and son of Toramana, and known as a very tyrant ruler and a destroyer. This time, the Hunas were successful in their invasion of India. They temporarily overthrew the Gupta Empire. Mihirkula ruled from his capital at Sakal, which is today the modern Sialkot. The Huna power in India collapsed after the defeat of Mihirkula. Mihirkula was defeated successively by two Indian rulers, Yasodharman of Malwa and Narasimhagupta Baladitya of the later Gupta dynasty.

12.4.4 Aftermath of the battles: Winner and Loser

Before the defeat of the Hunas by Skandagupta, the first invasions of the Hunas displaced the Gupta Empire rule from the North Western part of India. This invasion also influenced the chieftains and regional kings to become more ambitious and rebel against the Gupta Empire. The Hunas ruled over Gandhar and central Punjab and also controlled the Kushans. The first Hun king Toramana ruled northern India as far as Malwa in central India. After his death, his son Mihirkula, who destroyed the Gupta Empire, ruled over North Western India for thirty years. However, Mihirakula was driven out of the plains and into Kashmir and died in about 542 A.D. After his death, the political power of the Hunas declined.

The larger implications of the battle

- Toramana, the first white Huna king, conquered Punjab, Rajputana, Kashmir, parts of Doab and Malwa. He ruled and operated the interiors of India by keeping his base at Punjab. During his rule, he reduced the power of a number of local kings and chieftains as his subordinates and assumed the title of "Maharajadhiraja".
- Some of the provincial governors of the Gupta Empire also joined Toramana during the course of his invasion in India.
- In extensive regions of Sutlej and Yamuna, the coins and inscriptions of Toramana were found.
- However, Toramana's rule in India did not last long and he was defeated by Skandagupta, which forced him to flee to the other side of India.
- When Toramana was succeeded by his son Mihirkula, he entered and ruined every city and town along the Ganges. The capital town Pataliputra was reduced to a small village. The Hunas persecuted Buddhists and destroyed all the monasteries and the Gupta regime was completely extinguished.
- However, when Mihirkula was defeated by two major rulers Yasodharman and Narasimhagupta Baladitya, he had to leave India forever. The Hunas suffered a great loss.

The overall place and significance of the invasions in the Indian History

The Hunas' invasion in India had far reaching effects and significance in Indian History, as mentioned below:

- First of all, the Hunas had destroyed the dominance of the Gupta Empire in India and on their feudatories.
- Small kingdoms began to grow and prosper on the ruins of the Gupta Empire.
- The trade connections between the Guptas in India and the Roman Empire also weakened after the Huna invasion that completely devastated the Gupta economy. Due to this, the economic and cultural cities like Pataliputra or Ujjain lost their glory.

- The socio-political and economic life during the later Guptas also deteriorated.
- On the other hand, trade with South East Asia and China prospered through ports like Tamralipta, Kaveri Pattanam, etc.
- There was a racial admixture in India after the Huna invasion and this was one of the most significant effects.
- Various tribes entered India through North West, same as the central Asian tribes, some of whom remained in Northern India and some moved further to the south and the west.
- For the first time, Indian culture got introduced to the Hunas' martial culture.
- After the Hunas were driven out of India in 528, few of them blended with the Indian population and became a part of the local population, which exists even today such as Gurjaras and the ancestors of some of the Rajput families.

The Huna invasions of India led to socio-economic and cultural transformation of the Indian society as a whole.

Check Your Progress-2

19. Write a short note on the the reasons that led to the invasions.

12.5 LET US SUM UP

Hunas or Huna (Middle Brahmi script: Gupta ashoka huu.jpgGupta allahabad nnaa.jpg Hūṇā) was the name given by the ancient Indians to a group of Central Asian tribes who, via the Khyber Pass, entered India at the end of the 5th or early 6th century. Huna Kingdom occupied areas as far as Eran and Kausambi, greatly weakening the Gupta Empire. The

Hunas were ultimately defeated by the Indian Gupta Empire and the Indian king Yasodharman.The Hunas are thought to have included the Xionite and/or Hephthalite, the Kidarites, the Alchon Huns (also known as the Alxon, Alakhana, Walxon etc.) and the Nezak Huns. Such names, along with that of the Harahunas (also known as the Halahunas or Harahuras) mentioned in Hindu texts, have sometimes been used for the Hunas in general; while these groups (and the Iranian Huns) appear to have been a component of the Hunas, such names were not necessarily synonymous. The relationship, if any, of the Hunas to the Huns, a Central Asian people who invaded Europe during the same period, is also unclear.The nomadic Hunas inhabited the borders of China as far back as the second century B.C. Another nomadic tribe Yueh-chi was forced to migrate from their neighbourhood because of their pressure which ultimately led to the invasions of the Sakas and the Kushanas on India. Later, the Hunas themselves migrated to the west, and further dividing themselves into two parts, they proceeded towards the river Volga and the river Oxus respectively.The nomadic savages or tribes who lived in the neighbourhood of China were the Hephthalites (the Sanskrit name of which is Hunas). Studies show that the Hunas extended their kingdom from the border of Persia to Khotan in Central Asia. There were two branches of Hunas that advanced towards the west. One branch of the Hunas moved towards the Roman Empire and the other towards India. This branch of the Hunas, which came to India, was referred to as the White Hunas. The invasion of India by the Hunas began about a hundred years after the Kushanas' invasion. In historical studies, one of the most warlike tribes, popular for their barbarism and cruelty, was the Huna tribe. There were two major invasions of the Hunas in the subcontinent.

12.6 KEYWORDS

- **The Hunas:** Huna Kingdom occupied areas as far as Eran and Kausambi, greatly weakening the Gupta Empire
- **The invasions of Hunas:** One branch of the Hunas moved towards the Roman Empire and the other towards India. This branch of the Hunas, which came to India, was referred to as the White Hunas.

12.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Briefly discuss the invasions of Hunas.

2. Explain about the the Hunas.

3. Write about the aftermath of the battles.

4. Discuss about the Huna invasions of India.

12.8 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

1.Kurbanov, Aydogdy (2010). "The Hephthalites: Archaeological and Historical Analysis" (PDF). p. 24. Retrieved 17 January 2013. The Hūnas controlled an area that extended from Malwa in central India to Kashmir.

2. Gerald James Larson (1995). India's Agony Over Religion. State University of New York Press. pp. 78–79. ISBN 978-1-4384-1014-2.

3.Mircea Eliade; Charles J. Adams (1987). The Encyclopedia of religion. Macmillan. pp. 530–532. ISBN 978-0-02-909750-2.

4. "The White Huns - The Hephthalites". Silkroad Foundation. Retrieved 11 January 2013.

5.Iaroslav Lebedynsky, "Les Nomades", Paris 2007, ISBN 978-2-87772-346-6

12.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Hunas or Huna (Middle Brahmi script: Gupta ashoka huu.jpgGupta allahabad nnaa.jpg Hūṇā) was the name given by the ancient Indians to a group of Central Asian tribes who, via the Khyber Pass, entered India at the end of the 5th or early 6th century. Huna Kingdom occupied areas as

far as Eran and Kausambi, greatly weakening the Gupta Empire. The Hunas were ultimately defeated by the Indian Gupta Empire and the Indian king Yasodharman.

2. Chola Dynasty

In 985, Maharajah Rajaraja the Great (who name roughly translates to King Kingking the Great) became the leader of the Chola kingdom of southern India. He built a huge stone temple dedicated to Shiva not so much out of piety but as means of unifying support against the Muslims and taking a stake in the trading empires in Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean and China.

3.The reasons that led to the invasions

While the Gupta Empire ruled over a major part of India, after the death of the Gupta emperor, Samudragupta, there was less control of the Guptas in Western India. During this time, the Hunas armed forces attacked the Gupta dynasty and they were able to win Jammu, Kashmir, Himachal, Rajasthan, Punjab, and parts of Malwa.

UNIT-13 VAKATAKA AND OTHER DYNASTIES OF PENINSULAR INDIA

STRUCTURE

13.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Able to understand the history of Peninsular India.
- Able to understand Formative Period in the History of Deccan and Peninsular India.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

The Deccan Plateau is a large plateau in western and southern Indian subcontinent. It rises to 100 metres (330 ft) in the north, and to more than 1,000 metres (3,300 ft) in the south, forming a raised triangle within the south-pointing triangle of the Indian subcontinent's coastline.

It extends over eight Indian states and encompasses a wide range of habitats, covering significant parts of Telangana, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

The plateau is located between two mountain ranges, the Western Ghats and the Eastern Ghats, each of which rises from its respective nearby

coastal plain, and almost converge at the southern tip of India. It is separated from the Gangetic plain to the north by the Satpura and Vindhya Ranges, which form its northern boundary. The Deccan produced some of the major dynasties in Indian history including Pallavas, Satavahana, Vakataka, Chalukya, and Rashtrakuta dynasties, the Western Chalukya, the Kadamba Dynasty, Kakatiya Empire, Kamma Nayakas, Vijayanagara and Maratha empires and the Muslim Bahmani Sultanate, Deccan Sultanate, and the Nizam of Hyderabad.

The extent of the geopolitical area covered by the term "Deccan" has varied throughout history.

Geographers have attempted to define the region using indices such as rainfall, vegetation, soil type or physical features. According to one geographical definition, it is the peninsular tableland lying to the south of the Tropic of Cancer. Its outer boundary is marked by the 300 m contour line, with Vindhya-Kaimur watersheds in the north. This area can be sub-divided into two major geologic-physiographic regions: an igneous rock plateau with fertile black soil, and a gneiss peneplain with infertile red soil, interrupted by several hills.

Historians have defined the term Deccan differently. These definitions range from a narrow one by R. G. Bhandarkar (1920), who defines Deccan as the Marathi-speaking area lying between the Godavari and the Krishna rivers, to a broad one by K. M. Panikkar (1969), who defines it as the entire Indian peninsula to the south of the Vindhyas. Firishta (16th century) defined Deccan as the territory inhabited by the native speakers of Kannada, Marathi, and Telugu languages. Richard M. Eaton (2005) settles on this linguistic definition for a discussion of the region's geopolitical history.Stewart N. Gordon (1998) notes that historically, the term "Deccan" had the overtones of an area considered suitable for conquest by northern kingdoms: the northern border of Deccan has thus varied from Tapti River in north to Godavari River in south, depending on the southern boundary of the northern empires. Therefore, while discussing the history of the Marathas, Gordon uses Deccan as a "relational term", defining it as "the area beyond the southern border of a northern-based kingdom" of India.

The Deccan plateau is a topographically variegated region located south of the Gangetic plains-the portion lying between the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal-and includes a substantial area to the north of the Satpura Range, which has popularly been regarded as the divide between northern India and the Deccan. The plateau is bounded on the east and west by the Ghats, while its northern extremity is the Vindhya Range. The Deccan's average elevation is about 2,000 feet (600 m), sloping generally eastward; its principal rivers, the Godavari, Krishna, and Kaveri, flow from the Western Ghats eastward to the Bay of Bengal. Tiruvannamalai in Tamil Nadu is often regarded as the Southern gateway of Deccan plateau.

The Western Ghats mountain range is very massive and blocks the moisture from the southwest monsoon from reaching the Deccan Plateau, so the region receives very little rainfall.The eastern Deccan Plateau is at a lower elevation spanning the southeastern coast of India. Its forests are also relatively dry but serve to retain the rain to form streams that feed into rivers that flow into basins and then into the Bay of Bengal.

Most Deccan plateau rivers flow south. Most of the northern part of the plateau is drained by the Godavari River and its tributaries, including the Indravati River, starting from the Western Ghats and flowing east towards the Bay of Bengal. Most of the central plateau is drained by the Tungabhadra River, Krishna River and its tributaries, including the Bhima River, which also run east. The southernmost part of the plateau is drained by the Kaveri River, which rises in the Western Ghats of Karnataka and bends south to break through the Nilgiri Hills at the island town of Shivanasamudra and then falls into Tamil Nadu at Hogenakal Falls before flowing into the Stanley Reservoir and the Mettur Dam that created the reservoir, and finally emptying into the Bay of Bengal.

13.2 VAKATAKA AND OTHER DYNASTIES OF PENINSULAR INDIA

The Deccan produced some of the most significant dynasties in Indian History like the Chola dynasty, Pallavas, The Tondaiman, Satavahana

dynasty, Vakataka dynasty, Kadamba dynasty, Chalukya dynasty, Rashtrakuta dynasty, Western Chalukya Empire, Vijayanagara Empire and Maratha Empire. Of the early history, the main facts established are the growth of the Mauryan empire (300 BC) and after that the Deccan was ruled by the Satavahana dynasty which protected the Deccan against the Scythian invaders, the Western Satraps. Prominent dynasties of this time include the Cholas (3rd century BC to 12th century AD), Chalukyas (6th to 12th centuries), Rashtrakutas (753–982), Hoysalas (10th to 14th centuries), Kakatiya (1083 to 1323 AD), Kamma Nayakas (13th to 17th century AD) and Vijayanagara Empire (1336–1646). Ahir Kings once ruled over the Deccan. A cave inscription at Nasik refers to the reign of an Abhira prince named Ishwarsena, son of Shivadatta. After the collapse of the Satavahana dynasty the Deccan was ruled by the Vakataka dynasty from the 3rd century to 5th century.

From the 6th to 8th century the Deccan was ruled by the Chalukya dynasty which produced great rulers like Pulakesi II who defeated the north India Emperor Harsha or Vikramaditya II whose general defeated the Arab invaders in the 8th century. From the 8th to 10th century the Rashtrakuta dynasty ruled this region. It led successful military campaigns into northern India and was described by Arab scholars as one of the four great empires of the world. In the 10th century the Western Chalukya Empire was established which produced scholars like the social reformer Basava, Vijñāneśvara, the mathematician Bhāskara II and Someshwara III who wrote the text Manasollasa. From the early 11th century to the 12th century the Deccan Plateau was dominated by the Western Chalukya Empire and the Chola dynasty. Several battles were fought between the Western Chalukya Empire and the Chola dynasty in the Deccan Plateau during the reigns of Raja Raja Chola I, Rajendra Chola I, Jayasimha II, Someshvara I and Vikramaditya VI and Kulottunga I.

In 1294, Alauddin Khalji, emperor of Delhi, invaded the Deccan, stormed Devagiri, and reduced the Yadava rajas of Maharashtra to the position of tributary princes (see Daulatabad), then proceeding southward to conquer the Andhra, Carnatic. In 1307, a fresh series of Muslim incursions led by Malik Kafur began in response to unpaid

tributes, resulting in the final ruin of the Yadava power; and in 1338 the conquest of the Deccan was completed by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq. The imperial hegemony was brief, as soon Andhra and Karnataka reverted to their former masters. These defections by the Hindu states was soon followed by a general revolt of the Muslim governors, resulting in the establishment in 1347 of the independent Muslim dynasty of Bahmani. The power of the Delhi sultanate evaporated south of the Narmada River. The southern Deccan came under the rule of the famous Vijayanagara Empire which reached its zenith during the reign of Emperor Krishnadevaraya.

In the power struggles which ensued, the Hindu kingdom of Karnataka fell bit by bit to the Bahamani dynasty, who advanced their frontier to Golkonda in 1373, to Warangal in 1421, and to the Bay of Bengal in 1472. Krishnadevaraya of the Vijayanagara Empire defeated the last remnant of Bahmani Sultanate power after which the Bahmani Sultanate collapsed.[22] When the Bahmani empire dissolved in 1518, its dominions were distributed into the five Muslim states of Golkonda, Bijapur, Ahmednagar, Bidar and Berar, giving rise to the Deccan sultanates.[20] South of these, the Hindu state of Carnatic or Vijayanagar still survived; but this, too, was defeated, at the Battle of Talikota (1565) by a league of the Muslim powers. Berar had already been annexed by Ahmednagar in 1572, and Bidar was absorbed by Bijapur in 1619. Mughal interest in the Deccan also rose at this time. Partially incorporated into the Empire in 1598, Ahmadnagar was fully annexed in 1636; Bijapur in 1686, and Golkonda in 1687.

In 1645, Shivaji laid the foundation of the Maratha Empire. The Marathas under Shivaji directly challenged the Bijapur Sultanate and ultimately the mighty Mughal empire. Once the Bijapur Sultanate stopped being a threat to the Maratha Empire, Marathas became much more aggressive and began to frequently raid Mughal territory. These raids however angered the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb and by 1680 he moved his capital from Delhi to Aurangabad in Deccan to conquer Maratha held territories. After Shivaji died, his son Sambhaji defended the Maratha empire from the Mughal onslaught but he was captured by

the Mughals and executed. By 1698 the last Maratha stronghold at Jinji fell and Mughals now controlling all Maratha held territories.

In 1707, Emperor Aurangzeb died of sickness at the age of 89 and this allowed Marathas to reacquired their lost territories and established their authority in much of modern Maharashtra. After the death of Chhatrapati Shahu, the Peshwas became the de facto leaders of the Empire from 1749 to 1761, while Shivaji's successors continued as nominal rulers from their base in Satara. The Marathas kept the British at bay during the 18th century. By 1760, with the defeat of the Nizam in the Deccan, Maratha power had reached its zenith. However, dissension between the Peshwa and their sardars (army commanders) saw a gradual downfall of the empire leading to its eventual annexation by the British East India Company in 1818 after the three Anglo-Maratha wars.

A few years later, Aurangzeb's viceroy in Ahmednagar, Nizam-ul-Mulk, established the seat of an independent government at Hyderabad in 1724. Mysore was ruled by Hyder Ali. During the contests for power which ensued from about the middle of the 18th century between the powers on the plateau, the French and British took opposite sides. After a brief course of triumph, the interests of France declined, and a new empire in India was established by the British. Mysore formed one of their earliest conquests in the Deccan. Tanjore and the Carnatic were soon annexed to their dominions, followed by the Peshwa territories in 1818.

In British India, the plateau was largely divided between the presidencies of Bombay and Madras. The two largest native states at that time were Hyderabad and Mysore; many smaller states existed at the time, including Kolhapur, and Sawantwari.

After independence in 1947, almost all native states were incorporated into the Republic of India. The Indian Army occupied Hyderabad in Operation Polo in 1948 when it refused to join. In 1956, the States Reorganisation Act reorganized states along linguistic lines, leading to the states currently found on the plateau.

13.3 ECONOMY

The Deccan plateau is very rich in minerals and precious stones. The plateau's mineral wealth led many lowland rulers, including those of the Mauryan (4th–2nd century BCE) and Gupta (4th–6th century CE) dynasties, to fight over it. Major minerals found here include coal, iron ore, asbestos, chromite, mica, and kyanite. Since March 2011, large deposits of uranium have been discovered in the Tummalapalle belt and in the Bhima basin at Gogi in Karnataka. The Tummalapalle belt uranium reserve promises to be one of the top 20 uranium reserve discoveries of the world.

Low rainfall made farming difficult until the introduction of irrigation. Currently, the area under cultivation is quite low, ranging from 60% in Maharashtra to about 10% in Western Ghats.Except in developed areas of certain river valleys, double-cropping is rare. Rice is the predominant crop in high-rainfall areas and sorghum in low-rainfall areas. Other crops of significance include cotton, tobacco, oilseeds, and sugar cane. Coffee, tea, coconuts, areca, pepper, rubber, cashew nuts, tapioca, and cardamom are widely grown on plantations in the Nilgiri Hills and on the western slopes of the Western Ghats. Cultivation of Jatropha has recently received more attention due to the Jatropha incentives in India.

Check Your Progress-1

1. What is thr economy of peninsular India.

13.4 HISTORY OF PENINSULAR INDIA

In this article we will discuss about the history of Peninsular India.

This triangular region is bound by the Western and Eastern Ghats along the two borders and the southern flanks of the Vindhyan ranges from its northern limits. In the north the distance between the two coasts exceeds

1000 km while near the tip of this reversed triangle the same distance is often less than 50 km.

Although most of Orissa comes within this triangle, we have considered the Lower Palaeolithic occurrence of this region along with Chhotanagpur discussion in the eastern zone. If Orissa forms the eastern corner of the base of the triangle, Maharashtra forms in the same way the western corner of the triangle

Both these states have populations speaking languages which represent branches of Indo-European families. Rest of the zone speaks languages belonging to the Dravidian family. Further, most of this region, comprising of 4 states and 4 major branches of Dravidian family of languages, fall below 18° N latitude.

The southern zone except for parts of Maharashtra and Orissa is a mono-climatic region. The Western Ghats extend a greater amount interiorly in the landmass of the peninsula and hence render it a hilly topography. The Eastern Ghats are much more denuded and discontinuous. Rainfall for the entire region is fairly high and maintains fairly thick sub-tropical plants and allied species.

However, the central region of this triangle, which constitutes parts of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra, falls under rain shadow and hence is perhaps as dry as the Saurashtra region in the Western zone. The rainfall in the drier regions can be as low as 60 cm per year while along the coasts it increases to as much as 300 cm per year.

The rivers Godavari and Krishna- both originating in the Western Ghats- flows south-east through Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra, finally these rivers open in the Andhra coast. Although majority of the landmass of the entire region is composed of the Basalt or Deccan trap, yet, at suitable gaps, there are almost the oldest Archaean rocks exposed within this region.

The Lower Palaeolithic occurrence in this region is perhaps as prolific as in the central zone. One of the earliest reports of Lower Palaeolithic

culture in good detail from this region is from the Kortalayer valley in the Chingleput district of Tamil Nadu. Here a very rich and varied Lower Palaeolithic assemblage was reported by Krishnaswami in 1938.

Since the river flows over a primary lateritic plain and also since the boulder conglomerate marking the first aggradation of the river occurs in two distinct terraces, an attempt was made by Krishnaswami to identify an internal evolution of the culture. The boulder conglomerate from Vadamadurai is non-laterized and hence is taken to be older than the boulders exposed at Attirampakkam terrace which is highly laterized.

The tools from the former terrace yield a mixture of Abbevillian to Acheulian types and have further been divided into several groups and series to demonstrate how the Acheulian types can be shown as having evolved from within the Abbevillian base.

Leaving aside the question of stratigraphy and internal evolution of Lower Palaeolithic in Kortalayer valley we might pay some attention to the techno-morphological features of this find. Besides a large variety of massive asymmetrical Abbevillian types entirely prepared by primary flakings, there are many specimens who compare with the Rostro-handaxes described by Reid Moir in Ip swich (England) and known as Victoria West in East Africa.

Symmetrical handaxes include both the elongated varieties like amygdaloid, lanceolate and micoquian as also the smaller Upper Acheulian forms such as ovates and cordates. Cleavers are prepared both bifacially as also on flakes. The cleavers and some of the handaxes show a distinct technique of thinning a biface by a tranchet blow delivered along its length so that one of the lateral borders of the biface becomes sharp edged.

Such specimens naturally develop a V-shaped cross-section. In Africa this technique was identified near Vaal and hence was named as Vaal technique. Francois Bordes had once argued that since this technique involves first preparation of a core and then delivering a flaking blow, it

must have formed the inspiration for the levalloise technique which was to evolve later. Consequently he named this technique as para-levalloise.

Besides these varieties of bifaces a large number of discoidals and flakes are also illustrated in this industry. What should appear as rather surprising is the fact that the report does not record any pebble tool types from Kortalayer. The absence of any flake tool types is another peculiarity of this industry. It is sufficient to note that this is not entirely correct because a number of pebble tools and also flake tools have subsequently been reported from many of the recent explorations and excavations- especially at Gudiyam caves.

However, considering the fact that the Kortalayer industry was analysed at a very early date when flake tool types were not so well developed even in France, one can understand why Krishnaswamy thought of designating his find with a regional emblem, The Madrasian culture. This was to demonstrate an opposition to another regionally designated term – the Sohanian culture, which was at that time gaining popularity.

Zeuner's expedition along the Gundlakamma River in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh yielded a rich harvest of Lower Palaeolithic sites. K.V. Soundara Rajan, as a member of this expedition, reported several localities along the Sagileru (a tributary of Gundlakamma) and named them as Giddalur I, II etc. The stratigraphic context of the finds is the first cemented gravel which is exposed at several places. The lithic reportoire includes a large variety of Abbevillio- Acheulian handaxes and cleavers besides the Rostro and both clactonian and levalloisean flakes.

At Nagarjunakonda on river Krishna and at Karempudi due south-east from it on Naguleru river, similar other rich Lower Palaeolithic sites are reported. In Prakasam district of coastal Andhra Pradesh Madhusudhana Rao discovered a rich Acheulian site called Paleru. Almost 65 percent of the collection contains handaxes, cleavers and knives and the rest constitutes of worked flakes and pebbles.

Rami Reddy has recorded two more clusters from Chittoor district lying only 40 km. north of Tirupati town. These are Maratipalam and

Chintalapalam. The tools include handaxes, cleavers, side scrapers, scraper-cum-borers, discoids, macro lunates and levalloise flakes.

Some pebble tools are also recorded. The richness of the Lower Palaeolithic content of all these sites with their numerous localities makes Andhra one of the richest centers of early Palaeolithic population. There had been attempts to show that Andhra shows a regional feature of having some so-called burinated bifaces which the neighbouring regions had not developed but these are not very convincing.

As far as pebble tools are concerned it has been argued that such specimens are not usually associated with the advanced bifaces, instead they are found with either Abbevillian cores or clactonian flakes. These claims are clearly aimed towards demonstrating an internal evolution, but unfortunately, cannot be substantiated in any better way than what Krishnaswamy could achieve for his Kortalayer valley.

Further west, the state of Karnataka offers two very distinct climatic zones. The northern regions can be as arid as to maintain a rain fall of merely 40-50 cm per annum while the western coastal strip is typically coastal in climate. Both Malaprabha and Ghataprabha in the northern districts and Tungabhadra in the central districts have yielded many Lower Palaeolithic sites in the state.

Sheshadri, Pappu and Joshi have surveyed these zones extensively. The evidences, however, do not yield any different features than what has already been repeatedly witnessed in the other peninsular rivers both in stratigraphic as also in techno-morphological characters.

There is some indication of a generalized paucity of pebble tools in Karnataka when one compares them with the evidences known from Andhra. Recently Paddayya reported a remarkable evidence of a primary site from Hunsgi from Shorapur doab in Gulbarga district.

It seems that Lower Palaeolithic people lived on the natural floors littered with granitic blocks. Limestone pebbles and cobbles have been carried to the site to make various tools. Since no fire hearth or faunal debris is recovered to indicate a living floor, Paddayya tries to demonstrate its primary context on two basic indicators.

These are:

(a) A remarkable freshness of the finished tools and

(b) The high concentration of artifacts on the floor.

The density of occurrence of the total 291 artifacts (recorded till 1977) is as high as 13 pieces per square meter. Finished tools form a density of 4.8 tool types per square meter. The finished types include 25 percent cleavers, 16 percent handaxes, 13 percent knives, 8 percent choppers and 14 percent side and end-scrapers.

The typo-technological features of the industry are typically upper Acheulian although the bifaces at times are as big 18-20 cm in length. Paddayya has since then added 27 more localities of the Hunsgi complex. All these occur along the course of the river of the same name. At one of these sites on a terrace at a height of 5 meters from the stream even a living floor has been claimed.

Proceeding with the assumption that the claim of Hunsgi being primary is correct, one will have no other alternative but to concede the fact that to consider chopper- chopping as a regional feature in India is totally erroneous. It is a type which has been found as an integral part of both Abbevillian separately (Giddalur-I) as also Acheulian.

Its preponderance is found to decrease progressively as one progress from the earlier to the later stages in Lower Palaeolithic. In this light we might recall the Bhimbetka and Adamgarh (both primary sites) dichotomy. The former which lies 40 km away from Narmada did not yield any pebble tools while the latter which lies within couple of kms from Narmada yields an overwhelming frequency of chopper-chopping types.

It is significant that the accompanying biface component in both the sites is not only identical but also late Acheulian in character. Thus, mere availability of pebbles will have to be accepted as having played a significant role in deciding the occurrence of the pebble types.

Going further north along the arid inland plain we come across the rolling landmass drained by Godavari and its tributaries in Maharashtra.

More than one Palaeolithic occurrences from these river systems have been recorded but in their totality Lower Palaeolithic concentration in this state appears to be far lower and thinner than both Andhra and Karnataka.

However, the site Chirki-Nevasa on river Pravara, a tributary of Godavari in Ahmednagar district requires a special attention. Here Gudrun-Corvinus uncovered a 20-40 cm thick alluvial mantle and exposed a concentration of Lower Palaeolithic industry below it.

Like Paddayya she has argued about the site being primary on the basis of artifact concentration and freshness of the tools. The primary categories of types are handaxes 34 percent; cleavers 25 percent, and choppers 36 percent. Surprising though but Chirki seem quite peculiar in many features, the most important of all these being the total absence of flake tool types which otherwise form quite a significant percentage of an Upper Acheulian industry.

The handaxes and cleavers are also fairly thick when compared with the Adamgarh, Barkhera, Bhimbetka types. Furthermore, the handaxes, unlike the Central zone sites, are more often than not, shaped as a pick rather than the lanceolate forms known usually in late Acheulian areas. In terms of the degree of retouchings and final dressing, however, Chirki-Nevasa qualifies perfectly as a late Acheulian albeit with important component of flakes missing in them.

To sum up, we might note that the Lower Palaeolithic cultures in India can tentatively be accepted as emerging around early Upper Pleistocene. Even this late beginning surely was not universal for the whole sub-continent. Areas like Western zone, in this regard, might have been one of the areas of late colonization.

Narmada, Krishna, Mahanadi and Burhabalang represent perhaps the most thickly populated regions in this sense. With regards to the cultural metamorphosis we have no doubt that the Abbevillian types are purely intruded within the Acheulians. We have more than one evidence of Late Acheulians without any Abbevillian indicators, and consequently the

Abbevellio- Acheulian industries known from the secondary sites are definitely not representing a single stage of our Lower Palaeolithic.

The Acheulian tradition within our Lower Palaeolithic, therefore, has to be much younger in date than the Acheulian in France. A very conservative estimation for this should be anywhere between 100,000 to 60,000 years ago. Thus, to expect a kind of human evolution with cultural association in the line of Olduvai Gorge in India would not be entirely correct.

13.5 FOMATIVE PERIOD IN THE HISTORY OF DECCAN AND PENINSULAR INDIA

Chronologically, the period from the 6th century to the 14th century is called the early medieval period.

This was a formative period in the history of Deccan and peninsular India.

During this phase, two groups of states:

(i) The kingdoms of the Deccan plateau, and

(ii) Tamilham in the south emerged as very important and dominant players in the political and cultural domains.

The **Chalukyas of Badami** or Vatapi, the Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta and the Chalukyas of Kalyani were the important ruling families in the Deccan.

The Pallavas of Kanchi, the Pandyas of Madurai and the Cholas of Tanjhavur are the important players of the Tamilham. While traditional historians viewed the continuous struggle between these ruling families as a dynastic struggle for political hegemony, the latest researches made some historians view this conflict from the geopolitical perspective

The reason for the continued conflict between the western Deccan kingdoms and the kingdoms of Tamilham is the desire to control the

Vengi region and Raichur doab, where the deltas happen to be prime agricultural lands and the east coast is a well-known trade network.

These kingdoms appear to be more interested in improving their resource base to sustain themselves as imperial powers. Lack of vast fertile plains in the peninsula resulted in the establishment of smaller regional kingdoms. As such, we notice the regional loyalties taking deep-rooted shape in the form of language, script, art, architecture, sculpture and music and yet having a common syncretic thread as a unifying factor. It was a period where we notice the transmission of northern Indian values and beliefs and faiths in the Peninsula that led to an interface between the assertion of local culture and that of the expanding Sanskritic culture based on Puranic Dharma. We also notice an expansion of agricultural operations by bringing more and more of forest lands under irrigation by the mechanism of issuing land grants to religious and secular benificiaries, growth of trade and commerce, formation of guilds of merchants and artisans, temple-centred devotionalism as ideology and the emergence of a new social economic formation and state society. In this background, a study of the ruling families of western Deccan for an understanding of the historical process is necessary.

Check Your Progress-2

2. During this phase how many groups are there?

13.6 LET US SUM UP

The Deccan produced some of the most significant dynasties in Indian History like the Chola dynasty, Pallavas, The Tondaiman, Satavahana dynasty, Vakataka dynasty, Kadamba dynasty, Chalukya dynasty, Rashtrakuta dynasty, Western Chalukya Empire, Vijayanagara Empire and Maratha Empire. Of the early history, the main facts established are

the growth of the Mauryan empire (300 BC) and after that the Deccan was ruled by the Satavahana dynasty which protected the Deccan against the Scythian invaders, the Western Satraps. Prominent dynasties of this time include the Cholas (3rd century BC to 12th century AD), Chalukyas (6th to 12th centuries), Rashtrakutas (753–982), Hoysalas (10th to 14th centuries), Kakatiya (1083 to 1323 AD), Kamma Nayakas (13th to 17th century AD) and Vijayanagara Empire (1336–1646). Ahir Kings once ruled over the Deccan. A cave inscription at Nasik refers to the reign of an Abhira prince named Ishwarsena, son of Shivadatta. After the collapse of the Satavahana dynasty the Deccan was ruled by the Vakataka dynasty from the 3rd century to 5th century.From the 6th to 8th century the Deccan was ruled by the Chalukya dynasty which produced great rulers like Pulakesi II who defeated the north India Emperor Harsha or Vikramaditya II whose general defeated the Arab invaders in the 8th century. From the 8th to 10th century the Rashtrakuta dynasty ruled this region. The Deccan plateau is very rich in minerals and precious stones. The plateau's mineral wealth led many lowland rulers, including those of the Mauryan (4th–2nd century BCE) and Gupta (4th–6th century CE) dynasties, to fight over it. Major minerals found here include coal, iron ore, asbestos, chromite, mica, and kyanite. Since March 2011, large deposits of uranium have been discovered in the Tummalapalle belt and in the Bhima basin at Gogi in Karnataka. The Tummalapalle belt uranium reserve promises to be one of the top 20 uranium reserve discoveries of the world. This triangular region is bound by the Western and Eastern Ghats along the two borders and the southern flanks of the Vindhyan ranges from its northern limits. In the north the distance between the two coasts exceeds 1000 km while near the tip of this reversed triangle the same distance is often less than 50 km.Although most of Orissa comes within this triangle, we have considered the Lower Palaeolithic occurrence of this region along with Chhotanagpur discussion in the eastern zone. If Orissa forms the eastern corner of the base of the triangle, Maharashtra forms in the same way the western corner of the triangle. The Pallavas of Kanchi, the Pandyas of Madurai and the Cholas of Tanjhavur are the important players of the Tamilham. While traditional historians viewed the continuous struggle between

these ruling families as a dynastic struggle for political hegemony, the latest researches made some historians view this conflict from the geopolitical perspective.The reason for the continued conflict between the western Deccan kingdoms and the kingdoms of Tamilham is the desire to control the Vengi region and Raichur doab, where the deltas happen to be prime agricultural lands and the east coast is a well-known trade network.These kingdoms appear to be more interested in improving their resource base to sustain themselves as imperial powers. Lack of vast fertile plains in the peninsular resulted in the establishment of smaller regional kingdoms.

13.7 KEYWORDS

- **Peninsular India:** These kingdoms appear to be more interested in improving their resource base to sustain themselves as imperial powers. Lack of vast fertile plains in the peninsular resulted in the establishment of smaller regional kingdoms.
- **Deccan:** The Deccan produced some of the most significant dynasties in Indian History like the Chola dynasty, Pallavas, The Tondaiman, Satavahana dynasty, Vakataka dynasty, Kadamba dynasty, Chalukya dynasty, Rashtrakuta dynasty, Western Chalukya Empire, Vijayanagara Empire and Maratha Empire.

13.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Describe about the history of Peninsular India.
2. Analyse about the economy.
3. Explain about the formative period in the history of Peninsular.
4. Discuss critically about the Vakatakas and other dynasties of Peninsular.

13.9 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

1.Page 46, Dr. Jadoan, Atar Singh (September 2001). Military Geography of South-East Asia. India: Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd. pp. 270 pages. ISBN 81-261-1008-2. Retrieved 8 June 2008.

2. "The Deccan Peninsula". sanctuaryasia. Archived from the original on 17 October 2006. Retrieved 5 January 2007.

3. "The Deccan Plateau". rainwaterharvesting.org. Retrieved 5 January 2007.

4. Henry Yule, A. C. Burnell. Hobson-Jobson: The Definitive Glossary of British India. Oxford. ISBN 9780191645839.

5. Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary, p. 498 (scanned image at SriPedia Initiative): Sanskrit dakṣiṇa meaning 'southern'.

13.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. The Deccan plateau is very rich in minerals and precious stones. The plateau's mineral wealth led many lowland rulers, including those of the Mauryan (4th–2nd century BCE) and Gupta (4th–6th century CE) dynasties, to fight over it. Major minerals found here include coal, iron ore, asbestos, chromite, mica, and kyanite. Since March 2011, large deposits of uranium have been discovered in the Tummalapalle belt and in the Bhima basin at Gogi in Karnataka. The Tummalapalle belt uranium reserve promises to be one of the top 20 uranium reserve discoveries of the world.

2. This was a formative period in the history of Deccan and peninsular India.

During this phase, two groups of states:

(i) The kingdoms of the Deccan plateau, and

(ii) Tamilham in the south emerged as very important and dominant players in the political and cultural domains.

UNIT-14 HARSHA, CHALUKYA, PALLAVAS

STRUCTURE

14.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Able to understand The Harsha Dynasty
- Able to understand The Chalukya Dynasty
- Able to understand The pallava Dynasty

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Harsha (c. 590–647 CE), also known as Harshavardhana, was an Indian emperor who ruled North India from 606 to 647 CE. He was a member of the Vardhana dynasty; and was the son of Prabhakarvardhana who

defeated the Alchon Huna invaders, and the younger brother of Rajyavardhana, a king of Thanesar, present-day Haryana. At the height of Harsha's power, his Empire covered much of North and Northwestern India, extended East till Kamarupa, and South until Narmada River; and eventually made Kannauj (in present Uttar Pradesh state) his capital, and ruled till 647 CE. Harsha was defeated by the south Indian Emperor Pulakeshin II of the Chalukya dynasty in the Battle of Narmada, when Harsha tried to expand his Empire into the southern peninsula of India.

The peace and prosperity that prevailed made his court a centre of cosmopolitanism, attracting scholars, artists and religious visitors from far and wide. The Chinese traveller Xuanzang visited the court of Harsha and wrote a very favourable account of him, praising his justice and generosity.His biography Harshacharita ("Deeds of Harsha") written by Sanskrit poet Banabhatta, describes his association with Thanesar, besides mentioning the defence wall, a moat and the palace with a two-storied Dhavalagriha (white mansion)

The Chalukya Empire ruled most of the western Deccan, South India, between the 10th and 12th centuries. This Kannadiga dynasty is sometimes called the Kalyani Chalukya after its regal capital at Kalyani, today's Basavakalyan in the modern Bidar District of Karnataka state, and alternatively the Later Chalukya from its theoretical relationship to the 6th-century Chalukya dynasty of Badami. The dynasty is called Western Chalukyas to differentiate from the contemporaneous Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi, a separate dynasty. Prior to the rise of these Chalukyas, the Rashtrakuta empire of Manyakheta controlled most of Deccan and Central India for over two centuries. In 973, seeing confusion in the Rashtrakuta empire after a successful invasion of their capital by the ruler of the Paramara dynasty of Malwa, Tailapa II, a feudatory of the Rashtrakuta Dynasty ruling from Bijapur region defeated his overlords and made Manyakheta his capital. The dynasty quickly rose to power and grew into an empire under Someshvara I who moved the capital to Kalyani.

The Chalukyas developed an architectural style known today as a transitional style, an architectural link between the style of the early

Chalukya dynasty and that of the later Hoysala empire. Most of its monuments are in the districts bordering the Tungabhadra River in central Karnataka. Well known examples are the Kasivisvesvara Temple at Lakkundi, the Mallikarjuna Temple at Kuruvatti, the Kallesvara Temple at Bagali and the Mahadeva Temple at Itagi. This was an important period in the development of fine arts in Southern India, especially in literature as the Western Chalukya kings encouraged writers in the native language Kannada, and Sanskrit.

The Pallava dynasty was an Indian dynasty that existed from 275 CE to 897 CE, ruling a portion of southern India. They gained prominence after the eclipse of the Satavahana dynasty, whom the Pallavas served as feudatories.

Pallavas became a major power during the reign of Mahendravarman I (571–630 CE) and Narasimhavarman I (630–668 CE) and dominated the Telugu and northern parts of the Tamil region for about 600 years until the end of the 9th century. Throughout their reign they were in constant conflict with both Chalukyas of Badami in the north and the Tamil kingdoms of Chola and Pandyas in the south. Pallava was finally defeated by the Chola ruler Aditya I in the 9th century CE.

Pallavas are most noted for their patronage of architecture, the finest example being the Shore Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Mamallapuram. The Pallavas, who left behind magnificent sculptures and temples, established the foundations of medieval South Indian architecture. They developed the Pallava script from which Grantha ultimately descended. The Pallava script gave rise to several other southeast Asian scripts. Chinese traveller Xuanzang visited Kanchipuram during Pallava rule and extolled their benign rule.

14.2 EXTEND OF CHALUKYA EMPIRE

Knowledge of Chalukya history has come through examination of the numerous Kannada language inscriptions left by the kings (scholars Sheldon Pollock and Jan Houben have claimed 90 percent of the Chalukyan royal inscriptions are in Kannada),and from the study of

important contemporary literary documents in Western Chalukya literature such as Gada Yuddha (982) in Kannada by Ranna and Vikramankadeva Charitam (1120) in Sanskrit by Bilhana. The earliest record is dated 957, during the rule of Tailapa II when the Western Chalukyas were still a feudatory of the Rashtrakutas and Tailapa II governed from Tardavadi in present-day Bijapur district, Karnataka. The genealogy of the kings of this empire is still debated. One theory, based on contemporary literary and inscriptional evidence plus the finding that the Western Chalukyas employed titles and names commonly used by the early Chalukyas, suggests that the Western Chalukya kings belonged to the same family line as the illustrious Badami Chalukya dynasty of 6th-century,while other Western Chalukya inscriptional evidence indicates they were a distinct line unrelated to the early Chalukyas.

The records suggests a possible rebellion by a local Chalukya King, Chattigadeva of Banavasi-12000 province (c. 967), in alliance with local Kadamba chieftains. This rebellion however was unfruitful but paved the way for his successor Tailapa II.A few years later, Tailapa II re-established Chalukya rule and defeated the Rashtrakutas during the reign of Karka II by timing his rebellion to coincide with the confusion caused in the Rashtrakuta capital of Manyakheta by the invading Paramaras of Central India in 973.After overpowering the Rashtrakutas, Tailapa II moved his capital to Manyakheta and consolidated the Chalukya empire in the western Deccan by subjugating the Paramara and other aggressive rivals and extending his control over the land between the Narmada River and Tungabhadra River.[22] However, some inscriptions indicate that Balagamve in Mysore territory may have been a power centre up to the rule of Someshvara I in 1042.

The intense competition between the kingdom of the western Deccan and those of the Tamil country came to the fore in the 11th century over the acutely contested fertile river valleys in the doab region of the Krishna and Godavari River called Vengi (modern coastal Andhra Pradesh). The Western Chalukyas and the Chola Dynasty fought many bitter wars over control of this strategic resource. The imperial Cholas gained power during the time of the famous king Rajaraja Chola I and the crown prince Rajendra Chola I. The Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi were cousins of the

Western Chalukyas but became increasingly influenced by the Cholas through their marital ties with the Tamil kingdom. As this was against the interests of the Western Chalukyas, they wasted no time in involving themselves politically and militarily in Vengi. When King Satyashraya succeeded Tailapa II to the throne, he was able to protect his kingdom from Chola aggression as well as his northern territories in Konkan and Gujarat although his control over Vengi was shaky. His successor, Jayasimha II, fought many battles with the Cholas in the south around c. 1020–21 when both these powerful kingdoms struggled to choose the Vengi king.Shortly thereafter in c. 1024, Jayasimha II subdued the Paramara of central India and the rebellious Yadava King Bhillama.

It is known from records that Jayasimha's son Someshvara I, whose rule historian Sen considers a brilliant period in the Western Chalukya rule, moved the Chalukya capital to Kalyani in c. 1042. Hostilities with the Cholas continued while both sides won and lost battles, though neither lost significant territory[30][31] during the ongoing struggle to install a puppet on the Vengi throne. In 1068 Someshvara I, suffering from an incurable illness, drowned himself in the Tungabhadra River (Paramayoga).Despite many conflicts with the Cholas in the south, Someshvara I had managed to maintain control over the northern territories in Konkan, Gujarat, Malwa and Kalinga during his rule. His successor, his eldest son Someshvara II, feuded with his younger brother, Vikramaditya VI, an ambitious warrior who had initially been governor of Gangavadi in the southern Deccan when Someshvara II was the king. Before 1068, even as a prince, Vikramaditya VI had invaded Bengal, weakening the ruling Pala Empire. These incursions led to the establishment of Karnata dynasties such as the Sena dynasty and Varman dynasty in Bengal, and the Nayanadeva dynasty in Bihar., Married to a Chola princess (a daughter of Vira Rajendra Chola), Vikramaditya VI maintained a friendly alliance with them. After the death of the Chola king in 1070, Vikramaditya VI invaded the Tamil kingdom and installed his brother-in-law, Adhirajendra, on the throne creating conflict with Kulothunga Chola I, the powerful ruler of Vengi who sought the Chola throne for himself.At the same time Vikramaditya VI undermined his brother, Someshvara II, by winning the loyalty of the Chalukya

feudatories: the Hoysala, the Seuna and the Kadambas of Hangal. Anticipating a civil war, Someshvara II sought help from Vikramaditya VI's enemies, Kulothunga Chola I and the Kadambas of Goa. In the ensuing conflict of 1076, Vikramaditya VI emerged victorious and proclaimed himself king of the Chalukya empire.

The fifty-year reign of Vikramaditya VI, the most successful of the later Chalukya rulers, was an important period in Karnataka's history and is referred to by historians as the "Chalukya Vikrama era".Not only was he successful in controlling his powerful feudatories in the north (Kadamba Jayakesi II of Goa, Silhara Bhoja and the Yadava King) and south (Hoysala Vishnuvardhana), he successfully dealt with the imperial Cholas whom he defeated in the battle of Vengi in 1093 and again in 1118. He retained this territory for many years despite ongoing hostilities with the Cholas. This victory in Vengi reduced the Chola influence in the eastern Deccan and made him emperor of territories stretching from the Kaveri River in the south to the Narmada River in the north, earning him the titles Permadideva and Tribhuvanamalla (lord of three worlds). The scholars of his time paid him glowing tributes for his military leadership, interest in fine arts and religious tolerance.Literature proliferated and scholars in Kannada and Sanskrit adorned his court. Poet Bilhana, who immigrated from far away Kashmir, eulogised the king in his well-known work Vikramankadeva Charita.Vikramaditya VI was not only an able warrior but also a devout king as indicated by his numerous inscriptions that record grants made to scholars and centers of religion.

The continual warring with the Cholas exhausted both empires, giving their subordinates the opportunity to rebel. In the decades after Vikramaditya VI's death in 1126, the empire steadily decreased in size as their powerful feudatories expanded in autonomy and territorial command. The time period between 1150 and 1200 saw many hard fought battles between the Chalukyas and their feudatories who were also at war with each other. By the time of Jagadhekamalla II, the Chalukyas had lost control of Vengi and his successor, Tailapa III, was defeated by the Kakatiya king Prola in 1149. Tailapa III was taken captive and later released bringing down the prestige of the Western Chalukyas. Seeing decadence and uncertainty seeping into Chalukya

rule, the Hoysalas and Seunas also encroached upon the empire. Hoysala Narasimha I defeated and killed Tailapa III but was unable to overcome the Kalachuris who were vying for control of the same region. In 1157 the Kalachuris of Kalyanis under Bijjala II captured Kalyani and occupied it for the next twenty years, forcing the Chalukyas to move their capital to Annigeri in the present day Dharwad district.

The Kalachuris were originally immigrants into the southern Deccan from central India and called themselves Kalanjarapuravaradhisavaras. Bijjala II and his ancestors had governed as Chalukya commanders (Mahamandaleshwar) over the Karhad-4000 and Tardavadi-1000 provinces (overlapping region in present-day Karnataka and Maharashtra) with Mangalavada or Annigeri as their capital. Bijjala II's Chikkalagi record of 1157 calls him Mahabhujabala Chakravarti ("emperor with powerful shoulders and arms") indicating he no longer was a subordinate of the Chalukyas. However the successors of Bijjala II were unable to hold on to Kalyani and their rule ended in 1183 when the last Chalukya scion, Someshvara IV made a final bid to regain the empire by recapturing Kalyani. Kalachuri King Sankama was killed by Chalukya general Narasimha in this conflict.During this time, Hoysala Veera Ballala II was growing ambitious and clashed on several occasions with the Chalukyas and the other claimants over their empire. He defeated Chalukya Someshvara IV and Seuna Bhillama V bringing large regions in the Krishna River valley under the Hoysala domains, but was unsuccessful against Kalachuris. The Seunas under Bhillama V were on an imperialistic expansion too when the Chalukyas regained Kalyani. Their ambitions were temporarily stemmed by their defeat against Chalukya general Barma in 1183 but they later had their vengeance in 1189.

The overall effort by Someshvara IV to rebuild the Chalukya empire failed and the dynasty was ended by the Seuna rulers who drove Someshvara IV into exile in Banavasi 1189. After the fall of the Chalukyas, the Seunas and Hoysalas continued warring over the Krishna River region in 1191, each inflicting a defeat on the other at various points in time. This period saw the fall of two great empires, the Chalukyas of the western Deccan and the Cholas of Tamilakam. On the

ruins of these two empires were built the Kingdoms of their feudatories whose mutual antagonisms filled the annals of Deccan history for over a hundred years, the Pandyas taking control over some regions of the erstwhile Chola empire.

14.2.1 Administration

The Western Chalukya kingship was hereditary, passing to the king's brother if the king did not have a male heir. The administration was highly decentralised and feudatory clans such as the Alupas, the Hoysalas, the Kakatiya, the Seuna, the southern Kalachuri and others were allowed to rule their autonomous provinces, paying an annual tribute to the Chalukya emperor. Excavated inscriptions record titles such as Mahapradhana (Chief minister), Sandhivigrahika, and Dharmadhikari (chief justice). Some positions such as Tadeyadandanayaka (commander of reserve army) were specialised in function while all ministerial positions included the role of Dandanayaka (commander), showing that cabinet members were trained as army commanders as well as in general administrative skills.

The kingdom was divided into provinces such as Banavasi-12000, Nolambavadi-32000, Gangavadi-96000, each name including the number of villages under its jurisdiction. The large provinces were divided into smaller provinces containing a lesser number of villages, as in Belavola-300. The big provinces were called Mandala and under them were Nadu further divided into Kampanas (groups of villages) and finally a Bada (village). A Mandala was under a member of the royal family, a trusted feudatory or a senior official. Tailapa II himself was in charge of Tardavadi province during the Rashtrakuta rule. Chiefs of Mandalas were transferable based on political developments. For example, an official named Bammanayya administered Banavasi-12000 under King Someshvara III but was later transferred to Halasige-12000. Women from the royal family also administered Nadus and Kampanas. Army commanders were titled Mahamandaleshwaras and those who headed a Nadu were entitled Nadugouvnda.

The Western Chalukyas minted punch-marked gold pagodas with Kannada and Nagari legends which were large, thin gold coins with

several varying punch marks on the obverse side. They usually carried multiple punches of symbols such as a stylised lion, Sri in Kannada, a spearhead, the king's title, a lotus and others. Jayasimha II used the legend Sri Jaya, Someshvara I issued coins with Sri Tre lo ka malla, Someshvara II used Bhuvaneka malla, Lakshmideva's coin carried Sri Lasha, and Jagadhekamalla II coinage had the legend Sri Jagade. The Alupas, a feudatory, minted coins with the Kannada and Nagari legend Sri Pandya Dhanamjaya. Lakkundi in Gadag district and Sudi in Dharwad district were the main mints (Tankhashaley). Their heaviest gold coin was Gadyanaka weighting 96 grains, Dramma weighted 65 grains, Kalanju 48 grains, Kasu 15 grains, Manjadi 2.5 grains, Akkam 1.25 grains and Pana 9.6 grain.

14.2.2 Religion

The fall of the Rashtrakuta empire to the Western Chalukyas in the 10th century, coinciding with the defeat of the Western Ganga Dynasty by the Cholas in Gangavadi, was a setback to Jainism. The growth of Virashaivism in the Chalukya territory and Vaishnava Hinduism in the Hoysala region paralleled a general decreased interest in Jainism, although the succeeding kingdoms continued to be religiously tolerant. Two locations of Jain worship in the Hoysala territory continued to be patronaged, Shravanabelagola and Kambadahalli. The decline of Buddhism in South India hadbegun in the 8th century with the spread of Adi Shankara's Advaita philosophy. The only places of Buddhist worship that remained during the Western Chalukya rule were at Dambal and Balligavi.There is no mention of religious conflict in the writings and inscriptions of the time which suggest the religious transition was smooth.

Although the origin of the Virashaiva faith has been debated, the movement grew through its association with Basavanna in the 12th century. Basavanna and other Virashaiva saints preached of a faith without a caste system. In his Vachanas (a form of poetry), Basavanna appealed to the masses in simple Kannada and wrote "work is worship" (Kayakave Kailasa). Also known as the Lingayats (worshipers of the Linga, the universal symbol of Shiva), these Virashaivas questioned

many of the established norms of society such as the belief in rituals and the theory of rebirth and supported the remarriage of widows and the marriage of unwed older women.[85] This gave more social freedom to women but they were not accepted into the priesthood. Ramanujacharya, the head of the Vaishnava monastery in Srirangam, traveled to the Hoysala territory and preached the way of devotion (bhakti marga). He later wrote Sribhashya, a commentary on Badarayana Brahmasutra, a critique on the Advaita philosophy of Adi Shankara. Ramanujacharya's stay in Melkote resulted in the Hoysala King Vishnuvardhana converting to Vaishnavism, a faith that his successors also followed.

The impact of these religious developments on the culture, literature, and architecture in South India was profound. Important works of metaphysics and poetry based on the teachings of these philosophers were written over the next centuries. Akka Mahadevi, Allama Prabhu, and a host of Basavanna's followers, including Chenna Basava, Prabhudeva, Siddharama, and Kondaguli Kesiraja wrote hundreds of poems called Vachanas in praise of Lord Shiva. The esteemed scholars in the Hoysala court, Harihara and Raghavanka, were Virashaivas. This tradition continued into the Vijayanagar empire with such well-known scholars as Singiraja, Mallanarya, Lakkana Dandesa and other prolific writers of Virashaiva literature. The Saluva, Tuluva and Aravidu dynasties of the Vijayanagar empire were followers of Vaishnavism and a Vaishnava temple with an image of Ramanujacharya exists today in the Vitthalapura area of Vijayanagara. Scholars in the succeeding Mysore Kingdom wrote Vaishnavite works supporting the teachings of Ramanujacharya. King Vishnuvardhana built many temples after his conversion from Jainism to Vaishnavism.

14.2.3 Society

The rise of Veerashaivaism was revolutionary and challenged the prevailing Hindu caste system which retained royal support. The social role of women largely depended on their economic status and level of education in this relatively liberal period. Freedom was more available to women in the royal and affluent urban families. Records describe the participation of women in the fine arts, such as Chalukya queen

Chandala Devi's and Kalachuris of Kalyani queen Sovala Devi's skill in dance and music. The compositions of thirty Vachana women poets included the work of the 12th-century Virashaiva mystic Akka Mahadevi whose devotion to the bhakti movement is well known.[94] Contemporary records indicate some royal women were involved in administrative and martial affairs such as princess Akkadevi, (sister of King Jayasimha II) who fought and defeated rebellious feudals. Inscriptions emphasise public acceptance of widowhood indicating that Sati (a custom in which a dead man's widow used to immolate herself on her husband's funeral pyre) though present was on a voluntary basis.[97] Ritual deaths to achieve salvation were seen among the Jains who preferred to fast to death (Sallekhana), while people of some other communities chose to jump on spikes (Shoolabrahma) or walking into fire on an eclipse.

In a Hindu caste system that was conspicuously present, Brahmins enjoyed a privileged position as providers of knowledge and local justice. These Brahmins were normally involved in careers that revolved around religion and learning with the exception of a few who achieved success in martial affairs. They were patronised by kings, nobles and wealthy aristocrats who persuaded learned Brahmins to settle in specific towns and villages by making them grants of land and houses. The relocation of Brahmin scholars was calculated to be in the interest of the kingdom as they were viewed as persons detached from wealth and power and their knowledge was a useful tool to educate and teach ethical conduct and discipline in local communities. Brahmins were also actively involved in solving local problems by functioning as neutral arbiters (Panchayat).

Regarding eating habits, Brahmins, Jains, Buddhists and Shaivas were strictly vegetarian while the partaking of different kinds of meat was popular among other communities. Marketplace vendors sold meat from domesticated animals such as goats, sheep, pigs and fowl as well as exotic meat including partridge, hare, wild fowl and boar. People found indoor amusement by attending wrestling matches (Kusti) or watching animals fight such as cock fights and ram fights or by gambling. Horse racing was a popular outdoor pastime.In addition to these leisurely

activities, festivals and fairs were frequent and entertainment by traveling troupes of acrobats, dancers, dramatists and musicians was often provided.

Schools and hospitals are mentioned in records and these were built in the vicinity of temples. Marketplaces served as open air town halls where people gathered to discuss and ponder local issues. Choirs, whose main function was to sing devotional hymns, were maintained at temple expense. Young men were trained to sing in choirs in schools attached to monasteries such as Hindu Matha, Jain Palli and Buddhist Vihara. These institutions provided advanced education in religion and ethics and were well equipped with libraries (Saraswati Bhandara). Learning was imparted in the local language and in Sanskrit. Schools of higher learning were called Brahmapuri (or Ghatika or Agrahara). Teaching Sanskrit was a near monopoly of Brahmins who received royal endowments for their cause. Inscriptions record that the number of subjects taught varied from four to eighteen. The four most popular subjects with royal students were Economics (Vartta), Political Science (Dandaniti), Veda (trayi) and Philosophy (Anvikshiki), subjects that are mentioned as early as Kautilyas Arthashastra.

14.2.4 Literature

The Western Chalukya era was one of substantial literary activity in the native Kannada, and Sanskrit.[104] In a golden age of Kannada literature,[105] Jain scholars wrote about the life of Tirthankaras and Virashaiva poets expressed their closeness to God through pithy poems called Vachanas. Nearly three hundred contemporary Vachanakaras (Vachana poets) including thirty women poets have been recorded. Early works by Brahmin writers were on the epics, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavata, Puranas and Vedas. In the field of secular literature, subjects such as romance, erotics, medicine, lexicon, mathematics, astrology, encyclopedia etc. were written for the first time.

Most notable among Kannada scholars were Ranna, grammarian Nagavarma II, minister Durgasimha and the Virashaiva saint and social reformer Basavanna. Ranna who was patronised by king Tailapa II and Satyashraya is one among the "three gems of Kannada literature". He

was bestowed the title "Emperor among poets" (Kavi Chakravathi) by King Tailapa II and has five major works to his credit. Of these, Saahasabheema Vijayam (or Gada yuddha) of 982 in Champu style is a eulogy of his patron King Satyashraya whom he compares to Bhima in valour and achievements and narrates the duel between Bhima and Duryodhana using clubs on the eighteenth day of the Mahabharata war. He wrote Ajitha purana in 993 describing the life of the second Tirthankara, Ajitanatha.

Nagavarma II, poet laureate (Katakacharya) of King Jagadhekamalla II made contributions to Kannada literature in various subjects. His works in poetry, prosody, grammar and vocabulary are standard authorities and their importance to the study of Kannada language is well acknowledged. Kavyavalokana in poetics, Karnataka-Bhashabhushana on grammar and Vastukosa a lexicon (with Kannada equivalents for Sanskrit words) are some of his comprehensive contributions. Several works on medicine were produced during this period. Notable among them were Jagaddala Somanatha's Karnataka Kalyana Karaka.

Check Your Progress-1

2. Write about the administration of the Chalukya Empire.

14.3 EXTEND OF PALLAVAS DYNASTY

The origins of the Pallavas have been debated by scholars.The available historical materials include three copper-plate grants of Sivaskandavarman in the first quarter of the 4th century CE, all issued from Kanchipuram but found in various parts of Andhra Pradesh, and another inscription of Simhavarman half century earlier in the Palanadu area of the western Guntur district. All the early documents are in Prakrit, and scholars find similarities in paleography and language with

the Satavahanas and the Mauryas. Their early coins are said to be similar to those of Satavahanas. Two main theories of the origins have emerged from this data: one that the Pallavas were former subsidiaries of Satavahanas in the Andhradesa (the region north of Penna River in modern Andhra Pradesh and later expanded south up to Kanchi, and the other that they initially rose to power in Kanchi and expanded north up to the Krishna river.

The proponents of the Andhra origin theory include S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar and K. A. Nilakanta Sastri. They believe that Pallavas were originally feudatories of the Satavahanas in the south-eastern part of their empire who became independent when the Satavahana power declined.They are seen to be "strangers to the Tamil country", unrelated to the ancient lines of Cheras, Pandyas and Cholas. Since Simhavarman's grant bears no regal titles, they believe that he might have been a subsidiary to the Andhra Ikshvakus who were in power in Andhradesa at that time. In the following half-century, the Pallavas became independent and expanded up to Kanchi.

Another theory is propounded by historians R. Sathianathaier and D. C. Sircar,[17] with endorsements by Hermann Kulke, Dietmar Rothermund and Burton Stein.[19] Sircar points out that the family legends of the Pallavas speak of an ancestor descending from Ashwatthama, the legendary Brahmin warrior of Mahabharata, and his union with a Naga princess. According Ptolemy, the Aruvanadu region between the northern and southern Penner rivers (Penna and Ponnaiyar was ruled by a king Basaronaga around 140 CE. By marrying into this Naga family, the Pallavas would have acquired control of the region near kanchi. While Sircar allows that Pallavas might have been provincial rulers under the later Satavahanas with a partial northern lineage, Sathianathaier sees them as natives of Tondaimandalam (the core region of Aruvanadu). He argues that they could well have adopted north Indian practices under the Mauryan Asoka's rule. He relates the name "Pallava" to Pulindas, whose heritage is borne by names such as "Pulinadu" and "Puliyurkottam" in the region.

Overlaid on these theories is another hypothesis that "Pallava" is a derivative of Pahlava (the Sanskrit term for Parthians). Partial support for the theory is derived from a crown shaped like an elephant's scalp depicted on some sculptures, which resembles the crown of Demetrius I.

14.3.1 Religion

Pallavas were followers of Hinduism and made gifts of land to gods and Brahmins. In line with the prevalent customs, some of the rulers performed the Aswamedha and other Vedic sacrifices.They were, however, tolerant of other faiths. The Chinese monk Xuanzang who visited Kanchipuram during the reign of Narasimhavarman I reported that there were 100 Buddhist monasteries, and 80 temples in Kanchipuram.

14.3.2 Society

The Pallava period beginning with Simhavishnu (575 AD – 900 AD) was a transitional stage in southern Indian society with monument building, foundation of devotional (bhakti) sects of Alvars and Nayanars, the flowering of rural brahmanical institutions of Sanskrit learning, and the establishment of chakravartin model of kingship over a territory of diverse people; which ended the pre-Pallavan era of territorially segmented people, each with their culture, under a tribal chieftain.While a system of ranked relationship among groups existed in the classical period, the Pallava period extolled ranked relationships based on ritual purity as enjoined by the shastras. Burton distinguishes between the chakravatin model and the kshatriya model, and likens kshatriyas to locally based warriors with ritual status sufficiently high enough to share with Brahmins; and states that in south India the kshatriya model did not emerge.As per Burton, south India was aware of the Indo-Aryan varna organised society in which decisive secular authority was vested in the kshatriyas; but apart from the Pallava, Chola and Vijayanagar line of warriors which claimed chakravartin status, only few locality warrior families achieved the prestigious kin-linked organisation of northern warrior groups.

14.4 EXTEND OF HARSHA EMPIRE

Harshavardhana was one of the most important Indian emperors of the 7th Century. During the peak of his reign, Harshavardhana's empire extended from north India to the Narmada River in central India. His rule was renowned for peace, stability and prosperity, and attracted many artists and scholars from far and wide. Xuanzang, a famous Chinese traveler, heaped a lot of praise on Harshavardhana for his generosity and administrative skills. Ruling from 606 to 647 CE, Harshavardhana became the most successful emperor of the Pushyabhuti dynasty until he was defeated by a South Indian ruler Pulakeshin II. The defeat of Harshavardhana marked the end of the Pushyabhuti dynasty.

The Pushyabhuti dynasty, also known as the Vardhana dynasty, came into prominence after the decline of the Gupta Empire. Prabhakara Vardhana, the first king of the Pushyabhuti dynasty, was instrumental in consolidating the small republics and monarchical states that had sprung up in North India after the downfall of the Gupta dynasty. When Prabhakara Vardhana passed away in 605 CE, his eldest son Rajya Vardhana became the new ruler. Harshavardhana was Rajya Vardhana's brother and they also had a sister named Rajyashri. Rajyashri went on to marry the Maukhari King Grahavarman. Rajyashri's husband, King Grahavarman, was defeated by the Malwa King Devagupta and Rajyashri was imprisoned. King Devagupta was now ruling over the subjects of King Grahavarman. Also, Rajyashri was ill-treated during her stay in the prison. Unable to tolerate the treatment given to his sister, Rajya Vardhana marshalled his troops into the kingdom of Devagupta and managed to defeat him. Around the same time, a Gauda ruler Shashanka entered Rajya Vardhana's kingdom. Unfortunately, Rajya Vardhana failed to make out the motive behind Shashanka's entry into his kingdom. Shashanka had posed as Rajya Vardhana's friend, and had gained knowledge about his military affairs. But in reality, Shashanka was an ally of Rajya Vardhana's arch-rival. Rajya Vardhana never suspected Shashanka's intentions and he eventually paid the price for it as he was murdered by Shashanka. When Harshavardhana came to know about his brother's death, he waged a war against Shashanka and defeated him convincingly. He then ascended the throne and took over the leadership of the Vardhana dynasty at the age of 16.

14.4.1 Administration and the Empire

Harshavardhana ruled over the entire North India from 606 to 647 CE. It is said that Harshavardhana's empire reminded many of the great Gupta Empire as his administration was similar to that of the administration of the Gupta Empire. There was no slavery in his empire and people were free to lead their life according to their wish. His empire also took good care of the poor by building rest houses that provided all the amenities required. In many texts, Harshavardhana has been described as a noble emperor who made sure all his subjects stayed happy. He did not impose heavy taxes on his people and the economy was somewhat self-sufficient. His capital Kannauj (in present day Uttar Pradesh) attracted many artists, poets, religious leaders and scholars who traveled from far and wide. He also maintained cordial relations with the Chinese. He even sent an Indian mission to China, establishing a diplomatic relationship between India and China. The famous Chinese monk and traveler Xuanzang spent eight years in his empire. He later recorded his experiences and even praised Harshavardhana for the way he went about ruling his empire.

During the course of his rule, Harshavardhana built a strong army. Historical records suggest that he had 100,000 strong cavalry, 50,000 infantry and 60,000 elephants during the peak of his reign. He was also a patron of literature and art. Thanks to the numerous endowments that were made to the Nalanda University, a mighty wall enclosing the edifices of the university was constructed during his rule. This wall saved the university from attack and invasions by the enemies and that ensured the prosperity of this great centre of learning. Harshavardhana's interest in the field of prose and poetry is well-documented. A famous Indian writer and poet named Banabhatta served as the 'Asthana Kavi' (primary poet of the kingdom) in the court of Harshavardhana. The emperor himself was a skilled writer as he had penned down three Sanskrit plays, namely 'Ratnavali', 'Priyadarsika' and 'Nagananda.'

During Harshavardhana's reign, there was paucity of coins in most parts of North India. This fact suggests that the economy was feudal in nature.

People were more concerned about growing their own crops rather than creating a market for the crops grown.

Harshavardhana's kingdom was one of the earliest Indian kingdoms where we can see the practice of feudalism. This was similar to the feudal grants of Europe. Independent rulers, collectively known as 'Mahasamantas,' paid tribute to Harshavardhana and also helped him by supplying military reinforcements. This played an important role in the expansion of Harshavardhana's empire.

Being one of the largest Indian empires of the 7th Century CE, it covered the entire North and Northwestern India. In the east, his empire extended till Kamarupa and ran all the way down to the Narmada River. It is said that his empire was spread across the present day states of Orissa, Bengal, Punjab and the whole of Indo-Gangetic plain. Harshavardhana defeated and conquered many kingdoms during his reign. When he thought of extending his empire beyond the Narmada River, his advisors came up with a plan to conquer South India. He then charted out a plan to attack Pulakeshin II of the Chalukya dynasty. Pulakeshin II controlled a major part of South India. Hence, Harshavardhana's plan to fight Pulakeshin II suggests that he wanted to gain control over the whole of India. Unfortunately, Harshavardhana underestimated Pulakeshin II's military prowess and was defeated in the battle, which took place on the banks of Narmada.

14.4.2 Religion

According to historical sources, Harshavardhana's ancestors were sun worshippers, but Harshavardhana was a Shaivite. He was an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva and his subjects described him as 'Parama-maheshvara' (supreme devotee of Lord Shiva). In fact, 'Nagananda,' a Sanskrit play which was written by him, was dedicated to Lord Shiva's consort Parvati. Though he was an ardent Shaivite, he was also tolerant towards all other religions and extended his support as well. He did not force his religious beliefs on his subjects and they were free to follow and practice the religion of their choice. Sometime later in his life, he became a patron of Buddhism. Records suggest that his sister Rajyashri had converted to Buddhism and that encouraged King Harshavardhana to

support and even propagate the religion. He got several Buddhist stupas constructed. The stupas built by him on the banks of the Ganges stood at 100-feet high. He also banned animal slaughter and started building monasteries all over North India.

He built hospices and ordered his men to maintain them well. These hospices served as shelters to the poor and to the religious travelers across India. He also organized a religious assembly called 'Moksha.' It was organized once in every five years. Harshavardhana was also renowned for organizing a grand Buddhist convocation in 643 CE. This convocation was held at Kannauj and it was attended by hundreds of pilgrims and 20 kings who had come from far and wide. Chinese traveler Xuanzang penned down his experience of attending this massive convocation. Xuanzang also wrote about a 21-day religious festival which too, was held at Kannauj. This religious festival was centered on a life-sized statue of Buddha which was made out of pure gold. According to Xuanzang, Harsha, along with his subordinate kings, would perform daily rituals in front of the life-sized statue of the Buddha. It is still not clear if Harshavardhana converted to Buddhism. But Xuanzang has clearly mentioned in one of his writings that King Harshavardhana was not only favorable to Buddhist monks, but also treated scholars of other religious belief with equal respect. This suggests that he might not have converted to Buddhism.

After ruling over most parts of North India for more than 40 years, King Harshavardhana left for the holy abode in the year 647 CE. Since he did not have any heirs his empire collapsed and disintegrated rapidly into small states. The demise of King Harshavardhana marked the end of the mighty Vardhana dynasty.

Check Your Progress-2

3. Write a short note on the Pallava Dynasty Religion.

14.5 LET US SUM UP

Knowledge of Chalukya history has come through examination of the numerous Kannada language inscriptions left by the kings (scholars Sheldon Pollock and Jan Houben have claimed 90 percent of the Chalukyan royal inscriptions are in Kannada),and from the study of important contemporary literary documents in Western Chalukya literature such as Gada Yuddha (982) in Kannada by Ranna and Vikramankadeva Charitam (1120) in Sanskrit by Bilhana. The earliest record is dated 957, during the rule of Tailapa II when the Western Chalukyas were still a feudatory of the Rashtrakutas and Tailapa II governed from Tardavadi in present-day Bijapur district, Karnataka. The genealogy of the kings of this empire is still debated. One theory, based on contemporary literary and inscriptional evidence plus the finding that the Western Chalukyas employed titles and names commonly used by the early Chalukyas, suggests that the Western Chalukya kings belonged to the same family line as the illustrious Badami Chalukya dynasty of 6th-century,while other Western Chalukya inscriptional evidence indicates they were a distinct line unrelated to the early Chalukyas.

The origins of the Pallavas have been debated by scholars.The available historical materials include three copper-plate grants of Sivaskandavarman in the first quarter of the 4th century CE, all issued from Kanchipuram but found in various parts of Andhra Pradesh, and another inscription of Simhavarman half century earlier in the Palanadu area of the western Guntur district. All the early documents are in Prakrit, and scholars find similarities in paleography and language with the Satavahanas and the Mauryas. Their early coins are said to be similar to those of Satavahanas. Two main theories of the origins have emerged from this data: one that the Pallavas were former subsidiaries of Satavahanas in the Andhradesa (the region north of Penna River in modern Andhra Pradesh and later expanded south up to Kanchi, and the other that they initially rose to power in Kanchi and expanded north up to the Krishna river.

Harshavardhana was one of the most important Indian emperors of the 7th Century. During the peak of his reign, Harshavardhana's empire extended from north India to the Narmada River in central India. His rule was renowned for peace, stability and prosperity, and attracted many artists and scholars from far and wide. Xuanzang, a famous Chinese traveler, heaped a lot of praise on Harshavardhana for his generosity and administrative skills. Ruling from 606 to 647 CE, Harshavardhana became the most successful emperor of the Pushyabhuti dynasty until he was defeated by a South Indian ruler Pulakeshin II. The defeat of Harshavardhana marked the end of the Pushyabhuti dynasty.

14.6 KEYWORDS

- **Chalukya:** Knowledge of Chalukya history has come through examination of the numerous Kannada language inscriptions left by the kings (scholars Sheldon Pollock and Jan Houben have claimed 90 percent of the Chalukyan royal inscriptions are in Kannada),and from the study of important contemporary literary documents in Western Chalukya literature such as Gada Yuddha (982) in Kannada by Ranna and Vikramankadeva Charitam (1120) in Sanskrit by Bilhana.

- **Pallava:** The origins of the Pallavas have been debated by scholars.The available historical materials include three copper-plate grants of Sivaskandavarman in the first quarter of the 4th century CE, all issued from Kanchipuram but found in various parts of Andhra Pradesh, and another inscription of Simhavarman half century earlier in the Palanadu area of the western Guntur district.

- **Harsha:** Harshavardhana became the most successful emperor of the Pushyabhuti dynasty until he was defeated by a South Indian ruler Pulakeshin II. The defeat of Harshavardhana marked the end of the Pushyabhuti dynasty.

14.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Briefly discuss the Chalukya Empire.

2. Explain about the literature of Chalukya Empire.

3. Write about the extend of Pallava dynasty.

4. Discuss about the administration of Harsha Empire.

14.8 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

1.India: History, Religion, Vision and Contribution to the World, by Alexander P. Varghese p.26

2. International Dictionary of Historic Places: Asia and Oceania by Trudy Ring, Robert M. Salkin, Sharon La Boda p.507

3. Ancient India by Ramesh Chandra Majumdar p.274

4.Vasudeva Sharana Agrawala (1969). The deeds of Harsha: being a cultural study of Bāṇa's Harshacharita. Prithivi Prakashan. p. 118.

5. Harsha Charitra by Banabhatt

6.Cousens, Henry (1996) [1926]. The Chalukyan Architecture of Kanarese Districts. New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India. OCLC 37526233.

7.Davison-Jenkins, Dominic J. (2001). "Hydraulic works". In John M. Fritz; George Michell (eds.). New Light on Hampi : Recent Research at Vijayanagara. Mumbai: MARG. ISBN 81-85026-53-X.

8.Sathianathaier, R. (1970) [first published 1954], "Dynasties of South India", in Majumdar, R. C.; Pusalkar, A. D. (eds.), The Classical Age, History and Culture of Indian People (Third ed.), Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, pp. 255–275

14.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. **Administration**

The Western Chalukya kingship was hereditary, passing to the king's brother if the king did not have a male heir. The administration was highly decentralised and feudatory clans such as the Alupas, the Hoysalas, the Kakatiya, the Seuna, the southern Kalachuri and others were allowed to rule their autonomous provinces, paying an annual tribute to the Chalukya emperor.

2. Religion

Pallavas were followers of Hinduism and made gifts of land to gods and Brahmins. In line with the prevalent customs, some of the rulers performed the Aswamedha and other Vedic sacrifices.They were, however, tolerant of other faiths. The Chinese monk Xuanzang who visited Kanchipuram during the reign of Narasimhavarman I reported that there were 100 Buddhist monasteries, and 80 temples in Kanchipuram.