

1. Would you consider the Gupta period a "Golden Age"?

Ans: The Gupta period (4th - 6th century CE) is often described as the "Golden Age of Ancient India" because of its remarkable achievements in literature, science, art and architecture. However, the term "Golden Age" is not universally accepted. A closer examination shows that the period was one of cultural efflorescence but its benefits were not equally shared by all sections of society.

Reasons for calling Golden Age

1. Political and Economic Stability

- The Guptas established a relatively stable political order over large parts of northern India.
- Gold coins (dinars), flourishing trade and agricultural expansion indicate considerable economic prosperity, particularly under rulers like Chandragupta II.
- Fa-Hien's account describes prosperous towns and relatively peaceful conditions.

2. Literature and Education

- Here Sanskrit literature reached great heights, particularly through Kalidasa, whose work such as Abhigyanam Sakuntalam remain classics.
- The period witnessed the growth of important centres of learning and the wider use of Sanskrit in political and cultural life.

3. Science and mathematics

- In this time Aryabhata made major contributions to astronomy and mathematics including his explanation of the Earth's rotation.
- The development of the decimal system and advances in astronomy reflect the high intellectual achievements of the age.

4. Art and Architecture

- Gupta Sculpture achieved a remarkable balance of spirituality, serenity and idealised human form, e.g. Buddha images of Sarnath.
- Early Structural temples, such as the

Dashavatara Temple at Deogarh mark an imp stage in Indian temple architecture.

Despite these numerous progresses, this era had limitations in the domain of Society, women, and the economy.

For instances --

1. Social Inequalities

- That period witnessed greater rigidity of the varna-jati system and increasing social disabilities for lower groups.
- Fa-Hien mentions the segregation of the Chandalas, suggesting that social prosperity was not universal.

2. Position of women.

- Patriarchal norms remained strong, while women's property and social autonomy were restricted in several contexts.

3. Regional and economic limitations

- Gupta political control was not uniform across the Subcontinent.

- R.S. Sharma associated the later Gupta period with growing land grants, decline of urban centres and elements of Indian feudalism.

Nationalist historians often celebrated the Gupta as an era of India's cultural greatness. However, historians such as R.S. Sharma have highlighted the social and economic inequalities beneath this cultural sphere not for the entire society.

In conclusion, the Gupta period can reasonably be called a "Golden Age of Indian Culture, Science and art" but not an age of universal prosperity. Its achievements represent a remarkable phase of cultural synthesis and intellectual creativity, while its social inequalities remind us that cultural brilliance and social equality do not necessarily advance together.

Very good 12/20

2. Discuss the Administrative System of the Mauryan Empire

Ans- The Mauryan Empire (c. 322-185 BCE), founded by Chandragupta Maurya, was the first empire to establish extensive political control over much of the Indian Subcontinent. Its administration combined centralisation at the imperial level with considerable local and provincial arrangements. The Arthashastra, Ashokan inscriptions and accounts of Megasthenes provide important evidence for understanding this system.

1. Central Administration.

The King was the Supreme authority and controlled the major functions of the state.

- The king was assisted by the Mantriparishad and senior officials.
- The Arthashastra mentions a highly organised bureaucracy dealing with revenue, trade, agriculture, mining and other activities.
- The State maintained a large standing army, supported by departments dealing with infantry, cavalry,

Elephants and Chariots.

Thus, the ~~ma~~ Mauryan State had a strong administrative centre to utilise substantial resources.

2. Provincial Administration

The vast empire was divided into major provinces, often governed by royal princes (Kumaras).

- Important centres included Taxila, Ujjain, Tosai and Surasthagiri.
- Provincial governors were supported by officials and local administrative institutions.
- This arrangement helped the centre to maintain control over distant territories.

3. District and Local Administration.

At the lower levels, officials such as Rajukas, Pradeshtikas and Yuktas performed judicial, revenue and administrative duties.

- Villages formed the basic units of administration.
- Village headmen played an important

role in maintaining local administration and revenue collection.

- Megasthenes also describes organised municipal administration at Pataliputra.

3. Judicial and welfare Administration

The Mauryan administration also had judicial institutions and mechanisms for maintaining law and order.

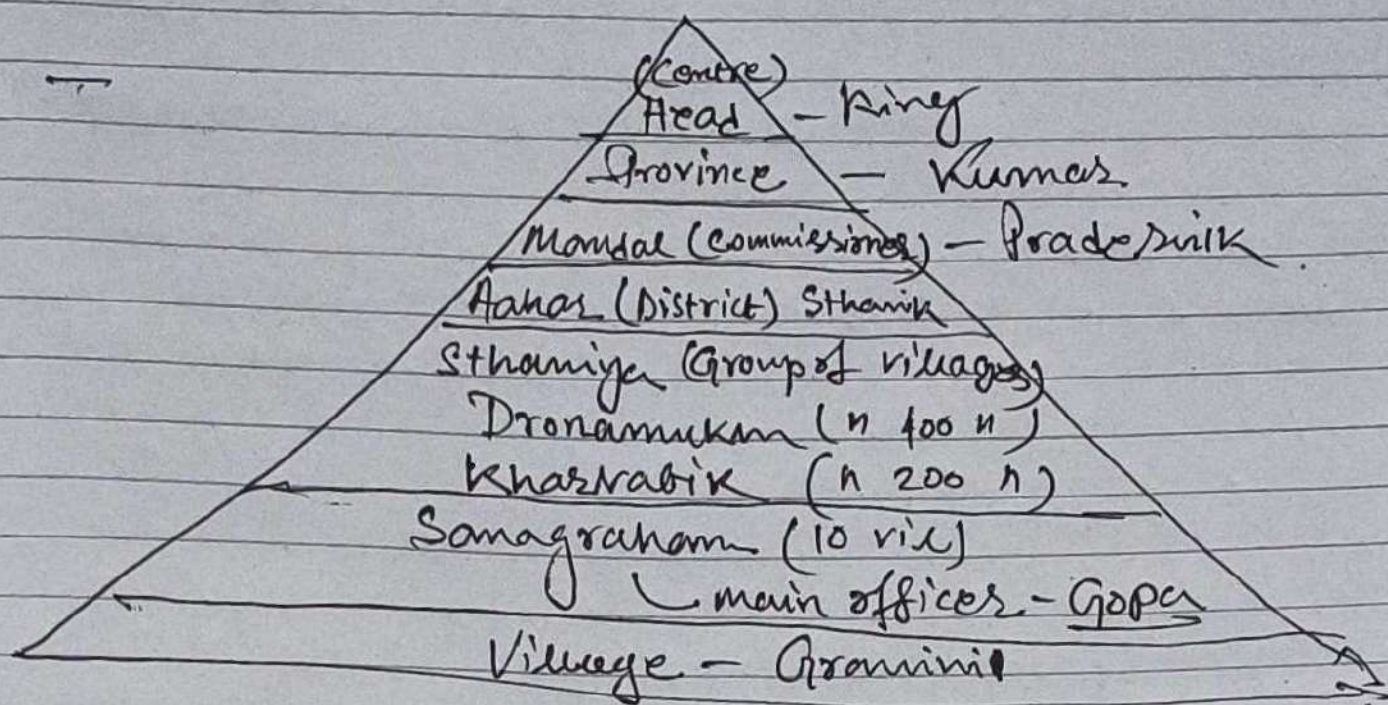
Under Ashoka, administration acquired an additional ethical dimension:

- Dhamma Mahamatras were appointed to promote moral and social welfare.
- Ashoka ordered measures for medical treatment, wells, roads and trees.

Critical Assessment

The Mauryan administration was highly organised but should not be understood as an entirely uniform bureaucratic state. Romila Thapar stresses the different levels of integration within the empire.

While the Arthashastra reflects an idealised model of statecraft rather than a complete description Mauryan practice.



Administration of Mauryan.

In conclusion, the Mauryan administrative system represented a significant experiment in imperial governance, fiscal centralisation and bureaucratic organisation. Its strength lay in the coordination of the centre, provinces and local institutions. However, its extensive administrative machinery depended heavily on royal authority and resources extraction which explains the difficulty of maintaining such a vast empire after the decline of strong rulers.

Very good

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Feedback:-

Question 1.

n 2.