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# **HISTORY OF INDIA (FROM CE 300 TO 1206)**

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(FROM CE 300 TO 1206)**

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# QUESTION PAPER

June – 2024

(Solved)

HISTORY OF INDIA (FROM CE 300 to 1206) **B.H.I.C.-132**

**Time: 3 Hours ]**

**[ Maximum Marks: 100**

**Note :** Answer any **five** questions. Attempt at least **two** questions from each section. All questions carry **equal** marks.

## SECTION-I

**Q. 1. Describe the administration under the Gupta rule.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-2, Page No. 9, 'Administration Under The Guptas'.

**Q. 2. Throw light on the extent of Harsha's empire on the basis of his military campaigns.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-3, Page No. 18, 'Political Activities of Harsha: An Overview'.

**Q. 3. Analyse the importance of Bhakti movement in studying the history of Indian religion.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-8, Page No. 63, 'Religion in The Post-Gupta Period' and 'Bhakti Movement in South India'.

**Q. 4. Write short notes on the following:**

**(a) Pallava architecture**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-5, Page No. 37, 'Art and Architecture'.

**(b) Gurjara-Pratiharas**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-9, Page No. 72, 'Rise of the Gurjara-Pratiharas'.

**(c) Land-grants in post-Gupta period**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-7, Page No. 56, 'Agrarian Structure' and Page No. 58, Q. No. 2.

**(d) Ajanta paintings**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-15, Page No. 136, Q. No. 2.

## SECTION-II

**Q. 5. Discuss various debates pertaining to the emergence of the Rajputs.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-9, Page No. 69, 'Origin of Rajputs: Debates'.

**Q. 6. Elaborate on gender relations during the period C. 700-1200 CE.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-14, Page No. 124, 'Gender Relations'.

**Q. 7. Discuss the growth of the Sanskrit literature during the Gupta era.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-15, Page No. 133, 'Growth of Language' and Page No. 136, Q. No. 3.

**Q. 8. Write short notes on the following:**

**(a) Battles of Tarain**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-12, Page No. 110, Q. No. 2.

**(b) The Pandyas**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-4, Page No. 29, 'The Pandyas'.

**(c) Tripartite struggle for Kannauj**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-2, Page No. 20, 'Aftermath: The Tripartite Struggle for Kannauj'.

**(d) Tantricism**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-16, Page No. 142, 'Tantrism'.

■ ■

# QUESTION PAPER

December – 2023

(Solved)

HISTORY OF INDIA (FROM CE 300 to 1206) **B.H.I.C.-132**

**Time: 3 Hours ]**

**[ Maximum Marks: 100**

**Note :** Answer any **five** questions. Attempt at least **two** questions from each section. All questions carry equal marks.

## SECTION-I

**Q. 1. Discuss the nature of the Gupta Administration.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-2, Page No. 9, 'Administration Under The Guptas'.

**Q. 2. Review the debate on the origin of the Rajputs.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-9, Page No. 69, 'Origin of Rajputs: Debates'.

**Q. 3. Throw light on the importance of Chachnama as a historical source.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-11, Page No. 93, 'The Chachnama'.

**Q. 4. Account for the rise and proliferation of castes during C 700-1200 CE.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-14, Page No. 122, 'The New Social Order – The Castes'.

## SECTION-II

**Q. 5. Describe the growth and development of language and literature during the Gupta period.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-15, Page No. 133, 'Growth of Language' and 'Growth of Literature'.

**Q. 6. Discuss the emergence of Puranic Hinduism in Gupta and post-Gupta periods.**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-16, Page No. 140, 'Puranic Hinduism'.

**Q. 7. Which factors favoured and increased military efficiency of Turkish invaders against Indian monarchs?**

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-12, Page No. 105, 'Reasons Behind Rajput Defeat and Turkish Victory' and Page No. 106, Q. No. 1 and Page No. 107, Q. No. 4.

**Q. 8. Write short notes on the following:**

(a) Pallava architecture

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-5, Page No. 37, 'Art and Architecture'.

(b) Rashtrakuta empire

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-10, Page No. 79, 'The Rashtrakuta Empire'.

(c) Prayaga-Prashasti of Samudragupta

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-1, Page No. 2, 'Samudragupta' and 'Expansion and Consolidation'.

(d) Rise of Kannauj in the post-Gupta period

**Ans. Ref.:** See Chapter-3, Page No. 17, 'Kannauj as the New Political Centre'.



# Sample Preview of The Chapter

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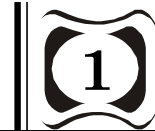
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# HISTORY OF INDIA FROM C. 300 TO 1206

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## Rise and Growth of the Guptas

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### **INTRODUCTION**

We will discuss briefly about the political situation of the 4th century CE in this chapter. Then we will study the historical situation which gave rise to the Gupta dynasty. The chapter also deals with the controversies relating to the succession of Gupta kings and also discusses some of the achievements which made possible the formation and consolidation of the empire. Finally, the chapter also takes into account the problems faced by the Gupta kings and the factors responsible for the decline of Gupta.

### **CHAPTER AT A GLANCE**

#### **POLITICAL BACKGROUND**

There was no large state structure in the beginning of the 4th century CE and two large state structures had emerged in north India and in the Deccan in the post-Mauryan period. These were the Kushana state of the north and the Satavahana state of the Deccan. These structures became weak and the Satavahana state had disappeared before the middle of the 3rd century CE. After that there were many minor powers but no major power existed. After that the Guptas, a family of uncertain origins, began to build up an empire from the beginning of the 4th century CE.

#### **North-western and Northern India**

The rule of the Sassanians had been established in Iran and the Sassanian rulers started claiming overlordship over Kushana kings. The Kushana kings were reduced to the position of subordinates and the Sassanians also extended to Sindh and certain other areas.

The discovery of the coins suggests that there were states which were not ruled by a single king but possibly by several chiefs. The Madras, mentioned in connection

with the exploits of the Gupta ruler Samudragupta, was located in the Punjab. The Yaudheyas were in power in present-day Haryana and the Malavas were located in Rajasthan. Also there were many other republican states like these and several branches of the Nagas became very powerful in Mathura and other centres. There were many Naga origin rulers of the north Indian rulers who were defeated by Samudragupta.

#### **Western and Central India**

We have already studied that a branch of Kshatrapa rulers established themselves in Western India in the post-Mauryan period and then till 304 CE, the line of Chastana, to which the well known Shaka-Kshatrapa Rudradaman belonged continued to rule. After that a new line of rulers began to rule. At the close of the 4th century CE, the Kshatrapa rule came to an end when Gupta ruler Chandragupta-II conquered and annexed their territories. Vatakas was the new power had emerged by the middle of the 3rd century CE which soon became formidable and a branch was also established at Vatsagulma (modern Basim in Akola district). The Vakataka family and the Guptas later on came into close contact later.

#### **The Deccan and South India**

After the decline of the Satavahana state of the Deccan, there was emergence of a number of new royal families in different parts of the Deccan. There was a succession of families like the Ikshvakus, the Salankayanas and others in coastal Andhra and in Karnataka; the most important ruling family was that of the Kadambas which was founded by Brahmin Mayurasarman whose Talagunda inscription gives some interesting details of the circumstances leading to the establishment of the kingdom and also some idea regarding its extent. The Pallavas ruled till the 9th century in Tamil Nadu.



### THE RISE OF THE GUPTAS

There is not much known about Gupta ancestry and hence there are many speculations. Different scholars have given different arguments on the ancestry of the Gupta and on the basis of which the following suggestions are made that the original core of the Gupta territory lay in eastern UP:

- The inscription on the Allahabad pillar, the earliest inscription recording the achievements of an early Gupta ruler Samudragupta, comes from this region.
- The coin-hoards of the Guptas also tells about their ancestry

#### Samudragupta

The details of the Samudragupta's accession and conquests can be calculated from the inscription engraved (at a later date) on the Ashokan pillar at Allahabad (known as *Prayaga-prashasti*). The inscription indicates that Maharajadhiraja Chandragupta-I in a highly emotional tone declared his son Samudragupta as his successor. There are some indications of the controversy in this regard. The discovery of some gold coins bearing the name of Kacha has generated a controversy relating to this. The controversy existed because:

(i) The Kacha's coins are similar to the coins of Samudragupta in many ways.

(ii) Kacha's name does not appear in the official lists of Gupta rulers, as they are available in the Gupta inscriptions.

There are many interpretations in this regard:

- The first interpretation is that Samudragupta's brothers revolted against him and placed Kacha, the eldest brother, on the throne. But then he died in the war of succession.
- The second interpretation is that these coins were issued by Samudragupta in the memory of his brother.
- The third interpretation says that Kacha is the initial name of Samudragupta and the later name was adopted only after the conquest of south.

#### Expansion and Consolidation

The Gupta power Samudragupta adopted an aggressive policy of conquests for expansion and consolidation. We can say that in certain regions – particularly in the South – he let the kings, whom he had defeated, rule over their regions. This in turn helped in bringing the stability. The record: the *Prayaga-*

*prashasti* of Harishena tells us about some of the aggressive campaigns taken by Samudragupta in various regions.

**1. Campaigns in Aryavarta:** The records indicate that Samudragupta carried his victorious campaign of Aryavarta at one time. Some other historians, assuming that the *Prayaga-prashasti* mentions the conquests of Samudragupta in a chronological order, have pointed out that there were two campaigns in north India. The *prashasti* first talks about three Aryavarta kings and then it mention his southern campaign and then again about nine Aryavarta kings.

**2. Campaign in South:** There are 12 rulers mentioned in *Prayaga-prashasti* from Dakshinapatha (South India) who were defeated by Samudragupta. These were:

- Mahendra of Kosala (Raipur, Durg, Sambalpur and Bilaspur districts)
- Vyaghraraja of Mahakantara (Jeypore, forest region of Odisha)
- Mantaraja of Kaurata (probably Sonpur area in Madhya Pradesh or plain country to the north-east of Mahendra hill)
- Mahendragiri of Pishtapura (Pithasuram, east Godavari district)
- Svamidatta of Kottura (Ganjam district)
- Damana of Erandapalla (Chicacole or West Godavari district)
- Vishnugopa of Kanchi (Chingleput district)

The historians specify different views of these kings and their kingdoms. According to *Prayaga-prashasti*, Samudragupta showed favour to Dakshinapatha kings by first capturing them (*grahana*) and then releasing them (*moksha*). Aryavarta (North India). They were defeted by him and the territories were annexed which became integrated into the Gupta empire. Samundragupta defeted the following North Indian kings:

- Rudradwa
- Matila
- Nagadatta
- Chandravarma
- Ganapatinaga
- Nagasena
- Archyuta
- Nandi
- Balavarmna and others.

The *Prashasti* indicates that Samudragupta reduced all states in the forest regions to the position of servants.

The other category indicates the frontier kingdoms like Samatata (in south-east Bengal), Kamarupa (Assam), Nepala (Nepal) and others and the republican states of the Malavas, Yaudheyas, Madrakas, Abhiras, etc.

#### CHANDRAGUPTA-II

The analysis of inscriptions reveal that Chandragupta-II was Samudragupta's successor but the literary sources, some copper coins and inscriptions suggests that Ramagupta was the successor who was Samudragupta's other son. There are some texts like *Harshacharita*, *Kavyamimamsa* and also Visakhadatta's drama *Devi Chandraguptam* mentions that Chandragupta-II killed his elder brother Ramagupta. This was done because Ramagupta was facing defeat at the hands of the Shakas and in order to save the kingdom and he had agreed to surrender his wife to the Shaka king. Chandragupta protested and went to the Shaka camp in the disguise of the queen Dhruvadevi. He was successful against the Shaka king but as a result of the subsequent hostility with his brother he killed him and married his wife Dhruvadevi.

The inscriptions on the Mehrauli Iron Pillar located in the Qutub-Minar complex in Delhi have been identified by many scholars with Chandragupta-II. There are many scholars who relate Chandragupta-II with the hero of Kalidasa's work *Raghuvamsha* because Raghu's exploits appear comparable with those of Chandragupta. All these evidences suggest that Chandragupta-II was able to extend the frontiers of the Gupta Empire to western, north-western and eastern India.

#### KUMARAGUPTA-I

The inscriptions and the coins reveal that Chandragupta-II son Kumaragupta succeeded him. Some examples in this regard are:

- The earliest known inscription is from Bilsad (Etah district) which is dated 415 CE (Gupta Era 96).
- There are some inscriptions which tell that Karamdanda (Faizabad) of Kumaragupta's minister (436 CE) fame was spread to the four oceans.
- An inscription on the stone from Mandisor (436 CE) mentions Kumaragupta as reigning over the whole earth.
- The Damodar Copper Plate inscriptions (433 CE or 447 CE) introduce him as *Maharajadhiraja* and show that he himself appointed the governor (*Uparika*) of *Pundravardhana bhukti*

(or province) being the biggest administrative division in the empire.

- The last known date of Kumaragupta is from a silver coin dated 455 CE (Gupta Era 136).

#### SKANDAGUPTA

Skandagupta was probably the last powerful Gupta monarch and succeeded Kumaragupta-I. During this period, the country faced Huna invasion from across the frontiers in the north-west but Skandagupta succeeded in throwing the Hunas back. The wars gave an adverse effect on the economy. Also a new and heavier weight system for gold coins was introduced but generally his coins had less gold in them than earlier coins. There are some inscription in Junagadh which tells about his reign and the public works undertaken during his times. The Sudarshana Lake burst due to excessive rains and in the early part of his rule his governor Parnadatta got it repaired which shows that the state undertook the task of public works. The last known date of Skandagupta is 467 CE from his silver coins.

#### Gupta Rulers after Skandagupta

There are many seal inscription which indicate a line of Gupta rulers after Skandagupta from Kumaragupta-I and his son Purugupta and not Skandagupta. Also, the probability is that the division of the Gupta Empire into many parts already began towards the close of Skandagupta's reign. An inscription from western Malwa recorded in the last year of Skandagupta does not indicate towards him but to some other rulers beginning with Chandragupta-II. The inscriptions mentioned some of the following successors of Skandagupta:

- Budhagupta
- Vainyagupta
- Bhanagupta
- Narasimhagupta Baladitya
- Kumaragupta-II
- Vismigupta

Till 550 CE, the Guptas continued but by then their power had already become very insignificant.

#### DISINTEGRATION OF THE GUPTA EMPIRE

There are some factors that contributed towards the disintegration of the Gupta Empire which are as follows:

**1. Huna Invasions:** From the period of Kumaragupta-I the north-west borders had been threatened by the Hunas: a central Asian tribe which was successfully moving in different directions and was establishing

pockets of rule in north-western, northern and western India. Towards the end of the 5th century CE the Huna chief Tormana was able to build his rule over large parts of western India and in central India. This dominion was extended by Mihirakula, his son.

**2. Administrative Weaknesses:** The Guptas adopted a policy in the conquered areas to restore the authority of local chiefs or kings once they had accepted Gupta suzerainty. There was no effort to enforce a strict and effective control over these regions. It was obvious that whenever there was a crisis of succession or a weak monarchy within the Gupta Empire these local chiefs would re-establish their independent authority.

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q. 1. Fill in the blanks:**

(a) At the beginning of the 4th century CE there were .....

(many/no) small kingdoms in North India.

(b) Chandragupta-I had a matrimonial alliance with ..... (Shakas/Lichchhavis).

(c) The *Prayaga-prashasti* refers to the victories of ..... (Pravarsena/Samudragupta).

**Ans.** (a) many, (b) Lichchhavis, (c) Samudragupta.

**Q. 2. Discuss the efforts made by Samudragupta for the expansion of Gupta Empire.**

**Ans.** There were many policies adopted by Samudragupta for conquests which led to the formation of the Gupta Empire. In certain regions particularly in the South, he let the kings, whom he had defeated, rule over their regions that accepted his suzerainty and paid tributes. These policies helped in solving the problems of communication and effective control and brought stability for the time being. The record named *Prayaga-prashasti* of Harishena gives us the details of the campaigns carried out by Samudragupta which are as follows:

**1. Campaigns in Aryavarta:** According to some historians, Samudragupta carried his victorious campaign of Aryavarta at one time. Whereas, some believe that the *Prayaga-prashasti* mentions the conquests of Samudragupta in a sequential order and believed that there were two campaigns in north India. The *prashasti* first refer about the three Aryavarta kings and then about his southern campaign and then about nine Aryavarta kings. It seems that taking benefit of the war of succession, which Samudragupta had to face there are certain rulers attempted to establish their

dominance. In this reference, Samudragupta defeated Achyuta, Nagasena and Kota-Kulaja. The historians have identified Achyuta as ruling over Ahichchhatra, Nagasena over Gwalior area and Kota-Kulaja as ruler of the Kota family in east Punjab and Delhi. After defeating them, Samudragupta controlled not only the Ganga valley but also over some adjacent regions.

**2. Campaign in South:** According to *Prayaga-prashasti*, the 12 rulers from Dakshinapatha (south India) who were defeated by Samudragupta were as follows:

- Mahendra of Kosala (Raipur, Durg, Sambalpur and Bilaspur districts)
- Vyaghraraja of Mahakantara (Jeypore, forest region of Odisha)
- Mantaraja of Kaurata (probably Sonpur area in Madhya Pradesh or plain country to the north-east of Mahendra hill)
- Mahendragiri of Pishtapura (Pithasuram, east Godavari district)
- Svamidatta of Kottura (Ganjam district)
- Damana of Erandapalla (Chicacole or west Godavari district)
- Vishnugopa of Kanchi (Chingleput district)
- Nilaraja of Avamukta (Godavari valley)
- Hasti-varman of Vengi (Cellor in the Krishna-Godavari delta)
- Ugresena of Palakka (Nellore district)
- Kubera of Devarashtra (Yellamanchiti in Visakhapatnam district), and
- Dhananjaya of Kushthalpura (possibly in north Arcot district in Tamil Nadu).

The historians differ about the specific identifications of these kings and their kingdoms. According to *Prayaga-prashasti*, Samudragupta exhibited favour to Dakshinapatha kings by first seizing them (*grahana*) and then releasing them (*moksha*). Aryavarta (north India) not only conquered them but also took over their territories which became integrated into the Gupta Empire. Following are the north Indian kings defeated by Samudragupta:

- Rudradwa
- Matila
- Nagadatta
- Chandravarma
- Ganapatinaga
- Nagasena
- Archyuta
- Nandi
- Balavarmna and others