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**GUPTAS**

**CULTURE OF INDIA**

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## **GUPTAS**

### **Introduction**

- ❖ After the Mauryan empire, many small kingdoms rose and fell. In the period from c. 300 to 700 CE, a classical pattern of an imperial rule evolved, paving the way for state formation in many regions.

### **Sources**

- ❖ There are three types of sources for reconstructing the history of the Gupta period.
  - Literary sources
  - Epigraphical Sources
  - Numismatic Sources

### **Origins of the Gupta Dynasty**

- ❖ Evidence on the origin and antecedents of the Gupta dynasty is limited. The Gupta kings seem to have risen from modest origins.

### **Samudragupta**

- ❖ Chandragupta I appointed his son Samudragupta to succeed him in 335 CE. A lengthy eulogy on him, inscribed on an Ashokan pillar, suggests that he was claiming the legacy of the Mauryan kingdom.
- ❖ This inscription gives an impressive list of kings and regions that succumbed to Samudragupta's march across the country.
- ❖ Four northern kings were conquered mainly in the area around Delhi and western Uttar Pradesh. The kings of the south and the east were forced to pay homage, and from the places mentioned, it appears that Samudragupta campaigned down the eastern coast as far as Kanchipuram.

### **Chandragupta II**

- ❖ Named after his grandfather, Chandragupta II was a capable ruler, who ruled for 40 years from c. 375 to 415 CE. He came to power after a succession struggle with his brother Rama Gupta.

### **Ministers and other officials**

- ❖ Seals and inscriptions make a mention of official ranks and designations, whose precise meaning is often uncertain.

### **Division of the Empire**

- ❖ The Gupta Empire was divided into provinces known as deshas or bhuktis. They were administered by governors who were usually designated as uparikas. The uparika was directly appointed by the king and he, in turn, frequently appointed the head of the district administration and the district board.

### **Army**

- ❖ Seals and inscriptions mention military designations such as baladhikrita and mahabaladhikrita (commander of infantry and cavalry).

### **Economic Condition**

- ❖ Nitisara, written by Kamandaka, is a text like Arthasastra. It emphasises the importance of the royal treasury and mentions various sources of revenue.

### **Agriculture and Agrarian Structure**

- ❖ Agriculture flourished in the Gupta period due to establishment of irrigation works.

### **Rock-cut and Structural Temples**

- ❖ The rock-cut caves continue the old forms to a great extent but possess striking novelty by bringing about extensive changes in the ornamentation of the facade and in the designs of the pillars in the interior.



### **Stupas**

- ❖ Stupas were also built in large numbers but the best are found at Samat (Uttar Pradesh), Ratnagiri (Orissa) and Mirpur Khas (Sind).

### **Buddhist Literature**

- ❖ The earliest Buddhist works are in Pali, but in the later phase, Sanskrit came to be used to a great extent. Most of the works are in prose with verse passages in mixed Sanskrit. Arya Deva and Arya Asanga of the Gupta period are the most notable writers.

### **Nalanda University**

- ❖ Nalanda was an acclaimed Mahavihara, a large Buddhist monastery in the ancient kingdom of Magadha in India.
- ❖ The site is located about ninety five kilometers southeast of Patna near the town of Bihar Sharif and was a centre of learning from the fifth century CE to c. 1200 CE.
- ❖ It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The highly formalised methods of Vedic learning.

### **Decline of the Gupta Empire**

- ❖ The last recognised king of the Gupta line was Vishnugupta who reigned from 540 to 550 CE. Internal fighting and dissensions among the royal family led to its collapse.