

History Part - 10

10] Gupta Empire

NOTES

Gupta Empire (400 – 600 AD)

- On ruins of Kushan Empire rose Gupta Empire
- Constituted majority of UP & Bihar
- Main center of power at Prayag (Allahabad)
- Founder of Gupta Dynasty was Sri- gupta
- Srigupta was succeeded by Ghatokcha
- Both of them were called Maharaja

Emperors of gupta period :

- Shrigupta and Ghatokcha. The reign of maharaja shrigupta(240 AD to 280 AD) is considered by the man historians to be the starting point of the gupta period.
- Ghataokcha succeeded his father shrigupta and ruled from 280 AD to 319 AD.

Chandragupta I (320-335 A.D.)

- Was the son of Ghatokcha.

- Acquired the strategically important Magadha kingdom on marriage to a Lichchhavi princess Kumaradevi.
- He extended his kingdom through conquests. His territory extended from the Ganges River to Prayaga by 321 AD.
- He issued coins in the joint names of his queen and himself.
- He assumed the title of Maharajadhiraja (great king of kings).
- He was successful in building a small principality into a great kingdom.
- He is considered the first great king of the Gupta Empire.

Samudragupta (335-380 A.D.)

- Son of Chandragupta I and Kumaradevi.
- Was a military genius and was successful in adding many territories into the Gupta Empire.
- The Allahabad inscription describes his bravery as composed by his court poet, Harisena. There it is said that he defeated nine kings of the Ganges Valley, twelve kings from the southern region and eighteen forest tribes.
- His region extended from the Himalayas in the north to the Krishna and Godavari Rivers in the south; and from Balkh (Afghanistan) in the west to Brahmaputra River in the east.

- He was a follower of Vaishnavite Hinduism but was tolerant of other faiths. He gave permission to the king of Sri Lanka, Meghavarna to build a monastery in Bodh Gaya.
- He was also called “Indian Napoleon” by art historian Vincent Smith.
- He also performed Ashvamedha sacrifice. Hence, one of his coins refers to him as “the restorer of Ashvamedha.”
- He was also called “Kaviraja” since he composed verses
- Samudragupta was called by different names, one of them was ‘Kaviraja’ because of his ability to compose verses. Certain coins show him with a Veena.
- He patronised poets and scholars like Harisena, and hence played a part in promoting Sanskrit literature(which is a characteristic feature of Gupta dynasty).
- Samudragupta was a follower of Vaishnavism. However, he also patronised the great buddhist scholar Vasubandhu.
- He also captured the pallavan king who ruled the Kanchipuram.

Chandragupta II (380-415 A.D.)

- Son of Samudragupta and his queen Dattadevi.
- He was also known as ‘Vikramaditya’.

- He further annexed territories including Saurashtra which gave him the western coastline.
- He used matrimonial alliances to expand his kingdom. He established matrimonial alliances with the Nagas and the Vakatakas. He gave his daughter Prabhavatigupta in marriage to Vakataka ruler of Maharashtra Rudrasena II.
- He also annexed three Satrapa kingdoms and assumed the title Sakari (destroyer of the Sakas). He defeated the Saka king Rudrasimha III thus acquiring Saurashtra and Kathiawar.
- Through the western ports, the kingdom's prosperity grew through trade links with Roman Empires.
- After East and West India, Chandragupta II defeated northern rulers also like the Hunas, Kambojas, Kiratas, etc.
- He was a brilliant conqueror and an able administrator as well.
- Like his father, he was a Vaishnavite but was tolerant of other religions.
- His other names (as mentioned in coins) include Vikrama, Devagupta, Devaraja, Simhavikrama, Vikramaditya Sakari, etc.
- His court had nine jewels or Navaratnas, nine people eminent in various fields of art, literature and science. This included the great Sanskrit poet Kalidasa, Harisena, Amarasimha (lexicographer) and Dhanvantari (physician).

- Fa-Hien, a Buddhist from China visited India during his reign. He records the prosperity of the Gupta Empire.

Kumaragupta (415-455 A.D.)

- He succeeded Chandragupta II.
- Kumargupta I was a worshipper of Kartikeya.
- The coins of his time tell that he took titles like: Mahendraditya, Ashwamedha Mahendrah.
- He laid the foundation of **Nalanda University** which later grew to become an international centre of learning.

Skandagupta (456-468 AD)

- He was last great ruler of Gupta dynasty.
- He saved the empire from Hun invasion coming from Central Asia. But these invasions weakened the empire.
- Details about him are mentioned on the Bhitari Pillar inscription, proclaiming him the title of 'Vikramaditya'.

Other Gupta Rulers :

- Chandragupta II was succeeded by his son Kumaragupta I. He ruled till 455 AD.

- Kumaragupta I was the founder of the Nalanda University. He was also called Shakraditya.
- The last great king of the Gupta dynasty, Skandagupta was the son of Kumaragupta I. He was able to repulse an attack by the Hunas but this strained his empire's coffers.
- The Gupta Empire declined after the death of Skandagupta in 467 AD.
- He was followed by many successors.
- The last recognised king of the Gupta line was Vishnugupta who reigned from 540 to 550 AD.

Gupta's Administration

- Unlike Mauryas, Guptas assumed titles like Parmeshwara, Maharajadhiraja & Paramabhataraka
- Provinces in Gupta's period were known as Bhuktis & provincial governors Uparikas
- King maintained close contacts with provincial administration through a class of officials called "Kumaramatyas" & "Ayuktas"
- Provinces were divided into districts Vishayas under charge of Vishayapati.
- All foreign affairs were looked after by foreign affair minister known as "Sandivigraha"

- Villagers were subjected to forced labour called Vishti for serving royal army & officials

Religion & Social Culture

- Brahamans formed the top ladder & receive numerous gifts
- Brahamanism reigned supreme during Gupta period & had 2 branches mainly, Vaishnavism & Shaivism, with former more prevalent (Bhagavatism)
- Fahien accounts shows a decline of Buddhism in Gangetic valley but a few buddhist monks like Vasubandhu were patronised by Gupta kings.

Art & Culture

- Gupta age is called golden age of India in field of art, science & literature
- Nagara & Dravidian styles of art evolved during this period
- Delhi iron pillar, 7 ½ feet Buddha statue & Deogarh temple are finest example of Gupta art
- Mural paintings of Ajanta, which mainly depicted life stories of Buddha as in Jataka stories belong to this period (Paintings at Sigiria in Srilanka are influenced by Ajanta paintings)
- Mehrauli iron pillar also belongs to gupta period.

Literature :

- Sanskrit became primary language in Gupta period
- Ramayana & Mahabharata were compiled during this period

- Aryabhatta said that the earth is circular and it is revolving around the sun.

Kalidasa (indian shakesphere)	Abhigyanashakuntalam, Malvikagnimitram, Vikramorvasiya, Kumarsambhava, Raghuvamsa, Ritusamhara, Meghaduta
Vishakadatta	Mudrarakshash & Devi – Chandraguptam
Vishnu sharma	Panchtantra stories
Sudraka	Mrichchakatika
Amarsimha	Amarkosha (Lexicon in sanskrit)
Dandin	Kavyadarsa & Desa – kumarcharita

Science & Technology

Aryabhatta	Aryabhatiyam , Suryasidhhanta
Varahmitra	Panch sidhhanta (5 astronomical system), Brihadsamhita, Brihadjataka (Astrology)

Vagbhata	Ashtangasangraha (Summary of 8 branches of Medicine)
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Fall of Gupta Empire

- Due to invasion of Hunas from central Asia
- Due to rise of Yashodharman in Malwa
- Due to dissention within the royal family & weak rulers
- The later Gupta's embraced Buddhism while their predecessors were staunch Hindus.
- Kumara devi is the first Indian princess to be portrayed in the Indian currency.

Expected Questions

1) After the collapse of the Kushana Empire, which empire came to the rule and made Patliputra as capital ?

(A) Maurya Empire

(B) Gupta Empire

(C) Magadha Empire

(D) Harsha Empire

2) Who was called Maharajadhiraja (the great king of kings) of the Gupta dynasty?

(A) Chandragupta I

(B) Skanda Gupta

(C) Samudragupta

(D) Chandragupta II

3) Which of these inscription tells us about the success of the Samudragupta invasion?

(A) Sarnath inscription

(B) Allahabad inscription

(C) Thiruvandhapuram inscription

(D) Uthirameroor inscription

4) Who is known as Napoleon of India?

(A) Skanda Gupta

(B) Chandragupta I.

(C) Samudragupta

(D) Chandragupta II

5) Who is called as Vikramaditya?

(A) Chandragupta I.

(B) Chandragupta II

(C) Samudragupta

(D) Kumara Gupta

6) Whose court the nine scholars known as Navaratnam were present?

(A) Chandragupta I.

(B) Chandragupta II

(C) Samudragupta

(D) Kumara Gupta

7) Nalanda University was built during whose period ?

(A) Chandragupta I.

(B) Chandragupta II

(C) Skanda Gupta

(D) Kumara Gupta

8) Who wrote the Panchatantra stories?

(A) Harisena

(B) Sudraka

(C) Kalidasa

(D) Vishnusarma

9) 'Mrichchakatika' was written by

(A) Visakadatta

(B) Sudraka

(C) Varakamitra

(D) Vishnusarma

10) Mudrarakshasa was written by

(A) **Visakadatta**

(B) Sudraka

(C) Varakamitra

(D) Vishnusarma

11) Which was the official language of gupta?

(A) Prakrit

(B) Tamil

(C) Pali

(D) **Sanskrit**

12) The period of the Gupta Empire

(A) AD 1st century

(B) **AD 4th century**

(C) AD 6th century

(D) AD 8th century

13) which of the following statements is / are correct ?

1. The Gupta period is considered golden age.

2. During the Guptes period, all levels of political solidarity and economic growth were improved.

(A) **1 and 2 are correct, and 2 is the correct explanation for 1**

(B) 1 and 2 are correct and 2 is not the correct explanation for 1

(C) 1 only

(D) 2 only

14) Who is the first Indian princess to be portrayed in the Indian currency?

(A) Kubera naga

(B) Kumara Devi

(C) Prabhavathi

(D) Trisala

15) Who was the sculptor of Allahabad inscription?

(A) Harisena

(B) Sudraka

(C) Kalidasa

(D) vishnusarma

16) During whose period the famous Chinese pilgrimist Fahien came to see India's Buddhist temples?

(A) Skanda Gupta

(B) Chandragupta I.

(C) Samudragupta

(D) Chandragupta II

17) Which book was written by Varahamihira?

(A) **astronomical systems and Brihadsamhita**

(B) Shakuntala , Malavikagnimitra

(C) Vikramorvasiya

(D) Malavikagnimitra

18) Who is known as Indian Shakesphere?

(A) Harisena

(B) Sudraka

(C) **Kalidasa**

(D) vishnusarma

19) Kalidasa's drama book is

(A) Malavikagnimitra

(B) Vikramorvasiya

(C) Shakuntala

(D) **All of these**

20) The pallava king who ruled the kanchipuram was captured by

(A) Skanda Gupta

(B) Chandragupta I.

(C) **Samudragupta**

(D) Chandragupta II

21) Which of these gupta king is interested in music?

- (A) Skanda Gupta
- (B) Chandragupta I.
- (C) **Samudragupta**
- (D) Chandragupta II

22) Which of the following is / are correct match

- 1) Visakadatta - Mudrarakshasa
- 2) Bharavi - Raghuvamsam
- 3) Brahmagupta - Brahmasputhas
- 4) Kalidasa - Harsha saritham'

- (A) **1 and 3**
- (B) 1, 3 and 4
- (C) 2 and 4
- (D) 1, 2, 3 and 4

23) Which of the following is related to the Gupta period?

- 1) The caste system was very severe in the social system.
- 2) Temples were set up for Hindu gods.
- 3) Divided the states into districts called Visians.
- 4) Revival and resurrection were revived from the Ashoka period.

(A) 1 and 3

(B) 1, 3 and 4

(C) 2 and 4

(D) 1, 2, 3 and 4

24) which of the following statements is / are correct ?

1) Some of the Buddhist cave sculptures and paintings in Ajanta are from the Gupta period.

2) The Ellora Cave paintings belong to the Gupta period.

(A) 1 only

(B) 2 only

(C) 1 and 2

(D) None of these

25) which of the following statements is / are correct ?

1) Chandragupta II was called by the name of Sakari because he won the war against the rulers who were all tried to conquered Gujarat and Saurashtra.

2) Chandragupta II captured Ujjaini city.

(A) 1 and 2 are correct, and 2 is the correct explanation for 1

(B) 1 and 2 are correct and 2 is not the correct explanation for 1

(C) 1 only

(D) 2 only

26) which of the following statements is / are correct ?

1) Kalidasa is the main character of Navaratnam

2) Navaratna in chandraagupta court is, the medical expert Dhanvantri , the astronomer was Varahamihira , Amarsimha was a Sanskrit lexicographer.

(A) 1 only

(B) 2only

(C) 1 and 2

(D) None of these

27) Skanda Gupta's Period is

(A) AD 256 to AD 468

(B) AD 856 to AD 468

(C) AD 456 to AD 868

(D) AD 456 to AD 468

28) which of the following statements is / are correct ?

1) Scholars in Tamil language were appreciated by Guptas.

2) Aryabhatta was a great mathematician andastronomer. He wrote the book

Aryabhatiya

(A) 1 only

(B) 2only

(C) 1 and 2

(D) None of these

29) Which of the following statements is / are correct ?

1) Hun leaders such as Tormana and Migirkula have foiled the Gupta Empire.

2) The Gupta Empire collapsed by foreign invaders such as Pushyamitra and Heinar.

(A) 1 only

(B) 2only

(C) 1 and 2

(D) None of these

30) Who won the adavika kingdom in the Vindhya hills region?

(A) Skanda Gupta

(B) Chandragupta I.

(C) **Samudragupta**

(D) Chandragupta II

31) Which of the following statements is / are correct ?

1) The Gupta Empire was extended from Bengal to Sindhu River and from Himalayas to Vindhya hills

2) Guptas ruled over 100 years northern India.

(A) 1 only

(B) 2only

(C) 1 and 2

(D) None of these

32) In the Allahabad inscriptions , which king has won nine northern Indian kings, eleven Republican groups and twelve South Indian kings?

(A) Skanda Gupta

(B) Chandragupta I.

(C) Samudragupta

(D) Chandragupta II

33) Who said that the earth is circular and it is revolving around the sun?

(A) Bhramma gupta

(B) Visakadatta

(C) Varakabhatta

(D) Aryabhatta

34) The Mehrauli iron pillar belongs to whose period ?

(A) Kushana

(B) Gupta

(C) Magadha

(D) Harsha

35) Which of the evidence help us to know about the history of Guptas?

- (A) Eighteen literatures
- (B) Chinese Fahien writings
- (C) Kalidasa's literature
- (D) All of these**

