

CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we are discussing the dynasties which were ruling under the period c. 300 B.C to 300 A.D. and their administrative system. We get only a very dim and fragmentary picture of the administration of the Vedic and post Vedic periods. The case is quite different with regard to the Mauryan administration. The Mauryan period is remembered for the greatness of the empire. This is mainly due to the richness of the original material available for utilization. We have not only important indigenous contemporary sources like the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya and inscriptions of Aśoka, but also valuable fragmentary accounts given by several Greek writers, some of whom had direct and firsthand knowledge of the country and its government, like the *Indica* of Megasthenes. The post-Mauryan period from 200 B.C. to 300 A.D., saw the rise of many states all over the Indian sub-continent. Some were small whereas others were large such as the kingdom of the Kushāṇas which extended into central Asia. We can see not only the rise of multiple political powers in different parts of the subcontinent but also the introduction of new features in art, architecture and religion, the spread of commerce and trades also brought the sub-continent together in this period.

The Mauryan dynasty: The period of Mauryas marks a new epoch in the history of India, as political unity of the country was achieved for the first time during this period. It was a period when politics, art, trade and commerce, judiciary elevated India to a glorious height. It was founded by Chandragupta Maurya and the kingdom continued to expand under Bindusāra and Aśoka. The foreign yoke on the North West India was also removed by Chandragupta Maurya, the successor of Alexander; Seleucus was defeated and forced for peace treaty. Megasthenes was sent as an ambassador to the court of Chandragupta Maurya, who wrote *Indica* from which we derive valuable first hand information about early Mauryan India. Aśoka fought just one battle and thereafter devoted the whole of his life for the welfare of the masses. Trade and commerce, art and architecture, culture and religion made tremendous progress in the Mauryan period.

Chandragupta undoubtedly ruled over a vast empire. According to Plutarch, Chandragupta after achieving all these conquests in the northern India subdued the

whole of India with an army of 60,000 men and he does not record any facts or details in support of his general statement. The details of all conquest are lacking, but there is reliable evidence for it in the inscriptions of Aśoka.¹ The inscription of Rudradāman I at Junagarh shows that Saurashtra was a province of the Mauryan Empire.² It was ruled by Chandragupta's provincial governor Pushyagupta, describes as a Visya, and in Aśoka's time by Yavana (Greek) Raja Tashaspha. Saurashtra was then joined with the region called Anarta to form the Mauryan province of Western India. The location of an Aśokan inscription at Sopara in modern Thana District shows that the region around Sopara or Surparaka of old texts was also a province of the Mauryan Empire under Chandragupta.³ Aśoka's inscriptions credit him with only one conquest that is Kaliṅga. But the geographical distribution of these inscriptions as well as their internal evidence show that his empire extended up to Mysore in the south and up to borders of Persia in the north-west. Aśoka's father Bindusara is not known to history as a great conqueror. Purāṇas gives the reference of the Bindusara, we know very little of his reign. According to the literary evidence of a later date, Chanakya continued for some time as minister under Bindusara.⁴ Bindusara was succeeded by his son Aśoka who is one of the greatest figures in history. H. G. Wells in his 'Outline of History' describes him as 'the greatest of kings' and that not because of the physical extent of his empire, but because of his character as a man. The vast territory extending from Persia to Southern India was bequeathed to him by his predecessors. He himself made an addition to it by his conquest of Kaliṅga. A unique feature of his history is that he himself left a record of it in a permanent form in inscriptions engraved on natural rocks as well as monolithic pillars constructed by him which stand to this day as remarkable monuments of Indian architecture and engineering skills. Aśoka was the first Indian King to issue edicts in order to proclaim his ideals and record his exploits.

The important inscriptions of Aśoka are divided into three classes: Fourteen Rock Edicts, Minor Rock Edicts and Seven Pillar Edicts. These inscriptions supply valuable data for the reconstruction of the life and career of the great emperor. Although they do not record many events, they contain in an abundant degree the measures adopted and regulations issued by him and the description of the noble principles and that inspired him as almost an autobiographical touch.⁵

According to Buddhist tradition Aśoka was converted to Buddhism by the venerable monk Upagupta shortly after the Kalinga war. This is corroborated by his edicts. In the Rock Edict-XIII,⁶ Aśoka expresses genuine remorse for the suffering caused by the war in the most touching language, reflecting such a deep sincerity and conviction that it has been generally held that the record was drafted by emperor himself. Aśoka converted to Buddhism, became a vegetarian, and dedicated the rest of his reign to spreading Buddhism, although he honored all religions. He also convened the Third Buddhist Council at Pataliputra to deal with differences within the monastic order and to finish compiling the Buddhist canons.⁷

In the opinion of some modern scholars Aśoka must be held primarily responsible for the downfall of the great empire. The empire was founded by a policy of blood and iron and could only be maintained by following the same policy. But by eschewing all wars and abandoning the aggressive imperial policy, Aśoka weakened the very foundations of the empire. There is no doubt that he could easily have completed the political unity of India by conquering the Tamil lands in the extreme south, if he only cared to send a powerful army instead of Buddhism missionaries to that region. It is also urged that the lack of all military activities after the Kalinga war and the constant preaching of the great virtue of Ahimsā (non-injury) by the emperor had a permanent effect not only on the military organization of the state, but also on the martial qualities of the people. The soldiers lost their skill and discipline and Indians generally became averse to war.

But according to R.C. Majumdar there may be some truth in these accusations. But it must be remembered that the end of the Mauryan Empire did not differ materially from that of many other powerful empires in India, though there was nothing like the pacifist policy of Aśoka to account for it. There were other factors at work, notably the weakness of the successors of Aśoka and the well-known centrifugal force in Indian politics. A modern historian may well remember the great saying of Thucydides that all mortal glory is doomed to destruction, but the memory of greatness lives forever. The Mauryan Empire has followed the way of all mundane glories, but the memory of Aśoka will last forever.⁸

Post Mauryan period: The breakdown of the Mauryan Empire led to the rise of many regional kingdoms in different parts of the country. At the same time, we witness invasions by various groups of people based in Central Asia and western

China. These were Indo-Greeks, the Scythians or the Śakas, the Parthians or the Pahlavas and the Kushāṇas. It was through such political processes that India came in closer contact with the central Asian politics and culture.

The Śuṅgas- Śuṅga dynasty was founded by Pushyamitra Sunga. It originated in foul treachery and it met its end in the same way. Devabhūmi, the tenth King of the dynasty, was of dissolute character and he was killed at the instance of his minister Vasudeva. The ten kings of the Śuṅga dynasty ruled for a period of 112 years (185-73 B.C).

The Kāṇvas- Kāṇvas dynasty was founded by Vasudeva, comprised only four kings and ruled over the Magadha Empire for a period of 45 years. The fourth king Suasman was overthrown by the Andras.⁹

The Greeks- The north-western provinces of the Magadha Empire had been wrested by Demetrius, the Greek King of Bactria, about the beginning of the second century B.C. Demetrius was so successful in his Indian expedition that the Greek writers gave him the title of “king of the Indians.” But while he was busy in India, the Bactrian throne was usurped by one Eucratides, though successful against Demetrius, was not destined to enjoy his ill-gotten power for long. He was cruelly murdered by his own son, who drove his chariot over the dead body of his father.

These internal dissensions among the Greeks probably gave Pushyamitra a good opportunity to recover some of the lost territories and restore order in the Empire. While they were quarrelling among themselves, Bactria was invaded by the Scythian hordes, and the Greek sovereignty in the fair valley of the Oxes was extinguished for ever (120 B.C). The Greeks, driven from Bactria, were forced to take shelter in their Indian dominions in Afghanistan and the western Punjab, where they ruled for two hundred years more.

The names of these Greek rulers are known to us from their coins, but we hardly know anything about most of them. Of the few kings, who are known to us from other sources also, Menander, king of the Buddhist literature is the most prominent. His capital was Śākala, the present Sialkot and he seems to have led several victorious expeditions into the interior of northern India. Another king, Apollodotus, is also said to have conquered Kāthiāwār, Peninsula. In general, however, the sovereignty of the Greek kings was confined to Afghanistan and the

Punjab and it is only at rare intervals that they temporarily carried their arms into the interior.¹⁰

The Parthians- Greeks were not the only nation that harassed the Indian frontier. Several others followed in their wake, the most notable of them being the Parthians, the Śakas, and the Kushāṇas. The Parthian kingdom was established in about the middle of the third century B.C, by a successful revolt against the Seleucid monarch of Syria. As early as the middle of the second century B.C, the Parthian king Mithradates I had carried his arms up to the Sindhu. At a later period, a powerful chief named Maues established a principality in the western Punjab. About the same time a line of Parthian princes ruled in the Kandāhār region, the most notable of them being Vonones and Azes. Towards the close of the first century A.D., the Parthian chiefs were squabbling for power in lower Sindhu. Some Parthian kings also ruled in the Peshāwar valley. Great interest centers round one of these Indo-Parthian chiefs, named Gondophares, whose record has been found at Takhi-i-Bahi (in N.W.F.P). A very early Christian tradition affirms that the Apostle St. Thomas visited his court and converted him and his family to Christianity.

The Śakas: The Śakas were at first a nomadic tribe and lived on the northern bank of the river Jaxartes or Syr Daria. Being expelled of their homelands by another nomadic tribe, the Yueh-Chi, they fell upon Bactria and destroyed the Hellenistic monarchy in that province. Later on, they proceeded south and east and entered India in various bands, through different ways. They must have formed a strong settlement on the bank of the Helmund River, as the region was called Śakasthāna after them. In India, we can clearly trace three important Śaka principalities. Two of them were in Northern India and had Mathurā and Takshaśilā as their respective capitals. The third comprised Mālwā and Kāthiāwār Peninsula in western India. The rulers of all these countries called themselves Satraps or Viceroys. Modern historians accept that the Śakas rulers of Mathura and Takshaśilā as northern Satraps and those of Malwa and Kathiawar Peninsula as the western Satraps. Altogether four northern Satraps are known to us, though we hardly have any detailed information about them. The western Satraps were more than twenty in number and ruled for three centuries.

Kushāṇas: These foreign invaders, belonged to a nomadic Turkish tribe, called the Yueh-Chi, which originally settled in the Kan-Su province in north –western China. Being driven by another nomadic tribe, called the Hiung-Nu (Huns), about 65 B.C.,

they were forced to march westward and fell upon the Śakas who occupied the territory to the north of the Jaxartes Rivers. Hardly had they occupied the land of the Śakas, than they were once more defeated by their enemy, the Huns and forced to move towards the south. The migration of the Śakas in consequence of this event and their settlement in India has been related. As mentioned above, the Yueh-Chi drove away the Śakas and occupied and settled in Bactria to the south of the Oxus. Here two important changes came over; in the first place, they gave up their nomadic habit and adopted a settled life. Secondly, the solidarity of the great Yueh-Chi tribe was destroyed and five of its clans established five independent principalities in the conquered region.

More than a century passed away and then the chief of the Kushāṇas, one of the five clans of the Yueh-Chi, found means to bring the other four clans under his control. Kozola Kadphises or Kadphises I, who accomplished this great task and laid the foundation of the greatness of his clan but he did not rest. He cast longing eyes towards India and made preparations for conquering that land. As a preliminary measure, he had to fight with the Greeks and the Parthians, who were now in possession of the territories immediately south of the Hindu Kush. Throughout his long career he was engaged in this task and ultimately succeeded in finally extinguished the Parthian and the Greek domination in the North-western frontier of India. A series of coins beautifully illustrate how the authority gradually passed from Hermaeus, the last Greek ruler of Kabul, to Kadphises I.

Kadphises I disposed the Greeks and the Parthians and occupied Kabul. With the Indian empire almost within his grasp, he died full of years and honours, at the age of eighty. But the task which he left unfinished was accomplished by his son and successor, Wema Kadphises or Kadphises II, who conquered India, probably as far as Banaras, if not further towards the east. But he appointed military chiefs to govern them on his behalf. Thus he established a vast Kushāṇa empire which included large tracts on both sides of the Hindu Kush Mountains.

The next Kushāṇa emperor was the famous Kanishka. His memory has been fondly cherished by the Buddhist who looked upon him as one of their greatest patrons and a number of traditions have gathered round his name. According to these sources he conquered the whole of northern India including Kashmir and Magadha and his power extended up to the borders of the desert of Gobi in central Asia. He is

further credited with success in wars against the Parthians and the Chinese and also with the conquest of three rich provinces belonging to the latter, viz. Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan. It is even alleged that hostages from a Chinese principality lived in his court. How far these traditions may be accepted as historical it is difficult to say, but there is scarcely any doubt that Kanishka's Indian dominions included Kashmir and upper Sindh and extended to Banaras in the east and the Vindhya to the south.

Unlike Wema Kadphises, whose relationship with Kanishka is not yet known, Kanishka ruled his Indian territories in person and selected Purushapura as his capital. The great relic-tower which he erected there excited the wonder and admiration of all for hundreds of years and its ruins have been discovered near Peshawar which represents that ancient capital city. This along with the statue of Kanishka discovered in Mathura, have rendered this famous emperor of old quite familiar to us. Traditions affirm that two learned men lived in the court of Kanishka, viz. Āśvaghosha, the famous Buddhist scholar and poet and Charaka, who is supposed to be the same as the great medical authority whose treatises still occupy the highest place of honour in the indigenous system of medical treatment.

Kanishka was followed by three kings Vāsishka, Huvishka, and Vāsudeva. Very little is known about them beyond the fact that they were probably successful in keeping the empire intact. Kanishka founded the era which is believed by many to be the Śaka era current today. Four kings ruled for about one hundred years after which the great empire of Kanishka passed away.¹¹

Sassanian invasion: It is generally recognized that the downfall of the Kushāṇa Empire was mainly due to the invasion of the Sassanians who had overthrown the Arsacid dynasty and founded a powerful kingdom in Persia early in the third century A.D. The Sassanian king Shāpur I (241-272 A.D.) is known to have made extensive conquests in Bactria and Afghānistān and subjugated the Kushāṇas. According to the latest theory on the subject, Shapur's invasion, sometime between 241 and 250 A.D., coincides more or less with the end of the reign of Vasudeva; and consequently the accession of Kushāṇa, one hundred years before this, fall about 142 A.D. But the overthrow of the Kushāṇa Empire did not mean an end of the Kushāṇa power in India. Kushāṇa kings known in history as the later Kushāṇa and bearing names of Kanishka and Vasudeva, ruled in Kābul and a part of the Panjāb valley for a long time. They

were ousted by another branch of the clan, known as the Kidāra Kushāṇas, who ruled in the same region till the 4th century A.D.¹²

The Western Satraps: Śaka Satraps or governors ruling over Malwa and Kathiawar Peninsula. Very little is known of Bhumaka, except that he belonged to the Kshaharāta dynasty and ruled over extensive territories including Malwa, Gujarāt, Kathiawar Peninsula and probably also a part of Rāputāna and Sindh. The next Satrap Nahapāna, who assumed the title *rājan* is a more distinguished figure. His known dates range between 119 and 125 A.D. and his coins and inscriptions leave no doubt that he ruled as an independent king over a vast dominion which extended as far as Ajmer in the north and Nasik and Poona district in the south. But his power was crushed by the Sātavāhana king Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi and the Satrapy passed into the hands of a new dynasty known as Kārdamaka. Chashtana, the founder of this dynasty, is undoubtedly to be identified with Tiastenes who is mentioned in Ptolemy's Geography (written about 140 A.D.) as having ruled with Oozene (Ujjayinī) as his capital. Evidently he recovered from the Sātavāhanas at least some of the dominion of Nahapāna north of the Narmadā. But the struggle continued and Chashtana's successor, his grandson Rudradāman, is represented as the lord of all the countries conquered by Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi. He further claims to have twice defeated Sātakarṇi, lord of a Dakshiṇāpatha, though he did not destroy the latter on account of close relationship between the two. A somewhat damaged record refers to the daughter of a Mahākshatrapa, the first letter of whose name, *ru* alone has been preserved, as the wife of Vāsishṭīputra Sātakarṇi. It has been possible that the Mahākshatrapa was no other than Rudradāman and his son-in-law was Pulumāyi (or his brother according to some). The lord of Dakshiṇāpatha, defeated by Rudradāman, is generally taken to be Pulumāyi himself, though some identify him with his father Gautamīputra.

According to R.C. Majumdar, there is no doubt that the Sātavāhanas were finally driven from Malwa, Gujarat and Kathiawar. Rudradāman not only ruled over these but also over Kachchha (cutch), Svabhra (Sabarmati valley), Maru (Marwar), Sindhu and Sauvīra (eastern part of Sindh) and inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Yaudheyas before 150 A.D., the date of the Junāgaḍh inscription, which supplies us the above account. The fact remains, that the long Sanskrit inscription, which was engraved by his order in 150 A.D., is the first official record in that language with the

probable exception of one or two short epigraphs, out of hundreds that have so far come to light. According to this record Rudradāman won the hands of several princesses in *suayamrara* ceremonies. Inter-marriage with Indian royal families seems to have been a deliberate policy pursued by the Kārdamakas in order to be merged into Hindu society.

Rudradāman was succeeded by his son Dāmajadaśrī who was associated with the administration during his father's reign. It seems to have been a regular practice for the king, who assumed the title *mahākshatrapa*, to appoint his son or brother as joint ruler under the title *kshatrapa*, with the right even to issue coin. There are numerous dated coins issued by the *mahākshatrapas* and *kshatrapas* that we can trace, in an unbroken line, the genealogy of the Western *Kshatrapas* for more than 300 years with only occasional gaps here and there.

The death of Dāmajadaśrī was followed by a disastrous civil war between his son and brother in the last quarter of the second century A.D. which considerably weakened the power and prestige of the family. The Sātavāhana king conquered part of their dominions and a new ruler, Isvaradatta by name, generally regarded as an Abhira, issued coins in his own name with the title Mahākshatrapa. Although order was soon restored and the family ruled peacefully for some time, troubles again arose about the second quarter of the third century A.D. Internal dissensions broke out once more and the Mālavas in the north and the Abhiras in the south challenged the power of the western Satraps. The Mālavas conquered a part of their northern dominions and the Abhiras established a powerful kingdom in northern Maharashtra on the ruins of the Sātavāhana kingdom. Malwa was also probably lost as we find a Śaka chief Sridhara-Varman ruling there as an independent king.

Mahākshatrapa Bhartridaman, whose known dates range between 289 and 296 A.D., is the last known member of Chashtana's family to use this title. His son Visvasena ruled as Kshatrapa till 305 A.D. A large number of indigenous States flourished in North India during the long period of more than four centuries (c. 100 B.C to 300 A.D.). We can trace their existence from a large number of coins and few inscriptions; it is not possible to deal with their history in detail. There were both kingdoms and non-monarchical states and many of them had to submit, for a time, to the foreign invaders, notably the Kushāṇa. But many of them rose to power again with the decline of the foreign power and were not finally extinguished till the rise of the

Gupta Empire in the fourth century A.D. These indigenous States of north India were- Ahichchhatra, Kauśāmbī, Ayodhya, Nagas, Bharasivas, Mālavas, Yaudheyas. Another powerful kingdom that arose out of the ruins of the Magadha Empire was Kaliṅga. A large inscription in the Hathigumpha cave in the Udayagiri hill near Bhuvaneshvar (Orissa) gives us a detailed biography of king Kharavela- something unique in Indian history. Although the damaged condition of the rock does not enable us to understand the full import of the record, still enough remains to show that Kharavela made Kaliṅga an almost imperial power which played an important role in the history of North India. He was well instructed, as a young prince, in writing, accountancy, administration and legal procedure. The date of Kharavela is not definitely known. His record refers to his repairing or enlarging a canal which was originally excavated by a Nanda King three centuries ago. This Nanda king was most probably Mahapadma Nanda who established a mighty empire about 350 B.C. and presumably conquered Kaliṅga. The date of Kharavela would then fall in the first century B.C. some scholars, however, placed him in the first half of the second century B.C.¹³

Andhras: While the Greeks, the Parthians, the Śakas and the Kushāṇas were invading the north-western frontier of India, a powerful kingdom was established in the Deccan by the Andhras. The Andhras are an ancient people and are referred to in a legend in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* which shows that they lived on the border of Aryan settlements and had a mixture of Aryan and non-Aryan blood in them. This notice may be dated about 800 B.C five hundred years later, we hear of them as a very powerful people, who possessed numerous villages and thirty towns, defended by walls and towers and an army of 100,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry and 1,000 elephants (the statement is made by Pliny who probably got his information from Megasthenes). Not long after this they had to acknowledge suzerainty of the Mauryas, although they seem to have preserved a great measure of autonomy in their internal administration. Their history is not definitely known, but it appears very probable that shortly after the death of Aśoka they threw off the yoke of the Mauryan dynasty. King Simuka, who achieved this task, belonged to the Sātavāhana family.

Sātavāhanas: Śālivāhana or Śātavāhana was the name of the royal family founded by Simuka. Simuka and his two successors extended their dominions from the mouth of the Krishna to the whole of Deccan plateau. Pratishthāna, modern Paithān or Pytoon on the Godāvāri, was their western capital, while Dhānyakataka, near Bezwada on the

Krishnā, was the eastern capital. For nearly two hundred years the power of the family were confined to the territories south of the Vindhya, but according to the *Purānas*, the Sātavāhanas killed the last Kāṇva ruler and become master of Magadha in the last century B.C.

The *Purānas* credit Simuka with this achievement and accordingly some scholars refer him as a founder of the Sātavāhana family and the foundation of the Sātavāhana power to 27 B.C. or shortly before it. But this is incompatible with another statement of the same *Purānas* that the Sātavāhanas ruled for 456 years. For the Sātavāhana rule would in that case end in the 5th century A.D. when the Vakātakas were ruling in the Deccan. As a matter of fact we know definitely that the Sātavāhana rule came to an end about the middle of the third century A.D. if, therefore we accept the *Purānic* statement that Simuka, the founder of the Sātavāhana family, destroyed the Kanvas, we must assign to them a total reign-period of 300 years for which there is some authority in the *Vāyu Purāṇa*. The scholars are thus divided their views about the date of Simuka; some place him about 220 B.C and hold that the Andhras declared their independence shortly after the death of Aśoka. Other, place Simuka towards the end of the last century B.C and regard him as having ended the supremacy of the Kanvas. Both, however, agree that the rule of his family ended about the middle of the third century A.D.

However that may be, it is certain that in the first century B.C there was a great Andhra empire which extended its sphere of influence not only over the whole of the Deccan and South Indian Peninsula, but also over Magadha and Central India (including Malwa). More than the hundred years passed in peace and prosperity, when the empire had to feel the terrible shock of the foreign invasions that convulsed North-western India. The Andhra emperors had to fight with the Greeks, the Śakas and the Parthians, but the details of the struggle are unknown. Towards the end of the 1st century A.D., the Śaka chiefs, called the Western Satraps of Malwa and Kathiawar Peninsula dispossessed the Andhras of their dominions in Malwa, conquered the North-western portion of the Deccan and occupied the important city of Nasik. It was a critical moment, not only for the Andhra kingdom, but also for the whole of Sothern India. Fortunately, a great hero arose in the Sātavāhana family was Gautamīputra Satakarni. He ascended the throne about 106 A.D., and inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Śaka chiefs of Malwa and Kathiawar Peninsula. Thereby he not only

recovered his paternal dominions in the Deccan, but also conquered large territories in Gujarat and Rājputāna.

His great exploits are described in detail in a record of his mother, Queen Gautamī Balaśrī. She describes her son as a unique Brahmana, who totally uprooted the Kshanārāta dynasty and extirpated the Śakas, Yavanas (Greeks) and the Pahlavas (Parthians). He is also said to have been lord of many countries including Aparanta (N. Konkan), Surashtra (Kathiawar), Ākara-Avanti (E. and W. Malwa), Anupa and Kukura, which together denoted regions in the neighbourhood of the preceding two. He totally defeated the Kshahārāta ruler Nahapāna, and having driven him out of Maharashtra struck his coins in his own name for immediately putting them into circulation again.

Gautamīputra died after a glorious reign of about 25 years and was succeeded by his son Pulumāyi. About that time the two Śaka principalities of Malwa and Kathiawar Peninsula were united under Rudradāman and there ensued a long and protracted struggle between the two rulers. Rudradāman seems to have been successful in pushing back the Andhras to the Deccan properly and his kingdom extended over Malwa, Gujarat and Rajputana. A matrimonial alliance was established between the rival dynasties, by the marriage of Pulumāyi (or his brother) with the daughter of Rudradāman, but intermittent struggles continued.

A later Sātavāhana named Yajña Sātakarṇi seems to have conquered the southern dominions of the Western Satraps. His coins contain figures of ships, probably indicating the naval power of the Andhras. He not only ruled over Aparānta and the whole of the Deccan, but probably also over the eastern part of Central Provinces. He was the last great ruler of the Sātavāhana family. There were four or five successors of Yajña Sātakarṇi in the main line who continued to rule till about the middle of the third century A.D.¹⁴ According to one *Purāṇic* account the dynasty comprised about thirty kings, who ruled for over 450 years, an unusually long period in Indian history. But according to another *Purāṇic* account there were 19 kings in the family who ruled for 300 years.¹⁵

Republican tribes: There were also numbers of republican tribes during this period which are known from the coins issued by them. Some of them find mention in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata* and *Asthadyayi* of Panini. The Yaudheyas,

Ārjunāyanas, Kuṇindas and Mālavas were the tribes of great influence and importance from 300 BC to 300 AD.

The Yaudheyas were known for the warlike tradition in ancient India. Panini, the Sanskrit grammarian believes that they earn their living by the profession of arms.¹⁶ The Mahābhārata associate that with Rohtak and their joining areas.¹⁷ The *Harivamśa*, *Purāṇas* and the *Bṛihatsamhita* also mention their names. Their coin moulds and seals have been discovered from a large region from Satlej to Yajmanā such as Sunet, Rothak, Hissar, Dehradun and Saharanpur. The long history of the Yaudheyas witnessed many ups and downs. By the 2nd century A.D Yaudheyas had become formidable military strength that scared even Rudradāman. In the Girmar inscription Yaudheyas have been refer to has invincible people.¹⁸ During the days of the reign of the Kushāṇa faced trouble but by the time of the rise of the Samudragupta, the Yaudheyas once again became a power to be reckoned with.¹⁹ The legends on their coins *Yaudheya-gaṇasya-jaya* “ Victory of the Yaudheya republic” points towards the republican form of government. The seals with the legend *Yaudheyānām jayamantra-dharāṇām* also echo their victory. Another legend on the coins from Rohtak of second century reads like this *Yaudheyānām Bahudhānyaka* meaning that the land was of plenty.²⁰

The Kuṇindas occupied the area between the upper courses of the rivers Beas and Yamunā. The Mahābhārata mentions them as Kalinda, Kauṇinda or Kaulinda several times.²¹ *Rāmāyaṇa*²², *Vishnu Purāṇa*, *Bṛihatsamhita*²³ and Ptolemy also refer to them. They issued coins in copper and silver and have been discovered in the Kangra district, in the Ropar district, Sunet, Karnal and Garhwal. These coins have the legend in Brāhmī and Kharoshthī and belong to later half of the 1st century B.C. there after we do not come across their coins for more the two centuries but in the 3rd century A.D again we come across their coins. It is probable that they became an independence power in the Punjab after the decline of the Kushāṇas. A.S.Altekar believes that Yaudheyas, Kunindas and Ārjunāyanas jointly defeated the Kushāṇas. The Allahabad inscription does not mention them at all which means that they had ceased to exist as an independence power sometimes before Samudragupta.²⁴

The Ārjunāyanas, Pāṇini refers to the Ārjunāyanas in his work²⁵ and Varāhamihira group them with the Sārsvatas and Matsyas.²⁶ The coins of the

Ārjunāyanas have been found around Agra, Alraw and Delhi. From the coins of c. 100 B.C. it is believed that they were a flourishing republican tribe and was defeated by the Kushāṇas. Probably they regained their freedom along with the Yaudheyas and Mālavas as the Allahabad pillar inscription mentions them along with the Mālavas and Yaudheyas. A.S. Altekar views that Yaudheyas, Kuṇindas and Ārjunāyanas made a confederation against the Kushāṇas.²⁷

The Mālavas have a checkered history like other tribes of the period. The Mālavas find mention in the Mahabhasya of Patanjali and the Mahābahārata mentions them along with the Sibis, Trigartas and Ambashthas. Varahmihir place them in the north. Probably, they can be identified with Mallois, occupying the territory below the confluence of the Jhelum and Chenab, who offered a stiff resistance to Alexander in the 4th century B.C. but were defeated in the end. Then they settled in parts of Jaipur district. They were again defeated by Ushavadāta, the son in law of Nahapāna. There after they occupied Avanti for sometime and given to this region their name -Mālava. The Ginar inscription of Rudradāman includes Akara and Avanti in his empire. The Nandasa Yūpa inscription clearly mentions that the Mālavas got freedom from the Śakas before A.D. 225. Their coins of the c. 3rd A.D has the legend *Mālavānām jaya*. They accepted suzerainty of Samudragupta along with the other tribes of the area.

Administration:

The machinery of the government was highly organized. At the head stood the king, assisted by a number of ministers and a council. The work of administration was divided among a number of departments and managed by well-organized bureaucracy. The king was the supreme head of the executive, judicial and military branches of administration. Sometimes the kings were elected by the people, though hereditary kingship became gradually the established practice. Females were not absolutely excluded from succession, though we hear very rarely of reigning queens.²⁸ The paramount duty of the king was to protect the people and seek their welfare. Kauṭilya sums up the position very beautifully in the following verse: “in the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness; in their welfare his welfare; whatever pleases himself he shall not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects he shall consider as good.”²⁹ Asoka also informs us in Rock Edict VI that he was always ready and willing to carry on his work of administration, for “the welfare of the whole

in an esteemed duty with me and the root of that again is the exertion and dispatch of business” “This, therefore, I have done, namely that all hours and in all place-whether I am eating or am in the closed (female) apartments, in the inner chamber, in the royal rancho, on horseback or in pleasure orchards, the Reporters may report people’s business to me.”³⁰ Manu writes, “They declare that king to be a just inflicter of punishment, who is truthful, who acts after due consideration, who is wise, and who knows (the respective value of) virtue, pleasure, and wealth. A king who properly inflicts (punishment), prospers with respect to (those) three (means of happiness); but he who is voluptuous, partial, and deceitful will be destroyed, even through the (unjust) punishment (which he inflicts).”³¹ Only a just king augments the three means of happiness i.e. virtue, pleasure and wealth and an unjust destroys these means of happiness.

The main problem before any administration in India has always been the maintenance of peace, law and order in the country. In order to accomplish the purpose of having a crime free society and a welfare state a well defined and well organized law and order system was laid by the Mauryan rulers. The *Arthasāstra* of Kauṭilya and the inscriptions of Aśoka throw welcome light on the maintenances of law and order during Mauryan period. The *Indica* of Megasthenes also gives a vivid description of Chandragupta’s administration. Monarchy was the prevailing form of government in the Mauryan period and it had become hereditary. Usually the eldest son succeeded to the throne. Considerable care was taken to train him properly in the art of government and administration. He was well acquainted with the traditional culture as embodied in the Vedic lore (*trayī*); but the *Arthasāstra* emphasizes that he should be an expert in economic (*vārtā*) and science of government (*danḍanīti*). For this special effort was made to train him in drafting, public accounts and all military tactics and exercises. He was to attend upon elderly statesmen and imbibe from them their accumulated experience.³² The *Arthasāstra* and *Mahābhārata* are particular about describing in detail the qualities that a king was to cultivate and the training he was to receive.

Kauṭilya³³ and Megasthenes³⁴ refer to the extremely busy time table of the king which permitted him hardly six hours rest at night. Only a small part of his time was spent in bath, meals and rest. Almost throughout the day he was busy either reporters or officers or in participating in the meeting of the ministry or in surveying

the military parades or in judging causes and suits. Megasthenes states that “the king does not sleep in day time but remains in the court the whole day for the purpose of judging cases and other public business which was not interrupted even when hour arrived for massaging his body.” Aśoka informs us in Rock Edict- VI that he was always ready and willing to carry on his work of administration, for “the welfare of the whole in an esteemed duty with me and the root of that again are the exertion and dispatch of business.” Even after the special judges were appointed, the king remained the final arbiter of the justice.³⁵ Kauṭilya emphasizes the concept that the king stands for *danḍa* which upholds *dharma*, the law that governs the four castes and Asramas or stages of life and also the customs of the people based on it. Which protests all it was *Rāja-dharma* who protected all *dharmas* and it would have declined without his protection. The *danda*, enforces *dharama* equally among all, would ensure happiness in this world and pave its way for the next world too.³⁶

Next in importance to the king were the ministers. Kauṭilya says: “sovereignty is possible only with assistance. A single wheel can never move. Hence the king shall employ ministers and hear their opinion.”³⁷ In view of the great importance of the position of the ministers, Kauṭilya held the view that the “ministerial appointments shall depend solely on qualifications and not on the considerations of family, or backstairs influence.” Before employing ministers on responsible duties, their characters were tested by secret agents.³⁸ The number of ministers varied according to circumstances, from three or four to twelve. Sometimes one of them was appointed prime minister. Individual ministers were in charge of separate departments. The king may ask his ministers for the opinion, either individually or collectively, and ascertain their ability by judging over the reasons they assign for their opinions.³⁹ The evidence of the *Mudrārākshasa* shows how very often the prime minister counted much more than the king.

In addition to the body of ministers, there was a council to assist the king in the administrative work. From Aśoka’s rock edict VI, it appears that the council of ministers continued its normal meetings even when the king was out on tour. It was also the duty of the central government to secure a uniformity of administration. Aśoka was particular to bring it about by issuing a number of edicts to guide the subordinate officers.⁴⁰ Aśoka created the new class reporters (*prativedaks*) who were posted everywhere and they reported king the affairs of the people at any time. He

said that *prativedaks* can report to me any time, while I am eating, in the harem, in the inner apartment, in the mews, even in the private grounds and in the parks.⁴¹ King Bimbisāra, who had the sovereignty of 80,000 villages, is said to have once called an assembly of their 80,000 chiefs such big councils could, however, be summoned only on rare occasions. There was a smaller council, too, which formed a regular part of the machinery of government. According to Kauṭilya the numbers of members depends on the requirement of the dominion.⁴² *Mahābhārata* state that 4 Brāhmaṇas, 8 Kṣatriyas, 21 Vaiśyas, 3 Śūdra and 1 Suta formed the State Council and out of this body of 37, ‘the king selected 8 as ministers.’ while the policy was formulated by the council and the ministers, the detailed work of administration was carried on by a bureaucracy. At the head of the bureaucracy were a few high officials whose numbers and status must have varied in different ages and different States. There were other officers like Viceroys and Ambassadors, whose sphere of work lay in distant parts of the country. All these formed the members of the higher branch of administration.⁴³

Diodorus, Strabo and Arrian also state that administration service was manned by councilors of state who deliberated on public affairs. Arrian tells us that on account of their superior wisdom and justice, they enjoyed the privilege of choosing governors, chiefs of provinces, deputy-governors, superintendent of the treasury, generals of the army, admirals of the navy, controllers and commissioners, who superintended agriculture.⁴⁴

Kauṭilya describes the class of the Amātyas, members of which were to be of noble extraction and high training, mature judgment and keen intellect, quick decision and remarkable energy, sterling integrity and unquestioned loyalty.⁴⁵ The Arthaśāstra informs us that *mantrins* or ministers were selected from among them,⁴⁶ as also all the members of the *adhyaksha* class⁴⁷ and the higher officers in the secretariat who drafted important documents.⁴⁸ The judicial officers were also recruited from the *amātya* class.⁴⁹ In one place in the *Arthaśāstra*, Kauṭilya avers that *amātyavyasana* is a very serious one, because all important government activities proceeds from them, e.g. successful carrying out of projects, protection against internal and external enemies, precautions against calamities, colonization, recruiting of the army and collecting of the revenue.⁵⁰ In the Aśokan times the senior *amātya* s were called *mahāmātras*, which term seems to be but a variation of *mahāmātya*. In the Aśokan administration *mahāmātras* were members of the central⁵¹ as well as provincial

cabinets,⁵² heads of the district administration (Brahmagiri edict) and judges of the city court.⁵³ When appointed to promote religious harmony, piety and charities they were called *Dharmamahāmātras*, when charged with the work of frontier administration, they were called *antamahāmātras*,⁵⁴ when entrusted with the work of promoting the welfare of the women, granting them relief when destitute or in child bed, they were called *strīadhyaksha-mahāmātras*.⁵⁵

The *Arthasāstra* advises a king to control his subjects; the king should employ an army of various artful persons as spies who keep watch at all levels of society. The spies also played an important role in the administration of the justice of the empire. They helped the judges to solve the cases. Megasthenes called these spies Overseers. They reported secretly to the king on important matters related to the city and the army. Spies were called *dutas* in the text *Arthasāstra*.⁵⁶ They delivered the messages to the judges or to the king without the fear or favors to anyone.⁵⁷ The qualifications for this officer were also not simple. The term *duta* also occurs in the inscriptions of Aśoka. The spies served to keep the king of all that happens in the empire and to his neighbours. According to *Arthasāstra* the duty of the emissaries or *dutas* were to consist in transmission of messages, maintenance of treaties, sowing seeds of dissension among friends, fetching secret forces, winning the favor of the envoy and government officers of the enemy. The mission entrusted to them seems to be the spreading the peace and goodwill between the respective states and help in the judiciary system of the empire. Some spies moved in the guise of students, some in that of ascetics and some in the guise of merchants, recruitment was also made from the class of nuns, prostitutes and astrologers. Some of them were operated in one place while others moved from one place to another. They were helpful in the task of *kantasodhana*. Kauṭilya described the method of detection of crimes with the help of spies. To curb the menace of corruption Kauṭilya advocated a higher level of strictness and control in administration. Spies were appointed to monitor and control illegal activities and corruption in the administration.⁵⁸ They were to keep a watch even over the activities of accountants and clerks, for reporting cases of fabrication of accounts. Kauṭilya was proactive in laying down traps to catch public functionaries with loose morals and inclination to resort to bribery or seek undue favour. Through the help of the spies the pure and impure character of the ministers was detected. Aśoka too maintained the secret police and network of spies that he had inherited as a part of his extensive and powerful bureaucracy. Aśoka called them *prativedaks*.⁵⁹

The Mauryan Empire was divided into a number of provinces. The Aśokan inscriptions refer to the three viceroys stationed at Taxila, Tosali (in Kalinga) and Brahmagiri (in Mysore); Buddhism tradition refers to a fourth viceroy at Ujjayni. A later Śaka inscription incidentally refers to a fifth viceroy with Girnar in Kathiawar as his headquarters. We may well presume that very probably there was a viceroy for eastern Punjab and northern U.P. with his capital at Ahichchhatra, another for southern U.P. and Kośala with his capital at Kauśāmbī, a third for Telangana with his capital near Maski. Mahārāshṭra and Bengal were also probably under separate viceroys.⁶⁰

The viceroy at Brahmagiri is expressly described as a *kumāra* or prince in the Aśokan inscription; Buddhist tradition mentions Aśoka and Kuṇāla as viceroys at Taxila and Ujjayini. It is therefore clear that some important provinces had princes of the blood royal as their viceroys. The viceroy in Kathiawar under Chandragupta was a Vaiśya named Pushyagupta and the one under Aśoka was a Yavana (Parthian) named Tushāshpa. It is thus clear that some viceroys were commoners, but belonging to the official cadre. It is quite likely that some of the viceroys may have been selected from among the members of the ex-ruling families or of the executive councils of the Punjab and Sindh republics.⁶¹ The provincial viceroys were assisted by a council of ministers. Aśoka addressed his second Kalinga edict to the prince viceroy and the *mahāmātras*, who formed his council of ministers, who were of the status of the *mahāmātras*.

A.S. Altekar state that, the precise work of the provincial government has not been expressly described, but it will not be difficult to conjecture about its nature. It had to maintain law and order, collect the taxes for the centre government, cooperate in the work of its different departments and keep a watch over the feudatories and frontier people. It reported the general situation to the centre and received instructions from the latter, which it used to transmit to the district headquarters, as was done by the viceroy at Suvarṇagiri.⁶²

Provinces were subdivided into divisions and the latter into districts. The officers over the former were probably known as *prādeśikas* and those over the latter as *rajjukas*. Both were assisted by a large number of subordinate officers known as *yuktas* or *yutas*.⁶³ The *prādeśikas* of the Aśokan inscriptions appear to be the same as the *pradeshtāraḥ* of the *Arthaśāstra*, who were directly responsible to the *samāhartā*

and were to supervise the work of the superintendents of the various departments, probably within their own territorial spheres.⁶⁴

The *pradeshtri* was charged with the executive, revenue and judicial functions. There is a description of the *rajjukas* in the Aśokan edict. *Rajjukas* played an important role in the administration of justice. They particularly enjoyed the impartial investigation of disputes and the award of punishments. *Rajjukas* were kept in constant touch with the king by his agents, *purushas* who knew the king's mind was constantly on the move (Pillar edict.-IV). They were also to take a hand in the propagation of *dhamma* among the people and direct the *janapadas*.⁶⁵ To keep a check on the misuse of power by the *rajjukas*, the *dharma-mahāmātras* were appointed. The separate *rock edicts* mentioned the city administration of justice, these *mahāmātras* were refer to here as concerned with their judicial function in the town of Tosali. The superior officials of this kind were termed *dharma-mahāmātras*, which may be rendered censors, and the inferior were called *dhamma-yuktas* or assistant censors. They were also instructed to redress cases of wrongful confinement or corporal punishment and were empowered to grant remission and in certain cases relaxation of punishment were also considered such as advanced years, sudden calamity, or the burden of a large family.⁶⁶ Aśoka in his Sarnath *pillar edict-I* spoke of another class of officer called *anta-mahāmātras*, they had the special jurisdiction over the frontier districts and were the wardens of the marches like the *antapala* of the *Arthasāstra*.⁶⁷ Aśoka in his two special edicts of Kaliṅga called upon his *mahāmātras* in order to administer justice impartially and to gain the affection of the people.⁶⁸ Aśoka explained that the *yuktas*, the *rajjukas* and the *prādeśika* were required to undertake the tours every five years to prevent the miscarriage of justice and high handed actions along with their usual administration duties.⁶⁹ Most of the other edicts of Aśoka dealt with the welfare and happiness of all people. It would appear from the Sarnath, the Rupanath and the Brahmagiri records that *āhāra* was the name of the territorial division corresponding to the modern district in charge of the *rajjuka*.

Megasthenes also describes the working of Mauryan municipal administration. He calls the town official *astynomoi* and describes their duty as follows: "Those who have charge of the city are divided into six bodies of five each. The members of the first look after everything relating to the foreigners. To these they assign lodging and

they keep watch over their modes of life by means of those persons whom they give to them for assistants. They escort them on the way when they leave the country, or in the event of their dying, forward their property to their relatives. They take care of them when they are sick, and if they die, bury them. The third body consists of those who inquire when and how births and deaths occur, with the view not only of levying a tax, but also in order that births and deaths among both high and low may not escape the cognizance of government. The fourth class superintendent trade and commerce. Its members have charge of weights and measures and see that the products in their season are sold by public notice. No one was allowed to deal in more than one kind of commodity unless he pays a double tax. The fifth class supervises manufactured articles, which they sell by public notice. What was new was sold separately from what is old and there was a fine for mixing the two together. The sixth and last class consists of those who collect the tenths of the prices of the articles sold. Fraud in the payment of this tax is punished with death".⁷⁰

The district was subdivided into a *sthānīya* usually compressing of about 800 villages. Each of the latter consisted of two *droṇamukhas* having 400 villages each. The next territorial division was *khārvaṭika* consisting of 200 villages. The latter consisted of 20 *saṅgrahaṇas* each having 10 villages.⁷¹ The head of these divisions exercised the revenue, the judicial and executive functions. The officers of the subordinate grades working under them were known as *yukas*. The officer over *saṅgrahaṇa*, who supervised ten villages, was called *gopa*.⁷²

The village administration was under a *grāmaṇī* or headman assisted by an informal council of village elders (*grāmavridhdas*). The office work was done by the *gopa*, who used to keep careful records about the numbers of the houses and their inmates, the extent, boundary and ownership of fields and gardens, crops grown upon them, the taxes due from them and the condition of roads, water courses, inns, temples, etc. village elders used to settle petty civil disputes; others were decided by a court consisting of three officials and three jurors.⁷³

It is only in the case of the Mauryan administration that we have definite information about the salaries of officers.⁷⁴ The Mauryan state recognizes its responsibility to the destitute and diseased. It offered doles to the orphans, the aged and the infirm, as also to poor women in the family way.⁷⁵ It supplied work to persons

in temporary difficulty; it supplied cotton to women whose guardians were away and later collected the yarn after paying for it.⁷⁶ Persons were not allowed to embrace asceticism without providing for their dependants; they were fined if they failed to maintain their children or minor brothers or sisters, when they were capable enough to do so.⁷⁷ The welfare state of the Mauryan period paid full attention to public hygiene. Every house was to have a dunghill and an outlet for refuse water;⁷⁸ throwing of refuse or dirt or a carcass on the road was an offence.⁷⁹ It further safeguarded the health of the citizen by penalizing adulteration of grains, oils, salts and medicines.⁸⁰ It took adequate measures against epidemics. When a famine broke out, state granaries were utilized for providing relief and seeds; an extra taxation was imposed upon the rich in order to relieve the poor.⁸¹ Government agencies were alert against forest breaking out and tried to mitigate the damage of monsoon floods.⁸²

The moral welfare of the subjects was also a concern for the state; gambling, drinking and prostitution were under rigorous control. Literature and education were encouraged, articles required for sacrifices and temples were exempted from customs duties. During the ancient Indian period, India was perhaps best administered and much advanced under the Mauryas.

Life under the Mauryans was prosperous. Culture flourished. Buddhist and Jain canons were completed during this period. Other writings include religious commentaries and early versions of the epics *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*. It appears that Aśoka lost his grip in his later years and after his death his sons disputed for succession, and the empire began to fall apart as local governors, many royal princes, exerted their autonomy. Little is known about his successors except their names, but the disruption of the empire began within almost a decade after the death of Aśoka. Perhaps the fall of the Mauryan Empire was inevitable due to its size and diversity. A general killed the last Mauryan ruler and established a dynasty in northern India called the Śūṅga. Meanwhile, Bactrian Greeks were invading the northwestern frontier. India would be torn apart and fragmented for almost five centuries. Chandragupta Maurya was the founder of India's first great empire, and his minister Kauṭilya helped to establish the institutions that sustained it. The empire grew in size, wealth, and culture under his son and grandson, reaching its zenith under Emperor Aśoka. Its legacy to modern times is the concept of unity for the subcontinent.

We do not possess detailed information about the different kingdoms that flourished in India from c. 200 B.C to 300 A.D., and so can give only a very imperfect picture of their administration. There were numbers of Indian dynasties ruling at this time like the Śūngas, the Kaṇvas and the Śātavāhanas; there were also foreign houses like those of the indo-Greeks, the indo-Scythians, the indo-Parthians and the Kushāṇans. But the administrative structure of the latter did not differ in any vital and important points from that of the former. Foreign rulers came under the powerful influence of the Indian political thought; Rudradāman, the 3rd ruler of the Scythian house of western india had assiduously studied the Indian science of polity; he asserts that his officials were possessing the necessary qualifications of *amātya*s and is proud to point out that he had refrained from the imposition of benevolences and force labour. Rudradāman had completely assimilated Indian political theories and was anxious that his administrative structure should conform to the traditional Indian type.

The institutions of the foreigners had some influence upon the Indian administrative usage. Chandragupta and Aśoka were content to call themselves mere *Rājās*; the Mauryan queens like Chāruvākī were known as mere *Rāṇīs*; Kanishka on the other hand styled himself as *Rahārāja-rājātirāja-Devaputra*. Queens began to be called *agramahishīs* and *mahādevīs*. Hindu kings and queens did not adopt these titles during this period. The title *devaputra* shows how the theory of the divinity of the king was making a rapid progress under the Kushāṇa auspices; the emperors of this dynasty started building temples at Mathurā in honour of their dead predecessors, following the Roman practice on the bank of the Tiber.

An interesting practice popularized by the Scythian rule was the system of *dvairājya*. This practice was not unknown to the Hindu polity, but was rather rare. Under the Śakas and the Parthians, the king and the heir-apparent both ruled with almost equal powers. As instances of this *dvairājya* we may refer to the joint rule of Spalyris and Azes, Hagāṇa and Hagāmasha, Gondopharnes and Gad and Kanishka II and Huvishka. Under the Western Kshatrapas, the father usually ruled as Mahākshatrapa simultaneously with his heir-apparent as Kshatrapa, both issuing coins in their own names. In the *dvairājya* administration, the junior member seems to have exercised greater powers than those conceded to *Yuvarāja* by the Hindu polity. Some queens like Nayanikā of the Śātavāhana dynasty used to act as regent during the minority of their sons.

The powers of the king were on the increase; there was no revival of a popular assembly like the *samiti* of the Vedic period. In the centre, the power was vested in the king and the ministry, the latter being responsible only to the former. Ministers were known as *matiasachivas* and *karmasachivas* under Rudradāman I. Among the specific ministers only the treasurer known as *koshthatārika* or *bhāṇḍāgārika*, figures in our records.⁸³ The secretariat continued to function as in the earlier period and used to serve as the link between the central government on the one hand and provincial and district administrations on the other. It received the reports from the latter, and after considering them, used to communicate to them the decisions of the former.

The general machinery of the provincial, district and town administrations remained the same. The foreign rulers changed the designation or titles of some offices; thus the provincial governor was called Kshatrapa or Mahākshatrapa under the Śakas and the kusanas, the district officer probably as *meridarch* and the military commandant as *strategos* under the Greeks. These designations however did not become popular in India, for the foreign rulers themselves were being rapidly indianised. Rudradāman, the 3rd ruler of the Śaka house in western India, took pride in his capacity to write elegant and chaste Sanskrit.

There was no much departure from the earlier tradition in the general administrative structure. Senior officials continued to be known as *mahāmātras* and *rajjukas*; the Sātavāhanas had a *sramaṇa-mahāmātra* at Nasik and the *rajjukas* were working in central India under the Śuṅgas and in Karnatak under the Chūta Sātakarṇis. Ayama, the minister of Mahākshatrapa Nahapāṇa, was an *amātya*, as also *kulaipa*, the viceroy of Gujarat under Rudradāman. Under the Sātavāhanas private secretaries to kings and treasurers were also *amātyas*. The officers in charge of Govardhana and Māmala districts belonged to the same cadre. The royal donor of the gift of a tank and monastery at Banavāsī had entrusted the work of the execution of her project to *amātya khadasati*, who probably belonged to the engineering department, as he is expressly described as the superintendent of works (*kammāntika*). The *amātyas* were as ubiquitous in the administration at this period as they were in the Mauryan age.

To turn to the territorial divisions, *rāshṭra* or *deśa* denoted the province and *āhāra* or *vishaya* the district. But sometimes these terms were used indiscriminately; thus *sātavāhanī raṭṭa* was also called *sātavāhanī-āhāra*. The chief officer over *rāshṭra*

was called *rāshṭrapati* or *rāṣṭrika*; he belonged to the cadre of the *amātyas*. Sometimes, however, he used to belong to the military cadre, as was the case with Mahādaṇḍanāyaka Śrīdhara, the governor of Mālhwā under the western Kshatrapas. The special designation of the district officers does not occur; they are referred to merely as Amātyas to whose cadre they belonged. Sometimes however they were military officers, as was the case with *sātavāhani-āhāra* at the end of the Sātavāhana rule.⁸⁴ It may be notice that the members of the *amātya* cadre also supplied military and naval officers under the Mauryas. Probably certain amount of military training was compulsory for all the members of the *amātya* service.

Grāma or village continued to be the smallest administrative unit; headman was known as *grāmaṇi*, *grāmika*, or *grāmeyaka* or *grāmabhojaka*. He was assisted in the administration by a council of elders, *grāma-mahatras*, as in the earlier period.

Bhāga (land tax), *śulka* (customs) and *bali* (extra impositions) are the main taxes referred to in the Junagad inscription of Rudradāman. There is however evidence to show that a considerable part of the state's income was spent on charity to temples and monasteries help to learned men and the construction of the works of public utility. The extensive charities of Ushavadāta, the son-in-law of king Nahapāna, are a pointer in this direction.

Republics reasserted themselves during this period at the downfall of the Mauryan dynasty. The evidence of the coinage shows that the Kuṇindas, the Yaudheyas, the Arjunāyanas and the Mālavas became independent by c.150 B.C the central executive of the republic was however tending to become hereditary, especially during the times of stress and strain. In some cases the heads of the republic used to have the title of the Mahārāja, as in the case of the Sanakānīkas in central India. In other republics, as in the Mālavas, though the headship had become hereditary, the royal title was not permitted. No republican president was however allowed to issue coins in his own name; the coin legends like Malavānām jayah, Yaudheya-gaṇasya jayah show that the coinage was in the name of the republic and not n that of its head.

Sources:

Literary sources:

The earliest sources are the Vedas, Buddhist literature and Jain canonical works, the *Astadhyayi* of Panini, *Mahabhasya* of Patanjali and the works of the Kālidāsa. They throw welcome light on dark corners of history. The two Epics- the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* give interesting pictures of the religious and social conditions, but as chronicles of political events they seem lamentably full of tale-telling and chronological aberrations. Next come the *Purāṇas*, the most important *Purāṇas* are *Matsya*, *Vayu*, *Vishnu*, *Brahmanda*, *Bhagavata* and *Bhavisya*. Most of these have got no historical value but they sometimes treat contemporaneous dynasties or rulers as successive, or omit some of them entirely (e.g., the *Purāṇas* are silent about the Kushāṇas, Indo-Greeks, Indo-Parthians, etc.). No dates are given and even names of kings are not often inaccurate.

The aim of the thesis is to focus on the rights of the people in the ancient India from 300 B.C to 300 A.D. The concepts of human rights are mainly enshrined in the Vedas, Kauṭīliya's *Arthaśāstra*, *Dharmaśāstras* like the *Manu Smṛti*, *Nārada Smṛti*, *Yājñavalkya Smṛti*. *Smṛtis* speaks highly on the equality and brotherhood. *Dharmasūtras* and *Grihasūtras* are also important sources of information. *Rigveda* which is regarded as the oldest literature declares: "Gather together, talk together, know each other's minds; may your consultations and assemblies be unified, may your minds and intellects be common; may your resolutions be united and your hearts beat in unison; may your minds unite to make you happy". This indeed is the assertion of equality and fraternity.⁸⁵ The *Rigveda* reaffirms that all are equal and there should be universal brotherhood for all round development of society saying, "Without distinction of superior and inferior these are brothers growing up together for prosperity".⁸⁶ It is in the *Atharva Veda* that, "All have equal rights in articles of food and water. The yoke of the chariot of life is placed equally on the shoulders of all. All should live together with harmony supporting one another like the spokes of a wheel of the chariot connecting its rim and the hub (*Atharva Veda- samjnanai sukta*).⁸⁷

Arthaśāstra is also very important; it gives us a picture of administration, economy, law and justice of the country. Kauṭīliya based his *Arthaśāstra* not only on the texts of polity that were available during his times but on the experience and knowledge he had acquired on personal observation and on the study of political phenomenon and institution. He defines broadly the maintenance of social order as

well as order in the sense of preventing and punishing criminal activity. There is a description of the legal system, the law of evidence in the civil cases and for criminal activities, investigation and forensic science etc. The first clear statement of rights is found in Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*, where justice was assured as a fair trial and the right to produce witnesses. Citizens had a right to trade and commerce, right to inheritance and to get standard wages. Women's right to *strīdhana* were recognized, right to widow remarriage and in some cases even the right to divorce the husband. Also in the plays of Kālidāsa, woman seems to be a sacred name to him. Kālidāsa repeatedly refers to the anxiety of the parents to get their daughters married to suitable persons. (*Abhijñānaśākuntala*. IV; I).⁸⁸ People were guaranteed the right to protection by casting a corresponding duty on the Rulers. They had to perform their duties in accordance with the tenets of *Rajadharma*, the equivalent of constitutional law in ancient India. These principles applied to all rulers ruling in any part of the country.⁸⁹ Manu Smṛti described that the king should support all his subjects without any discrimination, in the same manner as the earth supports all living beings. *Manu*. IX, 311 declares this is a forceful declaration. Just as mother earth gives equal protection to all irrespective of religion or caste of individuals, it is obligatory for the state to give equal protection to all.⁹⁰ According to Kauṭilya, Leniency shall be shown in imposing punishments on the following: a pilgrim, an ascetic, anyone suffering from illness, hunger, thirst, poverty, fatigue from a journey, suffering from an earlier punishment, foreigner or one from the countryside.⁹¹ The spies were also played an important role in the administration of the justice of the empire. They helped the judges to solve the cases and were called *dutas* in the text *Arthaśāstra*.⁹² They delivered the messages to the judges or to the king without the fear or favors to anyone.⁹³ We get the information of spy system also from the work of Panini.⁹⁴

Foreign Writers:

The *Indica* of Megasthenes, the Seleucid ambassador at the Mauryan court, gives important information about the Mauryan capital administration system and social life, the institutions, geography and products of India. It is now lost to us, but fragments are still preserved in the form of Quotations by late authors, such as Arrian, Strabo, Justin, etc. Similarly, the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea and Ptolemy's Geography furnish geographical data of interest. The observations and writings of

these foreigners are particularly valuable for the light they throw on the political events, society, manners, geography and religion, law of ancient India. Like Megasthenes says that person convicted of bearing false witnesses suffered mutilation of his extremities. He who injure or wound anyone not only suffered in return the loss of the same limb, but his hand was also cut off. He who caused anyone to loss his hand or his eye he was put to death, in the time of the Mauryas the theft was very rare occurrence.⁹⁵

Inscriptions:

The literary sources found engraved on rocks, pillars, stone tablets, metal plates, caves, etc., and are couched in the languages current at different periods and localities-Sanskrit, Pali, mixed dialects, or the languages of Southern India. Some of them are of considerable literary merit too, being either in prose or verse or a combination of the two. The majority of inscriptions are in the *Brāhmī* script, written from left to right, but a good number are also incised in *Kharosthi* running, like Arabic and Persian, from right to left. Inscriptions refer the relation of the rulers with the people in general. They record the donations, public or private, or to commemorate a great event, or the exploits of a conqueror. The edicts of Aśoka, containing his ethical exhortations, are the best example by themselves. They are extremely useful in fixing dates and often regulate and supplement what we learn from literature and other sources. The main inscriptions of Aśoka which throw welcome light on the law are Rock Edict V, XII, and Pillar Edict VII. Dhauri Edict I also very important which describe the judges. The word *devanampriya* and the *mahāmātras* describe as judicial officers. Pillar Edict IV tells that there was uniformity in the judicial procedure and penalties. In the Pillar Edict V it was shown that birds were not killed on some specific days which were mentioned there. Aśoka also provides us ideas about the Mauryan rules and regulations. In two special edicts he called upon his *mahamattas* in Kalinga to administer justice impartially and to gain the affection of the people. Most of the other edicts dealt with the welfare and happiness of all **people based on Aśoka's conception of Dharma. The Nasik cave inscription. No. 15, tells about Śakāni lay devotee Vishṇudatā, the daughter of Agnivarman, the Śaka.**⁹⁶ Plate VII. It shows that the Śaka in India, used to perform certain religious ceremonies indigenous to their adopted country. It gives us information about the Śaka rulers that they were liberal towards their subjects

regarding their religious practices. They never seem to have interfered with the religious feelings of their subjects. In the Nasik cave inscription 15, 17, we find the description about the medical treatment of the monks in the *vihāras* of the Triraśmi hill.⁹⁷ The earliest epigraphic reference to *Sāti* in Indian history comes from the Eran pillar inscription.⁹⁸ In the Sātavāhana period, women were prominent in social life and held property in their own right is seen from records of their lavish charity mentioned we only find in the inscriptions.⁹⁹

Coins:

The next guides, we may appeal to, are coins. Like the inscriptions, they corroborate the information derived from literature, and often modify or amplify it. They are of various metals- gold, silver, copper and alloy and they contain legends or simple marks. Those with dates are doubtless very valuable for the framework of Indian chronology, but even undated and anonymous ones yield fruitful results when we carefully consider their fabric and type. Coins shed remarkable light on the existence of autonomous communities in ancient India and also on the religious predilections of certain monarchs and their personal accomplishments. The purity of the metal undoubtedly reflects the economic conditions of the time and provenance of the coins helps us in fixing the limits of a kingdom.

Monuments:

Temples, Stupas and monasteries give us information about the artistic achievements and religious devotions of the people and princes alike.¹⁰⁰

Review of Literature:

R. Shamasastri in his work *Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya* (1951) translates *Arthaśāstra* into English. His work is the most valuable and interesting. In the *Arthaśāstra* he brought out the social conditions and political theories of Ancient India. This text throws light on the judicial, commercial, military and civil, etc. activities of that period. He touched every aspect of the *Arthaśāstra* in detail and this work is very useful for our study.

E. J. Rapson in *The Cambridge History of India* (1955) (ed) Vol-I presented the history of the ancient India from the earliest times to about the middle of the 1st century CE. This work help us to construct chronological and geographical

framework for the political history of many of the kingdoms and empires of ancient India and this work firstly traces the India of present days and gives us accounts of those geographical features which have determined the course of history in past times. This volume trace the sources of history, people and language, social, political, economic conditions as represented in the earliest scriptures of the Brahmans, Jains and Buddhists and also examine their history. He also traces the *Purāṇas*, *epics*, *śāstras* and law book and also examines the early history of Alexander's period, Mauryas, Greeks, Scythians and Parthian invaders, early history of south India, history of Ceylon. He described the ancient monuments and traces the various phases of Indian art from its beginning to the 1st century CE. He also talks about the Śakas and Pahlava, etc., this work clearly traces the foundation and extension of the Śaka era, Vikrama era, Gupta era and the era of Harsha.

K. P. Jayaswal in his work *Hindu Polity, A constitutional History of India in Hindu Times* (1955) studied the evolution and progress of the constitutional history of India since the very beginning of Hindu civilization. He, in one chapter on the law and administration of justice talks about the judicial system in ancient India. Although the scholar talks about the justice to be provided to the subject according to the existing works on the law by the ancient law givers but the concept of the human rights is still to be explored in detail.

R. P. Kangle in his work *Kauṭīliya 's Arthaśāstra* (1965) deals with the question about the origin of *Arthaśāstra*, authorship and date of *Arthaśāstra*, its sources and style, state, society, social life, state economy, administration, law and administration of justice, internal security, defence and external affairs, conclusion, etc. His work gives all the important information related to *Arthaśāstra*.

M. K. Sharan in his work, *Court Procedure in Ancient India* (1978) makes an attempt the comprehensive and authenticated account of judicial system of Hindu law-givers in detail together with some judicious derivatives out of other invaluable sources. He also examines the Hindu *dharmasastrakararas*. He divided his work into six chapters namely, contemporary judicial elements, judicial proceeding, evidence, trial, decision and miscellaneous matters.

J. W. McCrindle in his work *Ancient India as Described in Classical Literature* (1979) translated all the texts of Greek and Latin literature related to

ancient India and he concentrated on the writers coming to India before and after Christian era. His work contains all the information of worth relating to India and that can be gathered from classical sources. He talks about the works of Strabo, Megasthenes, Pliny, Arrian and others. His work is very useful for our study.

N. N. Ghose in the *Early history of India* (1981) presents a critical emphasis on the process of social-economic developments and controversial issues in the different phases of the history and also included the new discoveries in the field of epigraphy and numismatic. This work presents the history of pre-historic culture up to the period of Kushānas and foreign invasions. He not only focuses on the geographical feature of ancient India, but also on the social, political, religious life of Aryans and Vedic people up to the period of post Kushānas . He also deals with the epics and *Purāṇas* etc. in this work. But very little is known to us about the rights of the people.

R. Thapar in her work *A History of India* (1983) Vol-I deals with the ancient history of India. This work starts with a short introduction to the Harappan civilization, discussing the political and social set up of the Vedic people, the age of the Mahājanapadas and republics and goes as far as the coming of the Mughals. She has discussed the history of India from 321 B.C to 300 A.D. in which she has discussed the political set up of India during different dynasties which were established in north as well as south India. She also deals with the social and economic developments taking place during the above said period but the aspect of the human rights has not been touched in a proper way by the scholar.

K. A. N. Sastri, edited *A Comprehensive History of India* (1987) Vol-II is a compilation of articles on ancient Indian history belonging to the period of the Mauryas, their contemporaries, their successors etc. before the Imperial Guptas by various scholars such as R. K. Mookerji, D. R. Bhandarkar, K. A. N. Sastri, Jagannath, J. N. Banerjea, K. Gopalachari, D. C. Sircar, U. N. Ghosal etc. these eminent scholars have studied various aspects of history such as the foundation of the Mauryan empire and other powers, the chronology of different dynasties such as the Mauryas, the Satavahanas, the Indo-Greeks, Śakas, Parthians, Pahlavas and Kushānas etc., the political conditions prevailing during the time, the administrative set up of different dynasties, the economic and social life of the people during their rule, art and architectural developments taking place during the span of time etc., but the proper

study of human rights as is reflected in various literary sources still lacks proper attention.

R. C. Majumdar in his work on *Age of Imperial Unity* (1990) has discussed the prehistoric age including the Indus Valley Civilization, the account of the ancient republican clans, medieval dynasties, especially those of the south and development of art and colonization in detail. He also deals with political, administrative, social and economic condition of the people and one section also deals with coins. He has not given predominance to political history but has devoted considerable space to religious, literature and other cultural aspects of ancient India. But he has not touched the human rights and legal system of that period.

P. S. Jaswal and N. Jaswal in *Human Rights and Law* (1996) examine the concept of human rights, its evolution from the Greek thinkers and ancient India to the charter of united nation. This work explains in detail human rights wide range available in Indian Constitution focusing on the role of judiciary. They also illustrate various declarations by government of India adopting international protocols and covenants regarding human rights. The role of judicial activism in the field of human rights is analyzed through number of cases. The main emphasis by them is on judicial activism and provision of national human rights machinery for the protection of human rights in India. They just go through the human rights of ancient times, but not touched it in a proper way.

V. A. Smith in his work *Early History of India* (1999) deals only with the political history of early India from 600 B.C. to the Muhammadan conquest including the invasion of Alexander the great. Students have to go through a large number of books, which they often find it difficult to select and also to procure.

M. McCrindle in his work *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian* (2000) familiarized the fragments of the Greek writers about India through his English translation. In his work he translated the Megasthenes's *Indika*. A translation of the first part of the *Indika* of Arrian has been subjoined, for giving the general description of India. In his work he explained the general characters of India, its boundaries, rivers, size, and fertility, races of men, seven castes among the Indians and administration of public affairs etc. which were noticed by Megasthenes. McCrindle also explained the fragments of the *Indika* of Arrian, in this he mentioned

the Indian tribes west of the Indus, boundaries and size of India, rivers, etc., this work gives very little information about the rights of the people in India of that time.

C. J. Nirmal in the *Human Rights in India: Historical, Social and Political Perspectives* (2002) discussed the complex issue of human rights from different perspective and cover such diverse issues as the rights of tribal peoples, prisoners, etc. and also discussed the human rights in education, the constitutional context of human rights, organizational bases of human rights, etc., this work gives all the basic information related to the human rights but this work does not deal with the human rights in ancient India in an appropriate manner.

M. Rama. Jois in *Ancient Indian Law: Eternal Values in Manu Smṛti* (2010) tackles with the basic rights which are mentioned in the *Manu Smṛti*. He has divided his book into 16 chapters and this work contributes a lot to present the eternal values contained in *Manu Smṛti*. His work contained the moral values of the individual and the society, duties towards the society and the State and State towards its citizens. He explained that the concept of dharma is very wide and comprehensive. It stands for establishing harmony, peace, stability and progress in society and state as its main realization. This work throws rich treasure on our ancient socio- religious and cultural history.

Micheline R. Ishay in her work *Human Rights Reader: Major Political Essays, Speeches and Documents from Ancient times to the present* (2007) deals with the origin of human rights and associated human rights with the history. She conveys the corresponding debate over acceptable ways to promote the human rights. This book provided the excellence material on the human rights in the ancient, medieval and the modern times. And clear the ideas of dignity, religious tolerance, fair ruling, legal transparency and progressive punishment and these notions have deep roots in ancient religious and secular traditions. It also mentions about the Asian contribution to human rights find in the writings of Kauṭilya, Asoka and various Buddhist texts. This book is very useful but finds very little information of our period.

A.S. Altekar in his work *State and Government in Ancient India* (2001) discuss about the functions of the government and state in the ancient India. This work deals with the administrative system, origin of the state, kingship, political theory, duties of the king and the ministers, position and status of the king and the ministers from Vedic age to about 1000 A.D. also discuss about the different

departments of the government, power of the ministers, and spy system in the ancient India. This work based or utilizes the data available in the Vedic and classical literature, Buddhist and Jain works, accounts of the foreign travelers and the inscriptions. This work is very useful and enables us to trace the origin and development of institutions of government very clearly but we cannot trace much information about the human rights.

H.S. Bhatia in *Society, Law and Administration in Ancient India* (2001) deals with the Indian civilization and tradition, like the social manners, religious practice, culture etc. He also explains the law and administration in the village, jail and jail administration in Kautilya's times, different ceremonies and the position of the women as a widow. This work gives very little information about the rights of the people.

We can say that none of the above works encompass the period of our study. The thrust of the present work is to find out the nature of the human rights as gleaned in the primary and secondary sources from 300 B.C to 300 A.D.

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