

P R E F A C E

The evolution of the Indian coinage constitutes an interesting subject of study. Though its genesis seems to be indigenous, it imbibed many-fold foreign influence through the course of its evolution. Some of the Indian Coins are more foreign than Indian in their shape, fabric, weight, language and legends. However, in the Gupta period there set in a process of Indianisation of the coins, as a result of which the traces of foreign influences were totally eliminated and coins became thoroughly Indian in all their aspects.

The Gupta coins occupy an important place in history of the Indian coins. This is why they have been studied by a large number of scholars from time to time. In this regard the studies of John Allan and A.S. Altekar are the most notable ones. The catalogues of the Gupta coins already published are the main source of our study. However, in most cases the Gupta coins have been studied mainly as a source of constructing the political history of the Guptas. Their study from a purely numismatic angle has left much room for improvement. There is a large number of these coins which admit of new interpretations. It is with this point of view that the present study is sought to be undertaken.

This thesis has been divided into six chapters. First chapter deals with the origin and evolution of the Gupta coins. Chandragupta I was the first Gupta king who started Gupta gold

coinage with the issue of Chandragupta-Kumaradevi type.

Second chapter tells about the numismatic contents of the Gupta gold coins such as their shape, weight, size, fabric, symbols, figures, manufacturing techniques and their find places.

Third chapter contains the artistic and literary contents of the Gupta gold coins. The Gupta mintmaster have demonstrated their artistic skill by depicting political and cultural events of the Gupta kings. The legends inscribed on them also corroborate the different scenes depicted on them. They also throw light on the language and literature of that period.

Fourth chapter discusses the controversial Gupta gold coins. There are still some Gupta gold coins about whom the numismatists have different opinions. In some cases, the scholars have different opinions about the legends and attributions of the Gupta coins, on the other hand they differ about the figures and symbols depicted on them.

Fifth chapter speaks on the religious contents of the Gupta gold coins. The figures of gods, goddesses, religious ceremonies, figures and symbols reflect on the religious faith of the Gupta kings and other different religions prevailing during the Gupta period.

Sixth chapter consists of socio-economic contents of the Gupta gold coins. The dress of the kings, queens, gods,

goddesses, their ornaments, weapons, thrones, couches, birds and animals throw light on the social life of the people. The above stated things also tell us about the trade, industry and different professions prevailing during the Gupta period. Moreover Gupta gold coins themselves point out towards the prosperity and sound economy of that period.

We have tried our best to settle the controversies by making new suggestions supported by the literary, archaeological, palaeographic, numismatic, inscriptional and iconographic evidences.

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