

Guptas

Socio-Economic Conditions of Gupta period:

The socio-economic conditions of the Gupta period were highly determined by religious and caste systems.

Below we have described in details the socio-economic conditions of Gupta period.

The status of Brahmins During The Gupta period:

The varna system continues and was practiced during the Gupta period. The Brahmins enjoyed a privileged position in the society especially with the grants of land made to them by the rulers. These charitable lands were given to the priest without any tax assessment. The Brahmins also perform the religious duties of conducting ceremonies and interpreting the religious scripture. The supremacy of the Brahmins increased during the Gupta period.

The Gupta rulers became great supporters of the Brahmins as they legitimized the position of the rulers. The Brahmins accumulated a lot of wealth and also enjoyed a high position in society.

Class system During The Gupta period:

There was an increase in the number of Kshatriyas with the influx of the Hunas and the Gurjaras, who joined

the rank of warriors. The Kshatriyas received support from the Brahmins, especially the Gupta rulers who received legal recognitions as the rightful rulers. In the same way, the number of vaishyas also increases as a result of craftsmen who joined the status of vaishyas. There was an increase in the number of shudras during the Gupta period. The shudras were absorbed into the varna society. The class of untouchables also exists in Gupta society. It is important to note that a new caste also exists during this period, namely the Kayasthas who were scribes. The Chandelas who were untouchables also exist in Gupta society. During this period varna rulers and distinctions were popular. A person belonging to different varnas had to follow different varna rulers.

Besides, law books were also compiled because every person had to be dealt with differently, according to their varna. Even in marriage, they discourage intercaste relations.

According to Fa-Hien, the Chandelas before entering a city on the market had to strike a piece of wood to inform of their arrival. By doing so people could avoid them. The untouchables are considered being impure, useless, dishonest, and greedy.

Women Condition During The Gupta period:

During the Gupta period, the position of women declines as the women were totally dependent on the male members. Women of the higher varnas did not have the freedom to earn their own livelihood.

However, women of the vaishya and Shudras were free to earn their living. They were active in agricultural activities and domestic services.

Usually, they work in the households of the upper Caste.

Widow marriage was not popular but they favor the practices of sati. The practice of Devadasi also existed during the Gupta period. The family system was patriarchal whereby the eldest male member was the head of the family. The eldest son takes over the property.

The Socio - Economic Conditions of The Gupta Period:

From the inscriptions, coins and travelers' accounts like that of Fa-Hien (A Chinese traveler), we can learn the socio-economic conditions of the Gupta period. These sources give us important information on the development of agriculture, industry, trade, and business during this period. The economic development of the Guptas was possible due to the efficient administrative system.

Agriculture During The Gupta period:

Agriculture was the main occupation of the people of India during the Gupta period. Almost the entire land within the Gupta kingdom was cultivated. The state and private owners looked after the cultivation on the land. The Gupta kings look after the welfare of the farmers and peasants. The kings provide people with facilities like irrigation to increase production. For example, king Skandagupta constructed a lake to help the farmers.

According to Jha, the Gupta kings introduced the system of land grants, where the king would make gifts of land to certain officials. These officials were given the duty to develop agriculture within that piece of land and to collect revenue from the peasants who were cultivating the land. This led to the emergence of feudalism. In many parts of the country, the peasants have to work for the officials all their lives. Forced labor was also prevalent during the Gupta period.

Industry During the Gupta period:

Also, the industry was developing and a large number of people were active in spinning and weaving of cloth. The main centers of the cloth industry were Gujarat and Bengal. The clothes produced by people include cotton, silk, linen and wool. Other industries that developed during this period were gold smithy, ivory, and metallurgy. The cutting and polishing of diamonds and other precious stones also made progress. The people during the Gupta period were also active in carpentry, blacksmithy, pottery, and shoemaking.

Trade During the Gupta period

During the Gupta period, trade flourished both internally and externally. The Gupta period would conduct their business within the kingdom as well as with other countries. Good means of transport and communication enable smooth trade and commerce. Important centers of trade within the Gupta kingdom include Banaras, Ujjain, ~~Mathura~~ Mathura, and others. The traders would usually conduct their business by selling and buying items in these important centers.

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Important items of exports were sandal wood, mustard, pepper and other commercial crops. Indian cotton, silk and linen were famous in many countries. The Gupta traders establish trade contacts with countries like Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Persia, Arabia, China and a few countries in the Mediterranean

Economic Activities Import items include horses, gold, ivory and precious stones. It is important to note that foreign trade was very profitable for the Gupta Empire. Many historians also pointed out that the country enjoys economic prosperity as a result of foreign trade.

Economic Activities During the Gupta period

As trade and industry developed, there were many economic activities within the Gupta Empire. The traders and merchant played a huge role in the economy of the country. The sources of Gupta's period mentioned the existence of guilds. A guild is a community of traders, merchants, workers and artisans. Each guild has its own laws chief who would look after the activities of the groups of traders, merchants, workers and artisans.

◀ Social condition under the Satavahanas

Unit VIII

- i) Introduction
- ii) Social classes
- iii) Stages of Life
- iv) Family Life
- v) Food
- vi) Dress and ornaments
- vii) Conclusion.

Introduction:-

* With the establishment of Satavahana Empire a new begins in the history of the Deccan and the South. The Satavahanas rose to power on the ruins of the Mauryan Empire.

* They united the whole of Deccan and the South, gave political integrity and protected it from foreign invaders.

* Their period is known for economic prosperity and cultural development. They set up glorious traditions in literature and art.

* Major System of Society of Satavahana and other contemporary dynasties is largely followed from its predecessors.

Social classes:-

* Varna and Ashrama Systems

* The society consisted of four varnas.

namely

i) Brahmanas

ii) Kshatriyas

iii) Vaishyas and

iv) Sudras

* Dharmasastras described the duties, status, and occupations of all the four varnas.

* Over a period of time, there was great increase in the number of mixed Jatis (castes)

* Manusmriti defines the origin of the numerous mixed (Sankara) varnas.

* Anuloma was the marriage between the male of higher varna and the female of lower varna.

* Pratiloma was the marriage between the male of lower varna and the female of higher varna.

* The social status of a person born of Anuloma was higher than Pratiloma and they followed their father's occupation.

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* According to the Buddhist texts, mixed castes resulted from organizations like guilds of people following different arts and crafts.

* The Buddhist texts described that a Kshatriya working successively as a potter, basket-maker, road-worker, garland-maker, and cook. Setthi (Vaisy) working as a tailor and a potter without loss of prestige in both cases.

* Kshatriyas of the Sakya and Koliya Clans cultivated their fields.

The Vasetha Sutta refers to Brahmas working as cultivators, craftsmen, messengers, and landlords.

* The Jatakas mentioned that Brahmas pursuing tillage, tending cattle, trade, hunting, carpentry, weaving, policing of caravans, archery, driving of carriages, and even snake charming.

* Jatakas story tells that a Brahman peasant as a supremely pious man and even a Bodhisattva.

* The gradual absorption of foreigners.

like Indo-Greek, Sakas, Yavanas, Kusans and Parthians into the Indian Society was the most important development of this period.

* The life of an individual man was divided into four stages. The stages are called as Ashramas.

Stages of Life:

* The four stages of an individual life as mentioned in Dharmasutras are-

* Brahmacharya - In this ashrama, a person lives a celibate life as a student at the home of his teacher.

* Grihastha - After learning the Vedas a student returns back to his home, gets married, and becomes a Grihastha (householder). Grihastha has manifold duties broadly marked out as

i) Yajna

ii) adhyayana

iii) dana

* Vanaprastha - In the middle age, after seeing his grandchildren, he leaves

me for the forest to become a
hermit.

* Sanyas - Sanyas ashrama is the time meditation and penance; one frees his soul from material things. He leaves hermitage and becomes a homeless wanderer and thus, earthly ties have been broken.

Family Life !

* The joint family system was the main characteristics of the society.

* The family was considered as the unit of the social system and not the individual.

* Obedience to parents and elders was held as the highest duty for the children.

* Marriage between the same Jatis was also preferred though intermarriage between different Jatis was prevalent.

* The marriage in the same "gotra" and "pravara" is restricted.

* Dharmasāstras explained eight forms^{de}

of marriage, namely -

- i) Brahma vivah,
- ii) Daiva vivah,
- iii) Asura vivah,
- iv) Prajapatya vivah,
- v) Asura vivah,
- vi) Gandharva vivah,
- vii) Rakshasa vivah, and
- viii) Paisacha vivah.

* Among all these eight (as discussed above), paisacha vivah is condemned by all the Dharmasāstras.

* Ideal marriage is one in which the father and guardian of the girls selected the bridegroom on an account of his qualifications.

* The women hold an honorable position in the society and household.

* Two classes of women students are mentioned as:

* Brahmavadin or lifelong students

* Sadyodvaha who pursued their studies till their marriage.

* Women not only attained good education, but also received training in fine arts like music, dancing, and painting.

* Dharmasastras described that in the family property, all the sons had equal share, but a large number of Dharmasastras rejected the right of women to inherit.

* Yajnavalkya lays down a list of priority in inheritance, which places the sequences as son, wife and daughter.

* The right of a wife to inherit if no sons were living, has been accepted by most of the ancient Indian authorities.

* Women were allowed to have some personal property known as Strī-dhana in the form of jewelry

Clothing, etc.

* The Arthashastra mentioned that a woman can own money up to 2,000 silver panas and amount above this could be held by her husband in trust on her behalf.

Food :

The staple food of the people were wheat, rice and millets. The people used non-vegetarian food also intoxicating liquors were also used. They were manufactured within the country. Sometimes, they were imported from outside.

Dress and ornaments :

The dress of men consisted of a loin cloth, an upper garment and a turban. Women wore a single piece garment. They had a number of ornaments. Men also wore a number of ornaments.

Unit - 10

- * Introduction
- * Agriculture
- * Land classification
- * Industry
- * Trade
 - * Major guilds
- * Foreign Colonies
- * Conclusion.

Introduction:

Major Economic system of Sathavahana and other contemporary dynasties was well organized and systematic. There was all round development in the field of agriculture, industry, and trade during this period.

Agriculture :-

Agriculture was the main occupation of a large section of the people. The land was held by the

usually, the Land holdings were small enough that could be cultivate by the Individual family. But sometimes the Land holdings were big enough consisting of up to 1,000 acres

The Land outside the village is called arable land

Beyond the arable Land of the village lay its pastures, which were common for the grazing of cattle. The aric Land also belonged to the state

The forest was located on the boundary of the village

Kautilya gives a complete scheme of village plan

Land classification

According to Kautilya, the land of the village was divided into

- cultivated Land
- uncultivated Land
- Grove
- Forest
- pastures, etc.

small the main crops
different varieties, coarse grains, sesame
saffron, pulses, wheat, linseed, sugarcane
and mustard. Besides a large number
of vegetables and fruits were also
grown

Every village had artisans like
carpenter, potter, blacksmith, barber,
rope maker, washer man, etc.

Industry:

The Sathavahana period had
considerable economic activity.

The inscriptions mention several
industries. weavers, iron workers, leather
workers, goldsmiths and jewellers were
some of the craftsmen. metal industry
was highly developed.

Trade:

The economic prosperity of the
period is revealed by internal and
external trade. The important markets
towns were Paithan, Nasik, Govardhana

Vajrayani, ~~...~~ ~~...~~ ~~...~~
etc.

These towns were connected with ports. Roads and Rivers were the means of communication. The exports from the Satavahana empire were shells, pearls, diamonds, sapphires, gold, cloth etc.

The imports included horses, aromatics and drugs. The availability of a large number of Roman coins at place like Pondichery, Arikamedu, Nagarjunakonda, and Kondapur, reveals maritime trade with the western countries.

The shipmarked coins of Pulumavi and Yajnarsi indicate the maintenance of a fleet by the Satavahana kings. The great centres of foreign trade were Bawkachcha and Kalyan on the west coast and Maisolia and Ghantasala on the east coast.

Major Guilds.
The craft of the period were organised into guilds or srenis. The inscription mention the names of 18 guilds such as corndealers, braziers, polishers, weavers, potters and fabricators.

The guild was headed by an elderly man, Ligama Sabha. was the office of the guild. The guilds served as banks. They received deposits, on which they paid interest.

Increasing craft and commerce in this period brought many merchants and artisans to the forefront. Merchants took pride in naming themselves after the towns to which they belonged.

Both the merchants and artisans made generous donations to the Buddhist cause. Among the artisans the Gandhikas or the perfumers are repeatedly mentioned as donors.

Later the Grandhika was so familiar term and there is also a in opinion "Grandhi" the modern title derived from that.

Foreign colonies!

As a result of vigorous foreign trade colonial enterprise was encouraged. Indian settlements grew in the Far east as well as on the Coast of Africa

Indian culture flowed to the eastern countries like Burma, Sumatra etc. The flourishing of ~~Burma~~, ~~Sumatra~~ etc. Buddhism in South-east Asia during this period was the result of commercial contacts with the Satavahana Empire

Rashtrakutas

* The Rashtrakuta Empire was divided into several provinces called rashtras under the control of rashtrapatis. They were further divided into vishayas or districts governed by vishayapatis.

Administration :-

* The Rashtrakuta Empire was divided into several provinces called rashtras under the control of rashtrapatis. They are further divided into vishayapatis.

* The next subdivision was bhukti consisting of 50 to 70 villages under the control of bhogapatis. These officers were directly appointed by the central government.

* The village administration was carried on by the village headmen. However the village assemblies played a significant role in the village administration.

Society and Economy :-

* The Hindu sects of vaishnavism and Saivism flourished during the period of Rashtrakutas. yet, they did not affect the patronage of Rashtrakuta^{to} kings and officers.

* Almost one third of the population of the Deccan were Jains. There were some prosperous Buddhist settlements at places like Kanheri, Sholapur and Dharwar.

* There was harmony among various religions. There was a college at Salati situated in modern Bijapur district of this educational centre. It was run by the income from the endowments made by the rich as well as by all the villagers on occasions of functions and festivals.

* The economy was also in a flourishing condition. There was an active commerce between the Deccan and the Arab. The Rashtrakuta kings promoted the Arab trade by maintaining friendship with them.

cultural Contributions:-

* The Rashtrakutas widely patronized the Sanskrit literature. There were many scholars in the Rashtrakuta court. Trivikrama wrote Nalachampu and the Kavi Rahasya was composed by Halayudha during the reign of Krishna II.

* The Jain literature flourished under the patronage of the Rashtrakutas. Amogavarshad I, who was a Jain patronized many Jain scholars. His teacher Jinasena composed Parsvabhudaya, a biography of Parsva in verses.

* Another scholar Gunabhadra wrote the Adipurana, the life stories of various Jain saints. Sakatayana wrote the grammar work called Amogavritti. The great mathematician of this period, Viracharya was the author of Granthasaram.

* The Kannada literature saw its beginning during the period of the Rashtrakutas.

Amogavarsha's Kavi Rajamargaw as the first poetic work in Kannada language. Pampa was the greatest of the Kannada poets. His famous work was Vikramasenavijaya. Ponna was another famous Kannada poet and he wrote Santipurana.

Art and Architecture :-

* The art and architecture of the Rashtrakutas were found at Ellora and Elephanta. At Ellora, the most remarkable temple is the Kailasa temple. It was excavated during the reign of Krishna I.

* It is carved out of a massive block of rock 200 feet long, and 100 feet in breadth and height. The temple consists of four parts - the main shrine, the entrance gateway, an intermediate shrine for Nandi and mandapa surrounding the courtyard.

* The temple stands on a lofty plinth 25 feet high. The central face of the plinth has imposing figures of elephants.

And lions giving the impression that the entire structure rests on their back. It has a three tiered sikhara or tower resembling the sikhara of the Mamalapuram Rathas.

* In the interior of the temple there is a pillared hall which was sixteen square pillars. The Kailasa temple is an architectural marvel with its beautiful marble with its beautiful sculptures.

* The sculpture of the Goddess Durga is shown as slaying the Buffalo demon. In another sculpture Ravana was making attempts to lift mount scenes of Ramayana were also depicted on the walls. The general characteristics of the Kailasa temple are more Dravidian.

* Elephanta is an island near Bombay. It was originally called Sripuri. The Portuguese after seeing the large figure of an elephant named it Elephanta. The sculptural art of the Rashtrakutas reached its zenith in this place.

* There is a close similarity between the sculptures at Ellora and those in Elephanta. They might have been carved by the same craftsmen. At the entrance to the sanctum there are huge figures of dwara-palaks.

* In the walls of the prakara around the sanctum there are niches containing the images of shiva in various forms images of shiva in various nataraja, Gangadhara, Ardhanareeswara and somaskanda.

* The most imposing figure of this temple is trimurthi. The sculpture is six metre high. It is said to represent the three aspects of shiva as creator, preserver and destroyer.