

Economic Condition under the Harsha period

- * Agriculture
- * Industry
 - a) Textiles
 - b) Metals
 - c) Trade

2
2
2

Agriculture :-

Agriculture was most important occupation of the people. The king gave land grants to officials instead of salaries. Men of religious learning were also given land grants. As a result, land was fragmented. The society and the economy were characterised by feudal conditions.

The principal crops of the period were rice, wheat and sugar cane, and fruits. Hiuen-Tsang says that rice - was cultivated in paryatra (Baria). Rice grown in the region of Magadha was of fragrant variety. Bana the court poet of Harshavardhana, made a reference to the production of rice, wheat and sugarcane. Fruits were grown in orchards. Saffron was grown in the Kashmir region.

Brihat Samhita mentions two main harvests. Hiuen-Tsang says that Persian water-wheels were used for irrigating the fields. An average village possessed approximately 1,333 acres of fertile land.

Industry :-

a) Textiles :-

The period witnessed remarkable industrial activity. Textile industry occupied an important place. "The Harshacharita" of Bana makes a reference to Rajyasri, the widowed sister of Harsha, who was known to have used linen, cotton, bark-silk, muslin and shot-silk garments.

Hsuen-Sang, the Chinese pilgrim, also made a mention of these garments. Coloured cloth and flowered silk were also in use. The craftsmen of the period knew several weaving techniques.

Gold and silver brocade, tie knew several weaving techniques. Gold and silver brocade, tie and dye work, spotted muslin etc. were mentioned in the contemporary literature and art. The centers of textile industry were located at Varanasi, Mathura and Kamarupa (Assam).

b.) Metals :-

Metal industry was also in a flourishing condition. Gold and silver were available in plenty in the north west,

Copper and Silver were available in the area between the Beas and Sutlej. Brass was extensively used in different parts of the country. The large-sized copper image of Buddha and the Brass temple at Nalanda, stand testimony to the successful functioning of metal industry. The extensive use of ornaments of gold, ~~the~~ silver and precious stones indicate the development of the industry of valuable metals.

C.) Trade :-

The 7th Century A.D was a period of brisk trading activity. There was internal and foreign trade. The maritime contact with the outside countries brought prosperity to the people. The sea ports were Tamralipti, Kongoda and Broach. The Ganges was the main means of transport in the Gangetic Valley.

The sea port at Tamralipti was the gateway to the South east Asia and China. There was sea-borne traffic between India and China, through Indonesia and Ceylon. In the west coast of India, ships proceeded to Persia and Arabia.

The Persians monopolised trade in silk. Silk industry declined in India. Items of export were spices and saffron. The items imported were ivory, horses, copper, emerald etc.

Hsien Tsang says that several villages and towns in the Gandhara region were deserted. The same conditions prevailed in cities like Sravasti, Kapilavastu, Kusinagara and Ramagrama. Even Pataliputra was mentioned as desolate. The other cities and regions were prosperous and peaceful.

Socio Economic Condition under the Rajput.

Social Conditions :

- * Brahmins
- * Kshatriyas
- * Sudras
- * Women

Brahmins :-

Fuedalism was the Socio economic institution of the period. Society was based on Caste System. There were Subcastes also. The Brahmins were on the top of the Social ladder. They received land grants from kings and they were exempted from payment of taxes. The Kshatriyas and the Vaisyas were next in importance.

Kshatriyas :-

The Kshatriyas were a martial race. Villages were donated to families of soldiers who are killed. Heroic virtues were instilled among the Kshatriyas.

Sudras :-

The Sudras were the fourth in the Social hierarchy. They were mostly peasants and artisans. There were also untouchables living outside the village. The Caste System was rigid. Therefore the unity of the Society was affected.

Women :-

There was no inter caste marriage and inter dining. Swayamvara and Grandharva marriages were known. Polygamy was prevalent. Female infanticide was followed. Some ladies distinguished themselves in public life. Tauhar, Self immolation of ladies, was practised. Women had low status in society. Purdah system was followed. Satisahagamana was widely prevalent.

Economic Conditions :-

- * Village
- * Trade
- * Towns
- * Guilds
- * Money lending

Village :-

Villages were self sufficient economic units. Trade was affected due to frequent wars. The aristocrats spent lavish

Trade :-

Internal and external trade declines. However coastal towns traded with China and the Arab countries. Cloth was exported. Homes, wine, scents and

①

Unit - IV

Chalukyas

Besides the Pallavas the Western Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas in the Deccan constitute important political forces. Both these kingdoms had their rivals in the far south, namely the Pallavas and later the Cholas. Their period has also been important in the history of India for their cultural contributions.

Chalukyas (543 - 755 A.D.): The Chalukyas dynasty was an Indian royal dynasty that ruled large parts of Southern and Central India between the 6th and 12th centuries. During this period, they ruled as three related yet individual dynasties. The earliest dynasty known as the "Badami Chalukyas", ruled from Vatapi (modern Badami) from the middle of the 6th century. The Badami Chalukyas began to assert their independence at the decline of the Kadamba Kingdom of Banavasi and rapidly rose to prominence during the reign of Pulakeshin II. After the death of Pulakeshin II the Eastern Chalukyas became an independent kingdom in the Eastern Deccan. They ruled from Vengi until about 11th century. In the Western Deccan, the rise of Rashtrakutas in the middle of the 8th century eclipsed the Chalukyas in the late 10th century. These Western Chalukyas ruled from Kalyani until the end of the 12th century.

Pulakeshin II (608 - 642 A.D.)

The most important ruler of their dynasty was Pulakeshin II. The Aihole inscription issued by him gives the details of his reign. He fought with the Kadambas of Banavasi and the Vangas of Mysore and established his suzerainty. Duvvintla, the Vanga ruler, accepted his overlordship and even gave his daughter in marriage to Pulakeshin II. Another notable achievement of Pulakeshin II was the defeat of Harshavardhana on the banks of the river Narmada. He put a check to the ambition of Harsha to conquer the south. In his first expedition against the Pallavas, Pulakeshin II emerged victorious. But he suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of Narasimhavarma I near Kanchi. Subsequently,

② The Chalukya capital Vatapi was captured and destroyed by the Pallavas. The most important event in the reign of Pulakesin II was the visit of Hiuen Tsang to his kingdom. The successor of Pulakesin II was Vikramaditya. He once again consolidated the Chalukya kingdom and plundered the Pallava capital, Kanchi. Thus he had avenged his father's defeat and death at the hands of the Pallavas. Kirtivarma II was the last of the rulers of the Chalukyas. He was defeated by Dantidurga, the founder of the Rashtrakuta dynasty.

Administration and Social life under the Chalukyas

The Chalukya administration was highly centralized unlike that of the Pallavas and the Cholas. Village autonomy was under the Chalukyas. The Chalukyas had a great maritime power. Pulakesin II had 100 ships in his navy. They also had a small standing army. The Badami Chalukyas were Brahmanical Hindus but they gave respect to other religions. Importance was given to Vedic rites and rituals. The founder of the dynasty Pulakesin I performed the Ashvamedha sacrifice. A no. of temples in honour of Vishnu, Shiva and other gods were also built during this period. Hiuen Tsang mentioned about the decline of Buddhism in western Deccan. But Jainism was steadily on the path of progress in the region. Ravikirti, the court poet of Pulakesin II who composed the Aihole inscription was a Jain.