

### Maurya Period (322 BC-185 BC)

### **Origin of the Mauryas**

- The Puranas describe them as **Shudras**.
- ➤ 'Mudrakshasa' of Vishakhadatta uses the terms **Vrishal/Kulhina** (of low clan).
- The Classical writers, such as Justin, describe Chandragupta only as a man of humble origin.
- The Junagarh Rock Inscription of Rudradaman (150 AD) has some indirect evidence, suggesting that the Mauryas might have been of Vaishya origin.
- The Buddhist work, on the other hand, try to link the Mauryan dynasty with the **Sakya Kshatriya** clan to which Buddha belonged, the region from which the Mauryas came was full of Mor and hence they came to be known as 'Moriyas'.
- we can say that the Mauryas belonged to the Moriya tribe.

### Chandragupta Maurya: 322 BC-298 BC

- Chandragupta dethroned the last Nanda ruler Dhananand and occupied Patliputra in 322 BC with the help of Kautilya or Chankya.
- > Chandragupta Maurya defeated Selecus Nikator in 305 BC, who surrendered a vast territory including herat, Kandhar, Baluchistan and Kabul, in return for 500 elephants.
- After treaty between Chandragupta and Selecus, the Hindukush became boundry between their states.
- Selecus Nikator sent Megasthenese to the court of Chandragupta Maurya.
- > Under Chandragupta Maurya, for the first time, the whole of Northern India was united.
- > Trade flourished, agriculture was regulated, weights and measures were standardised and money came into use.
- Taxation, sanitation and famine relief became the concerns of the state.

#### Bindusara: 298 BC-273 BC

- Chandragupta Maurya was succeeded by his son Bindusara.
- Bindusara, known to the Greeks as Amitrochates (derived from the Sanskrit word **Amitraghata**)
- Bindusara patronised Ajivikas.

### Ashoka: 273 BC-232 BC

- According to Buddhist texts when Ashoka, the son of Bindusara, was born, his mother, happy to have a child, said, 'Now I am Ashoka', i.e., without sorrow. And so. the child was named.
- ➤ It appears from the available evidence (Buddhist literature mainly) that there was a struggle for the throne among the princes on the death of Bindusara.



- According to Buddhist tradition, Ashoka usurped the throne after killing his 99 brothers and spared **Tissa**, the youngest one. Radhagupta helped him in fratricidal struggle.
- This war of succession accounts for interregnum for 273-269 BC and only after securing his position on the throne, Ashoka had himself formally crowned in 269 BC.
- Under Ashoka, the Mauryan Empire reached its climax. the whole of the sub-continent was under imperial control.

### Later Mauryas: 232 BC-185 BC

- > The Mauryan dynasty lasted 137 years.
- After the death of Ashoka, the division of the Mauryan Empire into two parts-Western and Eastern. Kunala son of Ashoka ruled the Western part and Dasaratha ruled the Eastern part.
- > Brihadratha the last Mauryan ruler was assassinated in 185 BC by his commander in chief, **Pushyanitra** Sunga, who established his own Sunga dynasty.

#### Causes for the Decline:

- 1. Highly centralised administration
- 2. Pacific policy of Ashoka
- 3. Brahmanical reaction
- 4. The partition of the Mauryan Empire
- 5. Weak later-Mauryan Rulers
- 6. Pressure on Mauryan economy
- 7. Neglect of North-West Frontier.

# **EACHERS**

### Sources for Mauryan History

- **Kautilya's 'Arthasastra':** It is the most important literary source for the Mauryas. It is a treatise on government and polity. It gives a clear and methodological analysis of political and economic conditions of the Mauryan period.
- Megasthenese's 'Indica': Megasthenese was the ambassador of Selecus Nikator in the court of Chandragupta Maurya. 'Indica' refers to Mauryan administration, 7- caste system, absence of slavary and usuary in India etc.
- Visakha Datta's 'Mudra Rakshasa': it was written during Gupta Period, it describes how

Chandragupta Maurya get Chanakya's assistance to overthrow the Nandas.

**Puranas:** Though they are a collection of legends interspread with religious teachings, they give us the chronology and lists of Mauryan kings.

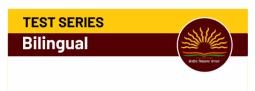
### **Buddhist Literature:**

- 1. Indian Buddhist text **Jatakas** reveal a general picture of socio-economic conditions of Mauryan period.
- 2. **Dipavamsa** and **Mahavamsa** describe the part played by Ashoka in spreading Buddhism to Sri Lanka.
- 3. Divyavadana gives information about Ashoka and his efforts to spread Buddhism.



**10TOTAL TESTS** 

Ashokan Edicts and inscriptions: There are Rock Edicts, Pillar Edicts and Cave Inscriptions located at several places in the Indian sub-continent. Majority of them are in the nature of Ashoka's proclamations to the public at large, and only a small group of them describe his own acceptance of Buddhism and his relationship with the Sangha. They used Prakrit language, the script varied from region to region like Kharoshti in the North-West, **Greek and Aramaic** in the West and **Brahmi** in the East of India.



## **KVS PRT 30 TOTAL TESTS**

Validity: 12 Months

### **Army**

- Mauryan administration was maintain a huge army. They also maintained a Navy.
- The Army administration was carried by a board of 30 officers divided into 6 committee, each committee consisting of 5 members. They are Infantry, Cavalry, Elephants, Chariots, Navy and **Transport**
- Sansthan (Stationary) and Sanchari (Wandering) were the two types of Gudhapurushas (detectives).

### **Economy**

- The state controlled almost all economic activities.
- 1/4 to 1/6 of the produce collected from peasants varied as a Tax.
- The irrigation facilities were provided by state.
- > State had enjoyed Monopoly in mining, forest, salt, sale of liquor, manufacture of arms.
- Bharukachch/Bharoch and Supara in Western coast and Tamralipti in Bengal were the Important ports.
- > During Mauryan period, the punch-marked coins (mostly of silver) were the common units of transactions.