

CLASS:--12TH, HISTORY, REVISION NOTES, CHAPTER:- 2

Question 14.

Historians have used a variety of sources to reconstruct the history of the Mauryan Empire. State any four such sources.

Answer:

Historians have used a variety of sources to reconstruct the history of Mauryan Empire. These were:

- Things found in archaeological excavation, specially sculpture are regarded as an important source.
- Contemporary works like writings of Megasthenes, Arthashastra by Chanakya are important sources regarding that period.
- The Mauryas were also mentioned in later Buddhist, Jaina, Puranic and Sanskrit literature.
- Moreover the inscriptions of Asoka on rocks and pillars are regarded as the most valuable sources.

Question 15.

What is the role played by the coins in the decipherment of Kharosthi script?

Answer:

The role played by the coins in the decipherment of Kharosthi script was:

Analysis of Indo-Greek Coins The coins of Indo-Greek kings who ruled over the north-western part of the sub-continent in c. second century BCE. were analysed by the epigraphists.

Comparison with Greek Script The Indo-Greek coins contain the names of kings written in Greek and Kharosthi scripts. The Kharosthi script was compared with the Greek one. The European scholars who could read Greek, compared it with Kharosthi. There were few similarities e.g. letter 'a' was used in both scripts for writing names such as 'Apollodotus'. James Prinsep identified the language of Kharosthi as Prakrit. After that, it became possible to read longer inscriptions easily

Question 16.

Explain briefly the notions of kingship during Kushana and Gupta empire.

Answer:

In the 1st century BCE Kushanas ruled over a vast kingdom extended from Central Asia to North-West India. Their history has been reconstructed from inscriptions and textual traditions. The notions of kingship they wished to project are perhaps best evidenced in their coins and sculpture. The colossal statues of Kushana rulers were found in Mathura and Afghanistan.

According to some historians, this trend indicates that Kushanas thought themselves like God. Several Kushana rulers assumed the title 'Devaputra' or 'Son of God', perhaps they were influenced by the Chinese leaders who called themselves 'Sons of Heaven'.

On the other hand, histories of the Gupta empire have been taken from literature, coins and inscriptions, including Prashastis. Prashastis were composed in praise of kings and patrons in general. The famous Prayaga Prashasti composed by Harisena, the court poet of Samudragupta, is a powerful document to know about the Gupta rulers.

Question 17.

Describe briefly any two strategies for increasing agricultural production from 6th century BCE to 6th century CE.

Answer:

To increase the agricultural production, some strategies were adopted from 6th century BCE to 6th century CE. These strategies were:

- There was a shift to plough agriculture. The iron-tipped ploughshare was used to turn the alluvial soil in areas which had high rainfall.
- Irrigation through wells, tanks, canals were started to irrigate fields to increase agricultural production.

Question 18.

Describe briefly the sources used for reconstructing the history of the Gupta rulers.

Answer:

The Gupta rulers established a vast empire in the 4th century which was reconstructed from various sources. These sources are explained in the following ways:

Inscriptions Inscriptions are writings engraved on hard surfaces like stones, metals, etc. These are generally composed in praise of kings in particular, and patrons in general by the poets. For example, Allahabad pillar inscription or Prayaga Prashasti were composed in Sanskrit by Harisena, the court poet of Samudragupta in praise of him.

Coins Coins are also an important source of reconstructing the history of Gupta rulers, as they include elements like scripts, images and the context in which they are found. Some of the most spectacular gold coins were issued by the Gupta rulers. These coins facilitated long distance transactions from which the expansion of trade and commerce was known.

Literature Historians attempted to draw factual information from the compositions of Prashastis. Those who composed these, often treated them as works of poetry, rather than an account that were literally true. These were written in praise of king and patron in general. Thus, historians have to constantly assess the statements made in inscriptions to judge whether they are true plausible or exaggerations.

Prashastis They contribute prominently in reconstructing the histories of the Gupta rulers, e.g. Prayaga Prashasti was composed in Sanskrit for Samudragupta.

