

Important Questions for Class 12 History, Chapter 2 **– 8 Marks Questions**

Question 1

Explain the main features of the Mauryan administration.

or

Explain any four sources to reconstruct the history of Mauryas, Examine the system of Mauryan administration.

What type of source have been used to reconstruct the history of Mauryan empire? Explain with suitable examples.

Answer:

For sources to reconstruct the history of Mauryas, 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.**

System of Mauryan Administration :- The growth of Magadha culminated in the emergence of the Mauryan empire. Chandragupta Maurya who founded the empire (321 BCE), extended control as far North-West as Afghanistan and Baluchistan, and his grandson Asoka, arguably the most famous ruler of early India, conquered Kalinga (present-day coastal Odisha).

- There were five major political centres in the empire i.e. the capital Pataliputra and the provincial centres of Taxila, Ujjayini, Tosali and Suvarnagiri, that are all mentioned in Asokan inscriptions.
 - Due to Vastness of the empire administrative system of this empire was not uniform. It is likely that administrative control was strongest in areas around the capital and the provincial centres.
 - These centres were carefully chosen, both Taxila and Ujjayini being situated on important long-distance trade routes, while Suvarnagiri (literally, the golden mountain) was possibly important for tapping the gold mines of Karnataka.
 - Communication along both land and riverine routes was vital for the existence of the empire. It is obvious

that the army was an important means for ensuring the latter.

- Megasthenes mentions a committee with six subcommittees for coordinating military activity. Of these, one looked after the navy the second managed transport and provisions, the third was responsible for foot-soldiers, the fourth for horses, the fifth for chariots and the sixth for elephants**
- . The activities of the second subcommittee were rather varied-arranging for bullock carts to carry equipment, and recruiting servants and artisans to look after the soldiers.**
- Asoka also tried to hold his empire together by propagating Dhannna, the principles of which were simple and virtually universally applicable.**
- This, according to him, would ensure the well-being of people in this world and the next. Special officers, known as the Dhamma Mahamatta, were appointed to spread the message of Dhamma.**