

CLASS:--12TH, HISTORY, REVISION NOTES, CHAPTER:- 02

1. List some of the problems faced by epigraphists.

Ans: The problems faced by epigraphists are as given below :

1. Sometimes, the letters of inscriptions are very faintly engraved, and thus reconstructions are uncertain.
2. Sometimes, the inscriptions may be damaged or letters missing.
3. On certain occasions it is not easy to be sure about the exact meaning of the words used in the inscriptions, some of which maybe specific to a particular place or time. That is why scholars are constantly debating and discussing alternative ways of reading inscriptions.
4. Several thousand inscriptions have been discovered but not all have been deciphered, published and translated.
5. Many more inscriptions must have existed, which have not survived the ravages of time. Whatever is available, is only a fraction of all inscriptions.
6. There is also a possibility that what we consider politically or economically significant may not have been recorded in inscriptions. For example, there is no mention of routine agricultural practices and the joys and sorrows of daily existence in the inscriptions.

2.. Discuss the main features of Mauryan administration. Which of these elements are evident in the Asokan inscriptions that you have studied?

Ans: The main features of Mauryan administration are as follows :

1. There were five major political centres in the empire i.e., the capital Pataliputra and the provincial centres of Taxila, Ujjayini, Tosali and Suvamagiri.
2. The communication system existed along both land and riverine routes. It was very vital for the existence of the empire.
3. As the journeys from the centre to the provinces could have taken a long time, there was arrangement for provisions as well as protection for the travellers,
4. The Mauryans kept a large army. Magasthenes mentions a committee with six subcommittees for coordinating military activity which were as mentioned below :
 - One to look after the navy;
 - The second for management of transport and provisions;
 - The third was responsible for foot soldiers;
 - The fourth for horses;
 - The fifth for chariots;
 - The sixth for elephants.

The element that there were five major political centres in the empire – the capital Pataliputra, and the provincial centres of Taxila, Ujjayini, Tosali and Suvamagiri – all have been mentioned in the Asoka's inscriptions.

3.. This is a statement made by one of the best-known epigraphists of the twentieth century, D.C. Sircar: "There is no aspect of life, culture, activities of the Indians that is not reflected in inscriptions." Discuss.

Ans: The statement of eminent epigraphist D.C. Sirkar has highlighted the importance of inscription as single source of information that touch upon all areas of our life. Following are the main areas we get information about from the inscriptions

- 1. Determination of state's boundaries:** the inscriptions were carved in the territories of the kings and even more important is not often close to the borders. This help us find out boundaries of kingdoms and their expansions thereto.
 - 2. Names of Kings:** The names of the kings are mentioned in the inscriptions. The names and titles used by Asoka the Great got revealed through inscriptions only.
 - 3. Historic events:** The important historical events are mentioned in the inscriptions. The best example is how the event of the Kalinga war is mentioned in the inscription and how Asoka takes to Dhamma.
 - 4. Information about conduct of Kings:** Inscriptions describe the conduct and character of the kings quite well. It is through the inscriptions only that we know Asoka worked for the welfare of the masses.
 - 5. Information about administration:** Inscriptions gave information about administration. It is through the inscription. We know that Asoka appointed his son as a Viceroy.
 - 6. Land settlement and Taxes:** inscriptions mention how land were granted or gifted. It also talks about various taxes imposed by the ruler.
- There is hardly any area of governance of our life that is not mentioned in the inscriptions. Hence, we are inclined to agree with D.C. Sirkar who says, "There is no aspect of life, culture, activities of Indians that is not reflected in the inscriptions."