ANCIENT INDIA

Valued Add On with Post-Ancient

IMPULSE

IMPULSE
Kolkata, 9903582403

🏛️ Additional UPSC Prelims-Level Additions

(Only New Information Added | Not Repeating Existing IMPULSE Notes)

Sources and Historic Ages

1. 📚 Additional Literary Sources of Ancient India

A. Vedic Literature (Additional Points)

🔹 *Four Vedas and Their Focus*

Veda	*Main Theme*
Rig Veda	Hymns in praise of gods
Sama Veda	Music and chants
Yajur Veda	Sacrificial rituals
Atharva Veda	Magic, spells, medicine, folk traditions

🔹 UPSC Highlight

✅ Rig Veda is the oldest Indo-European literary text in existence.

🔹 *Associated Texts of Vedas*

VEDAS

```
├── Samhitas
├── Brahmanas → Rituals and sacrifices
├── Aranyakas → Forest texts
└── Upanishads → Philosophy
```

Important Examples

Text	*Associated Veda*
Aitareya Brahmana	Rig Veda
Shatapatha Brahmana	Yajur Veda
Chandogya Upanishad	Sama Veda
Mundaka Upanishad	Atharva Veda

⭐ Shatapatha Brahmana mentions → Videha and King Janaka.

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B. Epics as Historical Sources

Ramayana

- Traditionally attributed to **Valmiki**.
- Original text known as **Adi Kavya**.
- Provides information regarding:
    - monarchy,
    - kinship,
    - administration,
    - social values.

Mahabharata

- Traditionally composed by **Ved Vyasa**.
- Originally called **Jaya** (8,800 verses).
- Expanded into:
    - **Bharata** (24,000 verses)
    - **Mahabharata** (1,00,000 verses)

UPSC Highlight

⭐ *Mahabharata is called the "Fifth Veda".*

C. Sangam Literature (Additional)

Major Sangam Works

Category	*Examples*
Ettuttokai	Eight Anthologies
Pattuppattu	Ten Idylls
Tolkappiyam	Grammar Text

Tolkappiyam

- Oldest surviving Tamil grammar text.
- Written by **Tolkappiyar**.
- Contains information regarding:
    - social divisions,
    - economy,
    - polity,
    - love and war traditions.

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2. Additional Archaeological Sources

A. Types of Inscriptions

Classification

```
INSCRIPTIONS
|
├── Royal inscriptions
├── Religious inscriptions
├── Land grant inscriptions
└── Commemorative inscriptions
```

Important Examples

Inscription	Importance
Hathigumpha Inscription	Kharavela
Junagadh Inscription	Rudradaman
Allahabad Pillar Inscription	Samudragupta
Aihole Inscription	Pulakesin II
Nasik Inscription	Satavahanas

UPSC Highlight

⭐ ***Junagadh inscription of Rudradaman*** *is the earliest long inscription in Classical Sanskrit.*

B. Scripts Used in Ancient India

Script	*Direction*
Brahmi	Left to Right
Kharosthi	Right to Left

UPSC Favourite Fact

⭐ *Kharosthi script was influenced by Aramaic script.*

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3. Additional Numismatic Information

First Rulers to Issue Various Coins

Type	*Issued By*
Punch-marked Coins	Mahajanapadas
Gold Coins in large numbers	Kushanas
Portrait Coins	Indo-Greeks
Pure Gold Coins	Guptas

Information Obtained from Coins

COINS
- Trade
- Religion
- Economy
- Political authority
- Trade routes

UPSC Highlight

⭐ **Satavahanas issued coins made of lead.**

4. Additional Foreign Accounts

Greek Accounts

Megasthenes' 'Indica' → 4th century BC)

Traveller	*Contribution*
Nearchus	Information on Indus navigation
Strabo	Geography of India
Arrian	Indica (2nd century BC)

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Chinese Travellers (Additional)

Traveller	*Dynasty in India*
Fa-Hien	Gupta Empire
Hiuen Tsang	Harsha
I-Tsing	Post-Harsha period

I-Tsing

- Stayed at Nalanda for nearly 10 years.
- Provides valuable information regarding:
  - Buddhist education,
  - monasteries,
  - university system.

Arab Travellers (Additional)

Traveller	*Book*
Al-Biruni	Kitab-ul-Hind
Ibn Battuta	Rihla

Ibn Battuta

- Visited during reign of **Muhammad bin Tughlaq**.
- Appointed as **Qazi of Delhi**.

5. Additional Prehistoric Information

Paleolithic Age Classification

PALEOLITHIC

```
├── Lower Paleolithic
├── Middle Paleolithic
└── Upper Paleolithic
```

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Important Sites

Site	*State*
Soan Valley	Pakistan
Hunsgi	Karnataka
Didwana	Rajasthan
Attirampakkam	Tamil Nadu

Mesolithic Age Additional Facts

Important Sites

Site	*State*
Langhnaj	Gujarat
Sarai Nahar Rai	Uttar Pradesh
Mahadaha	Uttar Pradesh

UPSC Highlight

⭐ Earliest evidence of **human burial** in India comes from **Mesolithic sites of Ganga Valley**.

Neolithic Additional Sites

Site	State	Feature
Chirand	Bihar	Bone tools
Daojali Hading	Assam	Jadeite
Hallur	Karnataka	Horse remains
Paiyampalli	Tamil Nadu	South Indian Neolithic

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6. ⚒ Additional Chalcolithic Information

Important Cultures

Culture	*Region*
Ahar Culture	Rajasthan
Malwa Culture	Madhya Pradesh
Jorwe Culture	Maharashtra
Kayatha Culture	Madhya Pradesh

Characteristics

✅ First use of copper tools with stone tools
✅ Bull worship became prominent
✅ Beginning of social differentiation
✅ Use of painted pottery increased

UPSC Highlight

⭐ ***Ahar culture** is famous for Black-and-Red Ware pottery and copper metallurgy.*

🧠 Quick Revision Mind Map

SOURCES OF HISTORY

- Literary
  - Vedas
  - Epics
  - Buddhist
  - Jain
  - Sangam
- Archaeological
  - Inscriptions
  - Coins
  - Monuments
- Foreign Accounts
  - Greeks
  - Chinese
  - Arabs

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⭐ Most Probable UPSC Prelims Facts

1. Kharosthi → Right to Left
2. Junagadh inscription → Rudradaman
3. Mahabharata originally called Jaya
4. Tolkappiyam → oldest Tamil grammar
5. Satavahana coins → Lead
6. I-Tsing → Nalanda
7. Ahar Culture → Copper metallurgy
8. Hallur → Horse remains
9. Rig Veda → Oldest Indo-European text
10. Mahabharata → Fifth Veda

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Indus Valley / Harappan Civilization

🌍 1. Geographical Extent of Harappan Civilization

🔷 Extent (UPSC Favourite)

Direction	*Site*	*Present Location*
Northernmost	Manda	Jammu & Kashmir
Southernmost	Daimabad	Maharashtra
Easternmost	Alamgirpur	Uttar Pradesh
Westernmost	Sutkagendor	Pakistan-Iran Border

UPSC Highlight

⭐ Harappan Civilization covered nearly 12 lakh sq. km., making it larger than contemporary Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Mind Map

HARAPPAN EXTENT

```
├── North → Manda
├── South → Daimabad
├── East → Alamgirpur
└── West → Sutkagendor
```

🏙️ 2. Harappan Phases (Frequently Asked)

Phase	*Period*
Early Harappan	3300–2600 BCE
Mature Harappan	2600–1900 BCE
Late Harappan	1900–1300 BCE

UPSC Highlight

⭐ Urbanization reached its peak during the **Mature Harappan Phase.**

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🧱 3. Additional Features of Town Planning

Important Features

✅ Standardized burnt bricks
✅ Covered underground drainage system
✅ Soak pits outside houses
✅ Inspection holes for cleaning drains
✅ Separate bathing area in most houses

UPSC Highlight
⭐ *No other Bronze Age civilization had a drainage system as sophisticated as Harappans.*

Mind Map

```
TOWN PLANNING
│
├── Grid Pattern
├── Covered Drains
├── Soak Pits
├── Standardized Bricks
└── Citadel + Lower Town
```

⚖️ 4. Standardization in Harappan Civilization

The Harappans showed remarkable uniformity in:

1. Brick size (1:2:4 ratio)
2. Weight system (16-based multiples)
3. Seal designs
4. Urban planning

UPSC Highlight
⭐ *Such standardization suggests the presence of a **strong administrative mechanism**, though no direct evidence of kingship exists.*

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🪨 5. Harappan Seals (UPSC Favourite)

Characteristics

- Mostly made of **Steatite**.
- Usually square in shape.
- Contained:
  - animal figures,
  - script,
  - religious symbols.

Common Animals on Seals

Animal	*Presence*
Unicorn	Most common
Bull	Common
Elephant	Present
Rhinoceros	Present
Tiger	Present

UPSC Trap

❌ Horse absent

❌ Cow absent

❌ Lion absent

UPSC Highlight

⭐ Unicorn appears on nearly 60% of Harappan seals.

🧬 6. Harappan Script (Additional)

Features

1. Approximately 400–450 signs identified.
2. Short inscriptions (usually less than 10 symbols).
3. Written from:
   - Right to Left,
   - occasionally Boustrophedon style.

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UPSC Highlight

⭐ Harappan script remains **undeciphered** because:

- no bilingual inscription has been found,
- inscriptions are too short.

🚢 7. External Trade Relations

Major Trading Partners

Region	*Harappan Name*
Mesopotamia	Meluha
Bahrain	Dilmun
Oman	Magan

Exports	Imports
✅ Cotton textiles ✅ Beads ✅ Ivory products ✅ Shell objects ✅ Timber	✅ Copper ✅ Silver ✅ Lapis Lazuli ✅ Tin

Mind Map

```
HARAPPAN TRADE
│
├── Meluha → Indus Region
├── Dilmun → Bahrain
├── Magan → Oman
│
├── Exports
│     ├── Cotton
│     ├── Beads
│     └── Ivory
│
└── Imports
      ├── Copper
      ├── Tin
      └── Silver
```

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🌾 8. Agriculture (Additional Facts)

Crops Cultivated

Crop	*Status*
Wheat	Common
Barley	Common
Cotton	First cultivated in world
Rice	Limited evidence
Peas	Present
Sesame	Present
Mustard	Present

UPSC Highlight

⭐ *Harappans were probably the **first people in the world to cultivate cotton.***

🐄 9. Domesticated Animals

Known Animals

- Humped Bull
- Sheep
- Goat
- Buffalo
- Dog
- Camel
- Elephant

Controversial Evidence

Animal	*Evidence*
Horse	Surkotda
Cow	No clear evidence

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UPSC Favourite Trap

Which animal is absent from Harappan seals?

✔ Horse

✔ Cow

✔ Lion

⚒ 10. Harappan Industries

Major Industries

1. Bead Making
2. Shell Industry
3. Metallurgy
4. Pottery
5. Textile Production

Specialized Centers

Industry	*Site*
Bead Making	Chanhudaro
Shell Industry	Nageshwar
Dockyard	Lothal
Textile	Mohenjodaro

UPSC Highlight

⭐ **Chanhudaro is called the "Lancashire of the Indus Civilization."**

🏺 11. Pottery

Features

✅ Wheel made pottery

✅ Red ware with black painting

✅ Geometric designs dominant

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UPSC Highlight

⭐ Harappan pottery was generally **plain utilitarian pottery**, unlike Painted Grey Ware or Northern Black Polished Ware cultures.

🏛️ 12. Political Organization

Scholarly Views:

Historian	*View*
Stuart Piggott	Priestly State
Mackay	Merchant Oligarchy
Wheeler	Military Control
Fairservis	City States

UPSC Highlight

⭐ No evidence of:

- monarchy,
- standing army,
- royal palaces.

🧘 13. Religion (Additional)

Religious Features

✅ Mother Goddess Worship
✅ Pashupati Cult
✅ Tree Worship
✅ Animal Worship
✅ Fertility Cult

Sacred Trees

- Peepal
- Acacia

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Sacred Animals

- Bull
- Unicorn
- Elephant

UPSC Highlight

⭐ No evidence of:

- ❌ Temple architecture
- ❌ Organized priesthood
- ❌ Monumental religious structures

⚰️ 14. Burial Practices

Types

1. Extended burial
2. Fractional burial
3. Post-cremation burial

Important Cemetery

⭐ **Cemetery H Culture → Harappa**
(Frequently asked in UPSC)

🌊 15. New Theories of Decline

Recent scholarship emphasizes:

1. Climate Change
2. Declining Monsoon
3. River Drying
4. Trade Collapse
5. De-urbanization

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Modern Consensus

❌ Aryan invasion theory is largely rejected.
✅ Multi-causal ecological explanation is preferred.

Mind Map

DECLINE OF HARAPPA

```
├── Climate Change
├── Floods
├── River Shift
├── Declining Trade
└── De-urbanization
```

📌 One-Line Revision Sheet

Fact	*Remember*
Largest Site	Mohenjodaro
Largest Indian Site	Rakhigarhi
First Dockyard	Lothal
Water Management	Dholavira
Fire Altars	Kalibangan
Horse Bones	Surkotda
Rice Evidence	Lothal, Rangpur
Bead Industry	Chanhudaro
Ploughed Field	Kalibangan
Cemetery H	Harappa
Most Common Seal Animal	Unicorn
First Cotton Producers	Harappans
Script	Undeciphered

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⭐ UPSC Most Probable Prelims Traps

1. Unicorn was the most common seal animal.
2. Cow does not appear on Harappan seals.
3. Lothal had the world's earliest known dockyard.
4. Dholavira had sophisticated water reservoirs.
5. Harappan script remains undeciphered due to absence of bilingual inscriptions.
6. No temples or palaces have been discovered in Harappan cities.
7. Harappans used standardized weights based on multiples of 16.
8. Cemetery-H culture belongs to Late Harappan phase.
9. Meluha in Mesopotamian records refers to the Indus region.
10. Modern historians prefer ecological explanations over Aryan invasion theory for Harappan decline.

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VEDIC AGE

1. IMPORTANT VEDIC TERMS (UPSC Favourite)

Most Rigvedic wars were **fought for cattle** and not territory.

✓ Gavishti

- Literally means **search for cows**
- Came to mean **war/battle**

✓ Gavya

- Means products obtained from cows

Examples

- Milk
- Ghee
- Butter
- Curd

✓ Gomat

- Rich man possessing many cows.

✓ Duhita

shows **pastoral economy**

- Means → **Daughter**
- Literally → "One who milks cows."

✓ Bali

- Originally → Voluntary offering
- Later Vedic → became **Compulsory tax**

2. GEOGRAPHY (Extra)

Saraswati River

- Rigveda describes it as **Naditama (Best River)**
- Later disappeared because of tectonic shifts.
- Possible identification → Ghaggar-Hakra system.

Rivers NOT mentioned in Rigveda

✗ Narmada
✗ Tapti
✗ Godavari
✗ Krishna
✗ Kaveri

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3. POLITICAL TERMS

Jana	Largest tribal unit.
Vish	Collection of Gramas.
Gramani	▪ Originally → Military leader ▪ Later → Village headman.
Rajan	**Not an absolute monarch.** He depended upon ✓ Sabha ✓ Samiti ✓ Priest ✓ Clan support
No Standing Army	Army was raised → only during war.

4. IMPORTANT OFFICERS (Extra)

Takshan	Carpenter
Rathakara	Chariot maker Highly respected artisan.
Karmara	Blacksmith Importance increased after iron.
Kulapa	Head of family.

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5. WOMEN SCHOLARS (Very Important)

Gargi Vachaknavi	▪ Philosopher ▪ **Debated with Yajnavalkya** ▪ Mentioned in → Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.
Maitreyi	▪ **Wife of Yajnavalkya** ▪ Known for knowledge of Brahman.
Lopamudra	▪ Rigvedic woman sage. ▪ Composed hymns.
Ghosha	Female composer of Rigvedic hymns.
Apala	Rigvedic woman seer.
Vishvavara	Female rishi.

UPSC FACT

Around **20–30 hymns of Rigveda** were composed **by women.**

6. VEDIC EDUCATION (Extra)

Gurudakshina	Fee paid to Guru after education.
Samavartana	Convocation ceremony. Marked completion of education.
Upanayana	Sacred thread ceremony. Beginning of education.

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7. ECONOMY

Nishka	▪ Originally → Gold ornament ▪ Later → Medium of exchange. **NOT coin initially.**
Satamana	▪ Unit of weight. ▪ Later became monetary unit.
Pada	Quarter unit.

8. IMPORTANT SACRIFICES

Purushamedha	Human sacrifice Only symbolic.
Sarvamedha	For universal prosperity.
Gosava	Associated with fertility.
Agnihotra	Daily household sacrifice.
Agnichayana	Construction of fire altar. Mentioned in Shatapatha Brahmana.

9. BRAHMANAS (Extra)

Each Veda has its own Brahmana.

Brahmana	*Associated Veda*
Aitareya	Rigveda
Kaushitaki	Rigveda
Panchavimsha	Samaveda
Taittiriya	Yajurveda

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Brahmana	*Associated Veda*
Shatapatha	Yajurveda
Gopatha	Atharvaveda

⭐⭐ Very important.

10.Principal Upanishads

Upanishad	*Associated Veda*	*Content Summary*
1. Isa (Ishopanishad)	Shukla Yajurveda	Teaches that the entire universe is pervaded by **Brahman (God)**. It advocates the harmony of **renunciation (Tyaga)** and **selfless action (Karma)**.
2. Kena Upanishad	Samaveda	Explains that **Brahman is the ultimate power** behind the mind, senses and speech. It teaches that true knowledge comes through humility rather than pride.
3. Katha Upanishad	Krishna Yajurveda	Contains the famous dialogue between **Nachiketa and Yama (God of Death)**. It explains the concepts of **Atman (Soul), Moksha and immortality**.
4. Prashna Upanishad	Atharvaveda	Structured around **six questions** asked by disciples to Sage Pippalada. It discusses **creation, Prana (life force), Om and the path to liberation**.
5. Mundaka Upanishad	Atharvaveda	Divides knowledge into **Para Vidya (Higher Knowledge)** and **Apara Vidya (Lower Knowledge)**. It emphasizes realization of **Brahman** through spiritual wisdom rather than rituals.
6. Mandukya Upanishad	Atharvaveda	The shortest Upanishad with only **12 mantras**. It explains the **four states of consciousness**—waking, dreaming, deep sleep and **Turiya (Supreme Consciousness)**through the symbol **Om (AUM)**.
7. Taittiriya Upanishad	Krishna Yajurveda	Introduces the doctrine of the **Five Koshas (sheaths of human existence)** and emphasizes ethical living, education and the bliss of Brahman.
8. Chandogya Upanishad	Samaveda	One of the largest Upanishads. It contains the famous Mahavakya **"Tat Tvam Asi" (Thou Art That)** and teaches the unity of **Atman and Brahman**.

INSIGHT

Upanishad	*Associated Veda*	*Content Summary*
9. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad	Shukla Yajurveda	The largest Upanishad. It contains the philosophical debates of **Yajnavalkya with Gargi and Maitreyi**, discussing **Atman, Brahman and Neti-Neti ("Not this, Not this")**.
10. Aitareya Upanishad	Rigveda	Explains the **creation of the universe and the origin of man**. It emphasizes that **Consciousness (Prajnana)** is the essence of Brahman.
11. Kaushitaki Upanishad	Rigveda	Focuses on the **journey of the soul after death**, supremacy of **Prana (life force)** and the importance of self-realization.
12. Svetasvatara Upanishad	Krishna Yajurveda	Introduces the concept of **Ishvara (Personal God)** and gives prominence to **Rudra (Shiva)**. It discusses **Yoga, devotion (Bhakti) and the role of Maya**.

Mahavakyas (Great Sayings)

Mahavakya	*Upanishad*	*Meaning*
Prajnanam Brahma	Aitareya	Consciousness is Brahman.
Tat Tvam Asi	Chandogya	Thou Art That.
Aham Brahmasmi	Brihadaranyaka	I am Brahman.
Ayam Atma Brahma	Mandukya	This Self is Brahman.

UPSC Prelims One-Liners

- ✓ Isa Upanishad → Renunciation + Karma Yoga.
- ✓ Kena Upanishad → Brahman is beyond senses and mind.
- ✓ Katha Upanishad → Dialogue between Nachiketa & Yama.
- ✓ Prashna Upanishad → Six philosophical questions.
- ✓ Mundaka Upanishad → Para Vidya & Apara Vidya.
- ✓ Mandukya Upanishad → Four states of consciousness; Om.
- ✓ Taittiriya Upanishad → Five Koshas (Panchakosha).
- ✓ Chandogya Upanishad → Tat Tvam Asi.

IMPULSE

✓ Brihadaranyaka Upanishad → Aham Brahmasmi, Neti-Neti, debates of Yajnavalkya, Gargi and Maitreyi.

✓ Aitareya Upanishad → Prajnanam Brahma.

✓ Kaushitaki Upanishad → Supremacy of Prana.

✓ Svetasvatara Upanishad → Rudra (Shiva), Yoga and Bhakti.

UPSC Tip:

Among these, **Katha, Mandukya, Chandogya, Brihadaranyaka, Aitareya, and Svetasvatara**are the most frequently referenced in UPSC Prelims and Mains due to their association with major philosophical concepts and Mahavakyas.

11. PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS

Atman	Soul.
Brahman	Ultimate reality.
Moksha	Liberation.
Karma	Action determines future birth.
Samsara	Cycle of birth and death.

These concepts developed mainly in **Upanishadic period.**

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12. IMPORTANT VEDIC GODS (Extra)

Savitr	Sun deity. Gayatri Mantra dedicated to him.
Pushan	Protector of cattle. Guardian of roads.
Ashvins	Twin gods. Gods of medicine.
Maruts	Storm gods. Companions of Indra.
Mitra	God of friendship. Often paired with Varuna.
Ushas	Goddess of dawn. One of the most beautiful Rigvedic deities.
Aditi	Mother of Adityas.
Tvastar	Divine craftsman.
Brihaspati	Priest of gods.

13. IMPORTANT SYMBOLS

Horse	Power
Cow	Wealth
Fire	Purification
Soma	Immorality

14. IRON AGE (Extra)

Earliest archaeological evidence around 1200–1000 BC

Sites

- ✓ Atranjikhera
- ✓ Jakhera
- ✓ Noh
- ✓ Hastinapur

Iron greatly helped

- ✓ Forest clearance

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- ✓ Agriculture
- ✓ State formation

15. LITERARY CHRONOLOGY

Rigveda
↓
Brahmanas
↓
Aranyakas
↓
Upanishads
↓
Sutras

16. SUTRA LITERATURE (Extra)

Four types

- ✓ Shrauta Sutra → Public sacrifices
- ✓ Grihya Sutra → Domestic rituals
- ✓ Dharma Sutra → Social laws
- ✓ Sulba Sutra → Geometry → Construction of altars.

UPSC FACT

Sulba Sutras contain
- ✓ Geometry
- ✓ Pythagoras-like theorem → before Euclid.

17. PAINTED GREY WARE (PGW)

Associated with ***Later Vedic Culture***

Main areas

- ✓ Haryana
- ✓ Delhi
- ✓ Western UP
- ✓ Punjab

often linked with Mahabharata settlements

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18. NORTHERN BLACK POLISHED WARE (NBPW)

- Appears around 700–200 BC
- Associated with **Mahajanapada period**……..NOT Vedic Age.

19. COMPARISON

Rigvedic	*Later Vedic*
Pastoral	Agricultural
Tribal	Territorial
Copper/Bronze	Iron
Sabha strong	Sabha weak
Women respected	Status declined
Small yajnas	Grand sacrifices
Cattle wealth	Land wealth

20. PYQ FACTS

- ⭐ Saraswati = Naditama.
- ⭐ Sabha and Samiti controlled the king.
- ⭐ **Painted Grey Ware = Later Vedic.**
- ⭐ Iron accelerated Ganga valley expansion.
- ⭐ Upanishads emphasised Knowledge (Jnana) over Rituals.
- ⭐ **Sulba Sutras = Geometry.**
- ⭐ **Gargi debated Yajnavalkya.**
- ⭐ Maitreyi associated with Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.
- ⭐ Ashvins = Twin physicians.
- ⭐ Pushan = Protector of roads and cattle.

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*These additions are curated specifically from **NCERT (Old & New), R.S. Sharma, Upinder Singh, Tamil Nadu Board, and UPSC Prelims trends** , ensuring **no repetition** of the material already present in your notes while strengthening them for high-probability Prelims questions.*

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BUDDHISM & JAINISM (6th Century B.C.)

WHY DID THESE RELIGIONS EMERGE?

Causes

Later Vedic Society
↓
Costly Sacrifices (Yajnas)
↓
Dominance of Brahmins
↓
Rigid Caste System
↓
Animal Sacrifice
↓
Desire for Simple Religion
↓
Buddhism & Jainism

UPSC Highlight

⭐ Both were **Śramaṇa Movements** (non-Vedic traditions).

They:

- Rejected Vedic rituals
- Opposed animal sacrifice
- Preferred ethical life
- Accepted Karma & Rebirth
- Sought Moksha/Nirvana

COMPARISON

Feature	*Buddhism*	*Jainism*
Founder	Gautama Buddha	Mahavira (24th Tirthankara)
Clan	Shakya	Jnatrika
Varna	Kshatriya	Kshatriya
Language	Pali	Ardha-Magadhi
Goal	Nirvana	Kevalya
Path	Middle Path	Extreme Asceticism
God	**Ignored**	**No Creator God**
Vedas	Rejected	Rejected

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GAUTAMA BUDDHA

Timeline

- 563 BC → Birth(Lumbini)
- 29 Years → Mahabhinishkramana(Great Renunciation)
- 35 Years → Enlightenment(Bodh Gaya)
- First Sermon → Sarnath
- 45 Years → Preaching
- 483 BC → Mahaparinirvana → Kushinagar

Places Associated with Buddha

Event	*Place*
Birth	Lumbini
Renunciation	Kapilavastu
Enlightenment	Bodh Gaya
First Sermon	Sarnath
Death	Kushinagar

Important Personalities

Father → **Suddhodana**
Mother → **Mahamaya**
Foster Mother → **Prajapati Gautami**
Wife → **Yashodhara**
Son → **Rahula**
Horse → **Kanthaka**
Charioteer → **Channa**
Favourite Disciple → **Ananda**
Meditation Teachers

- **Alara Kalama**
- **Uddaka Ramaputta (Rudra Ramputra)**

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FOUR SIGHTS

Old Man
↓
Sick Man
↓
Dead Man
↓
Ascetic
↓
Great Renunciation

Four Noble Truths

Life = Suffering
↓
Cause = Desire
↓
Remove Desire
↓
Follow Eightfold Path

Eight Fold Path

Wisdom

- ✓ Right View
- ✓ Right Thought

Morality

- ✓ Right Speech
- ✓ Right Action
- ✓ Right Livelihood

Meditation

- ✓ Right Effort
- ✓ Right Mindfulness
- ✓ Right Concentration

UPSC Highlight

- ✗ Buddha never prescribed severe penance.
- ✓ He advocated **Middle Path (Majjhima Patipada).**

IMPULSE

Three Jewels (Triratna)

Buddham
↓
Dhammam
↓
Sangham

Buddhist Symbols

Symbol	*Represents*
Lotus	Birth
Horse	Great Renunciation
Bodhi Tree	Enlightenment
Wheel	First Sermon
Stupa	Mahaparinirvana

Five Precepts

- No killing
- No stealing
- No lying
- No intoxicants
- No sexual misconduct

Buddhist Councils

Council	Place	King	President	Achievement
1st	Rajgriha	Ajatashatru	Mahakassapa	Vinaya & Sutta Pitakas compiled
2nd	Vaishali	Kalashoka	Sabbakami	First split
3rd	Pataliputra	Ashoka	Moggaliputta Tissa	Abhidhamma; missionary expansion
4th	Kundalvana (Kashmir)	Kanishka	Vasumitra	Rise of Mahayana; Sanskrit commentaries

Sequence

Rajgriha → Vaishali → Pataliputra → Kashmir

IMPULSE

Tripitaka

- Vinaya
  - **Rules**
- Sutta
  - **Sermons**
- Abhidhamma
  - **Philosophy**

Hinayana vs Mahayana

Hinayana	*Mahayana*
Buddha as Teacher	Buddha as God
No idol worship	Idol worship
Pali	Sanskrit
Theravada	Mahayana
Sri Lanka, Myanmar	China, Korea, Japan

UPSC Highlight

⭐ **Nagarjuna → Mahayana → Sunyavada**

Important Buddhist Books

Book	*Author*
Buddhacharita	Ashvaghosha
Milinda Panho	Nagasena
Visuddhimagga	Buddhaghosa
Madhyamika Karika	Nagarjuna
Saddharma Pundarika	Lotus Sutra (Mahayana)

IMPULSE

Important Buddhist Texts

Text	*Author*	*Content Summary*	*UPSC Highlight*
Buddhacharita	**Ashvaghosha**	An epic biography of Gautama Buddha covering his birth, renunciation, enlightenment, and early teachings. Written in classical Sanskrit.	⭐ First great Sanskrit epic on Buddha's life.
Milinda Panho (Questions of King Milinda)	**Nagasena**	A philosophical dialogue between Indo-Greek King **Menander (Milinda)** and monk **Nagasena**, explaining Buddhist doctrines through logical questions and answers.	⭐ Evidence of Indo-Greek patronage of Buddhism.
Visuddhimagga (Path of Purification)	**Buddhaghosa**	A comprehensive manual of **Theravada Buddhism**, explaining morality (Sila), meditation (Samadhi), and wisdom (Prajna) leading to Nirvana.	⭐ Most authoritative Theravada commentary.
Mūlamadhyamakakārikā (Madhyamika Karika)	**Nagarjuna**	The foundational text of the **Madhyamika (Middle Way)** school, propounding the doctrine of **Śūnyavāda (Emptiness)**—all phenomena are empty of inherent existence.	⭐ Basis of Mahayana philosophy.

IMPULSE

Text	*Author*	*Content Summary*	*UPSC Highlight*
Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra (Lotus Sutra)	**Mahayana Buddhist Scripture**(author unknown)	One of the most revered Mahayana texts teaching the universality of Buddhahood, compassion, and the concept of the **One Vehicle (Ekayana)**.	⭐ Central scripture of Mahayana Buddhism, especially in China and Japan.

🧠 UPSC Memory Trick

"ABNL-S"

- A → Ashvaghosha → Buddhacharita
- B → Buddhaghosa → Visuddhimagga
- N → Nagasena → Milinda Panho
- N → Nagarjuna → Madhyamika Karika
- S → Saddharma Pundarika → Lotus Sutra

🎯 *PYQ Facts*

- ✡ *Ashvaghosha* – Court poet of **Kanishka**; wrote **Buddhacharita** and **Saundarananda**.
- ✡ *Nagasena* – Engaged in philosophical dialogue with **King Menander (Milinda)** in *Milinda Panho*.
- ✡ *Buddhaghosa* – 5th-century Theravada scholar from India; compiled **Visuddhimagga** in Sri Lanka.
- ✡ *Nagarjuna* – Founder of the **Madhyamika School**; propounded **Śūnyavāda (Doctrine of Emptiness)**.
- ✡ *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka* **(Lotus Sutra)** – One of the **most important Mahayana scriptures**, emphasizing compassion and universal Buddhahood.

⚡ UPSC One-Liner Revision

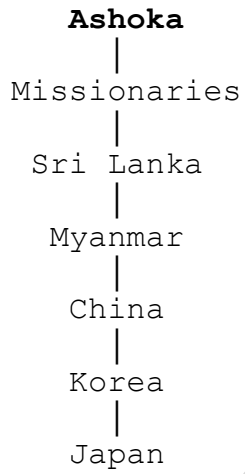
Ashvaghosha → Buddha's Life → Buddhacharita
Nagasena → Menander Dialogue → Milinda Panho
Buddhaghosa → Theravada Manual → Visuddhimagga
Nagarjuna → Śūnyavāda → Madhyamika Karika
Lotus Sutra → Mahayana's Most Revered Scripture → Saddharma Puṇḍarīka

INPULSE

Important Buddhist Personalities

- ***Ananda*** → Buddha's attendant
- ***Upali*** → Vinaya expert
- ***Mahakassapa*** → 1st Council
- ***Moggaliputta Tissa*** → 3rd Council
- ***Ashvaghosha*** → Buddhacharita
- ***Nagarjuna*** → Sunyavada
- ***Buddhaghosa*** → Visuddhimagga

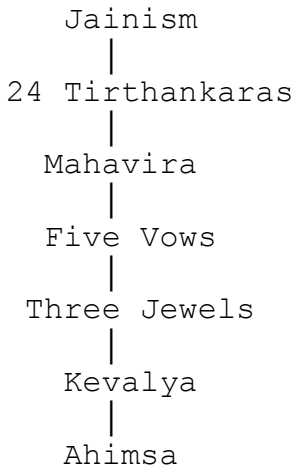
Spread of Buddhism



IMPULSE

JAINISM

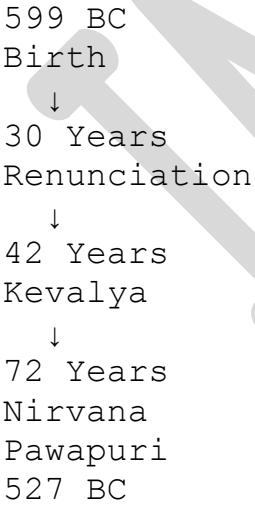
Mind Map



Mahavira

- Born → **599 BC**
- Place → Kundagrama
- Clan → Jnatrika
- Father → Siddhartha
- Mother → Trishala
- Wife → Yashoda
- Daughter → Priyadarshana

Timeline



Enlightenment

- Near **Jrimbhikagrama** → Under **Sala Tree** → River **Rijupalika**

IMPULSE

Five Mahavratas

Ahimsa
↓
Satya
↓
Asteya
↓
Aparigraha
↓
Brahmacharya

UPSC Highlight

⭐ Parsvanatha taught **4 vows**.

⭐ Mahavira added **Brahmacharya**.

Three Jewels

Right Faith
↓
Right Knowledge
↓
Right Conduct

Jain Philosophy

Anekantavada	Truth has many dimensions.
Syadvada	Every statement is conditional.
Saptabhangi	Seven possible viewpoints.

Jain Councils

Council	*Place*	*President*	*Achievement*
1st	Pataliputra	Sthulabhadra	12 Angas compiled
2nd	Vallabhi	Devardhi	Canon finalized

IMPULSE

Digambara vs Svetambara

Digambara	*Svetambara*
Nude monks	White clothes
Women can't attain liberation directly	Women can attain liberation
South India	Western India
Strict	Liberal

24th Tirthankaras (UPSC Important)

Tirthankara	*Symbol*
Rishabhanatha	Bull
Parshvanatha	Snake
Mahavira	Lion

Important Jain Texts

Text	*Author*
Kalpa Sutra	Bhadrabahu
Samachari	Rules for monks

Buddhism vs Jainism (UPSC Table)

Topic	*Buddhism*	*Jainism*
Founder	Buddha	Mahavira
Language	Pali	Ardha-Magadhi
Goal	Nirvana	Kevalya
Path	Middle Path	Severe Austerity
Creator God	Rejected	Rejected
Soul	**Denied (Anatta)**	**Accepted (Jiva)**
Non-violence	Important	Absolute

IMPULSE

PYQ FACTS (Repeated UPSC Areas)

✓ ***Nagarjuna***
- Founder of **Madhyamika** school
- Theory of **Sunyavada**

✓ ***Buddhaghosa***
- **Visuddhimagga**

✓ ***Ashvaghosha***
- **Buddhacharita**

✓ ***Milinda Panho***
- Dialogue between **King Menander (Milinda)** and **Nagasena**

✓ ***Upali***
- Expert in **Vinaya Pitaka**

✓ ***Ananda***
- Recalled Buddha's sermons; associated with **Sutta Pitaka**

Frequently Confused (UPSC Trap)

Remember	*Don't Confuse*
Bodh Gaya = Enlightenment	Sarnath = First Sermon
Kushinagar = Mahaparinirvana	Lumbini = Birth
Pali = Early Buddhism	Sanskrit = Mahayana
Bhadrabahu = Jain	Buddhaghosa = Buddhist
Nagarjuna = Mahayana	Mahakassapa = First Council
Parshvanatha = 23rd Tirthankara	Mahavira = 24th Tirthankara
Ajatashatru = 1st Council	Ashoka = 3rd Council
Kanishka = 4th Council	Kalashoka = 2nd Council

UPSC PRELIMS RAPID REVISION BOX

🔶 **Buddha**
- Birth: Lumbini
- Enlightenment: Bodh Gaya
- First Sermon: Sarnath
- Death: Kushinagar
- Four Noble Truths
- Eightfold Path
- Tripitaka

IMPULSE

- Four Buddhist Councils
- Hinayana vs Mahayana
- Nagarjuna, Ashvaghosha, Buddhaghosa

🔶 Jainism

- 24 Tirthankaras
- Rishabhanatha (1st)
- Parshvanatha (23rd)
- Mahavira (24th)
- Five Mahavratas
- Three Jewels
- Anekantavada
- Syadvada
- Digambara vs Svetambara
- Two Jain Councils

UPSC Focus : *Questions repeatedly test* ***councils, Buddhist/Jain doctrines, texts, symbols, Tirthankaras, philosophical schools (Sunyavada, Syadvada), languages (Pali vs Ardha-Magadhi), and differences between Hinayana–Mahayana and Digambara–Svetambara****. These areas deserve maximum revision.***

IMPULSE

THE FIRST TERRITORIAL STATES (MAHAJANAPADAS)

BIG PICTURE

Later Vedic Age
↓
Iron Technology (1000–600 BCE)
↓
Agricultural Expansion
↓
Janapadas
↓
16 Mahajanapadas (6th Century BCE)
↓
Magadha Empire
↓
Mauryan Empire

UPSC Concept

State formation = Agriculture + Iron + Taxation + Army

Source of 16 Mahajanapadas

Primary Source

✅ ***Anguttara Nikaya (Buddhist)*** → *Lists all 16 Mahajanapadas.*

Elimination Tip

If UPSC asks → "Which text mentions 16 Mahajanapadas?"

Answer → Anguttara Nikaya

NOT

Rigveda
Arthashastra
Mahabharata

IMPULSE

Complete List (Mnemonic)

"KKA MV CS AMP VKGM"

Mahajanapada	*Capital*	*Nature*
Kashi	Varanasi	*Monarchy*
Kosala	Shravasti	*Monarchy*
Anga	Champa	*Monarchy*
Magadha	Rajagriha	*Monarchy*
Vajji	Vaishali	*Republic*
Malla	Kushinara/Pava	*Republic*
Chedi	Shuktimati	*Monarchy*
Surasena	Mathura	*Monarchy*
Asmaka	Potali	*Monarchy*
Avanti	Ujjain/Mahishmati	*Monarchy*
Vatsa	Kaushambi	*Monarchy*
Kuru	Indraprastha	*Monarchy*
Panchala	Ahichchhatra/Kampilya	*Monarchy*
Matsya	Viratanagara	*Monarchy*
Kamboja	Rajapura	*Monarchy/Oligarchy*
Gandhara	Taxila	*Monarchy*

Map Memory

```
North-West

Kamboja
Gandhara
  ↓
Kuru
Panchala
  ↓
Kosala
  ↓
Vajji
  ↓
Magadha
  ↓
Anga
  ↓
Asmaka
```

IMPULSE

UPSC often asks

Which Mahajanapada was south of Vindhyas?

Answer → Asmaka

Mahajanapadas by River

River	*Kingdom*
Ganga	Magadha
Yamuna	Vatsa
Sarayu	Kosala
Godavari	Asmaka
Jhelum	Gandhara

⊗ *Useful for elimination.*

Republican States (Very Important)

Only two major republican Mahajanapadas

✓ *Vajji*

✓ *Malla*

Other Republican Clans

Not Mahajanapadas

- Shakyas
- Koliyas
- Moriyas
- Lichchhavis
- Videhas

(***Source:*** *Mahaparinibbana Sutta)*

IMPULSE

Vajji Confederacy *(Most probable UPSC area)*

- Consisted of → **Eight clans**
- Most important
  - Lichchhavis
  - Videhas
  - Jnatrikas
- Capital → **Vaishali**
- ***Remember*** → Mahavira belonged to → Jnatrika clan.

Nature of Republic

- NOT democracy → Actually "Oligarchy"
- Evidence
  - Panini
  - Mahaparinibbana Sutta
- Members → **Mostly Kshatriyas.**
- Women → No participation.
- Shudras → Excluded.

Santhagara

- Assembly Hall → Republican states.
- Comparable to **Greek Agora** (only for memory—not historical equivalence).

Why Magadha Won?

Geographical Factors

- ✓ Fertile alluvial plains
- ✓ Ganga river
- ✓ Son river
- ✓ Gandak river
- ✓ Iron ore
- ✓ Dense forests
- ✓ Elephants

IMPULSE

Political Factors

Bimbisara
↓
Marriage alliances
↓
Ajatashatru
↓
Military innovation
↓
Nandas
↓
Standing army

Economic Factors

Iron tools
↓
Forest clearance
↓
Agricultural surplus
↓
Revenue
↓
Standing army

Administrative Factors

- Permanent taxation
- Officials
- Standing army
- Capital shift

Magadha Capitals

Rajagriha
↓
Pataligrama
↓
Pataliputra

Important

- *Ajatashatru → started fortification.*
- ***Udayin → made it permanent capital.***

(Source: Upinder Singh)

IMPULSE

UPSC Trap

- Many books incorrectly mention → Ajatashatru shifted capital.
- **Actually → he fortified it.**

Udayin completed shift.

Bimbisara

↘ Dynasty → ***Haryanka***

↘ Achievements

✓ Annexed Anga

✓ Marriage alliances

✓ Administrative reforms

✓ Patron of Buddha

Marriage Alliances

Kosala
↓
Lichchhavi
↓
Madra

Known as → **"Diplomacy before conquest"**

Ajatashatru

Known for

- Patricide
- War against Vajji
- Fortification (Patliputra)
- Military innovations

Military inventions → mentioned in **Buddhist texts**

✓ ***Mahashilakantaka*** → Stone throwing machine

✓ ***Rathamusala*** → Scythed chariot

IMPULSE

Nanda Dynasty

- Founder → Mahapadma Nanda
- *Sources*
    - Puranas
    - Mahabodhivamsa
    - Greek writers
- *Features*
    - First non-Kshatriya dynasty
    - Large treasury
    - Huge standing army
- *Army*
    - **Greek Sources**
    - 200,000 infantry
    - 20,000 cavalry
    - 2,000 chariots
    - 3,000 elephants
- Remember → Figures probably exaggerated.

Persian Influence

Cyrus
↓
Darius
↓
Gandhara
↓
Kamboja
Became Achaemenid provinces.
Evidence
Herodotus
Behistun inscription

IMPULSE

Alexander

327 BCE

Sequence

Taxila
↓
Ambhi
↓
Porus
↓
Hyphasis Mutiny
↓
Return

- Battle → ***Hydaspes***
- River → ***Jhelum***

Immediate Effects

- Political unification
  - Coinage
  - Trade
  - Greek contacts
  - Military changes

Administration

Office	*Function*
Gramika	Village Head
Senanayaka	Commander
Mahamatta	Senior Officer (later Mauryan)
Shulkadhyaksha	Toll Officer

Taxes

Bali
↓
Bhaga
↓
Kara
↓
Shulka

Remember → Bali → Initially voluntary → Later compulsory.

IMPULSE

Iron Technology

Iron
↓
Agriculture
↓
Surplus
↓
Cities
↓
States
↓
Empire

Evidence

- **PGW, NBPW**
  - *Excavations* → Rajgir, Kaushambi, Atranjikhera

Archaeological Evidence

Site	*Importance*
Rajgir	Magadha
Vaishali	Vajji
Kaushambi	Vatsa
Taxila	Gandhara
Ujjain	Avanti

Literature Mapping

Source	*Information*
Anguttara Nikaya	Mahajanapadas
Mahaparinibbana Sutta	Vajji polity
Mahavamsa	Magadha chronology
Jataka	Trade & society
Panini	Sangha
Herodotus	Persian rule
Megasthenes	Nandas/Mauryas

IMPULSE

Comparison Table

Feature	*Monarchy*	*Republic*
Head	King	Raja/Senapati
Succession	Hereditary	Election among Kshatriyas
Assembly	Weak	Strong
Nature	Centralized	Oligarchic
Example	Magadha	Vajji

PYQ Elimination Tricks

Statement : Asmaka was north of Vindhyas.
❌ *Wrong*

Statement : Anguttara Nikaya mentions Mahajanapadas.
✅ *Correct*

Statement : Vajji was monarchy.
❌ *Wrong*

Statement : Magadha had iron deposits.
✅ *Correct*

Statement : Taxila belonged to Gandhara.
✅ *Correct*

Statement : Mahapadma Nanda was first Mauryan king.
❌ *Wrong*

Frequently Confused

Confusion	*Correct*
Rajgir vs Rajagriha	Same
Saketa vs Ayodhya	Same
Kushinara vs Kushinagar	Same place
Champa river vs Champa city	Different
Vaishali vs Videha	Different

IMPULSE

One-Liners

- **16 Mahajanapadas** → Anguttara Nikaya
- **Only southern Mahajanapada** → Asmaka
- **Largest republican confederacy** → Vajji
- **Capital of Gandhara** → Taxila
- **Capital of Vatsa** → Kaushambi
- **Capital of Surasena** → Mathura
- **Capital of Anga** → Champa
- **Capital of Kashi** → Varanasi
- **Capital of Kosala** → Shravasti
- **Capital of Magadha** → Rajagriha → Pataliputra
- **Founder of Nanda Dynasty** → Mahapadma Nanda
- **Founder of Haryanka expansion** → Bimbisara
- **Republican assembly hall** → Santhagara
- **Village headman** → Gramika
- **Military commander** → Senanayaka
- **Greek ally of Alexander** → Ambhi
- **Defeated by Alexander** → Porus
- **First non-Kshatriya ruling dynasty** → Nandas

UPSC -- High-Probability Areas

1. Match Mahajanapadas with capitals and present-day locations.
2. Features of Vajji and Malla republics.
3. Reasons for Magadha's rise (geography + iron + polity).
4. Bimbisara–Ajatashatru chronology and military innovations.
5. Literary sources (Anguttara Nikaya, Mahaparinibbana Sutta, Jataka, Mahavamsa).
6. Persian and Greek interactions with Gandhara and Kamboja.
7. Administrative terms (Gramika, Senanayaka, Bali, Bhaga, Kara, Shulka).
8. Archaeological sites linked with Mahajanapadas (Rajgir, Vaishali, Kaushambi, Taxila, Ujjain).

IMPULSE

PYQ Trend (Last 15 Years)

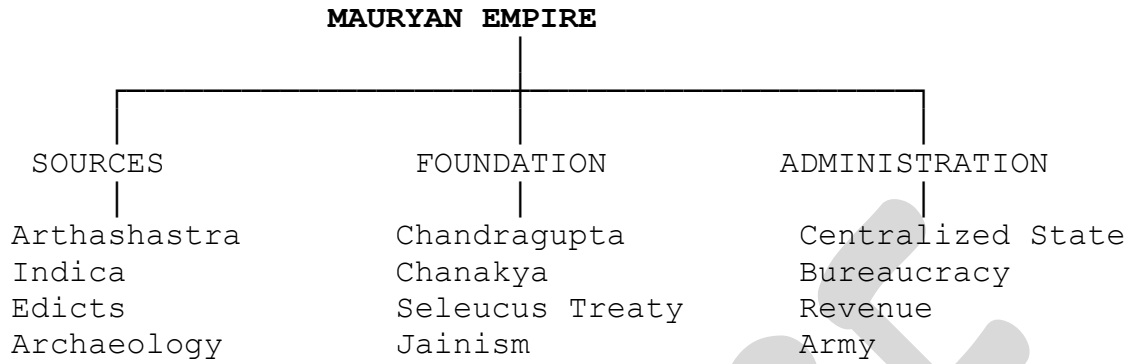
UPSC has repeatedly asked about:

- ✓ Mahajanapadas
- ✓ Anguttara Nikaya
- ✓ Republican states
- ✓ Pataliputra
- ✓ Bimbisara
- ✓ Ajatashatru
- ✓ Alexander
- ✓ Nanda Dynasty
- ✓ Iron technology
- ✓ Magadha expansion

IMPULSE

THE MAURYAN EMPIRE (321-297 BCE)

MEMORY MAP



WHY IS THE MAURYAN EMPIRE IMPORTANT?

- ✓ First Empire to politically unite most of India
- ✓ First highly centralized administration
- ✓ First empire with extensive inscriptions
- ✓ First ruler (Ashoka) to communicate directly with people through inscriptions
- ✓ Foundation of Indian statecraft

CHRONOLOGY

Event	*Year*
Alexander leaves India	325 BCE
Chandragupta becomes king	321 BCE
Seleucus defeated	305 BCE
Bindusara	297 BCE
Ashoka	269 BCE
Kalinga War	261 BCE
Ashoka dies	232 BCE
Last Mauryan ruler	185/180 BCE

IMPULSE

SOURCES OF THE MAURYAN EMPIRE

(UPSC repeatedly asks source-based questions.)

I. Literary Sources

Arthashastra

- Author : Chanakya
- Also called
  - Kautilya
  - Vishnugupta
- Book on
  - Administration
  - Economy
  - Taxation
  - Espionage
  - Diplomacy
  - War
- Most Important Books
  - Book II → Administration
  - Book III → Law
  - Book IV → Crime & Punishment
  - Book V → Officials
  - Book VII → Foreign Policy
  - Book XIII → War Strategy

UPSC FACT

Arthashastra was rediscovered in 1905 by R. Shamasastry.

II. Greek Sources

Indica

- Author → Megasthenes
- Ambassador of → Seleucus Nikator
- Visited → Court of Chandragupta Maurya
- Capital → Pataliputra
- *Information Given*
  - Administration
  - Army
  - Society
  - Agriculture
  - Roads

IMPULSE

- City Planning

- Limitation
  - He confused → Occupation with Caste.
  - Hence, his "Seven Castes" are actually **Seven occupational groups**.

III. Buddhist Sources

- Mahavamsa
- Dipavamsa
- Divyavadana
- Ashokavadana → Useful for Ashoka
- Third Buddhist Council
- Missionaries

IV. Jain Sources

- Parishishtaparvan
- Bhadrabahu Charita → Useful for Chandragupta *Sallekhana* → Migration to Karnataka

V. Archaeological Sources

Ashokan Edicts

(*MOST IMPORTANT SOURCE*)

- First deciphered inscriptions
- Nearly 45 sites
- Written on
  - Rock
  - Pillar
  - Cave
- Languages
  - Prakrit (Most Common)
  - Greek
  - Aramaic
- Scripts

Region	***Script***
India	Brahmi
North-West	Kharosthi
Afghanistan	Greek & Aramaic

IMPULSE

UPSC FACT

- Kharosthi written → Right → Left
- Brahmi → Left → Right

JAMES PRINSEP

- Year → 1837
- Achievement → Deciphered Brahmi Script
  - Read → ***"Devanampiya Piyadasi"***
  - Later → Maski Inscription → proved → Piyadasi = Ashoka

CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA

- Reign → 321–297 BCE
- Founder of Mauryan Empire
- Mentor → Chanakya

ORIGIN

- Different traditions Buddhist → Kshatriya
- Jain → Moriya Clan
- Greek → Humble origin
- Puranas → Linked with Nandas

Origin is disputed.
(Avoid extreme statements.)

RISE OF CHANDRAGUPTA

- Defeated → Nandas
- Captured → Pataliputra
- Unified → Magadha

SELEUCUS CAMPAIGN

- Year → 305 BCE → Seleucus invaded.
- Outcome → Victory of Chandragupta.

Treaty

- Seleucus gave
  - Arachosia
  - Gedrosia
  - Aria
  - Paropamisadae
- Chandragupta gave
  - 500 War Elephants
  - Marriage Alliance

Megasthenes sent as ambassador

INPUT SE

UPSC FACT

Battle ended by diplomacy—not complete destruction.

IMPORTANCE OF THE TREATY

- Secured → North-West Frontier
- Strengthened → Mauryan Empire
- Improved → Trade, Diplomatic Relations

CHANDRAGUPTA'S LAST DAYS

- Accepted → Jainism
- Teacher → Bhadrabahu
- Migrated to → Shravanabelagola
    - Performed → Sallekhana (Santhara)
    - Hill → Chandragiri

Remember:

- Sallekhana ≠ Suicide
- It is → a Jain religious fast unto death.

GIRNAR INSCRIPTION

- Issued by → **Rudradaman**
- Mentions → *Pushyagupta, Governor of Saurashtra*
- Construction → Sudarshana Lake

UPSC FACT

- Lake Built → Mauryan Period
- Repaired by → Rudradaman
- Again repaired by → Skandagupta

CHANDRAGUPTA'S ADMINISTRATION

- Strong Central Government
- Large Bureaucracy
- Standing Army
- Provincial Administration
- Efficient Tax Collection

IMPULSE

- Road Network
- Espionage

ARMY

- Greek writers mention
    - 600,000 Infantry
    - 30,000 Cavalry
    - 9,000 Elephants
    - 8,000 Chariots
- These figures are likely exaggerated but indicate a very large standing army.

FEMALE BODYGUARDS

- Mentioned by → **Greek writers**
- Unique feature → Personal security of the king.

HIGH-YIELD FACTS (★★★★★)

- Founder → Chandragupta Maurya
- Mentor → Chanakya
- Arthashastra → Kautilya
- Ambassador → Megasthenes
- Greek ruler → Seleucus Nikator
- Treaty → 305 BCE
- 500 elephants given to Seleucus
- Sudarshana Lake → Pushyagupta
- Girnar Inscription → Rudradaman
- Sallekhana → Shravanabelagola
- Bhadrabahu → Jain monk
- James Prinsep deciphered Brahmi (1837)
- Maski inscription mentions Ashoka by name
- Brahmi → Left to Right
- Kharosthi → Right to Left

IMPULSE

PRELIMS ELIMINATION TIPS

If options contain:

Megasthenes

Think

- ✓ Indica
- ✓ Chandragupta
- ✓ Pataliputra

→ Never Ashoka

If option contains

Arthashastra

Think

- Administration
- Revenue
- Espionage
- Foreign Policy

→ NOT Buddhism

If option contains

Girnar

Think

- Sudarshana Lake.

If option contains

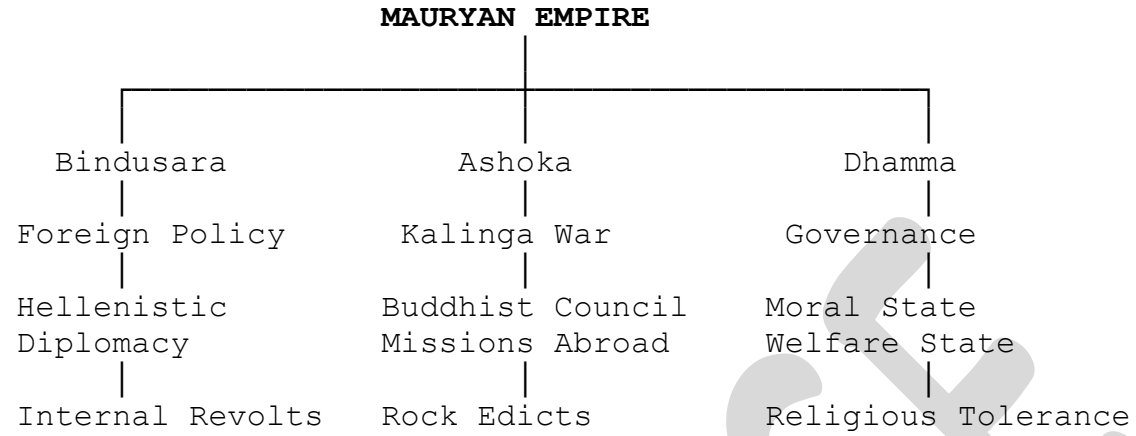
Shravanabelagola

Think

- Jainism
- Bhadrabahu
- Sallekhana

IMPULSE

🧠 MIND MAP



ASHOKA

1. *WHY IS ASHOKA IMPORTANT IN WORLD HISTORY?*

(Not merely because he embraced Buddhism.
UPSC often asks **what made Ashoka unique**.)

Ashoka was the first ruler to—

- ✓ communicate directly with subjects through inscriptions.
- ✓ issue state policy in public places.
- ✓ use inscriptions as an instrument of administration.
- ✓ preach ethical governance rather than conquest.
- ✓ appoint officers specifically for moral welfare.
- ✓ speak about treatment of prisoners.
- ✓ prohibit unnecessary animal slaughter.
- ✓ mention foreign rulers by name.
- ✓ use local languages for administration.

UPSC Highlight

- ✡ Ashoka was **the earliest Indian ruler whose inscriptions are available in large numbers.**
- ✡ Everything before him is reconstructed mainly from literary sources.

IMPULSE

2. WHY DID ASHOKA ISSUE INSCRIPTIONS?

Political Purpose

- Integrate a huge empire.
- Spread uniform royal orders.
- Maintain communication.

Administrative Purpose

- Supervise officials.
- Reduce corruption.
- Convey welfare measures.

Moral Purpose

- Spread Dhamma.
- Promote harmony.
- Reduce social conflict.

FLOWCHART

```
Large Empire
      |
Poor Communication
      |
Need of Public Orders
      |
Stone Inscriptions
      |
Administrative Integration
```

3. LANGUAGES OF ASHOKAN INSCRIPTIONS

Region	*Language*	*Script*
Most of India	Prakrit	Brahmi
North-West	Prakrit	Kharosthi
Afghanistan	Greek	Greek
Afghanistan	Aramaic	Aramaic

UPSC FACT

Ashoka is the only Indian emperor whose inscriptions occur in four scripts/languages.

IMPULSE

4. WHY BRAHMI WAS IMPORTANT?

James Prinsep deciphered **Brahmi** in **1837**.

Consequences

- ✓ Mauryan history became clear.
- ✓ Ashoka became identifiable.
- ✓ Ancient Indian chronology improved.
- ✓ Indian epigraphy developed.

5. WHY KALINGA WAS IMPORTANT?

It was strategically located.

Importance

- ✓ Bay of Bengal trade
- ✓ Coastal route
- ✓ South-East Asia contact
- ✓ Rich agriculture
- ✓ Elephant resources
- ✓ Independent political power

6. EFFECTS OF KALINGA WAR (Beyond Conversion)

Political

- End of territorial expansion.

Administrative

- More welfare measures.

Diplomatic

- Dhamma replaced conquest.

Ashoka did **not abolish the army.**
He only rejected **aggressive warfare**.

Religious

- Patronage to Buddhism.

International

- Buddhist missions abroad.

IMPULSE

7. WHAT IS DHAMMA?

Dhamma ≠ Buddhism
Dhamma ≠ Hinduism
Dhamma ≠ Jainism

- It is **a universal ethical code for public life.**

Core Principles

- ✓ Respect parents
- ✓ Respect teachers
- ✓ Respect elders
- ✓ Compassion
- ✓ Truthfulness
- ✓ Religious tolerance
- ✓ Welfare
- ✓ Non-violence
- ✓ Moderation

UPSC Trap

Ashoka never ordered everyone to become Buddhists.

8. Dhamma vs Buddhism

Dhamma	*Buddhism*
Moral code	Religion
Universal	Religious
Administrative	Spiritual
No Four Noble Truths	Four Noble Truths
No Eightfold Path	Eightfold Path
No Nirvana	Nirvana

9. WHY DID ASHOKA CREATE DHAMMAMAHAMATRAS?

- Existing officers collected taxes.
- These officers promoted ethics.

IMPULSE

Functions

- ✓ Social harmony
- ✓ Prison welfare
- ✓ Women's welfare
- ✓ Tribal welfare
- ✓ Religious harmony
- ✓ Supervision of officials

UPSC Fact

They were appointed in **13th regnal year.**

10. ANIMAL POLICY

Ashoka

Did NOT prohibit

- ✗ eating meat
- ✗ hunting completely

He prohibited

- ✓ unnecessary slaughter
- ✓ ritual sacrifice
- ✓ killing specified animals

UPSC Trap

Ashoka was not a vegetarian reformer.

11. WHY DID ASHOKA EMPHASIZE TOLERANCE?

Mauryan Empire had

- Brahmanism
- Buddhism
- Jainism
- Ajivikas
- Tribal cults

Need → Social harmony → Political stability

IMPULSE

12. FOREIGN POLICY OF ASHOKA

Three features

- ✓ Diplomacy
- ✓ Cultural exchange
- ✓ Religious missions

Not military alliances.

UPSC Highlight

Buddhist missions travelled to

- Sri Lanka
- Kashmir
- Gandhara
- Central Asia
- Himalayan region

13. HISTORICAL SOURCES ON ASHOKA

Archaeological

- ⭐ Inscriptions
- ⭐ Pillars
- ⭐ Stupas

Literary

- Dipavamsa
- Mahavamsa
- Divyavadana
- Ashokavadana
- Puranas

Reliability Order (UPSC)

Inscriptions
↓
Archaeology
↓
Contemporary Evidence
↓
Later Buddhist Texts
↓
Puranas

IMPULSE

14. WHY DO HISTORIANS PREFER INSCRIPTIONS?

Because they are

- ✓ Contemporary
- ✓ Official
- ✓ Dated
- ✓ Direct evidence

Unlike legends.

15. ASHOKA'S LEGACY

```
Ashoka
   |
Political Unity
   |
Administrative Communication
   |
Public Welfare
   |
Religious Tolerance
   |
Spread of Buddhism
   |
Statecraft
```

UPSC PRELIMS TRAPS

Remember

- ✅ Dhamma ≠ Buddhism
- ✅ Ashoka never made Buddhism the State Religion.
- ✅ Ashoka continued capital punishment.
- ✅ Army continued after Kalinga.
- ✅ Hunting was reduced—not abolished.
- ✅ Edicts were written in local languages.
- ✅ Greek inscriptions are found only in Afghanistan.
- ✅ Dhamma was meant for all communities.

ONE-LINER REVISION

- ⭐ First ruler to communicate through inscriptions.
- ⭐ Earliest extensive inscriptional evidence in India.
- ⭐ Dhamma = ethical governance.
- ⭐ Kalinga changed foreign policy, not administration overnight.

IMPULSE

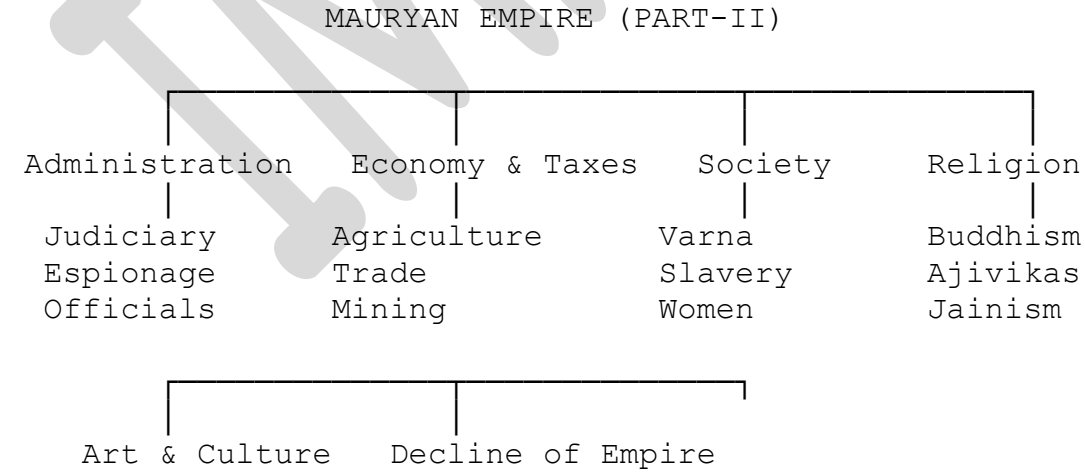
- ⭐ Dhammamahamatras = officers for moral welfare.
- ⭐ Ashoka preferred persuasion over coercion in spreading Dhamma.
- ⭐ Rock edicts were addressed to the general public; pillar edicts often conveyed more specific administrative and ethical instructions.

MEMORY MAP

ASHOKA

Conquest
↓
Kalinga
↓
Remorse
↓
Dhamma
↓
Edicts
↓
Administration
↓
Welfare
↓
Tolerance
↓
Legacy

🧠 MIND MAP



IMPULSE

MAURYAN ADMINISTRATION

★ *Cabinet*

- Members called **Mantri**
- Normally **3–4 ministers**
- Selected from **Amatyas**
- Two most important:
  - Chief Minister
  - Purohita

Prelims Fact

Ashoka refers to the Council of Ministers in Girnar Rock Edict (III & IV).

Rajuka

- ✓ Land survey
- ✓ Revenue assessment
- ✓ Judicial powers
- ✓ Independent award of punishment

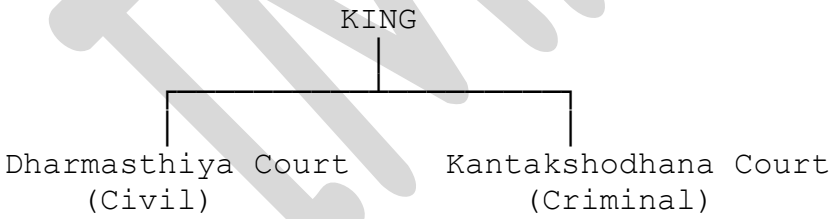
Gopa

- Controlled **10 villages**
- Maintained village records

Gramika

- Village Headman

JUDICIAL SYSTEM



Civil Court dealt with

- Marriage
- Divorce
- Loans
- Property
- Boundary disputes
- Water disputes

IMPULSE

Criminal Court dealt with

- Theft
- Robbery
- Assault
- Dacoity
- Anti-state crimes

MAURYAN ECONOMY

Three pillars

```
  Agriculture
       +
Cattle Rearing
       +
    Trade

   = Varta
```

Major Taxes

Tax	*Meaning*
Bhaga	Land Revenue
Bali	Customary Tax
Kara	Tribute
Hiranya	Cash Tax
Pranaya	Emergency War Tax
Setu	Irrigation Tax
Senabhakta	Army Supply
Pindakara	Village Tax

Special Fact

↘ Ashoka reduced **Bhaga** to **1/8** for **Lumbini.**

- Evidence → **Rummindei Pillar Inscription**

Guilds

Known as

- Shreni
- Sangha

Head → **Jetthaka (Shrenipati)**

IMPULSE

Trade Routes

- Megasthenes mentions → **Agronomoi** → Officials supervising roads.

Important Ports

East Coast

- Tamralipti

West Coast

- Sopara
- Broach (Bharuch)

Exported

- ✓ Ivory
- ✓ Pearls
- ✓ Indigo
- ✓ Timber
- ✓ Turtle Shell

Imported

- ✓ Glassware
- ✓ Wine
- ✓ Perfume
- ✓ Medicines

Interest Rate

- Normal → 15%
- Sea Trade → 60%

CURRENCY

- Most common → **Silver Punch-marked Coins**
  - *Examiner* → **Rupadarshaka**

WOMEN

Women permitted

- ✓ Divorce
- ✓ Remarriage
- ✓ Niyoga

Could perform → Religious rituals → **EXCEPT Vedic sacrifices**

IMPULSE

ENTERTAINMENT

State-supervised professions

- Prostitutes
- Dancers
- Actors

Officer → **Ganikadhyaksha**
Royal courtesan → **Ganika**

Jains in Ashokan inscriptions → Nirgrantha

BUDDHISM

Third Buddhist Council

```
250 BC
  ↓
Pataliputra
  ↓
President → Moggaliputta Tissa
```

Objectives

- Remove corruption
- Restore Sangha unity
- Send missionaries

ASHOKA'S DHAMMA (Quick Revision)

Core values

- ✓ Non-violence
- ✓ Compassion
- ✓ Religious tolerance
- ✓ Respect for elders
- ✓ Welfare of subjects
- ✓ **Humane treatment of prisoners**

IMPULSE

MAURYAN ART

Main features

- ✓ Monolithic pillars
- ✓ Mirror-like polish
- ✓ Chunar sandstone
- ✓ Animal capitals

Most famous

Lion Capital → **Sarnath Lion Capital**

Architecture

- Pillars
- Stupas
- Caves
- Palaces

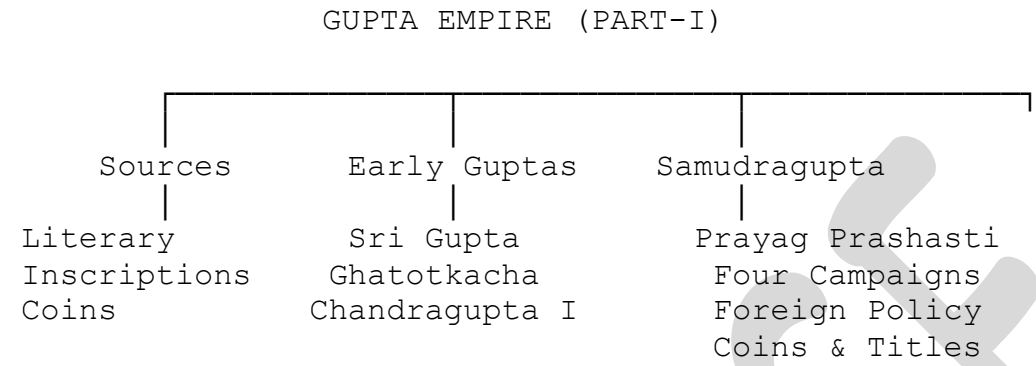
Important sculptures

- Didarganj Yakshi
- Parkham Yaksha
- Dhauli Elephant

IMPULSE

The Myth of the Golden Age (c. 240–550 CE)

🧠 MIND MAP



WHY IS THE GUPTA AGE CALLED THE "GOLDEN AGE"?

Features

- ✓ Political stability
- ✓ Expansion of Sanskrit literature
- ✓ Advances in science & mathematics
- ✓ Flourishing art and architecture
- ✓ Growth of trade and urban centres
- ✓ Development of classical Hindu culture

Literary Sources

Work	***Author***	***Importance***
Devichandraguptam	**Vishakhadatta**	Ramagupta–Chandragupta II tradition
Abhijnanashakuntalam, Raghuvamsha, Meghaduta etc.	**Kalidasa**	Society & culture
Mrichchhakatika	**Shudraka**	Urban life
Kamasutra	**Vatsyayana**	Social customs
Nitisara	**Kamandaka**	Political thought

IMPULSE

Epigraphic Sources

Major Inscriptions

Inscription	***Importance***
Prayag Prashasti	Achievements of Samudragupta
Eran Inscription	Samudragupta's character
Bhitari Inscription	Huna invasion
Junagarh Inscription	Sudarshana Lake repairs
Poona Copper Plate	Gupta genealogy

Coins

Help in understanding

- Genealogy
- Religion
- Titles
- Economy
- Military achievements

REPUBLICAN STATES

Accepted Gupta supremacy voluntarily.

Mnemonic

Ma-Ma-Ab-Ar-Ya

- Malavas
- Madrakas
- Abhiras
- Arjunayanas
- Yaudheyas

UPSC Focus Areas

- ⭐ Prayag Prashasti (author, language, script, style)
- ⭐ Harisena as Sandhivigrahika
- ⭐ Four campaigns of Samudragupta
- ⭐ Difference between South and North Indian policies
- ⭐ Frontier states and republican states (mnemonics)
- ⭐ Samudragupta's coin types and titles
- ⭐ Marriage alliance of Chandragupta I with Kumaradevi

IMPULSE

⭐ Importance of Gupta inscriptions as historical sources

GUPTA ADMINISTRATION

Flowchart

```
      King
       |
 Council of Ministers
       |
Provincial Administration
       |
  District (Vishaya)
       |
   Village (Gram)
```

Important Features

✅ Monarchy was hereditary.

✅ Kings assumed titles like

- **Maharajadhiraja**
- **Parama Bhagavata**
- **Parama Bhattaraka**

✅ Administration became **less centralized** than the Mauryas.

✅ Beginning of **feudal tendencies**.

Provincial Administration

Province

➡️ **Bhukti**

Governor

➡️ **Uparika**

District

➡️ **Vishaya**

District Officer

➡️ **Vishayapati**

Village Head

➡️ **Gramika**

UPSC FACT

- Unlike the Mauryas, **greater powers were delegated to provincial officers.**

IMPULSE

LAND GRANTS

Important Feature

The Gupta Age witnessed a rapid increase in

Land Grants

Given to

- Brahmins
- Temples
- Officials

↓

Created

✔ Semi-independent landed class

↓

Resulted in

✔ Beginning of Indian Feudalism

UPSC Keywords

- Agrahara
- Brahmadeya
- Tax-free villages

PRELIMS FACT

Land grants often transferred

- revenue rights
- judicial rights
- police powers

to the donee.

REVENUE SYSTEM

Main Source

➡️ Land Revenue

Taxes included

- Bhaga
- Bhoga
- Udranga
- Hiranya

IMPULSE

Important

- Taxes were increasingly collected through → **Local landlords**
  - *instead of direct royal officials.*

GUILDS (SHRENI)

Guild

↓

Association of

- **Merchants**
- **Artisans**
- **Craftsmen**

Head

➡️ **Shrenipati**

Functions

✓ Banking
✓ Trade
✓ Loans
✓ Charity
✓ **Temple construction**

UPSC FACT

Guilds acted like → Modern Banks.

ECONOMY

Agriculture

Main occupation.

Expansion through

- Irrigation
- forest clearance

Trade

Inland Trade

Important cities

- Pataliputra
- Ujjain
- Mathura
- Prayaga

IMPULSE

Overseas Trade

Exports

- ✓ Silk
- ✓ Cotton
- ✓ Spices
- ✓ Ivory
- ✓ Pearls

Imports

- ✓ Horses
- ✓ Gold
- ✓ Wine
- ✓ Glassware

Ports

East Coast

- Tamralipti

West Coast

- Bharuch
- Sopara

COINS

```
Gold → Dinara
Silver → Rupaka
Copper → Common use
```

UPSC FACT

The Guptas issued the **largest number of gold coins** in ancient India.

New Development

Rise of

✓ **Kayasthas**

as an administrative class.

Mixed Castes increased.

Women

Positive

- ✓ Education
- ✓ Property rights (limited)
- ✓ Remarriage in some cases

Negative

- ✓ Child marriage

Earliest inscriptional evidence of **Sati → Eran Inscription**

IMPULSE

✔ Patriarchy
✔ Sati (rare but earliest inscriptional evidence)

SLAVERY

Forms existed.

Not identical to → **Roman slavery.**

Types

- Domestic
- Agricultural
- Debt slavery

RELIGION

Major Trend

Rise of → **Brahmanism**

↓

Development of → **Puranic Hinduism**

Vaishnavism

- Most popular.
- Main deity
  - ➡️ **Vishnu**
- *Important ideas*
  - Dashavatara
  - Bhakti
  - **Temple worship**

Shaivism

Popular across

- Central India
- South India

Shakti Worship

Rapid development during Gupta period.

Buddhism

Mainly → **Mahayana**

Centres

- **Nalanda**
- **Bodh Gaya**

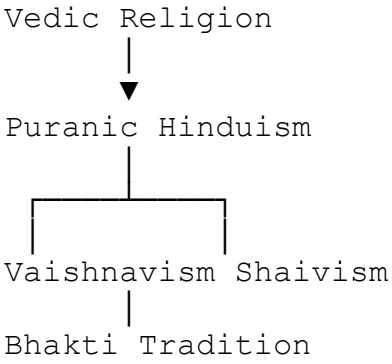
IMPULSE

Jainism

Centres

- **Mathura**
- **Valabhi**

FLOWCHART



ARCHITECTURE

Most important contribution

Structural Temples

Examples

- ✓ Temple No.17, Sanchi
- ✓ Dashavatara Temple, Deogarh

Dashavatara Temple
➡ Earliest surviving **Panchayatana temple**.

Temple Features

- **Garbhagriha**
- **Flat roof**
- **Shikhara (early form)**

CAVE ARCHITECTURE

Examples

- Ajanta
- Bagh
- Badami

Themes

- ✓ Buddha
- ✓ Bodhisattvas
- ✓ Jataka tales

IMPULSE

PAINTING

Best examples → **Ajanta Caves**

Important Paintings

- ✓ Bodhisattva Padmapani
- ✓ Vajrapani

Characteristics

- Natural colours
- Emotional expressions
- Graceful figures

SCULPTURE

Features

- ✓ Spiritual expression
- ✓ Calm faces
- ✓ Idealized human body

Materials

- Sandstone
- Bronze

LITERATURE

Sanskrit reached its peak.

Kalidasa

Works

- Abhijnanasakuntalam
- Meghadutam
- Raghuvamsha
- Kumarasambhava
- Ritusamhara

Other Authors

- Vishakhadatta ➡️ Devichandraguptam
- Shudraka ➡️ Mrichchhakatika
- Vatsyayana ➡️ Kamasutra
- Kamandaka ➡️ Nitisara

IMPULSE

SCIENCE & MATHEMATICS

Aryabhata

- ✓ Aryabhatiya
- ✓ Rotation of Earth
- ✓ Astronomy

Varahamihira

- ✓ Brihat Samhita
- ✓ Astronomy
- ✓ Geography

Brahmagupta

- ✓ Zero
- ✓ Algebra

EDUCATION

Major Centres

- Nalanda
- Ujjain
- Valabhi

Medium

➡️ Sanskrit

WHY IS IT CALLED THE "GOLDEN AGE"?

Arguments For

- ✓ Political stability
- ✓ Economic prosperity
- ✓ Flourishing literature
- ✓ Scientific advancement
- ✓ Temple architecture
- ✓ Classical Sanskrit

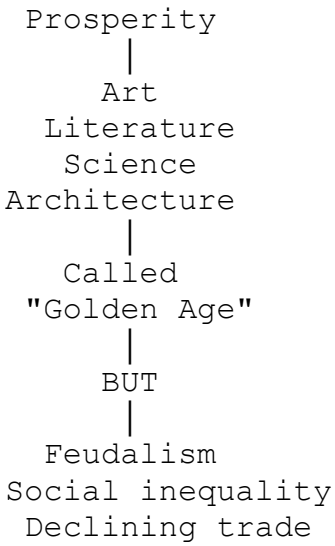
Arguments Against

- ❌ Decline in trade after Roman collapse
- ❌ Rise of feudalism
- ❌ Untouchability strengthened

IMPULSE

❌Women's status declined
❌Regional inequalities

FLOWCHART



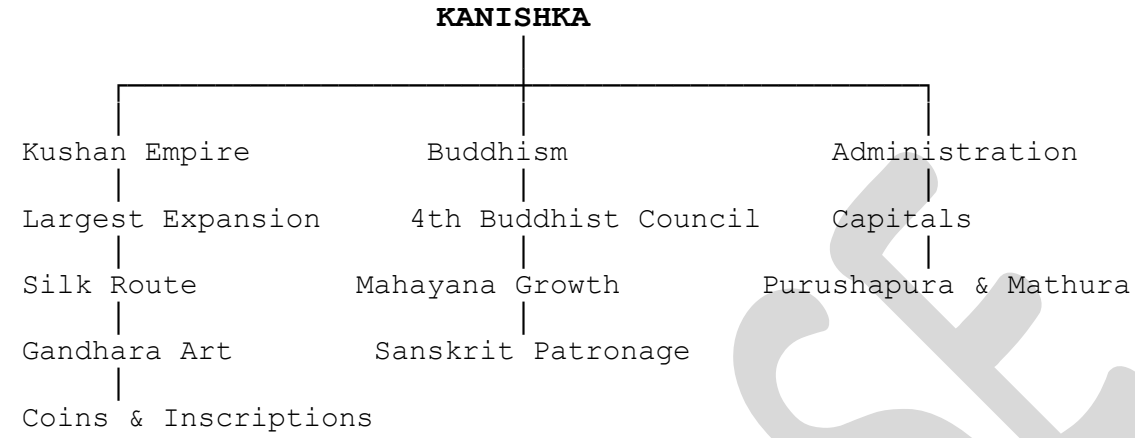
PRELIMS ONE-LINERS

⭐ Gupta administration was **less centralized** than the Mauryas.
⭐ **Land grants** accelerated feudalism.
⭐ **Guilds (Shrenis)** acted as banking institutions.
⭐ **Gold coins (Dinaras)** reached their peak under the Guptas.
⭐ Earliest inscriptional evidence of **Sati** comes from **Eran**.
⭐ **Vaishnavism** was the dominant religion under Gupta patronage.
⭐ **Temple No. 17 (Sanchi)** is among the earliest surviving structural temples.
⭐ **Dashavatara Temple, Deogarh** is an early Panchayatana temple.
⭐ **Ajanta** paintings reached classical perfection during the Gupta-Vakataka age.
⭐ **Kalidasa** is regarded as the greatest Sanskrit poet of the Gupta period.
⭐ **Aryabhata** explained the Earth's rotation.
⭐ **Nalanda** emerged as a major centre of higher learning.

IMPULSE

Kanishka (c. 127 – 150 CE)

🧠 MIND MAP



QUICK REVISION FLOWCHART

Yuezhi Tribe
↓
Kujula Kadphises
↓
Vima Kadphises
↓
⭐ KANISHKA
↓
Largest Kushan Empire
↓
Fourth Buddhist Council
↓
Spread of Mahayana
↓
Silk Route Prosperity
↓
Gandhara + Mathura Art

POSITION IN DYNASTY

King	*Importance*
Kujula Kadphises	Founder
Vima Kadphises	Introduced Gold Coins
⭐ Kanishka I	Greatest ruler

IMPULSE

King	*Importance*
Huvishka	Successor
Vasudeva I	Last important Kushan ruler

DATE (UPSC SAFE)

- ✡ Generally placed around **127 CE** (based on ***Rabatak Inscription*** studies).
- ✡ Earlier textbooks sometimes associated him with **78 CE (Śaka Era)**, <u>but this identification is debated.</u> UPSC generally avoids asking the disputed starting year directly.

⚜ **UPSC Tip:** Remember the controversy rather than memorising only one date.

CAPITALS

✅ **Purushapura** (Present-day Peshawar)

✅ **Mathura**

⚜ Sometimes **Begram** served as an important centre.

EMPIRE

```
Central Asia
     |
 Afghanistan
     |
 Pakistan
     |
  Punjab
     |
  Mathura
     |
Parts of Gangetic Plain
```

⚜ *According to the **Rabatak Inscription**, his authority extended toward cities such as **Saketa, Kaushambi and Pataliputra**, indicating a wider influence than earlier believed.*

IMPULSE

WHY IMPORTANT?

✓ Greatest Kushan Emperor

Known for

- Territorial expansion
- International trade
- Promotion of Buddhism
- Gandhara Art
- Silk Route control

SILK ROUTE

Kanishka controlled

- **Central Asian routes**
- **India–Rome trade**
- **India–China trade**

Result

✓ Huge inflow of Roman gold

✓ Cultural exchange

✓ Spread of Buddhism

BUDDHISM (VERY IMPORTANT)

Flowchart

```
  Kanishka
      ↓
Patron of Mahayana
      ↓
Fourth Buddhist Council
      ↓
Compilation of Commentaries
      ↓
Spread to Central Asia
      ↓
     China
```

Fourth Buddhist Council

Held at

✓ Kundalvana (Kashmir) (traditional account)

Patron

✓ Kanishka

President

✓ Vasumitra

Vice-President

✓ Ashvaghosha

IMPULSE

Purpose

- Resolve doctrinal disputes
- **Compile Sarvastivada commentaries**
- Strengthen Buddhist philosophy

⚹ Traditional accounts associate the council with Sanskrit commentaries and the growth of Mahayana, though details vary across Buddhist traditions.

MAHAYANA BUDDHISM

During Kanishka

- ✓ **Bodhisattva** ideal became popular
- ✓ Buddha worship increased
- ✓ **Image worship** expanded
- ✓ **Sanskrit** increasingly used in Buddhist literature

GREAT SCHOLARS

Ashvaghosha

Author of

- **Buddhacharita**
- **Saundarananda**

Nagarjuna

Founder of

- ✓ **Madhyamika Philosophy**

Doctrine

- ✓ **Shunyavada**

Vasumitra

President of **Fourth Council**

Charaka

Royal physician (traditional attribution)

Author associated with

- ✓ **Charaka Samhita**

GANDHARA ART

```
Greek Influence
       +
Indian Buddhism
```

IMPULSE

↓

Gandhara School

Features

- Grey schist stone
- Curly hair
- Roman robes
- Realistic muscles

✂ First mature Buddha images developed here.

MATHURA SCHOOL

Material

✓ **Red sandstone**

Features

- **Indigenous style**
- **Spiritual expression**
- **Simpler drapery**
- **Strong Indian influence**

PRELIMS DIFFERENCE

Gandhara	***Mathura***
Greek influence	Indian influence
Grey stone	Red sandstone
Realistic	Symbolic/idealised
Heavy robes	Thin drapery

COINS

One of the most asked areas.

Coins depict

- **Buddha**
- **Shiva (Oesho)**
- **Nana**
- **Mithra**
- **Helios**
- **Selene**

Shows

✓ Religious tolerance

✓ Cultural fusion

IMPULSE

- Initially Greek legends appeared; later Bactrian language became prominent under Kanishka.

RABATAK INSCRIPTION

Most important inscription.

Importance

- ✓ **Kushan genealogy**
- ✓ **Extent of empire**
- ✓ **Beginning of Kanishka Era**
- ✓ **Adoption of Bactrian ("Arya") language in place of Greek for official use**

RELIGION

Kanishka

- ✓ Patron of Buddhism

BUT

Coins show

- Greek gods
- Iranian gods
- Indian gods
- Buddha

Hence

Religious Syncretism

ECONOMY

Reasons for prosperity

- Silk Route
- Roman Trade
- Gold Coins
- Urban Centres
- Caravan Trade

ADMINISTRATION

Capitals

- **Purushapura**
- **Mathura**

Provincial governance

- **Satraps**
- **Mahasatraps**

IMPULSE

- Inherited from Indo-Greek and Śaka administrative traditions.

ARCHITECTURE

Kanishka Stupa

Location → **Purushapura (Peshawar)**

- Ancient sources describe it as *one of the tallest Buddhist stupas of its age.*

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Maintained contact with

- **China**
- **Central Asia**
- **Rome**

- Controlled strategic Silk Route corridors.

SOURCES

Literary

- Buddhacharita
- Chinese Buddhist accounts
- Buddhist traditions

Archaeological

- Rabatak Inscription
- Coins
- Kanishka Stupa
- Gandhara sculptures

UPSC PRELIMS TRAPS

Trap 1

✗ Kanishka founded Kushan Empire

✓ Founder = Kujula Kadphises

Trap 2

✗ Fourth Council under Ashoka

✓ Ashoka → Third Council

✓ Kanishka → Fourth Council (Sarvastivada tradition)

IMPULSE

Trap 3

❌ Gandhara = Gupta Art

✓ Gandhara = Kushan period

Trap 4

❌ Mathura only Buddhist

✓ Produced Buddhist, Jain and Brahmanical sculptures.

Trap 5

❌ Kanishka worshipped only Buddha

✓ Coins depict multiple religious traditions.

HIGH-YIELD ONE-LINERS

- Greatest Kushan ruler.
- Capital: Purushapura and Mathura.
- Patron of Mahayana Buddhism.
- Fourth Buddhist Council traditionally held under him.
- President: Vasumitra.
- Ashvaghosha associated with the council.
- Nagarjuna flourished during the Kushan age.
- Gandhara and Mathura schools reached great heights.
- Kanishka Stupa at Purushapura.
- Rabatak Inscription provides genealogy and territorial information.
- Coins depict Greek, Iranian, Indian and Buddhist deities.
- Controlled Silk Route trade.
- Gold coinage flourished.

UPSC PRELIMS FOCUS

✓ Buddhist Councils

✓ Gandhara vs Mathura Art

✓ Kushan coinage

✓ Silk Route

✓ Mahayana Buddhism

✓ Archaeological inscriptions

✓ Chronology of ancient rulers

✓ Religious syncretism

IMPULSE

✓ Buddhist literature
✓ Trade and cultural diffusion

🎯 *UPSC 30-Second Revision Box*

- **Dynasty:** Kushan
- **Greatest ruler:** Kanishka I
- **Capital:** Purushapura & Mathura
- **Key source:** Rabatak Inscription
- **Religion:** Patron of Mahayana Buddhism
- **Council:** Fourth Buddhist Council (traditional)
- **Art:** Gandhara & Mathura
- **Trade:** Silk Route
- **Famous scholars:** Ashvaghosha, Vasumitra, Nagarjuna, Charaka (traditional association)
- **Major monument:** Kanishka Stupa at Purushapura

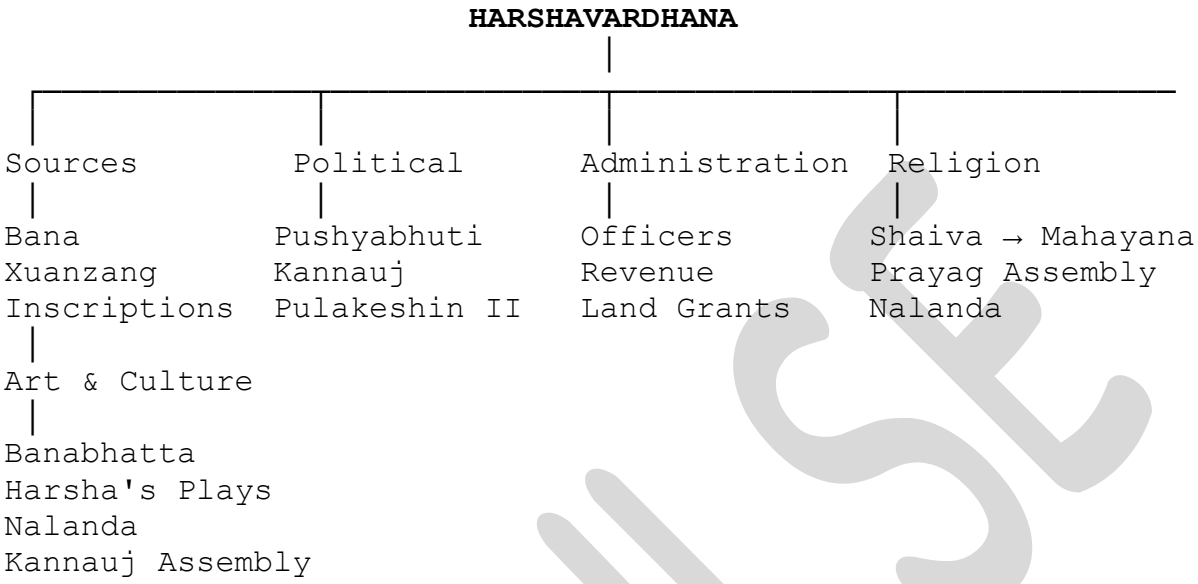
UPSC PRELIMS PYQs AREAS

- Gupta administration
- Land grants & feudalism
- Gupta gold coins
- Guilds (Shreni)
- Ajanta paintings
- Dashavatara Temple
- Kalidasa's works
- Aryabhata & Varahamihira
- Religious developments
- Eran inscription & Sati
- Nalanda University

IMPULSE

HARSHAVARDHANA (606–647 CE)

MIND MAP

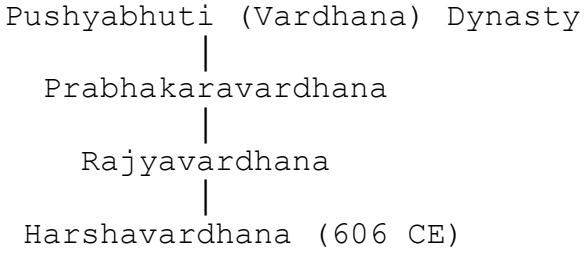


UPSC PRELIMS PYQ FOCUS AREAS

UPSC has repeatedly asked questions from:

- ✓ Xuanzang (Hiuen Tsang)
- ✓ Nalanda
- ✓ Harsha's religious policy
- ✓ Aihole Inscription
- ✓ Banabhatta
- ✓ Harsha's literary works
- ✓ Pushyabhuti Dynasty
- ✓ Administration & land grants
- ✓ Assemblies at Kannauj and Prayag

DYNASTY



IMPULSE

Founder of dynasty

➡️ Pushyabhuti (traditional founder)

First important ruler

➡️ Prabhakaravardhana

Capital

Initially

➡️ **Thanesar (Sthanishvara)**

Later shifted to

➡️ **Kannauj (Kanyakubja)**

ACCESSION OF HARSHA

```
Prabhakaravardhana dies
        |
Rajyavardhana becomes king
        |
Killed by Shashanka
        |
Harsha crowned (606 CE)
        |
Rescued sister Rajyashri
```

Family

Father

- Prabhakaravardhana

Brother

- Rajyavardhana

Sister

- Rajyashri

Brother-in-law

- Grahavarman (Maukhari ruler)

Enemy

- Shashanka of Gauda

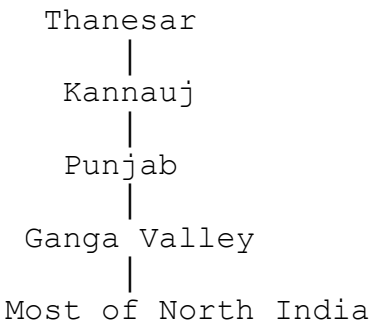
UPSC FACT

Harsha ascended the throne at approximately 16 years of age.

IMPULSE

POLITICAL EXPANSION

Flowchart



Extent

Controlled

- Punjab
- Haryana
- Uttar Pradesh
- Bihar
- Parts of Odisha

Did **NOT** conquer

- ***Deccan***
- ***Tamil kingdoms***

MOST IMPORTANT PRELIMS FACT

Harsha was **defeated by Pulakeshin II** on the banks of the **Narmada River**.

Narmada became the

➡️ **Southern boundary** of Harsha's empire.

Evidence

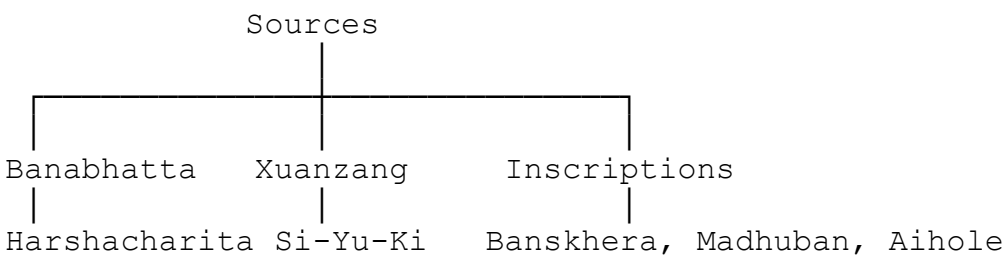
➡️ **Aihole Inscription**

Author

➡️ Ravikirti.

SOURCES OF HARSHA

Mind Map



IMPULSE

Literary Sources

Banabhatta

Works

- **Harshacharita**
- **Kadambari**

Court poet of Harsha.

Xuanzang (Hiuen Tsang)

➢ Visited India → **630–644 CE** → stayed at **Nalanda** → Studied under **Shilabhadra**

Described

- Administration
- Religion
- Society
- Economy

Faxian (Fa-Hien) → Gupta period
Xuanzang → Harsha period

INSCRIPTIONS

Inscription	*Importance*
Banskhera	Contains Harsha's signature
Madhuban	Land grant
Aihole	Pulakeshin II defeated Harsha

ADMINISTRATION

```
King
 |
Council
 |
Provincial Officers
 |
District
 |
Village
```

Features

✓ Strong monarchy
✓ Ministers
✓ Provincial administration
✓ Land grants increasing
✓ Beginning of feudal tendencies

IMPULSE

Revenue

Main source

➡️ Agriculture

Army

Included

- Infantry
- Cavalry
- Elephants
- Chariots (limited)

Xuanzang describes Harsha as maintaining a large army, though figures in literary sources may be exaggerated.

RELIGION

Evolution

```
Early Life
     |
Shaiva
     |
Influenced by Xuanzang
     |
Patron of Mahayana Buddhism
```

Religious Policy

Harsha

- ✓ Patronized Buddhism
- ✓ Honoured Brahmanism
- ✓ **Religious tolerance**

IMPORTANT

Harsha **did not abandon Hinduism completely**.

He remained

- ✓ Eclectic
- ✓ Tolerant
- ✓ Patron of all religions.

IMPULSE

GREAT ASSEMBLIES

Kannauj Assembly

Purpose

Promotion of

➡️ **Mahayana Buddhism**

President

➡️ **Xuanzang**

Prayag Assembly

Held → Every **Five years**

Known as

➡️ **Mahamoksha Parishad**

Activities

- ✓ Charity
- ✓ Donation of wealth
- ✓ Honoured all religions

FLOWCHART

```
  Every 5 Years
       |
 Prayag Assembly
       |
Donation of Wealth
       |
  Buddhists
   Brahmins
    Jains
    Poor
```

NALANDA

Most famous university.

Xuanzang studied under

➡️ **Shilabhadra**

Subjects

- Buddhism
- Grammar
- Logic
- Medicine
- Philosophy

} patronized by Harsha

IMPULSE

LITERATURE

Harsha himself wrote

- Ratnavali
- Priyadarshika
- Nagananda

Court Poet

➡️ **Banabhatta**

Works

- **Harshacharita**
- **Kadambari**

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Maintained diplomatic relations with

✓ Tang China

Chinese Emperor

➡️ **Taizong**

Chinese embassies exchanged during Harsha's reign.

HARSHA'S COINS

Mainly

✓ **Gold**

✓ **Silver**

Symbols

- **Shiva**
- **Nandi**
- **Legends in Sanskrit**

DEATH

647 CE

No direct heir.

↓

Empire disintegrated.

↓

North India fragmented.

IMPULSE

TIMELINE

606 CE → Coronation

610–620 → Consolidation

c. 618–620 → **Defeated by Pulakeshin II**

643 CE → **Kannauj Assembly**

Every 5 years → **Prayag Assembly**

647 CE → Death

PYQ ELIMINATION TABLE

Statement	*True/False*
Harsha defeated Pulakeshin II	❌ False
Pulakeshin II defeated Harsha	✅ True
Xuanzang visited during Harsha	✅ True
Faxian visited Harsha	❌ False
Harsha shifted capital to Kannauj	✅ True
Banabhatta wrote Harshacharita	✅ True
Harsha wrote Ratnavali	✅ True
Harsha patronized only Buddhism	❌ False
Prayag Assembly every five years	✅ True

HIGH-YIELD PRELIMS FACTS

⭐ Dynasty → **Pushyabhuti (Vardhana)**

⭐ Capital → **Thanesar → Kannauj**

⭐ Court Poet → **Banabhatta**

⭐ Biography → **Harshacharita**

⭐ Chinese Traveller → **Xuanzang**

⭐ Defeated by → **Pulakeshin II**

⭐ Evidence → **Aihole Inscription (Ravikirti)**

⭐ Assembly → **Kannauj**

IMPULSE

⭐ Quinquennial Assembly → **Prayag (Mahamoksha Parishad)**

⭐ Patron of → **Nalanda**

⭐ Plays → **Ratnavali, Nagananda, Priyadarshika**

⭐ Religion → **Shaiva by origin; later a major patron of Mahayana Buddhism while remaining religiously tolerant**

⭐ Death → **647 CE**

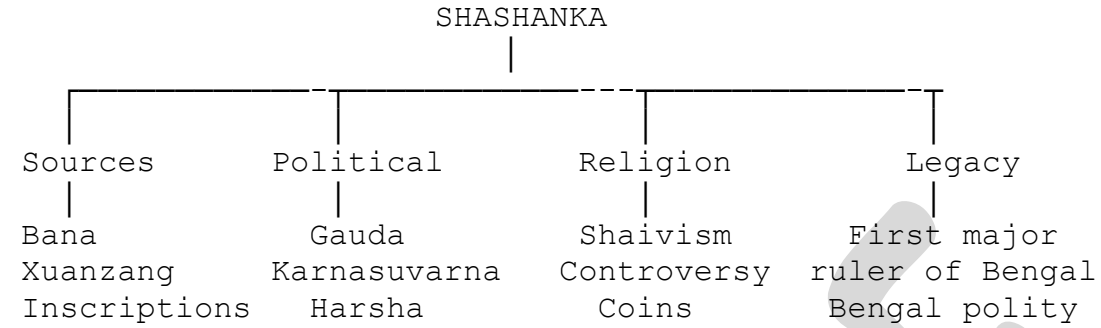
UPSC PRELIMS "MATCH THE FOLLOWING"

Person	***Correct Pair***
Banabhatta	Harshacharita
Xuanzang	Si-Yu-Ki
Ravikirti	Aihole Inscription
Shilabhadra	Nalanda
Pulakeshin II	Defeated Harsha
Rajyashri	Harsha's sister
Shashanka	King of Gauda

IMPULSE

SHASHANKA (c. 600–625/636 CE)

MIND MAP

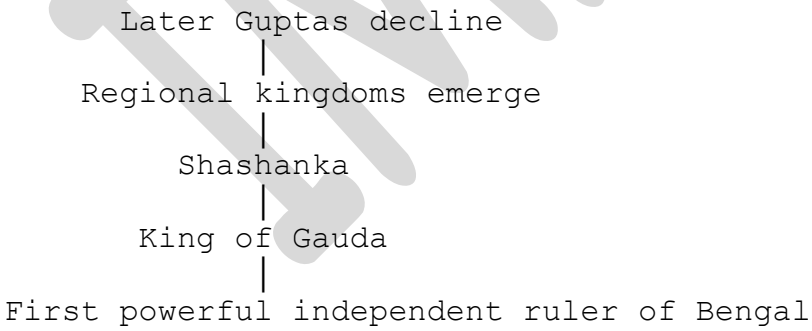


UPSC PRELIMS HOT AREAS

UPSC generally asks from:

- ✓ Harsha–Shashanka conflict
- ✓ Gauda Kingdom
- ✓ Capital
- ✓ Contemporary rulers
- ✓ Xuanzang
- ✓ Banabhatta
- ✓ Inscriptions
- ✓ Religious policy
- ✓ Early medieval Bengal

WHO WAS SHASHANKA?



Important Facts

- ✓ Ruled approximately **c. 600–625/636 CE**
- ✓ Founder of the powerful **Gauda Kingdom**
- ✓ Contemporary of
  - Harshavardhana

IMPULSE

- Bhaskaravarman (Kamarupa)

✔ Title : **Maharajadhiraja**

PRELIMS FACT

- Most historians regard Shashanka as the **first major independent ruler of ancient Bengal (Gauda)**.

CAPITAL

Capital

➡ **Karnasuvarna (Karnasubarna)**

Present location

➡ Near **Murshidabad, West Bengal**.

FLOWCHART

```
Gauda Kingdom
      |
   Capital
      |
Karnasuvarna
      |
Present-day
Murshidabad
```

ORIGIN

- Not completely certain.
- Most accepted view
  - ➡ Began as a **Mahasamanta (feudatory chief)** before becoming an independent ruler after the decline of Gupta authority.

UPSC CAUTION

❌ Founder of Bengal civilization

✅ First important independent ruler of **Gauda/Bengal**

IMPULSE

POLITICAL HISTORY

Timeline

Decline of Guptas
|
Rise of Shashanka
|
Conflict with Harsha
|
Alliance politics
|
Death
|
Gauda declines

Major Rivals

- Harshavardhana → King of Thanesar–Kannauj
- Bhaskaravarman → King of Kamarupa (Assam)
  Harsha and Bhaskaravarman eventually cooperated against Shashanka.

CONFLICT WITH HARSHA

Rajyavardhana
|
Killed after campaign against Gauda
|
Banabhatta blames Shashanka
|
Harsha campaigns eastward

According to Harshacharita

- Rajyavardhana defeated the ruler of Malwa.
- He was then killed.
- Banabhatta attributes responsibility to Shashanka.

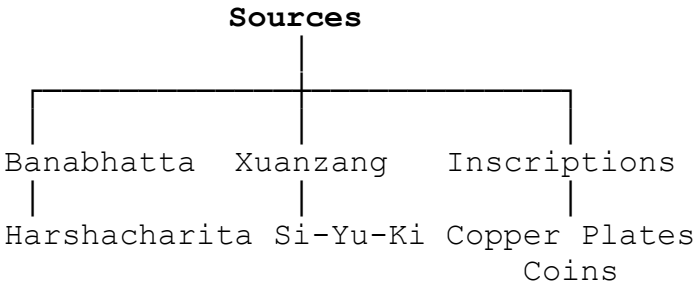
UPSC Note:

This account comes from Harsha's court poet and may reflect political bias. Historians treat it cautiously.

IMPULSE

SOURCES

Mind Map



Literary Sources

Banabhatta

- ***Harshacharita***
- Court poet of Harsha.
- Provides valuable information but is not politically neutral.

Xuanzang

- Visited India during Harsha's reign.
- Reports traditions that **Shashanka cut down the Bodhi Tree and removed a Buddha image from Bodh Gaya.**

⌘ These claims are debated because they come from a Buddhist pilgrim writing after the events and are not independently confirmed by Shashanka's own inscriptions.

PRELIMS TRAP

Do **not** state as an unquestioned fact that Shashanka destroyed Buddhist institutions.

Safer UPSC wording:

"Xuanzang and later Buddhist traditions attribute such acts to Shashanka, but historians debate the extent of these claims due to source bias and limited corroborating evidence."

INSCRIPTIONS

Important evidence

- **Rohtas seal**
- **Egra copper plate**
- **Midnapore copper plates**
- **Ganjam copper plate (Madhavavarma)**

IMPULSE

- **Banskhera plate of Harsha**
- **Nidhanpur inscription of Bhaskaravarman**

RELIGION

Personal Faith ➡️ **Shaivism**

Evidence

- Coins depicting **Shiva**
- Shaiva symbols
- Epigraphic evidence

Flowchart

```
  Shaivism
     |
Royal Patronage
     |
Shiva symbols
     |
Gold & Silver Coins
```

UPSC FACT

- Shashanka's coins commonly depict **Shiva** and **Nandi-related iconography**, reflecting his Shaiva affiliation.

COINS

Issued

✓ **Gold**

✓ **Silver**

Important because they establish

- Sovereignty
- Royal titles
- Religious affiliation

ADMINISTRATION

Direct evidence is limited.

Likely features

✓ Monarchical rule

✓ Provincial officers

✓ Land grants through copper plates

✓ Feudatory chiefs under Gauda authority

IMPULSE

EXTENT OF KINGDOM

Included much of

- **Bengal**
- **Parts of Bihar**

Influence extended into

- **Northern Odisha (at least temporarily through subordinate rulers).**

SUCCESSOR

- Successor ➡️ **Manava**
- His reign was brief.
- After Shashanka's death

↓

Political instability

↓

Power struggle

↓

Later emergence of the Pala dynasty (much later).

TIMELINE

```
c.600 CE
Rise of Shashanka

Capital
Karnasuvarna

Conflict
Harsha
Bhaskaravarman

After death
Gauda declines
```

PYQ ELIMINATION TABLE

Statement	***True / False***
Shashanka ruled Gauda	✅ True
Capital was Karnasuvarna	✅ True
Contemporary of Harsha	✅ True
Contemporary of Bhaskaravarman	✅ True

IMPULSE

Statement	*True / False*
Founder of Pala dynasty	❌ False
Personally a Shaiva ruler	✅ True
Bodhi Tree episode is accepted by all historians without debate	❌ False

HIGH-YIELD PRELIMS ONE-LINERS

- ⭐ Kingdom → **Gauda**
- ⭐ Capital → **Karnasuvarna (Murshidabad)**
- ⭐ Religion → **Shaivism**
- ⭐ Contemporary → **Harsha**
- ⭐ Contemporary → **Bhaskaravarman (Kamarupa)**
- ⭐ Literary source → **Harshacharita**
- ⭐ Chinese source → **Xuanzang**
- ⭐ Earliest status → **Mahasamanta (probable)**
- ⭐ Successor → **Manava**
- ⭐ Coins → **Gold and silver with Shaiva iconography**
- ⭐ Historical importance → **First major independent ruler of Bengal (Gauda)**

UPSC "MATCH THE FOLLOWING"

Person	*Correct Match*
Shashanka	Gauda
Harsha	Pushyabhuti dynasty
Bhaskaravarman	Kamarupa
Banabhatta	*Harshacharita*
Xuanzang	*Si-Yu-Ki*
Karnasuvarna	Capital of Shashanka

COMPARISON TABLE (UPSC FAVOURITE)

Feature	*Shashanka*	*Harsha*
Dynasty	Gauda Kingdom	Pushyabhuti
Capital	Karnasuvarna	Thanesar → Kannauj

IMPULSE

Feature	*Shashanka*	*Harsha*
Religion	Shaivism	Initially Shaiva; later major patron of Mahayana Buddhism while remaining religiously tolerant
Main Source	*Harshacharita*, Xuanzang, inscriptions	*Harshacharita*, Xuanzang, inscriptions
Contemporary Rival	Harsha	Shashanka

ONE-PAGE REVISION MAP

SHASHANKA

Kingdom → Gauda

Capital → Karnasuvarna

Religion → Shaivism

Sources
- Harshacharita
- Xuanzang
- Rohtas Seal
- Egra Copper Plate
- Midnapore Plates

Contemporaries
- Harsha
- Bhaskaravarman

Importance
- First major independent ruler of Bengal

Coins
- Gold
- Silver
- Shiva imagery

Successor
- Manava

"GKS-HBM"

- **G** – Gauda Kingdom
- **K** – Karnasuvarna (Capital)
- **S** – Shaivism
- **H** – Harsha (Rival)
- **B** – Bhaskaravarman (Contemporary)
- **M** – Manava (Successor)

Treat Buddhist persecution narratives cautiously—they derive mainly from rival and later Buddhist sources and remain historically debated.

IMPULSE