

Revision Notes
Chapter – 10
Traders Kings and Pilgrims

• Around 1,000 BC when the Second Urbanisation characterised North India, the area around Deccan Peninsula and South India saw its eco-habitation of both Iron Age and Megalithic Age leading to a strong civilisation.

• **Sangam Age:**

(i) The Iron Age laid roots of a golden period in South India from 300 BC to 300 AD, popularly known as the Sangam Age.

(ii) Sangam period portrays the rich poetic culture of Tamil Nadu.

(iii) During the Sangam Age the area south of river Krishna and Tungabhadra was ruled by three dynasties-the Cheras,Cholas and Pandyas.

(iv) The main source of information about these kingdoms is traced from the literary references of Sangam period.

(iii) Tamils had good contacts and trade relations with distant lands like Rome and Cambodia.

• **Sangam Literature:**

(i) The word 'Sangam' means assembly.

(ii) The Tamil literature reveals of three literary gatherings of poets ad scholars around 2,200 years ago under the royal patronage of th Pandyan Kings of Madurai.

(iii) The first Sangam is believed to be held at Madurai but no literary work of this Sangam is available.

(iv) Of the second assembly, only the Tamil grammar 'Tolkappiyam' has survived. The third assembly at Madurai led to creation of over 2,000 poems together which is called the Sangam

Literature.

• **Southern Kingdoms:**

- (i) The Sangam literature mentions three Kingdoms in the Tamilakam territory: The Cheras, the Cholas and the Pandyas.
- (ii) The Cheras were also called Keralaputras as they ruled over major parts of Kerala. Their capital was Vanji.
- (iii) The Cholas ruled Kaveri delta and even captured parts of Sri Lanka. Their first capital was at Uraiyur and later shifted to Tanjore.
- (iv) The Pandyas centred around Madurai. Madurai was famous for its third Tamil assembly.

• **Foreign Trade:**

- (i) Tamilakam had extensive trade with distant lands.
- (ii) Greek text like Pliny's *Periplus* also confirms these trade relations.
- (iii) Foreign merchants mainly Romans and Arabians did business in Tamil markets.
- (iv) Evidence of Tamil trading presence in Egypt is seen in the form of Tamil inscriptions on pottery in Red sea ports.
- (v) Trade route was through North India from Taxila to Patliputra via Ujjain which linked to Tamralipti seaport.
- (vi) Tamil Kingdom even had trade with South and South-East regions of Ceylon, Malaya, Java, Cambodia, Sumatra, etc.

• **Conquerors from Distant Lands:**

- (i) In North-West India, the main conquerors were Sungas, Indo-Greeks, Parthians, Kushanas and Shakas.
- (ii) Sungas came in 185 BC, after defeating the last Mauryan ruler Brihadratha and captured Magadha. They spread Buddhism.

(iii) The Indo-Greeks or Bactrians were from Northern Afghanistan. They captured Punjab.

(iv) The Parthians came from Central Asia and established Gandhara as their capital.

(v) The Kushanas were nomadic Yeu-h-chi tribes of North-West China. They defeated the Indo-Greeks, Parthians and Shakas. Their greatest ruler was Kanishka.

(vi) Shakas came through Hindu-kush mountains and established Ujjain as their capital. The most famous Shaka ruler was Rudradaman.

(vii) In western India, the Satavahanas were the main rulers. Gautamiputra, Sri Satkarni was their most important ruler

(viii) Gautamiputra with other rulers of his dynasty came to be known as lords of Dakshinapatha. Dakshinapatha literally refers to the route leading to the South and entire Southern region was known by his name. Gautamiputra sent his army to the Eastern, Western and Southern coast.

• **Trade:**

(i) Trade flourished during this period. All the kingdoms issued a number of gold, silver and copper coins to promote trade.

(ii) Broach, Kaveripattinam, Sopara and Kalyan were the important port cities.

(iii) The most important reason for development and prosperity during the age was the Silk Route which linked India to Rome via Central Asia. Kushanas, were the best known of the rulers who controlled the sea route.

(iv) Many gold and silver coins that were issued by Roman emperors like Augustus, Tiberius and Nero have been found in all parts of Tamil Nadu indicating flourishing trade.

(v) Major exports of the Sangam age were cotton fabrics and spices such as pepper, ginger, cardamom, cinnamon and turmeric along with ivory products and precious stones.

(vi) Major imports for the traders were gold, horses and sweet wine.

• **Religion:**

- (i) In India, Buddhism and Hinduism were the two main religions.
- (ii) Buddhism was divided into two cults Hinayana and Mahayana.
- (iii) Menander, the Indo-Greek king and Kanishka, the Kushana ruler helped in promotion of Buddhism.
- (iv) Bamiyan is one of the tallest statues of Buddha.
- (v) The Chinese Buddhist pilgrims were very popular who visited places associated with the life of the Buddha. Some of them were Fa Xian, Xuan Zang and I-Qing.
- (v) Hinduism was patronised by Satavahana ruler who worshipped Vishnu, Shiva and Mother Goddess, Durga.
- (vi) Emphasis was now laid on devotion to God called Bhakti.
- (vii) Deities were kept in temples and special places in homes.
- (viii) Bhagvad Gita became famous text during this period as the concept of Bhakti is also present in this sacred book of the Hindus.
- (ix) It was Bhakti that motivated best expressions in art-sculpture, poetry and architecture.
- (x) The people who followed Bhakti focused on devotion and individual worship of God or Goddess, and not on the performance of elaborate sacrifices.