

CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA (320-300 BC)

Chandragupta Maurya was the founder of the Mauryan Empire. He founded the dynasty by overthrowing the Nandas around 320 BC. There is no clear account available about his early life. He was born in Pataliputra, but was raised in the forest in the company of herdsmen and hunters. It was Chanakya who spotted him and he was struck by his personality. Chanakya trained and transformed him into one of the most powerful rulers of that era. Chanakya trained him in arts, sciences, logic, administration and warfare at the Taxila University. Chanakya had decided a task for Chandragupta-to free India from Greek dominance. Some smaller kingdoms in Punjab and Sindh helped Chandragupta. Soon Chandragupta defeated the Greeks and freed Punjab. Sindh and other north-west regions of India. He then defeated the Nanda rulers in Pataliputra and captured the throne of Magadha. Chandragupta Maurya's army included over 6,00,000 infantry, 50,000 cavalry, 10,000 elephants and 7,000 chariots.

Importance of Chandragupta's Rule

Chandragupta was the first Indian ruler whom we can call a national ruler in real senses he established such a system of

★ Coming of Chandragupta Maurya

Macedonian ruler Alexander's invasion of north-western India, and the increasing unpopularity of Nanda rulers, resulted into their decline. With the help of Chanakya, Chandragupta overthrew the Nandas and assumed the throne. After invading Seleucus, Alexander's successor in Persia, he entered a treaty liberating the empire from Greco-Persian

authority. It also assured him a respectful place in later Greek and Roman histories. He used the administrative system established by the Nandas to his full advantage, and established close and friendly relations with Babylon and the lands farther west. He was acknowledged as a brilliant general having an army of well over half a million soldiers. He was also a brilliant king, who united India, restricting himself in not going beyond the subcontinent. Pataliputra became a cosmopolitan city of such a large proportion that Chandragupta had to create a special section of municipal officials to look after its welfare, and special courts were established to meet its judicial needs.

administration which was autocratic in nature and centrally based, assisted by a council of ministers. He also created a functional espionage system to keep his enemies within his watch. It is widely believed that his advisor Chanakya contributed considerably towards the success of Chandragupta. He established a highly centralised and hierarchical system of governance with the help of a large staff, with systematic tax collection; trade and commerce, industrial arts; mining; vital statistics; welfare of foreigners; maintenance of public places, including markets and temples and welfare of prostitutes.

★ Extent of Chandragupta's Empire

Chandragupta freed Punjab and Sindh from foreign control and brought these areas under his rule. The whole of northern region of India (from Pataliputra to the Hindukush mountains in the north-west) and to Narmada in the south came into his direct control. His empire included the regions of Kabul, Herat,

Kandahar, Baluchistan, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, Gujcrat and Kathiawar. In 305 BC, his fruitful treaties with the ruler of Babylon gave him control over a large area of Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Kabul and Kandahar. Records do not provide any clear information about his conquests in South India. However, there is little doubt about the fact that he ruled over a vast empire. Megasthenes and Kdutilyd nave mentioned: about the vastness of his empire in their texts. He spent his life's last ten years at Chandragiri hills of Sharvanabebgola) in a temple built by him. The temple was known as 'Chandragupta Basadi' where he led his life as a disciple of a Join, saint, Bhadrabahu, who guided him to maksha by observing Sallekhana Vrata (which leads to death by slow starvation, as per Jain tradition). It is estimated that he died at the age of 45 years in 296 BC.

★ **Kautilya and the Arthashastra**

Kautilya, who was also known as Chanakya, was a minister in Chandragupta Maurya's court. There is little information about the life of Kautilya. He got his education at Taxila, which was also the capital of Gandhara. He is known to have helped Chandragupta overthrow the Nanda Dynasty. Some historions believed that he was a wily planner who could adopt any method to execute the plans of the king. He is best known for his work, the Arthashastra, the first and most imported Indian text on how a king should wield political and economic powers.

Though the Arthashastra includes many sections written many centuries after Kautilya, it is attributed to him because of his legendary political wisdom. Most part of the

text are associated with theoretical situations but some parts represent real conditions and the strategy present at the time of the Mauryas. The book informs about a centralised administrative system which also had provincial governors levels of bureaucrats, the tax system and o royal army. If also mentions about the methods by which peasants con be encouraged to increase agricultural productivity

The Arthashastra also presents a model on foreign affairs called the circle of states. As per the model, all states are surrounded by natural adversaries. A ruler who desires to be a conqueror is always surrounded by enemies, so are his enemies' A sensible ruler relies on the power of his enemies' enemies along with his own power. The book describes various strategies for making and breaking alliances using military force or treaties, and engaging spies or propaganda to weaken opponents and take advantage of the situation.

Political Administration

Chandragupta maintained a large standing army and a well- organised espionage system. He divided his empire into provinces, districts and villages. All the administrative units were governed by centrally appointed local officials who performed the functions as directed by the central administration. The capital city had magnificent palaces, temples, a university, a library, gardens and parks.

★ **Military Might of Chandragupta**

Chandragupta Maurya's army included over 6, 00,000 infantry, 50,000 cavalry, 10,000 elephants and 7,000 chariots. There were six boards of five members each four of which supervised the four divisions of the army, and the remaining two locked after the admiralty

and transport cum commissariat.

Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum

It is an epigraphical publication of the Archeological Survey of India and has been brought out as a multi-volume series of collections of inscriptions bearing on the history of Maurya, post Maurya and Gupta times.

GK Study Materials [PDF Download](#)

All subject Study Materials [PDF Download](#)

2018 Current Affairs Download – [PDF Download](#)

Whatsapp Group  [Click Here](#)

Telegram Channel  [Click Here](#)

Join Us on FB : English –

[Examsdaily](#)

Follow US on  **Twitter - [Examsdaily](#)**