

Revision Notes

Class- 6 Social Science(History)

Chapter 3 - Ashoka, the Emperor Who Gave Up War

The Empire of Ashoka

- The realm that Ashoka administered was established by his grandfather, Chandragupta Maurya, over 2300 years prior.
- Chandragupta Maurya was helped by a wise man named Chanakya. His ideas and teachings were written down in the famous Arthashastra.
- Some of the cities of Ashoka include the following capitals, namely Taxila, Ujjain and Pataliputra. Ujjain connects north and south India. Craftspeople, merchants, and other essential officials lived in this place. In other areas, there were villages of farmers and herders.
- Many forests were located in Central India, where people used to go in search of food. It was a vast empire, and people spoke different languages, lived a different lifestyle, ate various kinds of food, and wore clothes of other patterns.

Difference between Empires and Kingdoms

Emperors need more resources than kings because empires are larger than kingdoms and need to be protected by armies. Emperors also need a larger number of officials who collect taxes.

Ruling an Empire

- Because the empire is so large, different regions have different ways of ruling. The area around Pataliputra was under the direct control of the emperor. Officials were appointed to collect taxes from farmers, herders, crafts persons and traders, who lived in villages and towns in the area.
- Officials also punished those who disobeyed the ruler's orders, and many of these officials were given salaries.
- Messengers went to and fro, and spies kept a watch on the officials, and of course the emperor supervised them all, with the help of members of the royal family, and senior ministers.
- There were vast areas between the provincial centres, here the Mauryas tried to control roads and rivers, which were important for transport, and to collect whatever resources were available as tax and tribute.

Ashoka- A Unique Ruler

- A Unique Ruler He was the most famous Mauryan ruler, and was the first ruler who tried to take his message to the people through inscriptions.

- Most of Ashoka's inscriptions were in Prakrit and were written in the Brahmi script.

The Kalinga War

- In ancient times, coastal Orissa was known as Kalinga.
- Ashoka fought a war so that he could conquer the great Kalinga. But remained horrified when he found out the results of the war.
- He was terrified to see all the bloodshed and the massive loss of lives in both the kingdom.
- Ashoka is the only king in the history of the world who gave up conquest after winning a war.

Ashoka's Dhamma

- Ashoka's dhamma did not involve worship of a God, or performance of a sacrifice.
- He was also inspired by the teachings of the Buddha.
- A number of problems such as the people in the empire followed different religions, and this sometimes led to conflict, troubled him a lot.
- Slaves and servants were ill-treated, besides, there were quarrels in families and amongst neighbours.
- Ashoka's role as Emperor is to solve all the problems that occur in his kingdom.
- Therefore, Ashoka appointed several officials known as dhamma mahamatta who went from place to place teaching people about dhamma.
- Ashoka got his messages inscribed on rocks and pillars, instructing his officials to read his message to those who could not read it themselves.
- He also sent messengers to spread ideas about dhamma to other lands, such as Syria, Egypt, Greece and Sri Lanka. He built roads, dug wells, rest houses, and he also arranged for medical treatment for both human beings and animals.