

# UNIT 153 – UPSC - SATAVAHANA ACHIEVEMENTS

The government of the Satavahana kingdom was organized on the traditional lines. The kingdom was divided into Janapadas, which were further sub-divided into aharas. Each ahara was under an Amataya. The basic unit of the ahara was the grama with the village headman called gamika. Central control was maintained over the provinces. Princes were generally made viceroys. And the kings did not assume high-sounding titles. They were expected to maintain dharma.

Taxation was not burdensome. The state derived its income from crown lands, court fees, fines and ordinary taxes on lands. The extraordinary taxes of the Mauryan period were not imposed. In general, Central control was not high because feudal traits emerged in the Satavahana period. The feudal chiefs like maharathas mahasenapatis and mahabhojas issued their own coins.

The area under the satavahanas in general witnessed considerable prosperity. There was brisk trade. Broach was the most important port and it had a vast and rich hinterland. Pratishthana produced cotton cloth. Tagara and Ujjain produced muslin. The chief imports were wines, copper, tin, lead and gold and silver coins. Another important port was kalyan mentioned in the Periplus. The other ports were Sopara, Goa and Pigeon Islands. Within the kingdom there were important cities like Tagara, Prathishthana, Nasik, Junnar and Dhanyakataka. Koddura and Chinnaganjam were the important ports on the east. The general life led by the people was similar to the one portrayed in Vatsyana's Kama-Sutra.

Evidence also shows that a good number of people emigrated from the Deccan to colonize the regions in South-East Asia

The Satavahanas and Shiva were worshiped. Saptasatika reveals the worship of many Hindu deities. Vaishnavism and Shivism grew popular. Gautamiputra-Satakarni claimed himself to be the protector of brahmins. The Nashik prasasti states that Varnashrama Dharmawas maintained.

Buddhism too was popular. Both the Sakas and Satavahanas encouraged Buddhism. Ushavadata made several grants to Buddhist monks. Some of these grants were renewed by Gautamiputra Satakarni. Buddhist monuments and stupas came into existence at Nasik, Vidisa, Bhattiprolu, Goli, Ghantasala and Amaravati. It was at the last place that most probably human figures were carved out for the first time. And the stupa at this place had a marble railing with relief sculptures. A Vijayanti merchant was responsible for enriching Karle and Kanheri Buddhist caves. Merchants from Nasik contributed to the caves at Vidisa and Bharhut. In brief cave architecture and building of stupas witnessed certain development under the auspices of the satavahanas; and the donations or the merchants belonging to the guilds prove the commercial prosperity of the area.

Encouraged by wealth the kings patronized literature and architecture. Hala was an authority on the Puranas. He was the author of Sapta-Sataka. It is said that Hala paid as much as 40 million pieces of gold for four kavyas. Leelavati deals with the military campaigns of Hala.

The kings encouraged architecture. The five gateways at Sanchi the rock-cut Chaity-halls of Bhaja, Karle, Nasik and Kanheri and the stupas at Amaravati, Bhattiprolu, Goli and Ghantasala were built in this period. The capitals of the pillars in Karle caves are elaborately sculptured. The dome and the base of the Amaravati stupa is elaborately sculptured. Jataka stories were incised on marble slabs. The upper part of the dome is a beautiful floral design. It is generally said that its construction began during the time of Gautamiputra Satakarni and was completed during the time of Yajna Sri Satakarni. Most probably two Ajanta Frescoes (9th and 10th) came into existence during this period.

The satavahanas were great excavators of cave temples and the magnificent temples of Ellora and Ajanta were the continuation of the Satavahana tradition to which all Middle Indian dynasties in succeeding ages claimed historic relationship. The basic tradition in Middle India is of the Satavahana empire. As in the north it is of the Mauryan. From the point of view of historic continuity it is important to remember this primary fact as up to quite recent times the traditions flowing from the satavahanas were living factors in Indian history.