

Short-Answer Questions

1. Name any three rulers of the Mauryan dynasty.

Ans. Chandragupta Maurya, Bindusara and Ashoka

2. Who was Chanakya?

Ans. Chanakya was a great scholar and chief adviser of Chandragupta Maurya, the founder of the Mauryan dynasty.

3. Who was the Greek ruler with whom Chandragupta Maurya fought a war?

Ans. Chandragupta Maurya fought a war with Seleucus.

4. Who was Megasthenes? Name the book written by him.

Ans. Megasthenes was a Greek historian. He wrote a book '*Indica*'.

5. Who was the author of Arthashastra?

Ans. Kautilya was the author of Arthashastra.

6. Name the four provinces under Chandragupta Maurya.

Ans. Punjab, Magadha, Herat and *Kandahar*.

7. Which famous war was fought by Ashoka and when?

Ans. Ashoka fought the Kalinga war in 261 BC.

8. What is meant by Ashoka's 'Dhamma'?

Ans. Ashoka's *Dhamma* was a set of moral principles. The word '*Dhamma*' was the Prakrit form of the word *Dharma*.

Structured Essay-Type Questions

1. With reference to Chandragupta Maurya's conquest, explain the following:

- (a) Conquest of Punjab
- (b) Conquest of Magadha
- (c) War with Seleucus.

Ans. (a) Chandragupta, with the help of Chanakya, gathered a small army and captured Punjab after Alexander had left the province. He drove the Greeks out. After

strengthening his position in the Punjab, he raised a powerful army to invade the kingdom of Magadha.

Chandragupta Maurya raised a powerful army after strengthening his position in Punjab.

- (b) Magadha in those days was ruled by the Nanda rulers who had become quite unpopular among the people because of their greed. So an easy victory fell in his arms and Chandragupta became the undisputed ruler of Northern India.
- (c) **War with Seleucus (305 B.C.)** : Seleucus was a Greek general of Alexander who became the ruler of the territories conquered by Alexander from Asia Minor to the Indus. He wanted to recover the Indian territories which had then become a part of the Mauryan Empire. It brought him in conflict with Chandragupta Maurya who defeated the Greek general and consequently he had to surrender not only the four provinces of Herat, Kandahar, Kabul and Baluchistan but also had to give his daughter in marriage to the Mauryan Emperor.

2. With reference to Mauryan administration, explain the following :

- (a) Reforms introduced by Chandragupta Maurya
- (b) Changes brought about by Ashoka.

Ans. (a) Most of our knowledge about the Mauryan Administration is derived from the Megasthenes's '*Indica*' and book written by Chandragupta's minister Chanakya or Kautilya, called '*Arthashastra*'.

Central Government: The king was the highest authority of the State and assisted by a council of ministers or a '*Mantri Parishad*'. Each minister was individually responsible for his department there were other officers who looked after their respective duties for example *Adhyakshas* (Superintendents), *Amatyas* (Executive Officers), *Mahamatras* (Governors), *Pradeshakas* (Revenue Officers), *Rajukas* (Judicial officers) and *Yuktas* (Treasury Officers).

Provincial Government: The whole empire was divided into four provinces of Magadha, Taxila, Ujjain and Swarnagri.

The administration of the districts was looked after by '*Sthanaka's*' and that of the villages by village headmen, called '*Gramikas*' or '*Graminis*'.

Revenue System: Land Revenue was the chief source of income. It varied from 1/5th to 1/4th of the total produce. Taxes were also collected from mines, forests, cattle, toll tax, and professional taxes.

Military Administration: Chandragupta kept a huge army which includes infantry, cavalry, elephants and chariots. It was necessary to maintain such a large army to look after so big an empire. There was an efficient network of spy system spread all over the empire and in the neighbouring states.

The administration of the city was looked after by a committee of 30 members. This committee was further divided into six boards.

This committee also took steps to ensure health and sanitation, and built hospitals, roads, parks, schools and temples.

- (b) Ashoka's administration was similar in character to that of his father and grandfather. There was now great stress on the people's welfare. He built various roads and planted trees on their both sides. He had various rest-houses built for the travellers. He had various wells dug for the welfare of the people. He opened a large number of hospital both for men and animals. He began to treat his subjects as his children. At all times, he was ever-ready for the service of the people.

Ashoka appointed a new class of officers known as '*Dhamma Mahamatras*'. Their main duty was to raise the morale of the people and also to supervise the actions of the state officials. Ashoka himself undertook tours to see that his orders were fully obeyed. Ashoka adopted the

policy of religious toleration. His was an ideal system of administration which brought peace and made the people happy and prosperous.

3. With reference to Ashoka's reign explain the following :

- (a) His Kalinga War
- (b) His Dharma or Dhamma
- (c) His Administration

Ans. (a) The Kalinga War, 261 B.C.: The Conquest of Kalinga by Ashoka was perhaps the most important event of his reign. Ashoka could not tolerate the existence of an independent state, Kalinga on the borders of his empire. Thus, Ashoka invaded this territory in 261 B.C. The people of Kalinga offered tough resistance but overpowered by the mighty Mauryan army. From Rock Edict XIII, we come to know that the Kalinga people suffered much and as many as one hundred and fifty thousand persons were captured, one hundred thousand were slain and many times that number died. Death and destruction in Kalinga made Ashoka sad and unhappy. It became a turning point in his life he abandoned the path of war and violence. After this war, he never fought any war and became an ardent follower of the Buddha. Thereafter, Ashoka gave up his ambition of '*Digvijay*' or 'Victory in all Directions' and pursued a policy of '*Dharamavijay*'.

- (b) **Ashoka's Dharma or Dhamma:** Ashoka himself followed Buddhism. His Dhamma', which is the Prakrit form of the Sanskrit word Dharma, was a set of moral principals.

Main Principles of Ashoka's Dhamma

- (i) **Respect of Elders:** Ashoka says obedience must be tendered to the father and the mother. In the same way, the student must show respect to the teacher.
- (ii) **Proper Treatment of Youngsters:** Elders, superiors and officers should be polite and kind to their youngsters, inferiors and subordinates.

- (iii) **Ahimsa:** Ashoka not only forbade the slaughter of animals but himself gave up hunting and flesh-eating.
 - (iv) **Tolerance:** Ashoka says there should not be honour to one's own sect or condemnation of another sect.
 - (v) **Truthfulness:** A man should speak the truth at all times. It is better than various religious ceremonies.
 - (vi) **Charity:** One should give education to the illiterate, money to the poor and knowledge of the Dhamma to everyone.
 - (vii) **Pure Life:** Ashoka favoured a pure and simple life. Anger, cruelty, pride and jealousy are great sins. Thus, Ashoka's Dhamma consisted of principles which were common to all religions.
- (c) Ashoka's administration was similar in character to that of his father and grandfather. But in spirit, there was a change and there was now great stress on the people's welfare. He built various roads and planted trees on their both sides. He had various rest-houses built for the travellers. He had various wells dug for the welfare of the people. He opened a large number of hospitals both for men and animals. He began to treat his subjects as his children. At all times, he was ever-ready for the service of the people. Ashoka appointed a new class of officers known as '*Dhamma Mahamatras*'. Their main duty was to raise the morale of the people and also to supervise the actions of the state officials. He had instructed his officers to make the life of the citizens happy and prosperous. Ashoka himself undertook tours to see that his orders were fully obeyed. Ashoka adopted the policy of religious tolerations. His was an ideal system of administration which brought peace and made the people happy and prosperous.