

Study Material for Semester- II  
Paper – Mauryan and Gupta Empire (Core-3)  
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## Social And Economic condition of SatvahanaPeriod

The coins, sculpture and literature of the Satavahana period are the source of our knowledge not only in respect of the contemporary administration but also about the political, social, economic and religious and cultural conditions.

### **Social Condition:**

The Satavahana society was divided into four classes. This division was based on economic activity and status. The first class consisted of high officials and feudatory chief who ruled over provinces and districts. The second class included petty officers like Amatyas Mahamatras and wealthy traders. In the third class were the middle class peoples such as Vaidyas or physicians, writers, peasants, goldsmiths, perfumers etc.

The fourth and the last class were constituted of the lowest vocations such as carpenters, blacksmiths, fishermen and gardeners. There were the four divisions of the society. The smallest unit was the family in which the eldest living member commanded the greatest respect. He was called the 'Grihapati and was obeyed by all the other members of the family.

Women were honoured. They were given higher education and they took part in religious functions. Some of the rulers even added their mother's name to their own name, such as Gautamiputra, Vashishthiputra, Pulumavi, Kaushakiputra etc.

This practice itself reveals that the status of women was much high. Sometimes, women assumed guardianship of their minor sons and acted as their regents. They also took part in the Ashvamedhas. The Satavahanas were Brahmanas.

Therefore, Brahmanism made rapid strides under their rule. The Brahmanas were accorded the highest place. Effort was also made to revise the Varna system. In their bid to exalt Brahmanism the Smritis declared that a ten years old Brahman would be more revered than a 100 years old Kshatriya.

Mixed marriages were considered obnoxious though there are some instances of such marriages. Vashishthiputra Pulumavi himself married the daughter of the Saka ruler Rudradaman thus giving respectability to such marriages. In this period, inter marriages among the Hindus and foreign tribes of the Sakas, the parthians

and the Greeks were freely consummated so that these foreigners were absorbed forever in the Hindu social order.

### **Economic Condition:**

Agriculture and trade were prosperous. Life of the common man was happy as he was well- provided with all facilities of life. They were economically well-off. They inherited many traits of the material culture of the Mauryas and made their life better and well off. There was a free fusion of local elements and northern ingredients under them.

They learnt the use of coins, burnt bricks and ring wells from the Mauryas and added much to the advancement of their material life. Under the Satavahanas, agriculture was prosperous and the village's economy was developed. Rice was cultivated in the territory between the Krishna and Godavari rivers. Cotton was also produced. The peasants used implements made of iron which were extensively used particularly in Carnatic. There were also wells for irrigation.

Encouragement was given to trade and industry. The traders and those engaged in other professions had their own guilds or 'sanghas'. Coin dealers, potters, oil pressers and metal workers had their own guilds. These guilds looked after the collective interests of their trade and worked for their common uplift. These guilds were recognized by the Government and worked as bankers also.

The external or foreign trade was carried through the famous ports of Supara, Broach and Kalyan. India and trade relations with countries like Arabia, Egypt and Rome. In the far eastern countries, Indian traders established their own settlements and preach Indian culture.

They referred to these countries as 'Swargabhoomi' or paradise. India exported cotton, textiles, spices etc. India imported wine, glass and items of luxury. The inland trade was also prosperous. Travel between the north and south of India were much easy as the roads and transport were better.

Several towns sprang up in Maharashtra during this period. Paithan, Nasik and Junar were big markets and centers of trade. In the south-east Vijaypur and Narsela were well-known trade centers. There were guilds of traders as well and they carried trade in groups. To encourage trade, the Satavahna kings struck numerous coins of gold, silver, copper and bronze.

Source - [www.historydiscussion.net/empires/satavahana-dynasty-rulers-administration-society-and-economic-conditions/736](http://www.historydiscussion.net/empires/satavahana-dynasty-rulers-administration-society-and-economic-conditions/736)