

Study Material for Semester- II
Paper – Mauryan and Gupta Empire (Core-3)
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Satavahana Administration:

The Satavahana coins, inscriptions and literature are the rich source of our knowledge about their administrative system. In this period the South was ruled over by the monarchies. King was the highest official of the Government and his office was hereditary.

They did not assume high sounding titles. Similarly, the Satavahana rulers did not believe in divine rights of a king and they carried administration in accordance with the directives of the Dharma Shastras and the social customs. The king himself led his armies in the battle-field and was commander-in-chief of his forces.

There was also a council of ministers to aid and advise him for carrying out the administration properly. The king was the head of the Government as well as the protector to his people. The Satavahana kings regarded their subjects as their own children and always looked after their welfare.

The Satavahana Empire was very vast. Their administrative system was feudal. They had divided their empire among a number of feudal chiefs who managed the land revenue system and looked after the administration.

There were three grades of feudatories – the ‘Raja’, the ‘Mahabhoja’ and the ‘Maharathi or ‘Senapati’’. The ‘Raja’ belonged to the highest grade. He had the right to impose taxes and to strike coins. The kingdom was divided into provinces and ‘Janapadas’ for administrative efficiency.

The highest official in a province was ‘Amatya’ or minister. His office was not hereditary. Men of proven ability were appointed to this office. Each unit had several villages. A village was administered by a

‘Gramika’. There were several officials to help the king. Out of them, the most important were ‘Senapati’, ‘Mahabhoja’, ‘Koshadhyaksha’, ‘Rajadoof’, ‘Amatya’ etc.

There was also a special official called ‘Uparakshita’ who was charged with the duty of building caves etc. for the monks. The ‘bhikshus’ (monks) and Brahmanas were held in high esteem and they too observed and preached high standards of conduct. They were beyond the ordinary laws of the Government.

In this period, the local administration had its own importance. There were separate organizations to look after the administration of the towns and the villages. The towns were administered by a body called the ‘Nagarsabha’ while in villages there were ‘Gram Sabhas’. These organizations carried their functions independently without any interference.

The military administration of the Satavahanas was also quite efficient. Their army consisted of foot soldiers, cavalry and elephants. Foot soldiers or infantry was the backbone of the army and they formed the vanguard and were flanked on either side by horses and elephants. The soldiers used swords, spears, axes and armours as weapons of war.

It was by dint of efficient military administration that the Satavahanas succeeded in expanding their empires. They kept a regiment posted in each village for maintaining peace and order. They were maintained at the expense of the rural inhabitants.

Source - www.historydiscussion.net/empires/satavahana-dynasty-rulers-administration-society-and-economic-conditions/736