

Satavahana Dynasty

[UPSC Notes]

History of the Satavahana Dynasty

The Satavahana dynasty emerged in the Deccan region after the decline of the Sunga empire around 73 BCE, when the Kanva dynasty ruled Magadha. The term “Satavahana” is taken from the Prakrit language, which means “driven by seven.” It is also linked to seven horse driven chariot of lord Sun.

The Maurya Dynasty promptly replaced the Shunga powers in northern regions. Devabooti, the Shunga dynasty’s last emperor, was killed by his minister Vasudeva Kanva, thus establishing Kanva’s rule in the north (Magadha). At that time, the Deccan and central India were authorized by the Satavahanas.

- Simuka was the first ruler of the Satavahana dynasty for 23 years. After his exit, Sri Satakarni has taken power into his hands as the third ruler. He conquered the Berar and west Malwa regions. Also, he conducted Asvamedha's sacrifices after his victory in the war.
- The early Satavahana dynasty had rulers from Northern Maharashtra; however, their inheritors slowly expanded towards Karnataka and Andhra regions. As mentioned in Puranas, the Andhras are referred to as indistinguishable from Satavahanas. Also, it is believed that Andhras ruled for three hundred years, designated to the Satavahana dynasty.
- Gautamiputra Satakarni is the most prominent ruler of the Satavahana dynasty, who ruled for 24 years from (AD. 106 to 130). He overpowered the Shakas and claimed himself as the destroyer of the Kshatriya emperor Nahapana.

Evidence of his claim is the restriction on the Nahapana’s silver coins by him. Under his rule, the Satavahana dynasty expanded to Karnataka from Malwa. His mother, Gautami Balasri, inscribed his accomplishments in the Nasik Inscription. He entitled himself as Dakshina Pathapati and referred to himself as only Brahmana.

- He was succeeded by Vashishtiputra Pulumayi, who ruled for 24 years from AD 130 to 154. He expanded the Satavahana rule to the bench of the Krishan river. His epigraphs and coins found in the Andhra region show the Satavahana dynasty. He made Pratishthan, the Aurangabad district, the Satavahana empire's capital.
- Later, Vashishtiputra Satakarni and Shivaskabda Satakarni became his successors. Rudradaman I, the Shaka emperor of Saurashtra, overpowered the Satavahanas twice.

- The last emperor of the Satavahana dynasty was Yajna Sri Satakarni, who ruled for 29 years from (AD 165 to 194). He won back the regions of Malwa and Konkan from the Shakas.

Rulers Of the Satavahana Dynasty

Several rulers ruled the Satavahana dynasty, some ruled for an extended period, and some ruled only for a short period. The famous rulers of the Satavahana Dynasty were:

- **Simuka**

The first ruler of the Satavahana dynasty, Simuka, considered the founder of the Satavahana dynasty and the ruler who followed the Maurya dynasty, was discovered at Naneghat. Simuka was famous for many names like Sushila, Sudhira, and Tirpak, because nobody knew his real name.

Simuka was the ruler who toppled Kanva and made the region expand in many parts of the world. His dynasty and rule continued for 23 years till his successor Kanha took over the region as a ruler.

- **Kanha**

Kanha was the second ruler of the Satavahana dynasty. He defeated Simuka and became the king of the Satavahana dynasty. He was also succeeded by Shatakarni-I, who was the son of Simuka.

- **Satakarni-I**

Sri Satakarni or Satakarni-I is the son of the Simuka, the founder of the Satavahana Dynasty. He was the third king of the dynasty after the Kanha. He ruled from 70-60 BC and was considered the first ruler who expanded the region with military support.

Naganika, the daughter of the Maharathi Trainkairo, was the queen of Satakarni-I. He also performed Ashvamedha Yagya, and he brought Brahmanism back to Deccan.

- **Satakarni II**

Satakarni II was the fourth king of the Satavahana Dynasty.

- **Hala**

He is also considered one of the greatest rulers of the Satavahana Dynasty. The Maharashtri Prakrit "Lilvati" describes the Hala romance with queen Simhaladvipa. This king is the lover of love who combined a wide variety of poems known as Saptashati, and the poem's theme was based on love.

His minister Gunadhya composed Brihatkatha, a well-known combination of poetic stories.

- **Gautamiputra Satakarni**

He occupied the dynasty from AD 106 to 130. He is the greatest king of the dynasty. Many believed he revived the dynasty's fortune by defeating shakas. His empire was situated in Malwa in North Karnataka. He expands the kingdom on a massive scale from west to east, north, and south, and it can make the presence of a dynasty all over India.

He was given the title of Rajaraja and Maharaja. He was the only king named after his mother, GautamiPutra, and finally, he was succeeded by his son Pulumavi, 1. The latter was, unfortunately, the last king of the kingdom.

- **Vashithiputra Pulumayi**

He was the successor of the Gautama Putra, and his coins were found in the region of Andhra. He was married to the daughter of Rudradaman 1.

- **Yajna Sri Satakarni**

He is considered one of the later kings of the Satavahanas dynasty and ruled from 165 to 194 CE. During his reign, he recovered Kakanad and Malwa from the Shaka rulers. His coins were found in states like Andhra, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat.

Satavahana Administration

Satavahan's administration was based on shastra, while kings were considered gods by people, as they thought the king possessed god-like qualities, so they worshiped them like this and followed them blindly.

Kingdom was divided into subgroups and handled by well-experienced professionals like Amatya & Mahamatras. Different officials were made to manage the other regions of the kingdom to handle things correctly.

- Rural area administration was given to the hand of Gaurimika, the village headman. He was the one who took care of all the administrative work in the rural area.
- The Head of a military regiment consists of a chariot, elephants, horses, and soldiers. Different military camps and settlements are arranged in various parts of the region to protect the country from having protection from enemies. Satavahana started the culture of giving grants.
- They started providing tax-free villages to brahmins and Buddhist monks.
- Satavahana kingdom has three grades of feudatories Raja, Maharaja, and Senapati.

Economy

The Satavahana dynasty was based on farming. Agriculture was the backbone of the dynasty. Agriculture is the primary source of income for the Satavahana dynasty. The region saw a massive civilization in the fertile area, especially near the fertile area like river ponds or where agriculture is done extensively. Therefore, it increased domestic land trading and income from the region.

Craftsmanship is also a part of the Satavahana economy. Many archaeologists have found many craft artworks created during the period, showing a large production of such crafts for livelihood.

Many natural resources were exploited during their time when resources were used for urbanization and to provide help to people for their craft work. Satavahana has also been active in many trade activities as they control India's deports, and they have huge seaports named Prathisthna and Satavahanaa.

Satavahana has many regions rich in paddy transplantation and is known for cotton production in various parts. Satavahana dynasty learned to use coins, burst bucks, and ring bells by being in contact with the north side of the region.

Satavahana's Dynasty Coins

It was the first dynasty that used coins in the southern region. Coins are excavated from Deccan, western India, and western ghats. These coins are considered to die sticks. Various coins are used in the regions like silver, gold, copper, and lead. All the coins are explicitly used in the area.

They also used punch marked coined, and coins are designed beautifully where pictures of the king are engraved on the coins. Satavahana has unique coins in shape, size, and design, like square, rectangular, etc.

Religion And Language during the Satavahana's

Satavahanas are from the Hindu religion. They consider them as a brahmin, and they are also very humble towards other regions. Despite being rulers, they value different castes and do not dominate their religion over the others.

Their kindness and humble nature toward other regions can be seen in their donations to other religions. They provide resources and land to brahmins, monks, and other upper caste religions to maintain their seniority.

Satavahana Foreign Trade

Super, bracks, and Kalyan are the well-known ports of the Satavahana dynasty. These ports are considered the gateways for their region's foreign trade & business.

Most of the Indian ports are dependent on Egypt, Australia & Rome in the past.

India exports textile, cotton, and spices to the world. In addition, it imports luxury items like wine, glassware, and other pleasures and many prosperous items required to

enhance the region's market. Foreign trade is possible in the regions due to various reasons. Still, the most crucial reason for the increasing foreign exchange is that improved road & transportation made trade more accessible in the north and south India.

Satavahana Architecture

They are experts in building a stupa. They have created many stupas which are popular and well-known. Their architectural development can be represented in various ways, like the sculpture of Amravati, where they also constructed a Buddhist stupa.

They have also built a stupa in the regions like goli, Amravati, and gaushala. Many bricks and woodwork on the ashram stupa were replaced with stonework. They have built many well-known stupas like Amravati and Nagarjuna Konda stupas.

Satavahana dynasty magnificence can be seen through Karle Chaitya, related to Garbhagriha, Pradakshina Patha, and Mandapa.

Satavahana Social Organization

Satavahana is considered a tribe of Deccan, and they are pure brahman and follow the four-fold of Varna system. Many active artisans and merchants indulged in trading and commerce; however, as trade and business flourished, the importance of artisans' and merchants' positions in the market made the merchant's identity very precious.

Satavahana is not only kind enough towards the other religion but also the women of their caste. This can be evidenced by the fact that kings were often named after their mother's name, which shows that women are respected in society as the first person.

Decline Of Satavahana

Finally, the end of the dynasty comes after Pulamavi IV. He was the last ruler in the dynasty of Satavahana after his kingdom dynasty was segmented into five different smaller parts. And this marks finally decline of the kingdom. He ruled till 225 AD.

Ikshvakus is considered the ruler who succeeded the Satavahana in the eastern region. The best part was taken off by abhors, and Pallavas took off the southeast area.

Although the Satavahana dynasty is well known and established a dynasty, while declined and swept out its kingdom just like another ruler, the Satavahana dynasty is well available for the feature of the coinage system which was started by Satavahana dynasty and made it so famous in the region, Satavahana also contributed to various trade activities all over the world, which makes remember its presence in craft and artwork.