

# Gupta Empire for SSC Exams PDF

## Gupta Empire

The Gupta Dynasty controlled Ancient India from the mid-to-late third century (approximately) to 550 AD. The dynasty was founded by Sri Gupta and rose to prominence with emperors such as Chandragupta-I, Samudragupta, and others. Historians regard this period to be India's golden age. Let's take a closer look at the Gupta Dynasty.

### Overview of the Gupta Empire

<b>Name</b>	<b>Gupta Dynasty</b>
Period	320- 550 AD
Language	Sanskrit (literary and academic); Prakrit (vernacular)
Religion	Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism
Capital	Pataliputra

### Rulers of the Gupta Empire

<b>Gupta Dynasty Rulers</b>	<b>Important Facts</b>
<b>Sri Gupta</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Founder of Gupta Dynasty</li><li>• Reign from 240 CE to 280 CE</li><li>• Used the title of 'Maharaja'</li></ul>
<b>Ghatotkacha</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Son of Sri Gupta</li><li>• Took the title of 'Maharaja'</li></ul>
<b>Chandragupta I</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reigned from 319 CE to 335/336 CE</li><li>• Started the Gupta Era</li><li>• He assumed the title of 'Maharajadhiraja'</li><li>• Married Lichchavi princess Kumaradevi</li></ul>
<b>Samudragupta</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reigned from 335/336 CE to 375 CE</li><li>• Called 'Napoleon of India' by V.A. Smith (Irish Indologist and Art Historian)</li><li>• His campaigns are mentioned in the Eran inscription (Madhya Pradesh)</li></ul>
<b>Chandragupta II</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reigned from 376-413/415 CE</li><li>• Navratnas (9 Gems in his Court)</li><li>• Took the title 'Vikramaditya'</li></ul>
<b>Kumaragupta I</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reigned from 415 CE to 455 CE</li><li>• Founded Nalanda University</li><li>• He was also called Shakraditya</li></ul>

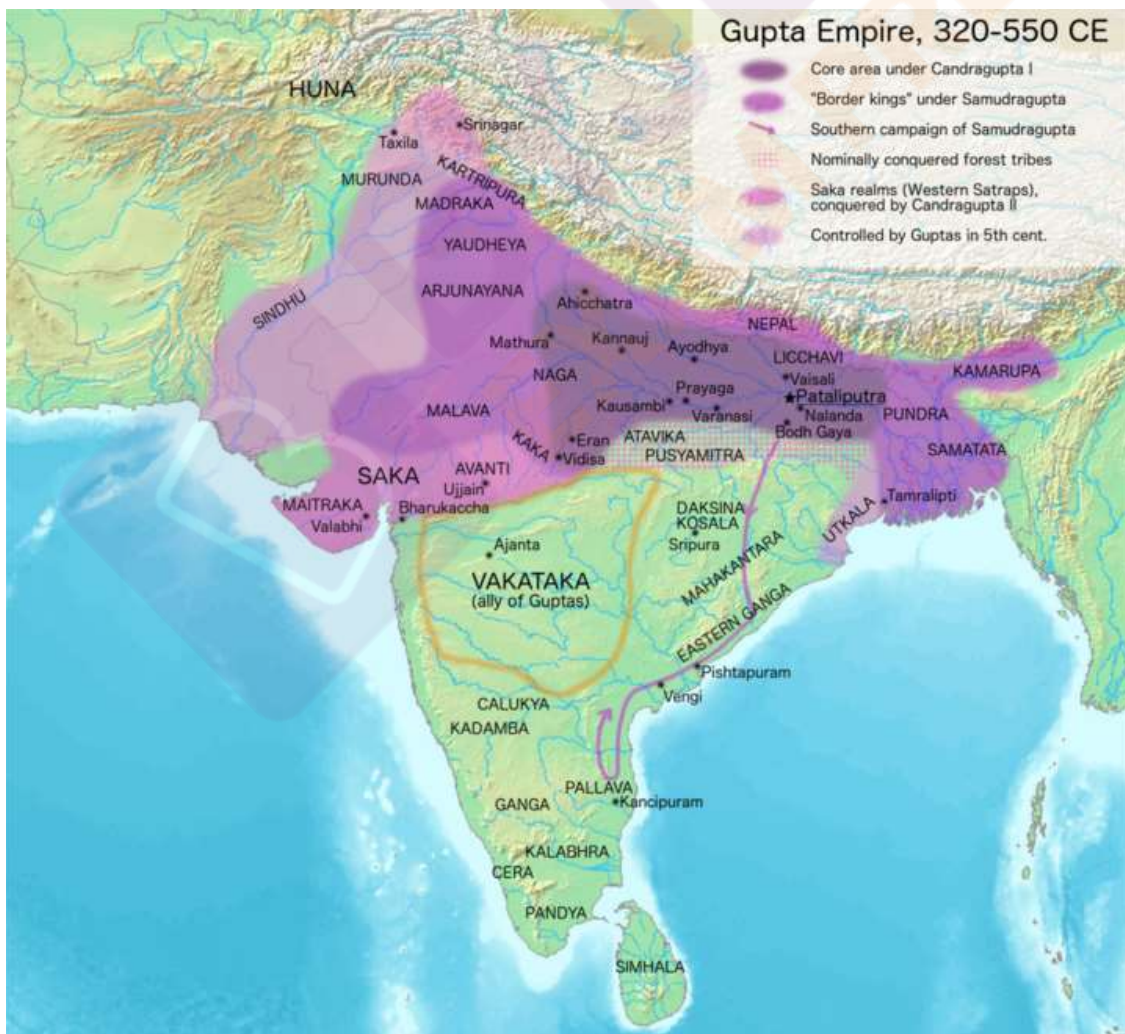


<b>Skandagupta</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reigned from 455 AD – 467 AD</li> <li>• Was a 'Vaishnavite'</li> <li>• Son of Kumaragupta</li> <li>• Repulsed an attack by the Hunas but this strained his empire's coffers</li> </ul>
<b>Vishnugupta</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Last known ruler of the Gupta Dynasty (540 AD – 550 AD)</li> </ul>

## The Rise and Growth of the Gupta Empire

### Background

After the fall of Mauryan empire, the Kushans in the North and Satavahanas in the south had held power. Gupta empire replaced the Kushans in the North with its center of power at *Prayag* and gave political unity for more than a century (335AD-455AD). It was founded by Sri Gupta. Gupta strength laid in the use of horses and material advantage of fertile land and natural resources abundant region.



Join Our Classroom Program Now



**1. Chandragupta I (319-334 AD)**

- He was the first great ruler of Gupta Dynasty. He assumed the title Maharajadhiraja. Married Licchavi princess
- Started the Gupta Era by 319-20 AD
- The original type of Gold coins Dinaras was issued.

**2. Samudragupta (335-380 AD)**

- He followed a policy of violence and conquest which led to enlargement of Gupta empire
- Harisena, his court poet, vividly mentions his military exploits in Allahabad inscriptions
- He reached Kanchi in the south which was ruled by Pallavas
- Meghavarman, the ruler of Srilanka, sent a missionary for permission to build a Buddhist temple at Gaya
- Samudragupta is called as Napoleon of India

**3. Chandragupta II (380-412 AD)**

- He adopted the title Vikramaditya
- He conquered Malwa and Gujarat which provided him access to the sea which enabled trade and commerce. Ujjain was made as the second capital
- His court was adorned by *the Navaratnas* including Kalidasa and Amarasimha.
- His exploits are glorified in *Iron Pillar at Qutub Minar*
- Chinese pilgrim *Fa-Hsien (399-414AD)* visited India during his period.

**Life in Gupta Age****1. System of Administration**

- They adopted Pompous titles such as Paemabhataraka and Maharajaadhiraja
- The administration was highly decentralized with feudal lords ruling over minor provinces
- Civil and criminal laws were highly demarcated
- Kumaramatyas were the most important officers. But Guptas lacked elaborate bureaucracy like Mauryas. These offices also became hereditary in nature.
- Grant of fiscal and administrative concessions to priests was also in practice. Agrahara grants and Devagraha grants were practiced.

**2. Trends in trade and agrarian economy**

- Guptas issued a large number of Gold coins which were called as Dinars
- There was a decline in the long distance trade with Romans which led to lesser gold content in the Dinars.
- Land grants made to the priests brought many virgin lands under cultivation





### 3. Social developments

- Brahmana supremacy continued during Gupta period
- The Huns came to be recognized as one of the 36 clans of the Rajputs
- The position of Shudras improved as they were permitted to hear Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranas
- The number of untouchables, the Chandalas, increased
- The position of women improved as they were permitted to hear Ramayana, Mahabharata and worship Krishna. But the first example of *Sati* also appears in the Gupta period.

### 4. State of Buddhism

- Buddhism did not receive royal patronage in Gupta Period, still stupas and Viharas were constructed and Nalanda became a center for Buddhist learning

### 5. Origin and growth of Bhagavatism

- Worship of Vishnu and Narayana merged to form Bhagavatism or Vaishnavism
- It was marked by Bhakti (loving devotion) and Ahimsa
- Religious teachings were mentioned in Bhagavadgita, Vishnu Purana and Vishnu Smriti
- Idol worship became a common feature of Hinduism
- Gupta rulers followed a principle of tolerance

### 6. Art: Gupta period is called Golden age of ancient India. Art was mostly inspired by Religions

- **Rock cut caves** – Ajanta, Ellora and Bagh caves
- **Structural temples** – Dashavatar temple of Deogarh, Laxman temple of Sirpur, Vishnu temple and Varah temple of Eran. The growth of Nagara style also enabled the development of temple architecture in India
- **Stupas** – Dhammek stupa of Sarnath, Ratnagiri stupa of Orissa, Mirpur Khas in Sindh developed in this period.
- **Paintings** – Ajanta paintings and Bagh caves paintings
- **Sculpture** – the Bronze image of Buddha near Sultanganj, Sarnath and Mathura school flourished during this period which supports the growth of Mahayana Buddhism and Idol worship.
- Images of Vishnu, Shiva and some other Hindu gods were also found.

### 7. Literature

- **Religious** – Ramayana, Mahabharata, Vayu Purana etc were re-written. Dignaga and Buddhagoshha were certain Buddhist literature written in this period



- **Secular**
  - a. **Mudrarakshasha** by Vishakadatta
  - b. **Malavikagnimitra, Vikramorvashiyam, AbhijanaShakuntalam – Dramas** by Kalidasa
  - c. **Ritusamhar, Megadoot, Raghuvamsam, Kumarasambhavam – Poetries** by Kalidasa
  - d. **Mricchakatika** by Sudraka
  - e. **Kamasutra** by Vatsyayana
  - f. **Panchatantra** by Vishnu Sharma
- **Scientific**
  - a. **Aryabhatiya and Surya Siddhanta** by Aryabhatta
  - b. **Romaka Siddhanta**
  - c. **Mahabhaskarya and Laghubhaskarya** by Bhaskara
  - d. **Pancha Siddhanta, Vrihat Jataka, Vrihat Samhita** by Vrahmihira

### **Architectural Wonders From The Gupta Empire**

The transition from traditional rock-cut shrines to life-sized images from Hindu mythology resulted in a deliberate structural solidity. Even now, the impact of Gupta architecture on modern culture appears undeniable. A few cave shrines from the Gupta dynasty have been authenticated at Udayagiri in Madhya Pradesh. An excellent masterpiece that honours Gupta architecture depicts Vishnu as the boar-headed Varaha. The Ajanta caves in North-West Deccan have Buddhist-inspired wall paintings and murals. Cave 19 is the most promising of the 29 rock-cut caves, with a cylindrical veranda and a semi-circular building above for airing. Later, the Gupta dynasty took embossed door frames, chiselled panels, and even T-shaped entrances from structural, free-standing buildings and temples. Gupta architecture regarded the square as the most perfect shape, arguing that a temple should be admired from all sides.

### **Religion Under The Gupta Empire**

The Gupta empire fostered Hindu civilization, with Sanskrit literature gaining prominence under the kings' patronage. Although Orthodox Hinduism predominated, other religions such as Buddhism and Jainism coexisted harmoniously. The core of such coexistence enabled pilgrims such as Fa-Xian to visit India, encouraging religious peace. Following the gradual decline of Buddhism in India, Hinduism reasserted itself as Brahmanis, in which numerous Vedic traditions were combined with aboriginal gods. The Gupta king was revered as Vishnu's avatar.

With the arrival of immigrants, the caste system spread, resulting in the formation of various new sects and increased casteism. In terms of money, caste, and prestige, Brahmins were regarded as the superior caste. By the end of the 16th century, the designations of Vishnu, Krishna, and Rama had spread widely, with the three being acknowledged as supreme gods.



## Fall of the Empire

1. Huns invasion during the reign of Skandagupta and his successors greatly weakened his empire
2. Rule of Yashodharman dealt a severe blow to Gupta empire.
3. The rise of feudatories and Governors becoming independent led to the disintegration of Gupta empire. Loss of western India had crippled them economically.



**Join Our Classroom Program Now**



# Buy Test Series

---

## Unlock All 650+ Mock Tests for SSC & Railway

- Unlimited Access
- All Exams covered
- Designed by Experts
- Performance Analysis