

SOURCES OF ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY

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IMPORTANT SOURCES OF HISTORY

- Sources- All the materials which has a direct bearing or can be any assistance in constructing the history of a Particular period are called as Historical Sources

TYPES OF SOURCES

- The Historical Sources can be divided into Two Types
- Primary sources
- Secondary Sources

- **Primary Sources:**
 - A Primary source is the evidence of an eye witness or Mechanical device which was present at the time of the Occurrence of an Event
- **Secondary source**

The secondary source is the evidence of someone who was not present at the time of Occurrence of the event

PRIMARY SOURCE

- ◉ Contemporary Records
- ◉ Confidential reports
- ◉ Public reports
- ◉ Governments Records
- ◉ Public Opinion
- ◉ Folklore and Proverbs
- ◉ Inscriptions
- ◉ Archeological remains
- ◉ Coins
- ◉ Autobiographies

SECONDARY SOURCE

Works of historians
Criticism
Internal Criticism
External criticism

CLASSIFICATION OF SOURCES

- ◉ LITERARY SOURCES
- ◉ ARCHAEOLOGICAL RELATED SOURCES
- ◉ ACCOUNTS OF FOREIGN TRAVELLERS

1. RELOGIOUS LITEARAY SOURCES

❖ 1.1 VEDAS

The word 'Veda' comes from the root 'Vidi'(Signifying Knowledge)

- ❖ Vadas are also known as Shruti (To Hear) as they were passed from Generation to Generation through Verbal Transmission.
- ❖ They are four in all
- ❖ Rig Veda
- ❖ Sama Veda
- ❖ Yajur Veda
- ❖ Atharvana Veda

RIG VEDA

- ◉ Oldest Religious text in the World
- ◉ Must have been composed around 1700 B.C.
- ◉ A Collection of Hymns (Suktian)
- ◉ It contains 1028 hymns
- ◉ The word Om (1028 times)
- ◉ Jan(275 Times)
- ◉ 250 hymns are dedicated to Indra 200are dedicated to Agni
- ◉ It Divided into 10 Mandalas
- ◉ II toVII are the earliest mandalas
- ◉ I and X are considered the later additions
- ◉ The third mandala contains the famous Gayatri mantra (by vishwamitra dedicated to Savitra the Solar deity)
- ◉ The battle of Ten Kings (Dasarajna) is mentioned in 7th mandala
- ◉ Saraswati is the deity river in Rig Veda

SAMA VEDA

- It Derived from the root Saman (Melody)
- Sama veda describes the collection of melodies.
- Sama veda placed Dhrupaka raga
- Sama veda was called book of chants
- The origins of Indian music are trace to it
- Sama veda is an alternative version of the rig Veda
- It has 1603 verses
- Vina (lute) is mentioned in Sama veda

YAJUR VEDA

- ◉ Yajus means “Sacrificial formula”
- ◉ Deals with Procedure for the Performing of Sacrifices
- ◉ It contains the rituals of the Yajanas
- ◉ Consists of 40 Chapters
- ◉ Estimated to have compose between 1400 B.C.and1000B.C.
- ◉ It also called Book of Prayers
- ◉ The Maximum numbers of Commentaries is written on Yajur Veda

ATHARVA VEDA

- ◉ The Collections of Charms, magic and spells
- ◉ Preserve many popular cults and Superstitions, contains non-aryan elements(folk elements)
- ◉ Atharva Veda was Entirely different from other three Vedas
- ◉ Contains 711/731/760 hymns
- ◉ It first mentioned Ayurvra
- ◉ Divided into 20 kandas with magic

THE ARANYAKAS

- ◉ Aranyakas also called Forest books written mainly by the hermits living in the jungles for their pupils.
- ◉ Deals with Mysticism and Philosophy
- ◉ Opposed to Sacrifice
- ◉ Emphasize Meditations
- ◉ A Bridge between Way of work(Karma Marg)

THE UPANISHADS

- The word Upanishads means to sit down near someone and denotes a student sitting near his guru to learn
- The total 108 Upanishads
- It is called Vedanta (the end of the Vedas)
- The Upanishads is a way of knowledge (Gyan Marg)
- They are considered the main source of Indian Philosophy.
- It condemns the ceremonies and the sacrifices
- The world is God and God is soul; the philosophy contained in the Upanishads
- Ancient Indian woman philosopher Gargi is mentioned in Brihadaranyaka

SMRITIS

- ◉ Smritis Explains rules and Regulations in the Vedic Life.

Main Smritis are

- ◉ Mnausmriti,
- ◉ Naradssmriti,
- ◉ Yagyavalkyasmiri
- ◉ Parasharsmriti

VEDANGAS

- ◉ Vedangas Literally means the Limbs of the Vedas
- ◉ They are 6 in numbers
- ◉ Shiksha - Deals with Pronunciation
- ◉ Kapla - Deals with Rituals
- ◉ Vyakarana - Deals with Grammar
- ◉ Nirukta - Deals with Etymology
- ◉ Chhanda - Deals with Meter
- ◉ Jyotisha - Deals with Astronomy

THE UPAVEDAS

- ◉ There are Four Upaveda
- ◉ Ayur veda (Upaveda of Rig Veda) –Deals with medicine
- ◉ Gandharva veda (Upaveda of Sama veda)- deals with Art& music
- ◉ Dhanurveda(Upaveda of Yajur veda) -Deals with the art of Warfare
- ◉ Shilpa veda (Upaveda of Atharva veda) – Deals with Architecture

THE PURANAS

- ◉ The most important Puranas numbering 18
- ◉ Its full of historical materials and are valuable for the reconstruction of the early history of India
- ◉ Out of the Purana as source of history largely depend on the
- ◉ Vishnu purana
- ◉ Vayu purana
- ◉ Matsya Purana
- ◉ Brahma Purana
- ◉ Bhavishya purana

BUDDHIST LITERARY SOURCES

- ◉ **TRIPATAKAS**
- ◉ The Buddhist Scripture in Pali are commonly referred to as
- ◉ Tripataka (Threefold Basket)

- ◉ Vinaya Pitaka - Rules and discipline in Buddhist monasteries
- ◉ Sutta Pitaka - A Collections of Buddhist Sermons
- ◉ Abhidhamma Pitaka – explanation of the Philosophical Principles
of the Buddhist Religion

JATAKAS

- ◉ Jatakas are the stories which deal with the pervious births of Buddha
- ◉ The Total numbers of Jatakas are 549
- ◉ The Jatakas are assigned to the second or third century of B.C.

JAIN LITERARY SOURCES

- ◉ **ANGAS**
- ◉ Angas are one of the Categories of Jain Scriptures
- ◉ It is considered to be Bhagwan
- ◉ It was written in Prakrit Language
- ◉ The total number of angas was 12.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES

- ◉ Archaeology is truly described as a Handmaid of History
- ◉ Five fold divisions of Archaeological sources
- ◉ 1. Material remains
- ◉ 2. Coins
- ◉ 3. Inscriptions
- ◉ 4. Monuments
- ◉ 5. Architecture- Painting and Sculpture.

1. MATERIAL REMAINS

- ◉ The excavations done by at several places provide astonishing clues to the life of the people of the past ages.
- ◉ We discover the kind of houses, life style dress, foods, social life,
- ◉ The Excavations at
- ◉ Harappa
- ◉ Mohenjo-Daro
- ◉ Lethal
- ◉ Alamgirpur
- ◉ Kalibangan
- ◉ Hastinapur
- ◉ Taxila
- ◉ Rajagraha

2. COINS

- The study of coins is called Numismatics.
- The Numismatics evidence is of great importance of Branch of history.
- The Numismatics evidence was used to determining the Chronology, Prosperity, territorial extent, Religion and Relations with Neighboring Countries
- The Coins are Primary sources of knowing the history of the Sakas, the kushanas, Parthians, Bactrians of Greeks.

3. INSCRIPTIONS

- The Inscriptions are those written records which are en-graved on rocks, stones, slabs, pillars, and metal plates
- The study of Inscriptions is called Epigraphy.
- The inscription is also very helpful in Reconstructing various aspects of history.
- Types of Inscriptions
 - Commercial
 - Magical
 - Religious
 - Administrative
 - Eulogistic
 - Donatives
 - Commemorative

4. MONUMENTS

- ◉ Monuments consisting of building, statues of stones or metals, caves ,stupas, and temples are immense values
- ◉ It shows the Cultural life of the periods
- ◉ The Glory of the gupta period came to light by the excavations of the temples of Deograh in Jansi and Bhitargaon near kanpur.

5.ARCHITECTURE

- Architecture, painting and sculpture .
- The painting in the cave of Ajanta, ellora and bagh enable us to see the whole of ancient India in Panorama.
- The loving and skilful hands of craftsman tell as the love of Indians for Arts
- The Buddhist stupas and other monuments reflects the care given to Architectural aspects.
- The Development of gandhara school of art informs us of the progress of Sculpture in Ancient India.

FOREIGN ACCOUNTS

- The earliest times from time to time several Envoys, explore, scholars, and Travelers kept visiting India in ancient times and records their observations about India
- Important Accounts
 - 1. The Greek Accounts
 - 2. Roman Accounts
 - 3. The Chinese accounts
 - 4. The Muslim Accounts

1. THE GREEK ACCOUNTS

- ◉ The Skylax's accounts of journey to India
- ◉ Herodotus accounts (histories)
- ◉ Accounts of Megasthene (Indika)
- ◉ Strabo Accounts
- ◉ Accounts of Diodorus
- ◉ Accounts of Ptolemy
- ◉ Accounts of Arrian

THE MUSLIM ACCOUNTS

- The eighth-century A.D. Arab geographers, historians, and travelers were attracted to India and wrote about its people an important Arab biographical work- Kitab-al- Fihrist.
- Accounts of Alberuni (Tehqiq-i-hind)
- Accounts of Ibn-Batuta
- Accounts of Sulaiaman
- Accounts of Hssan Nizami

THE ROMAN ACCOUNTS

- The Roman accounts give information about geography, history, Trade etc, of Ancient India.
- Accounts of Pliny
- Accounts of Justinus

THE CHINESE ACCOUNTS

- ◉ Accounts of Fa-Hien –Gupta period
- ◉ Accounts of Hieun-Tsang (Si-yu-ki)
- ◉ Accounts of I-Tsing

THANK YOU