
Harshavardhana's Reign Free PDF By Governmentadda.com

After the decline of Gupta Empire, there was disorder on political front in India. In the beginning of 7th century BC, Harshavardhan established a large kingdom in Northern India.

Sources for Study of Harshavardhana's Reign:

- Harshacharita written by Bana, his court poet.
- Travel accounts left by Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese traveller.
- Other important sources are dramas written by Harsha himself: Ratnavali, Nagananda, Priyadarshika.
- Madhuben plate inscription.
- Sonpat inscription.
- Banskhera inscription- has Harsha's signature.

Pushyabhuti Dynasty:

- It's founder was Pushyabhuti. They were feudatories of the Guptas and were known as Vardhans.
- They became independent after the Hun invasion.
- Their capital was Thaneshwar, to the north of Delhi.
- An important king of Vardhan Dynasty was Prabhakaravardhan.
- After his death, his elder son Rajyavardhan assumed the throne. He was treacherously murdered by Sasanka, the ruler of Bengal.
- Thereafter, Harshavardhan succeeded his brother.

Extent of Harshavardhan's Empire:

Harsha ruled over a vast territory consisting of eastern Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa under their control. Nepal had accepted his overlordship. Harsha defeated the ruler of Kannauj and made Kannauj his new capital.

Most important battle fought by Harshavardhan was against Chalukyan ruler Pulakeshin II with the ambition to extend his empire beyond Narmada. Aihole inscription of Pulakeshin mentions that Harsha was defeated.

Administration in Harshavardhana's Reign:

The administration during Harsha's reign was similar to that of the Guptas. Hiuen Tsang has described it in much detail.

- The administration was more feudal and decentralized during Harsh's reign as compared to that of the Guptas.
- Harsha probably began the practice of granting land to officers in lieu of salary.
- The maintenance of Public records was a characteristic feature of Harshavardhan's administration.

- The archives were called *nilopitu*, and were handled by special officers. The records of good as well as bad events that occurred during the time have been recorded in them.
- Taxation was light and forced labour was also rare.
- One-sixth of the crop produce was collected as land tax.
- The king made frequent visits of inspection throughout his dominion.
- Harshavardhan's Army consisted of four divisions- foot, chariot, horse and elephant. It was much more than that of the Mauryans.
- There was provision of cruel punishments, similar to the Mauryan times.
- Harshavardhan had diplomatic relations with China.

Economy and Society during Harsha's rule:

- There was fourfold Varna system in place comprising- Brahmins, Kshatriya, Vysya, and Sudra.
- Brahmins received land grants from the king, Kshatriyas were the ruling class, Vysyas were involved in trading and Sudras practiced agriculture. There were many sub-castes.
- **Position of Women:** Women lost the privileges of Swayamvar (the choice of choosing the husband), Widow remarriage was not permitted, especially among higher castes. The practice of Dowry and Sati became prevalent.
- **Burial of dead:** dead were disposed either by cremation, water burial or exposure in the woods.
- During Harshavardhana's reign, trade and commerce declined, as depicted by a decrease in trade centres.
- This decline also affected handicraft and agriculture. This also led to rise of self-sufficient village economy.

Developments in Art & Culture during Harshavardhana's Reign:

The architecture during Harsha's period was based on Gupta style primarily. Hiuen Tsang refers to a 8 feet tall copper Buddha statue. He also talk of a multistory monastery at Nalanda. In Chhattisgarh at Sirpur, a brick temple of Lakshman is surviving example of architecture during Harsh's period.



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Sirpur's Lakshman Temple

Learning: Harsha was great patron of learning and himself authored three plays- Ratnavali, Priyadarsika, Nagananda. He also patronised Nalanda university. Harsha's biographer was Banabhatta, who wrote Harshacharita and Kadambari. In Harshavardhana's court other notable figures were Matanga Divakara and Barthrihari(poet, philosopher and grammarian).

Religion during Harsha's Reign:

Harshavardhan was a Shaiva follower in the beginning but gradually embraced Buddhism. He was a tolerant ruler. It is believed that Hiuen Tsang converted him to Mahayana Buddhism. Harsha prohibited animal slaughter for food in his kingdom. He also erected various Stupa and established travellers' resthouse all over his kingdom. He conducted a gathering of representatives of all religions once in every five years. Two of them are important:

Kannauj Assembly:

- It was presided over by Hiuen Tsang.
- 20 kings, 1000 scholars of Nalanda University, 3000 Brahmins and Jains attended this assembly at Kannauj.
- It continued till 23 days.
- Here Hiuen Tsang explained and established superiority of values of Mahayana doctrine over others.
- However, violence broke out and an assassination attempt was made on Harsha's life.

Allahabad Assembly also known as Prayag Assembly:

- It was held for 75 days where quinquennial distribution by the king to the people happened.
- Hiuen Tsang was invited by Harshavardhan to withdraw this sixth distribution of alms and gifts(Maha Moksha Parishad) at Prayag.
- Hiuen Tsang writes that Harsha actually gave away everything in the royal treasury.

Harshavardhana was the ruler of which ancient Indian kingdom?

- a) Maurya Empire
- b) Gupta Empire
- c) Chola Kingdom
- d) Kannauj Kingdom

Solution: d) Kannauj Kingdom

Harshavardhana belonged to which dynasty?

- a) Maurya Dynasty
- b) Gupta Dynasty
- c) Rashtrakuta Dynasty
- d) Pushyabhuti Dynasty

Solution: d) Pushyabhuti Dynasty

Harshavardhana's reign is known as the Golden Age of which region?

- a) Kannauj
- b) Magadha
- c) Kalinga
- d) Kashmir

Solution: a) Kannauj

Harshavardhana ascended the throne in which century?

- a) 5th century
- b) 6th century
- c) 7th century
- d) 8th century

Solution: c) 7th century

Harshavardhana was a patron of which religion?

- a) Buddhism
- b) Hinduism
- c) Jainism
- d) Islam

Solution: c) Jainism

Harshavardhana was known for his military campaigns against which kingdom?

- a) Chola Kingdom
- b) Gupta Empire
- c) Kannauj Kingdom
- d) Kalinga Kingdom

Solution: d) Kalinga Kingdom

Which Chinese traveler visited Harshavardhana's court and wrote extensively about his reign?

- a) Hiuen Tsang
- b) Marco Polo
- c) Ibn Battuta
- d) Fa Xian

Solution: a) Hiuen Tsang

Harshavardhana's capital city was:

- a) Pataliputra
- b) Ujjain
- c) Kanyakubja
- d) Kannauj

Solution: d) Kannauj

Harshavardhana was a great patron of art and literature. He wrote a play in Sanskrit known as:

- a) Abhijnanasakuntalam
- b) Mudrarakshasa
- c) Nagananda

d) Mricchakatika

Solution: c) Nagananda

Harshavardhana was defeated by which ruler in the Battle of Narmada?

a) Pulakeshin II

b) Samudragupta

c) Prithviraj Chauhan

d) Rajendra Chola I

Solution: a) Pulakeshin II

Harshavardhana's administration was based on the principles outlined in which ancient Indian text?

a) Arthashastra

b) Manusmriti

c) Ramayana

d) Mahabharata

Solution: a) Arthashastra

Harshavardhana is credited with the establishment of a famous university in which city?

a) Nalanda

b) Taxila

c) Vikramashila

d) Kannauj

Solution: a) Nalanda

Which famous poet and scholar adorned Harshavardhana's court and wrote the famous Kavya, "Ritusamhara"?

a) Kalidasa

b) Magha

c) Bharavi

d) Banabhatta

Solution: b) Magha

Harshavardhana's sister, Rajyashri, was married to which ruler of the Vakataka dynasty?

- a) Pravarasena II
- b) Rudrasena II
- c) Harishena
- d) Narendrasena

Solution: c) Harishena

Harshavardhana's empire extended from the present-day region of:

- a) Bengal to Bihar
- b) Rajasthan to Punjab
- c) Tamil Nadu to Kerala
- d) Uttar Pradesh to Bengal

Solution: a) Bengal to Bihar

Harshavardhana was known for his benevolence and patronage of which art form?

- a) Sculpture
- b) Painting
- c) Dance
- d) Music

Solution: d) Music

Which ancient Indian traveler and scholar visited Harshavardhana's court and wrote about the grandeur of his kingdom?

- a) Hiuen Tsang
- b) Megasthenes
- c) Fa Xian
- d) Al-Biruni

Solution: a) Hiuen Tsang

Harshavardhana's empire was divided into administrative units called:

- a) Janapadas

- b) Mahajanapadas
- c) Mandals
- d) Pradeshas

Solution: c) Mandals

Harshavardhana's reign saw the development of which language as a literary language?

- a) Sanskrit
- b) Prakrit
- c) Tamil
- d) Pali

Solution: b) Prakrit

Harshavardhana is known for his support of which religious council held in the Kannauj region?

- a) First Buddhist Council
- b) Second Buddhist Council
- c) Third Buddhist Council
- d) Fourth Buddhist Council

Solution: d) Fourth Buddhist Council

Harshavardhana was a follower of which sect of Jainism?

- a) Digambara
- b) Shwetambara
- c) Sthanakvasi
- d) Terapanthi

Solution: b) Shwetambara

Harshavardhana's reign is known for its promotion of which form of literature that combines poetry and drama?

- a) Kavya
- b) Nataka
- c) Prabandha
- d) Gatha

Solution: c) Prabandha

Harshavardhana's court was adorned by the famous poet and scholar, Banabhatta, who wrote the biography of Harshavardhana in which work?

- a) Kadambari
- b) Nagananda
- c) Harshacharita
- d) Raghuvamśa

Solution: c) Harshacharita

Harshavardhana's reign is known for the development of a unique style of architecture known as:

- a) Dravidian architecture
- b) Nagara architecture
- c) Vesara architecture
- d) Gupta architecture

Solution: b) Nagara architecture

Harshavardhana is known for his patronage of which famous Buddhist pilgrim site?

- a) Bodh Gaya
- b) Sarnath
- c) Kushinagar
- d) Nalanda

Solution: d) Nalanda

Harshavardhana's empire was known for its vibrant trade relations with which foreign kingdom?

- a) Roman Empire
- b) Persian Empire
- c) Chinese Empire
- d) Egyptian Empire

Solution: c) Chinese Empire

Harshavardhana is credited with the construction of which famous canal to facilitate irrigation and agriculture?

- a) Indira Gandhi Canal
- b) Sirhind Canal
- c) Sharda Canal
- d) Grand Trunk Canal

Solution: d) Grand Trunk Canal

Harshavardhana's court was a center of learning and intellectual discourse. He invited scholars from various regions, including:

- a) Persia
- b) Greece
- c) Tibet
- d) All of the above

Solution: d) All of the above

Harshavardhana's reign is known for the revival of which ancient Indian system of education?

- a) Gurukula system
- b) Nalanda system
- c) Takshashila system
- d) Taxila system

Solution: a) Gurukula system

Harshavardhana's reign came to an end with his death in which year?

- a) 606 CE
- b) 642 CE
- c) 647 CE
- d) 648 CE

Solution: c) 647 CE