



## A Review of Sources of Mauryan History

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**Abstract :** The History of India starts with the Indus Valley Civilization and the happening to the Aryans. These two stages are for the most part portrayed as the pre-Vedic and Vedic periods. The most punctual scholarly source that reveals insight into India's past is the Rig Veda. It is hard to date this work with any exactness

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based on custom and equivocal cosmic data contained in the psalms. It is in all probability that Rig Veda was formed between 1,500 B.C. what's more, 1,000 B.C. In the fifth century, vast parts of India were joined under Ashoka.

The sixth Century B.C. was a time of extraordinary tumult in India. The kingdom of Magadha, one of the 16 extraordinary Janapadas had turned out to be central over different kingdoms of the Ganges Valley. This period additionally observed the rise of different heterodox orders in India. This was the time when Buddhism and Jainism developed as mainstream protestant developments to represent a genuine test to Brahmanic conventionality.

This period was trailed by the Mauryas of whom the most renowned was Ashoka the Great. The limits of his domain stretched out from Kashmir and Peshawar in the North and Northwest to Mysore in the South and Orissa in the East – however his acclaim rests less on military triumphs but rather more on his commended renunciation of war.

For the following four hundred years (after the colossal Mauryas), India remained politically separated and powerless. It was more than once assaulted and looted by nonnatives. Steadiness was reestablished by the Guptas. The Gupta age was the time of peace and success and saw an extraordinary blossoming of craftsmanship, writing and the sciences. This period likewise observed the start of Hindu sanctuary design.

### Sources of Mauryan History:

There are two types of sources of Mauryan History. One is Literary and the other is Archaeological. The literary sources include Kautilya's Arthashastra, Visakha Datta's Mudra Rakshasa , Megasthenese's Indica, Buddhist literature and Puranas. The archaeological



sources include Ashokan Edicts and inscriptions and material remains such as silver and copper punch-marked coins.

## **1. Literary Sources**

### ***a) Kautilya's Arthashastra***

It is a book written by Kautilya (other name of Chanakya) on polity and governance. It reveals the economic and political conditions of the Mauryan period. Kautilya was the Prime Minister of Chandragupta Maurya, founder of Mauryan dynasty.

### ***b) Mudra Rakshasa***

The book was written by Visakha Datta in Gupta period. The book gives an account of how Chandragupta Maurya defeated Nandas with help from Chanakya besides throwing light on socio-economic conditions.

### ***c) Indica***

Indica was authored by Megasthenese who was the ambassador of Seleucus Nikator in Chandragupta Maurya's court. It depicts administration in Mauryan Empire, 7-caste system and absence of slavery in India. Although it is lost in its original form, it has survived in the form of quotations in the text of classical Greek writers such as Plutarch, Strabo and Arrian.

### ***d) Buddhist Literature***

Buddhist texts such as Jatakas reveal socio-economic conditions of Mauryan period while Buddhist chronicles Mahavamsa and Dipavamsa throws light on the role of Ashoka in spreading Buddhism to Sri Lanka. Divyavadam, the Tibetan Buddhist text informs us about Ashoka's efforts in spreading Buddhism.

### ***e) Puranas***

Puranas reveals us the lists of Mauryan kings and the chronology.

## **Archaeological Sources**

### ***Ashokan Edicts***

Ashokan Edicts in the form of Rock Edicts, Pillar Edicts and Cave Inscriptions are found at different places in Indian Sub-continent. These edicts were deciphered by James Prinsep in



1837 AD. The majority of the edicts are mainly Ashoka's proclamations to the public while few of them describes Ashoka's acceptance of Buddhism.

### ***Material Remains***

Material remains such as NBPW (Northern Black Polished Ware), silver and copper punch-marked coins throws light on Maurya period.

### **Conclusion :**

Chandragupta Maurya was the author of the Maurya Empire in India. He is credited with uniting the little divided kingdoms of the nation and consolidating them into a solitary huge realm. According to the Greek and Latin records, King Chandragupta Maurya is known as Sandracottos or Andracottus.

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