

# ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM OF CHANDRA GUPTA MAURYA

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**Abstract:** *The Maurya dynasty was founded by Chandragupta Maurya, who seems to have belonged to some ordinary family. Mauryas organized a very elaborate system of administration. Chandragupta Maurya was evidently an autocrat who concentrated all power in his hands. The empire was divided into a number of provinces, and each province was placed under a prince who was a scion of the royal dynasty. Chandragupta was a great Conqueror, a daring soldier and a dynamic administrator. Though the government was a monarchical pattern, yet powers were not monopolized. Administration was based on certain scientific principles and attempt was made to ensure uniform administration throughout the empire. As a matter of fact, he was the first emperor who brought a political unity, ruled a vast territory where one rule and one administration prevailed. He believed in progressive and impartial justice system.*

**Keywords:** Maurya dynasty, Elaborate system, Political unity, Daring soldier, etc.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Chandragupta Maurya was the founder of the Maurya Empire in ancient India. He was born in a humble family, orphaned and abandoned, raised as a son by another pastoral family, was picked up, taught and counselled by Chanakya- a Hindu Brahmin also known as Kautilya and the author of the Arthashastra. Chandragupta with his Counselor Chanakya thereafter together built one of the largest empires even on the Indian subcontinent. According to Jain sources, he then renounced in all, became a monk in the Jain tradition. His grandson was emperor Ashoka, famous for his historic pillars and for his role in helping spread Buddhism outside of ancient India. Chandragupta's life and accomplishments are described in ancient Greek, Hindu, Buddhist and Jain text, but they vary significantly. In Greek and Latin accounts Chandragupta is referred to as Sandrokottos or Androcottus. Chandragupta Maurya was a pivotal figure in the history of India. Prior to his consolidation of power, Alexander the Great had invaded the northwest Indian subcontinent, then abandoned his campaign in 324 BCE and left a legacy of several Indo-Greek Kingdoms in the northwest ancient India. Chandragupta created a new empire applied the principles of statecraft, built a large army and continued expanding the boundaries of his empire. Greek rulers such as Seleucus/Nicator avoided war with him, entered into a marriage alliance instead, and retreated into Persia. Chandragupta's empire extended from Bengal to most of the Indian subcontinent except for parts that are now Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Odisha. Chandragupta's reign, as well as the dynasty that followed him, was an era of expansion of infrastructure such as irrigation, roads and mines. In his empire and those of his descendants many religions thrived in India, with Buddhism, Jainism and Ajivika gaining prominence along with the Brahmanic traditions.

## II. ADMINISTRATION OF CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA

Chandragupta Maurya was not only an outstanding conqueror and an able empire builder but also he was one of the strongest administrations. He was practical statesman and had well realised that a good administration, in the strong back bone of a kingdom. In the field of administration, he was fortunate to have the assistance of an able Minister in Chanakya. No doubt his Government was monarchical, but it was based on democratic setup. The contemporary source which highlights Chandragupta's administration are the India of Megasthenes and the Arthashastra of Kautilya. Besides these two, the inscriptions of Ashoka and Rudradaman and literary sources like Divyavadana and Mudrarakshasa also throw light on Maurya Administration. The king was at the apex of the administration. As the head of the state, has the embodiment of the mighty and majesty of the nation. Chandragupta ruled over a vast empire. His empire contained many types of people with different social customs and usages. So he was the fountain source of Law for the unity of the administration. He shouldered huge responsibilities and worked as the guardian of Law but not as the law-giver himself. Though the king was very powerful, yet he did not claim divinity. According to Kautilya, "Dharma, Contract, Custom, and royal decree, are the four legs of Law. This means that the king's order or decree was above all other forms of Law. So the king ruled according to law, conventions and with the advice of the council of Ministers.

He was duty bound to work for the welfare of the people and keep them happy and contented. In the happiness of his subjects lives the happiness of the king in their good in his own good and not in what is pleasing to him. He must find his pleasure in the pleasure of his subject.

According to Kautilya a king should be man of high birth, should possess intelligence and spiritual powers. He should be truthful, courageous, of religious disposition courteous etc.

The king according to Kautilya, was the Government itself. He appointed his ministers, priests, officers, and servants. The king was required to trust nobody and therefore, he was to employ spies to know about the conduct of the officers and of the people. The Maurya intelligence department was thorough and efficient, with its network of secret informers everywhere.

## III. MANTRI PARISHAD

There was a Mantri Parishad to assist Chandragupta Maurya. The king did all his work with the assistance of his ministers. The size of the council, as recommended by Kautilya, could be only three to four, or as many as the king required according to his need.

## IV. THE KING'S PALACE AND THE CAPITAL ADMINISTRATION

The Palace of Chandragupta Maurya symbolized the wealth and power of his empire. According to the Greek sources, the splendor of the Palace of Pataliputra excelled that of the Persian Palaces of Susa and Ekbatane. There were a number of apartments for the King, members of his family, bodyguards and archers, kinsmen and ministers and the armed soldiers, Chinese traveler Fabian wrote, "The King's palace in the city, with its various halls, all built by spirits who piled up stones, constructed walls and gates, carved, designed, engraved and inlaid, after no human fashion, is still in existence". The Capital of the Maurya Empire, Pataliputra was the centre of the imperial administration. It was built at the confluence of the two rivers, the Ganges and the Son.

## V. THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

The King was at the apex of judicial administration. There were chains of courts right from the village tribunals at the bottom. The village headman and village elders usually settled the smaller disputes within their local area. There were two types of higher courts namely civil and criminal. The civil courts were known as the “Dharamasthaniya” Courts. The civil courts were presided over by three Amatyas assisted by three learned Brahmins called Dharmastha. These courts dealt with cases of disputes as on marriage, divorce, dowry, inheritance of property, houses, lands, boundaries, debts, contracts etc. The criminal courts termed as the “Kantarodhna” Courts were presided over by three Amatyas assisted by a number of spies and agents. These courts tried murders, traitors, to the country, political offenders, thieves, violators of Laws and criminals. According to Megasthenes, the Maurya system of punishment was very severe and crimes were extremely rare. Rines, forced labour, whipping, mutilation and execution were methods of punishment. Kautilya refers to a number of prevailing modes of torture, and suggests that, “Those whose guilt is believed to be true shall be subjected to torture. Military Administration: This military administration was very elaborate and efficient. The highest officer of the army was the Senapati, who got a salary equal to that of High Minister. According to Megasthenes, Chandragupta Maurya had a big and powerful army of 60,000 infantry, 60,000 horsemen, 3,000 chariots and 9,000 elephants. The army was efficiently organized by a council of thirty members which was further divided into six Boards of Five men each. The boards were as follows:

### I. The Navy:

The first board was in charge of the Navy and worked in co-operation with the admiral. Ships were maintained by the state. They navigated the rivers and ventured to the sea. Taxes were also collected from the merchants by this Board.

### II. Supply and Transport:

The second board was in charge of supply and transport and worked in co-operation with the superintendent of bullock-carts. The bullock-carts were used for transporting war materials and food for the soldiers.

### III. The Infantry:

The third board was in-charge of infantry under the Pahlavayaksha. The soldiers were equipped with bows and arrows, swords and also Javelins.

### IV. The Cavalry:

The fourth board was in-charge of cavalry whose superintendent appears to have been the

### V. Elephant:

The fifth board was in-charge of war elephant, whose superintendent was probably the Hasthadhyaksha.

### VI. The Chariots:

The Sixth board in-charge of the war chariots was probably under an officer named Rathadhayaksha.

### VII. Spy System:

The spy system during Maurya period helped the government and the king in a big way to function effectively. The spies were competent and loyal to the king. They kept the king informed about all kinds of developments of the state and the neighboring countries. They collected clues about conduct integrity of the Ministers and officials and informed the king. They also kept touch with public opinions on important matters and furnished intelligence to

the kin. Many women were engaged and utilized in such work. The spy system of Chandragupta was highly efficient and useful.

### **VIII. Revenue Administration:**

As regards the revenue of the state, taxes were collected both in cash and in kind. The local officers collected the revenue. The land revenue was the chief source of income of the state. It was collected at the rate of one fourth of the produce of the land. Revenue were also collected from trade custom, excise, toll, forests, and mines. The house tax, water tax, coinage, birth and death tax also constituted the sources of revenue. The officer in-charge of the revenue department was called Samaharta.

### **IX. Provincial Administration:**

The extensive Maurya Empire was divided into some big provinces. The administration of the provinces was placed either in hands of the governors or the princes of the royal house acting as viceroys and called as Kumaras.

The exact number of the provinces at the time of Chandragupta is not known. Asokeu Inscriptions refers to the headquarters of some provinces. They were Kausambi, Ujjayini, Takshasil, Suvarnagiri, and Tosali. The Maurya province was administrated by several classes of officials. Among them were the Pradsibeas. It is obvious that provinces were administrated according to the directions from the centre. The provinces were divided into districts or Janapadas, having their administrative officers.

### **X. Local Administration:**

It was for the administrative convenience, that the province was divided into source Janapadas ordinaries each Janapadas into some Gangs or sthanas and each sthana into some villages. The Sthanikas and Gopas carried out the administration of the district. While the Sthanika was in-charge one greater district or Janapada, the Gopa was in-charge of five to ten villages. The Sthanikas and Gopas were responsible to Sameharta, the Minister of Finance and interior. The village was the lowest unit of administration. The gramik was the village headmen who carried the administration of each village with the help of village elders. Villages enjoyed antonomy.

The administration of the Capital city of Patliputra by a municipal commission of thirty members. They were divided into six Boards with five members each. The boards were entrusted with following duties respectively. The first board was to look after everything relating to industrial art, the record board to take care of the foreigners, besides controlling the inns and taking care of the resident in the city the third board to record the birth's and death's; the fourth board to superintendent the trade and commerce; the fifth board to supervise the manufactured articles; the sixth board to collect the tax of ten percent charge and the sales. But apart from these functions, the commission in its collections responsibly looks after matters of general interest, such as the supervision of markets, harbours, temples, and keeping of trouble building in proper repair. Thus the Maurya Empire enjoyed a very sound administration board on enlightened despotism.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

Chandragupta was not only a great conqueror but also a capable administrator. The way he carried on the administrations of his empire was pursued by his successors and no change was felt necessary. But the time of the Mauryas, the office of the king had become hereditary and the divine origin of monarchy had attained maturity and have given the king wide powers.

Though his system of administration was of a very centralized type having a powerful bureaucracy at the centre, yet much was left for the local self Government. The administration paid due attention for trade, commerce, industry, agriculture and public welfare activities. Of course, the necessity of a strong king was interested but it was equally emphasized that they had to rule according to the Dharma and for the establishment of the Dharma which was conducive to the highest good.

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