

## UPSC Civil Services Examination

### UPSC Notes [GS-I]

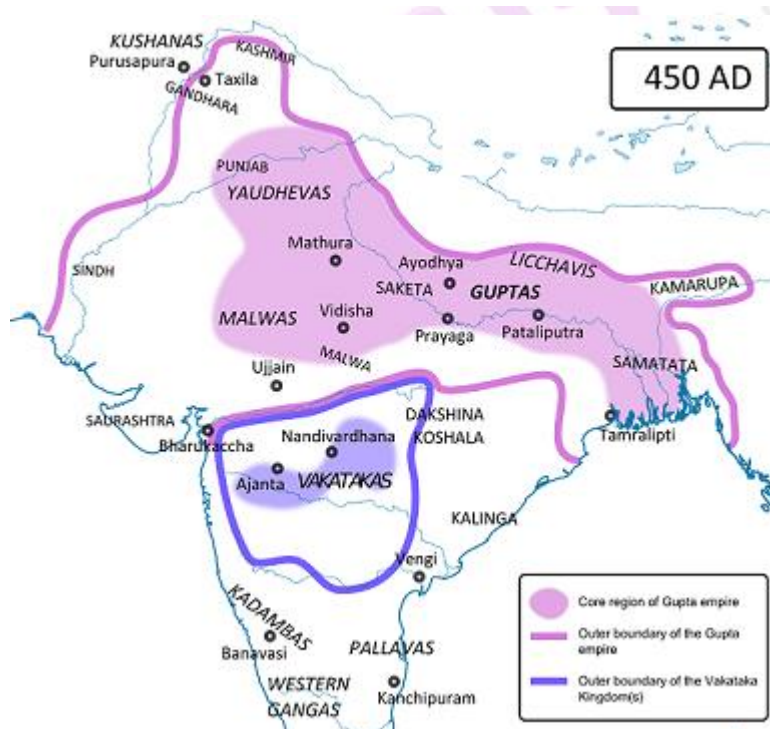
#### Topic: The Vakataka Dynasty [Ancient Indian History Notes for UPSC]

#### Vakataka Dynasty

The Vakataka dynasty ruled parts of South-Central India from 250 AD to 500 AD. They were important rulers whose power was firmly established in the Deccan just like their contemporaries, the Guptas in the north. They were important successors of the Satavahanas.

#### Origins

- The Vakatakas were Brahmins.
- Their origins are not clear with some claiming they are a northern family while others claim they originated in southern India.
- They have Sanskrit and Prakrit inscriptions which are similar to those belonging to the southern Pallavas.
- Also, no records of the Vakatakas have been found north of the Narmada. They are also mentioned in the Puranas.



#### Extent

The Vakataka kingdom extended from the southern extremities of Malwa and Gujarat in the north to the Tungabhadra River in the south; and from the Arabian Sea in the west to the edges of Chhattisgarh in the east.

## Rulers

Vindhyashakti (Reign: 250 – 270 AD)

- Founder of the dynasty.
- Nothing much is known about him except information from an Ajanta cave inscription stating that he is the banner of the Vakataka family and that he is a Dvija (Brahmin).

Pravarasena I (Reign: 270 – 330 AD)

- Son and successor of Vindhyashakti.
- His other titles include Samrat, Dharmamaharaja and Haritiputra.
- His empire included a good portion of northern India and the Deccan.
- He conducted Vedic rituals like Ashwamedha, Vajapeya, etc.
- He conducted wars with the Nagas.
- He had four sons as per the Puranas and it is possible that the empire split up among his sons.
- His son Gautamiputra died before him and his grandson (son of Gautamiputra) Rudrasena I succeeded him to the throne.
- After his death, there were two divisions of the Vakatakas.
  - i. Pravarapura-Nandivardhana Branch
  - ii. Vatsagulma Branch

## Pravarapura-Nandivardhana Branch

This branch ruled over Pravarapura (in present Wardha, Maharashtra), Mansar and Nandivardhan in present Nagpur district.

Rudrasena I (Reign: 330 – 355 AD)

- Grandson of Pravarasena I.
- He was succeeded by his son Prithvishena I who reigned from 355 – 380 AD.

Rudrasena II (Reign: 380 - 385 AD)

- Son of Prithvishena I.
- Married Prabhavatigupta, daughter of Chandragupta II.
- Rudrasena II died leaving behind minor sons and during this time, the imperial Guptas of the north is said to have controlled the Vakatakas through Prabhavatigupta who was the regent on behalf of her sons.

Pravarasena II (Reign: 400 - 440 AD)

- Was named Damodarasena.
- Second son of Rudrasena II.
- He became the king after his elder brother Diwakarasena died.
- Founded the city of Pravarapura.
- Also composed Setubandha in Maharashtri Prakrit.

## Vatsagulma Branch

This branch ruled over the territory between the Sahyadri Range and the Godavari River with its capital at Vatsagulma (present Washim, Maharashtra).

Sarvasena (Reign: 330 - 355 AD)

- Son of Pravarasena I.
- He authored Harivijaya in Prakrit.

Harishena (Reign: 475 - 500 AD)

- Fifth generation descendent of Sarvasena.
- Patronised Buddhist art and architecture.
- Many of the Buddhist caves, Viharas and Chaityas at Ajanta were executed under his reign. Ajanta is a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1983.
- The later caves at Ajanta show the high perfection and sophistication in art achieved under the Vakataka kings particularly Harishena.
- After his death, he was probably succeeded by a few rulers but not much is known about the end of the dynasty.