

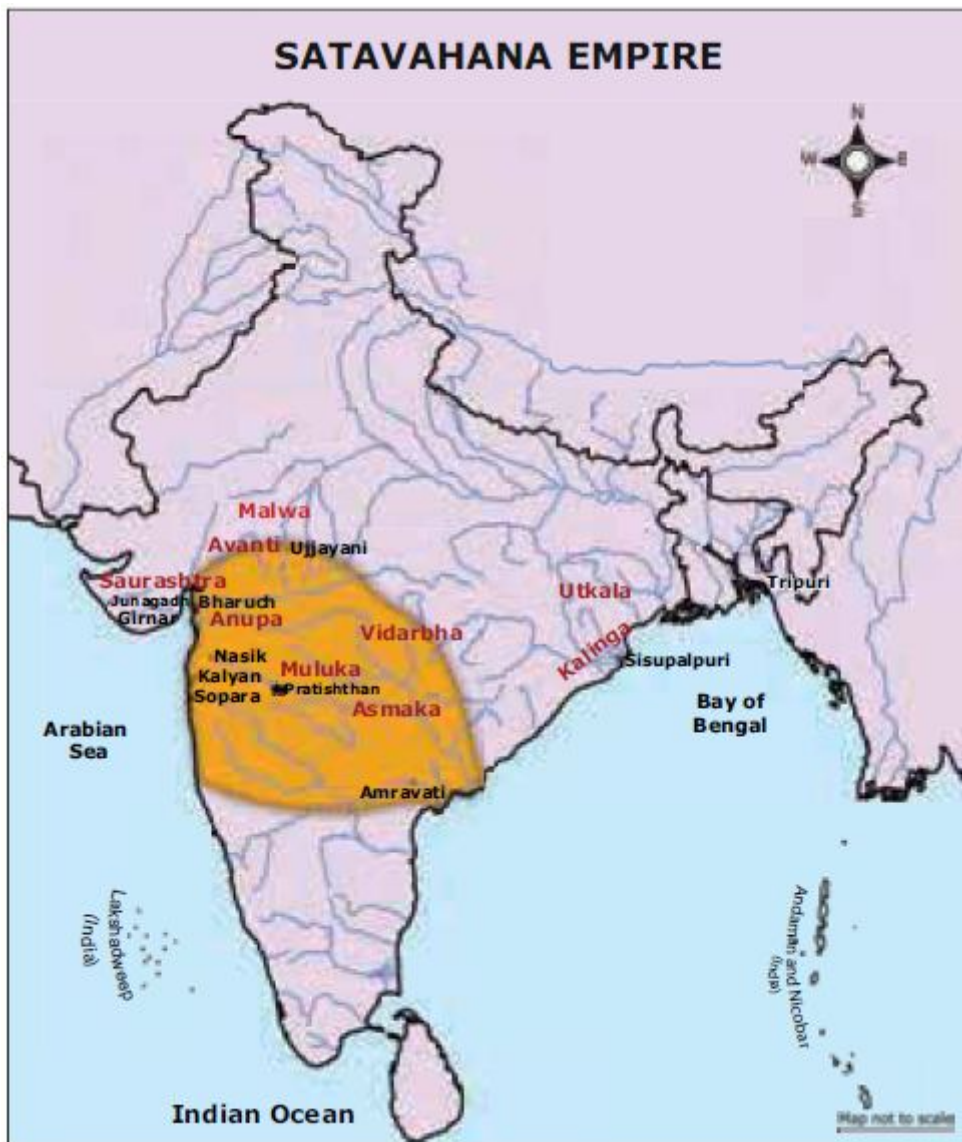
Satavahana Era

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Emergence of Satavahanas

The most important of the **native successors of the Mauryas** in the north were the Shungas, **followed by the Kanvas**. In the Deccan and central India, the Satavahanas succeeded the Mauryas, although after a gap of about 100 years in the **first century BCE**. They ruled over parts of Andhra, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh. They were also known as the **Andhras**.



Map: Satavahans

Satavahana Dynasty - Rulers and their Contributions	
Period: 60 BC - 225 AD	Capital: Pratishthana (Paithan) and Amravati
• Sources: The Puranas and inscriptions remain important sources for the history of Satavahanas. • It majorly comprised present Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Telangana. The early Satavahana kings appeared in Maharashtra and later in Andhra. • Deccan state: For the first time, a prominent state covering a major part of the Deccan was established. ◦ Several rock-cut caves dedicated to the Buddha sangha bear evidence that they were situated in the trade routes linking the interior to the coastal parts of the Konkan region. • It was also a period of brisk Indo- Roman trade.	

Simuka (60 BC- 37 BC)	• Founder of the Satavahana dynasty and is mentioned as the first king in a list of royals in a Satavahana at <u>Naneghat inscription</u>. • Also referred to as Balipuccha in some texts. • He was succeeded by his brother Kanha (Krishna).
Satakarni I (70- 60 BC)	• Sources: Described as Dakshinapathapati in the Naneghat inscription, which was written by his wife, Nayanika. ◦ Mentioned in the <u>Hathigumpha inscription</u> of Kharvela. • Conquered western Malwa from Shungas.
Hala	• Sources: Mentioned in Matsya Purana as the 17th ruler of the Satavahana dynasty. • Literature: Compiled "The Gatha Sattasai", a collection of poems. ◦ Gunadhya (composed Brihatkatha) was a scholar in his court.
Gautamiputra Satakarni (106-130 AD):	• Sources and titles:: ◦ Described as Ekabrahman in Nasik (by his mother, Gautami Balashri) and Nanaghad inscriptions. ◦ Title of Kshatriyadarpa Mardana (Destroyer of the Pride of Kshatriyas) in Nasik inscription. ◦ Known as the destroyer of the Sakas, Pahlavas and Yavanas. • Patronage to Brahmins: He patronised Brahmanism, but he also donated land to the Buddhist monks. Karle inscription mentions the grant of a village by him to the Buddhist monks. • Expansion of the empire: His rule extended from Malwa and Saurashtra in the north to Krishna River in the south and from Konkan in the west to Vidarbha in the east. ◦ He captured the whole of Deccan and expanded his empire. His victory over Nagapana, the ruler of Malwa, was remarkable. ◦ According to the Junagadh inscription of Rudradaman I, he was defeated by Kardamaka ruler Rudradaman I, a Western Kshatrapa dynasty.
Vashishtaputra Pulamayi (130 - 154 AD)	• Sources: Karla Caves' inscription has mentioned him. His marriage with the daughter of Rudradaman I is mentioned in Junagadh inscriptions. • Contribution: He extended his reign up to the mouth of the Krishna River and issued coins with images of ships inscribed on them. ◦ He repaired the old <u>Amaravathi stupa</u>.

Yajna Sri Satakarni (165 - 194 AD)	• Sources: The inscriptions at Kanheri Caves mention his reign. • Expansion of the empire: He was the last great ruler of Satavahanas. He conquered Kokan and Malwa from the Shaka rulers.
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Table - Satavahanas Dynasty

Art and Architecture during Satavahanas

Art and Architecture	
• As the Satavahanas acted as a bridge between North and South India, similarly, their material culture was a fusion of both local Deccan elements as well as northern ingredients. • Contributions: Caves 9 and 10 of Ajanta paintings were patronised by Satavahana. ◦ They patronised and promoted the Amravati School of Art. ◦ They enlarged Ashokan Stupas and replaced the earlier bricks and wood with stone. Example: Amaravati Stupa and the Nagarjunakonda Stupa. ◦ Development of rock-cut architecture: Chaityas and viharas were cut from solid rock in north-western Deccan. Chaitya was a place of worship, whereas Vihara (monastery) was a place of residence for monks. Eg. Karle Chaitya in <u>Ajanta Caves</u>.	
Amravati School of Art (Andhra Pradesh) 	• Nature: It was developed indigenously and not influenced by external cultures. • Material used: White marble. • Theme: It mainly had a Buddhist influence. • Sculptures are generally part of narrative art, so there is less emphasis on the individual features of Buddha. The sculptures generally depict the life stories of Buddha and the Jataka tales. • Location: It developed in the Krishna-Godavari lower valley, in and around Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda.

Amravati Stupa (Andhra Pradesh)



- **Discovery:** It was discovered by **Colin Mackenzie**
 - Amravati Stupa was **built during the 3rd century BC** by Satvahanas.
- **Features:** The **domical stupa structure** is covered with a relief stupa sculpture slab which is a unique feature.
 - **Themes:** The sculptures on stupas are drawn on themes based on **Jataka and other Buddhist stories**. The dream of Queen Mayadevi is also depicted here.
- **Patrons:** **Ikshvakus** were responsible for building the stupas at Nagarjunakonda and their equally beautiful carvings.

Table - Art and architecture during Satavahanas

Polity and Administration

- **Nature:** Satavahans **retained some of the administrative features of Mauryas**. The king was represented as the upholder of dharma. They had **a decentralised** administration.
 - **Aharas:** sub-divisions of the Kingdom into districts (administered by Amatyas or Mahamatras).
 - **Rashtras:** The administrative divisions were also called **Rashtras**, and their officials were called **Maharashtrikas**.
 - **Grama:** It was the lowest level of administration under the charge of a **Gramika or Gaulmika** (head of the military regiment consisting of nine chariots, nine elephants, twenty-five horses and forty-five-foot soldiers)
- **Major officials** associated with the administration:
 - **Senapati:** Provincial governor
 - **Feudal system:** had three grades of feudatories:
 - Raja (had the right to strike coins),
 - Mahabhoja
 - Senapati.
- **Language:** The official language was **Prakrit**, but the script was **Brahmi**. The Satavahanas also used **Sanskrit** in political inscriptions, but rarely.
- **Military administration:**
 - **Katakas and Skandhvaras:** These were the special military camps or cantonment areas.
 - Military strength: According to **Pliny**, the Andhra kingdom maintained an army of 100,000 infantry, 2000 cavalry and 1000 elephants.
- **The practice of tax-free villages:** The Satavahanas **started the practice of granting tax-free villages to Brahmanas and Buddhist monks**. The cultivated fields and villages granted to them were declared **free from intrusion by royal policemen, soldiers, and other royal officers**.
- Revenue was collected both in **cash and kind**.

Economy

The period was known for remarkable progress in trade and economy.

- **Progress in the fields of trade and industry:** Increased activities of organised merchant guilds (**Sethi**) were witnessed during this period.
- **Trade: Ptolemy** mentions many ports in the Deccan. (Western port: Kalyani; Eastern ports: Gandakasela and Ganjam)
 - **Trade centres: Pratishthana and Tagara** were two important Satavahana trade centres mentioned by the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea. **Sopara and Bharuch** were import trading outposts.
 - **Import items:** wine, cloth, choice unguents, glass and sweet clover.
- **Agriculture:** Economic expansion through the **intensification of agriculture** was done.
 - **Paddy** transplantation was known, and other agricultural crops were being cultivated. In foreign accounts, **Andhra** was mentioned for its **cotton** products.
- **Other occupations: Gandhikas** (perfumers) were mentioned as donors (a general term to connote all kinds of shopkeepers).
- **Extensive coinage system:** Issued **potin** (a mixture of copper, tin and lead), copper and bronze coins. The Satavahana kings mostly used lead as a material for their coins. Silver coins, called **Karshapanas** were used for trade.
 - The coins were inscribed with animal motifs and **names of 'Satakarni' and 'Pulumavi'** with different shapes.
 - On one side, most of the Satavahana coins had the figure of an elephant, horse, lion or Chaitya. The other side showed the **Ujjain symbol** - a cross with four circles at the end of the two crossing lines. **The dialect used was Prakrit.**
 - **Other purposes:** Although the coins were **devoid of any beauty or artistic merit**, they constituted a valuable **source material for the dynastic history** of the Satavahanas.

Religion and Society

- **Religion:**
 - The Satavahana rulers were **Brahmanas**, and they represented the march of triumphant Brahmanism.
 - They performed Vedic sacrifices such as Ashvamedha and Vajapeya paying liberal sacrificial fees to the Brahmanas.
 - They also worshipped a large number of **Vaishnava** gods, such as Krishna and Vasudeva.
 - They also patronised Buddhism by giving land grants to the monks.
- **Society:**
- **Social structure:** Varna and Ashrama systems continued to govern the society. The society consisted of four Varnas: **Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Sudra.**
 - Due to flourishing trade and commerce, **merchants and artisans formed an important social strata.** Merchants generally named themselves after the towns to which they belonged.
- **Position of women:** The position of women was better compared to other kingdoms, as kings bore their mother's name instead of their fathers'. This shows a **matrilineal social structure**, especially in the royal

families.

- The emergence of **large settlements** was seen in fertile areas due to agricultural expansion.

Decline of Satavahana Period

Various reasons mentioned below were collectively responsible for the decline of the Satavahana dynasty:

- **Line of weak rulers:** Rulers after Yajnashri Satakarni were considered poor and weak. He was the last powerful Satavahana ruler.
 - **Huge empire:** The kingdom was divided between Yajnasri Satakarni's successors, who were inefficient in handling a huge empire.
- **Loss of centralised power:** After the death of Yajna Satakarni and the rule of weak rulers, there was a rise of its feudatories, possibly as a result of a loss of centralised power.
- **Division of empire:** The Satavahana empire broke up into five smaller kingdoms after the death of Pulumavi IV:
- Satavahanas kings were succeeded by the **Kings of the Ikshvaku dynasty.**

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/upsc-exam/satavahana-era/>

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