Exploring and Assessing Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya

(ABSTRACT)

Dr. Kavita Rani\*

Religion is a potent and dominating force that overcomes polity; the nature of governance may be dictatorship, bureaucracy or aristocracy etc. History stands witness to the down fall of fanatic Mughal rule of Emperor Aurangzeb which doubtlessly flourished during the reign of Akbar, the Great Mughal. The problem of religion of multiple societies was duly noted and solved by Emperor Akbar by inducing *Din-e-Alahi* though it did not last long. It was simply an attempt to divert the attention of the people towards practical ethics.

The Gupta rule under reference flourished on account of various reasons viz a viz the conquests of various regions, annexation of the conquered states and the positive attitude of the sovereign. It is generally held by historians that Samudra Gupta was the nation builder but a deep probe into the various activities of the Government leads us to state that Chandra Gupta I and Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya were in no way behind in making conquests and consolidating the Empire.

Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya’s rule figures in the annals of history on account of conquests and consolidation of various states as was the practices with some of his predecessors. It is to be noted here that the religion of Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya and his predecessors was Vaishnavism but they deserve praise and applaud because their support other religions. Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya surpassed them in supporting the Hindu faith. Before taking notice of his

\* Assistant Professor, Department of Distance Education, Punjabi University, Patiala

Mobile no. 9781086412

achievements in various fields it is necessary to delineate here that unlike the

Mughal Emperors he captivated the support of the masses by favouring the Hindu faith. It is quite in the fitness of things to say that by inviting the support of the Hindus and by various other significant activities he was able to bring about the golden age of the Empire. It was in the Gupta age that Brahmanism displayed Budhism. Every Gupta Emperor from Samudra Gupta down to Kumara Gupta was a Vaishnavite. Havel writes that Vaishnava propaganda figured in the Gupta age. Krishna, the hero of *Mahabharta* remained prominent in opposition to the Buddhist faith. Art was used in favour of Hindu religion rather than Buddhist faith. Sanskrit which was very sacred to the ancient Hindus was encouraged by the Guptas. Temples of Hindu Gods like Shiva and Vishnu were constructed. It can be said with confidence that the Gupta period was the age of Hindu faith.

Significant development was seen in religious literature of Hindus. The old *shashtras* and *puranas* were examined and revised. *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* were also revised. Manu’s *smiriti* was rewritten.

As a matter of fact, Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya figured in the annals of Gupta historical records chiefly because he set up the edifice of the golden age of Gupta period. So far as the political history of Gupta’s concerned, the period from the end of Kushana rule till the commencement of Gupta rule is known as dark interval because there was no sovereign who could form a consolidated kingdom. With the advent of Guptas darkness slowly and steadily vanished. Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya’s rule figures in making conquest and their consolidation. He believed in the policy of *Digvijaya*. He acquired the territories of other rulers by aggression. He sat on the throne in 380 A.D. (Controversy regarding the accession is discussed in research paper). Like his father Samudra Gupta he was a warrior of repute. Right from the beginning of his career as a ruler he started conquering different countries. He was able to fight several battles against the chiefs of Bengal and established peace after defeating the enemy. Some historians believe that it was suppression of revolt in Bengal. He also defeated the Vahlika tribe. Notably his significant achievement was victory over the Sakas. He also annexed their territories. In fact, the whole of Western India including Malwa, Gujrat etc. submitted before him. He continued making conquests for several years. The wealth commenced flowing into India during his reign. His empire lay between Himalayas in the North and the Narbada River in the South and from Bengal in the East to Saurashtra in the West.

The administration of Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya also deserves applaud. The main source of government revenue was land tax which was light. According to Fahien roads were quite safe. People were truthful. Punishments were also light. Fahien visited India during Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya’s reign. Though he did not disclose the name of king at that time yet history throws sufficient light to prove that he wrote a lot about Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya. Fahien applauds the administration of Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya. He writes about the mild penal courts, honest magistrates and law abiding citizens.

His age was known as a glorious age of Indian art and architecture. Almost every branch of art viz a viz painting, architecture, and music flourished during his reign. The paintings of this age are known as master pieces of Ajanta caves.