

Pushyabhuti Dynasty

- Hieun Tsang's travel account Si-Yu-Ki, Banbhata's Harshacharita and Aihole stone inscription of Pulkeshin II.
- Madhuban & Sonpat inscriptions records chronology of Harsha.
- Banshekhra inscriptions has a signature of Harsha.
- Pushyabhutis were feudatories of Gupta.
- They became independent after Huna invasion.
- Important rulers of this dynasty were Prabhakarvardhana, Adityavardhan and Harshavardhana.
- Harshvardhan was son of Prabhakarvardhana.

Harshavardhan (606 CE – 647 CE)

- During Harshavardhana's rule, Kannauj was conquered and united with Thanesar.
- Harshavardhana attacked Shashank of Gauda Kingdom and established his control over regions of Bengal, Bihar and Odisha and befriended Bhashkarvarman of Kamrup (Assam).
- Vallabhi King Dhruvabhata in Gujrat too was defeated and a truce was negotiated with him by marriage of Harsha's daughter to Dhruvabhata.
- He assumed titles of Uttarapathanatha or Uttarapathapati (Lord of the North).
- While marching southwards, Harshavardhan conquered regions of Malawa and after crossing Narmada he was defeated by Pulkeshin II in the Battle of Narmada.
- Harshavardhana was greatly influenced by the personality of Hieun Tsang and organized a Buddhist assembly at Kannauj under his chairmanship.
- Hieun Tsang, in his book, has appreciated Harshvardhan's justice and munificence (generosity).
- Harshavardhan, the able military commander and good administrator, died in 647 CE without heir and is regarded as the last Hindu King to have ruled large part of North India.

- Hence, his death also marks the end of Pushyabhuti dynasty and beginning of Muslim rule over North India.

Administration

- Harsha governed his empire on the same lines of Gupta.
- The basic unit of administration was a village.
- Offices under the king became hereditary as Harisena who was a ‘mahadandanayaka’, or Chief Judicial Officer inherited the office from his father.
- One person could bear more than one office as Harisena also held offices of ‘Kumaramatya’ and ‘Sangrahvighraha’
- The ‘sreshti’ (Chief Banker or Merchant), the ‘sarthavaha’ (Leader of Merchant Caravans), ‘prathamakulika’ (Chief Craftsman), and the ‘kayashthas’ (head of the scribes) were other important officers of Harsha’s administration.
- Maintenance of Public Records is important feature of Harsha rule.

Economy

- One-sixth of the produce was collected as tax and was main source of revenue.
- Taxes imposed on ports, income from mines and tributes from vassals were other important revenue sources.
- Overall, the trade and commerce are said to have declined during this phase.

Society

- According to Hiuen-Tsang, there were castes, a mix of sub-castes, untouchables and also outcastes, yet, forced labour was absent.
- The position of women declined during this period as the institution of Swyamvara (the ceremony of choosing husband) had become dysfunctional.
- Widow remarriage was not allowed and Sati & dowry system were prevalent.

Religion

- As Harshavardhan was a secular king, all sects of religion peacefully coexisted but Brahmanism grew more than others.
- Harshvardhan was Shiva devotee. Later he converted to Mahayana Buddhism.

- According to Hieun Tsang, Harsha held Allahabad conference once in 5 yrs.

Art and Culture

- A patron of art and literature, Harshavardhan patronized the Banabhatta, Mayura, Matanga Divakara etc.
- Banabhatta wrote – Harshacharita, Kadambari & Parvatiparinay.
- Harsha was a poet and composed three Sanskrit plays: Nagananda, Ratnavali, and Priyadarsika.
- Harshavardhan held 5 yearly donation (Daan) ceremony at Prayag and donated munificently in favour of: Administration, Royal Household, Scholars and Religion.
- Brick temple of Laxamana at Sirpur was built during Harsha rule.

