

**Ques-Ashoka's edicts and pillars give us a hint of the extent of the Mauryan Empire. Comment.**

**Answer:** Mauryan Empire was quite possibly the largest empire in the Indian subcontinent. It extended from Kandahar in North-West to Bramhagiri in Karnataka and from Saurashtra in West to Kalinga in East. The Mauryan Empire gave an actual shape to the idea of Jambudvipa i.e. a single geographical identity to different regions of the Indian subcontinent.

- In order to study the geographical limits of the Mauryan Empire, locations of the edicts of Ashoka are very useful.
1. The major rock edicts found from North-West i.e. Kandahar, Shahbazgarhi, Mansehra etc. prove that the Mauryans controlled the North-West.
  2. Abundance of minor rock edicts and pillar edicts in central India viz. minor rock edict at Gurjara, Rupnath, Pangurari, etc. and minor pillar edicts at Sanchi, prove the Mauryan control.
  3. Inscriptions at Rummendei, Nigali Saar, Lauriya Areraj, Lauriya Nandangarh, and Rampurva testify that the Himalayan foothills, as well as upper and middle Gangetic basins, were under the Mauryan control.
  4. Major rock edicts at Sopara, Dhauli and Jaugada prove that the Mauryans were in charge of the Konkan and Odisha regions respectively.
  5. Rock Edict XIII about the Kalinga war signifies that the Mauryans controlled this area.
  6. A cluster of minor rock edicts have been found in Karnataka viz. Nittur, Udaygolam and Bramhagiri. They hint at some sort of Mauryan authority up to this far in South India.

From the above explanation, it is clear that Ashokan pillars and edicts are major archaeological sources to study the extent of the Mauryan Empire.

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