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# Daily Mains Answer Writing (Day - 80)

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Q.) "Reconstruction of Early Indian history is hardly possible without the help of inscriptions and coins." Discuss. (250 Words).

### Answer

- The sources used to construct history can be broadly classified as literary and archaeological. When we don't have literary sources, evidences such as Inscriptions, coins, monuments, etc. play a key role to study history .

### Coins

- Numismatics help us deciphering the information about a particular era or dynasty using the data given or the symbols carved on them in terms of
  - **Political History**- e.g. that of Shakas, Kushanas.
  - **Economic History** - These usages of coins throw valuable lights on economic history as well as trading pattern of that time. Coins were often used for various other purposes such as donations, as a mode of payment and a medium of exchange. There are examples which show that guilds of merchants and goldsmiths used to mint the coins and issued the same with the permission of the ruler which shows that the crafts and commerce had become important.
  - **Cultural History** - Coins also provide some cultural insights especially during Gupta era when it depicts the emperor holding the 'Veena'. It shows that art and culture had become more important.

### Inscriptions

- Their study is known as epigraphy and involves reading the script and language in which the inscription is recorded.
  - **Socio Economic life**: Existence of few records tell us directly about the social and economic life. E.g. an inscription of the time of Chola king Rajaraja III related to unbearable taxes on cultivators and how it was settled.
  - **Politics**: Inscription are often recorded on seals, stone pillars, rocks, copperplates, temple walls, wooden tablets, bricks and images. They provide plethora of information about the contemporary political happenings, royal orders and policies and social, religious and administrative matters to officials and people in general. Example - Allahabad inscription of Samudra gupta, Junagadh inscription of Rudra daman, Nasik inscription of Gautami putra Satakarni are few such inscriptions which delves deep into the then social, political, economic and religious conditions. They also help us in ascertaining accurate dates of the rulers.

- **Religious History:** Donative records give us glimpse into sects and cults that were once important but did not leave any literature of their own like - Ajivika sect, Yaksha, Naga cults.
- **Military History:** Throw light on military conquests, various wars. For example, inscriptions by Samudragupta, Naganika, Gautami Balasri, Raja raja chola. Inscriptions help us cross-check and critically examine conflicting claims. E.g. the Gurjara-pratihara king Vatsaraja and Rastrakuta King claiming to have defeated each other and ruling Karnataka.
- Thus it would have been hardly possible to reconstruct early Indian History without coins and inscriptions especially in the light of lack of other sources.