

# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

**SUBJECT : (HISTORY)**

**CHAPTER NUMBER: 6 PERIOD-1**

**CHAPTER NAME : THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO  
MAHAJANAPADAS**

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**CHANGING YOUR TOMORROW**

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# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Political System
- The Janapadas and Mahajanapadas
  - Fortification
  - The expansion of territories
  - Maintaining of Armies
  - Taxation
  - Currency and Growth of Trade
- Magadha
- Vajji

# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## INTRODUCTION

- The Aryans had spread out over Indo-Gangetic Plains by 600 BCE.
- The Aryans first settled down in the region surrounding the Indus and its tributaries. They called this land the Sapta Sindhu or the land of the seven rivers.
- The people were grouped into tribes. The Aryan religious practices and culture made a lasting impact on local inhabitants.
- This inter-mixing gave rise to the first Post –Indus states and kingdoms.
- This period of the Aryan expansion into the Indo-Gangetic Plain is called the Later Vedic Period.

# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## JANAPADAS AND MAHAJANAPADAS

- The period after 600 BCE saw a rapid change in society. The Aryans started leading settled lives as cultivators, their settlements became permanent.
- Each settlements consisted of a single jana or tribe.
- These tribal settlements were the first states. They were called as janapadas and were ruled by rajans or chiefs.
- Mahajanapadas: The powerful states that emerged after defeating the smaller states or janapadas came to be known as Mahajanapadas.
- By 600 BCE there were a total of 16 mahajanapadas. Magadha, Avanti, Vatsa and Kosala were some of the powerful mahajanapadas.

# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## MAHAJANAPADAS



# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## EXTRA QUESTIONS

- Q1. Which period is called as the Later Vedic Period?
- Q2. When did The Aryans spread over the Indo- Gangetic Plains?
- Q3. Define Janapadas.
- Q4. What is meant by Mahajanapadas?
- Q5. By 600 BCE how many mahajanapadas were emerged?
- Q6. Name some of the important mahajanapadas.

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# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

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# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## WHAT IS A STATE?

- A state is a political organisation that has sovereignty over a geographical area.
- The Rajan or the chief of the Janapada had total control over the area where the tribe lived.
- The Rajan also imposed laws and rules over the area he ruled, which the people of the state had to obey.
- The early states were of two types: monarchies and Republics.



# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## MONARCHIES AND REPUBLICS

- The Mahajanapadas governed in two different ways. They were either governed by monarchs or had a republican form of government.
- In monarchical mahajanapadas, the king was the most powerful and used to have a hereditary system where after the death of the father the son took over the throne and was made king.
- The king was considered divine, he imposed taxes to administer the land and the army was under his control.
- The republican mahajanapadas were ruled by a group of people who were elected by the people. The republics were also known as gana- sanghas.
- Power lay with the people, not with the ruler. The republics were ruled by a chief known as the ganapati, and was not hereditary.
- The ganapati ruled like a king, the assembly played a vital role in the administration of the land and also had a strong army.

# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## FORTIFICATION / SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- The mahajanapadas had capital cities as the seat of power and authority. They were mostly well fortified. The forts were built around the capital city for two reasons:
  - i) To show the power and prosperity of the mahajanapadas.
  - ii) To provide a safe and secure environment to people, where they could live without the threat of raids and invasions from outside.



# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- The main sources of information for this period are various Buddhist, Jain and Vedic texts, the jataka tales, the Brahmanas, the Upanishads and the Ramayana and Mahabharata.
- There is also some archaeological evidence of this period.



# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## QUESTIONS /ANSWERS

Q1: Define State.

Q2: What are the main sources of information about the Later Vedic period?

Q3: What were the two types of early states?

Q4: What were the differences between monarchies and republics?

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# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

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# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## LIFE IN THE MAHAJANAPADAS

- **Growth of new crafts:** As surplus food was produced by the cultivators, some people could now take up other crafts like pottery, carpentry, blacksmithing, weaving, etc.
- Pots of different colours have been found at many sites.
- **Growth of trade and the formation of guilds :**As trade increased and spread and became a very important activity, there is a need of economic system, so the barter system could sustained.
- The traders and merchants carried textiles, pots and many other types of crafts to the market to sell.





# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## LIFE IN MAHAJANAPADAS

- Punch marked coins were used by the traders. Punch marked coins were made of silver and copper with a symbols of hills and trees.
- Important trading centres were Taxila ( Pakistan), Champa and Baharukcha( Bharuch in Gujarat).
- The crafts people were organised into guilds known as shrenis. Each shreni had prescribed rules and regulations and a code of conduct.



# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## LIFE IN MAHAJANAPADAS

- **Growth of Urban Settlements:** Most of the settlements which became towns and cities were the capitals of the mahajanapadas and janapadas.
- Important towns and cities were Pataliputra, Koshambi, Rajgir, Varanasi etc.
- The capital cities were fortified to show their power and authority.



# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## IMPOSITION OF TAXES

- The taxes were imposed by the rulers on the revenue or income earned by the people of the kingdom.
- The rajas of the mahajanapads collected taxes to administer the land and to maintain a large army for defending the kingdom.
- Types of taxes collected from the people of mahajanapads:
  - i) The farmers were required to pay  $1/6^{\text{th}}$  of their agricultural produce as tax.
  - ii) Craftsmen paid taxes either by supplying craft items or by working for a certain number of days for the king.
  - iii) The herders and hunters used to provide a portion of their produce as tax.
  - iv) Traders were also taxed on goods bought and sold.

# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q1. Why did the forts were built around the capital cities of the mahajanapadas?

Ans: The forts were built around the capital city for two reasons:

- i) To show the power and prosperity of the mahajanapadas.
- ii) To provide a safe and secure environment to people, where they could live without the threat of raids and invasions from outside.

Q2. What is fortification?

Ans: The capital cities of the mahajanapadas had walls of wood or brick around them, which is called as fortification.

Q3: Why did the rajan of mahajanapadas collect taxes from the people? Mention the type of taxes collected from the people.

Ans: The rajan of the mahajanapads collected taxes to administer the land and to maintain a large army for defending the kingdom.

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# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

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# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## MAHAJANAPADAS



# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## CASE STUDY – MAGADHA

- Magadha was one of the 16 mahajanapadas or kingdoms in ancient India. The central parts of this kingdom were located in modern day Bihar, which lies south of the Ganges. Magadha's first capital was Rajagriha ( now Rajgir), it was later shifted to Pataliputra.
- The first known ruler of this kingdom, Bimbisara(558-493 BCE), belonged to Harayanka Dynasty.
- He was a capable ruler, he set up an excellent administrative system and built an extensive network of roads and communication.
- He strengthened his position by annexing the neighbouring state of Anga.

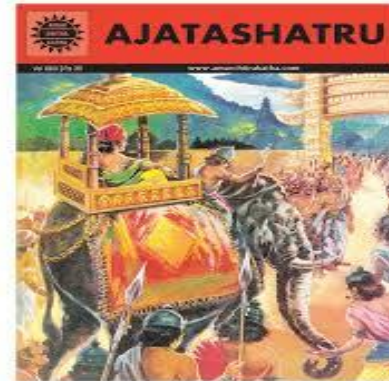




# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## CASE STUDY – MAGADHA

- Ajatshatru son of Bimbisara ascended the throne of Magadha around 493 BCE.
- He was an efficient ruler and was also considered fair and just. He was a follower of Buddhism.
- He shifted his capital to Pataliputra and built a huge fort there. He annexed Kosala and Vriji.



# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## CASE STUDY – MAGADHA

- Why did Magadha emerge so powerful?
- Magadha became the most powerful mahajanapadas as it was located in the rich Gangetic plain which helped the growth of agriculture, and made Magadha prosperous.
- There were a large deposits of iron ore which was used for making weapons, tools, etc.
- Magadha controlled the important river port of Champa, which gave it great advantage in matters of trade and in times of war.
- The forests in this region provided timber which was used to make chariots and provided animals like elephants which were effective war resources.

# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## CASE STUDY – VAJJI (VRIJJI)

- The Vajji mahajanapadas was a republic or gana- sangha.
- It was located in Bihar, north of Ganges river. Its capital was Vaishali.
- This mahajanapadas consisted of eight clans or janas to form a confederation.
- The chairman of the assembly was called the gana- pramukh. His position is not hereditary.
- Decisions on important issues were taken after discussions were held in assembly. If a decision could not be reached, the matter was put to vote.



# THE EARLY STATES- JANAPADAS TO MAHAJANAPADAS

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- Q1. What were the differences and similarities between the monarchies that emerged in the Later Vedic Period?
- Ans. Similarities: Both monarchies and republics were Mahajanapadas.
- Differences: Monarchies: In monarchical mahajanapadas, the king was the most powerful and used to have a hereditary system where after the death of the father the son took over the throne and was made king.
- The king was considered divine, he imposed taxes to administer the land and the army was under his control.
- Republics: The republican mahajanapadas were ruled by a group of people who were elected by the people. The republics were also known as gana- sanghas.
- Power lay with the people, not with the ruler. The republics were ruled by a chief known as the ganapati, and was not hereditary.
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- Strong army.

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