
Chapter – 6 History

Kingdoms Kings and Early Republic

- In the later Vedic period, the tribal organization changed their identity and gradually started shifting into a territorial identity called Janapada or states.
 - These states consisted of a single tribe like Shakyas and Molas or people from the Ganaga Valley called Aryans.
 - They did not incorporate people outside the Aryan pole.
 - There was, therefore, a strong consciousness of the pure land of the Aryans called Aryavrata.
 - **What is Janapada:**
 - (i) The term Janapada is a compound composed of 'Jana' meaning tribe and 'pada' meaning foot. Its literal meaning, thus, is realm and subject population.
 - (ii) Early Vedic texts reveal about several Janas or tribes of the Aryans living in semi-nomadic tribal state.
 - (iii) In due course of time, these early Indian Iron Age Rigveda Janas coalesced into geographically fixed Janapadas.
 - (iv) They were governed by rulers or rajas each having their own army and capital.
 - (v) The kings maintained large armies who were paid regular salaries by using punch marked coins.
 - **Features of Mahajanapadas:**
 - (i) Each Mahajanapadas was ruled by a king.
 - (ii) Villagers were controlled by a village headman called Gramini.
 - (iii) Varna system was divided into four castes-Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras.
 - **Political Organisation**
 - (i) The political organization of the mahajanpadas was organized into two forms- monarchy and republican system.
 - (ii) In a monarchy, king was the head of the state. Magadha was its example.
 - (iii) In a republican system, state was ruled by an elected chief called Ganpat. Mallas was its example.
 - **Taxation:**
 - (i) As Mahajanapadas needed huge amount of money, they imposed taxes.
 - (ii) One-sixth tax was fixed on crops; tax on crafts persons, herders, goods bought and sold through trade.
 - (iii) Further hunters and gathers had to give forest produce to the raja.
 - **Agricultural System of Mahajanapadas:**
 - (i) Two major changes were introduced in agriculture.
 - (ii) One, was the rapid use of iron ploughshares.
 - (iii) Second, people started transplanting paddy.
 - **Varna System of Mahajanapadas:**
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- (i) Varna means group in Sanskrit.
 - (ii) Varna decided one's group. It was not based on birth.
 - (iii) Gradually in later Vedic age, Varna system changed to caste system.
 - (iv) The Brahmins imparted knowledge, Kshatriyas were rulers, Vaishyas contributed to trade while Shudras were slaves who were denied entry into the mainstream.

- **Magadha and Vajji**

- (i) Magadha in South Bihar, on the banks of river Ganga was a fertile and industrial area which contributed to one of the most powerful kingdoms and some great kings like Bimbisara and Ashoka in India.
 - (ii) Vajji in northern part of Ganga, was a confederacy of eight clans of whom the Videhas, Lichchhavis and the Jnatrikas were the most popular. Vaishali was a prosperous city under them.