

## Sources of Information:

### Literary:

#### **Buddhist Texts**

- Sutta Pitaka
- Vinaya Pitaka
- Sutta Nipata

#### **Jaina texts**

- Bhagavati sutra
- Parisisthaparvan

#### **Puranas**

#### **Greek and Latin narratives**

#### **Archaeological materials:**

#### **Pottery; NBPW**

#### **Coins: Silver punch marked coins**

#### **Mudforts and other signs of Urbanisation.**

### **Introduction:**

**Around 450 BC, over forty janapadas covering even Afghanistan and south-eastern Central Asia are mentioned by Panini.**

**However, the major part of southern India was excluded.**

**The Pali texts mention sixteen of them. Nine of them also occur in Panini not as mahajanapadas but as janapadas. In the age of the Buddha we find sixteen large states called mahajanapadas. Most of these states arose in the upper and mid-Gangetic plains, including the doab area covered by the Ganges, Yamuna, and their tributaries.**

### **Details of important mahajanapadas:**

**Anga** Earliest reference to Anga is found in the Atharvaveda

- Anga comprised the modern districts of Bhagalpur and Munghyr in Bihar

The river Champa formed the boundary between

#### **Anga in the east and Magadha in the west**

- Champa was its capital ancient name of Champa was Malini
- The city of Champa was built by Mahagovinda One of the six great cities of India during the time of Buddha
- Great centre of trade and commerce

Kasi

The kingdom of Kasi was the most powerful in the beginning

- Its capital was Varanasi,
  - Bounded by the rivers Varuna and Asi on the North and South
  - Kasi was famous for cotton textiles and market for horses
  - Buddha delivered his first sermon in Saranath near Varanasi
  - Kasi was conquered by Kosala some time before the Buddha
- Kosala

The kingdom of Kosala corresponded to modern Awadh

- One of the most powerful kingdoms in the 6th Century BCE
- Kosala contained three great Cities :- **Ayodhya, Saketa, Sravasti**
- The kingdom of Kosla was divided into North and South by the river Sarayu
- Sravasti was the capital of Uttara Kosala Kusavati was the capital of Dakshina Kosala
- Prasenjit, a contemporary of Buddha, made Kosala a formidable kingdom

Vriji/ vajji Vriji territory lay to the north of the Ganga and extended upto the hills of Nepal It was separated from Kosala and Malla by the river Gandak

- The Vrijjian confederacy consisted of eight clans
- Members of the confederacy were Vrijjis, Videhas, Lichchavis and Jnatikas
- Vaisali was the capital of the Lichchavis and headquarters of the Vrijjian confederacy
- Videhas had their capital at Mithila, identified with Janakapura
- Vriji flourished non-monarchical state in the time of Mahavira and Gautama Buddha
- The Lichchavis attacked Magadha during Bimbisara's reign
- Treaty and matrimonial alliance between the Lichchavi and Bimbisara

Mallas

- Mallas are mentioned in the Buddhist and Jain works
- Powerful tribe in Eastern India
- There were many branches of this clan
- Two branches had their headquarters at Kusinara and Pava

- Buddha died in the vicinity of Kusinara
- Buddha's last rites were performed by the Mallas

Kuru

- Kuru corresponded to Delhi-Meerut region
- Indraprastha near Delhi was its capital
- In Buddha's time, the Kuru country was ruled by a titular chieftain named Koravya
- The Kurus had matrimonial relations with the Yadavas, the Bhojas and the Panchalas

clanMatsya

- Matsya located in the Jaipur area of Rajasthan, extending in to Alwar-Jaipur-

Bharatpur

- Viratanagar, Named after its founder king Virata, was its capital
- First appear in the Rigveda
- Satapata Brahmana mentions a Matsya king named Dhvasana

Dvanivatavana

- Some of the edicts of Ashoka have been found at Bairat
- The Pandavas stayed in the court of Viratanagara during Ajnatavasa

Avanti

- One of the great monarchies of India
- Corresponds to the Ujjain region together with a part of the Narmada valley from Mandhata to Mahesvara
- Divided into North and South by the river Vettravati
- Ujjain and Mahismati as capitals
- Located in a very fertile agricultural tract controlling rich iron ore
- Pradyota, contemporary of Buddha, was a powerful king
- Pradyota has been described as Chanda in the Puranas

Gandhara

- Comprised the modern districts of Peshawar & Rawalpindi in Pakistan Kashmir

valley

- Takshasila, modern Taxila was its capital The city founded by a prince Taksha
- Panini a native of Gandhara refers to Takshasila

- Centre of trade and ancient seat of learning
- Great personalities like Uddalaka, Svetaketu and Kautilya were educated
- King Pushkarasin, the ruler of Gandhara was a contemporary of king Bimbisara• He had cordial relations with Magadha and waged a successful war against Avanti

Rise of Magadha:

- All the sixteen Mahajanapadas did not play the same role in the contemporary politics
- In the sixth century BCE only four states :- Kasi, Kosala, Magadha, Vrijjian, confederacy remained important
- Struggle between the republic & monarchical states
- The Gangetic basin became an ample of discard
- Magadha rulers successfully suppressed the other states by using arms and diplomacy
- Magadhan kingdom was converted as Magadhan empire

Haryanka Dynasty:

Bimbisara (544-495BCE)

- Used arms and diplomacy to expand the Magadha power
- Conquered Anga
- Matrimonial alliances with the leading monarchical states
- Friendly relationship with Pradyota, the king of Avanti
- Devotee of Both Jainism and Buddhism

Ajatasatru( 495-461 BCE)

- He interviewed Lord Buddha and confessed killing of his father
- Meeting with Buddha is indicated in the sculptures of Barhut
- During his reign, three great teachers entered nirvana :- Buddha, Mahavira, and Makhaliputta Gosala.
- Ajatasatru died in 461 BCE and succeeded by his son Udayin
- Five successors of Ajatasatru ascended the throne after killing their fathers
- The history of Magadha after Udayin is confusing

Note:Ajatasatru was succeeded by Udayin (460–44 BC). His reign is important because he is said to have built a fort at the confluence of

the Ganges and Son at Patna.

Sisunaga Dynasty:

- Haryankas were succeeded by the Sisunagas
- Genealogy and chronology of the Sisunagas are not clear
- Achievement of Sisunaga was the destruction of the power of Pradyota of Avanti
- After Sisunaga, the mighty empire began to collapse
- Kalashoka transferred his royal residence from Girivraja to Patiliputra
- The second Buddhist council was held at Vaisali during the reign of Kalashoka
- Sisunaga dynasty ruled for half a century

Nanda dynasty:

Mahapadmananda:

- Sisunaga dynasty was overthrown by Mahapadma Nanda
- Powerful ruler of Nanda dynasty
- Uprooted all the kshatriya dynasties in Northern India and assumed the title 'Ekarat'
- Pali texts mention him as Ugrasena
- Kalinga and Deccan formed the part of the Magadhan Empire
- Occupied most of the Gangetic basin and build a mighty army
- Great empire builder and ruled 10 years
- Succeeded by his eight sons, who ruled successively
- The last Nanda ruler was Dhana Nanda
- Powerful ruler, possessed strong army and enormous wealth
- The oppressive way of tax collection was resented by the people
- Chandragupta Maurya and Kautilya initiated popular movement
- At about the same time Alexander invaded India

Persian Invasion: • The Persian kingdom of the Achaemenids was founded by Cyrus

(558-530 BCE)

- The Persian kingdom of the Achaemenids was founded by Cyrus (558-530 BCE)
- First foreign conqueror and penetrated well into India
- All Indian tribes to the west of the Indus upto Kabul region submitted & paid him

tribute

- Destroyed the city of Kapisha, located north of Kabul
- Darius I the grand son of Cyrus conquered the Indus valley in 518 BCE
- Herodotus states that India (Indus valley) was the twentieth Satrapy (province)
- Darius I sent a naval expedition under Skylax to explore the Indus
- Sindh and a portion of Punjab formed part of his Indian conquest
- The Indian provinces continued under Xerxes (486-465 BCE)
- He obtained the military service of an Indian contingent to fight his battles in Greece
- Persian empire declined after Xerxes
- Gandhara continued part of Persian empire under Artaxerxes II (405-359 BCE)
- Darius III (336-330 BCE) enlisted Indian soldiers and to resist Alexander's invasion
- Provided an impetus to the growth of Indo-Iranian commerce
- Introduced Kharoshti script, the official script of the Persian empire
- Archaemenid ascendancy ended with the conquest by Alexander in 330 BCE

Macedonians/ Greek Invasion:

- Alexander ascended the throne of Macedonia in 334 BCE and defeated, last Persian Emperor Darius-III
- Conquered the whole of Persia stretching from Asia Minor to Afghanistan
- Crossed the Hindu Kush Mountains in eastern Afghanistan in 327 BCE
- Fought against various tribes of north-west India more than a year

Ambhi king of Taxila accepted Alexander's suzerainty

- Porus was defeated and captured in the battle of Hydaspes (territory probably between Jhelum and Chenab)
- Impressed by the courage and heroism of this Indian prince, reinstated the Porus and made him his ally
- He determined to go on further, but his soldiers refused to obey
- Made administrative arrangements to look after his conquered

territories in India

- On the way back, there were military encounters with Ganas
- Seriously wounded in the battle with Agalassoi and Malava
- He died in 323 BCE at Babylon