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## The History of Sixteen Mahajanapadas Free PDF By Governmentadda.com

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### The History of Sixteen Mahajanapadas:

In 6th century BC, ancient India had a number of kingdoms which emerged during the Vedic Age . This period saw socio-economic development along with religious and political developments across the Indo-Gangetic plain. These permanent settlements led the evolution from janapadas to mahajanapadas. By sixth century BC, the centre of major political activity shifted from western part of gangetic plain to the eastern part, comprising the present day Bihar and eastern UP. Major reason for this shift was, the fertile lands of this area with better rainfall and rivers, their closeness to iron production centres also played a key role. In fact, it was the increased use of iron tools and weapons that enabled small states to become kingdoms, known as Mahajanapadas.

### Political structure of these Sixteen Mahajanapadas:

Majority of these states were monarchical but some were also republics, known as "ganasangha". Ganasangha had oligarchic system for governance where administration was headed by an elected king who had a large council for his aid. This was close to be called a democracy but common man had no say in administration.

There were 16 mahajanapadas / kingdoms which are mentioned in the ancient literature and scriptures. It must be noted here that these sixteen mahajanapadas were in existence before the

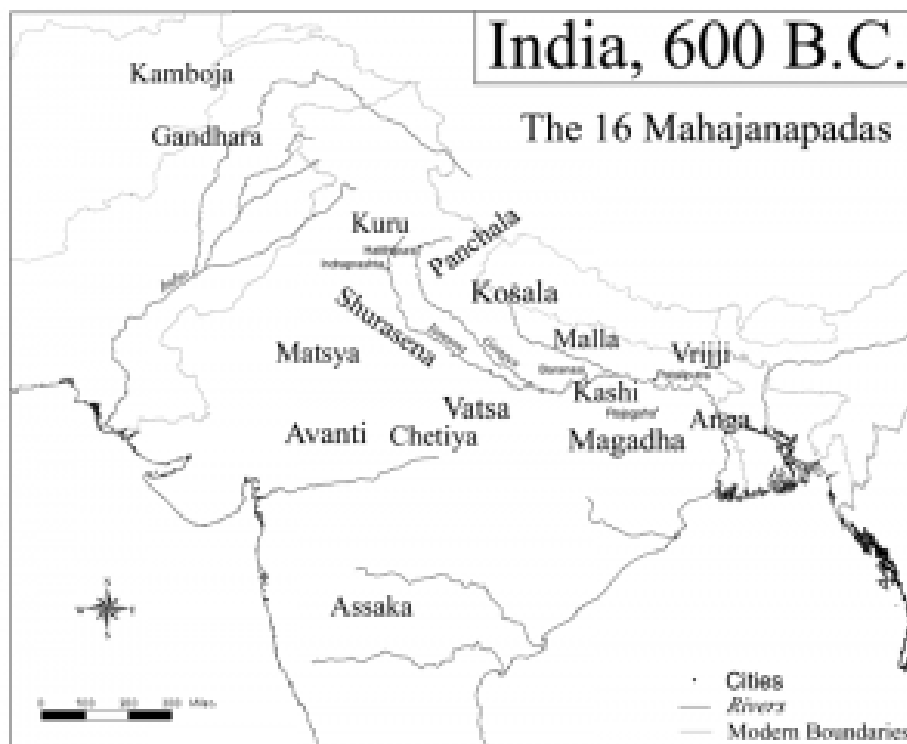
rise of Buddhism in India. The sixteen Mahajanapadas are given here in quick look format.

Sl. No.	Mahajanapadas	Capital	Modern location
1	Anga	Champa	Munger and Bhagalpur
2	Magadh	Girivraja / Rajagir	Gaya and Patna
3	Kasi	Kasi	Banaras
4	Vatsa	Kausambi	Allahabad
5	Kosala	Sravasti	Eastern Uttar Pradesh
6	Saurasena	Mathura	Mathura
7	Panchala	Ahichchatra and Kampilya	Western Uttar Pradesh
8	Kuru	Indraprastha	Merrut and S.E. Haryana
9	Matsya	Viratnagar	Jaipur
10	Chedi	Sothivati / Banda	Bundelkhanda
11	Avanti	Ujjain / Mahismati	Madhya Pradesh & Malwa
12	Gandhar	Taxila	Rawalpindi
13	Kamboj	Pooncha	Rajori & Hajra (Kashmir)
14	Asmaka	Pratisthan / Paithan	Bank of Godavari
15	Vajji	Vaishali	Vaishali
16	Malla	Kusinara	Deoria & U.P.

We shall now look into a little detail of each one of these sixteen mahajanapadas and their capitals:

1. **Anga:** This mahajanapada finds mention in the Atharva Veda and the 'Mahabharata'. During the reign of Bimbisara, it was taken over by Magadha empire. It is located in present day Bihar and west Bengal.
2. **Magadha:** It also finds reference in the Atharva Veda which tells that Magadha was semi-brahmanical place. It was situated in present day Bihar close to Anga, separated by river Champa. Later, Magadha became a center of Jainism. Along with that, the first Buddhist Council was held in Rajagriha.
3. **Kasi:** It was located around Varanasi which was the capital as well. It is believed that this city got its name from rivers Varuna and Asi as mentioned in the Matsya Purana.

4. **Vatsa or Vamsa:** This mahajanapada followed the monarchical form of governance. This kingdom was one of the sixteen Mahajanapadas. And its capital was located at Kausambi. This was an important city for economic activities. There was a prosperous trade and business scenario in 6th century BC. After the rise of Buddha, the ruler Udayana made Buddhism a state religion. Vatsa was located around the present day Allahabad.



5. **Kosala:** It was located in modern Awadh region of Uttar Pradesh. Its capital was Ayodhya.
6. **Saurasena:** Its capital was Mathura. This place was a centre of Krishna worship at time of Megasthenes. Also there was a dominant followership of Buddha here.
7. **Panchala:** Its capital was Ahichchatra and Kampilya for its northern and southern regions respectively. It was located in present day western Uttar Pradesh. And it shifted from monarchy to being a republic later.
8. **Kuru:** Their capital was Indraprastha in present day Meerut and Haryana. The region around Kurukshetra was supposedly the site for Kuru Mahajanapada. It shifted to a republic form of governance later.
9. **Matsya:** It was located to south of the Kurus and west of the Panchalas. Its capital was at Viratanagar, which lays around present day Jaipur.
10. **Chedi:** This was mentioned in the Rigveda, Its capital was Sothivati. It lay around the present day Bundelkhand region.
11. **Avanti:** Avanti was important in terms of rise of Buddhism. Its capital was located at Ujjain or Mahismati. It was located around present day Malwa and Madhya Pradesh.
12. **Gandhara:** Their capital was at Taxila. Gandhara are mentioned in the Atharva Veda as people who were highly trained in art of war. It was important for international commercial activities.
13. **Kamboja:** Kamboja had its capital named as Pooncha. It is located in present day Kashmir and Hindukush. Various literary sources mention that Kamboja was a republic.

14. **Ashmaka or Assaka:** The capital of this mahajanapada was located at Pratisthan or Paithan. Ashmaka was located t the bank of Godavari.
15. **Vajji:** Its capital was Vaishali. It was an important Mahajanapadas. The major races residig here were Licchavis, Vedeans, Jnatrikas and Vajjis.
16. **Malla:** It was one of the sixteen mahajanapadas. It finds mention in 'Mahabharata' and Buddhist and Jain texts. They were a republic (Samgha). Their capital was Kusinara located around present day Deoria and Uttar Pradesh.

How many Mahajanapadas were there in ancient India?

- a) 12
- b) 16
- c) 20
- d) 24

Solution: b) 16

Which of the following was not one of the Mahajanapadas?

- a) Magadha
- b) Kashi
- c) Vatsa
- d) Gandhara

Solution: d) Gandhara

Which Mahajanapada was located in present-day Bihar?

- a) Kosala
- b) Kuru
- c) Magadha
- d) Avanti

Solution: c) Magadha

Which Mahajanapada was known for its extensive trade and economic prosperity?

- a) Vajji
- b) Avanti
- c) Kashi
- d) Kosala

Solution: a) Vajji

Which Mahajanapada was ruled by King Bimbisara, who was a contemporary of Gautama Buddha?

- a) Magadha
- b) Vatsa
- c) Anga
- d) Kosala

Solution: a) Magadha

Which Mahajanapada was located in present-day Uttar Pradesh and was ruled by King Udayana?

- a) Vatsa
- b) Avanti
- c) Chedi
- d) Kosala

Solution: a) Vatsa

Which Mahajanapada was known for its powerful navy and maritime trade?

- a) Magadha
- b) Anga
- c) Kashi
- d) Saurashtra

Solution: d) Saurashtra

Which Mahajanapada was located in present-day Madhya Pradesh and was ruled by King Pradyota?

- a) Kuru
- b) Avanti
- c) Vatsa
- d) Chedi

Solution: b) Avanti

Which Mahajanapada was known for its republican form of government?

- a) Vajji
- b) Magadha
- c) Kashi
- d) Kosala

Solution: a) Vajji

Which Mahajanapada was located in present-day West Bengal and was ruled by King Anga?

- a) Vatsa
- b) Avanti
- c) Chedi
- d) Anga

Solution: d) Anga

Which Mahajanapada was known for its skilled bowmen and was located in present-day Haryana?

- a) Kuru
- b) Avanti
- c) Vatsa
- d) Chedi

Solution: a) Kuru

Which Mahajanapada was located in present-day Uttar Pradesh and was ruled by King Prasenajit?

- a) Vatsa
- b) Avanti
- c) Chedi
- d) Kosala

Solution: d) Kosala

Which Mahajanapada was known for its wealth and flourishing trade with the Persian Gulf?

- a) Gandhara

b) Avanti

c) Vatsa

d) Kashi

Solution: a) Gandhara

Which Mahajanapada was located in present-day Bihar and was ruled by King Ajatashatru?

a) Magadha

b) Vatsa

c) Chedi

d) Kosala

Solution: a) Magadha

Which Mahajanapada was known for its strong cavalry and was located in present-day Uttar Pradesh?

a) Vatsa

b) Avanti

c) Chedi

d) Kashi

Solution: c) Chedi

Which Mahajanapada was located in present-day Uttar Pradesh and was ruled by King Pasenadi?

a) Vatsa

b) Avanti

c) Kashi

d) Kosala

Solution: c) Kashi

Which Mahajanapada was known for its skilled chariot warriors and was located in present-day Gujarat?

a) Magadha

b) Avanti



c) Vatsa

d) Saurashtra

Solution: d) Saurashtra

Which Mahajanapada was located in present-day Bihar and was ruled by a confederation of several clans?

a) Vatsa

b) Avanti

c) Vajji

d) Kashi

Solution: c) Vajji

Which Mahajanapada was known for its expertise in iron and weapon production?

a) Chedi

b) Avanti

c) Kashi

d) Kosala

Solution: a) Chedi

Which Mahajanapada was located in present-day Uttar Pradesh and was ruled by King Udayana?

a) Vatsa

b) Avanti

c) Chedi

d) Kosala

Solution: b) Avanti