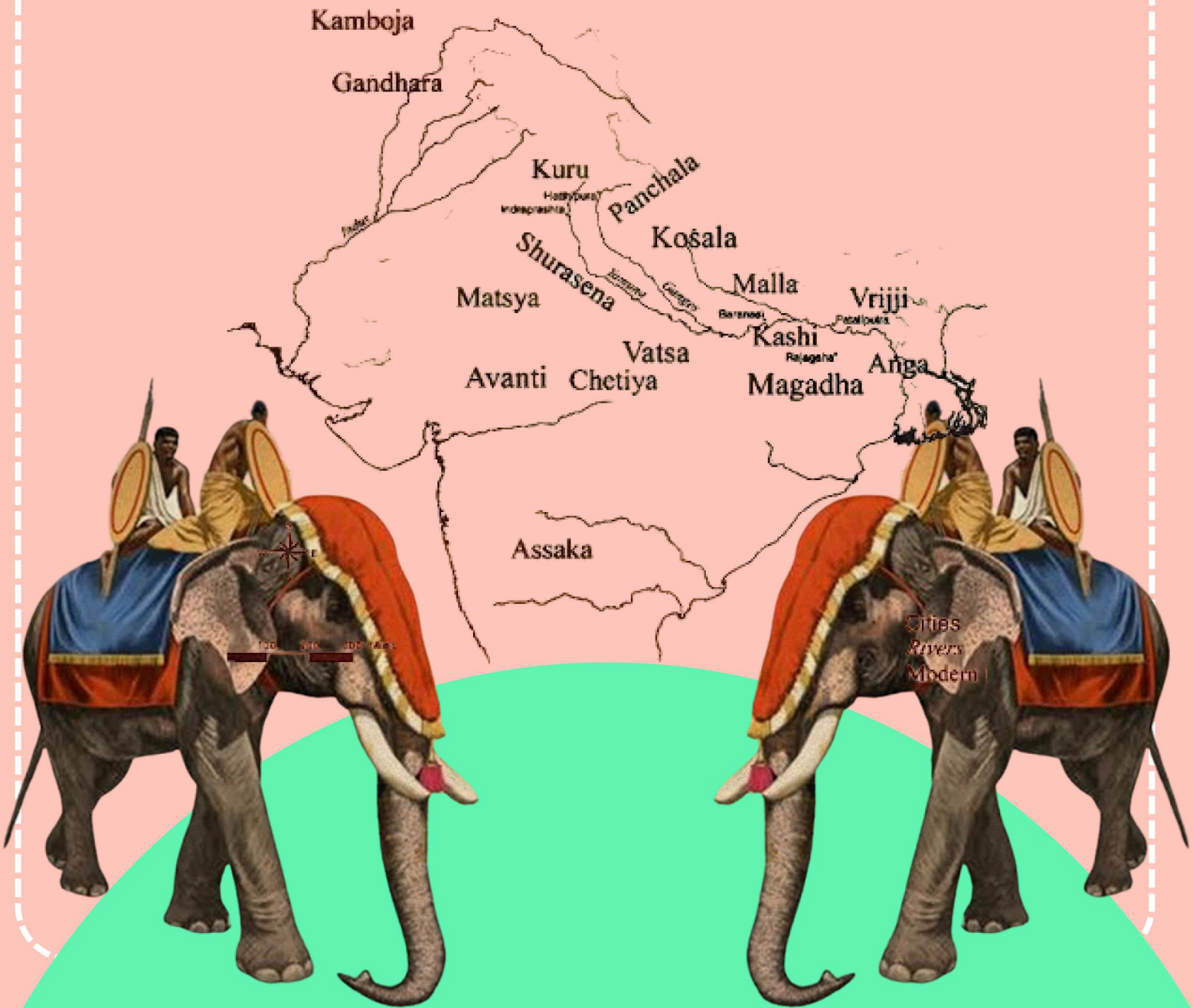
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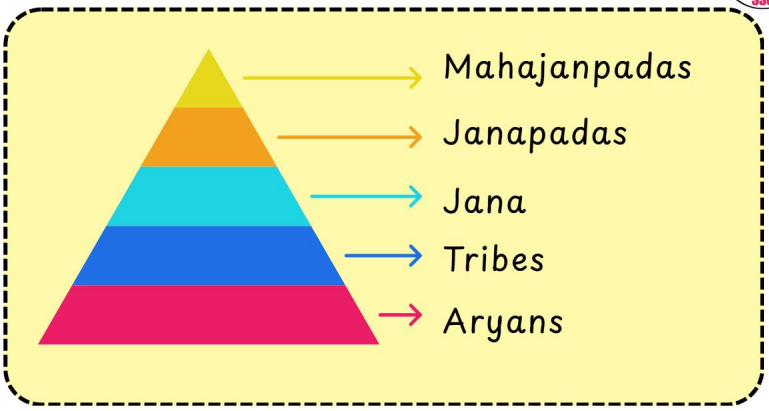
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Mahajanapada and Magadha



Mahajanpad

Aryans are considered the most powerful tribes during the Vedic period, and gradually transitioned to "Mahajanapadas" (great kingdoms) by the end of later Vedic Period. By forming territorial units called "Janapadas".



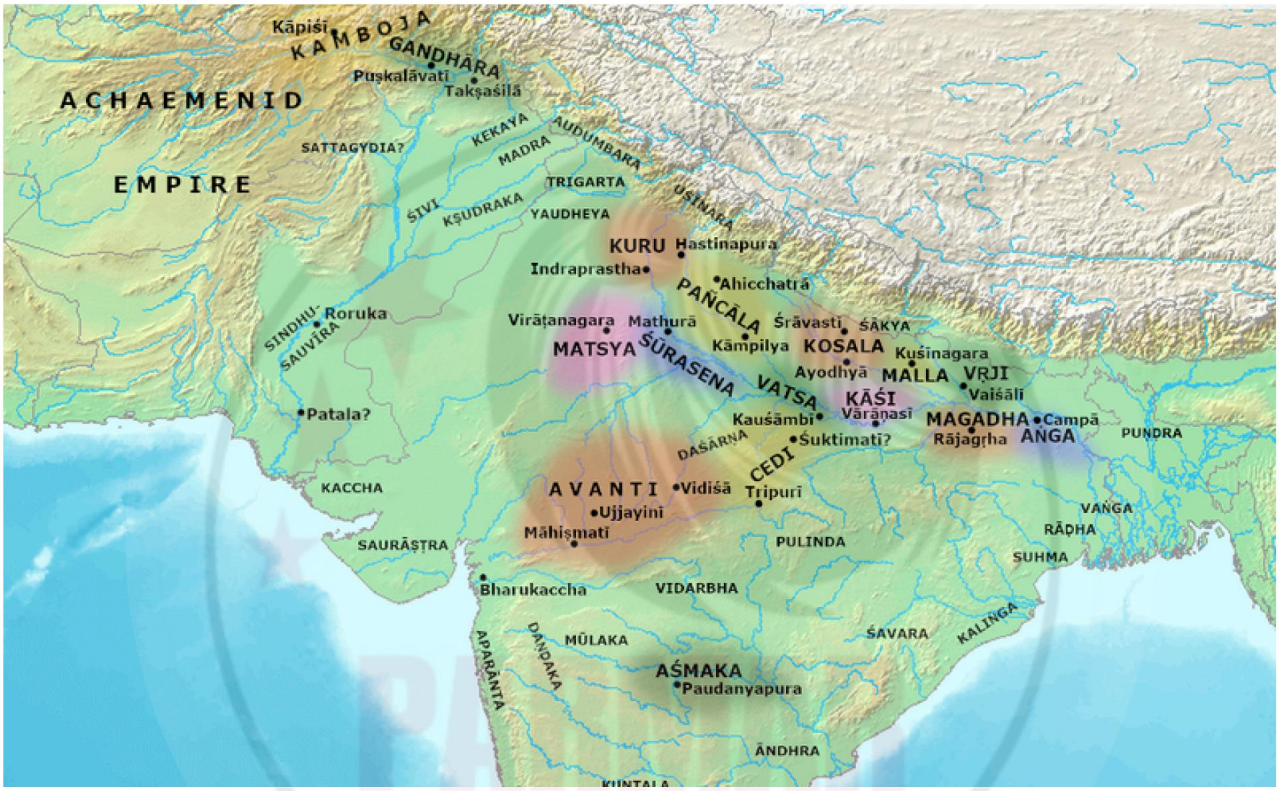


FIG: 16 Mahajanpadas

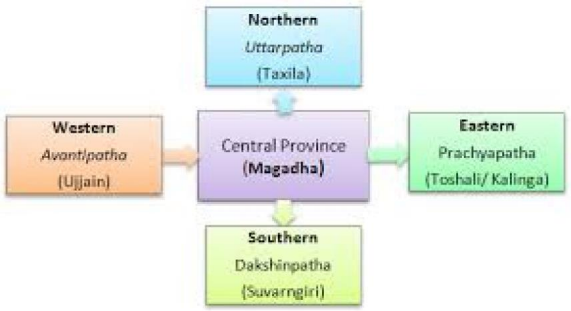
Causes for the Rise of Mahajanpadas

Use of Iron Technology (Agricultural Expansion)

- Introduction of Iron ploughshare and axes allowed clearing dense forests, especially in the Ganga Plains.
- Increased agricultural productivity : Produced surplus food that supported a larger population and non-agricultural groups.
- This requires larger political units to manage resources

Rise of Trade and Crafts

- Expansion of long distance trade via Uttarpath and Dakshinpatha.
- Use of punched marked coins boosted commercial activity.
- Powerful states emerged to control trade routes and ensure security.



Need for stronger Military Organisation

- Conflict over fertile land , cattle, trade route required organised Army.
- Only larger states with better resources could maintain standing armies and fortification.
- Examples: Magadha's rise due to Elephant, forts and Iron Mines.

Social Stratification (Varna System)

- Increasing Specialisation of labour led to clearer social roles.
- Varn system supported the emergence of political elites (Kshatriyas) who controlled territories.
- Strengthened hierarchial state systems.

Second Urbanisation

- Growth of cities like Rajgriha, Vaishali, Varanasi, Ujjain, Taxila
- Urban centers needed administration, defence and taxation, promoting formation of large states.

Geographical Factors

- The Ganga plain had fertile alluvial soil and abundant water.
- Ideal for settled agriculture → Higher population → emergence of powerful states like Kosala, Vatsa , Magadha

Emergence of new religious and Philosophical ideas.

- Buddhisam, Jainism and Upanishadic thought challanged Vedic orthodoxy.
- These movements flourished in urban cenrters and republican states.
- The intellectual environment favoured larger, organised polities that could support teachers, monks and institutions.

Decline of Tribal (Jana based) Polity

- Earlier Socity was organised into tribal kinship groups.
- As Population grew and settled agriculture spread, territorial identity (janapada) replaced Kinship identity.
- Need for permanent boundaries and central authority led to Mahajanapadas

Sources

Texts: **Ashtadhyayi** (in Sanskrit) written by **Panini** (oldest book on Sanskrit Grammar written in 4th-6th Century BC).

Buddhist Literature

- Anguttara Nikaya (A total of 16 Mahajanapadas are mentioned in it).
- Digha Nikaya (A total of 12 Mahajanapadas are mentioned in it).

Jain Literature

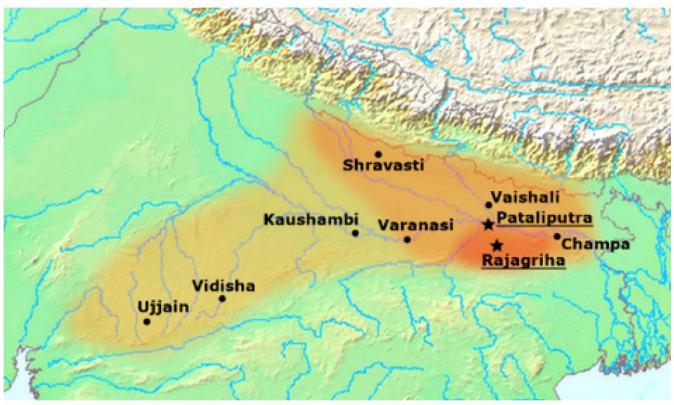
- Bhagavati Sutra.
- Mahajanapadas were either Monarchial (single decision makers) or Republic (multiple decision makers), also known as oligarchy.
- The following Mahajanapadas were Republic→ Kuru, Kamboja, Vajji, Malla.

The 16 Mahajanpadas

Mahajanapadas	Capital & River
Anga	Champa (Ganga)
Magadh	Rajagir/Pataliputra (Ganga & Son)
Kasi	Varanasi (Gomti)
Vatsa	Kausambi (Ganga)
Kosala	Sravasti/Ayodhya (Sarayu)
Surasena	Mathura (Yamuna)
Panchala	Achichchatra/Kampilya (Ganga)
Kuru	Indraprastha (Yamuna)
Matsya	Viratnagar (Yamuna)
Chedi/Chetiya	Sothivati/Banda (Ken & Betwa)
Avanti	Ujjain (North)/Mahismati (South) (Shipra & Narmada)
Gandhar	Taxila (Indus)
Kamboj	Pooncha (Kabul & Kurram)
Asmaka	Pratisthan/Paithan/Potana (Godavari)
Vajji	Vaishali (Gandak)
Malla	Kusinara (Sarayu)

Reasons for the Rise of Magadha

- Its advantageous position → situated south of Ganga.
- The capital Rajgriha was surrounded by five hills and Pataliputra was situated at the confluence of Ganga and Son.
- The availability of large number of elephants (as it was marshy-doab region).
- It had many great leaders.
- Availability of Iron mines (in Jharkhand region).



Vajji consisted of eight clans and three of them were the most powerful kingdoms → Jnatrika, Videha, Lichchavi.

Dynasties that Ruled Magadha

1 Haryanka Dynasty

1 Bimbisara (544 BC-492 BC)



- Title: Seniya
- He led military campaign against Anga.
- He had three wives:
  1. **Kosala Devi** :- Sister of Prasenjit or Pasenadi (son of Kosala King; Mahakosala)
  2. **Chellana** (Lichchavi princess)
  3. **Khema** :- Madra Clan (Punjab)
- He sent his physician 'Jivaka' to Ujjain (to treat King Pradyota, who was suffering from jaundice)

2 Ajatshatru



- He was the son of Chellana and Bimbisara.
- He conquered Lichchavi and Vaishali.
- He defeated Kosala King and married his daughter.
- He patronised the 1st Buddhist Council.
- He later killed his father Bimbisara.
- He was contemporary of Buddha and Mahavira.
- He introduce advanced military tech including the Mahashilakantaka (a giant catapult) and Rathmoosal (a scythe chariot)
- Established Patliputra as second Capital.

3 Udayin



- He shifted his capital from Rajgriha to Pataliputra (now: "Patna").

2 Shishunaga Dynasty



- Founder: Shishunaga.
- He defeated the last ruler of Haryanka Dynasty named Nagadasaka.
- He defeated Avanti and merged it with Magadha.
- Kalashoka patronised 2nd Buddhist Council.

3 Nanda Dynasty

Mahapadmananda



- He was the founder of Nanda dynasty.
- Title taken: Ekrat (Meaning: Empire builder/Uprooter of Kshatriya).

Dhananada



- Alexander invaded India during his reign (326 BC).
- He was the last king of Nanda Dynasty.

Battle of Hydaspes was fought between Alexander and Porus (Porus was defeated in the battle) on the banks of Jhelum (326 BC).

Society

Pottery

Northern black polished wares (NBPW) were used for pottery.

Trade

Artisans and merchants formed associations called Shrenis (Guilds) that were collectively referred to as Nigama (trading town)

Craft and Architecture

- Craft was hereditary.
- Iron ploughshare played a crucial role in the empire's agricultural success (second urbanization after Harappa).

Coins

- Punch-marked coins made of silver were used as the form of money for trade purposes.
- Gold coins such as Nishka and Satmana were also used.

Post

- Village headman was known as Bhojaka.
- Peasants had to pay tax called Bhaga (1/6th of their produce).
- Gahapatis were wealthy property owners who employed slaves or hired labourers to work on their lands.
- Bali was a voluntary offering to the King; however it was not compulsory.
- Toll tax persisted and were collected by officers known as Shaulkika/Shulkadhyaksha.