

KINGDOMS, KINGS AND AN EARLY REPUBLIC

Q1. What are Varnas?

The priests divided the people of the society into four groups, called varnas and according to them; each varna had a different set of functions.

Q2. Who divided the people into different Varnas?

The priests divided the people into different Varnas.

Q3. Who were untouchables?

Some people including crafts persons, hunters and gatherers, as well as people who helped perform burials and cremations were classified as untouchable by the priests and stated that contact with these groups was polluting.

Q4. Which people were excluded from the rituals performed by the rajas?

Some people who were regarded as shudras by the priests, were excluded from many rituals

Q5. What were Janapadas?

The word Janapada literally means the land where the Jana set its foot, and settled down.

Q6. What do you understand by the term “Rajas of Janapadas”?

The rajas that performed big sacrifices were recognized as being rajas of Janapadas rather than Janas.

Q7. Name some of the Janapadas found by the archaeologist.

Purana Qila in Delhi, Hastinapur near Meerut, and Atranjikhhera, near Etah (the last two are in Uttar Pradesh)

Q8. What were Mahajanapadas?

About 2500 years ago, some Janapadas became more important than others, and were known as Mahajanapadas

Q9. What was the source of income of Raja of Janapadas?

Occasional gifts brought by people

Q10. What was the source of income of Raja of Mahajanapadas?

They started collecting regular taxes.

Q11. What was Bhaga?

The tax that was fixed at 1/6th of what was produced was known as bhaga or a share.

Q12. How were iron ploughs useful to the people?

With the help of iron plough the heavy, clayey soil could be turned over better than with a wooden ploughshare, so that more grain could be produced.

Q13. When did Magadha become an important Mahajanapada?

Magadha became the most important Mahajanapada in about two hundred years.

Q14. Name the rivers flowing through Magadha.

Ganga and Son

Q15. Name the capital city of Magadha.

Rajagriha (present-day Rajgir) in Bihar was the capital of Magadha for several years, which was later, shifted to Pataliputra (present-day Patna).

Q16. Name the capital city of Vajji.

Vaishali (Bihar)

Q17. What was the government at Vajji called?

Gana or a Sangha

Q18. What was Sangha?

In a Gana or a Sangha there were not one, but many rulers. Sometimes, even when thousands of men ruled together, each one was known as a raja.

Q19. Which rulers conquered the last known Sangha?

Gupta rulers conquered the last known Sangha.

Q20. Who was the central figure in any ritual? How were they recognised?

The raja was a central figure in these rituals.

He often had a special seat, a throne or a tiger skin.

Q21. Which two major changes came in the agriculture during Mahajanapadas?

☐ Use of iron ploughshares- so that heavy, clayey soil could be turned over better and more grain could be produced.

☐ Transplanting paddy that is instead of scattering seed on the ground, from which plants would sprout saplings were grown and then planted in the fields. This led to increased production, as many more plants survived.

Q22. How were forts build by Rajas?

☐ Building huge walls of the fort required a great deal of planning.

Thousands of bricks or stone had to be prepared.

☐ Thousands of men, women and children of the kingdom provided the enormous labour for this task.

Q23. How was the army maintained by the rajas?

Soldiers were paid regular salaries and maintained by the king throughout the year. Some payments were probably made using punch marked coins.

Q24. List the functions performed by the Rajas of Mahajanapadas.

(a) Building huge forts

(b) Maintaining big armies

Q25. Which groups of people were involved in transplanting activity, in the agriculture?

☐ Slave men and women, (dasas and dasis) and

☐ Landless agricultural labourers (kammakaras) had to do this work.

Q26. How were forests and rivers useful for the people of Magadha?

Forests-

☐ Elephants from the forest were captured and trained for the army.

- ☐ Forests also provided wood for building houses, carts and chariots Rivers
- ☐ Transport
- ☐ Water supplies
- ☐ Making the land fertile

Q27. Name the powerful rulers of Magadha.
Bimbisara, Ajatasattu and Mahapadma Nanda

Q28. What functions were performed by the Rajas of Sangha?

- ☐ They performed rituals.
- ☐ They met in assemblies, and decided what had to be done and how, through discussion and debate.

Q29. How did men become rulers in the past?

- ☐ The Jana, the people, chose some of the rajas.
- ☐ Some men became recognized as rajas by performing very big sacrifices.

Q30. Who all were not allowed to be part of assemblies in Sangha?

- ☐ Women,
- ☐ dasas and
- ☐ kammakaras could not participate in the assemblies.

Q31. State some of the findings by the Archaeologist in the Janapadas.

- ☐ They found that people lived in huts.
- ☐ They kept cattle as well as other animals.
- ☐ They also grew a variety of crops — rice, wheat, barley, pulses, sugarcane, sesame and mustard

Q32. Why were forts build around Mahajanapadas?

Forts were probably built because

- ☐ People were afraid of attacks from other kings and needed protection.
- ☐ Some rulers wanted to show how rich and powerful they were by building really large, tall and impressive walls around their cities.
- ☐ Also in this way, the king could control the land and the people living inside the fortified area more easily.

Q33. Write few lines about Alexander.

- ☐ More than 2300 years ago, a ruler named Alexander, who lived in Macedonia in Europe, wanted to become a world conqueror.
- ☐ Though he couldn't conquer the world, but did conquer parts of Egypt and West Asia, and came to the Indian subcontinent, reaching up to the banks of the Beas.
- ☐ But when he tried to march further eastwards, his soldiers refused, as they were scared of the rulers of India who had had vast armies of foot soldiers, chariots and elephants.

Q34. What was Ashvamedha?

- ☐ The Ashvamedha or horse sacrifice was one of the rituals. In this a horse was let loose to wander freely and it was guarded by the raja's men.
- ☐ If the horse wandered into the kingdoms of other rajas and they stopped it, they had to fight.

- ☐ If they allowed the horse to pass, it meant that they accepted that the raja that wanted to perform the sacrifice was stronger than them.
- ☐ These rajas were then invited to the sacrifice, which was performed by specially trained priest. The raja that organized the sacrifice was recognized as being very powerful.

Q35. Who all were involved in the rituals and what functions did they perform?

- ☐ Priests- the rituals were performed by specially trained priests, who were rewarded with gifts by the rajas.
- ☐ Charioteer- He was rajas companion in the battlefield and witnessed his exploits and chanted tales of his glory.
- ☐ Rajas wife and sons- had to perform a variety of minor rituals.
- ☐ Other rajas- were simply spectators who had to sit and watch the performance of the sacrifice.
- ☐ The ordinary people, the vish or vaishya, brought gifts for raja.

Q36. Describe the composition and function of each Varna in the Varna system?

- ☐ The first Varna was that of the Brahmin. Brahmins were expected to study (and teach) the Vedas, perform sacrifices and receive gifts.
- ☐ In the second place were the rulers, also known as kshatriyas. They were expected to fight battles and protect people.
- ☐ Third were the vish or the vaishyas. They were expected to be farmers, herders, and traders. Both the kshatriyas and the vaishyas could perform sacrifices.
- ☐ Last were the shudras, who had to serve the other three groups and could not perform any rituals. Often, women were also grouped with the shudras. Both women and shudras were not allowed to study the Vedas.

Q37. Give some of the opinions given by the people against Varna system.

Many people did not accept the system of Varna laid down by the Brahmins.

- ☐ Some kings thought they were superior to the priests.
- ☐ Others felt that birth could not be a basis for deciding which varna people belonged to.
- ☐ Some people felt that there should be no differences amongst people based on occupation.
- ☐ Others felt that everybody should be able to perform rituals.
- ☐ Some condemned the practice of Untouchability.
- ☐ Also, there were many areas in the subcontinent, such as the northeast, where social and economic differences were not very sharp, and where the influence of the priests was limited.

Q38. Explain the system of Taxation in Mahajanapadas?

- ☐ Taxes on crops were the most important. This was because most people were farmers. Usually, the tax was fixed at 1/6th of what was produced. This was known as bhaga or a share.
- ☐ There were taxes on crafts persons as well. These could have been in the form of labour. For example, a weaver or a smith may have had to work for a day every month for the king.
- ☐ Herders were also expected to pay taxes in the form of animals and animal produce.
- ☐ There were also taxes on goods that were bought and sold, through trade.
- ☐ And hunters and gatherers also had to provide forest produce to the raja.