

NCERT Solutions Class 7 Social Science

(Exploring Society India and Beyond)

Chapter 4 New Beginnings Cities and States

The Big Questions? (page 67)

Question 1. What is meant by 'Second Urbanisation of India'?

Answer: In the early 2nd millennium BCE, India's first civilization started disintegrating. In the 1st millennium BCE a vibrant new phase of urbanisation began in the Ganga plains, parts of the Indus basin and neighbouring regions, gradually spreading to other parts of the Subcontinent. This is often called India's 'Second Urbanisation' which, incidentally, has continued right up to today.

Question 2. Why were the janapads and mahajanapadas an important development in India's early history?

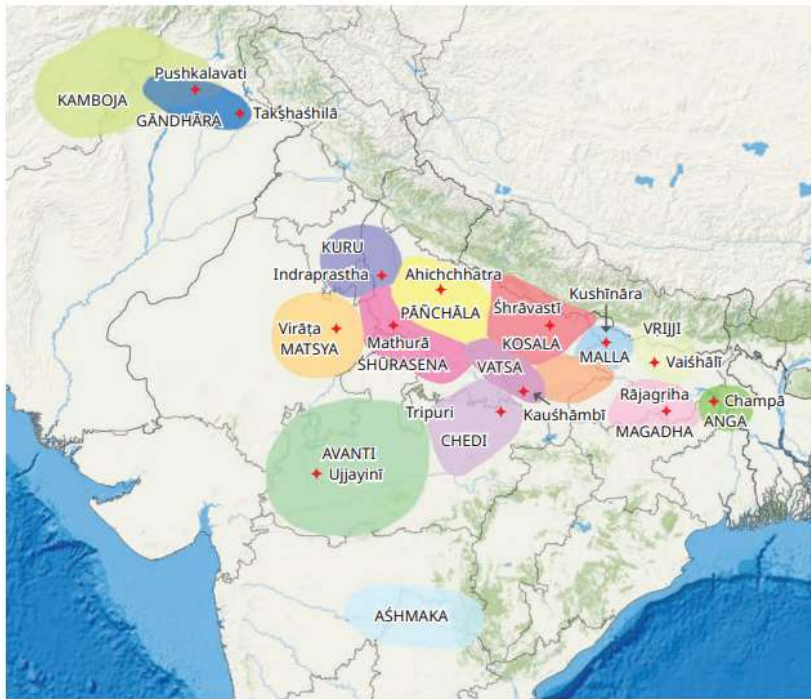
Answer: The emergence of janapadas and mahajanapadas was crucial in shaping early Indian history due to their advancements in agriculture, trade, and political organization. These entities facilitated increased production and distribution of goods, contributing to economic growth and the rise of urban centers.

Question 3. What kind of system of governance did they evolve?

Answer: Mahajanapadas, which were called ganas or sanghas, were not monarchies. Their functioning might be called democratic, since members of the assembly were the ones who selected the ruler and took major decisions. Mahajanapadas, which emerged from the consolidated Janapadas, maintained a largely monarchical structure but there were some where the rise of republics was seen which was indeed one of the earliest such systems in the world.

Let's Explore

Question 1. The most powerful of these new states were Magadha, Kosala, Vatsa and Avanti. Looking at the below map, can you identify their capitals? Also, how many can you match with Indian cities of today? (page 70)



Answer:

1. Magadha had its capital at Rajagriha, which was later shifted to Pataliputra. Today, Rajagriha is known as Rajgir, and Pataliputra is Patna, the capital of Bihar.
2. Kosala had its capital at Shravasti, located near the Bahraich district in Uttar Pradesh. The area is still known as Sravasti and is important for Buddhist pilgrims.
3. Vatsa had its capital at Kaushambi, which is near modern-day Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh.
4. Avanti had its capital at Ujjayini, which is now the city of Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh, a place of great religious significance even today.

Question 2. Compare this map (see Fig. 4.3 in the chapter) with the map of the regions mentioned in the Mahabharata (see Fig. 5.4 in the chapter 'India, That Is Bharat' in Grade 6) and list the names common to both maps. What do you think this implies? (page 70)

Answer: Do it yourself

Question 3. Fill up the following table with a Yes (or tick mark) or No (or cross mark) in each square, which provides an interesting comparison between these two phases of Indian civilisation. (page 70)

	First Urbanisation	Second Urbanisation
Ganga plains		

Monasteries		
Literature		
Trade		
Warfare		
Copper/bronze		
Iron		

Answer:

	First Urbanisation	Second Urbanisation
Ganga plains	No	Yes
Monasteries	No	Yes
Literature	No	Yes



Trade	Yes	Yes
Warfare	Yes	Yes
Copper/bronze	Yes	Yes
Iron	No	Yes

Question 4. Why should a complex society divide itself into such groups? Think about several possible factors why this happens. (page 76)

Answer: With the rise of civilization, a complex society divides itself in order to organize itself based on class, occupation and other criteria. There could be different groups concerned with governance, administration, religion, education, trade, town-planning, farming, crafts, arts and all kinds of other professions.

Question 5. List other such professions you expect in a complex society of the 1st millennium BCE. (page 76)

Answer: In a complex society of the 1st millennium BCE, there could be a diverse range of professions. This would include specialized crafts, trade and administration, as well as roles related to warfare, religion, writing and record-keeping. Specific examples might include skilled metalworkers, stone masons, scribes, priests, soldiers, and merchants.

III. Think About It:

Inequalities within society can exist in many forms. Have you encountered any incident where you or anyone you know might have been made to feel different from others? Do you think equality is desirable in a society? If so, why? Have you come across people or initiatives that lessened inequalities? (page 78)

Answer: Yes, inequalities within society can exist in many forms such as economic status, caste, gender, religion, language, or even appearance. Many people have experienced or witnessed such inequalities in different ways.

Here's a sample response:

Yes, I have seen incidents where people were made to feel different because of their



background or appearance. For example, a friend of mine who came from a small town was sometimes laughed at in school for having a different accent. This made him feel left out and uncomfortable. I believe equality is very desirable in a society, because everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity, no matter where they come from or what they look like. When people are treated equally, they feel valued and are more confident to contribute to society. I have also seen some positive examples, like schools offering scholarships to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, or community groups helping people get access to education and healthcare. These initiatives help reduce the gap between rich and poor and create a fairer, more inclusive society.

Question Answer (Exercise)

Question 1. Consider the quotation given below and discuss in several groups. Compare your observations and conclusions on what Kautilya recommends for a kingdom. Is it very different today?

The kingdom shall be protected by fortifying the capital and the towns at the frontiers. The land should not only be capable of sustaining the population but also outsiders in times of calamities. It should be beautiful, being endowed with cultivable land, mines, timber forests, elephant forests, and good pastures rich in cattle. It should not depend [only on] rain for water. It should have good roads and waterways. It should have a productive economy, with a wide variety of commodities....

_ Kautilya, Arthashastra

Answer: Kautilya's vision in the Arthashastra is impressively forward-thinking and surprisingly relevant even today. When we break down his recommendations, we see a holistic approach to governance, development, and sustainability that could easily apply to a modern state.

Let's compare his ideas with today's context:

(i) Fortifying the capital and frontier towns:

Then: Protection through physical defense structures and strategic planning.

Now: We focus on national security, border management, smart cities, and disaster preparedness. Cybersecurity is the modern frontier. The core idea security for stability remains unchanged.

(ii) The land must sustain both the population and outsiders in times of calamity:

Then: Preparedness for famine, war, or displacement. Now: We talk about food security, refugee support systems, emergency relief funds, and disaster management authorities. The value of resilience still stands strong.

(iii) Natural wealth cultivable land, forests, pastures, mines, water, etc.:

Then: A kingdom's strength came from self-sufficiency and natural resources.

Now: Nations still invest heavily in agriculture, mining, renewable energy, and biodiversity.

Climate change and sustainability efforts echo Kautilya's foresight about not depending solely on rain.

(iv) Good roads and waterways:

Then: Infrastructure as a backbone for trade and connectivity.

Now: The same transportation networks, logistics systems, digital infrastructure.

Connectivity equals growth.

(v) A productive economy with diverse commodities: Then: Economic diversification to ensure stability and growth.

Now: Economists still preach this. A country with multiple strong sectors—agriculture, industry, services, tech is more stable and resilient to global shocks.

It is not different today. The core principles that Kautilya laid out are still very much in use just adapted to our times with modern tools and language. What stands out is how timeless his ideas are. His emphasis on balance between economy, environment, defense, and social welfare is a model for sustainable development even now.

Question 2. According to the text, how were rulers chosen in early Vedic society?

Answer: In early Vedic society, rulers were not always hereditary kings. In early Vedic society leaders or rulers (often referred to as raja) were likely chosen by the community, particularly among the Kshatriya class. The position of a raja was often based on qualities like bravery, leadership, wisdom, and ability to protect the tribe, rather than just birthright. The sabha and samiti, which were early tribal assemblies, played a role in the selection and support of the ruler. These assemblies represented the collective will of the people. Brahmins (priests) often legitimized the ruler's position through rituals, but they did not necessarily determine who became king. So, early Vedic leadership had a more democratic or merit-based element compared to later periods, where dynastic succession became the norm.

Question 3. Imagine you are a historian studying ancient India. What types of sources (archaeological, literary, etc.) would you use to learn more about the mahajanapadas? Explain how each source might contribute to your understanding.

Answer: As a historian studying ancient India especially the Mahajanapadas I would rely on a mix of literary, archaeological, numismatic, and epigraphic sources to build a well-rounded understanding.

(i) Literary Sources: These include ancient texts, religious scriptures, and historical accounts. They provide names, values, administrative styles, and sometimes even conflicts between different Mahajanapadas.

(ii) Archaeological Sources: Excavations at ancient sites reveal much about the culture. For example ruins of cities like Rajgir, Ujjain, Taxila give us clues about urban planning, defense



(forts), religious buildings, and daily life. Artifacts like pottery, tools, ornaments show levels of craftsmanship, trade links, and domestic life. These sources bring physical evidence of the existence, lifestyle, and technological level of the Mahajanapadas.

(iii) Numismatic Sources (Coins): Coins issued by different Mahajanapadas, especially Punch-marked coins often bear information about the rulers of that period. They reveal economic practices, trade, state authority, and interactions with other regions. By using all these sources together, we can gather much clearer, multi-dimensional picture of the Mahajanapadas how they functioned, interacted, and shaped the early history of the Indian subcontinent.

Question 4. Why was the development of iron metallurgy so important for the growth of urbanism in the 1 st mil-lennium BCE? You may use points from the chapter but also from your knowledge or imagination.

Answer: The development of iron metallurgy during the 1 st millennium BCE was a game-changer for early societies in India and it played a key role in the rise of urbanism (the growth of towns and cities). Here's why it was so important:

(i) Stronger Tools and Weapons: Iron tools like ploughs, axes, and sickles were stronger and more durable than their earlier stone or copper counterparts. This led to more efficient agriculture, forestry, and construction. Greater agricultural productivity could support larger populations, which is essential for towns and cities to emerge.

(ii) Craft and Trade Specialization: Iron tools boosted various crafts like carpentry, masonry, and metalwork. As agriculture stabilized, more people could take up non-farming occupations (blacksmiths, traders, builders). These craftspeople and traders often lived in urban centers, where their goods could be exchanged or sold.

(iii) Growth of Trade and Infrastructure: Iron was also used to make transport tools (wheels, carts), helping in trade and connectivity. Urban centers often developed along trade routes, benefiting from increased mobility and commerce. Cities grew as commercial and administrative hubs.

