

## UPSC Civil Services Examination

### History

#### Topic: 16 Mahajanapadas

Ancient Indian History starts with stone ages. Gradually, cities started coming and the first arrival of groups of communities was witnessed in 16 Mahajanapadas (Kingdoms). The mahajanapadas signify the tribes that came together to form different groups and later gave rise to a permanent area of settlements called 'states' or 'janapadas.'

The topic, '16 Mahajanapadas' is an important for IAS Exam, for both Prelims and Mains History syllabi. This article will provide you with relevant details about 16 Mahajanapadas which will help you with civil services exam preparation.

Which are 16 Mahajanapadas?

The table below provides you with the list of names of 16 mahajanapadas:

16 Mahajanapadas
1. Kasi
2. Kosala
3. Anga
4. Magadha
5. Vajji
6. Malla
7. Chedi
8. Vatsa
9. Kuru
10. Panchala
11. Matsya
12. Surasena
13. Assaka
14. Avanti
15. Gandhara
16. Kamboja

## 16 Mahajanapadas - Facts for UPSC Exam

Ancient India had several kingdoms in the 6th century BC. This era saw socio-economic growth along with religious and political developments crossways the Indo-Gangetic plain.

These settlements led the growth from Janapadas to Mahajanapadas. By 6th BC, the focus of chief political activity moved from the western part of Gangetic plain to the eastern part. The eastern part of Gangetic plain consists of present-day Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh. The main reason for this shift was the fertile lands, better climate and topography condition bestowed with rainfall and rivers. In fact, it was the augmented use of iron tools and weapons that empowered small states to develop as a kingdom which is later known as Mahajanapadas.

The table gives you the details about 16 Mahajanapadas:

16 Mahajanapadas	Capital of 16 Mahajanapadas	Modern Location of 16 Mahajanapadas	Facts about 16 Mahajanapadas
Anga	Champa	Munger and Bhagalpur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anga Mahajanapada finds reference in the Mahabharata and Atharva Veda</li> <li>• During the rule of Bimbisara, it was taken over by Magadha Empire.</li> <li>• It is situated in present-day Bihar and West Bengal.</li> </ul>
Magadha	Girivraja  Rajagriha	Gaya and Patna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Magadha finds mention in the Atharva Veda which conveys that Magadha was semi-Brahmanical habitation.</li> <li>• It was located in present day Bihar close to Anga, divided by river Champa.</li> <li>• Later, Magadha became a center of Jainism and the first Buddhist Council was held in Rajagriha.</li> </ul>
Kasi	Kasi	Banaras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was located in Varanasi.</li> <li>• This city got its name from rivers Varuna and Asi as cited in the</li> </ul>

			Matsya Purana.
<b>Vatsa</b>	<b>Kausambi</b>	<b>Allahabad</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vatsa is also known as Vamsa</li> <li>• This Mahajanapada followed the monarchical form of governance.</li> <li>• The capital is Kausambi.</li> <li>• This was a central city for economic activities.</li> <li>• There were a prosperous trade and business scenario in 6th century BC. After the rise of Buddha, the ruler Udayana made Buddhism a state religion.</li> <li>• Vatsa was located around the present day Allahabad.</li> </ul>
<b>Kosala</b>	<b>Sravasti</b>	<b>Eastern Uttar Pradesh</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was located in modern Awadh region of Uttar Pradesh.</li> <li>• Its capital was Sravasti</li> </ul>
<b>Saurasena</b>	<b>Mathura</b>	<b>Western Uttar Pradesh</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This place was a center of Krishna worship at the time of Megasthenes. Also, there was a dominant followership of Buddha here.</li> </ul>
<b>Panchala</b>	<b>Ahichchatra and Kampliya</b>	<b>Western Uttar Pradesh</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Its capital for northern Panchala was Ahichchatra and Kampilaya for its southern regions.</li> <li>• It was situated in present-day western Uttar Pradesh.</li> <li>• Later the nature of governance shifted from monarchy to republic.</li> </ul>
<b>Kuru</b>	<b>Indraprastha</b>	<b>Meerut and Southeastern Haryana</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The area around Kurukshetra was apparently the site for Kuru Mahajanapada.</li> <li>• It moved to a republic form of governance.</li> </ul>
<b>Matsya</b>	<b>Viratnagar</b>	<b>Jaipur</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was situated to the west of the Panchalas and south of the Kurus.</li> <li>• The capital was at Viratanagar</li> <li>• It is situated around present-day</li> </ul>

			Jaipur.
<b>Chedi</b>	<b>Sothivati</b>	<b>Jaipur</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This was cited in the Rigveda</li> <li>• The capital was Sothivati.</li> <li>• It located in the present-day Bundelkhand region.</li> </ul>
<b>Avanti</b>	<b>Ujjaini or Mahismati</b>	<b>Malwa and Madhya Pradesh</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avanti was significant in relation to the rise of Buddhism.</li> <li>• The capital of Avanti was located at Ujjaini or Mahismati.</li> <li>• It was situated around present day Malwa and Madhya Pradesh.</li> </ul>
<b>Gandhara</b>	<b>Taxila</b>	<b>Rawalpindi</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The capital was at Taxila.</li> <li>• Gandhara are cited in the Atharva Veda</li> <li>• The people were highly trained in the art of war.</li> <li>• It was significant for international commercial activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Kamboja</b>	<b>Pooncha</b>	<b>Rajori and Hajra</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The capital of Kamboj is Poonch.</li> <li>• It is situated in present-day Kashmir and Hindukush.</li> <li>• Several literary sources mention that Kamboja was a republic.</li> </ul>
<b>Ashmaka or Assaka</b>	<b>Pratisthan/ Paithan</b>	<b>Bank of Godavari</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The capital of this Mahajanapada was located at Pratisthan or Paithan.</li> <li>• It was located on the bank of Godavari.</li> </ul>
<b>Vajji</b>	<b>Vaishali</b>	<b>Bihar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is the capital of Vajji was Vaishali.</li> <li>• The main races residing in this Mahajanapadas were Licchavis, Vedehans, Jnatrikas and Vajjis.</li> <li>• Malla</li> </ul>
<b>Malla</b>	<b>Kusinara</b>	<b>Deoria and Uttar Pradesh</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It finds a reference in Buddhist and Jain texts and Mahabharata.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Malla was a republic</li><li>• Their capital was Kusinara situated around present-day Deoria and Uttar Pradesh.</li></ul>
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