

## The Big Questions (Page 68).

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

**Ans:** The 'Second Urbanisation of India' refers to a period in the 1st millennium BCE when urban life re-emerged in the Indian subcontinent after the decline of the Harappan civilisation. This new phase began in the fertile Ganga plains and parts of the Indus basin and was marked by the rise of janapadas and mahajanapadas, the development of trade, the use of iron tools and weapons, and the growth of cities. It was supported by both archaeological and literary sources.

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

**Ans:**

- Janapadas were early territorial units where people settled under a local ruler.
- As trade and agriculture grew, some janapadas merged to form larger units called mahajanapadas.
- These became the first organised states in India with proper governance, administration, armies, and urban centres.
- They laid the foundation for future kingdoms and empires and played a key role in the spread of new ideas, technology (like iron), and economic growth.

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

**Ans:**

- Most mahajanapadas were monarchies, with a rājā as the hereditary ruler.
- The king was advised by ministers and assemblies like the sabha and samiti.
- However, some like Vajji (Vṛijji) and Malla had democratic systems, where rulers were chosen by discussion or vote in the assembly.
- These were known as gaṇas or sanghas and are considered among the earliest republics in the world.

## LET'S EXPLORE (Page 70)

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

**Ans.** The most powerful mahajanapadas and their ancient capitals are:

- Magadha – Capital: Rajagriha (modern-day Rajgir, Bihar)
- Kosala – Capital: Shravasti (modern-day Shravasti, Uttar Pradesh)
- Vatsa – Capital: Kaushambi (modern-day Kaushambi, near Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh)
- Avanti – Capital: Ujjayini (modern-day Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh)

Modern equivalents matched:

- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| • Rajgir    | • Kaushambi |
| • Shravasti | • Ujjain    |

So, all four ancient capitals can be matched with existing Indian cities today.

This shows that many cities of ancient India have continued to exist and evolve into modern times, highlighting their long and uninterrupted urban legacy.

2. Compare this map 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?

**Ans.** When comparing the map of mahajanapadas with the regions mentioned in the Mahabharata (Grade 6, Fig. 5.4):

**Common names include:**

- Kuru
- Panchala
- Matsya
- Kashi
- Anga
- Magadha
- Gandhara

**What this implies:**

- These regions existed across different historical periods, including both epic literature (like Mahabharata) and historical records.
- It implies a continuity of political and cultural regions, and that the stories of the Mahabharata were rooted in real geographical places known to people even centuries later.
- This connection also shows how myth, memory, and history overlapped in ancient India.

#### LET'S EXPLORE (Page 73)

- 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.

**Ans.**

	First Urbanisation	Second Urbanisation
Ganga plains	✗ No	✓ Yes
Monasteries	✗ No	✓ Yes
Literature	✗ No	✓ Yes
Trade	✓ Yes	✓ Yes
Warfare	✓ Yes (limited)	✓ Yes (more evident)
Copper/bronze	✓ Yes	✗ No
Iron	✗ No	✓ Yes

#### LET'S EXPLORE (Page 75)

1. Why should a complex society divide itself into such groups? Think about several possible factors why this happens.

**Ans.** A complex society divides itself into different groups for several reasons:

- Specialisation of work: As society grows, people begin to specialise in certain types of work (like farming, trading, ruling, etc.) for better efficiency.
- Efficient functioning: Dividing responsibilities ensures that all aspects of society — like food production, defence, education, and administration — are managed smoothly.

- Skill-based roles: Certain professions require specific skills (e.g., blacksmiths, priests), so people group into communities that pass down these skills.
- Economic needs: Trade, agriculture, governance, and crafts all need separate focus for a society to be prosperous.
- Cultural and religious practices: Rituals, beliefs, and traditions often influenced the grouping of people (like priests or temple builders).
- Social identity and order: Divisions gave people a role and status in society, which created a sense of belonging and structure.

**2. List other such professions you expect in a complex society of the 1st millennium BCE.**

**Ans.** Professions that likely existed in a complex society of the 1st millennium BCE include:

- |                         |                              |                             |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Farmers               | • Metalworkers               | • Chariot makers            |
| • Potters               | • Carpenters                 | • Doctors or healers        |
| • Weavers               | • Builders or masons         | • Barbers                   |
| • Priests               | • Fisherfolk                 | • Scribes or record-keepers |
| • Traders and merchants | • Musicians and entertainers | • Soldiers and warriors     |

**THINK ABOUT IT (Page 77)**

**Inequalities within society can exist in many forms.**

**1. Have you encountered any incident where you or anyone you know might have been made to feel different from others?**

**Ans.** Yes, I have seen such an incident in school. One of my classmates was teased and excluded from group activities because he wore old clothes and could not afford expensive school supplies. He felt embarrassed and left out, even though he was very good in studies and always helped others.

**2. Do you think equality is desirable in a society? If so, why?**

**Ans.** Yes, equality is very important in a society. It ensures that:

- Everyone gets equal opportunities to grow and succeed.
- People are treated with respect and fairness, no matter their background.
- It helps build a society that is peaceful, united, and just, where no one feels left behind or inferior.

**3. Have you come across people or initiatives that lessened inequalities?**

**Ans.** Yes, I have seen some initiatives that try to reduce inequalities:

- In our school, teachers provide extra help to students who are weak in studies or come from poor families.
- I also know about mid-day meal schemes and free tuition classes run by NGOs to help underprivileged children.
- Some people in my locality donate clothes and books to children who need them.
- These efforts make people feel included and supported, and help reduce the gap between different groups in society.

## Questions and activities

**1. Consider the quotation at the start of the chapter and discuss in several groups. Compare your observations and conclusions on what Kauṭilya recommends for a kingdom. Is it very different today?**

**Ans.** Kauṭilya's recommendations for a kingdom – Then and Now

- **Kauṭilya's vision (from Arthaśāstra):**
  - The kingdom should have fortified towns, especially at the capital and frontiers.
  - It must be self-sufficient during calamities.
  - The land should be fertile, have mines, forests, pastures, and independent water sources.
  - It should have good roads and waterways for transport and trade.
  - A productive and diverse economy is essential.
- **Comparison with today:**
  - Many of these ideas are still relevant in modern governance: infrastructure, food security, resource availability, and economic development.
  - Today's cities are also planned with sustainability, resilience, and connectivity in mind.
  - However, modern democracies use institutions, laws, and technology, while Kauṭilya's ideas were more focused on monarchical efficiency and survival.

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

**Ans.**

- In early Vedic society, rulers were often selected with the guidance of assemblies such as the sabhā and samiti.
- These councils included elders and respected members of the clan who advised the rājā (king).
- In some places like Vajji and Malla, rulers were even elected by assembly members — a form of early democratic governance.
- However, in many mahājanapadas, the king's position became hereditary, and monarchy was the norm.

**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.**

**Ans.** Sources used by historians to study the mahajanapadas

**a. Archaeological Sources:**

- Ruins of cities like Rajgir, Kauśhāmbī, and Śhishupalgarh.
- Fortifications, coins (punch-marked coins), tools, pottery, and infrastructure (roads, moats).
- These help us understand urban planning, economy, warfare, and technology.

**b. Literary Sources**

- Buddhist, Jain, and Vedic texts give insights into politics, society, and religion.
- Texts like the Arthaśāstra and the Mahabharata mention kingdoms, governance, and customs.

**c. Foreign Accounts:**

- Writings of travellers and traders (though more useful for later periods) help understand how India was perceived and what was traded.

**d. Inscriptions and Edicts:**

- Later inscriptions record rulers, events, religious patronage, and social practices.

Together, these sources give a multi-dimensional picture of life in the mahajanapadas.

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

**Ans.** Importance of Iron Metallurgy for Urbanism

- Iron tools enabled large-scale clearing of forests, which made more land available for agriculture.
- Efficient farming tools increased food production, supporting larger populations and urban growth.
- Iron weapons helped in defending cities and in expanding territories, leading to stronger kingdoms.
- Iron trade boosted the economy and created specialised crafts and occupations in cities.
- Overall, iron helped build self-sufficient, militarily strong, and economically vibrant urban centres during the Second Urbanisation.