

Here, we are giving the complete study material of 'Ancient Bihar History' that will ease the journey of aspirants to crack the competitive examinations like BPSC and other state-level examinations.

Ancient History of Bihar Part-1

STONE AGE SITES

- Palaeolithic sites have been discovered in Munger and Nalanda.
- Mesolithic sites have been discovered from Hazaribagh, Ranchi, Singhbhum and Santhal Pargana (all in Jharkhand)
- Neolithic(2500 - 1500 B.C.) artefacts have been discovered from Chirand(Saran) and Chechar(Vaishali)
- Chalcolithic Age items have been discovered from Chirand(Saran), Chechar(Vaishali), Champa(Bhagalpur) and Taradih(Gaya)

MAHAJANAPADAS

- In the Later Vedic Age a number of small kingdoms emerged. 16 monarchies and republics known as Mahajanapadas stretched across Indo-Gangetic plains. They are:

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

- Three Mahajanapadas were in Bihar namely Magadha, Anga and Vajji.

ANGA Kingdom

- It is mentioned for the first time in Atharvaveda.
- It comprised of present-day Khagaria, Bhagalpur, and Munger.
- It was situated to the north-east of Magadha Empire.
- Champa (in present-day Bhagalpur) was the capital.
 - It was established by king Mahagovind.
 - It was also called Chenampo (by Hiuen Tsang) and Malini.

VAJJI Kingdom

- It consisted of eight clans.
- Most important clans were - Licchavi, Videha and Jnatrika.
- It was located in Northern India.
- The capital of Vajji was located at Vaishali.
- It was considered the world's first republic.

Licchavi Clan

- It was the most powerful clan among the Vajji confederacy.
- It was situated on the Northern Banks of Ganga and Nepal
- Its capital was located at Vaishali.
- Lord Mahavira was born at Kundagram in Vaishali. His mother was a Licchavi princess (sister of King Chetaka).
- They were later absorbed into the Magadh Empire by Ajatshatru of Haryanka dynasty.
- Later Gupta emperor Chandragupta married Licchavi princess Kumaradevi.

Jnatrika Clan

- Lord Mahavira belonged to this clan. His father was the head of this clan.

Videha Clan

- It is mentioned for the first time in Yajurveda.
- The kingdom was started by Ishkavaku's son Nimi Videh.
- Mithijanak Videh established Mithila.
- Goddess Sita, daughter of King Janak, belonged to this clan.
- Janakpur (now in Nepal) was the capital of this kingdom.

MAGADHA Kingdom

- It is mentioned for the first time in Atharvaveda.
- It extended from the Ganga in the north to Vindhya in the south, Champa in the east to river Sone on the west.
- Its capital was Girivraja or Rajgir which was surrounded by hills on all sides by five hills.
- Later the capital was shifted to Patliputra.
- The Magadh Kingdom included Koshal, Vatsa, and Avanti.
- It played an important role in the development of Buddhism and Jainism.
- Two of India's greatest empires, Maurya and Gupta, emerged in Magadha.

Pre-Mauryan Dynasties under Magadha Empire

BRIHADRATH Dynasty

- Brihadrath was the earliest known king Magadha. He was the eldest son of Vasu, Kuru king of Chedi.
- His name has been mentioned Rigveda.
- Jarasandha, son of Brihadrath was the most famous king.
- Girivraja (Rajgir) was the capital under Jarasandh.
- Prodyota dynasty succeeded the Brihadrath dynasty in Magadha.

HARYANKA Dynasty - 544 B.C. to 492 B.C.

Bimbisara

- He founded the dynasty. He was a contemporary of Buddha.
- He established his capital at Rajgir.
- He expanded his empire through matrimonial alliances e.g. Kosala
- He was also the first ruler in history to form permanent forces/army.
- He also sent royal physician Jivaka to Ujjain for treating Chanda Pradyota, King of Avanti, and his longtime rival who later became a friend.

Ajatshatru

- He killed his father Bimbisara to become the next ruler.
- Lord Buddha attained Mahaparinirvana and Lord Mahavira also attained Moksha during his reign.
- First Buddhist Council (483 B.C.) was conducted under his patronage at Rajgir.

Udayin

- He also killed his father Ajatshatru to become the next ruler.
- He founded the city Patliputra at the confluence of rivers Ganga and Sone and made it his capital.

SHISHUNAGA Dynasty - 412 B.C. to 344 B.C.

Shishunaga

- He was the founder of the dynasty. He was a viceroy of Banaras.
- During this time Magadha had two capitals - Rajgir and Vaishali
- He finally destroyed the resistance Avanti and brought to end to the 100-year rivalry.

Kalasoka

- He shifted his capital to Patliputra and it continued as the capital of Magadha Empire onwards.
- Second Buddhist Council (383 B.C.) was conducted under his patronage at Vaishali.

NANDA Dynasty - 344 B.C. to 321 B.C.

- Mahapadmananda established the dynasty after killing last Shishunaga ruler Nandivardhana.
- He was also described Mahapadmapati - sovereign of an infinite host or of the immense wealth
- In Mahabodhivamsa, he was called Ugrasen.
- Dhana Nanda was the last ruler of this dynasty and was the contemporary Alexander.

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