

## CLASS:--12<sup>TH</sup>, HISTORY, REVISION QUESTIONS, CHAPTER:-2,

### 1. Describe the salient features of mahajanapadas.

**Ans:** The salient features of mahajanapadas are as follows :

- The most important mahajanapadas were Vajji, Magadha, Koshala, Kuru, Panchala, Gandhara and Avanti.
- Most mahajanapadas were ruled by kings.
- Some, known as ganas or sanghas, were oligarchies where power was shared by a number of men, often collectively called rajas.
- In some cases, as in the case of the Vajji sangha, the rajas probably controlled resources such as land collectively.
- Each mahajanapada had a capital city, which was often fortified.
- Brahmanas composed the Dharmasutras which laid down norms for rulers as well as for other social categories. The rulers were ideally expected to be Kshatriyas. Rulers were advised to collect taxes and tribute from cultivators, traders and artisans.
- Sometimes raids on neighbouring states were conducted for acquiring wealth. These raids were recognised as legitimate means.
- Gradually, some states acquired standing armies and maintained regular bureaucracies. Others continued to depend on militia, recruited from the peasantry.

### 2. How do historians reconstruct the lives of ordinary people?

**Ans:** Ordinary people could not leave behind any historical evidence about their life. Hence, the historians use a variety of sources to reconstruct the lives of the common people during the ancient times. The important sources are:

1. Remains of houses and pottery give an idea of the life of common men.
2. Some inscriptions and scriptures talk about the relation between monarchs and the subject. It talks about taxes and happiness and unhappiness of the common men.
3. Changing tools of craftsmen and farmers talk about the lifestyle of the people.
4. Historians also depend upon folklores to reconstruct the lives of the people during the ancient times.