

2th Sept.

Q) Trace the rise of Magadhan imperialism up to the times of Nandas with particular reference to its policy towards non-monarchical state. Discuss the factors that contributed to its success? (20M)

Ans) Magadha was one of the 16 Mahajanapadas which existed during the Post Vedic age in ancient India. Its core area was mainly around modern day Bihar, ~~which~~ and stretched to neighbouring states.

The Post Vedic period also had several non-monarchical or Republican states, which were known as Ganas or Sanghas. In fact, Buddha and Mahavira, belonged to Ganas only.

Gradually, Magadha started to increase its imperial ambitions, which transformed it into the first pan-Indian empire ^{under Mauryas} by subjugating other small and big states.

MAGADHAN IMPERIALISM:

- The imperial policies started under Hararyaka dynasty, under its King Bimbisara. He strengthened the empire mainly by his matrimonial alliances with several states. He is said to have around 500 wives. He also conquered Anga state.
- His successor, Ajatashatru, conquered Vajji or Lichhavis Sangha, by treachery. He sent an undercover mission into the confederacy, to create discord among their ranks.

He succeeded in his mission and attacked Lichhavi, who were not able to put a united stand and were fighting for the method of resistance.

- Shishunaga captured the Vajji confederacy after fighting a long war which continued for 16 years.
- Mahapadmananda under the Nanda dynasty also captured several Ganas and was the first in country to become the solo monarch or sovereign (~~to~~ Ekarat).

Under these rulers and the Mauryas, the other monarchical states were also captured to build a pan-Indian empire under Mauryas.

GEOGRAPHICAL FACTORS FOR RISE OF MAGADHA:

- Magadha was blessed with vast fertile lands, perennial rivers and favourable climate, which resulted in agriculture expansion and trade. It brought revenues for state in form of taxes.
- The trade routes like Uttarapatha passed through Magadha, which also included part of Tamralipti, bringing more revenue through ~~had~~ connectivity.
- Magadha also had the iron mines in Sigh Singhbhum and Mayurbhanj region, which gave them iron for weapons.

- Their distance from Brahmanical religion dominated Northwest India, allowed them to avoid caste and Varna system. They could employ people from all castes, as in Army, and it also strengthened cohesiveness.
- The forest areas of the region provided them with necessary timber resources for chariots and defence. According to Megasthenes, Pataliputra was surrounded by wooden Palisade.
- The elephants of Eastern India were used during warfare.
- Their earlier capital Rajgirha, was surrounded by 5 hills, while later capital Pataliputra, was also called Jala-durga, due to the rivers, Ganga, Son and Puspa, surrounding it.

OTHER FACTORS:

- Emergence of heterodox sects like Buddhism, Jainism etc. prevented any discord in society.
- Magadhans also provided organisational ~~strength~~ innovations in its Army and also ~~it~~ innovated 2 new weapons viz. Ratha Musala and shila-Kentika.
- It was blessed with guidance of great rulers of the time such as Bimbisara, Ajatashatru, Mahapadma Nanda, Chandragupta Maurya etc.

Thus, these factors made Magadha, the supreme power in India of ancient period.