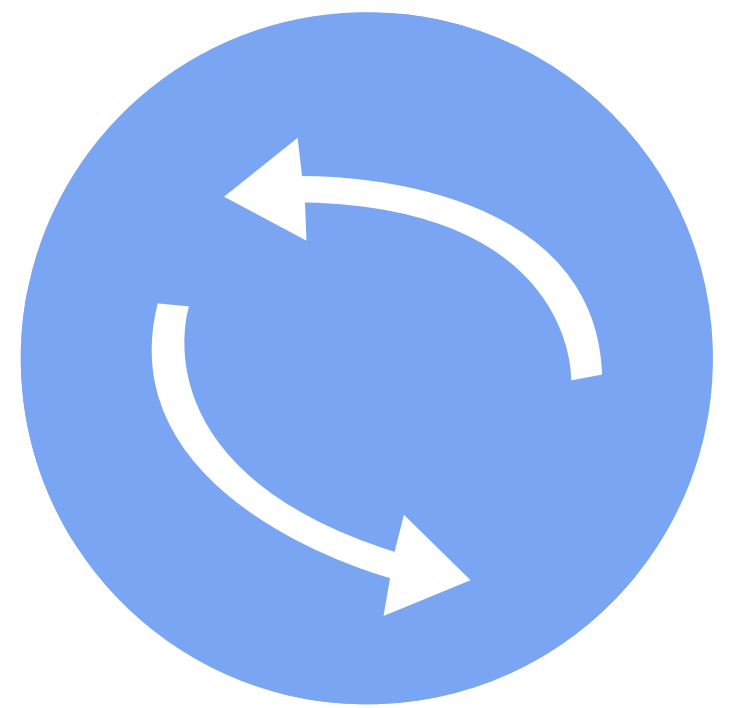


# IGNOU

# MHI-104

**SOLVED** MOST  
REPEATED  
QUESTIONS



Curated List of 30 Questions  
that are seen to be repeated  
frequently in the examinations.

*By* [FarLearner.com](https://farlearner.com)

# MHI-104 Most Repeated Questions

## 1 . Discuss the nature of the Mauryan state.

Found in June 2020 ( 4 ), Dec 2023 ( 1 ), June 2022 ( 1 )

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The Mauryan state (c. 321–185 BCE) represents one of the earliest and most extensive examples of centralized imperial governance in ancient India. Founded by Chandragupta Maurya and consolidated under rulers like Bindusara and Ashoka, the empire extended across most of the Indian subcontinent. Its nature can be understood in terms of centralized authority, administrative organization, economic control, and ideological foundations, reflecting a sophisticated and highly structured polity.

A defining feature of the Mauryan state was its strong centralization. The king was the supreme authority, exercising control over administration, military, judiciary, and revenue. The ideas found in the Arthashastra, attributed to Kautilya, emphasize a highly organized and bureaucratic system where the ruler was advised by ministers but retained ultimate authority. The state was not feudal but bureaucratic, with officials appointed and accountable to the king.

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The administrative structure was elaborate and hierarchical. The empire was divided into provinces

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governed by royal princes or trusted officials, ensuring loyalty to the center. These provinces were further subdivided into districts and villages, each managed by appointed officers. A network of spies and informants was maintained to monitor officials and prevent corruption, highlighting the importance of surveillance in governance.

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Economically, the Mauryan state exercised significant control over resources and production. Land revenue was the primary source of income, but the state also regulated trade, industry, mining, and forests. State monopolies existed in key sectors such as mining and metallurgy. Taxes were systematically collected, and records were maintained, indicating a well-developed fiscal system.

The Mauryan military was another pillar of the state. It was a large standing army comprising infantry, cavalry, elephants, and chariots. A separate war office with committees managed different aspects of military organization. This strong military ensured internal stability and facilitated territorial expansion.

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Under Ashoka, the nature of the state acquired a moral and ideological dimension. After the Kalinga War, Ashoka adopted the policy of Dhamma, emphasizing ethical governance, non-violence, and welfare of subjects.

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He introduced measures such as public works, medical facilities, and religious tolerance, transforming the state into a more welfare-oriented entity.

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From this perspective, the Mauryan state was a centralized, bureaucratic, and interventionist polity, combining political authority with economic regulation and moral governance. It laid the foundation for future imperial traditions in India.

### 2 . Discuss the rise of territorial state in the age of Buddha.

Found in June 2020 ( 1 ), June 2024 ( 1 ), June 2021 ( 1 )

The rise of territorial states during the age of Buddha (6th century BCE) marks a crucial phase in early Indian political evolution. This period witnessed the transformation of small tribal polities (janapadas) into larger, organized territorial units known as mahajanapadas. These states were defined not merely by kinship ties but by fixed geographical boundaries, centralized authority, and administrative structures, indicating a shift toward more complex forms of governance.

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One of the primary factors behind this transformation was

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agricultural expansion in the fertile Gangetic plains. The widespread use of iron tools enabled the clearing of forests and cultivation of new lands, leading to increased agricultural productivity. This surplus supported a growing population and allowed the emergence of stable settlements. As villages expanded into towns, the need for organized administration and control over land and resources became essential, contributing to the rise of territorial states.

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Economic developments also played a significant role. The growth of trade and commerce, along with the introduction of coinage such as punch-marked coins, facilitated market exchanges and the rise of urban centers. Cities like Rajagriha, Shravasti, and Kaushambi became important hubs of economic and political activity. The emergence of a merchant class (vaishyas) further strengthened the economic base of these states, reducing dependence on purely agrarian systems.

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Politically, the period saw the consolidation of power by ambitious rulers who expanded their territories through conquest, alliances, and strategic marriages. Among the sixteen mahajanapadas, Magadha emerged as the most powerful state. Its success can be attributed to factors such as fertile land, access to iron resources, and strong

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leadership under rulers like Bimbisara and Ajatashatru. These rulers introduced administrative measures and military innovations that enhanced state control and expansion.

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Another important feature of this transition was the gradual decline of tribal assemblies and the rise of monarchies. While some republican states (gana-sanghas), such as the Vajji confederacy, continued to exist, monarchies became more dominant due to their ability to maintain standing armies and enforce centralized authority. This shift marked the weakening of collective decision-making and the strengthening of royal power.

Social and religious changes also accompanied this political transformation. The rise of new religious movements, including Buddhism and Jainism, reflected the changing socio-economic environment. These movements questioned traditional Vedic practices and were supported by urban populations and rulers, indicating a shift in ideological frameworks that aligned with the emerging state structures.

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To conclude, the rise of territorial states in the age of Buddha was driven by agricultural expansion, economic growth, urbanization, and political consolidation.

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It marked a transition from kin-based tribal systems to geographically defined and centrally governed states, laying the foundation for the development of large empires like Magadha and, later, the Mauryan Empire.

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### 3 . Examine the process of state formation under the Rajputs.

Found in June 2020 ( 2 ), Dec 2024 ( 2 )

The process of state formation under the Rajputs between the 7th and 12th centuries CE represents a significant phase in early medieval Indian history. It was marked by political decentralization, the emergence of regional powers, and the consolidation of authority through kinship, land control, and military strength. Unlike earlier centralized empires, Rajput polity developed through gradual expansion and integration of local elements.

The decline of major empires such as the Guptas created a political vacuum that facilitated the rise of numerous Rajput clans. These clans, claiming Kshatriya status, established control over different regions of northern and western India. Their legitimacy was often constructed through genealogies linking them to ancient royal lineages or mythical origins,

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which helped strengthen their social and political standing.

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A key aspect of Rajput state formation was the importance of kinship and clan organization. Power was structured around familial ties, with rulers distributing authority and land among relatives and loyal chiefs. This created a network of subordinate rulers who acknowledged the supremacy of a central king but enjoyed considerable autonomy in their territories. As a result, the political structure was decentralized and often fragmented.

Land grants played a crucial role in consolidating Rajput authority. Rulers granted land to Brahmins, temples, and military chiefs in return for support and services. These grants helped in extending cultivation, integrating local populations, and legitimizing rule through religious sanction. Over time, this practice contributed to the emergence of a feudal-like system characterized by hierarchical relationships between overlords and vassals.

Military organization and control over strategic locations were a key focus for Rajput rulers. They emphasized maintaining armed forces to defend their territories and expand their influence.

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4 . Analyse the important features of the Mughal theory of sovereignty.

Found in June 2020 ( 3 ), Dec 2023 ( 4 ), Dec 2021 ( 3 ), June 2024 ( 5 c )

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The Mughal theory of sovereignty was a well-developed concept of kingship that combined elements of Islamic political traditions, Persian cultural influences, and Indian administrative practices. It defined the emperor's authority as absolute yet morally guided, forming the ideological basis of Mughal governance and ensuring the stability of a vast and diverse empire.

One of the central features of Mughal sovereignty was the idea of absolute authority of the emperor. The Mughal ruler was the supreme head of the state, with all administrative, military, and judicial powers concentrated in his hands. His authority was considered divinely sanctioned, meaning that he ruled as God's representative on earth. This notion reinforced loyalty and obedience among subjects.

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The concept of the emperor as a divine being was particularly prominent in the Mughal tradition. The idea of the emperor as a divine being was particularly prominent in the Mughal tradition. It suggested that the emperor possessed a divine light that set him apart from ordinary humans and legitimized his rule.

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in expressing sovereignty. Ceremonies such as the darbar, use of royal titles, and elaborate court etiquette projected the grandeur and authority of the emperor, reinforcing his supreme position.

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In retrospect, the Mughal theory of sovereignty combined divine legitimacy, centralized authority, administrative control, and ethical responsibility. It provided a strong ideological and practical framework for governance, enabling the Mughal Empire to maintain unity and stability over a vast territory.

### 5 . Gana-Sanghas (Short note).

Found in June 2020 ( 5 a ), Dec 2023 ( 5 b ), Dec 2020 ( 5 b )

Gana-Sanghas were a form of republican or oligarchic political organization that existed in ancient India during the 6th century BCE, particularly in the age of the Mahajanapadas. Unlike monarchies, these states were governed by assemblies or councils rather than a single hereditary ruler. The term “gana” refers to a group or clan, while “sangha” denotes an assembly, collectively indicating a system where power was shared among members of a ruling group.

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These republics were mainly found in regions such as north Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh. Prominent examples include the Vajji confederacy, the Licchavis, and the Mallas. In these states, political authority rested with a group of elders or chiefs, often belonging to warrior clans. Decision-making was conducted through assemblies, where important matters such as war, diplomacy, and administration were discussed collectively.

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The structure of governance in Gana-Sanghas reflected elements of early democratic practices, though participation was limited to a select group, usually male members of the ruling class. Common people had little direct role in governance. Officials were sometimes elected or selected, and there were established procedures for debate and resolution, indicating a degree of political organization and institutional development.

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Despite their collective nature, Gana-Sanghas faced challenges such as internal conflicts and a lack of strong centralized authority. These weaknesses made them vulnerable to powerful monarchies like Magadha, which eventually unified the region. All things considered, the Gana-Sanghas represent an important experiment in non-monarchical governance in ancient India,

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6 . Examine the nature of the Vijayanagara state.

Found in Dec 2023 ( 3 ), June 2022 ( 4 ), June 2024 ( 3 )

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The Vijayanagara state (c. 1336–1646 CE) was one of the most powerful empires in South India, established by Harihara and Bukka in response to political instability and the expansion of the Delhi Sultanate. Its nature can be understood as a complex blend of centralized monarchy, military organization, regional decentralization, and strong cultural foundations, making it a unique political system in medieval India.

At its core, the Vijayanagara state was a centralized monarchy. The king was the supreme authority, controlling administration, military, and revenue. He was regarded as a divine or semi-divine figure and was the protector of dharma. The court played an important role

in governing with ministers and officials assisting the ruler in decision-making. However, ultimate authority rested with the king, reflecting a centralized structure.

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Administratively, the empire was divided into provinces, often governed by royal family members or trusted nobles. These provinces were further subdivided into smaller units for efficient management. While the central administration maintained control over major policies, local governance allowed a degree of autonomy, especially in distant regions. This balance between centralization and decentralization helped maintain stability across a vast territory.

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Military strength was a key feature of the Vijayanagara state. The empire maintained a large standing army consisting of infantry, cavalry, and war elephants. Fortifications and strategic control of key locations were crucial for defense against external threats, particularly from the Bahmani Sultanate and other Deccan powers.

The military organization was closely tied to the nayaka system, which delegated military responsibilities to local chiefs.

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Economically, the Vijayanagara state was prosperous, supported by agriculture, trade, and taxation. Extensive irrigation systems improved agricultural productivity. The empire engaged in vibrant trade, both inland and overseas, exporting spices, textiles, and precious stones.

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7 . What were the characteristics of the nayaka system under the Vijayanagar rulers?

Found in June 2020 ( 8 ), Dec 2024 ( 10 c ), Dec 2020 ( 8 ), Dec 2021 ( 8 ), June 2023 ( 10 b ), June 2022 ( 7 )

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The nayaka system was a distinctive feature of the administrative and military organization of the Vijayanagara Empire, playing a crucial role in maintaining control over its extensive territories. It represented a blend of centralized authority and local autonomy, enabling the empire to function efficiently despite its vast geographical spread. This system was particularly important in sustaining military strength and ensuring regional governance.

One of the defining characteristics of the nayaka system was the assignment of land grants known as amaram to military chiefs called nayakas. These grants were not hereditary initially and were given in return for services rendered to the state. The nayakas were responsible for administering these territories, collecting revenue, and maintaining law and order. In return, they retained a portion of the revenue and reported to the central authority.

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A key feature of this system was its strong military basis. Nayakas were required to maintain a specified number of troops, including infantry, cavalry, and war elephants, which they would supply to the king during times of war. This arrangement reduced the need for a large centrally maintained standing army and ensured that the empire had access to a ready and well-equipped military force. It also allowed rapid mobilization in response to external threats, particularly from rival Deccan states.

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The nayaka system also reflected a degree of decentralization in administration. While the Vijayanagara king remained the supreme authority, nayakas enjoyed considerable autonomy in managing their territories. They exercised powers related to revenue collection, local justice, and governance. This decentralization helped in efficient administration, especially in distant regions where direct control was difficult.

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Another feature of the nayaka system was a gradual tendency toward hereditary control. Although the nayakas were initially appointed and could be transferred or removed by the king, over time many established hereditary rule. This led to a strengthening of their local control, as some nayakas began to act independently.

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8 . How did the establishment of railways help in the conquest and administration of India?

Found in Dec 2023 ( 9 ), Dec 2021 ( 9 )

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The establishment of railways in India during the 19th century was one of the most significant developments under British colonial rule. Introduced primarily to serve imperial interests, railways played a crucial role in both the conquest and administration of India. They transformed transportation, communication, and governance, enabling the British to consolidate and maintain control over a vast and diverse territory.

One of the most important contributions of railways was in strengthening military control. Before their introduction, the movement of troops across long distances was slow and inefficient. Railways allowed the British to transport troops, weapons, and supplies rapidly from one region to another. This proved especially useful in suppressing rebellion and maintaining law and order. For instance, after the Revolt of 1857, the British expanded railway networks significantly to ensure quicker military responses.

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9 . Mention various approaches to the study of early medieval polity.

Found in Dec 2023 ( 2 ), June 2024 ( 2 ), Dec 2022 ( 2 ), June 2021 ( 2 )

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The study of early medieval polity in India has been approached by historians through different interpretative frameworks, reflecting diverse perspectives on political structures, economy, and society between roughly the 6th and 13th centuries. These approaches have evolved over time, shaped by new evidence, methodologies, and theoretical orientations.

One of the earliest approaches is the colonial or imperialist perspective, which viewed early medieval India as a period of political decline and fragmentation following the fall of classical empires like the Guptas.

Colonial historians often emphasized the absence of strong centralized authority and portrayed this era as one of disorder and stagnation.

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In contrast, nationalist historians reinterpreted this period more positively, highlighting the emergence of new kingdoms and cultural achievements. They argued that this era was a period of political traditions. Rather than decline, they emphasized the resilience and adaptability of Indian polity, as seen in

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It examines how these groups interacted with and were affected by political structures, offering a more inclusive understanding of history.

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Additionally, recent approaches emphasize regional diversity and ecological factors. Historians study how geography, environment, and local conditions influenced political organization and state formation in different parts of India.

All things considered, the study of early medieval polity is enriched by multiple approaches, each offering unique insights. Together, they provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complexities of political life during this period.

### 10 . State of Hyderabad (Short note).

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Found in June 2020 ( 5 c ), Dec 2023 ( 5 c ), June 2021 ( 5 b )

The State of Hyderabad was one of the largest and most significant princely states in pre-independence India, ruled by the Asaf Jahi dynasty from the early 18th century until 1948. Founded by Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah I after the decline of Mughal authority, Hyderabad emerged as a powerful and semi-autonomous state in the Deccan region.

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Hyderabad was characterized by a centralized administrative system under the Nizam, who held absolute authority over governance, revenue, and military affairs. The administration included ministers and officials responsible for various departments such as finance, justice, and public works. Despite being under British paramountcy, the Nizam retained considerable internal autonomy.

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Economically, the state was prosperous, with agriculture forming the backbone of its economy. It also had a developed system of land revenue and engaged in trade and handicrafts. Hyderabad was known for its cultural diversity, with a blend of Hindu and Muslim traditions, and it became a center of art, architecture, and education.

However, the state faced political challenges in the 20th century, particularly regarding integration into independent India. The Nizam initially sought to remain independent, leading to tensions with the Indian government. In 1948, Hyderabad was annexed into India through a military operation known as "Operation Polo."

In summary, the State of Hyderabad was a prominent princely state with a rich cultural heritage and economic prosperity. Its integration into India's independence marked a significant chapter in its history.

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