

Class 9 Social Science

Chapter 5: State and Society up to 1000 CE

Easy-to-Understand Study Notes | Tiwari Academy

Chapter at a Glance

- **Early political organisation:** Janas (clans) gradually developed into janapadas, mahājanapadas and large empires.
- **Main powers:** Magadha, Mauryas, Guptas, Satavāhanas, Pallavas, Chālukyas, Gurjara-Pratihāras, Pālas, Rāṣṭrakūṭas and Cholas.
- **Administration:** Kings were assisted by ministers, officials and local institutions; villages often managed many local affairs.
- **Society:** Family, varṇa, jāti, āśhramas and occupations shaped social life, but mobility and flexibility existed in many periods.
- **Ethics:** Dharma connected duty, justice, moral conduct and governance.
- **Economy:** Agriculture was the backbone of the economy; irrigation, trade routes, ports and guilds supported growth.
- **Education and culture:** Gurukulas, centres of learning, literature, philosophy and Bhakti traditions flourished.

1. Important Timeline

Period / Date	Major Development
2000–500 BCE	Vedic period
1000–600 BCE	Transition from jana to janapada
600–300 BCE	Rise of mahājanapadas
321 BCE	Mauryan Empire founded by Chandragupta Maurya
272–232 BCE	Aśhoka's reign and Dhamma
300 BCE–300 CE	Sangam literature and early Tamil kingdoms
320–550 CE	Gupta period
c. 275–897 CE	Pallavas
543 CE onward	Chālukyan dynasty
8th–10th centuries CE	Gurjara-Pratihāras, Pālas and Rāṣṭrakūṭas
9th–11th centuries CE	Imperial Cholas

2. Society and State

Society	State
System of social relationships among people sharing territory, culture and belonging.	Organised political system based on rules and laws.
Mainly guided by customs and practices.	Has rulers, officials, institutions and mechanisms to enforce law and order.
Includes families, households and social institutions.	Defines rights, duties, administration and governance.

3. The Vedic Period

Vedic literature is an important source for understanding early Indian society, geography, political institutions, economy and religious practices. The earliest parts of the Ṛigveda were composed in the Sapta-Sindhu region.

The Four Vedas

Veda	Main Feature
Ṛigveda	Earliest Veda; 1,028 hymns on deities and universal questions.
Yajurveda	Deals mainly with the performance of yajñas and ritual procedures.
Sāmaveda	Ṛigvedic hymns arranged for musical recitation; linked with the tradition of seven svaras.
Atharvaveda	Contains varied hymns, including those linked with protection and ailments.

Four parts of Vedic texts: Saṁhitā (hymns), Brāhmaṇa (ritual explanations), Āraṇyaka (philosophical reflections) and Upaniṣhad (questions about Ātman and Brāhman).

4. Political Institutions in the Vedic Period

- **Jana:** A clan or group bound mainly by kinship.
- **Pañchajana:** Five peoples—Yadu, Turvaśha, Puru, Anu and Druhyu.
- **Rājā:** Clan chief who led in warfare and protected the people.
- **Bharata jana:** The Ṛigveda uses the name Bharata for a jana associated with the Bharata family.

Assembly	Main Role
Sabhā	Smaller body of selected elites; mainly judicial functions.
Samiti	Larger assembly; policy and political matters.
Vidhata	Popular gathering for discussions on warfare and other political matters.

5. From Jana to Empire

Jana → Janapada → Mahājanapada → Kingdom / Empire

- **Janapada:** A territorial unit; identity became connected not only with kinship but also with land.
- **Mahājanapada:** A larger political unit that required stronger administration.
- **Magadha:** Became the most powerful mahājanapada because of fertile plains, strategic location and strong rulers.
- **Political forms:** Both monarchies (rājyas) and republican states (gaṇas or saṁghas) existed.

6. Early States of Southern India

- **Satavāhanas:** Important power in the Deccan after the Mauryas.
- **Tamilakam:** Included important polities such as Cholas, Cheras/Keralaputras and Pandyas.
- **Sangam literature:** Major source for understanding early Tamil society and kingdoms.
- **Vendar of Tamilakam:** The Chera, Chola and Pandya rulers were called the three crowned kings.

Kingdom	Royal Emblem
Cholas	Tiger
Cheras	Bow
Pandyas	Fish

7. Duties and Ideals of the King

- Protect the people and the territory.
- Maintain law and order.
- Administer justice fairly.
- Protect the country from calamities and external threats.
- Promote public welfare.
- Follow ethical conduct and act responsibly.

Important idea: Titles such as *rājā*, *mahārāja* and *samrāt* were used. Kingship was often hereditary, but sources also mention kings being elected or removed.

8. Dharma and the Idea of Political Unity

- **Dharma:** Duty, obligation, righteousness and moral conduct; it is not simply a synonym for religion.
- **Dhamma:** Pāli form of dharma; Aśhoka emphasised moral conduct, compassion, non-violence and respect.
- **Chakravarti samrāt:** Ideal of a universal paramount ruler.
- **Pan-Indian ideas:** Terms such as Jambudvīpa, Bhāratavarṣha, Prithivi and chakravarti kṣhetra expressed a wider political-geographical vision of the subcontinent.

9. Administration of Early Indian States

Kauṭilya's Saptāṅga – Seven Parts of the State

Term	Meaning
Swāmi	King
Amātya	Ministers and high officials
Janapada	Territory and population
Durga	Fortified towns and cities
Koṣha	Treasury
Daṇḍa	Defence and law-and-order forces
Mitra	Allies

Council of Ministers (mantri-pariṣhad): Advised the king and included officials such as the treasurer, chief tax collector, chief legal adviser and commander-in-chief.

How Large Empires Were Governed

Kingdom → Province → Division / District → Village

- Satavāhana administrative divisions were called āhāras; villages were headed by a grāmika.
- District governors (pradeśhikas) performed administrative and judicial functions.
- Between about 300 and 800 CE, decentralised administration became increasingly important.
- In the north, provinces could be called bhuktis; in the south, maṇḍalas or maṇḍalams.

10. Regional and Chola Administration

- **Pallavas:** Combined monarchy with local governance; tax-free Brahmin villages were called Brahmadeyas.
- **Chālukyas:** Granted agrahārams to Brahmin settlements; some became centres of learning.
- **Tripartite struggle:** Gurjara-Pratihāras, Pālas and Rāṣṭrakūṭas competed for Kannauj.
- **Villages:** Often remained the smallest and largely self-reliant administrative units.

Chola Administration

Maṇḍalam → Valanāḍu → Nāḍu → Ur (village)

- Village assemblies handled revenue, land, irrigation, roads, records and disputes.
- The Uttaramerur inscription describes the Kudavolai or 'ballot pot' system.
- Elected members served on specialised committees called variyams.

11. Social Organisation: Varṇa and Jāti

Varṇa	Main Roles Mentioned
Brāhmaṇa	Study/teach Vedas, perform yajñas, give and receive dāna.
Rājanya / Kṣatriya	Warfare, protection, justice and social order.
Vaiśhya	Agriculture, pastoralism and trade.
Śhūdra	Assistance to other varṇas; also agriculture, animal husbandry, trade, arts and crafts in practice.

Varṇa vs Jāti: Varṇa refers to four broad social categories. Jātis were numerous groups that developed over time due to occupation, migration, endogamy, intermarriage and regional differences. Early social roles could be flexible, though this flexibility reduced over time.

12. Family and Stages of Life

Kula → Grāma → Viśha → Jana

Āśhrama	Stage of Life
Brahmacharya	Studentship
Gṛihastha	Householder life
Vānaprastha	Withdrawal / forest life
Saṁnyāsa	Renunciation

Four puruṣhārthas: Dharma (righteousness), Artha (material well-being), Kāma (fulfilment of desires) and Mokṣha (liberation).

13. Role of Women

- Vedic women participated in learning, rituals and social gatherings.
- Women sages associated with Ṛigvedic hymns include Apālā, Viśhvavārā, Ghōṣhā and Lopāmudrā.
- Prabhāvatī Gupta served as a regent and issued land grants.
- Sangam literature shows women in agriculture, cattle rearing, spinning, fishing, salt production and other occupations.
- Avvaiyar and Vennikuyattiyar are examples of influential women in Tamil literary-cultural life.
- Sembiyan Mahādevī supported temple building and religious institutions.

14. Religious Life and Bhakti

- Vedic worship was closely connected with nature and yajñas.
- Renunciant traditions became more visible in the first millennium BCE; terms included parivrājaka, bhikṣhu and śramaṇa.
- Gautama Buddha and Mahāvīra were important thinkers of this period.
- Bhakti emphasised a direct devotional relationship with deities such as Viṣṇu, Śhiva and Śhakti.
- From the 6th century CE, 12 Ālvārs praised Viṣṇu and 63 Nāyanmārs praised Śhiva in Tamil devotional hymns.

15. Education and Knowledge

- Education aimed at both knowledge and character-building.
- Subjects included Vedas, grammar, logic, philosophy, ethics, mathematics, medicine, astronomy, music, dance, painting and martial arts.
- Students also practised yoga, meditation, self-control and service to the guru.
- The guru-śhiṣya relationship was central to the gurukula system.
- Important centres of learning included Takṣhaśhilā, Nālandā, Vikramśhilā, Vallabhī, Vārāṇasī, Ujjayinī and Kānchīpuram.

16. Economy: Agriculture and Irrigation

- Agriculture was the backbone of the economy and a major source of State revenue.
- The Mauryan basic land tax was generally one-sixth of the produce.
- Crops included rice, pulses, wheat, mustard, sugarcane, vegetables and fruits.
- The Deccan also saw cotton cultivation; Sangam texts mention pepper, turmeric, ragi and sugarcane.
- Irrigation relied on reservoirs, canals, dams, lakes and tanks.
- Sudarshana Lake and the Grand Anicut (Kallanai) are important examples of irrigation works.

17. Trade, Ports and Guilds

- **Major routes:** Uttarāpatha and Dakṣiṇāpatha linked regions and enabled movement of goods, people and ideas.
- **Important ports:** Muziris, Kāveripaṭṭinam, Arikameḍu and Masulipaṭṇam, among others.
- **Trade goods:** Textiles, gems, coral, pearls, metals, minerals and salt.
- **Guilds (śhreṇīs):** Associations of traders, artisans and merchants belonging to the same occupation.
- **Functions of guilds:** Regulated quality and prices, maintained professional discipline and also acted as banks, financiers and trustees.
- **Nāśhik cave inscription:** Shows money deposited in guilds on interest, demonstrating their financial role.

18. Important Historical Sources

Source	What It Helps Us Understand
Ṛigveda / Vedic literature	Early society, janas, beliefs, occupations and institutions
Arthaśhāstra	Statecraft, administration, taxation and economy
Mahābhārata	Ethics, justice and duties of rulers
Sangam literature	Tamil society, kingdoms, occupations and economy
Aśhokan inscriptions	Dhamma, administration and political ideas
Junagadh inscription	Public works, Sudarshana Lake and political history
Uttaramerur inscription	Chola village administration and elections
Nāśhik cave inscription	Financial role of guilds

19. Quick Revision

- Society is mainly guided by social relationships and customs; the State is a political system based on rules and laws.
- Early Vedic political organisation was clan-based.
- Sabhā, Samiti and Vidhata were important assemblies.
- Political evolution: Jana → Janapada → Mahājanapada → Empire.
- Magadha became the strongest mahājanapada.
- Kings were expected to protect people, ensure justice and promote welfare.
- Kauṭilya's Saptāṅga explains seven essential parts of the State.
- Dharma linked duty, ethics and governance.
- Village administration remained important across many dynasties.
- The Cholas had an organised local administration and the Kudavolai system.
- Varṇa and jāti were different forms of social classification.
- Women, education and knowledge traditions remained important parts of social and cultural life.