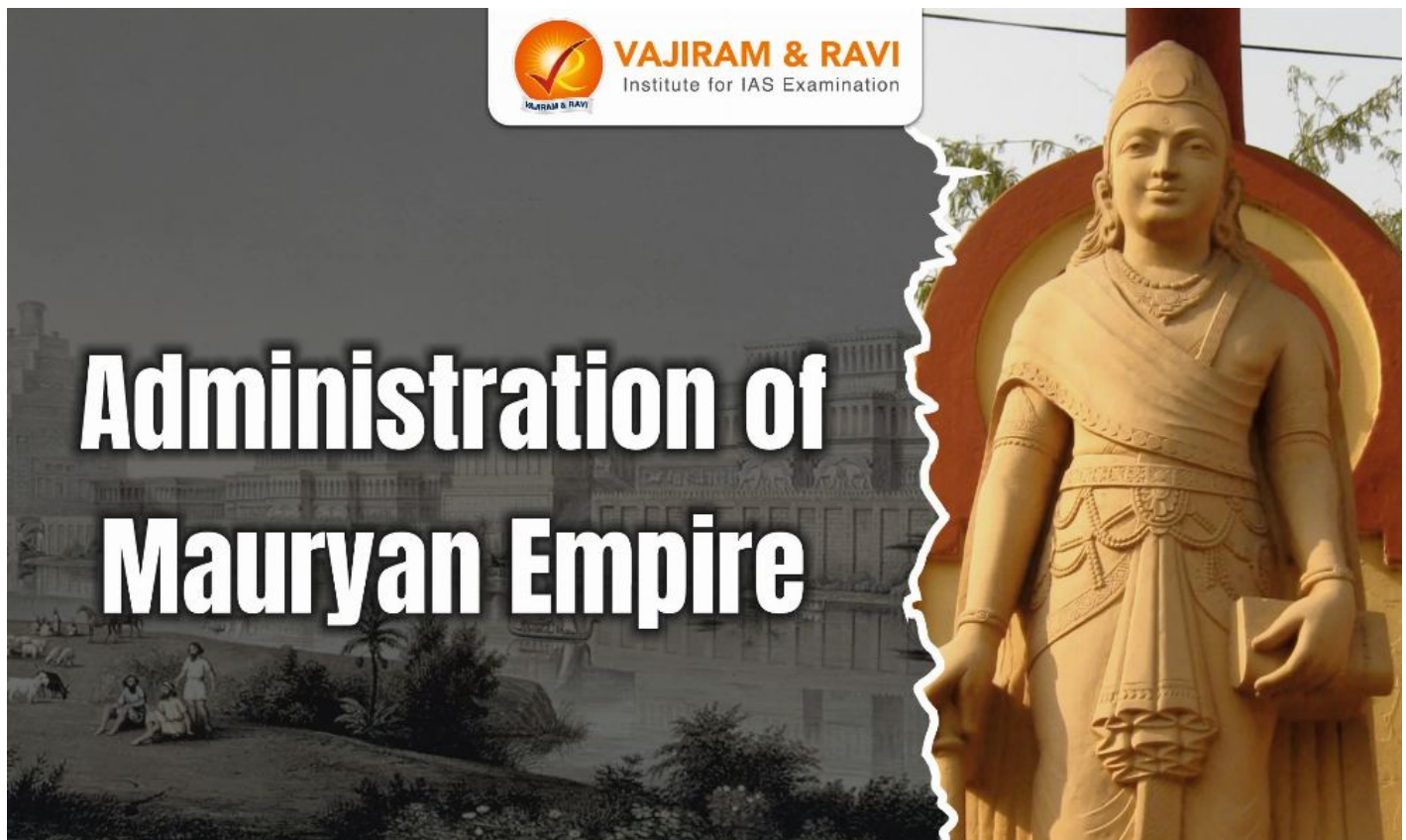


Administration of Mauryan Empire

January 6, 2026 • vajiramandravi.com



Mauryan Administrative System

Indian history entered a new era with the beginning of the Mauryan Empire, as India attained **political unity** and **administrative uniformity for the first time**.

- Mauryans developed an **organized and elaborate** system of administration.
- **Decentralization** was prevalent, as the village units played a significant role as the base of **grassroots administration**.
- The empire was divided into provinces, provinces into districts, and districts into rural and urban centers for efficient administration.
- **Kautilya: Saptanga theory of State:** “Saptang” indicates **seven limbs**, constituents or elements. **Seven Angas, Prakritis**, or elements were enumerated and elucidated by **Kautilya** for describing “the nature of the State” in its totality. These are:
 - **Swami (The Sovereign King):** The Swami is the chief executive head of the state and is, thus, “the consummation of all other elements”.

- **Amatya (The Minister):** Kautilya describes an elaborate system of recruitment of the **Amatyas** and other officials who were to be morally and ethically pure, honest in **financial matters** and of good character.
- **Janapada (The People and The Territory):** This unique element of Saptanga is the symbol of the State, which stands for a **“territorial society”**. Kautilya’s Janapada includes not only territory but also population.
- **Durga (Fortification):** Kautilya regarded fortification as essential for the **defence** and protection of the state. He wanted the state to fortify the territories from all sides.
- **Kosha (The Treasury):** Kautilya wanted a prosperous treasury; he specifically directed the king to earn the wealth of the nation only by **legitimate and righteous means** and in no way by unfair and immoral means
- **Danda (The Army or The Force):** He accepted a strong and hereditary **Kshatriya army** as the most important requisite of the state.
- **Mitra (The Allies):** Kautilya considered the Mitra or the Ally a vital factor. Kautilya recognises two kinds of **allies**, namely **Sahaja and Kritrima**.

Central Administration

The **King** was the supreme and **sovereign authority** of the Mauryan administration.

- **Powers of the King:** He had his supreme **executive, legislative, and judicial powers** vested.
 - He appointed ministers and other officers of the **royal administration**.
 - He was the **supreme commander of the army** and head of the entire military.
 - **The Mauryan Empire (before Ashoka)** was essentially a Hindu State.
 - According to the Hindu concept, the supreme sovereign of the State was ‘Dharma’ or law, and the King was to be its guardian.
 - He was aided and advised by a **‘Mantri Parishad’ (Council of Ministers)**, and he was to be guided by it in day-to-day administration.
- **Influence of Brahmins:** The Brahmins significantly influenced the King, who could not disobey them.
- **Decentralisation:** Powers of the Mauryan government were decentralised; the **provincial governor and ministers** had the right to be consulted by the King, especially in all provincial matters.
- **Bureaucracy:** A well-organized hierarchy of bureaucrats looked after the **executive, judicial, and revenue offices**.
- The entire administration system was organised into departments, each headed by a Superintendent known as **‘Adhyaksha.’** Clerks, accountants, and spies assisted the Adhyaksha.
- Besides, there were other officers like the Army Minister, Chief Priest, and Governor of Forts.

Provincial Administration

- The entire Empire was divided into two parts:
 - The kingdom that was under the direct rule of the King, and
 - The vassal states
- The territory directly ruled by the King was divided into several provinces called **‘Janapadas.’**

- Ashoka had five provinces with capitals: Taxila, Ujjain, Tosali, Suvarnagiri, and Pataliputra.
 - Each province was subdivided into a number of **districts**, and each district was again subdivided into a number of **units**.
- However, there were vassal states in addition to these centrally ruled Mauryan territories. They enjoyed a great deal of autonomy.
- The provincial administration worked on similar lines to the **central administration**.
- The Mauryan Emperor directly ruled the central and eastern parts of the Empire.
- **Role of Governors:** The other areas were ruled by the **provincial Governors**. The provincial Governors were responsible for the day-to-day conduct of the administration of provinces.
- There were also the district officers, reporters, and clerks, who helped in the smooth running of provincial administration.

Local Administration

- The district administration was in charge of '**Rajukas**', whose position and functions are similar to today's district collectors.
 - He was assisted by '**Yuktas**' or subordinate officials.
- In the urban area, there was a **Municipal Board**. There were six committees with five Board members in each to manage the administration of cities.

Committee on	Function
Industrial Arts	It looked after industry and crafts. It inspected such centers and looked after fixing wages etc.
Foreigners	It looked after the foreigners. Its functions included arranging their food, stay, comfort, and security.
Registration of Births and Deaths	Registration of births and deaths
Trade and Commerce	It looked after trade and commerce. It inspected weights and measures, markets etc.
Supervision of Manufactures	Inspected manufactured goods, made provisions for their sale and steps taken to distinguish between new and second-hand goods
Collection of Excise and Customs duty	It collected taxes on the goods sold, the rate being 1/10th.

- **Village administration** was in the hands of '**Gramani**', and his superior was called '**Gopa**,' who was in charge of ten to fifteen villages.
- **Census** was a regular activity, and the village officials were to number the people along with other details such as their **castes and occupations**.
 - Conducted by **municipal officials**, mainly to track the movements of both **foreign and indigenous populations**.

Judicial Administration

The King was the head of the **Judiciary** and the highest court of appeal. But due to the large empire, judges were appointed to resolve disputes.

- The **Supreme Court** was located in the capital, and the Chief Justice was called '**Dharmathikarin.**'
- **The nature of the punishment depended on the nature, gravity, circumstances, and the varna of the offender and the plaintiff.**
- **At the district level:** Subordinate courts under '**Amatyas.**'
- **In Towns:** cases were settled by '**Nagara Vyavaharika Mahamantra.**'
- **At the Village level:** cases were settled by the '**Gramavradha.**'

Military Administration

- The Mauryan army was well organized and was under the control of a '**Senapati.**'
- There was a Board of 30 members to look into matters pertaining to war.
 - These members were placed in **six committees**, and these committees were responsible for managing the **wings of the military**, i.e., navy, transport and supply, infantry, cavalry, war chariots, and war elephants.
 - Each of the above wings was controlled by '**Adhyaksha**' or **Superintendents.**
 - **Board of Infantry:** Headed by **Padadhyaksha**
 - **Board of Cavalry:** Headed by **Asvadhyaksha**
 - **Board of War Chariots:** Headed by **Rathadhyaksha**
 - **Board of War Elephants:** Headed by **Hastyadhyaksha.**

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/upsc-exam/administration-of-mauryan-empire/>

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