

VEDIC AGE [1500-600 BC]

Period from 1500-1000 BCE was the period of transition from Chalcolithic Age to Iron age. During which Harappans saw their end whereas, Aryans saw their rise.

Aryans were group of people who were PASTORAL mainly and their main occupation was grazing animals. We know about the Aryans in India from the Vedic texts, specially the 'RIGVEDA', which is the earliest of all other Vedas and also is the chief source of information of the history of this period.

The initial settlements of the Aryans were in the north-west and the plains of Punjab. Later they moved into Indo-Gangetic plains. As they were cattle rearing people they were mainly in search of pastures. Later on by the 6th century BCE they occupied the whole of North India which was referred to as 'ARYAVARTA'. The Vedic Age may be divided into two broad chronological strata -

(1) The Early Vedic Age or Rigveda Age (1500-1000 BCE)

→ when Rigveda was composed.

(2) The later Vedic Age (1000-600 BCE)

→ when other Vedas including Upanishads, epics, Puranas, Smritis etc were composed.

There is a controversy relating to the original home of the Aryans. According to some authors they were native to the soil of India and some other believe that they were migrated from outside India. According to Maxmullar, they were from Central Asia.

It is said that from Central Asia, they ~~split~~ split into two groups from which one went to Iran and the other to India. As they were mainly cattle rearing people so they were in search of pastures.

Their initial settlements were in the valleys of North-west and the planes of Punjab.

Later they moved into Indo-Gangetic planes. Some scholars like Bal Ganga-dhar Tilak consider them from Arctic region.

Scholars like Sir John and Quiles consider them from Europe.

Dayanand Saraswati assumes them from Tibet. Whatever ~~the~~ may be the controversy but their migration from Central Asia is well accepted on the grounds of similarities between 'Zend Avesta' (Holy book of Iran) and 'Rig Veda'.

By the 6th century BCE, they occupied the whole of North India which was referred to as Aryavarta.

VEDIC LITERATURE

The Vedic literature is divided into three periods :

- 1) The Samhitas
- 2) The Brahmanas
- 3) The Upanishads, Aranyakas and the Sutra literature

Vedic literature had been traditionally held sacred and the vedas are believed to be eternal. Various sages or rishis who are known as their authors, said to have received them ~~directly~~ directly from the god.

The word Veda is derived from the root word 'vid' which means 'to know'. In other words the term veda ~~or~~ signifies 'superior ~~of~~ superior knowledge'.

The Vedic literature consist of four vedas :

- 1) Rig veda
- 2) Sam veda
- 3) Yajur veda
- 4) Athar veda.

Rig Veda

It is earliest of the four vedas and it contains 1028 hymns (and 10 mandals). The 3rd mandal contains 'gaytri mantra' and 10th mandal contains the famous Purush-Sukta, which explains the four varnas i.e. the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas, and the Shudras. They were born from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of the creator, Brahma respectively.

The Rig Veda has many things in common with 'Zind Anesta' which is the oldest text in Aryan language.

Sam Veda

This is set to tune for the purpose of chanting during sacrifices. It is called the book of chants and the origins of Indian music are traced in it. It ~~contains~~ 1549 stanzas consist of

This veda is important for Indian Music.

Yajur Veda

This consist of various details of rules to ~~be~~ be observed at the time of sacrifices.

There are two main text of Yajur Veda. i.e.

1) Shukla Yajur Veda
(increasing moon)
(white) contains mantras

2) Krishna Yajur Veda
(decreasing moon)
→ (black) it contains prose.

Atharv Veda

This Veda is completely different from other three Vedas. It contains details of the rituals and charms and spells.

To ward off evils and diseases.

Divided into 20 Khands and has 711 hymns mostly dealing with magic.

This Veda is most valuable for history and sociology and gives knowledge about the various aspects after Rig Veda.

→ Besides the Vedas there are other sacred works like the Brahmanas (text/book), the Upanishads, the Aranyakas, the Epics, the Sutras etc.

1) The Brahmanas — They are, series of text that followed the vedic samhitas (collection of vedic hymns) As regard (the samhita period, it refers to the samhitas or ~~text~~ text of four Vedas (Rig, Sam, Yajur, Atharv Veda).

Each Veda has several Brahmanas, a text to it. These are ritual text relating to prayers and sacrificial ceremonies. The most important among these is the 'Shata-Patha' Brahmana, which is the oldest and the largest and which recommends 100 sacred paths.

The Brahmanas ~~through~~ light on the social-political ways of the Aryans and forms a sort of explanation of their religion especially sacrifices.

2) The Upanishads — They are philosophical text dealing with topic like the soul, the absolute, the origin of the world and the mysteries of nature. They are the main source of Indian philosophy and the word 'upanishad' means 'to sit near someone' and denotes a student sitting near his guru to learn. There are ~~hundred~~ 108 Upanishads and among which 'Upanishad Aranyaka' is the oldest Upanishad. The Upanishads are ^{as} important to Indians as the new testaments to Christianity.

3) The Aranyakas — ^(ब्रह्म) Aranyakas are forest books that are treatises on mysticism. They lay emphases not on

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It is believed that sacrifice but on meditation. They are the ~~concluding~~ concluding portions of the Brahmanas and they ~~contain~~ content was so secret in nature that they were to be studied in the forest and hence called forest text.

4) The Epics or Mahakavyas. — The epics Ramayana and Mahabharata combines nature on and consider to be preeminent Vedic age creations. Among these two creations Mahabharata written by Ved Vyas with the longest epic of the world and it consists of about 1 Lakh Shlokas.

* Ramayana written by Valmiki, shortest than Mahabharata but it is the oldest epic of the world and it consists 24000 Shlokas or verses in 7 Khandas. The original verse is attributed to poet Valmiki but later it is authored by Tulsidas.

5) The Puranas — They are total 18 in numbers of which 'Bhagwat Puran' and 'Vishnu Puran' are the most important. They give detailed details which contains legends, rituals, traditions and moral queries courts.

c) The Smritis — They are auxiliary treatises of the Veda. It refers to the literature

which has been ^{passed} ~~past~~ on from one generation to another. They throw light on the then social, religious and economic conditions. They also throw a light upon the ~~stage~~ state polity and religion of that time. Mamamsmriti - written by Mamu, is the oldest of all the Smritis. Mamu established a detailed legal system and is considered to be the 'first law giver of India'.

7) The Vedangas - they derived inspiration from the Vedas and they literally mean 'limbs of the vedas'. They are total ~~six~~ 6 in number:

- a) ~~Shiksha~~ Shiksha deals with pronunciation.
- b) Kalp deals with rituals.
- c) Vyakaran (grammar)
- d) Chhand (metre)
- e) Jyotish (astronomy)
- f) Nirukta (etymology)

8) Upvedas → In the upvedas, ~~ayurveda~~ ayurveda has been given significant position. There are 4 upvedas in number.

- 1) Ayurveda deals with medicine.
- 2) Dhanurveda (warfare)
- 3) Gandharvaveda (music and arts)
- 4) ~~Shilp~~ Shilpveda (art and literature)

- 9) The Sutras - There are three sutras.
- ~~to~~ ~~short~~ Smriti Sutra
(vedic sacrifices)
 - ~~great~~ Gras Sutra
(duty of a family man)
 - Dharam Sutra
(social laws and duties)

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Political Pattern {vedic polity}

Vishwanittra — Vashistha
 Battle of 10 Kings. (Sudas - victory)
 Bharat (Kakila)
 Monarchy (form of govt)
 Cattles — richness.

Institutions → Sabha and Samiti
 (Council) (general Assembly)
 ↓
 main function.

elect the Kings

- Kul (family) - Kulpati, Kulpati
- gram - Grampati, Gramini
- Vish - vishpati
- Jan (People) Early Vedic Age :

The early Aryans who were essentially pastoral did not develop any political structure which could measure upto a state in either the ancient or modern sense. The tribes were organised as patrilineal groups and in the early stages the chief of tribe was

nearly the tribal leader
As the need for protection
group, the most capable protector
was elected chief and the gradually
begin to assume privileges generally
associated with kinship.

The ruler over his tribe (Jana)
and not over any specified area of
land. The word 'Jana' occurs
27 times in the rig veda but 'Tanapath'
is not mention at all.

The idea of territorial monarchy
emerged only towards the end of the
rig vedic period.

It seems that the king post was hereditary. His skill in war and defence
of a tribe were essential
to his continuing as king. He was
in no sense divine in this early
period and had negligible religious
functions, the function of the priest
were quite distinct.

The king only ordered sacrifices for the
god of the tribe and supported
the priest who perform them.
He also offered prayers on the tribes
behalf.

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However, there was no regular revenue system and the king was maintained by the tributes of his subjects which was voluntary in nature and these offerings were called "BALI".

Several tribal assemblies such as Sakha, Samiti, Didatha are mentioned in Rig-Veda which kept the check upon the powers of the king. These assemblies exercised the deliberative, military and religious functions. Of these Sakha and Samiti seem to have the more important from political point of view. These were so important that the king showed their eagerness to win their support.

Sakha : Sakha may have been council of the tribal elders and therefore, more exclusive. and perhaps women could also attain it.

Samiti : Samiti may have been a general assembly of an entire tribe.

The basic unit of political organisation was 'Kul' or family. Several families join together on the basis of their kinship to form a village or 'grama'. The leader of the grama is known as 'gramini'.

A group of villages constituted called 'vish' and it was headed by vishapati.

The highest political unit was called Jana or tribe.

There were several tribal Kingdoms during the Rig-vedic period such as Bharat, Matsyas, Yadus and Purus. The head of the kingdom was called as Rajan or King.

The king was assisted by pishita or priest and sanani or commander of the army in his administration.

	UNIT	HEAD
→	Kula (family)	Kulpat or Kulpati
→	gram (village)	gramini
→	Vish (clan)	Vishpati
→	Jana (people)	gopa or gopati
→	Rashtra or Rajya	Rajan

Political pattern of later vedic age :

Great changes occurred in the Aryan polity during the later vedic age. Kinship was so no longer tribal, it tended to become territorial.

Tribal name become current as territorial name eg. At first Panchal was a name of people and then it become the name of the region.

Many Jana or tribes were amalgamated to form Janapadas or Rashtras in later vedic period.

As regards the political conditions of Aryans seem to have moved on to the east and Kurupshetra become some of their activities.

As regards the system of administration during that period kinship was a normal feature of society.

"Aitareya Brahman" refers to the theory of origin of kinship in these words. 'The Devas and Asures were fighting.... The Asures defeated the Devas.... The Devas said; It is on account of our having no king that the Asures conquered. Let us elect a King'. All consented'.

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The ideas of imperialism begin to grow during this period and these is abundantly true by terms such as "Adhiraj", "Rajadhiraj", "Samrat", "Virat etc".

The royal power had increased along with the increase in the size of Kingdom.

The King perform various rituals and sacrifices to strengthen his position. They include Rajasuya, Ashwamedha, Vajpeya. The Kings also assumes titles like Ekraath, Samrath etc.

In the later vedic period a large no. of new officials were involved in the administration in addition to the existing Purohita, Sainani, They include the treasury officer, tax collector and royal messenger.

The rising monarchy derive strength from taxation which become common during this period. settled life and stable agricultural led to the production of considerable surplus and this could be collected by King in the form of taxes.

In the Sathpata Brahmana it has been indicated that king lived on taxes collected from the people and the officer who collected the taxes was probably called sangrihitri and Bhagadugha.

The importance of samiti and sakha deminished during the later vedic period due to the increasing royal power and the institution like Udatha completely disappeared during this period. The position of women was also degraded and now they could no longer sit in sakhas.

Rig veda	1028 hymns 10 mandals (3rd, 10 th → 41) Gayatri Mantra Uenas
Sam veda	1549 stanzas
Yajur	Shukla, Krishna
Atharv	20 Khands, 711 hymns
Brahmanas	'Sata-Patha' 100 sacred paths ritual text related to prayers and sacrificial ceremony
Upanishads	philosophical text 108 upanishads 'urihadaranyaka'
Aranyakas	forest text
Epic or Mahakavyas	Mahabharat Ved Vyas, longest, 1 Lakh shlokas. Ramayana Valmiki, Tulsi das, Oldest, 24000 shlokas, 7 Khands
Puranas	total 18. 'Bhagwat Puran' 'Vishnu Puran'.
Smriti ^o	(literature) Manusmriti
Wedangas	Sik Shiksha Kalp Vyakaran

	Chhand Tytich Muktā
upvedas	Ayurveda Atharvaveda Gandharvaveda Shilpveda
Sutras	Smṛiti Sutra Grah Sutra Charma Sutra