

**NEXT IAS**

# **HISTORY OF ANCIENT INDIA**

**CIVIL SERVICES  
EXAMINATION 2026**

*Published by*





**MADE EASY Publications Pvt. Ltd.**

Corporate Office: 44-A/4, Kalu Sarai  
(Near Hauz Khas Metro Station), New Delhi-110016  
Contact: 011-45124660, 8860378007  
E-mail: [infomep@madeeasy.in](mailto:infomep@madeeasy.in)  
Visit us at: [www.madeeasypublications.org](http://www.madeeasypublications.org)

**History of Ancient India**

© Copyright, by MADE EASY Publications Pvt. Ltd.

All rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photo-copying, recording or otherwise), without the prior written permission of the above mentioned publisher of this book.

First Edition: 2017  
Second Edition: 2018  
Third Edition: 2019  
Revised & Updated: 2020  
Fourth Edition: 2021  
Fifth Edition: 2022  
Sixth Edition: 2023  
Seventh Edition: Nov. 2023

**Eighth Edition: 2025**

# Contents

## History of Ancient India

### UNIT – I: DIFFERENT SHADES OF CIVILIZATION

#### Chapter-1

<b>Indian Pre-History.....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1 Introduction .....	2
1.2 Paleolithic Age .....	3
Lower Paleolithic (500,000 BC – 50,000 BC).....	3
Middle Paleolithic (50,000 BC – 40,000 BC) .....	3
Upper Paleolithic (40,000 BC – 10,000 BC) .....	5
Art in the Paleolithic Age.....	5
Society in Paleolithic Age .....	6
Importance of this Phase.....	6
Limitations of this Phase.....	6
1.3 Mesolithic Age (9,000 BC – 4,000 BC).....	6
Way of Living.....	6
Major Sites .....	6
Nature of Tools.....	6
Art in Mesolithic Age .....	8
Society in Mesolithic Age .....	8
Importance of Mesolithic Age .....	8
Limitations of Mesolithic Age.....	8
1.4 Neolithic Age (9000 – 1000 BC).....	8
Major Sites .....	8
Major Tools.....	9
Importance of Neolithic Age.....	9
Limitations of the Neolithic Age.....	10
1.5 Chalcolithic Age (2800 BC – 700 BC) .....	10
Major Sites .....	11
Major Tools.....	11
Domestication of Animals.....	11
Agriculture and Food .....	11
Art in Chalcolithic Age.....	11
Society in Chalcolithic Age.....	11
Importance of Chalcolithic Age.....	12
Limitations of Chalcolithic Cultures .....	12
Some Important Discoveries .....	12

#### Chapter-2

<b>Indus Valley Civilization.....</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	14
2.2 Geographical Extent .....	14
2.3 Phases of Indus Valley Civilization .....	16
2.4 Discovery .....	17
2.5 Features .....	17
Administration .....	17
Economic Life.....	18
Social Life.....	20
Religious Practices.....	21
Science and Technology.....	23
2.6 Harappa and Contemporary Cultures .....	24
2.7 Important Sites .....	24
Harappa .....	24
Mohenjo-Daro.....	25
Kalibangan.....	25
Kot-Diji .....	26
Lothal .....	26
Surkotda.....	26
Sutkagen-Dor .....	26
Ropar .....	27
Alamgirpur .....	27
Amri.....	27
Chanhudaro .....	27
Banawali.....	27
Rakhigarhi.....	28
Rangpur .....	28
Dholavira .....	28
2.8 End of Civilization Theories .....	28
Theories of Decline .....	29
Massive Floods and Earthquakes .....	29
Shifting in the Course of Indus River .....	29
Increased Aridity and Drying Up of Ghaggar-Hakra River .....	29
Aryan Invasion Theory.....	30
Disturbed Ecology of the Region.....	30

**Chapter-3****Aryans and Early Rig Vedic Phase ..... 37**

3.1	Aryans .....	37
3.2	Theories: Home and Migration of Aryans .....	37
	Original Home of Aryans .....	37
	Theory of Foreign Origin .....	37
	Arguments Supporting Foreign Origin .....	38
	The Rig-Veda – Avesta Link .....	38
	Theory of Indian Origin of Aryans.....	39
	Arguments Supporting Indian Origin.....	39
3.3	Aryans: Route of Migration, Spread and Penetration in India .....	39
	Route of Migration .....	39
3.4	Aryans Administration .....	41
	Political Organization .....	41
	Tribal Assembly.....	42
3.5	Economic: Vedic Period .....	43
	Nature of Economy .....	43
	Major Occupations and Ownership of Land.....	44
	Industry .....	44
	Trade and Commerce .....	44
	Transportation and Medium of Trade .....	44
	Overseas Trade.....	45
3.6	Aryan Society .....	45
	Family Life .....	45
	Social Life.....	45
	Social Divisions .....	46
	Religious Life of Aryans.....	47
3.7	Yagnas or Sacrifices .....	47
	Purpose of Yajna .....	47
	Types of Yajnas.....	48
	Prerogative to Perform a Yagna .....	48
3.8	Importance of this Phase.....	48
3.9	Limitations .....	48

**Chapter-4****Later Vedic Phase..... 54**

4.1	Introduction .....	54
4.2	Geographical Expanse.....	54
4.3	Systematic Expansion .....	54
4.4	Reason for Expansion .....	55
4.5	Political Condition.....	55
4.6	Economic Condition .....	57
4.7	Social Condition .....	57
	Position of Brahmins .....	57
	Position of Kshatriyas .....	58

	Position of Vaishyas .....	58
	Position of Kshudras .....	59
	Position of Women.....	59

4.8	Religious Practices.....	59
4.9	Vedic Literature .....	60
	Vedas .....	60
	Sutras .....	62
4.10	Vedic Philosophy.....	62

**UNIT – II: CONSOLIDATION OF EMPIRES****Chapter-5****Jainism and Buddhism ..... 66**

5.1	Rise of New Religion .....	66
5.2	Reasons for the Rise of New Religions.....	66
	Four-Fold Stratification of Society.....	66
	Rise of New Agricultural Economy .....	66
	Growth of Cities and Trade/Commerce in North-Eastern India .....	66
	Material Life to Simple Life .....	66
	Language.....	67
	Curiosity, Debates and Discussions.....	67
5.3	Jainism .....	67
	Tirthankaras .....	67
	Doctrines of Jainism.....	68
	Two Sects of Jainism.....	68
	Spread of Jainism .....	69
	Main Followers of Jainism .....	69
	Jain Councils.....	69
	Jain Literature .....	69
	Contributions of Jainism .....	69
	Jain Architecture .....	69
	Contribution in Trade.....	70
	Causes of Limited Spread.....	70
	Causes of Decline .....	70
5.4	Buddhism.....	70
	Gautama Buddha .....	70
	Social Orders and Legislation .....	71
	Five Events in Buddha's Life .....	71
	Teachings .....	71
	Doctrines of Buddhism.....	72
	Spread of Buddhism .....	73
	Main Followers of Buddhism .....	73
	Special Features of Buddhism .....	73
	Sects of Buddhism.....	74
	Buddhist Councils .....	74
	Administration during the Period.....	75
	Buddhist Literature.....	75

	Contribution of Buddhism (Language, literature, Art and Trade etc.) .....	75
	Causes of Decline .....	76
	Importance and Influence .....	76
5.5	Similarities between Buddhism and Jainism .....	77
5.6	Differences between Buddhism and Jainism .....	77

## Chapter-6

<b>Mahajanapadas.....</b>	<b>82</b>
6.1 Rise of Mahajanapadas.....	82
6.2 Reasons for Rise .....	82
6.3 Changes with the Rise .....	82
6.4 Ancient Indian Republics .....	82
6.5 Sixteen Mahajanapadas.....	83
6.6 Location of Mahajanapadas.....	84
6.7 Magadha Empire.....	84
Rise of Magadha Empire.....	84
Reasons for the Rise of Magadha .....	85

## Chapter-7

<b>Iranian and Macedonian Invasions .....</b>	<b>87</b>
7.1 Iranian Invasion .....	87
7.2 Importance of North-West .....	87
7.3 Influence of the Contacts .....	87
7.4 Alexander's Invasion .....	87
Alexander .....	88
Effects and Importance of Alexander's Invasion .....	88

## Chapter-8

<b>Mauryan Empire.....</b>	<b>90</b>
8.1 Introduction.....	90
8.2 Chandragupta Maurya (322-297 BC).....	90
8.3 Imperial Organization of Chandragupta Maurya .....	91
8.4 Chanakya.....	91
Arthashastra.....	91
8.5 Bindusara (297 BC – 272 BC).....	92
8.6 Asoka.....	92
Rise of Asoka .....	92
Kalinga War.....	92
Impact of Kalinga War.....	92
Asoka's Dhamma .....	93
Asoka's Inscriptions .....	93
Sources of Pillar Stones .....	94

	Language of Inscriptions.....	94
	Extent of Asoka's Empire.....	94
8.7	Internal Policy and Buddhism .....	95
8.8	Later Mauryas .....	96
8.9	Mauryan Administration.....	96
	Mantriparishad (Council of Ministers).....	96
	Espionage .....	96
	Army.....	96
	Administration .....	96
	Tax Administration.....	97
8.10	Economic Conditions .....	97
8.11	Social Conditions .....	98
8.12	Art and Architecture .....	98
	Mauryan Pillars.....	99
8.13	Sources of Mauryan Empire .....	99
	Literary Sources .....	99
	Archaeological Sources .....	99
8.14	Material Culture.....	99
8.15	Reasons for Decline .....	100
8.16	Importance of Mauryan Empire .....	100
8.17	Limitation of Mauryan Empire.....	100
8.18	Later kingdoms .....	101

## UNIT – III: REGIONAL BLOCKS OF POWER

### Chapter-9

<b>Post Mauryan Times.....</b>	<b>105</b>
9.1 Introduction .....	105
9.2 Central Asian Contacts with India .....	105
Indo Greeks .....	105
Sakas or Scythians.....	106
Satrap System (60 BC – 2nd Century AD).....	106
Parthians .....	106
Kushans (50 – 230 AD) .....	106
9.3 Central Asian Contacts: Impact .....	107
9.4 Central Asians: Polity .....	107
9.5 Religion .....	107
9.6 Disintegration .....	107
9.7 Indian Dynasties.....	107
Shunga Dynasty .....	107
Kanva Dynasty .....	108
Mahameghavahana or Chedi Dynasty of Kalinga .....	109
Satvahanas (1st Century BCE – Early 3rd Century AD) .....	109

9.8	Foreign Trade.....	111
9.9	Importance of this Phase.....	112
9.10	Limitations of this Phase.....	112

## Chapter-10

### Gupta Age ..... 115

10.1	Introduction.....	115
10.2	Rise of the Guptas.....	115
10.3	Gupta: Important Figures.....	115
	Chandragupta I (C. 319-335 AD).....	116
	Samudragupta (335-380 AD).....	116
	Chandragupta II (C. 380 – C. 415 CE).....	116
	Kumargupta I (415 – 455 AD).....	117
	Skandagupta (455 – 467 AD).....	117
	Later Guptas.....	119
10.4	Gupta Polity.....	119
	Decentralisation and Devolution of Power.....	119
	Imperial Government.....	119
10.5	Gupta Administration.....	120
	Administration at Central Level.....	120
	Administration at Military Level.....	121
	Judicial System.....	121
	Revenue Administration.....	121
	Land Grant System.....	121
10.6	Gupta Economy.....	122
	Introduction.....	122
	Agriculture.....	122
	Guild System.....	122
	Economic Regulations.....	122
	Currency.....	123
	Paucity of Coinage.....	123
	Trade and Commerce.....	126
	Nature of Trade.....	126
	Decline of Trade.....	127
10.7	Science and Technology.....	127
	Astronomy.....	127
	Mathematics.....	127
	Metallurgy.....	127
10.8	Gupta Society.....	127
	Religion.....	127
	Social System.....	128
	Rise of the Landed Class.....	128
10.9	Gupta Art and Architecture.....	128
10.10	Gupta Literature.....	129

10.11	Gupta Inscriptions.....	130
10.12	The Huna Invasions.....	130
10.13	Fall of Gupta Empire.....	131
10.14	Importance of Gupta Empire.....	131

## Chapter-11

### Harsha and His Times ..... 136

11.1	Introduction.....	136
11.2	Maukhari Dynasty.....	136
11.3	Naga Dynasty.....	136
11.4	Magha Dynasty.....	136
11.5	Vakataka Dynasty.....	136
	Pravarapura-Nandivardhana Branch.....	137
	Vatsalguma Branch.....	137
	End of Vakataka.....	137
	Legacy of Vakataka Dynasty.....	137
11.6	Pushyabhutis.....	138
11.7	Harshavardhana.....	138
	Introduction.....	138
	Polity.....	139
	Administration.....	139
	Religion.....	139
	Literature of Harsha.....	140
	Buddhism during Harsha's Rule.....	141
11.8	Nalanda during Harsha.....	141
11.9	Economy.....	141
11.10	Society.....	142
11.11	Hiuen Tsang Account of Harsha's Rule.....	142
	Polity.....	142
	Administration.....	142
	Religion.....	142
	Economy.....	143
	Society.....	143
	Education System.....	143
11.12	Abhiras Dynasty.....	143
11.13	Sakas of Mahisaka.....	143
11.14	Traikutakas Dynasty.....	143
11.15	Rashtrakutas Dynasty.....	144
	Administration of the Rashtrakutas.....	145
	Economy.....	145
	Literature.....	146
	Contribution and Legacy of Rashtrakutas.....	146
11.16	Kalachuris Dynasty (10th to 12th century).....	147
	Northern Branch.....	147

Southern Branch .....	147		
Basavana and Vachanas .....	147		
11.17 Gangas Dynasty.....	148	12.3 Chalukyas of Badami (543 AD – 755 AD).....	162
Western Ganga Dynasty .....	148	Introduction .....	162
Eastern Ganga Dynasty .....	148	Important Rulers.....	162
11.18 Palas Dynasty of Bengal .....	149	Polity .....	163
Legacy of Palas.....	149	Administration .....	164
Administration under the Palas .....	150	Religion .....	164
Polity .....	150	Revenue .....	165
11.19 Sena Dynasty (11th and 12th CE).....	150	Economy .....	165
Legacy of Senas .....	150	Society .....	165
11.20 Limitations of the Phase .....	150	Literature .....	165
11.21 Importance of the Phase .....	151	Art and Architecture .....	165
		Importance of the Dynasty .....	167
		12.4 Chalukyas of Kalyani (973 AD – 1200 AD) .....	167
		Introduction .....	167
		Important Rulers.....	167
		Polity .....	168
		Administration .....	168
		Religion .....	168
		Economy .....	169
		Society .....	169
		Literature .....	169
		Art and Architecture .....	170
		Importance of the Dynasty .....	170
		12.5 Pallavas of Kanchi.....	170
		Introduction .....	170
		Pallavas: A Background .....	170
		Some Important Rulers.....	171
		Polity .....	172
		Administration .....	172
		Economy .....	173
		Society .....	173
		Religion .....	174
		Literature .....	174
		Art and Architecture .....	174

## Chapter-12

### South India..... 155

12.1 Early Times to Megalithic Culture .....	155
12.2 Sangam Era.....	156
Introduction .....	156
Three Dynasties .....	156
Sangam Polity .....	158
Sangam Administration .....	158
Sangam Revenue Systems.....	159
Sangam Economy .....	159
Sangam Society .....	160
Position of Women.....	160
Sangam Religious Beliefs.....	160
Beginning of Brahmanism .....	160
Sangam Literature.....	161
Sangam Art and Architecture.....	162
End of Sangam Age .....	162
Importance of the Period.....	162

### History Key Words ..... 179





# Unit

I

## Different Shades of Civilization

1. Indian Pre-History.....	2
2. Indus Valley Civilization.....	14
3. Aryans And Early Rig Vedic Phase .....	37
4. Later Vedic Phase .....	54



# CHAPTER 4

## LATER VEDIC PHASE

### 4.1 Introduction

- **Later Vedic Phase:** 1000 BC – 600 BC.
- Advent of Iron Age.
- Also referred to as PGW (Painted Grey Ware) phase as marked by invention of PGW for Bowls and Dishes.
- Origin of Sam, Yajur and Atharva Veda.
- Geographical Expansion: Upper Gangetic Basin.

The Vedic culture which is associated with the advent of Aryans in India is the cornerstone of Indian culture. The word Veda comes from the word “Vid” (to know) thus Vedas means “Knowledge”. The Rig Veda Samhita is the earliest Veda and is also the first testament of the world. We read about the early Vedic period based on this text. For the purpose of recitation Rig Veda was set to tunes and the collection was known as Sama Veda Samhita. The other Vedas are Sama Veda and Yajur Veda. The Atharva Veda is the later Veda.

The later Vedic literature comprise of:

- The Samhitas of four Vedas - The Samhitas are books of hymns.
- The Brahmanas attached to each Samhitas - Full of ritualistic formulae and explains social and religious meaning of rituals and sacrifices
- The Aranyakas
- The Upanishads

The Aranyakas and Upanishads deal with the philosophical doctrine, allegorical significance of rites etc.

The Period following that of Rig Veda is known as Later Vedic Age or Later Vedic Civilisation. The Later Vedic Period is to be found in Sama Veda Samhita, Yajur Veda Samhita, and Atharva Veda Samhita as well as in the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas, and the Upanishads.

The Aryans further moved towards east in the Later Vedic Period. The Satapatha Brahmana refers to the expansion of Aryans to the eastern Gangetic plains. Several tribal groups and kingdoms are mentioned in the later Vedic literature. One important development during this period is the growth of large kingdoms. Kuru and Panchala kingdoms flourished in the beginning. After the fall of Kurus and Panchalas, other kingdoms like Kosala, Kasi and Videha came into prominence. The later Vedic texts also

refer to the three divisions of India – Aryavarta (northern India), Madhyadesa (central India) and Dakshinapatha (southern India).

### 4.2 Geographical Expanse

- The People of Later Vedic Period were known to two Seas – the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.
- The People of Later Vedic Period were also familiar with the Himalayas.
- 16 Mahajanapadas were formed in this period which comprised of large number of rural and urban settlements.
- The later Vedic period presents three broad divisions of India:
  1. Aryavarta (Northern India)
  2. Madhya Desa (Central India)
  3. Dakshinpath (Southern India)

The name India that is Bharat has been given to the Indian sub continent in different periods. In its original Persian sense it meant the “Sindhu River”, what the Greek called the “Indus”. The name India comes from the name of the river Sindhu flowing on India’s North-West frontier. Since the Persian pronounce the letter “S” as “H”, thus they pronounce the word as Hindu and from here originated the word “Hindustan” as used by medieval Persian, Arab and other Muslim authors.

Indians themselves called their land Bharatvarsha which has shortened into Bharat, after the name of leading Vedic tribe Bharatas or the famous legendary king Bharat. The Indians regarded Bharatvarsha as the Southern division of Jambudvipa, one of the seven islands making up the World.

### 4.3 Systematic Expansion

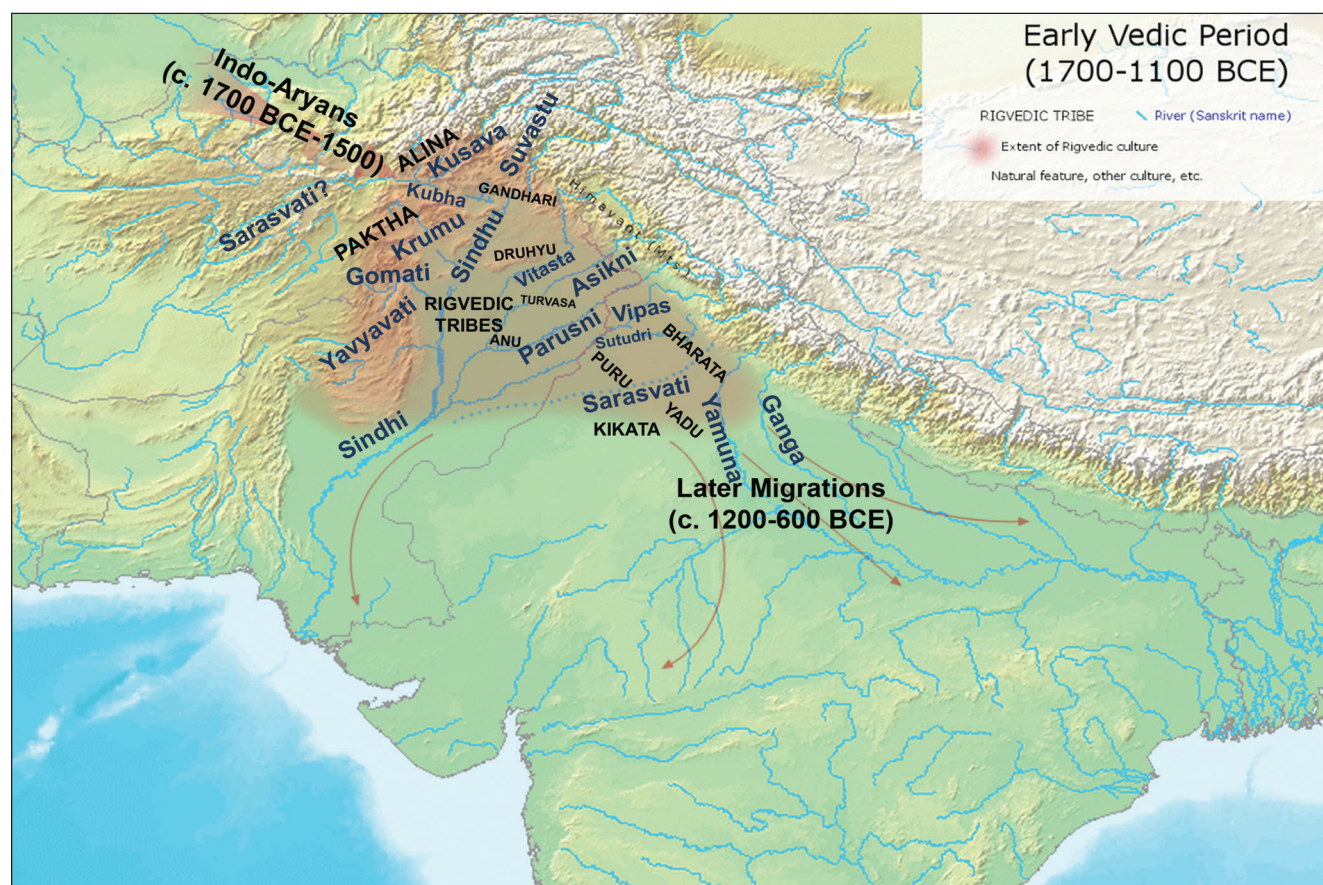
- This period was marked by further expansion of the Aryans to parts of eastern Uttar Pradesh, northern Bihar and parts of eastern Rajasthan. The Satapatha Brahmanas throws light on this expansion to the eastern Gangetic plains.
- The Bharats and Purus, the two major tribes, combined and thus formed the Kuru people. In the

beginning they lived between the Sarasvati and the Drishadvati just on the fringe of the doab.

- The Kurus occupied Delhi and the upper region of the Doab, the area called Kurukshetra or the land of the Kurus. Gradually they had relation with Panchalas who occupied the middle portion of the doab.
- The authority of the Kuru-Panchala people spread over Delhi and the upper and middle portion of the

doab. They set up their capital at Hastinapur situated in the district of Meerut.

- The Panchala kingdom covered the modern districts of Bareilly, Badaun and Farukhabad.
- Towards the end of the later Vedic period, around 600 BC the Vedic people spread from the doab to further east Koshala in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Videha in North Bihar.



Early Vedic Period (1700-1100BCE)

## 4.4 Reason for Expansion

- The northern and eastern parts of India to which the Aryans later migrated received more rainfall than the north-western part of India. As a result this region covered with thick rain forests which could not be cleared by copper or stone tools used by Rigvedic people.
- The use of iron tools now helped people clear the dense rain forests particularly the huge stumps left after burning, in a more effective manner. Large tracts of forestland could be converted into cultivable pieces in relatively lesser time. The iron plough could turn the soil from deeper portions making it more fertile.
- This process seems to have begun during the later part of the Rigvedic period but the effect of iron tools

and implements became evident only towards the end of the Later Vedic period.

## 4.5 Political Condition

- Larger Kingdoms made their appearances in later Vedic Period.
- Kings have different titles, depending upon the part of the country he ruled

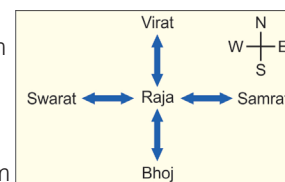
**Raja** – Middle kingdom

**Samrat** – Eastern Kingdom

**Bhoj** – Southern Kingdom

**Virat** – Northern Kingdom

**Swarat** – Western Kingdom



- In later Vedic period Rig Vedic popular assemblies lost importance and royal power came in the picture. The vidatha completely disappeared.
- To rule the Raja was assisted by the Priest, the commander, the chief Queen and few other high functionaries.
- The Sabha and Samiti continued to hold the ground, but their character changed. They came to be dominated by chiefs and rich nobles.
- Women were no longer allowed to sit on the sabha, and it was now dominated by nobles and Brahmanas.
- The formation of bigger kingdoms made the king more powerful.
- Tribal authority tended to become territorial. Princes or chiefs ruled over tribes, but dominant tribes gave their names to territories.
- Earlier Panchala was the name of the people, and afterwards it became the name of the region. The term Rashtra, which indicates territory, first appears in this period.
- In this period people had the right to choose their king which means Election had been introduced in this period.
- The Raja was elected based on his physical and other qualities. Bali, voluntary gifts, were given from kinsmen and common people called Vis.
- The position of the Raja became hereditary and often went to the eldest son.
- Influence of king was strengthened by rituals, like
  - (a) **Rajasuya Sacrifice:** It conferred supreme power on king. It was a coronation ceremony.
  - (b) **Ashwamedha Sacrifice:** The main purpose of this ritual was to expand the territory of Kingdom. It meant complete control over an area in which the royal horse ran uninterrupted.
  - (c) **Ratnavimshi:** It was the part of Rajasuya sacrifice. Different Ratninas (official) invoked different god and goddess.
  - (d) **Vajapeya:** Chariot race was meant to re-establish a king's supremacy over his people.
- Collection of taxes and tributes were done by an officer called Sangrihitri.
- At the lower level, the administration was possibly carried on by village assemblies which were controlled by the Chiefs of the dominant clans.
- Ratninas (word is given in Satpatha Brahmanas Literature) was the term used for administrative officers. Some famous Ratninas known in that period were:

Ratninas	
Purohita	The Priest
Mahishi	The Chief Queen
Yuvaraja	Crown Prince
Suta/ Sarathi	Charioteer
Senani	The General
Gramani	Head of Village
Kshata	Gateman
Sangrahitri	Treasurer
Bhagadudha	Collector of Taxes
Akshavapa	Courier/Accountant
Palagala	Messenger
Govikarta	Head of Forest Department

- This was also the Era of Janpads and Mahajanpads. In which Mahajanpads were the bigger kingdom and Janpads were relatively smaller and were 16 in number most of which were in Gangetic Plains.

Mahajanapadas	Capital	Modern location
Anga	Champa	Munger and Bhagalpur
Magadh	Girivraja/Rajagir	Gaya and Patna
Kasi	Kasi	Banaras
Vatsa	Kausambi	Allahabad
Kosala	Sravasti	Eastern Uttar Pradesh
Saurasena	Mathura	Mathura
Panchala	Ahichchatra and Kampilya	Western Uttar Pradesh
Kuru	Indraprastha	Merrut and S.E. Haryana
Matsya	Viratnaaar	Jaipur
Chedi	Sothivati/Banda	Bundelkhanda
Avanti	Ujjain/Mahismati	Madhya Pradesh and Malwa
Gandhar	Taxila	Rawalpindi
Kamboj	Pooncha/Rajapura	Rajori and Hajra (Kashmir)
Asmaka	Pratistlian/Paithan	Bank of Godavari
Vajji	Vaishali	Vaishali
Malla	Kusinara/Pawa	Deoria and UP

- Also in later Vedic times the king did not possess a standing army. Tribal units were mustered in times of war, and according to one ritual for success in war; the king had to eat along with his people from the same plate.



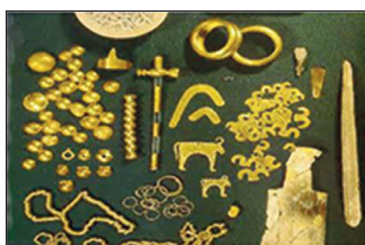
## 4.6 Economic Condition

- Growth of economic prosperity is indicated in many prayers contained in the Atharva Veda.
- Later Vedic Economy was surplus agrarian economy.
- Agriculture begins to replace cattle rearing.
- Pastoralism was no longer subsistence activity though cattle rearing were practised.
- Sathapatha Brahmanas speaks at length about ploughing rituals.
- Nishakas, Satamana and Krishnala were unit of value.
- Use of Iron was prominent and it was mentioned as "Krishan Ayes".
- Taxation was not fully developed; Bali, Bhaga and Shulka were the name of the taxes.
- Famous pottery of this age was 'Painted Grey Ware' and 'Northern Black Polished Ware'.
- Agriculture was still main occupation of the people and agriculture operations consisted of ploughing, sowing, reaping and thrashing.
- Cow-dung was used as manure. Grains like rice, barley, beans, sesame etc were grown in the various parts of the country. Before this development there were only two harvests in a year.
- Rice and wheat became their chief crop. Rice in the doab region was called Vrithi in the Vedic texts.

Later Vedic Period Crops Name	
Wheat	Godhuma
Barley	Yava
Rice	Vrihi
Sugarcane	Ikshu



Painted Grey Pottery



Art and Crafts

- The later Vedic people saw the rise of various arts and crafts. They were familiar with copper from the very beginning. They used copper from Khetri mines in Rajasthan. Copper were used mainly for war and hunting and also for ornaments.
- Weaving was confined to women but was practised on a wide scale. Leather work, pottery and carpenter's work made great progress.

- The later Vedic period people were acquainted with four types of pottery – black and red ware, black slipped ware, painted grey ware and red ware. The most distinctive pottery of the period was painted grey ware pottery.



Pottery

- Agriculture and various crafts enabled them to have a settled life. People lived in mud brick houses or in wattle and daub houses erected on wooden poles.
- Though we find the word Nagara in the later Vedic texts, it can be traced only towards the end of the period. Hastinapur and Kaushambi can be regarded as primitive towns.
- There are chances of commerce as there is mention of seas and sea voyages. Increase of crafts and new arts could have led to the commerce across countries.
- Also in later Vedic Period large number of other occupation's were known such as washer-men, butchers, fishermen, Ploughmen, charioteers, basket maker, ropes etc. The metals used by the people at that time were gold, bronze, iron, copper, tin etc.

## 4.7 Social Condition

- During later Vedic period the caste system got fully developed and Varna system got fully established.
- Later Vedic Period got divided into four Varna:
  1. Brahmanas - most powerful class.
  2. Kshatriyas/ Rajanyas - were soldier class.
  3. Vaishyas - were tribute payer. It included merchants, traders and agriculturalist.
  4. Kshudras - subordinate of all class.

All 3 higher varnas shared one common feature: Upnayana or investiture with sacred thread according to Vedic mantras. The fourth varnas or Kshudras were deprived of the sacred thread and also couldn't recite the Gayatri Mantra.

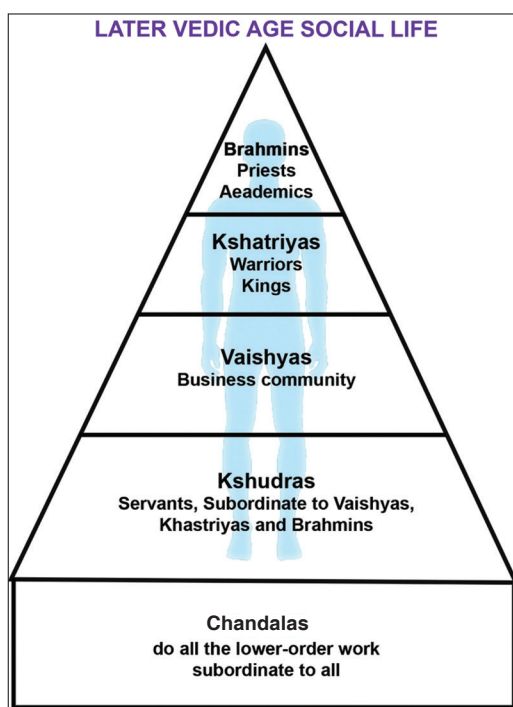
### Position of Brahmanas

- Initially Brahmanas were only one of the sixteen classes of priests but they eventually overshadowed other priestly groups.



Representation of Brahmins

- The power of Brahmin increased due to rise of “cult of sacrifice”.
- The rise in importance of Brahmanas is a peculiar development which is not found in Aryan societies outside India.



### Position of Vaishyas

- They constituted the common people. They were supposed to do work like agriculture and cattle-breeding and some were artisans and made crafts.
- Towards the end of Vedic phase they began to involve in trade.
- They were the only tax payers in the later Vedic phase.

- Though there were internal conflicts between the Kshatriyas and Brahmins they would unite to exert pressure on the other two sections. From the end of later Vedic period it began to be emphasised that the two should cooperate to rule over the rest of the society.
- As per Aitareya Brahmana, a brahmana is described as a seeker of livelihood and an acceptor of gifts but removable at will by the Raja.

### Position of Kshatriyas

- Traditionally the military or ruling class, who initially, achieved their class position on the merits of their aptitude (guna), conduct (karma), and nature (swabhava).
- They were to engage in warfare, protect people and administer justice, study the Vedas, get sacrifices performed, and make gifts.
- According to the Shastras, only Kshatriyas could be kings.



Kshatriyas-Warrior and Ruling Class

- The subjugation of Vaishyas lower than that of the other two varnas and also their payment of tax on which the Brahmins and Kshatriyas literally lived was a gradual process and even involved rituals.
- As per Aitareya Brahmana, a vaishya is called a tribute-paying, meant for being beaten and to be oppressed at will.



### Position of Kshudras

- The kshudra had the worst position of them all. As per Aitareya Brahmana, he was called the servant of another and to be beaten at will.
- There were instances when kshudras could attend public functions like coronation of the King.

### Position of Women

- The status of women declined. They were generally given lower position and thought to be inferior and subordinate to men.
- They could not inherit property of her father. Women were prohibited to attend political assemblies.
- Some women theologians took part in philosophical discussions and some queens participated in coronation rituals.

### Occupation

During this period caste system developed further. Different occupation was taken over by different castes. However the system was not rigid as it became later on in the Gupta Period. At this time it was midway between the laxity of the Rig Veda and the rigidity of the Sutras.

### Family

In the family there was an increase in the position of the father. In princely families the right to primogeniture got stronger. Male ancestors came to be worshipped while females were given lower position.

### Marriage

According to Sathapatha Brahmanas, marriage among relation of third and fourth degree was prohibited. While the Brahmanas and Kshatriya could marry women from Vaishya and the Shudra whereas the Vaishya and the Shudra could not marry in brahmana and Kshatriya.

### Caste System

It was difficult to change one's caste but it was not absolutely impossible. However no Vaishya or Shudra was allowed to become Brahmin or Kshatriya or even to take up the profession of teaching or fighting.

### Education

As a part of Education system student was taken to a teacher, the ceremony of Upnayana had to be performed and as a result of that ceremony the Brahmachari or the pupil become Dvija or twice born. Ordinarily the period of study was 12 years but it could be 32 years or more.

### Four Stages of Life

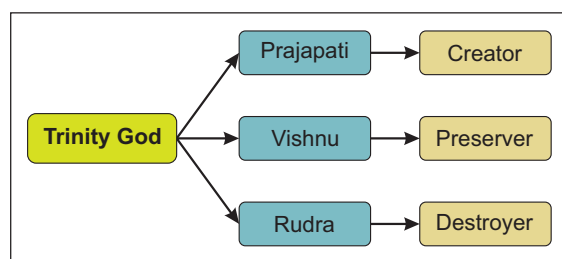
Ashramas or four stages of life were not well established in Vedic times. In the post-Vedic texts we hear of four

Ashramas i.e. Brahmchari or student, Grihastha or householder, Vanaprastha or hermit and Sannyasin or ascetic who completely renounced the worldly life. Only the first three are mentioned in the later Vedic texts; the last or the fourth stage had not been well established in later Vedic times though ascetic life was not unknown. Even in post-Vedic times only the stage of the householder was commonly practised by all the Varna.

### Gotra System

The institution of gotra appeared in later Vedic times. Literally it means the cow-pen or the place where cattle belonging to the whole clan are kept, but in course of time it signified descent from a common ancestor. People began to practise gotra exogamy. No marriage could take place between persons belonging to the same gotra or having the same lineage.

## 4.8 Religious Practices



- Two outstanding Rig Vedic gods Indra and Agni lost their former importance and Prajapati (The creator) came to occupy the supreme position along with Rudra (The destroyer) and Vishnu (Protector of people).
- Pushans (Supposed to look after cattles) became god of Shudra although in Rig Veda cattle rearing was primary occupation of Aryans.

<b>Asvins</b>	Protector of agriculture (Killer of rats)
<b>Savitri</b>	To fix a place where a new home could be built
<b>Surya</b>	Remove Demons

- Signs of Idolatry appeared in later Vedic times and mode of worship changed considerably as sacrifices became far more important than mere prayers along with formulae (Mantras) carefully pronounced by sacrificer.
- Sacrifices involved killing of animals on a large scale especially destruction of cattle wealth. Sacrificer was known as Yajamana (Performer of Yajna) and Guests were known as Goghna (Fed on cattle).

These formulae, Rituals and sacrifices were invented and elaborated by priests called Brahmanas who claimed monopoly of priestly knowledge. There was no land given to the Brahmanas as a gift in post Vedic Period.

- In addition to cows, which were usually given as sacrificial gifts, gold, cloth and even horses were given. Sometimes the priests claimed portions of territory as Dakshina.

During the period of Brahmanas there was a sharp rise in sacrifices. There is reference to seven kinds of priest in Rigvedic but their number was increased to 17. Various priest had their assistants. A lot of emphasis was put on symbolism. In the Brahmanas, the sacrifice was conceived constantly recurring in order to maintain the universe. Prajapati is again identified with Agni and both Prajapati and Agni is the divine counterpart of the human sacrifice.



Representation of Vedic Yajna

At the end of Later Vedic Civilization there was a strong reaction against the domination of priestly class and all the rituals which led to:

- The Upanishads were compiled. These philosophical texts criticised the rituals and laid stress on the value of right belief and knowledge. They emphasised that knowledge of self or atman should be acquired and the relation of atman with Brahma should be properly understood.
- Brahma emerged as the supreme entity comparable to powerful kings of the period.
- Some Kshatriya princes in Panchala and Videha also reformed their thinking against the priestly domination.

- Kings emphasised on immortality of atman or soul which served the cause of stability which was needed for rising state power.
- The ultimate result was the emergence of Buddhism and Jainism along with other heterodox sects.

## 4.9 Vedic Literature

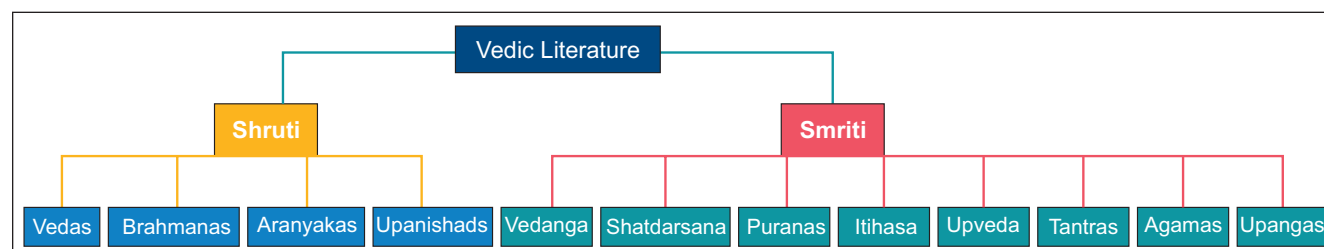
The term 'Vedic literature' simply means literature based on or derived from the Vedas. The texts which constitute the Vedic literature are:

1. The four Vedas i.e. Samhitas.
2. Brahmanas attached to each of the Samhitas.
3. The Aranyakas, and
4. The Upanishads.

The Hindus considered the Vedas to be revealed books and gave them the title Apaurusheya (not made by men) and Nitya (Eternal). It is contended that Rishi's wrote them under inspiration of god. However it is pointed out that the Vedic hymns were composed by ancient Rishi's for sheer of great antiquity. They were handed over by them from generation to generation.

The Vedas were considered to be so sacred that they were learnt by heart. Thus they came to be known as 'Shruti'. Shruti is "that which has been heard" and is canonical, consisting of revelation and unquestionable truth, and is considered eternal. Whereas 'Smriti' literally means "that which is remembered, supplementary and may change over time". It is authoritative only to the extent that it conforms to the bedrock of Shruti and it is entire body of the post Vedic Classical Sanskrit literature.

The Vedic literature is divided into three periods. The first refers to the time of Samhita. The second period refers to the time of Brahmanas. The third period refers to the time of the Upanishads.



### Vedas

The Rig Veda, Samveda and Yajur Veda are collectively known as Vedatrayi. Atharva Veda is considered a later addition. Bharatamuni's Natyasastra is considered to be the panchama Veda (fifth Veda). The Rig-Veda is the oldest

among all Vedas. It must have been compiled over several centuries. Some of the earliest hymns are said to have been composed around 1500 BC. These were passed on from the teacher to the disciple, orally.

### Rig Veda

It consists of 1028 hymns (sukta) which have been divided into 10 mandals or chapters according to the name of the Rishi's or the subject of matter. It is stated that the oldest hymns are found in mandals from 2 to 9. The first and the tenth mandal seem to be the later addition. It gave us the insight into the political, social, economical and religious life of people of Rigvedic India.

### Sama Veda

It is also known as 'Book of Chants'. It consists of 1549 hymns which are meant to be sung at the time of the Soma sacrifice by a special class of Brahmanas called 'Udgatris'. There is practically nothing original in this Veda with the exception of 75<sup>th</sup> hymns the rest have been taken from Rig Veda.

The Sama Veda shows that the Aryans loved music and were not merely Puritans.

### Yajur Veda

It is also known as 'Book of Sacrificial Prayer'. It lays down the performance of sacrificial prayers. There are two main texts of Yajur Veda and those are Black and white Yajur Veda. The white Yajur Veda only contains hymns but the Black Yajur Veda contains commentary in prose in addition to the text.

### Atharva Veda

Initially it was not considered to be Vedas. However it is being recognised at present. From historical and scientific point of view it resembles Rig Veda. Atharva Veda contains the magic spells, incorporates much of early traditions of healing and magic that are paralleled in other Indo-European literatures. The Atharva Veda is divided into 20 books and 75 hymns some of these hymns are in praise of god also.

### Vedangas

In order to understand the Vedic texts, it was necessary to learn the Vedangas or the limbs of the Veda. These supplements of the Veda comprised:

- Phonetics – Shiksha
- Ritual – Kalpa
- Grammar – Vyakarana
- Etymology – Nirukta
- Metrics – Chhanda
- Astronomy – Jyotish

### The Brahmanas

- The Brahmanas explain the hymns of the Vedas. They are written in prose and they elaborately describe the

various sacrifices and rituals, along with their mystic meanings.

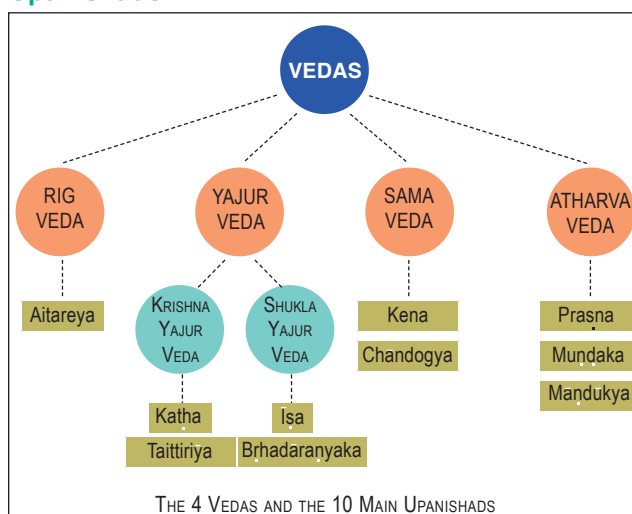
- Each Veda has several Brahmanas. The two Brahmanas attached to the Rig-Veda are *Aitareya Brahmana* and *Kausitaki Brahmana*. These were composed by *Hotri-priests* or invoker (the priest who recites mantras of the Rig Veda at the sacrifices).
- The *Sukla Yajur Veda* is appended with *Sathapatha Brahmana* which recommends 'one hundred sacred paths' (Sathapatha). It is the most exhaustive and important of all the Brahmanas.
- The *Gopatha Brahmana* is appended to the Atharvaveda.
- These Brahmanas, in fact, are the elaborate commentaries on the various hymns are Samhitas.

### Aranyakas

The word Aranyakas means 'the forest' and these are called 'forest books' written mainly for the hermits and students living in the jungles. These are the concluding portions of the Brahmanas or their appendices. A strict code of secrecy was maintained over the Aranyakas as it was believed that the contents would spell danger if taught to the uninitiated. And hence they were to be studied in the forest.

They deal with mysticism and symbolism. They form the natural transition of the Upanishads. They offer the bridge between Karma marga (way of deeds) which was the sole concern of the Brahmanas and the janana marga (way of knowledge) which the Upanishads advocated.

### Upanishads



The word Upanishad has been derived from the root Upani-sad that means 'to sit down near someone'. It denotes a student sitting under the feet of his guru to learn. Eventually the word began to be used for the secret

knowledge imparted by the guru to his selected pupils. Today the word began to be used for the secret knowledge imparted by the guru to his selected pupils. Today the word is associated with philosophical knowledge and spiritual learning. Upanishads are also called Vedanta (the end of the Veda) firstly, because they denote the last phase of the Vedic period and secondly, because they reveal the final aim of the Veda. **Our nation's motto Satyameva jayate is taken from the Mundakopanishad.**

### Sutras

The term sutra means thread. The first among the sutra literature is Srauta Sutra. It deals with Vedic sacrifices. Sulva Sutra prescribes various kinds of measurements for the construction of sacrificial altars.

The Dharma Sutra deals with social duties. The Sutras have been divided into four parts:

- Srauta Sutra
- Kalpa Sutra
- Griha Sutra
- Sulva Sutra

### Dharmashastras

The Dharmashastras are treatise on dharma, civil and religious law. They are the main source of knowledge regarding Brahmanical institutions. These shastras reveal the working of the caste system in a rigid form. They throw light on the Hindu law, marriage, divorce, loans and partnerships, various kinds of crimes and punishments and judicial procedure. The Dharmashastras mention the four Ashrams for the twice-born Brahmacharya, Grihasthya, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa.

### Arthashastra

Arthashastra dealt with matters related to economy. It was written by Kautilya.

### Kamasutra

This book dealt with physical pleasures.

### Puranas

The Puranas are in Sanskrit. Puranas literally mean ancient stories. There are 18 Puranas in number. They give valuable information about the political history of ancient India. The most important Puranas are - Vishnu Purana, Vayu Purana, Matsya Purana, Brahma Purana and Bhavishya Purana. Puranas are not completely trustworthy as they are at times exaggerated.

## 4.10 Vedic Philosophy

In the beginning, it seems that the Vedas propagate the philosophy of polytheism. This illusion gradually disappears as one approach the Upanishadic period. The Upanishads inconspicuously pronounce the philosophical thoughts that may lead one to the realization of the Ultimate Truth.

Traditionally, six schools of thought propagated Vedic wisdom, each from a different philosophical perspective. Each of these perspectives or Darshanas is associated with a famous sage who is the author of a Sutra (code) expressing the essence of his darshana. Vyasa's Vedanta-sutra, which carefully examines and judges the six systems of Vedic philosophy (as well as other philosophies), forms the third great body of Vedic literature after the Sruti-Sastra and Smriti-Sastra. This is known as the Nyaya-Sastra, "scripture of philosophical disputation." The Sad-Darshana (six philosophical views) is:

1. Nyaya (logic),
2. Vaishesika (atomic theory),
3. Sankhya (analysis of matter and spirit),
4. Yoga (the discipline of self-realization),
5. Karma-Mimamsa (science of furtive work) and
6. Vedanta (science of God realization).



## Later Vedic Phase: Important Facts

### Later Vedic Gods

- Indra and Varuna lost their previous importance and Prajapati attained the Supreme position.
- Rudra and Vishnu became more important than before.
- Pushan became the God of Kshudras.
- Brahmin monopoly over divine knowledge was established.
- An elaborate system of Yajnas developed. With Rajasuya, Ashvamedha and vajapeya being important.

### Later Vedic Gotra

- The institution of Gotra appeared in the Later Vedic Age.
- Literally meaning cowpen, Gotra signified descent from a common ancestor.
- The Gotra has been regarded as a mechanism for widening the socio-political ties, as new relationships were forged between hitherto unrelated people.
- People began to practice Gotra exogamy. In other words, marriage between persons belonging to the same Gotra was prohibited.

### Later Vedic Age- Polity/Administration

#### Sabha

- Functioned as a Parliament- Debate and Discussion.
- Chief- Sabhapati, Keepers- Sabhapala, Members- Sabheya, Sabhasad or Sabhasina.
- There were rules of Debate.
- Vajsaneyi Samhita mentions that members not following rules should be criticized.
- Also functioned as a court of justice.

#### Samiti

- Larger assembly of the people.
- Similar to Early Vedic Age Samiti.

#### New Officials

Suta	Charioteer
Sangrahitri	Treasurer
Bhagaduga	Collector of Taxes
Gramini	Head of Village
Sthapati	Chief Judge
Takshan	Carpenter
Kshatri	Chamberlain

## Vedas

### Rig Veda (Collection of lyrics)

Oldest text in the world and is known as "1st Testament of Mankind"

- 1028 Hymns
- 10 Mandalas
- [6 Mandalas (2<sup>nd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>) known as Gotra/Vamsha Mandalas/Kula Granth]
- 10<sup>th</sup> Mandala contain Purushasukta which explain varna system
- Hymns are recited by "Hotri"

### Sama Ved (Book of Chants)

Important for **Indian music**

- 1549 hymns
- All hymns (except 75) taken Rig Veda
- Hymns are recited by "Udgatri"

### Yajur Ved (Sacri!cial Prayers)

It explains Ritual Veda. It is divided into two parts: Krishna Yajur Veda and Shukla Yajur Veda

- Hymns are recited by "Adhvaryus"

### Atharva Ved (Magical Formulae)

It contains **Charms and Spells** to guard from evils and diseases



**Some Important Facts**

- The earliest evidence of the use of iron in India has been discovered from Atranjikhhera, archaeological site on the bank of Kali river, a tributary of Ganga.
- Sindhu river was the most important river during the Vedic period, that is why it was mentioned most of the times in Rig Veda. Due to its economic importance this river was called as 'Hirayani'.
- Pancha-Jana suggested five specific tribes whose eponymous ancestors were the founders of the clans, namely, Yadu, Turvasa, Druhya, Anu and Puru.
- The concept of 'Rit' i.e., universal principle of natural order is of Vedic origin. The 'Rit' has been the basis of Indian culture, legal theory, politics and philosophy.
- Gopatha Brahmana is associated with Atharvaveda.
- The word salvation or Moksha is not used in Vedas. It was firstly discussed in Upanishads.
- Yama and Nachiketa dialogue is mentioned in Kathopanishad.
- King Asvapati of the Upanishad period was ruler of Kekaya.
- Purusha Medha was mentioned in Shatapath Brahmana.
- The religion of early Vedic Aryans was primarily of worship of nature and Yajna.
- Saraswati river was referred as Matetama, Devitama and Naditama in Rig Veda.
- Sabha and Samiti are called as two daughters of prajapati in Atharvaveda.
- The statement 'Tamsoma Jyotirgamya' was mentioned in Upanishad.
- The teacher who taught ved-vedanga for livelihood was called Updhyaya.