

**TELANGANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION (TSPSC)
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STUDYMATE NOTES

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Vedic Age



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Salient features of Vedic Age

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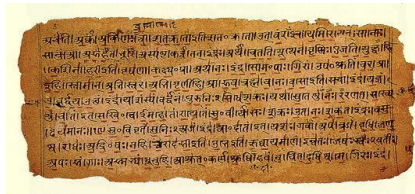

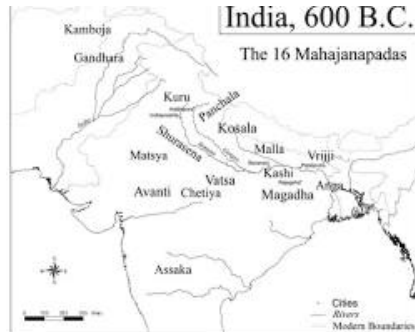
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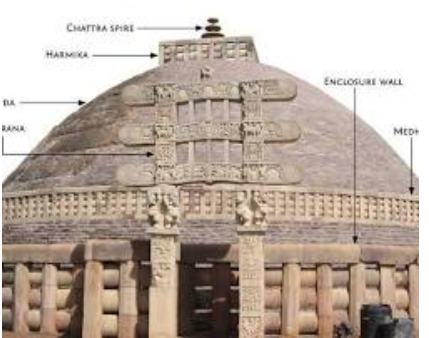


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Timeline of Ancient Indian History

Glimpse at Timeline of Indian History		
Period	Description	Image
Stone Ages (5 lakh - 1000 BC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergence of early humans in India, who lived by hunting and gathering. Early archaeological evidence comes from the Siwalik Hills and Narmada Valley. 	 <p>Fig: Stone age tools</p>
Indus Valley Civilization (2500 - 1750 BC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly developed Bronze Age civilization that flourished in the Indus Valley. Well-planned cities, advanced drainage systems, and distinctive pottery. Major cities include Harappa and Mohenjo-daro. 	 <p>Fig: Indus Valley Civilization city</p>
Vedic Culture (1500 - 600 BC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and spread of Vedic culture, based on the Vedas. Predominantly pastoral and tribal society. The Rigveda offers insights into early Indo-Aryan social, cultural, and religious life. 	 <p>Fig: Manuscript of Rig Veda written on bark of a tree.</p>
Jainism and Buddhism (6th – 5th C BC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergence of Jainism and Buddhism, two major Indian religions. Emphasis on non-violence and ahimsa. Jainism founded by Mahavira, and Buddhism by Gautama Buddha. 	 <p>Fig: Buddha and Mahavira</p>
Mahajanapadas before Mauryas (6th – 4th BC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rise of several independent kingdoms, known as Mahajanapadas. Important Mahajanapadas include Magadha, Kosala, and Vatsa. Constant warfare between kingdoms, but also crucial role in cultural development. 	 <p>Fig: Map of Mahajanapadas</p>

Mauryan Empire (4th – 2nd C BC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largest empire in Indian history, founded by Chandragupta Maurya. • Efficient administration, strong military, and promotion of Buddhism. Ashoka the Great, emperor known for commitment to peace and non-violence. 	 <p>Fig: Chandragupta Maurya statue</p>
Post Mauryan History (2nd – 3rd C AD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline of the Mauryan Empire and rise of regional kingdoms. • Development of Hindu and Buddhist art, architecture, and literature. 	 <p>Fig: Post Mauryan art</p>
Gupta Period (4th – 6th AD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golden age in Indian history, known for peace and prosperity. Major center of learning and culture. • Development of mathematics, astronomy, and medicine. 	 <p>Fig: Gupta Empire map</p>
Harshvardhan (7th C AD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powerful emperor who ruled northern India. Patronage of art and literature, efforts to promote peace and harmony. • Marked a period of cultural and intellectual flourishing. 	 <p>Fig: Harshvardhana statue</p>

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TSPSC GROUP-1

PRELIMS

SELECTION KIT BATCH

Start March 29, 2024



Salient features of Vedic Age

I. Vedic Civilization: Overview

Early Vedic Period (1500–1000 BC):

- Early Vedic age was characterized by the Rigveda, the oldest of the four Vedas.
- Society was predominantly pastoral and tribal.
- Rigveda offers insights into early Indo-Aryan social, cultural, and religious life.

Later Vedic Period (1000–600 BC):

- Later Vedic Period follows the Early Vedic Period.
- Marked by the Samaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda.
- Transition towards settled society with agricultural advancements.
- Emergence of urbanization, social hierarchy, and ritual importance.
- Later Vedic texts reflect societal changes, religious beliefs, and philosophical progress.

Period	Characteristics
Early Vedic (1500-1000 BC)	Rigveda, pastoral society, tribal structure
Later Vedic (1000-600 BC)	Samaveda, Yajurveda, Atharvaveda, settled society, agricultural advancements, urbanization, social hierarchy, ritual importance

II. Salient features of Early Vedic Age

1. Aryan Origins and Identity	
Feature	Description
Racial Group	The Aryans were a distinct racial group with specific physical characteristics.
Language	Their primary language belonged to the Indo-European family.
Origin	Their original homeland is believed to be located between southern Russia and central Asia.
Environmental Awareness	The Aryans possessed knowledge of rivers and forests, suggesting familiarity with their surroundings.
Pastoral Lifestyle	Their earliest form of subsistence was pastoralism, focusing on animal rearing.
Secondary Occupation	Agriculture became their second source of livelihood.
Importance of Horses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horses played a crucial role in their life and facilitated their migration westward. • Horses first entered their lives around 6000 BC in the Black Sea and Ural Mountain regions. • Archaeological evidence indicates the presence of approximately 60,000 horse bones in the Ural region by 3000 BC.
Widespread Migration	The swiftness of horses enabled the Aryans to expand their reach into West Asia.
Note: The Aryans were a distinct population with a unique language and cultural identity. Their initial lifestyle revolved around pastoralism, but they later adopted agriculture. The integration of horses proved instrumental in their migration and expansion into new territories.	

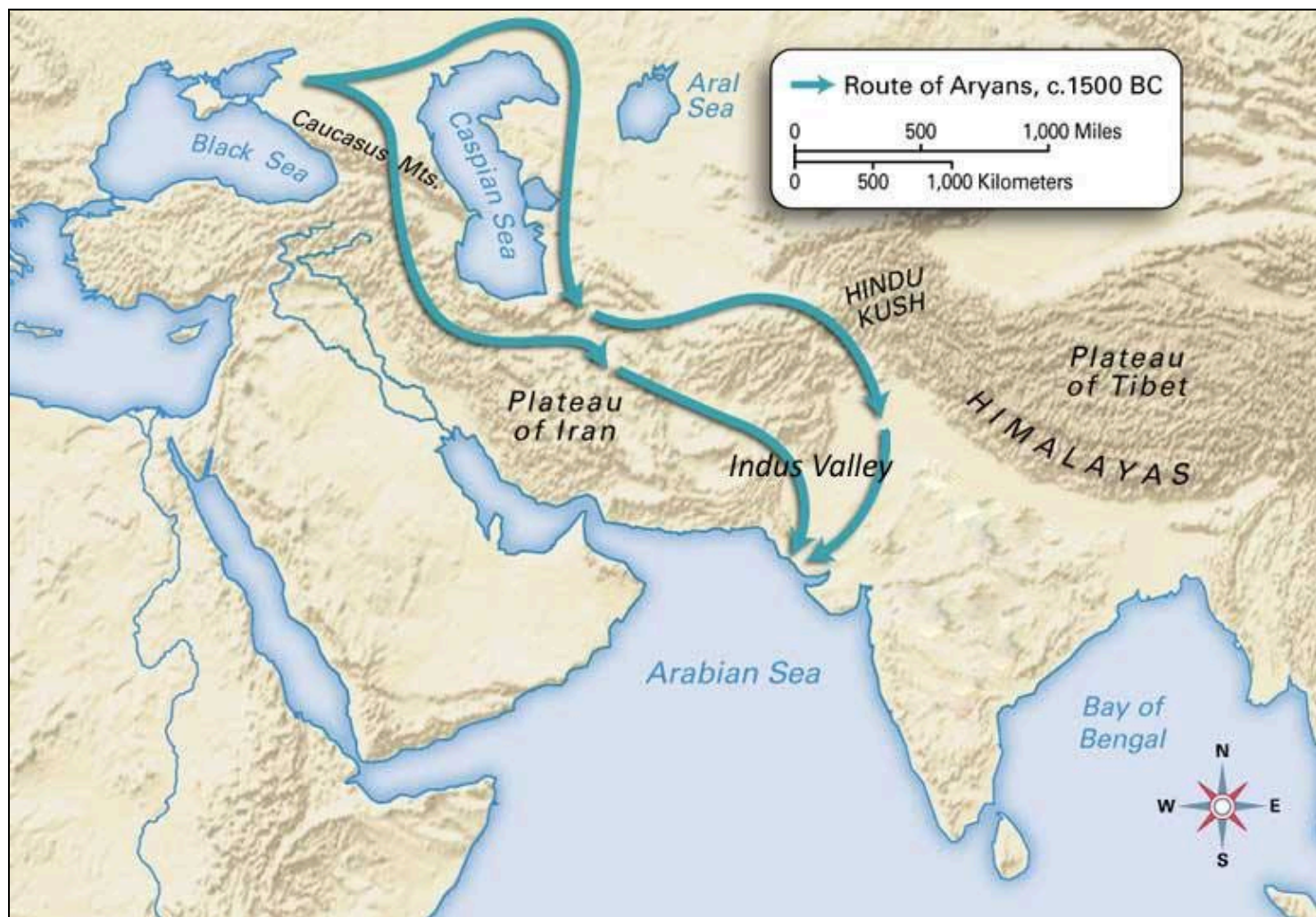


Fig: Indo-Aryan Migration into India

2. Aryans vs Dasas and Dasyus	
Feature	Description
Aryan Migration	Aryans arrived in India around 1500 BC in waves, not as a single group.
Early Conflicts	They encountered indigenous people known as Dasas and Dasyus, leading to conflicts.
Dasas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some scholars believe Dasas may have been early Aryans who intermarried with indigenous populations and adopted their culture. Evidence from the Rig Veda suggests Dasas could hold chief positions and even intermarry with Aryans, as seen in the case of Divodasa.
Dasyus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possibly the original inhabitants of the land. The term "Dasyuhatya," repeated in the Rig Veda, suggests hostility and conflict between Aryans and Dasyus. Some speculate Dasyus may not have practiced animal husbandry and held different religious beliefs.
Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relationship between Aryans, Dasas, and Dasyus remains a subject of debate and interpretation. The Rig Veda offers glimpses into their interactions, suggesting a complex dynamic of conflict, co-existence, and cultural exchange. While clear evidence for social hierarchies exists, it is important to approach these descriptions with sensitivity and avoid generalizations based on limited information.

3. Aryan Tribal Conflicts and the Battle of Ten Kings

Aryan Tribal Conflicts	
Feature	Description
Limited Information	Details about weapons and adversaries encountered by Aryans remain scarce.
Chariot Superiority	Aryans' success is attributed to their horse-drawn chariots, a technology they introduced to India.
Military Advantage	Aryan warriors possessed superior armor (varman) and weaponry.
Types of Conflicts	Aryans engaged in two types of conflicts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-Aryan conflicts: Battles against indigenous populations. Internal conflicts: Power struggles among Aryan tribes, including Indra's involvement.
Panchajana	The division of Aryans into five tribes. However, other tribal groups co-existed.
Inter-tribal Alliances	Aryans fought among themselves and sometimes sought alliances with non-Aryan groups.
The Battle of Ten Kings	
Feature	Description
Contending Clans	Bharatas and Trists (ruling Aryan clans) supported by Vasishtha.
Bharatvarsha	Country named after the Bharata tribe, first mentioned in the Rig Veda.
Opposition	Ten kings (five Aryan and five non-Aryan) challenged the Bharata leadership.
Battle Location	Banks of the Parushani River (identified as the modern Ravi River).
Outcome	Sudas (Bharata king) emerged victorious, establishing Bharata supremacy.
Aftermath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Purus, one of the defeated tribes, later joined forces with the Bharatas to form the Kurus. The Kurus, along with the Panchalas, established their rule in the Upper Gangetic Basin.

Note:

- The Battle of Ten Kings marked a significant event in Aryan history, consolidating the Bharata clan's power and laying the foundation for future political and cultural developments in India.
- There is no need for us to go in-depth into the details of the battle and the motivations behind it. From the exam point of view, the above content is more than sufficient or **students can skip the Battle of Ten Kings section for the TNPSC Groups exam.**
- Salient features of the above 3 topics are provided for better understanding of Indian Vedic History. The below provided topics and its respective salient features are important for the exam.

4. Rig Veda

Key points about Rig Veda

- Rig Veda is the most important source to know about the early Vedic Period and early Aryans.
- It is considered the purest form of Hindu Literature and the oldest book of any kind in India.
- It was composed during 1500 – 1000 BC in the Punjab region. As a book it was compiled much later.
- Since Aryans didn't know how to write, it was preserved for centuries using an oral tradition.

Feature	Description
Most Important Source	To understand the early Vedic period and the early Aryans
Meaning of Veda	Derived from "Vid" meaning "to know"
Oldest Book in India	Composed between 1500-1000 BC
Preserved Through	Oral tradition

Structure	Contains 10 Mandals (chapters), 1028 Suktas (hymns), 10,465 Shlokas (verses)
Language	Vedic Sanskrit
Content	Praises gods and goddesses
Aryans	Aryan term occurs 36 times. It was considered a cultural community or Linguistic group, not a race. Originated in Central Asia.
Prominent Rivers	Indus and Saraswati
Other Geography	Himalayas mentioned, deserts and seas not mentioned
Narmada and Ganga	Not mentioned prominently
Yamuna	Mentioned thrice

5. Occupation of Rig Vedic Society

Feature	Description
Predominantly Nomadic	Early Aryans were primarily pastoral nomads, focusing on animal domestication. Evidence - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were a lot of references to cows and bulls in Rig Veda. Most of wars were for sake of cows <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gavishthi – war for cow Cow seems most important form of wealth
Limited Farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic farming knowledge existed, with barley (Yava) being the most mentioned crop in the Rig Veda. Ploughshare (probably made of wood) is mentioned in Rig Veda.
Importance of Cows	Cows (Gau) held significant importance in Rig Vedic society. Wars were fought for cattle, not land. Several terms related to cows highlight their value: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gavisti: Conflict for cows Godhuli: Evening time (literally "cow's dust") Dudhitra: Cow milker Gavyanti: Cow's daily distance Aghanya: Not to be killed
Other Occupations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of carpenters, leather workers, chariot makers, potters, and weavers exists. Metal working was also known to them. Ayas term was used for copper or bronze.
Limited Trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlike the later Indus Valley Civilization, trade seems to have been limited in Rig Vedic society. Aryans mostly knew about land routes and not sea routes as Rig Veda mentions sea as just collection of water.
Chariots	Introduction of horse-driven chariots enhanced their dominance over indigenous people.
Spoked wheel	Probably, Aryans were the 1st to introduce the spoked wheel.
Cities	Aryans did not live in cities. They lived in some kind of fortified mud settlements which still are to be discovered. They know about caves in mountains.
Pre-Iron phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sites like Bhagwanpura in Haryana and three other locations in Punjab provide evidence of Painted Grey Ware (PGW) pottery associated with "late Harappan pottery." These findings date from 1600 to 1000 BC, coinciding with the period of the Rig Veda. The geographical area represented by these sites also aligns with references found in the Rig Veda. Iron and cereals are absent in these pre-iron phase settlements.

Rig Vedic society's occupations and agricultural practices highlight the importance of cattle and the introduction of new technologies like chariots. It offers valuable insights into the social and economic structure of this early Indian civilization.

6. River names mentioned in Rig Veda

Old Name	New Name
Sindhu	Indus
Vitasta	Jhelum
Askini	Chenab
Paurusni	Ravi
Bipasa	Beas
Shatudri	Satluj
Saraswati	Ghaggar
Kubha	Kabul

- The Indus River is the most important river in the Rig Veda, and it is mentioned more than any other river.
- The Vitasta, Askini, Paurusni, and Bipasa are all tributaries of the Indus River.
- The Shatudri is also a major river, and it is mentioned in the Rig Veda as being a source of water for irrigation.
- The Saraswati River is mentioned in the Rig Veda as being a sacred river, but it is now dry. The Kubha is a river that flows through Afghanistan and Pakistan.

7. Political Organization during Early Vedic Age

During the Early Vedic Age, Early Aryans were organized into tribes known as '**Jana**,' centered around cattle. These tribes were led by a '**Rajana**,' whose leadership was not hereditary. The **Gramanis** played a vital role in appointing Rajan.

Assisting the Rajana were key figures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Senapati' served as the head of the army. • 'Purohit' acted as the chief advisor to the king. 	Tribal assemblies supported the Rajana: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 'Vidhati' was the oldest assembly comprising both men and women. 2) 'Sabha' represented an assembly of Brahmins, also inclusive of both men and women. 3) 'Samiti' was an assembly of villagers, involving only men.
The Rajana collected 'gifts' called ' Bali ' from the people, which were voluntary and served as a precursor to taxes. There was no distinct office for tax collection or the administration of justice at this time.	

Early Vedic Political Structure

Feature	Description
Organization	Tribal (Janas)
Basis	Cattle
Leadership	Rajana (non-hereditary)
Appointed by	Gramanis
Support System	Senapati (army head), Purohit (chief advisor)
Assemblies	Vidhati (men & women), Sabha (Brahmins, men & women), Samiti (men only)
Taxation	Voluntary gifts (Bali)
Administration	No separate offices for tax or justice

Tribal Polity in Early Vedic Age

Feature	Description
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tribal Chief (Rjana): Center of administration, successful war leader, not hereditary, limited power, accountable to tribal assemblies. • Sabha: Council of elders and Brahmanas, deliberative, military, and religious functions. • Samiti: Assembly of common people (men and women), participated in electing the king. • Purohita: Advisor to the king, most notable examples: Vashishtha (conservative) and Vishwamitra (liberal). • Senani: Military leader, used various weapons.
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No tax collection system, only voluntary offerings (Bali) and war booty distribution. • Justice system: Handled by traditional rules, no specific officers. • Spies used to monitor social activities. • Smaller territories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Vrajabati: Overseer of pastures and villages. ◦ Kulapas: Heads of families. ◦ Gramani: Heads of fighting units, later merged with Vrajabati.
Military	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No standing army, tribal groups formed the military. • Vrata, Gana, Grama, and Sardha: Different tribal groups participated in warfare. • Stronger military element due to nomadic lifestyle.
Note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Vedic tribal polity was characterized by a decentralized structure with limited central authority. • The king, chosen by the assembly, relied on the support of tribal leaders and functioned primarily as a war leader and protector. • The lack of a standing army and formal taxation system reflected the nomadic lifestyle of the early Aryans. 	

8. Tribal and Family Structure in Early Vedic Age

Feature	Description
Tribal Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jana: Primary social organization, identified by kinship and loyalty. • Size: Approximately 100 members. • Frequency: Mentioned 75 times in the Rig Veda. • Purpose: Collective identity, security, and warfare. • Vis: Another term for tribe, mentioned 170 times in the Rig Veda. • Grama: Smaller units within Vis, primarily for fighting. • Warfare: Frequent clashes occurred between different gramas.
Family Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kula: Term for family, rarely mentioned in the Rig Veda. • Joint Family: The dominant family structure, including extended family members. • Griha: Another term for family used in the Early Vedic Age. • Patriarchal: Father as the head of the family. • Son Preference: Strong desire for sons due to their role in warfare and family lineage. • Cattle and Son: Both seen as valuable possessions and blessings. • Limited Daughter Mention: Lack of emphasis on daughters in the Rig Veda.
Women's Status and Marriage institution in Early Vedic Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Participation: Women could attend assemblies and participate in certain rituals. • Religious Contributions: Some women, like Vishavara and Lopamudra, composed hymns of the Rig Veda. • Marriage Institution: Marriage was established and considered sacred. • Polygamy: Both polygyny (a man having multiple wives) and polyandry (a woman having multiple husbands) existed. • Indissolubility: Marriage was considered unbreakable, and divorce was uncommon. • Child Marriage: Evidence suggests child marriage was not practiced.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widow Remarriage: Widows were allowed to re-marry. • Marriageable Age: Marriages typically occurred between the ages of 16 and 17.
Note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Vedic society revolved around the tribal structure and strong family ties. Jana and Vis formed the core social units, emphasizing kinship and collective identity. • Family life centered around the joint family, with the father holding authority and a strong preference for sons. • Women in the Early Vedic Age enjoyed a relatively higher status compared to later periods. They participated in social and religious activities, and their contributions were acknowledged. • While patriarchal norms existed, the practice of polyandry and the absence of restrictions on widow remarriage indicate a degree of flexibility and autonomy for women. 	

9. Social Divisions in Early Vedic Age

Feature	Description
Based on Color Consciousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of physical appearance began around 1500-1000 BC. • Varna: Initially referred to color, differentiating Aryans (fair) from indigenous inhabitants (dark-skinned).
Conquest and Social Hierarchy	Aryan conquest of Dasas and Dasyus contributed to social divisions, with conquered groups often becoming slaves or Shudras.
Early Varnas	Two primary varnas identified in the Rig Veda: Arya varna (Aryans) and Dasa varna (indigenous groups).
War Booty Inequality	Kings and priests received a larger share of war booty, creating economic disparities within the tribe.
Varna System	<p>Three Varnas: Later, society divided into three varnas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brahmanas: Priests and learned men. • Kshatriyas: Warriors and administrators. • Vaishyas: Common people engaged in productive activities. <p>Fourth Varna: The emergence of Shudras occurred in the later phase of the Early Vedic Age, as mentioned in the Purusukta hymn.</p>
Slavery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slave Ownership: Slaves existed and were often gifted to priests. • Women Slaves: Used primarily for domestic purposes. • Limited Use of Slaves: Slaves were not widely employed in agriculture or other production activities.
Occupational Divisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible System: While some occupational divisions existed, they were not strict. • Cross-Varna Professions: Individuals could change their profession and even belong to different varnas based on their occupations. (Example - A member of a family mentions being a poet, his mother a corn grinder, and his father a physician, highlighting inter-varna family relationships.)
Economic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited Surplus: The primarily pastoral economy with minimal surplus limited opportunities for wealth accumulation and tax collection. • Rare Land and Cereal Gifts: Land and cereal gifts were uncommon, hindering the development of landed property divisions. • Egalitarian Society: Early Vedic society remained largely tribal and egalitarian due to economic limitations and the absence of significant wealth disparities.

Note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Early Vedic Age witnessed the emergence of social divisions, influenced by factors like color, conquest, and war booty distribution. However, the society remained relatively egalitarian compared to later periods, with flexible occupational divisions and limited economic inequalities. • The concept of varnas was in its early stages, evolving to define social hierarchy in later periods. 	
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10. Religion and Faith during the Early Vedic Age

Early Vedic Aryans were not able to explain the reasons of natural forces and so they found their religion in these surroundings.

- **Natural Phenomena as Deities:** Early Vedic Aryans, unable to explain natural forces, personified them as gods and goddesses.
- **Anthropomorphism:** Gods were given human or living being attributes, making them relatable.
- **Hymns of Praise:** Numerous hymns composed by poets and sages praised these deities in the Rig Veda.

During the Early Vedic Age, religious beliefs reflected in the Rig Veda indicate:

- Belief in a singular deity: "**Eva Eka Dvitya**," meaning there is only one and not two.
- Faith in a formless God: "**Na Pratima Asti**," suggesting that the deity had no specific image.
- The Rig Veda references a **total of 33 other Gods and Goddesses**, alongside the notion of a singular, formless deity.

Feature	Description																													
Singular Deity	"Eva Eka Dvitya" - Belief in one supreme God																													
Formless God	"Na Pratima Asti" - No specific image associated with the deity																													
Multiple Deities	Rig Veda mentions 33 other Gods and Goddesses alongside the singular, formless deity																													
Early Vedic Gods and Goddesses	<table><tr><th>Deity</th><th>Domain</th><th>Significance</th></tr><tr><td>Indra</td><td>Rain, thunder, war</td><td>Strength, power, warrior god</td></tr><tr><td>Agni</td><td>Fire, sacrifice, communication</td><td>Messenger of the gods, sacred rituals</td></tr><tr><td>Soma</td><td>Ritual drink</td><td>Inspiration, wisdom, invigorating power</td></tr><tr><td>Varuna</td><td>Sky, water, cosmic order</td><td>Justice, law, protector of oaths</td></tr><tr><td>Mitra</td><td>Friendship, contracts, light</td><td>Loyalty, agreements, often worshipped with Varuna</td></tr><tr><td>Ushas</td><td>Dawn</td><td>New beginnings, hope, illuminating force</td></tr><tr><td>Prithvi</td><td>Earth</td><td>Fertility, abundance, mother goddess</td></tr><tr><td>Surya</td><td>Sun</td><td>Light, knowledge, life</td></tr></table>			Deity	Domain	Significance	Indra	Rain, thunder, war	Strength, power, warrior god	Agni	Fire, sacrifice, communication	Messenger of the gods, sacred rituals	Soma	Ritual drink	Inspiration, wisdom, invigorating power	Varuna	Sky, water, cosmic order	Justice, law, protector of oaths	Mitra	Friendship, contracts, light	Loyalty, agreements, often worshipped with Varuna	Ushas	Dawn	New beginnings, hope, illuminating force	Prithvi	Earth	Fertility, abundance, mother goddess	Surya	Sun	Light, knowledge, life
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<p>Note: None of these Gods have been mentioned as supreme to each other. However, Indra has been mentioned most number of times in Rig Veda followed by Agni and Varuna.</p>																														

11. Early Vedic Rituals and Yajnas

Feature	Description
Absence of Temples	No evidence of temple-like structures exists in the Early Vedic period.
Yajnas	<p>Rituals involving sacrifices were performed near fire altars.</p> <p>Important Yajnas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raj Suyajna: Coronation ceremony and annual commemoration. • Ashwamedha Yajna: Demonstrated the king's power and marked territory. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A horse was released to roam freely. ○ Other kings either surrendered or fought the king performing the Yajna. ○ Upon successful completion, the chief queen participated in a ritual with the horse, followed by its sacrifice. • Vajpayee Yajna: Performed to gain divine power for the king. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Involved a chariot race where the king's chariot was victorious.

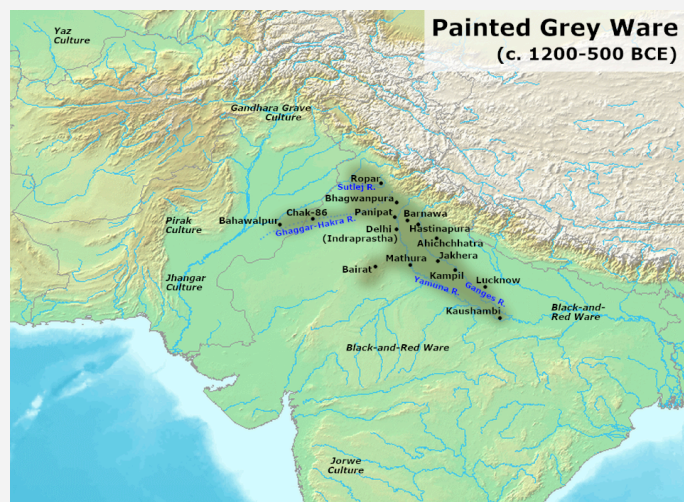
Animal Sacrifice	Hundreds of cattle were sacrificed in each Yajna.
Priestly Classes	<p>Sixteen classes are mentioned in the Rig Veda.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brahmans initially shared power with other groups like Hotras and Udgatras. • Later, as Yajnas became more frequent, Brahmans gained dominance due to their exclusive right to supervise the rituals.
Brahman Dominance	<p>Brahmans initially shared power with other groups, but later gained exclusive control over Yajnas.</p> <p>Note: Early Vedic rituals centered around Yajnas, involving animal sacrifices and performed near fire altars. The Brahman class gradually gained exclusive control over these rituals, solidifying their position in the social hierarchy.</p>
Marriage Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niyoga: In the absence of a child, a widow could reside with her brother-in-law to fulfill her childbearing duty. • Polygamy: Both forms of polygamy were practiced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Polygyny: A man could have multiple wives. ○ Polyandry: A woman could have multiple husbands. <p>Note: Early Vedic marriage practices were relatively flexible compared to later periods. Niyoga allowed widows a chance to have children and secure their future, while polygamy provided options for family expansion and alliances.</p>

III. Later Vedic Civilization: Overview

Later Vedic Period (1000 – 600 BC):

- Source to understand Later Vedic Period:
 - Archeological sources
 - Literary sources: All the later Vedic texts were composed in Upper Gangatic Basin only.

Archaeological Sources	Literary Sources
<p>Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atranjikheda - Western UP • Hastinapur - Western UP • Ahichatra - Western UP • Noh/Nuh – Haryana 	<p>Yajurveda</p> <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composition: Second Veda, composed after Rig Veda. • Content: Rituals of sacrifices and yajna. <p>Divisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shweta Yajurveda: Poetic form. • Shyama Yajurveda: Prose form. <p>Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlike Rig Veda which was entirely composed in poetic form, Yajurveda has both poetic and prose sections. • Yajurveda plays a crucial role in understanding the early Vedic rituals and practices related to sacrifices and yajnas. • Its division into two distinct forms, poetic and prose, reflects the evolving nature of Vedic literature.
<p>Pottery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painted Gray ware (PGW) are found at almost all sites in Western UP. 	<p>Samaveda</p> <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content: Musical hymns designed for singing. • Derivation: Majority of hymns are borrowed from the Rig Veda. • Significance: Considered the oldest known text on music.



Painted Grey Ware
(c. 1200-500 BCE)

- Unique Feature: Verses are chanted in melodic patterns instead of being spoken.

Note:

- Samaveda holds a unique position in Vedic literature by focusing on the musical aspect of religious rituals.
- Its hymns, derived from the Rig Veda, are chanted in specific melodies, enriching the religious experience and contributing to the development of Indian classical music.

Grains:

- Barley, Wheat and Rice evidences are found.
- Rice (vrihi) suddenly gained a lot of importance.

Atharvaveda

Key Points:

- Content: Folk literature, including charms, spells, and magic for various purposes.
- Focus: Warding off evil spirits and diseases.
- Significance: First mention of Ayurveda, the Indian system of medicine.
- Origins: Unlike the other three Vedas attributed to the Aryans, Atharvaveda reflects the beliefs and practices of non-Aryan communities.
- Unique Feature: Offers glimpses into the worldview and customs of non-Aryan populations during the Vedic period.

Note:

- Atharvaveda stands apart from the other Vedas by documenting the beliefs and practices of non-Aryan communities.
- Its focus on folk magic and medicine provides valuable insights into the cultural and social realities of early India.

Tools:

- At around 1000 BC, the discovery of a new metal, revolutionised the complete Vedic Society and enabled them to lead a settled life. **This new metal was IRON.**
- Now, weapons and agricultural tools were made of IRON which was much stronger than copper.

Other important literary sources during Later Vedic Age

Brahmanas:

- Brahmanas are the commentary on Vedas. They explain the complex verses of the Vedas. They are the first complete literature in prose.
- The most famous Brahmana is the 'Shatap' Brahmana of the Yajurveda.

Aranyakas:

- Aranyakas (jungle book/hermit book) were originally the part of the Brahmins but later considered as a separate part.

Upanishads:

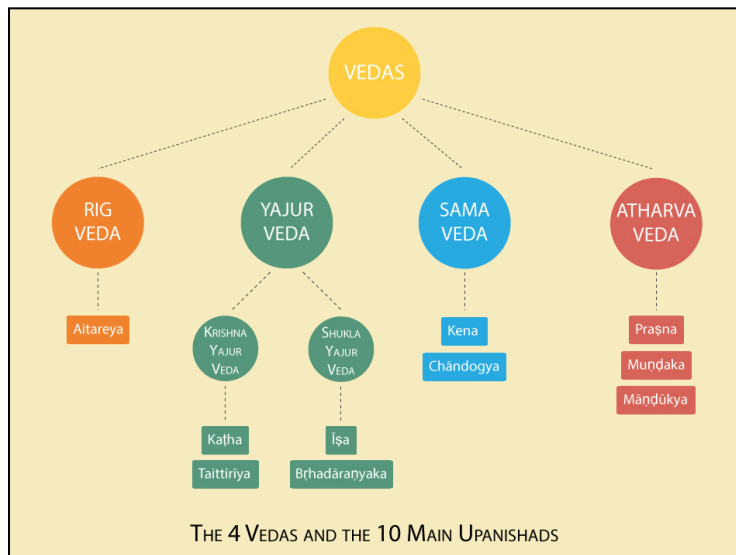
- The literal meaning of 'Upanishad' is to sit down near someone.
- Originally there were 108 books. It is historically believed that they came out as a result of the increasing grip of Brahmins on the society.
- They discuss about the importance of rituals and sacrifices.

- They deal with metaphysics i.e. relation between man and God.

Some famous Upanishads:

- Brihadaranayaka Upanishad (The oldest), Chandokya, Jabala , Katha, Ken, Isa etc.

Note: Brahmanas are regarded as the basis of the Hindu philosophy along with the Rigveda. In Upanishads, Brahma (the creator) is the most important God.



10 Main Upanishads

1. Isavasya Upanishad
2. Kena Upanishad
3. Katha Upanishad
4. Prasna Upanishad
5. Mundaka Upanishad
6. Mandukya Upanishad
7. Taitsiriya Upanishad
8. Aitareya Upanishad
9. Chandogya Upanishad
10. Brihadaranayaka Upanishad

Did you know?


- The literal meaning of Upanishad is "**the knowledge of realizing and visualizing God**".
- They explain the meaning of Vedas, God, Nature and all creation by use of symbolic stories.
- It is mostly in question answer form and sometimes represents the Vedic hymns as it is.
- There were several Upanishads earlier, however the above 10 available with humanity would be sufficient for our exam preparation requirement.

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IV. Salient features of Later Vedic Age

1. Later Vedic Living Patterns	
Feature	Description
Geographic Distribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Vedic - Primarily concentrated in western Uttar Pradesh and adjoining areas of Rajasthan, Punjab, and Haryana. Later Vedic texts suggest expansion from Punjab to the Ganga-Yamuna Doab. Evidence of settlements across northern India, from Punjab to Bihar.
Dominant Tribes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bharatas and Purus emerged as major tribal groups. The merger of these two tribes led to the formation of the Kurus.
Initial Settlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early settlements were established on the fringe of the Doab, between the Sarasvati and Drishadvati rivers.
Archaeological Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Painted Grey Ware (PGW) archaeological sites provide insights into the material culture and settlement patterns of the Early Vedic period. Iron-phase PGW sites offer a glimpse into the later stages of the Early Vedic period and Later Vedic period..

2. PGW - Iron Phase Culture	
Feature	Description
Emergence of Iron	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iron appeared in India around 1000 BC, with the earliest evidence found in Dharwar, Karnataka. Spread of iron technology remains unclear, but it appeared in Gandhar, Pakistan, and burial sites across India. By 800 BC, iron was used for arrowheads and spearheads in western Uttar Pradesh.
Iron's Impact on Later Vedic Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iron weapons provided a military advantage during expansion and helped clear forests for agricultural land. Initial use of iron in agriculture remained limited. Iron technology gradually spread eastward, reaching eastern Uttar Pradesh and Videha by the 7th century BC. Later Vedic texts refer to iron as "Shyama" or "Krishna Ayas."
Note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The adoption of iron technology during the Later Vedic period marked a significant turning point. Therefore, this is important topic from an exam perspective as well. Iron weapons enhanced military capabilities and facilitated territorial expansion, while iron tools gradually transformed agricultural practices. This technological advancement played a crucial role in shaping the Later Vedic economy and laying the foundation for future developments. 	

3. Later Vedic Agriculture

Feature	Description
Primary Livelihood	Agriculture
Iron Tools	Few iron agricultural tools found
Ploughing	Wooden ploughshares for light soils
Oxen	Exaggerated numbers in texts; limited availability due to sacrifices
Ploughing Rituals	Similar to modern practices
Upper Class Labor	Engaged in manual labor (e.g., Janaka, Balram)
Varna Restrictions	Later, ploughing restricted to lower Varna
Crops	Barley, wheat (Punjab, UP), rice (Vrihi), lentils
Rice Introduction	8th century BC, used in rituals
Wheat Usage	Staple in Punjab, UP; infrequent in rituals

4. Rise of Diverse Crafts in Later Vedic Period

Craft	Details	Significance
Smithing and Smelting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smiths and Smelters started using iron around 1000 BC, initially worked with copper. Copper tools found from the Later Vedic period, indicating established copper smiths. Likely sourced copper from Khetri mines in Rajasthan. Copper objects used mainly for warfare, hunting, and ornaments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iron technology revolutionized tools and weapons, enhancing military and agricultural capabilities. Copper remained important for decorative and ceremonial purposes. Development of specialized skills and professions.
Pottery Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various pottery types: Black and red ware, black slipped ware, PGW, and red ware. Red ware most common in western UP; PGW pottery distinctive, used by the upper class. Evidence of skilled techniques and regional variations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pottery served utilitarian and symbolic purposes. PGW's association with the upper class suggests social differentiation. Provides insights into trade and cultural exchange.
Glassworking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glass hoards and bangles held prestige. A relatively new craft, indicating technological advancements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glass objects were luxury items, signifying wealth and social status. Contributed to the development of decorative arts and craftsmanship.
Jewelworking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentioned in later Vedic texts, possibly catering to the wealthy. Specialized profession focused on creating ornaments and decorative items. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflects social stratification and demand for luxury goods. Skilled artisanship and intricate designs.
Weaving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominantly done by women, but not on a large scale. Primarily focused on household needs, with limited production for trade. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women played an important role in crafts, contributing to family livelihood. Textile production likely met basic needs and had limited economic impact.

Other Crafts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leatherwork and carpentry also existed during this period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates diversification and specialization within the craft sector. Contributed to various aspects of daily life and economic activity.
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5. Later Vedic Settlements		
Feature	Details	Significance
Lifestyle	Settled, based on agriculture and crafts	Shift from nomadic to permanent settlements
PGW Sites	Widespread in Kuru-Panchal, Madra, and Matsya	Evidence of regional expansion and cultural interaction
Number of Sites	Over 700 discovered	Indicates a large and populous society
Duration	1 to 3 centuries	Long-term settlements suggest stability and resource management
Predecessors	None	Represents a new phase in settlement patterns
House Construction	Mud-brick houses	Advances in construction materials compared to earlier periods
Economy	Agricultural, limited surplus	Reliance on subsistence farming and local resources
Iron Technology	Limited use in agriculture	Potential for future agricultural advancements
Town Emergence	Absent	Lack of surplus hinders trade and urban development
Settlement Debris	Thickness suggests long occupation	Provides insights into daily life and resource utilization
Excavated Sites	Atranjikhara, Hastinapur, Noh	Offers valuable archaeological evidence for detailed study

6. Emergence of Towns and Progress in Later Vedic Period		
Feature	Details	Significance
Town Emergence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Late in the Later Vedic period Hastinapur and Kausambhi are considered early towns or proto-urban sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition from rural settlements to urban centers. This indicates increasing economic activity, trade, and social complexity.
Commerce and Sea Trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Later Vedic texts hint at sea voyages and trade. Rise of new crafts and surplus goods fueled commerce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of trade networks and cultural exchange. Growth of merchants and artisans as a social class.
Material Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial advancement compared to Early Vedic period. Iron technology, diverse crafts, improved agriculture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced quality of life and standard of living. Increased social differentiation and wealth accumulation.
Lifestyle Shift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition from pastoral and semi-nomadic to settled agriculture. Agriculture became the primary livelihood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased reliance on land and permanent settlements. Development of social structures and institutions around agriculture.
Gangetic Plain Settlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent settlements established in the upper Gangetic plains. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adaptation to a new environment and utilization of fertile land. Laying the foundation for future agricultural and economic development.

Peasant Surplus Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peasants produced enough surplus for their needs and others. Creation of food security and support for non-agricultural occupations. Contribution to the growth of towns and specialized professions.
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7. Political Organization in the Later Vedic Period		
Feature	Details	Significance
Assemblies	Diminished importance compared to Rig Vedic times	Shift towards centralized power
Vidatha	Disappeared	Loss of direct democratic participation
Sabha & Samiti	Dominated by chiefs and nobles	Power concentrated in elite class
Sabha Composition	Nobles and Brahmins; women excluded	Social hierarchy and gender discrimination
Tribe & Territory	Formation of larger kingdoms	Increased power of kings
Territory Names	Named after dominant tribe, even with minority groups	Tribal identity linked to land
Rashtra	Emergence of term signifying territory	Territorial organization and identity
King Election	Based on merit and qualities	Potential for capable leadership
Bali (Presents)	Voluntary gifts from common people	Symbolic recognition of king's authority
Hereditary Rights	Chiefs and kings aimed for, but not always achieved	Power consolidation through lineage
Deviations from Primogeniture	Examples like Duryodhana's usurpation	Lack of rigid succession system
Kingship & Kinship	Detached from tribal ties	Emergence of centralized monarchy

8. Later Vedic Rituals			
Ritual	Purpose	Significance	Details
Rajasuya Sacrifice	Confer supreme power upon the king	Establish sovereignty and legitimacy	Soma pressing, chariot drive, archery, symbolic cattle raid
Ashvamedha	Demonstrate king's power and claim territory	Expand kingdom and influence, assert dominance	Release of horse guarded by king's men, potential for war or submission, gifts for priests and king
Vajapeya (Chariot Race)	Showcase king's strength and virility	Reinforce power and military prowess	Chariot race against kinsmen, display of skill and leadership

9. Later Vedic Administration: Summary in Table Format			
Level	Administration	Responsibilities	Officials
Higher Levels	King	Overall leadership, control of territory, military, finances, and justice	Sangirihitri (treasurer), princes, priests, commanders, chief queen
Taxes & Tributes	Sangirihitri	Collection and management of resources	
Large-Scale Distributions	Princes	During major sacrifices and events	
Lower Levels	Village Assemblies	Local governance, dispute resolution, agricultural management	Chiefs of dominant clans

Village Assembly Composition	Elders, influential individuals	Collective decision-making, maintaining social order	
Cases and Trials	Village Assemblies	Local disputes, minor offenses	

10. Later Vedic Army

Feature	Details	Significance
Standing Army	Non-existent	Limited need for full-time military
Mobilization	Tribal units assembled during wartime	Reliance on citizen-soldiers
Mobilization Ritual	King dining with his people (vis) from the same plate	Symbolic gesture of unity and shared sacrifice
Nature of Warfare	Primarily offensive, focused on expansion and resource acquisition	Raids, cattle rustling, and territorial disputes
Technology & Weapons	Iron weapons (swords, spears) played an increasingly important role	Chariots remained a crucial element of warfare
Leadership	King led the army, assisted by commanders and tribal chiefs	Military prowess and strategic skills valued

11. Later Vedic Social Organization: Summary in Table Format

Feature	Details	Significance
Varna System	Four divisions: Brahmanas (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (commoners), Shudras (servants)	Rigid social hierarchy, shaping access to resources and privileges.
Varna Emphasis	Growing distinction between upper three varnas and Shudras in later texts.	Increased social stratification and exclusivity.
Artisan Status	Some artisans like chariot-makers gained higher status and access to rituals.	Social mobility and blurring of varna lines in specific cases.
Brahmanas	Increased importance due to emphasis on sacrifices.	Dominant class, controlling religious knowledge and rituals.
Kshatriyas	Kings pledged not to harm Brahmanas but sought power over other varnas.	Powerful warrior class, often vying for supremacy among themselves.
Vaishyas	Engaged in agriculture, cattle breeding, and later trade.	Economic contributors, but subject to tribute payments to higher varnas.
Shudras	Lowest position, serving other varnas.	Limited opportunities, excluded from rituals and education.
Punishments	Severity based on varna, harsher for lower varnas.	Reinforced social hierarchy and unequal justice system.

12. Later Vedic Family and Social Structure

Feature	Details	Significance
Father's Power	Increased, allowed disinheritance, strengthened primogeniture in elite families.	Shift towards patriarchal authority and control over lineage.
Male Ancestor Reverence	Increased significance given to male ancestors.	Emphasis on lineage and patrilineal descent.

Women's Position	Lower status, considered subordinate to men, limited rights and autonomy.	Gender inequality and discrimination embedded in the social system.
Women Theologians and Queens	Some women engaged in philosophical discussions and coronation rituals.	Exceptions to the general rule, highlighting individual achievements and potential influence.
Gotra System	Emerged, signifying lineage descent from a common ancestor.	Introduction of exogamy rule, preventing marriage within the same lineage.
Ashramas	Three main stages recognized: Brahmachari, Grihastha, Sannyasin (Vanaprastha less prominent).	Development of life stages focused on education, family life, and spiritual pursuits.

13. Later Vedic Gods, Rituals, and Philosophy

Feature	Details	Significance
Vedic Literature Origin	Kuru-Panchal (Doab region)	Regional focus of religious texts and beliefs.
Gods: Shift in Importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indra and Agni declined. Prajapati emerged as supreme creator. Rudra, Vishnu, and Pushan gained prominence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing focus from celestial powers to earthly concerns and social order. Rise of deities associated with specific varna groups.
Idolatry	Worship of objects as symbols of divinity began.	Transition from abstract concepts to concrete representations of divine power.
Sacrifices: Importance and Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crucial aspect of worship, both public and domestic. Animal sacrifices became common, leading to cattle decline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforcing social hierarchy through rituals involving king and people. Emphasis on ritualistic precision and magical elements.
Ghoghana and Yajmana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guest fed with cattle offerings during sacrifices. Term 'Yajmana' emphasized the individual performing the ritual. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance of hospitality and the sacrificer's role in the success of the ceremony.
Ritualistic Similarities	Some similarities with Indo-European practices.	Shared cultural heritage and potential influences.
Unique Ritual Development	Many rituals developed by Indian priests.	Local innovation and adaptation of inherited traditions.

14. Brahmanas and Rituals in Later Vedic Society

Feature	Details	Significance
Brahmanas' Role	Invented, modified, and expanded formulas and rituals of sacrifices.	Increased control over religious knowledge and practices.
Motivation for Elaborate Rituals	Unclear, but selfish motives like substantial gifts were evident.	Potential exploitation of religious authority for personal gain.
Dakshina (Gifts to Priests)	Examples: 240,000 cows in Rajasuya, gold, cloth, horses, and land.	Wealth accumulation and economic power of Brahmanas.
Monopoly on Priestly Knowledge	Brahmanas asserted exclusive authority over rituals and religious matters.	Secured their social status and influence in society.
Land as Dakshina	Requested by priests, but not firmly established in later Vedic times.	Potential for landownership and economic independence.

Land Disputes	Texts mention tensions between kings and Brahmanas regarding promised land.	Conflict over land ownership and resource control.
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Later Vedic Period: Conclusion or Summary

- **Shift from Pastoral to Agricultural Society:** The later Vedic period saw a transition from a primarily pastoral society in the early Vedic era to a settled agricultural society. This led to the emergence of territorial kingdoms and conflicts over land instead of cattle.
- **Rise of Social Complexity:** The emphasis on agriculture led to increased social stratification, with tribe chiefs gaining power and collecting tributes from peasants and other groups. The four varnas (Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras) became more prominent, solidifying a hierarchical structure.
- **Political Development:** The later Vedic period witnessed the rise of kings and the formation of larger kingdoms. However, due to the limited agricultural surplus and lack of a robust taxation system or professional army, establishing a stable state system proved challenging for Kshatriyas despite Brahmanical support.
- **Religious and Philosophical Changes:** While ritualistic practices continued, there was a growing intellectual shift towards philosophy and spiritual exploration. The Upanishads emerged as a response to the dominance of rituals, emphasizing self-knowledge and the relationship between the individual (atma) and the ultimate reality (Brahma).
- **Legacy:** The later Vedic period laid the foundation for the development of complex social structures, political systems, and philosophical schools that would shape the course of Indian history.

Comparison with Contemporary India:

- **Taxation System:** Unlike the limited tribute system of the later Vedic period, contemporary India has a well-established taxation system that provides crucial resources for the government to function effectively.
- **Professional Army:** While the later Vedic period relied on citizen-soldiers for military needs, contemporary India boasts a professional army trained and equipped to defend the nation's borders.
- **Social Structure:** While the varna system continues to influence Indian society, significant efforts have been made to promote social equality and address discrimination based on caste.

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