



**SALTORA NETAJI CENTENARY COLLEGE**

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

**U.G.HISTORY –HONOURS**

**SEMESTER– I**

**COURSE CODE: AHHST101 C-1**

**HISTORY OF INDIA ( PREHISTORIC  
TIMES -600B.C.**

**Topic**

**Vedic Civilization- Society and Economy**

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# THE VEDIC PERIOD

(C. 1500-600 BCE).

## THE ARYANS

- ◉ According to some academics, the Vedic people arrived in India just before 1500 BC. They arrived in waves, one group after another. The Vedic literature describe the locals as Dasyus, dark-skinned people, as resisting them.
- ◉ The Arya- related to language (Sanskrit, an Indo-European language).
- ◉ During this time, the northern Indian subcontinent produced the Vedic literature, which includes the Rig Veda ((c. 1500-1000 BC), Samvesa, Yajurveda, Atharvaveda, Samhita, Brahman, Aranyak, Upanishad ((c. 1000-600 BC).
- ◉ Meaning of the word Arya: Noble.
- ◉ Compared to the urbanized Indus Valley inhabitants, they lived a semi-nomadic, rural lifestyle.
- ◉ The Vedic people were mostly dependent on cows and horses and lived in thatched houses in rural locations.
- ◉ Dispute on original homeland of Aryans.

## VEDIC CIVILIZATION

### Vedic literature

(chief source of information)

#### Early Vedic Period ( Rig Vedic Period ) (1500 BC – 1000 BC)

The Aryans initially lived in the region known as the 'Sapta-Sindhu Or 'Land of Seven rivers', the area of seven rivers which included Sindhu(Indus), Vitasta(Jhelum), Asini(Chenab), Parushni(Ravi), Vipash(Beas), Shutudri(Sutlej) and the Sarasvati.

This Sapta Sindhu has contributed more to the knowledge system and traditions of India and has a higher role in the development of Indian culture.

#### Later Vedic Period (1000 BC – 600 BC)

The Aryans advanced eastward during this period, conquering Bihar, the eastern and western UP (Kosala).

## SOCIAL LIFE IN EARLY VEDIC PERIOD (1500 BC – 1000 BC)

### FAMILY SYSTEM

Family-Kul-Grihapati (Kulap)  
Patriarchal  
Egalitarian and tribal in nature.  
The fundamental social unit was the family.

### FOODS AND DRINKS

Milk and milk-product, Meat etc.  
Grains: Yava (barley), wheat  
strong liquors - somrasa sura.

### CLOTHINGS

Bas, Adhibas, Nibi  
cotton, woolen  
Ornaments: gold, silver, costly stones

### AMUSEMENT

Music and dance, with instruments such as the flute, harp, professional dancers. Gambling, Chariot racing,

### RELIGION

'RIG VEDA' composed.

Rituals simple, involving basic offerings and animal sacrifices. These rituals were performed to appease the gods and seek their blessings for prosperity and well-being.

Worshipped various natural forces-wind, water, rain etc. Deities like Indra (god of rain and thunder), Agni (god of fire), Varuna (god of cosmic order), and others revered.

### Philosophy and Ideas

Ritualistic and sacrificial activities were the main ways that early Vedic thought interacted with the divine forces. The focus was on obtaining monetary and worldly benefits by following rites and appeasing the gods.

## SOCIAL LIFE IN EARLY VEDIC PERIOD

### Art and Architecture

Art and architecture were relatively simple. Pottery and basic dwellings were common, reflecting the nomadic lifestyle of the Vedic peoples

### Goals in life

Prosperity, Cattle-wealth Food, Kingdom, Health, Divine glow, Rains Nourishment, Victory etc.

### Religious deities

Dou & prithivi

Indra-(Purandar, Britraghna)

Agni

Varun

Mitra, Surya, Sabitri, Marut, Som, Saraswati,

**Valuable things:** houses, horses, food, gems, chariots, children, rich fields, and fame. The Vedic era saw a great deal of slavery, as captives were viewed as property with no autonomy, rights, power, or honor and subjected to extremely degrading treatment. Slaves were addressed with dasa and dasi.

## SOCIAL LIFE IN LATER VEDIC PERIOD (1000 BC – 600 BC)

### Literature

The Samaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda composed Samhita, Brahmana, Aranyak, Upanishada. Sutra Sahitya (Vedanga & SharaDarshan)

High social status of Brahmanas and Kshatriyas

Baisya and Sudras -declined

### EDUCATION

The Vedas, Upanishads' philosophy, grammar, rhyme Mathematics.

Complex and hereditary 'Barnashram' system

Various castes emerged money lenders, chariot makers, dyers, weavers, barbers, goldsmiths, iron smiths, washer men, bow makers, carpenters, musicians etc.

Child marriage, dowry etc

### AMUSEMENT

Music and dance, with instruments such as the flute, lute, harp, professional dancers. Gambling, Chariot racing,

### Agricultural production

Vreehi & tandula (paddy&rice), Yava (barley) Maasha (blackgram) Tila (sesame oilseed), Mudga (greengram), Godhooma (Wheat),

CLOTHINGS  
COTTON, SILK

Religion: Prajapati Brahma, Rudra (Shiva) and Vishnu -the new Gods. The changing religious practices and beliefs were greatly influenced by these deities. Rudra came to be connected with destruction and rebirth, whereas Vishnu came to represent preservation. During this time, Devi, the heavenly feminine, was also worshipped.

# SOCIAL LIFE IN VEDIC PERIOD

## ◉ **CHATURASHRAMA**

### ◉ **(Four Ashramas)**

- ◉ Four stages of life:

Bramhacharya, (celibacy)  
Garhasthya (householdership)  
Vanaprastha (spiritual reclusiveness)  
Sanyasa," (meditation).

- ◉ During the *Brahmacharya* phase, students studied in Gurukulas and practiced celibacy; upon completion of their studies, a convocation ceremony was held.

## ◉ **CHATURVARNA**

### ◉ **(Four varnas)**

### ◉ **(Purushsukta)**

- ◉ **BRAHMANA** ( Related to religious matters)
- ◉ **KSHATRIYA** (Ruler-War, conquest, protection and defense of kingdom).
- ◉ **BAISYA** (engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry, trade and business).
- ◉ **SUDRA** (serve the other three castes)

## ECONOMIC LIFE IN EARLY VEDIC PERIOD (1500 BC – 1000 BC)

- ◉ Trade and commerce limited  
barter system for exchange
- ◉ Primary based on agriculture and cattle-rearing
- ◉ cattle -a symbol of wealth. Cow- 'Godhan', Horse-chariot.
- ◉ private land ownership not established.

## ECONOMIC LIFE IN LATER VEDIC PERIOD

(1000 BC – 600 BC)

- Cities developed as the centers of economic activity as trade and commerce increased.
- Trade networks and commercial activity expanded.
- Trade introduced both domestically and internationally.
- More advanced methods for navigating the waters.
- Lending money also widespread during this time.
- Coinage became more widely used as a means of exchange.
- Sophisticated art and architecture
- Urban areas expanded and more sophisticated building methods were used.
- Bricks and stones were increasingly used in building, temples were constructed.
- Miscellaneous arts and crafts

# SOCIAL LIFE IN VEDIC PERIOD

## PASTORAL TO AGRICULTURE

○ Cattle husbandry and agriculture were the main forms of livelihood in this semi-nomadic and pastoral community. Tribes constituted the principal social unit and rural settlements were prevalent. Their way of life was pastoral, and they lived in modest thatched houses.

**Early Vedic Period**

○ The pastoral way of life gave way to more settled agricultural groups throughout the Later Vedic Period. Cities began to spring up, and trade and agriculture both advanced the economy. With the rise of new classes like the ruling Kshatriyas and the priestly Brahmins, social stratification became increasingly evident.

**Later Vedic Period**

# SOCIAL LIFE IN VEDIC PERIOD

## POSITION OF WOMEN

- ◉ Women enjoyed great respect and social standing in the early Vedic era.
- ◉ They were allowed to take part in **Sabha** and **Samiti**. There were women poets too (Apala, Lopamudra, Viswavara and Ghosa).
- ◉ They were allowed to take part in every religious ceremony.
- ◉ Through the "Swayamvara" system, they were free to select the spouses they wanted.
- ◉ Monogamy practiced
- ◉ No child marriage.

Early Vedic Period

- ◉ patriarchy took hold in society throughout the later Vedic era.
- ◉ The status of women declined.
- ◉ Education was not granted to women because they were viewed as inferior to males.
- ◉ Their liberty was restricted.
- ◉ Polygamy started to be used.
- ◉ They were kept within the four walls of their homes and were expected to work for their families.

Later Vedic Period

## THE ARYANS

image

source: [https://kn.wikipedia.org/wiki/%e0%b2%9a%e0%b2%bf%e0%b2%a4%e0%b3%8d%e0%b2%b0:aryans\\_settling\\_in\\_india.jpg](https://kn.wikipedia.org/wiki/%e0%b2%9a%e0%b2%bf%e0%b2%a4%e0%b3%8d%e0%b2%b0:aryans_settling_in_india.jpg)



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**THANK YOU**