

Vedic Civilization Free PDF By Governmentadda.com

The Vedic Civilization was the culture and traditions of the society prevalent during the Vedic age (1500- 600 BCE). In various examinations which have a section of general studies, often ask a question or two about the Vedic civilization. This chapter of the history study material & notes is meant to cover the essential and exam-worthy details of the ancient Vedic period.

It should be noted here that after the decline of Indus Valley civilization by 1500 BCE, the next wave of civilization began to take shape in form of Aryan occupation of Indo-Gangetic plain.

The Aryans:

- Typically, the age of Aryans is known as the Vedic age because the four major Vedas were created in this time.
- The word Aryan is derived from the Sanskrit word “arya” which means noble, not ordinary.
- They arrived from Russian steppes, as is believed and agreed to by majority historians.
- But various scholars voice different opinion about their origin. Bal Gangadhar Tilak argued that Aryans came from the Arctic region following their astronomical calculations.
- It is generally agreed that they spoke Indo-Aryan Language, Sanskrit.
- They were semi-nomadic, pastoral people, who led a rural life as compared to the urban Harappans.

Vedic Literature:

- The term Veda means “superior knowledge” in Sanskrit.
- Four major Vedas constitute the Vedic literature. They are – Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sam Veda, and Atharva Veda.
 1. **Rig Veda** – Earliest veda. Has 1028 hymns in praise of Gods.
 2. **Yajur Veda** – Has details of rules to be followed during sacrifices.
 3. **Sam Veda** – Has a collection of songs. The origins of Indian music are traced to it.
 4. **Atharva Veda** – has a collection of spells and charms.
- Besides these Vedas, there were Brahmanas, Upanishads, Aranyakas, and epics- Ramayana and Mahabharata.
- **Brahmanas** – Prose about Vedic hymns, rituals and philosophies.
- **Aranyakas** – Deal with mysticism, rites and rituals.
- **Upanishads** – Philosophical texts dealing with soul, mysteries of nature.
- **Ramayana** was authored by Valmiki.
- **Mahabharata** was written by Ved Vyasa.

Classification of Vedic Period:

The period of Vedic Civilization (1500-500 BCE) is divided into two broad parts –

1. Early Vedic Period (1500-1000 BC), also known as Rig Vedic Period.

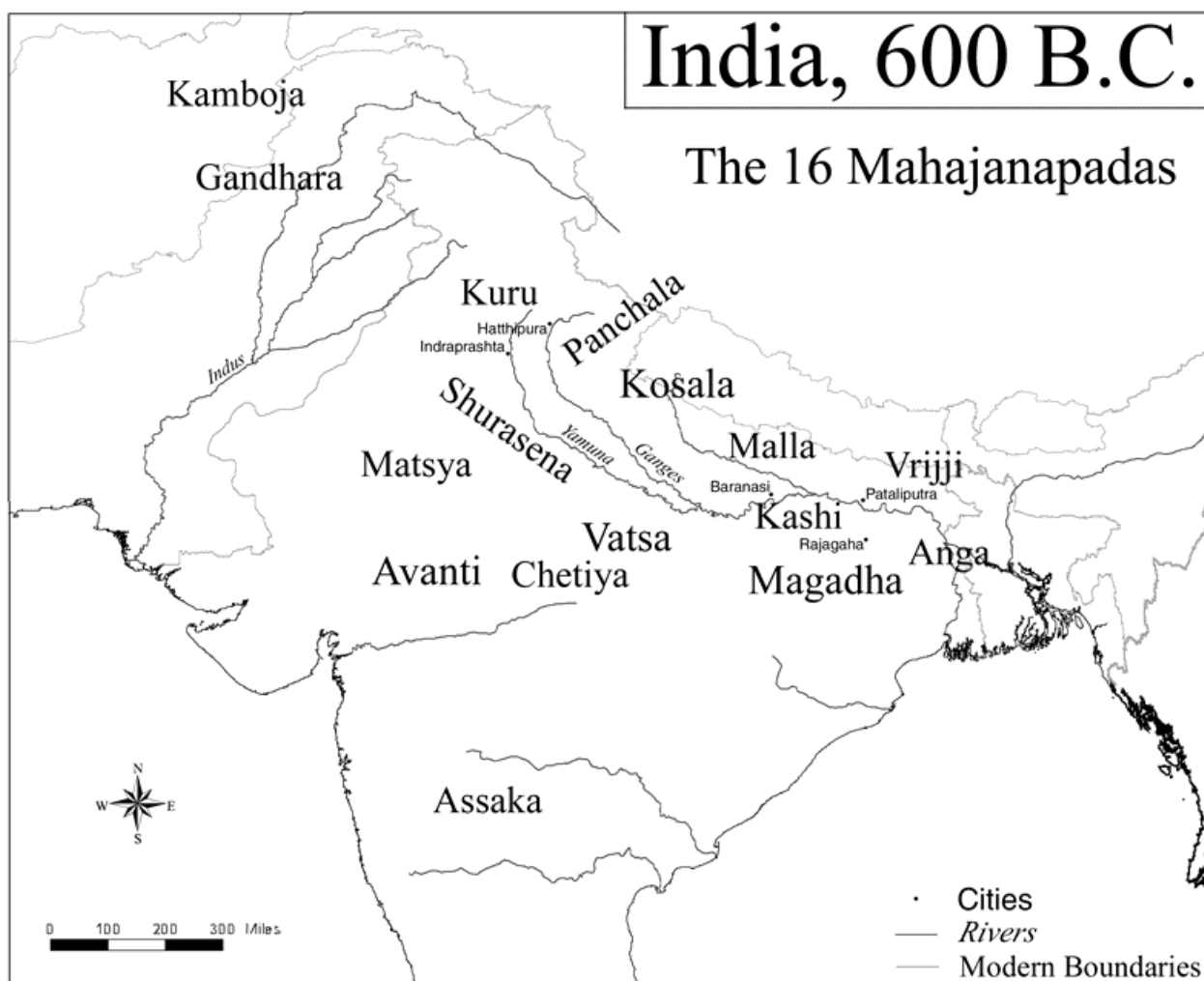
2. Later Vedic Period (1000- 600 BC).

We will study the following features of the Vedic Civilization under these two periods.

Political Organisation in Vedic Age:

In Early Vedic Age:

- 'Kula' was the basic unit of political organization.
- Multiple families together of kinship formed a 'grama'.
- Leader of 'grama' was 'Gramani'.
- Group of villages were called 'visu', headed by 'vishayapati'.
- The highest political and administrative unit was 'jana' or tribe.
- There were several such tribal kingdoms – Bharatas, Matsyas, Yadus and Purus.
- The head of kingdom was 'Rajan' or king.
- The Rig Vedic polity was hereditary monarchy normally.
- There were two bodies- Sabha(council of elders) and Samiti(general assembly of people).



In Later Vedic Age:

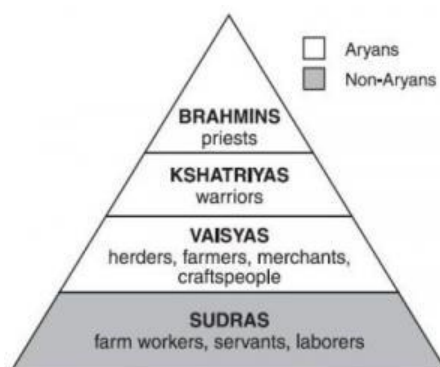
- Larger kingdoms by amalgamation formed '**Mahajanapadas or rashtras**'.

- Therefore, the power of king increased and he performed various rituals and sacrifices to make his position strong like Rajasuya (consecration ceremony), Asvamedha (horse sacrifice) and Vajpeya (chariot race).
- The kings assumed titles of Rajavisvajanan, Ahilabhuvanapathi(lord of all earth), Ekraat and Samrat (sole ruler).
- But, importance of the Samiti and the Sabha diminished.

Society in Vedic Civilization:

In Early Vedic Age:

- The Rig Vedic society was basically **patriarchal**.
- The basic unit of society was 'griha' or family, its head was called as 'grihapathi'.
- **Monogamy** was practiced while polygamy among royal and noble families was observed.
- Women had equal opportunities as men for their spiritual and intellectual development. Apala, Viswavara, Ghosa and Lopamudra were women poets.
- Women could attend the popular assemblies.
- No child marriage, sati practice.
- Social divisions were not rigid.



In Later Vedic Age:

- The Varna system became prevalent- four divisions of society :**Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras**.
- A Brahmin and Kshatriyas occupied a higher position than others.
- Various sub-castes on the basis of occupation emerged.
- Women were considered inferior and subordinate to men now and also lost their political rights of attending assemblies.
- Child marriages became common.

Economic Conditions in Vedic Civilization:

In Early Vedic Age:

- The Rig Vedic Aryans were **pastoral, cattle rearing** people.
- After they permanently settled in North India they began agriculture.
- Carpenters produced chariots and ploughs.
- A variety of articles with copper, bronze and iron were made by workers.

- Spinning was an important occupation – cotton and woolen fabrics.
- Goldsmiths made ornaments.
- The potters made different kinds of vessels for domestic use.
- Trade was conducted by barter system in beginning but later shifted to use of gold coins called '**nishka**' for large transactions.
- Rivers acted as means of transport.

In Later Vedic Age:

- More land was put under cultivation by clearing forests. Knowledge of manure saw development.
- Hence, Agriculture became the chief occupation of people growing barley, rice and wheat.
- Industrial activity became specialized with metal work, leather work, carpentry and pottery advancement.
- Internal trade as well as foreign trade also became extensive (they traded with Babylon through sea).
- Hereditary merchants (vaniya) came into existence as a different class.
- Vaisyas indulged in trade and commerce organized themselves into guilds known as '**ganas**'.
- Coins: Besides 'nishka', '**satamana**' – gold coins and '**krishnala**' – silver coins were also used as a media of exchange.

Religion in Vedic Period:

In Early Vedic Age:

- Rig Vedic Aryans worshiped natural forces like earth, fire, wind, rain and thunder by personifying them into many gods.
- Some important Rig Vedic gods – **Prithvi** (Earth), **Agni** (Fire), **Vayu** (Wind), **Varuna** (Rain) and **Indra** (Thunder). And 'Indra' was most popular. Next came 'Agni' – an intermediary between the gods and the people.
- 'Varuna' – the upholder of natural order.
- Female Gods – 'Aditi' and 'Ushas'.
- No temples and no idol worship.
- Prayers were offered to gods for rewards.

In Later Vedic Age:

- Indra and Agni lost their importance.
- **Prajapathi** (the creator), **Vishnu** (the protector) and **Rudra** (the destroyer) became.
- Sacrifices and the rituals became more elaborate.
- But the importance of prayers declined.
- Priesthood became a hereditary profession. They dictated the rules for these rituals and sacrifices.
- Therefore, by the end of this period there was a strong reaction against this priestly domination (also against elaborate sacrifices and rituals). This led to the rise of Buddhism and Jainism.

The Vedic Civilization is named after the:

- a) Vedas
- b) Upanishads
- c) Bhagavad Gita
- d) Ramayana

Solution: a) Vedas

The Vedic Civilization flourished in the region of:

- a) Indus Valley
- b) Ganges Valley
- c) Deccan Plateau
- d) Thar Desert

Solution: b) Ganges Valley

The Vedic texts were composed in the ancient language of:

- a) Sanskrit
- b) Pali
- c) Prakrit
- d) Tamil

Solution: a) Sanskrit

The Rigveda is the oldest and most important text of the Vedic Civilization. True or False?

- a) True
- b) False

Solution: a) True

The Vedic society was divided into different social classes called:

- a) Jatis
- b) Ashramas

c) Varnas

d) Castes

Solution: c) Varnas

The highest varna in the Vedic social system was:

a) Brahmins

b) Kshatriyas

c) Vaishyas

d) Shudras

Solution: a) Brahmins

The Vedic economy was primarily based on:

a) Agriculture

b) Trade and commerce

c) Animal husbandry

d) Mining and metallurgy

Solution: a) Agriculture

The Vedic Civilization worshipped a pantheon of gods and goddesses. True or False?

a) True

b) False

Solution: a) True

The most important god in the Vedic pantheon was:

a) Indra

b) Varuna

c) Agni

d) Brahma

Solution: a) Indra

The Vedic religious rituals and sacrifices were performed by:



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- a) Brahmins
- b) Kshatriyas
- c) Vaishyas
- d) Shudras

Solution: a) Brahmins

The Vedic Civilization believed in the concept of reincarnation and karma. True or False?

- a) True
- b) False

Solution: a) True

The Vedic texts contain hymns and prayers composed by:

- a) Sages and seers
- b) Kings and warriors
- c) Merchants and traders
- d) Farmers and laborers

Solution: a) Sages and seers

The Vedic society placed a strong emphasis on:

- a) Rituals and ceremonies
- b) Material wealth
- c) Education and knowledge
- d) Military strength

Solution: a) Rituals and ceremonies

The Vedic Civilization had a system of kingship with powerful rulers known as:

- a) Rishis
- b) Rajas
- c) Chieftains
- d) Emperors

Solution: b) Rajas

The Vedic texts mention a sacred fire ritual called:

- a) Yagna
- b) Puja
- c) Homa
- d) Aarti

Solution: a) Yagna

The Vedic Civilization practiced polygamy, allowing men to have multiple wives. True or False?

- a) True
- b) False

Solution: a) True

The Vedic period saw the emergence of early forms of:

- a) Democracy
- b) Capitalism
- c) Socialism
- d) Monarchy

Solution: d) Monarchy

The Vedic Civilization had a well-developed system of trade and commerce. True or False?

- a) True
- b) False

Solution: b) False

The Vedic society valued education and had a system of gurukuls, where students lived with their teachers. True or False?

- a) True
- b) False

Solution: a) True

The Vedic texts describe a class of warriors and rulers known as:

- a) Brahmins
- b) Kshatriyas
- c) Vaishyas
- d) Shudras

Solution: b) Kshatriyas

The Vedic Civilization is believed to have originated around:

- a) 2000 BCE
- b) 1500 BCE
- c) 1000 BCE
- d) 500 BCE

Solution: b) 1500 BCE

The Vedic texts contain hymns dedicated to various natural forces and deities. True or False?

- a) True
- b) False

Solution: a) True

The Vedic Civilization practiced animal sacrifices as part of their religious rituals. True or False?

- a) True
- b) False

Solution: a) True

The Vedic period saw the development of a system of mathematics known as:

- a) Algebra
- b) Geometry
- c) Arithmetic
- d) Trigonometry

Solution: c) Arithmetic

The Vedic society had a strong emphasis on cleanliness and personal hygiene. True or False?

a) True

b) False

Solution: a) True

The Vedic texts mention a powerful god associated with the preservation of cosmic order, known as:

a) Vishnu

b) Shiva

c) Brahma

d) Rudra

Solution: a) Vishnu

The Vedic Civilization had a system of dowry, where the bride's family gave gifts to the groom's family. True or False?

a) True

b) False

Solution: b) False

The Vedic texts describe a group of people called the "untouchables" who were considered outside the varna system. True or False?

a) True

b) False

Solution: b) False

The Vedic period saw the development of early forms of music and dance. True or False?

a) True

b) False

Solution: a) True

The Vedic Civilization had a system of village assemblies called:

a) Sabha

b) Samiti

c) Janapada

d) Panchayat

Solution: b) Samiti

The Vedic texts mention a powerful god associated with the creation of the universe, known as:

a) Vishnu

b) Shiva

c) Brahma

d) Rudra

Solution: c) Brahma

The Vedic Civilization had a system of oral transmission of knowledge, with texts being passed down through recitation. True or False?

a) True

b) False

Solution: a) True

The Vedic texts mention a goddess associated with wealth, prosperity, and good fortune, known as:

a) Lakshmi

b) Saraswati

c) Durga

d) Kali

Solution: a) Lakshmi

The Vedic period saw the development of early forms of poetry and literature. True or False?

a) True

b) False

Solution: a) True

The Vedic Civilization had a system of arranged marriages, where parents played a significant role in choosing the spouses. True or False?

a) True

b) False

Solution: a) True

The Vedic texts mention a powerful god associated with destruction and transformation, known as:

a) Vishnu

b) Shiva

c) Brahma

d) Rudra

Solution: b) Shiva

The Vedic period saw the emergence of early forms of legal and judicial systems. True or False?

a) True

b) False

Solution: a) True

The Vedic texts mention a goddess associated with knowledge, arts, and learning, known as:

a) Lakshmi

b) Saraswati

c) Durga

d) Kali

Solution: b) Saraswati

The Vedic Civilization had a system of sacred rituals and ceremonies performed by priests. True or False?

a) True

b) False

Solution: a) True

The Vedic period saw the development of early forms of astronomy and astrology. True or False?

a) True

b) False

Solution: a) True

The Vedic texts mention a goddess associated with power, protection, and destruction of evil forces, known as:

- a) Lakshmi
- b) Saraswati
- c) Durga
- d) Kali

Solution: c) Durga

The Vedic Civilization had a system of initiation rituals, known as:

- a) Upanayana
- b) Samskara
- c) Yajna
- d) Pranayama

Solution: a) Upanayana

The Vedic period saw the emergence of early forms of philosophical and metaphysical thought. True or False?

- a) True
- b) False

Solution: a) True

The Vedic texts mention a goddess associated with destruction and chaos, known as:

- a) Lakshmi
- b) Saraswati
- c) Durga
- d) Kali

Solution: d) Kali

The Vedic Civilization had a system of hereditary occupational groups called:

- a) Varnas
- b) Jatis

c) Ashramas

d) Gurukuls

Solution: b) Jatis

The Vedic period saw the development of early forms of ethical and moral codes. True or False?

a) True

b) False

Solution: a) True

The Vedic texts mention a god associated with the sun and light, known as:

a) Surya

b) Chandra

c) Agni

d) Varuna

Solution: a) Surya

The Vedic Civilization had a system of inheritance where property was passed down through male lineage. True or False?

a) True

b) False

Solution: a) True

The Vedic period saw the emergence of early forms of philosophical and spiritual teachings. True or False?

a) True

b) False

Solution: a) True

The Vedic texts mention a god associated with water, rivers, and the oceans, known as:

a) Surya

b) Chandra

c) Agni

d) Varuna

Solution: d) Varuna