

Vedic Civilization:

Introduction: started between 1500 BC and 600 BC after advent of Aryans + after the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization by 1400 BC + Vedas were composed in this period

Phases of Vedic Civilization:

This period between 1500 B.C and 600 B.C is divided into the

1. Early Vedic Period or Rig Vedic Period (1500 B.C -1000 B.C)
2. Later Vedic Period (1000B.C – 600 B.C).

Area of Settlement: [1] **Initial settlement:** Indus valley and its tributaries Vitasta (Jhelum), Asikni (Chenab), Parushni (Ravi), Vipasa (Beas) and the Sutudri (Sutlej) and also along Saraswati River around areas of Haryana and Punjab [2] **later settlements:** Indo-Gangetic plains.

About Aryans: Arya= Noble man + migrants from central Asia into India through Khyber Pass + spoke Sanskrit + semi-nomadic, pastoral people, who led a rural life + male dominated society + domesticated Horses

Advent of Aryans and conflict for dominance: [1] Phase 1: Aryans Vs. local inhabitants (Dasyus)→ Aryans victory due to superior war tactice and use of Horses in battle [2] Phase 2: Intra Aryan clan fight→ battle of ten Kings→ Bharata clan emerged victorious→ Bharata + Purus→ Kurus.

Aryans mode of occupation: mainly pastoralist + Cow was most economical and sacred Animal + fight for cows called Govishti + donation of cows and enslaved women to priests + Metallurgy called 'Ayas' +. Preferred land route than sea.

Comparison of Early Vedic Period and Later Vedic Period:

Political Organization:

Early Vedic Period	Later Vedic Period
Small Tribal kingdoms called 'Jana'	Big territorial kingdoms called Mahajanpad
Head of Kingdom called 'Rajan'	Samrat
Power was decentralized	Centralization of power into King
hereditary monarchy	hereditary monarchy
two bodies- Sabha (council of elders) and Samiti (general assembly of people) played important role in administration	Importance of Sabha and Samiti declined
Due to migrant nature there was no territorial administration	Birth of territorial administration

Social Organization:

Early Vedic Period	Later Vedic Period
Patriarchal	Patriarchal
Women enjoyed higher status Apala, Viswavara, Ghosa and Lopamudra were women poets of this age	Status of women declined
Caste system was not rigid and determined by profession	Caste system got institutionalized and assigned at birth
No child marriage and no sati practice	Proliferation of Sati and Child marriages
Mostly monogamy	Polygamy became more prevalent
Widow remarriage was allowed	Widow remarriage started getting thwarted
Mostly monogamy	Polygamy became more prevalent

Gotra system absent	Gotra system came into existence
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Economic structure of Vedic Period:

Early Vedic Period	Later Vedic Period
Pastoral + Agriculture	Agriculture became prominent
Mostly internal trade	External trade with Babylon through sea route important ports were Dwarka and Bhrigukaccha
Barter system with occasional use of metal currency	Metal currency called 'nishka' became more prominent 'satamana'- gold coins and 'krishnala'- silver coins
Vaishyas varna involved in Agriculture	Merchant class out of Vaishyas emerged called Banik/Vania
Tribute to King was voluntary	Tribute/tax became regularized
use of copper and bronze ayas	iron ayas called Krishna aya replaced copper.
Cattle as measure of wealth	land as measure of wealth
Society was largely egalitarian	Rise of social and economic inequality

Religion:

Early Vedic period	Later Vedic period
important Rig Vedic gods Prithvi (Earth), Agni (Fire), Vayu (Wind), Varuna (Rain) and Indra (Thunder).	Indra and Agni lost their importance. Prajapathi (the creator), Vishnu (the protector) and Rudra (the destroyer) became chief Deities.
Priesthood was not a hereditary profession	Priesthood became a hereditary profession
No temples and no idol worship	No temples and no idol worship
Prayers were used for material gains	Rituals got prominence over prayers
Religious practices were simple	Sacrifices and the rituals became more elaborate
Less influence of Brahmins over society	Increasing Brahmanization of society

Vedic Literature: [1] Veda= vid i.e. spiritual knowledge/subject of knowledge/means of acquiring knowledge [2] four Vedas are: Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva [3] Rig Veda: this is the oldest religious text in the world + Yajur Veda – this deals with the ways to perform rituals + Sama Veda – deals with music. + Atharva Veda – contains spells and magical formula [4] Other Vedic literature are: Brahmanas – Prose about vedic hymns, rituals and philosophies; Aryankas – Deal with mysticism, rites and rituals; Upnishads – Philosophical texts dealing with soul, mysteries of nature.

Important terms related to Vedic Period:

Vrihi→ Rice + Aghanya→ Not to be killed, generally Cow was referred as Aghanya + Bhagadugh→ carpenter + Gavishti→ a fight for cows + Kulala→ Potter + Takshan / Teshtri→ carpenter + Naditarna→name for river Saraswati + Dasyus/Dasas→ pre-Aryan local inhabitants of the region + Purandar→ Indra + Shyama Ayas/Krishna Ayas→ Iron + Bali→ voluntary tribute from Subjects to the King + Sangrihitri–the officer who collect taxes + Pushan→ God of Shudras who protected cattles. + Goghna→ The guest + Karmakar→ Hired labourers + Rajjugahaka→ officer for land survey.