



Practice, Learn and Achieve
Your Goal with Prepp

SSC MTS Exam

Study Material for Genral Awareness

Simplifying
Government Exams



SSC CHSL



IAS EXAM



RRB NTPC



NTSE



CDS



SSC CGL



CBSE UGC NET



IBPS PO



NDA



SBI PO



IBPS CLERK



AFCAT



SSC JE



CTET



CSIR UGC NET



CAPF



IBPS RRB

www.prepp.in

VEDIC CIVILIZATION

- Vedic literature is the most significant source of information about the Vedic civilization.
- The Vedic literature consists of three successive classes of literary creations, namely –
 - Vedas
 - Brahmanas
 - Aranyakas and Upanishads

Vedas

- Veda means "**knowledge**". The Vedas formed the earliest segment of Vedic literature.
- The Vedic literature had been evolved in the course of many centuries and was handed down from generation to generation by the **word of mouth**.
- The Vedas are the collection of *hymns, prayers, charms, litanies, and sacrificial formulae*.
- Vedas are four in number, namely –
 - **Rig Veda** – It is the oldest Veda. It is a collection of hymns.
 - **Samveda** – it is a collection of songs, which are mostly taken from Rig Veda.
 - **Yajurveda** – It is a collection of sacrificial formulae.
 - **Atharvanaveda** – it is a collection of spells and charms.

Brahmanas

The Brahmanas are prose texts. It describes about the meaning of Vedic hymns, their applications, and stories of their origins in details. Besides, it also explains the details about rituals and philosophies.

Aranyakas and Upanishads

- Aranyakas and Upanishads exemplify philosophical meditations of the hermits and ascetics on soul, god, world, etc. These are partly included in the Brahmanas or attached, and partly exist as separate works.
- They, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas, and the Upanishads are attached to one or the other of the four Vedas.
- Compositions of the hymns are credited to Hindu *Rishis* (monks) of divine origin.
- The Vedas are called '**apaurusheya**' (not created by man) and '**nitya**' (existing in all eternity) while the *Rishis* are known as inspired seers who received the *mantras* from the Supreme deity.

Age of RigVeda

- The origin of the earth goes back to about 4,600 million years and the origin of humans themselves goes back to about 4.2 million years (ago).

- **Max Muller** gives arbitrarily the date of composition of Rig Veda to be around 1,200 to 1,000 B.C.
- **W. D. Whitney** negated and criticized Muller for using totally arbitrary, unscientific, and un-academic method in assigning the dates.
- On the analogy of the language of *Avesta*, some scholars opined that the date of Rig Veda may be **1,000 B.C.**
- Some of the Vedic gods namely *Indra*, *Varuna*, *Mitra*, and the two *Nasatyas* were mentioned in *Boghaz-Koi* (Asia Minor) inscription of 1,400 B.C., which proves that Rig Veda must have come into existence much before the date described by some of the foreigner scholars.
- The *Boghaz-Koi* inscription records a treaty between the *Hittite* and the *Mitanni* Kings and the gods (mentioned in the above point) were cited as witnesses to this treaty. Even today, exactly in the same way, the oath is taken in the courts and on an assumption of a public office (in the name of god).
- Bal Gangadhar Tilak, on astronomical grounds, dated Rig Veda to 6,000 B.C.
- Harmon Jacobi held that Vedic civilization flourished between 4,500 B.C. and 2,500 B.C. and the *Samhitas* were composed in the latter half of the period.
- Famous Sanskritist, Winternitz felt that the Rig Veda was probably composed in the third millennium B.C.
- R. K. Mukerjee suggested that "on a modest computation, we should come to 2,500 B.C. as the time of Rig Veda".
- G. C. Pande also favors a date of 3,000 B.C. or even earlier.

Rig Vedic Geography

- Rig Vedic people called themselves '*Aryans*'. They had detailed knowledge of the geographical area in which they lived. Name and location and pattern of geographical features such as rivers and mountains mentioned in Rig-Veda suggest location of the regions of the geographical area of their habitat.
- The *Nadi-sukta* hymn of the Rig Veda mentions 21 rivers, which include the *Ganga* in the east and the *Kubha* (Kabul) in the west.
- The pattern of rivers is given in a definite order from the east to west i.e. from the *Ganga* in the east to the *Kubul* in the west. The rivers like *Yamuna*, *Saraswati*, *Sutlej*, *Ravi*, *Jhelum*, and *Indus* are situated between *Ganga* and *Kabul*.
- The mountain namely the *Himalayas* and the *Mujavant* (as mentioned in the Veda) are located in the north.
- The Ocean i.e. '*Samudra*' is mentioned in connection with rivers Sindhu and the river *Saraswati* had been falling into the ocean. Ocean has been also mentioned in the context of foreign trade.
- The geography of Rig Vedic period covers present-day western Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, the whole of Pakistan, and the south of Afghanistan.
- The battle of ten kings, mentioned in the Rig Veda, gives names of ten kings who participated in a war against **Sudas** who was *Bharata* king of *Tritsus* family. It illustrates that the territory known to Vedic people was divided into a number of states-republics and monarchical (kingdoms).

- The battle was fought on the bank of *Parushani* (Ravi) river and Sudas emerged as victorious.
- '*Bharatvarsha*' was the name used for the whole country. It was given by the most important people of the Rig Veda. They were '*Bharatas*' who were settled in the region between the rivers *Saraswati* and *Yamuna*.
- The Rig Veda also gives the location of other people, such as **Purus** in the region of *Kurukshetra*; the Tritsus east of Ravi; the Alinas, the Pakhtas, the Bhalanas and the Sibis west of Indus (up to Kabul river) and so on.

Vedic Society

Society

- Occupation of individuals was the basis of classification of a society in the Rig Vedic period.
- It was divided into four *varnas*, namely
 - *Brahmanas* (teacher and priests);
 - *Kshatriya* (rulers and administrators);
 - *Vaisya* (farmers, merchants, and bankers); and
 - *Sudra* (artisan and laborers).
- There was complete freedom and mobility for the adoption of a profession.
- Trades and occupations did not assume a hereditary character in the society (till now).

Salient Features of Vedic Society

- The family was the smallest unit of a society. It was primarily monogamous and Patriarchal.
- Child marriage was not in fashion.
- There was freedom of choice in marriage.
- A widow could marry the younger brother of her deceased husband.
- The wife was a partner of the husband in all religious and social ceremonies.
- The father's property was inherited by son.
- The daughter could inherit it only if she was the only child of her parents.
- Right to property was known in moveable things like cattle, horse, gold, and ornament and so also in immoveable property like land and house.

Education

- The teacher was given great respect.

- The school was in the home of the teacher where he taught the particular sacred texts.
- The texts were in the first instance learnt by pupils repeating the words taught by their teacher.
- A great importance was attached to enunciation and pronunciation.
- Oral learning was the method of training.
- Students were given intense training and learning to memorize and preserve the huge mass of Vedic literature.

Food and Drinks

- The important part of the diet was milk and its products like curd, butter, and *ghee*. Grains were cooked with milk (*kshira-pakamodanam*).
- *Chappati* (bread) of wheat and barley was eaten mixed with *ghee*.
- People used to eat the meat of birds, wild animals (like boar, antelopes, and buffalo), and fish.
- The meat of animals such as sheep, goat, and buffalo etc., which were sacrificed on ceremonial occasions, was also eaten.
- The cow was mentioned as *aghnya* i.e. not to be killed. The Vedas prescribe a penalty of death or expulsion from the kingdom to those who kill or injure cows.
- *Sura* and *Soma* i.e. alcoholic drinks were also consumed, though their consumption had been condemned.

Economic Life

- Agriculture, cattle rearing, and trade and commerce were the main economic activity of the Rig Vedic people.
- People had domestic animals like cows, sheep, goats, asses, dogs, buffalos etc.
- Oxen were used for ploughing and drawing carts and horses for drawing the chariots.
- The plough was drawn by the oxen at times in a team of six, eight, or even twelve.
- The grains were harvested with sickles.
- Manure was used for high yield; irrigation was also practiced.
- Excess of rains and drought is mentioned as damaging the crops.
- The grains are collectively called '*Yava*' and '*Dhanya*.'
- Some other occupations were pottery-making, weaving, carpentry, metal working, leather-working, etc.

- Initially, copper was the only metal that was used and the general term '*ayas*' had been used for this. In a later period, terms like '*lohit ayas*' and '*syam ayas*' were used for copper and iron respectively.
- The trade and traders (*vanik*) were also known in the Rig Vedic era.
- The practices of exchange of goods (Barter Economy) were in trend. It has been found that ten cows were quoted as the price for an image of *Indra*.
- The use of money can be traced in the mention of a gift of 100 *nishkas*.
- Money-lending was also popular. It is mentioned that an eighth or a sixteenth part of one being paid either as an interest or part of the principle.
- The sea is mentioned in the context of trade and ocean wealth, like pearls, and shells.

Vedic Politics

Politics of Vedic India was well structured and organized.

Political Structure

- The political structure of Rig Vedic India can be studied in the following ascending order –
 - The Family (*Kula*), the smallest unit.
 - The Village (*Grama*)
 - The Clan (*Vis*)
 - The People (*Jana*)
 - The Country (*Rashtra*)
- **Kula** (family) included all the people living under the same roof (*griha*).
- A collection of several families constitutes the *grama* (village) and its headman was called **gramini**.
- The collection of several *grama* (village) was called as the **Vis** and its head was called **Vispati**.
- Several *Vis* constituted a **Jana** as it is mentioned as *Panchajana*, *Yadva-janaha*, and *Bharata-janaha*.
- The aggregation of all *Jana* constitutes **Rashtra** (country).

Administration

- The hereditary kings were the popular form of Government.
- The provision of a democratically elected king by the assembly of people *Jana* was also known.
- The *Rashtra* was small states ruled by a *raja* (king).
- The bigger kingdoms were ruled by '*samrat*' that reflects that they enjoyed a position of greater authority and dignity.
- The *Raja* administered justice with the assistance of *Purohita* and other officials.
- The *Raja* was offered **bali**, which was voluntary gift or tribute for his services. The *bali* was offered by his own people and also from defeated people.

- The crimes were strongly dealt with by the administration. Major crimes were theft, burglary, robbery, and cattle lifting.
- The important royal officials were –
 - *Purohita* (chief priest and minister)
 - *Senani* (army chief)
 - *Gramini* (head of a village)
 - *Dutas* (envoys)
 - *Spies* (spy)
- *Sabha* and *Samiti* were two important assemblies mentioned in the Rig Veda. These assemblies were forms the essential feature of the government.
- The *Samiti* was mainly dealt with the policy decisions and political business, included common people.
- The *Sabha* was a selected body of the Elders or Nobles and less political in character.

Vedic Religion & Philosophy

Some gods had also been worshipped during the Rig Vedic period, which were the personified powers of nature.

Categories of Gods

- The Vedic Gods were classified into three categories as –
 - Terrestrial (*Prithivisthana*) e.g. Prithivi, Agni, Soma, Brihaspati, and Rivers.
 - Aerial or intermediate (*Antarikshasthana*), Indra, Apam-napat, Rudra, Vayu-Vata, Prujanya, and Apah (water).
 - Celestial (*Dyusthana*) e.g. Dyaus, Varuna, Mitra, Surya, Savitri, Pushan, Vishnu, the Adityas, Ushas, and the Asvins.



- *Indra* and *Varuna* (the supreme cosmic and moral ruler) stand out in that order, pre-eminent above the rest.
- *Agni* and *Soma* were also popular deities. *Agni* was valued as the messenger between the earth and the heaven. *Agni* is the only God who is regarded as present among all the categories of Gods.
- Gods are described as born yet they are immortal. In appearance, they are humans, though sometimes they are conceived as animals, e.g. *Dyaus* as a bull and *Sun* as a swift horse.
- In the sacrifice to the God, ordinary food of men such as milk, grain, flesh, etc. were offered and it becomes the food of Gods.
- The gods normally used to be kind; but some of them also had unkind traits, like *Rudra* and *Maruta*.
- Splendor, strength, knowledge, possession, and truth are common attributes of all the deities.
- *Gayatri Mantra* is recited daily by the pious Hindus even today.
- The multiplicity of gods is due to the different designations that have been given to God.
- The ultimate unity of the universe is asserted as the creation of one God to whom different designations applied.
- The creation is deemed as the outcome of the sacrifice made by the *Viratpurusha* or of evolution from nonbeing manifested in the form of water.
- It is mentioned that **Hiranyagarbha** arose from **the great waters**, pervading the universe, and thus created the waves out of eternally pre-existing matter.
- The hymn devoted to *Visvakarman* tells us that the waters contained the floating world egg from which *Visvakarman* arises; the first born in the universe, the creator,

and maker of the world. It is **now confirmed** by science that life first developed in water.

prepp



Latest Sarkari jobs, Govt Exam alerts, Results and Vacancies

- ▶ Latest News and Notification
- ▶ Exam Paper Analysis
- ▶ Topic-wise weightage
- ▶ Previous Year Papers with Answer Key
- ▶ Preparation Strategy & Subject-wise Books

To know more [Click Here](#)



www.prepp.in