UNIT 2: BACKGROUND TO EVOLVING POLITICAL PATTERNS

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Learning Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 Harappan Civilization

- 2.3.1 City and Its People
- 2.3.2 Economic Life
- 2.3.3 Religious Practices
- 2.3.4 Decline of Urban Life

2.4 Vedic Civilization

2.5 Later Vedic Civilization

2.6 Let Us Sum Up

2.7 Further Reading

2.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.9 Model Questions

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- discuss the origin of the Harappan Civilization
- understand the city life of the people of the Harappan Civilization
- analyse the Vedic Civilization,
- discuss the later Vedic Civilization.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

In 1922-23, three archaeologists, namely Rakhaldas Banerjee, Daya Ram Sahni and Sir John Marshall, discovered through excavation the ruins of an ancient civilization in the cities of Harappa and Mohenjodaro. Harappa is situated in the Motegomery district of Punjab and Mohenjodaro in the Larkana district of Sindh - both now in Pakistan. This discovery in the above mentioned sites along with many other sites proves it beyond doubt that

some thousands of years ago a highly developed civilization grew up here which was surely older than the Vedic Civilization. Most of the excavated cities are located on the bank of the river Indus. That is why this civilization is also known as the Indus Valley Civilization. Further, as this civilization was first discovered in Harappa, some scholars named it as Harappan Civilization. This civilization was followed by another civilization which is completely different from the former in many aspects. This civilization emerged in India after the Indus Valley Civilization. It is the Vedic Civilization. It is followed by the post-Vedic civilization.

2.3 Harappan Civilization

Unfortunately, we have no written sources about the Indus Valley Civilization. The scholars have failed to decipher the pictorial language written on the Indus seals found in different sites. As a result, our knowledge on the Harappan people and their lifestyle is largely based on premise. Our knowledge regarding this civilization is primarily based on the careful examination of the different items found during the excavation in Harappa, Mohenjodaro and many other sites. However, these lifeless objects tell us a lot about the people who founded such a highly developed civilization.

It is a difficult task to fix the chronology of this far-flung civilization. Various factors complicated the problem of fixing the Harappan chronology such as the discovery of Harappan seals from various contemporary sites outside India, variations in the C-14 determinations from various sites, time lag between the origin and growth of the civilization in nuclear area and the peripheral areas to the east and south and the conventional data for the Aryan incursion into India, etc. Therefore, various scholars suggested different dates of its origin on the basis of their own findings. According to Sir John Marshall, the date of this civilization fell approximately between 3250 and 2750 B.C.E. Again, Sir M. Wheeler opines it to be from 2500 to 1500 B.C.

Discovery of Radio-Carbon dating was a gift to archaeological discovery. Many samples from various Harappan sites were dated by this method. After analysing 14 C samples from various sites Dr. D.P. Aggarwal

proposed a maximum date bracket of 2300-1750 B.C. for the total growth of Indus civilization. The end of the civilization is even more unclear, but it appears like that the mature Harappan culture came to a close around 1750 B.C., to be succeeded at Harappa, Chandudaro and other sites by late or post-Harappan phases. Thus the mature Harappan civilization had a time span of not more than five centuries.

Figure 2.1: Indus seals



Source: *Google Images*



LET US KNOW

In addition to Harappa and Mohenjodaro, the traces of the Indus Valley Civilization have also been discovered in a number of other sites in later years. Among these sites mention may be made of Lothal (in Gujarat), Chanhudaro (in Sindh), Kalibangan (in Rajasthan), Rupar (in Haryana), etc. The archaeological remains of these sites greatly help us in the study of the historical character of the Indus Valley Civilization.

2.3.1 The City and Its' People

The interesting remains of the cities of Indus Valley indicate that it was an urban civilization. In other words, this civilization flourished around cities. The ruins show remarkable town planning and excellent drainage system. Let us now explore a few amazing features of these outstanding cities.

The dwelling houses were many in number and varied in size. These were made of well burnt bricks. Almost every house had a well, a kitchen, bathroom and drain. The private drains were connected with the drains of the street. The streets of the cities

were straight and the breadth of the streets varied from 9 to 34 feet. These were connected by lanes and by-lanes. Provision for street lights was also an important feature of the Indus city life. All such amenities of the Harappan cities definitely remind us of any present day town with modern town planning.

The biggest architectural structure found among the ruins was the *Great Bath* of Mohenjodaro. It was actually a public bath with 180 feet length and 108 feet in breadth. The main bathing pool was 39 feet by 23 feet with 8 feet depth. Galleries and rooms surrounded the bathing pool in all sides. You will be amazed to hear that like a modern swimming pool there was provision to fill and empty the water of the bathing pool. Provision for hot water bath was also there.

Figure 2.2 Great Bath



Source: *Google Images*

In addition to the *Great Bath*, a series of long public buildings have also been discovered. These buildings were probably used as public granaries. The biggest among them was the *Great Granary* found at Harappa. It was approximately 169 feet by 135 feet in length and breadth and had small compartments inside.

Figure 3.3 Great Granary



After the discussion on flourishing Indus cities, let us now

have some idea on the people who lived in these remarkably well planned cities. The excavations of Indus Valley show that there were probably **four classes** of people in the society: *the learned class, the warriors, the traders and artisans, and the working class*. The learned class included the priests, the astrologers, the physicians, etc. The ruins of ancient forts and palaces indicate the existence of a ruling or warrior class whose primary duty was to protect the land and people. The merchants and various artisans such as goldsmith, weaver, carpenter, mason, etc. formed the third section of society. The lowest class was constituted by the manual labourers, daily wage earners, domestic servants, etc.

The people of Indus Valley took both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food. Their diet list included wheat, barley, rice, milk, mutton, pork, beef, etc. besides a good number of fruits. Cotton as well as woollen clothes were used by the people. The discovery of spindles points out to the existence of weavers. Both men and women wore ornaments. These ornaments were made of different materials like gold, silver, bronze, ivory, etc.

People knew the art of toiletry and cosmetics. Toilet boxes made of ivory, metal, pottery and stone have been found among the ruins of the Indus Valley Civilization. The Harappan Gallery of the National Museum, New Delhi, has a large collection of ornaments and various cosmetic items of the period.

In addition to the clothes and ornaments, a number of other household articles like furniture, utensils, toys, etc. have been found in different sites of the Indus Valley. Most of the kitchen utensils were made of earth and stones. Other domestic items like knife, needle, axe, etc. were made of metals like bronze and copper. All objects were beautifully polished and decorated.

Play and amusement was probably a significant part of the life of the Harappan people. Dicing was a favourite pastime. No less popular was hunting. Children played with clay toys. People were

also fond of keeping birds perhaps for enjoying their fights.

Figure 2.4: Indus Toy



Source: *Google Images*



LET US KNOW

The discovery of a large number of toy clay carts from Chanhudaro indicates the existence of a factory in that age.

2.3.2 Economic Life

The marvelous cities and their large population testify to the sound economic condition of the people of the Indus Valley. Various factors such as agriculture, trade and commerce, communication, etc., largely contributed to such economic growth.

Agriculture was one of the most important occupations of the Harappan people. The river Indus and its tributaries made the valley fertile for agriculture and thereby contributed greatly for the large productions. The Great Granary found at Harappa along with many others amply points towards large productivity of this region. The chief agricultural products were wheat, barley, rice, cotton, various kinds of vegetables and fruits.

Another important means of livelihood was the domestication

of animals. The Harappan people tamed animals to fulfill two purposes - for obtaining milk and flesh, and for the purpose of carriage. For the first purpose, they used cows, sheep, pigs, etc. while, for the second one they domesticated camel, bullock, buffalo, ass, elephants, etc. It was doubtful whether horses were tamed or not as no evidence of familiarity with horses has been discovered so far.

Trade and commerce was a vital part of the economic life of the Harappan Civilization. There are evidences to prove that the Indus people traded not only with the other parts of India but also with many parts of Western and Northern Asia, Egypt, Babylon, etc. Some objects of Harappan origin have been found in Sumeria. This certainly confirms the trade relation of Indus Valley with that civilization. Clothes were the main items of export of Indus Valley and in return gold, silver, copper and precious stones were imported from contemporary outer world.

A developed and safe communication system was the first condition for a sound commerce. The Harappan people performed their foreign trades through the river and sea routes. The figures of boats and ship on Harappan seals confirm this view. Lothal and Mohenjodaro were probably two important sea ports of Indus Valley. Intercity trade was conducted through local rivers.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q. 1: Match the following:

a) Larkana	1. Harappa
b) Great Bath	2. A district of Sindh
c) Great Granary	3. A sea port
d) Lothal	4. Mohenjodaro

Q. 2: Choose the correct alternative:

a) Two / Three / Four archaeologist in 1922-23 at first discovered Harappa and Mohenjodaro.

b) Dicing / Horse Riding / Animal Fighting was a favourite pass time of the people of Harappa Civilization.

c) Agriculture / Sericulture / Horticulture was one of the most important occupations of the Harappan people.

d) Indus people traded with many parts of Eastern / Western Southern Asia.

RELIGIOUS CONDITION

The archaeological remains of Harappa and Mohenjodaro indicate a lot about the religious life of these people. Interestingly, no temples have been discovered in the excavated sites. Still the discovery of a large number of seals and terracotta figurines points to the fact that the Indus people were idol worshippers. People probably believed in a female energy as the source of creation. This female energy was worshipped as Mother Goddess, Nature Goddess or Divine mother.

Lots of figures of this Goddess found throughout the Indus valley indicate that the worship of the Mother Goddess was a significant part of Indus religion. Besides Mother Goddess, a male God was also worshipped. In a Mohenjodaro seal we find this God sitting in a *yogic* posture with three faces, horned head dress and surrounded by animals. For all these features this God has been identified by the scholars as the prototype of *Siva Pasupati* or lord of the beasts. The identification of this male deity with *Siva* is further strengthened by the discovery of a number of stone objects which exactly look like a *Siva Linga*. Further, the worship of trees, water and fire was also prevalent among the Harappan people. The discovery of a few seals bearing *swastika* symbol indicates the worship of the Sun God. *Swastika* is the symbol of the sun. ***Animism*** probably was a significant aspect of Harappan religious beliefs.

Figure 2.5: Mother Goddess Mohenjodaro



Source: *Google Images*

DECAY OF THE HARAPPAN CIVILIZATION

It is difficult to fix a proper date for Harappan Civilization. On the basis of the careful examination of available materials scholars are of the opinion that the Indus Valley Civilization ranged between 3200 B.C.E. and 1700 B.C.E.

The Harappan Civilization extended over a huge geographical area. It spread from Sutkanjodaro in Baluchistan in the West to Alamgirpur in Uttar Pradesh in the East and from Manda in Jammu in the North to Daimabad in the Godavari Valley in the South. As a whole, it covered an area of 22.50,000 sq. kilometers. It is the largest cultural zone in the contemporary history of world civilization.

Rise and fall of a civilization is a natural phenomenon. The amazing civilization once started by the Harappans was also no exception to it. There are many theories referred to by the scholars regarding the causes of the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization. The most valid and valued theories in this regard are as follows - rapid change of environment, natural calamities like flood and earthquake, conservative mentality and decrease in civic sense of the citizens, foreign attack, etc. However, most of the scholars believe



Animism: The belief that the physical work is permeated by a spirit or vital principle called the ANIMA MUNDA.

drought and flooding of the river Indus and its tributaries to be the most fatal factor for the destruction of the Harappan Civilization. Earthquake is also supposed to be another potential factor that caused changes in the course of the Indus which led to the inundation of the hinterland of Mohenjodaro.



ACTIVITY- 2.1

Make a list of the Harappan sites mentioned in this unit and then try to locate these places in a map.

.....

.....

.....

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: Write True / False:



a) People probably believed in a female energy as the source of creation.

b) Swastika is the symbol of the moon.

c) The Harappan Civilization extended over a huge geographical area.

d) Rise and fall of a civilization is not a natural phenomenon.

Q 4: Fill in the blanks:

a) Female energy was worshipped as ..... mother.

b) Sutkanjodaro is in .....

c) Flooding of the river ..... was one of the most fatal factors for the destruction of the Harappan Civilization.

2.4 VEDIC CIVILIZATION

The Harappan Civilization was followed by Vedic or Rig-Vedic Civilization which was completely opposed to it. The Vedic Civilization was founded by the Aryans. They were immigrants and in the following sections we will discuss the original home of the Aryans. Vedic Civilization is divided into two board divisions- Early Vedic or Rig Vedic Civilization and Later Vedic

Civilization.

Indo-Aryans and their origin

The people who evolved this new civilization were known as the Indo-Aryans. They came to India from some parts of Central Asia through the North-West frontier. One should not think that their migration to India was completed in a single batch. Rather, it was a continuous process for hundreds of years. You surely have heard about the Vedas. The Vedas were the main scriptures of the Indo-Aryans. There are four Vedas, namely *Rig Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sama Veda* and *Atharva Veda*. The *Rig Veda* is the oldest one. It is also the earliest literature of India. The Indo-Aryans shaped their civilization as guided by the holy Vedas. That is why this civilization of the ***Aryans*** is also known as the Vedic Civilization.



LET US KNOW

The Aryans are a linguistic group spread over not only Northern India and Central India but also over Europe. The group that composed the Vedic literature is known as Indo- Aryans and they used the Sanskrit language.

The whole Vedic age may be studied under two different time zones - the Rig Vedic age and the Later Vedic age. The Rig Vedic age ranged from 1500 B.C.E. to 1000 B.C.E. and the Later Vedic age ranged from 1000 B.C.E. to 700 B.C.E.

Political Institutions

The family was the lowest political unit of the Vedic age. Many families combined together to form a *Grama* or village. The union of several *Gramas* formed the higher unit called *Vis*. The *Vis* was probably a larger administrative unit of the whole tribe. The *Jana* or the state was the highest political and administrative unit. The leader

of the *Grama* was called the *Gramani* and that of a *Vis* was called the *Vispati* and the master of the *Jana* was called *Gopa*.



LET US KNOW

The Rig Vedic state was a tribal state. The first Veda informs us about a number of Aryan tribes like Yadu, Anu, Puru, Bharata, etc. These tribes were often at war with one another for the possession of land or cattle.

Kingship was the usual form of government of the period. The early Vedic states were generally small in size, sometimes with only a single tribe. The Vedic king enjoyed special power and dignity. He was denoted the title *Rajan*. Proficiency in warfare was the most essential qualification for the kings to possess the royal throne. He had the responsibility of protecting the life and property of his subjects. In return, he collected tribute called *Bali*, generally in kinds, from his subjects. The king was helped in his administration by the *purohita* (priest), the *senani* (general), the *gramani* (village head man), and the *spasa* (spies). Further, there were two popular bodies called the *sabha* and the *samiti* to help the king. The king had to periodically consult these two bodies in serious political matters. Thus, the *sabha* and the *samiti* restricted the arbitrary power of the king. However, we don't have the exact detail of the composition of the *sabha* and the *samiti*. The *sabha* probably was the selected body of the chiefs of different tribes and the *samiti* was possibly the assembly of the whole people.

Society

The foundation of the Vedic society was the family. At that time families were patriarchal. Do you know what a patriarchal family is? A **patriarchal** family is where the father is considered the head of the family. During the Rig Vedic age such heads of the families were called *grihapati* or *kulapati*.

Women enjoyed a respectable position in early Vedic society. Although the society was patriarchal, the girl child was also not neglected. The door of education was open for the daughters as well as the sons. Thus, we have come to know about some female scholars like Ghosa, Apala, Viswavara, etc who through their wisdom rose to the rank of the *rishis*. Neither the custom of *sati* nor *purdah* was prevalent in the Rig Vedic society. Girls were usually married at a mature age, though child marriage was not unknown altogether. Remarriage of widows was permissible in the society. Thus, we may observe that the Rig Vedic women held a high position in the society as well as in the household.

Cotton, wool and deer skin were used for the purpose of making clothes. Occasionally clothes were embroidered with gold. The Rig Vedic ladies were fond of gold ornaments of different types. Both men and women wore turban.

Barley, rice, wheat and vegetables of different seasons were the chief food of the people. Moreover, milk and its various products were also taken by them. The list of non-vegetarian items includes fish, bird, goat, bull, etc. However, the cow was not killed possibly because of its multiple utility. The Vedic Aryans took two kinds of intoxicating drinks called *soma* and *sura*.

The people of the Vedic age were fond of merrymaking and amusements. Chariot racing, war dancing and hunting were the most fascinating outdoor games. Joyous moments were celebrated with music and dancing. Gambling was probably the most exciting indoor game of the period.

The Vedic society was divided into four classes namely *Brahmana*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* and *Sudra*. However, in the early Vedic period (i.e. in the Rig Vedic period), there was no watertight divisions of society. Although there was in vogue the existence of four classes, no strict caste system existed at that time. During this period, inter caste marriage and inter caste dinning was a common feature and



Chandala : chandala is a class who looked after the cremation ground of the Hindus. Their social status was at the bottom of the Hindu society.

there was no bar in this respect. The orthodox divisions of society, the conception of untouchability, etc., were the development of later period. However, we do find references to the terms like *Chandala* in the Rig Veda.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Who evolved the Vedic Civilization?

.....

Q 2: Write the name of the four Vedas.

.....

Q 3: Who was the head of the family in the Rig Vedic period?

.....

Q 4: Name two kinds of intoxicating drinks used by the Vedic Aryans.

.....

Q 5: Who was the master of the Jana in the Rig Vedic period?

.....

Q 6: Name two bodies that restricted the arbitrary power of the king in the Rig Vedic period.

.....

Q 7: Fill in the blanks:

a) ..... were the main scriptures of the Indo-Aryans.

b) Women enjoyed a respectable position in early ..... society.

c) ..... was probably the most exciting indoor game of the Vedic period.

d) The ..... was the lowest political unit of the Vedic age.

Economy

In the early Vedic period, the Aryans were dependent mainly on a pastoral economy. They also practiced agriculture, trade and industry to a limited extent. The importance of pastoralism in the

early Vedic economy is evident from the direct reference to cattle. The importance of cattle is also evident from references to the chief as *Gopati* or the protector of the cattle. The animals they domesticated were cattle (for meat, dairy products and agricultural purpose), horse (for drawing chariots), sheep and goats (for meat), dog (for hunting, guarding, etc.) etc.

The evidence of agriculture is much more limited in the early Vedic period. Agriculture depended mainly on rainfall rather than on irrigation. The Rig Vedic people introduced the use of ploughshare drawn by oxen. We do find references to various crafts in the Rig Veda. In the Rig Veda terms like *takshan* (carpenters), *hiranyakara* (goldsmith), *kulala* (potters), etc. are mentioned.

The Rig Vedic people perhaps carried on inland trade. Sometimes they traded with the members of the same tribe and at times with the members of different tribes. Merchants used both land and water routes for distant places. The rathas or the chariots and carts drawn by horses and oxen were the chief means of land transportation. Trade was carried by ***barter***. There is controversy regarding whether the Aryans had overseas trade or not. As a whole, we are not in a position to confirm that the Rig Vedic Aryans traded with foreign countries.



Barter : Exchange of goods or services for other goods or services.

Religion

The Rig Vedic religion was plain and simple. The early Aryans worshiped every aspects of nature or it may be said that they imposed heavenly qualities on every object under the sun. Thus, there were a number of gods and goddesses in the religion worshipped by the Aryans. The Aryans divided their deities into three classes namely, **Earthly Gods** like *Prithvi*, *Soma*, *Agni*, etc; **Atmospheric Gods** like *Indra*, *Rudra*, *Vayu*, etc. and **Heavenly Gods** like *Dyau*, *Surya*, *Varuna*, etc. Although there were host of deities, interestingly, no temple or image of that period has so far been discovered. This

indicates the absence of image worship among the Rig Vedic Aryans. Another striking feature of the Vedic religion was the supremacy of the male Gods in comparison to their female counterparts. Sacrifices or *yajnas* occupied a prominent place in the Vedic rituals. The Aryans believed that the sacrifices and other offerings pleased the Gods and in return, they blessed the performer with the desired object. Everyone, without the distinction of rich and poor, could perform sacrifices according to his capacity.

2.5 LATER VEDIC CIVILIZATION

There were clear distinctions between the Rig Vedic and Later Vedic Civilization. The Aryans of Later Vedic Age led a more settled life and as a result of such organized lifestyle, there came obvious changes in different aspects of the civilization.

In the Later Vedic age we see the rise of the big states. It was the result of the Aryan expansion from the North-West India towards the East. Small tribal states of Rig Vedic period were gradually replaced by large kingdoms. With the enlargement of kingdoms, the power of the king also increased significantly. The later Vedic kings styled themselves as the *samrat* or *ekarat* meaning sole suzerain. There was also increase in the number of officials for managing the state affairs. The Later Vedic literatures refer to these officials as ratnas (gems). The *Taittiriya Samhita* gives us the list of ten such ratnas such as *purohita* (the priest), *suta* (the charioteer), *mahishi* (queen), *paribrikti* (queen), babata (queen), *sangrahitri* (the treasurer), *akshabapa* (the officer in charge of dice), *senani* (the general), *gramani* (the village head man) and *bhagadugha* (the revenue collector).

Society as a whole witnessed far reaching changes in the Later Vedic period. Probably the caste system started to be rigid probably from this age. There was a significant growth in the power and prestige of the Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas in the society. They enjoyed special privileges which were denied to the other castes. Caste became a hereditary right. The concept of untouchability was developing in the society. Striking changes

may be seen in the status of women in the later Vedic society. The women lost their respectable social position enjoyed in the Rig Vedic period. Their freedom and equality also gradually vanished. The birth of a girl child was detested. Dowry system became popular. As a whole, women were looked upon as an inferior class.

With the development of civilization, there was an obvious growth in the field of trade and commerce. Both domestic and foreign trades were carried out by the later Vedic Aryans. By this time they attained the art of navigation. In the absence of a regular coinage, a gold piece called *nishka* was used as the unit of value. Agriculture continued to be an important occupation. Reference to many other occupations like merchants, money lenders, etc. could be found in the later Vedas.

Significant changes took place in the spiritual life of the Aryans of the later Vedic age. The Rig Vedic Gods like *Indra*, *Varuna*, *Surya*, etc now lost their previous glory and were replaced by new Gods like *Rudra*, *Vishnu*, *Prajapati*, etc. In the later Vedic religion, *yajnas* or sacrifices played an important role. The Rig Vedic *yajnas* were simple. But in the later age *yajnas* became more complicated, ceremonial and expensive. Further, the Brahmanas rapidly came forward as the mediator between the heavenly Gods and the earthly mortals. Thus, religion gradually went beyond the reach of the common men and this dissatisfied many in the society.

As a reaction to the elaborate rituals and the highhandedness of the priestly class, there developed a philosophical trend in the later Vedic religion. The inquisitive mind of the philosophers enquired into the various aspects of the creation, life and death. The Upanishads preached the concept of *atma* (the inner soul) and the *Brahma* (the supreme creator). Death only destroys the body of a man not his atma or soul. Therefore, the *atma* or soul is to take birth again and again. An *atma* can avoid rebirth and attain *moksha* (liberation) only when it unites with the *Brahma*. But it solely depends on the *karma* or action of the atma in different births. Thus, there emerged the philosophical doctrines like transmigration of soul, *karma* and *moksha*, etc.



ACTIVITY- 2.2

Try to find out the difference between the Harappan Civilization and the Vedic Civilization.

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . . .



CHECK YOUR PROGESS

Q. 8: Write True / False:

a) Gopati means the protector of the cattle.

b) Hiranyakara was the coppersmith.

c) The Aryans divided their deities into two classes.

d) Sacrifices or *yajnas* occupied a prominent place in the Vedic rituals.

e) The samrat or ekarat meant sole suzerain.

f) During the Later Vedic age the birth of a female child was welcomed in the family.

Q 9: Match the following:

a) Takshan	1. Atmospheric God
b) Rudra	2. Queen
c) Babata	3. Carpenters
d) Karma	4. Philosophical Doctrine

Q 10: What do you know about the Rig Vedic economy? (Answer in about 60 words)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



2.6 LET US SUM UP

After going through this unit, you have learnt that-

- The Harappan Civilization is one of the two earliest civilizations of India. Harappan Civilization also known as the Indus Valley Civilization for being discovered on the bank of the river Indus.
- After the decline of the Harappan Civilization, there emerged the Vedic Civilization which was evolved by the Indo-Aryans. The period of the early Vedic Civilization which ranged from 1500 B.C.E. to 1000 B.C.E. was known as the Rig Vedic age and hence the civilization also is known as Rig Vedic Civilization.
- The society was based on the patriarchal family system where the women enjoyed a respectable position. It was divided into four classes. But this division was not a rigid one.
- Kingship was the form of government with the king styled as Rajan looking after the prosperity and protection of his subjects.
- The people worshipped every aspects of nature for which there were number of Gods and Goddess in the religion of the Aryans. The Aryans divided their deities as Earthly Gods, Atmospheric Gods and Heavenly Gods. Male Gods were considered superior to the female Gods.
- There existed a good deal of difference between the Vedic or Rig Vedic Civilization and later Vedic Civilization. The life in the later Vedic period was more settled. There was the emergence of the big states with corresponding increase in the power of the king. In the society the caste system was started to be rigidly imposed.
- In the later vedic period, women lost the social position which they enjoyed in the Rig Vedic period. There was development in the field of trade and commerce.
- In religious matters the Rig Vedic Gods were replaced by new Gods like *Rudra*, Vishnu, etc. in the later vedic period. The philosophical doctrines like transmigration of soul, karma and *moksha*, etc emerged.



2.7 FURTHER READING

1) Jha, D.N. (1977), *Ancient India-An Introductory Outline*, Peoples' Publishing House, New Delhi-110055

2) Majumdar, R.C., Raychaudhuri, H.C., Datta, K. (1986). *An Advanced History of India*. New Delhi, Macmillan India Ltd.

3) Raychaudhuri, H.C. (1972). *Political History of Ancient India*. Calcutta, University of Calcutta.

4) Tripathi, Ramashankar (1999). *History of Ancient India*. Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd.



2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Indo-Aryans.

Ans to Q No 2: Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda.

Ans to Q No 3: Grihapati or Kulapati.

Ans to Q No 4: Soma and Sura.

Ans to Q No 5: Gopa.

Ans to Q No 6: Sabha and Samiti.

Ans to Q No 7: (a) Vedas, (b) Vedic, (c) Gambling, (d) Family

Ans to Q No 8: (a) True, (b) False, (c) False, (d) True, (e) True, (f) False

Ans to Q No 9: (a) 3, (b) 1, (c) 2, (d) 4

Ans to Q No 10: The Rig Vedic economy was a pastoral economy. The Aryans of the Rig Vedic period used to domesticate cattle, horse, sheep, goat, etc for different purposes. Agriculture, trade and industry too prevailed in the Rig Vedic period. Agriculture was limited, but use of ploughshare was introduced by the Aryans. Inland trade was carried

by barter. Craftsmen like *takshan*, *hiranyakara*, etc were there.



2.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions (Answer each question in about 50 words)

Q 1: Who was known as Rajana?

Q 2: Name the political institutions of the Vedic civilization.

Q 3: Name two female scholars of the Rig Vedic Period.

Q 4: Who was *samrat* ?

B) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q 1: State the main features of the Rig Vedic society.

Q 2: What was the nature of Rig Vedic Polity?

Q 3: Compare the early Vedic period to that of the later Vedic period.

C) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Discuss the political institutions of the Vedic civilization.

Q 2: Give a comprehensive account of the Vedic Civilization.

Q 3: Discuss the socio-economic condition of the later Vedic period.

*** ***** ***