

Class VI

Subject: History and Civics

Teacher: Mili Bhadnagar

Chapter 6 The Vedic Civilization

Good Morning Students!

In this chapter we will study about the Aryans whose advent in India marked a new phase in the Indian history. Most historians believe that the Aryans lived in north-east Iran or in Central Asia. Due to difficulties in their original homeland, the Aryans migrated to other places. The Aryans who settled in India are known as the Indo-Aryans. The Vedic Age has been divided into two periods - Early Vedic Period and Later Vedic Period. In the early phase Aryans settled in the region called as Sapta Sindhu and later on the Aryans moved towards Gangetic Valley and this area came to be known as Aryavarta.

The Aryans composed the four Vedas - Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda. The Brahmanas, the Upanishads, the two epics - the Ramayana and the Mahabharata also provide us with the information.

Early Vedic Period - The Aryans were divided into many tribes called the janas. A number of villages formed a vis. It means that village formed the basic unit which consisted of a number of families. The chief of the tribe was called rajan. He was assisted by officials like senani, purohita and gramani.

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There were two tribal assemblies. The sabha was a council of the elder and important members of the tribe. The samiti was general assembly where all members of the tribe participated. The sabha and the samiti kept a check on the powers of the rajan.

The basic division in the society was between the Aryans and the indigenous people. The other division was on the basis of occupation:-

- Brahmanas - Priests who performed religious rituals and imparted education.
- Kshatriyas - warriors who fought wars
- Vaishyas - Farmers, craftsmen, merchants and traders.
- Shudras - Served the upper three groups.

Women were respected in the Rig Vedic society. They attended the samiti meetings and participated in religious ceremonies. Many girls received education.

The Aryans worshipped the forces of Nature. Indra was the most important god followed by Agni, Varuna, Surya, etc. People did not worship any idols and prayed in open. Cattle rearing and agriculture were the main occupations. Cattle was the basis of one's wealth. The Aryans had a developed trade system.