

## **CHAPTER – 4 - ANCIENT PERIOD**

### **4.1 – VEDIC CULTURE**

#### **I. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING IN A WORD OR A SENTENCE EACH.**

1. What do you mean by the term Arya?

A: Aryan means noble or master or a person dependent on agriculture.

2. From which word is the term Veda derived?

A: The term Veda is derived from the Sanskrit word “Vid”, which means knowledge.

3. What is meant by Veda?

A: Veda means knowledge.

4. Name the first Veda.

A: Rigveda.

5. Who was the head of the family during Vedic period?

A: The eldest male member is the head of the family, and was called the Kulapathi.

6. What was the main occupation of the Aryans?

A: Agriculture.

7. What was ‘Kshetra’?

A: The cultivated land of Aryans was called ‘Kshetra’.

8. What was considered as wealth by the Aryans?

A: Cattle was considered as wealth by the Aryans.

9. What was the ceremony performed to send the child to school?

A: Upanayanam.

## II. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING IN TWO WORDS OR TWO SENTENCES EACH.

1. Name any two Vedas.

- A: 1) Rigveda  
2) Samaveda.

2. Which two political institutions assisted the king in the administration during the Vedic period?

- A: 1) Sabha (group of elders)  
2) Samithi (group of experts).

3. Name any two Varnas.

- A: 1) Brahmana  
2) Kshatriya.

4. Name any two Ashramas of Aryans.

- A: 1) Brahmacharya (student life).  
2) Grihastha (married life).

5. Mention any two amusements of Vedic people.

- A: 1) Gambling.  
2) Chariot racing.

6. Name any two women scholars of Vedic period.

- A: 1) Gargi.  
2) Maitreyi.

## III. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING IN 15 TO 20 SENTENCES EACH.

1. Give an account of the political conditions of Aryans.

A: In the Early Vedic period, the Aryan tribes were called 'Janas' and the head of the tribes were called 'Rajan'. Rajan was assisted by Purohita, Sanghatri, Senapati, Vispathis, and Gramanis in the administration. Grama was the smallest unit of administration. Gramani was the head of the village and Vispathi was in charge of a group of villages. The primary duty of the king was the protection of his people. Sabha (group of elders) and Samithi (group of experts) also assisted the king in administration.

During the Later Vedic period, Janas turned into kingdoms, which were divided into provinces and subdivided into Gopas, Vishayas and Gramas. Kingship became hereditary. The important kingdoms were Panchala, Videha etc. Imperialism came into existence resulting in the hierarchy of kings viz Raja, Maharaja, Rajadhiraja etc. The kings began to perform yagas like Ashwamedha,

Rajasuya to establish political supremacy. The king was assisted by a council of ministers and a number of officers and the Sabha and the Samithi.

The military was well organized with improved war weapons like swords, axes, bows and arrows etc. Warfare was complicated and winning war was very important.

2. Explain the social conditions of Aryans.

A: In the Early Vedic period, Joint family system was in existence. Society was patriarchal in nature and the eldest male member was the head of the family known as 'Kulapathi'. Monogamy and Poligamy (mostly in royal families) was in practice. The status of women was high and had equal rights with men. Widow Remarriage was in existence. Women scholars like Ghosha, Apala etc. composed hymns. There were four Varnas based on profession, namely Brahmanas, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra. People could change professions and thus could change Varnas.

During the Later Vedic period, polygamy and polyandry came into existence. The status of women deteriorated. Only women of higher class received education. Varnas turned into castes, and caste system became hereditary. Brahmanas and Kshatriyas enjoyed a high status compared to Vaishyas and Shudras. Life of an individual was divided into four Ashramas, namely Brahmacharya (student life), Grihastha (married life), Vanaprastha (retirement to forest for meditation) and Sanyasa (ascetism).

Wheat, barley, vegetables, rice, milk, fish, meat etc. were commonly consumed. Soma and Sura were intoxicating drinks for special occasions. Aryans wore clothes made of cotton and wool. They also wore ornaments made of silver, gold and flowers in the form of necklaces, rings, bracelets etc.. Gambling, chariot racing, music, dance were different forms of amusements.

3. Enumerate the religious condition of the Aryans.

A: Vedic religion of the Aryans is one of the world's oldest religions which is still practiced. It is also known as Hinduism and Brahmanical religion. The Early Vedic Aryans were worshippers of nature. They worshipped several Gods like Indra, Varuna, Agni, Vayu etc. There was no idol worship. The method of worship was simple. They praised God by composing hymns. Simple rituals and performance of yajnas and yagas were in vogue.

In the Later Vedic period, the practice of religion became complex with manifold increase in the number of Gods. Idol worship came into existence. New Gods like Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwara, Ganesh, Parvati etc. came into existence. Cow was considered sacred and its slaughter was prohibited. The procedure of worship became very complex and elaborate rituals and mantras. Hence it also became costly. Practices like evil worship, black magic and witch craft started appearing. The entire life of a Hindu is guided by samskaras. The concept of transmigration of soul and the cycle of birth-death-rebirth is believed in. Many paths like Bhakti, Jnana, Karma, Yoga are prescribed to attain salvation (Moksha). The sacred books like Vedas,

Upanishads, Puranas etc. are contributions of the Vedic culture. The epics like Ramayana and Mahabharatha are given much importance.

4. Write a short note on education and science during the Vedic period.

A: Education was imparted in temples, Gurukulas, Pathshalas, Agraharas and Ghatikas. Higher education was imparted in universities like Takshashila and Kanchi. Education commenced with a ceremony known as Upanayanam. The position of Guru was high. Both men and women received education. Gargi, Maitreyi etc. were important women scholars. Subjects like Medicine, Astrology, Astronomy, Mathematics, Vedas, Puranas etc. were taught. Sanskrit was the medium of instruction. Aryans had great deal of knowledge in Metallurgy, Geometry, Medicine and Mathematics. They knew about the distance between sun and moon, moon and earth, sun and earth and about the occurrence of eclipse, comets etc. and the cure for different diseases using herbs, roots etc. They followed the lunar calendar.