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GYAN VIHAR
UNIVERSITY
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Master of Arts
(History)

HISTORY OF ANCIENT INDIA

Semester-1

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

The students will be able to understand:

UNIT -1

- Students should be able to comprehend the social, political, and economic conditions that led to the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution.
- Ability to identify and analyze various sources used in the study of ancient Indian history.
- Proficiency in assessing the reliability and limitations of historical sources.

UNIT -2

- Students should be able to define and conceptually understand the terms society, community, social groups, social institutions, social systems, and social mobility.
- Knowledge of the characteristics and developments in Paleolithic and Mesolithic cultures.
- Understanding the lifestyle, tools, and artistic expressions of these periods..

UNIT -3

- Students should be able to define and conceptually understand the terms society, community, social groups, social institutions, social systems, and social mobility.
- In-depth knowledge of the origin, extent, and key features of the Indus-Saraswathi civilization.
- Competence in describing and analyzing town planning, architecture, economy, religion, and arts.

UNIT-4

- Students should be able to define social control and recognize its role in maintaining social order.
- Understanding the historical significance of the Vedic Saraswati river and the evidence supporting its historicity.
- Engagement with scholarly discussions surrounding the original home and identity of the Aryans.

UNIT-5

- Synthesis of knowledge regarding the sources, historiographical trends, and major developments in ancient Indian history up to 600 B.C.
- Proficiency in critically analyzing and evaluating different historical perspectives and debates.
- Development of research and analytical skills to understand the complexities of prehistoric and ancient Indian civilizations.

**HISTORY OF ANCIENT INDIA
(FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO 600 B.C.)
SYLLABUS**

UNIT I

SOURCES AND HISTORIOGRAPHICAL TRENDS

Introduction, The Palaeolithic Culture, The Mesolithic Culture, The Neolithic Culture, The Chalcolithic Culture.

UNIT II

THE INDUS SARASWATI CIVILIZATION

Introduction, Origin of Indus Saraswati Civilization, Main Sites, Town Planning and Architecture, Economy, Religion, Arts, Decline, Devolution and Continuity, Relationship of Indus – Saraswati Civilization and Vedic Civilization.

UNIT III

CONTENT AND CLASSIFICATION OF VEDIC AGE

Introduction, Vedic Saraswati River, Evidence of Vedic Saraswati River, Problem Concerning the Original Home and Identity of the Aryans.

UNIT IV

EARLY VEDIC CULTURE

Introduction, Society, Economy, Polity, Religion, Town Planning and Architecture.

UNIT V

LATER VEDIC CULTURE

Introduction, Society, Economy, Polity, Religion, Town Planning and Architecture, Decline of Later Vedic Period

UNIT

I

SOURCES AND HISTORIOGRAPHICAL TRENDS

STRUCTURE

- 1.1 Learning Objective
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 The Palaeolithic Culture
- 1.4 The Mesolithic Culture
- 1.5 The Neolithic Culture
- 1.6 The Chalcolithic Culture
- 1.7 Chapter Summary
- 1.8 Review Questions
- 1.9 Multiple Choice Questions



1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

After completion of this unit, students will be able to:

- Know about the different cultures which include: Palaeolithic culture, Mesolithic culture, Neolithic culture and Chalcolithic culture.
- Understand why this period is called the Lithic Age i.e., Stone Age. Understand our present in a better way.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

History (from the Greek word – Historia, meaning “inquiry”, knowledge acquired by investigation) is the study of the past. History is an umbrella term that relates to past events as well as the discovery, collection, organization, presentation and interpretation of information about these events.

Moreover, the archaeological sources are treated as more authentic than the literary sources because of their contemporary. These sources have provided immense information on many historical facts about which nothing was known previously. For example, Prehistoric cultures i.e. Palaeolithic, Neolithic and Megalithic Cultures.

The earliest period of the history of India has been described as the pre-historic age. Since the 19th century, hundreds of Pre-historic sites have been discovered in the Indian subcontinent. The sources of information to know the pre-historic period included structural remains, plant remains and bones of humans and animals. The most important sources are the different kinds of stone-made tools used by pre-historic humans which have been collected from the excavation sites. Stone tools were a very important part of the lives of the Stone Age people and are therefore an important key to understanding their world. The environments in which the pre-historic people lived were very different from ours. Some of the major changes that gave the subcontinent its present form took place millions of years ago due to dramatic climatic changes.

Man has been living in India roughly from 500,000 B.C. There is no unanimity among the scholars regarding the exact area where man, first of all, existed in India. Some scholars are of opinion that man, first of all, lived in the Shivalik Hills, while the others think that Deccan was the original place of man in India because the oldest stone implements have been discovered there. However, the man in the process of his development passed through different phases of the Stone Age. In this unit you will study three different phases of the Stone Age or Pre-Historic Age, that is Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic ages according to the kind and nature of the stone tools.

Towards the end of the Neolithic period began the use of metals. In the Indian subcontinent first time, metal was used by the Harappan people. The pieces of evidence of the use of metals have been found in the different excavation sites of the Indus Valley Civilization. In this unit, you will also study the Harappan Culture and the expansion of the Indus Valley Civilization.

1.3 THE PALAEOLITHIC CULTURE

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The earliest pre-historic period is called the Palaeolithic age or the Old Stone Age. The term Palaeolithic is a Greek Word. In the Greek language "Palaeo" means old and "Lithic" means stone. So the term Palaeolithic age means Old Stone Age. During this age, the men were food gatherers and hunters and they used tools of unpolished undressed, rough stones to hunt animals for food. The Old Stone Age or the Palaeolithic age of India developed in the Pleistocene period or Ice age, which is a geological period.

We do not know when the Pleistocene period exactly began, but human remains associated with stone tools have been dated in East Africa as early as 3.5 million years ago. In India, the first human occupation on the basis of stone tools is not earlier than the middle Pleistocene which perhaps began about 500,000 years ago. The Palaeolithic age in India is divided into three phases based on the nature of the tools used by the people and the nature of the change in the climate.

The Palaeolithic age is divided into three-phase largely based on the changes in fauna associated with different tool types.

- a. Early or lower Palaeolithic
- b. Middle Palaeolithic
- c. Upper Palaeolithic

a. Early or Lower Palaeolithic Culture

Early Stone Age or the Lower Palaeolithic Age occurred during the years 600,000 through 60,000 B.C. The majority of Early Stone Age tools found in all parts of the subcontinent are made of quartzite. The evidence of stone tools in the Lower Palaeolithic age of India enables us a partial way to visualize the life of their makers. The lower Palaeolithic man of India was a hunter and a food gatherer. Bori in Maharashtra is considered to be the earliest lower Palaeolithic site. During this period people used fairly large core tools made of hard 28 rocks. They include hand axes, cleavers and Choppers. The axes found in India are more or less similar to those of Western Asia, Europe and Africa.

The lower Palaeolithic man was ignorant of agriculture and had no domesticated animals. The people lived either in rock – shelters or in huts with thatched roofs. The important sites of the Lower Palaeolithic Age have been found in the valley of Sohan in Punjab (now in Pakistan). Several sites have been found in Kashmir and the Thar Desert. In Gujrat, lower Palaeolithic tools have been found in the valley of the Sabarmati and the Bhadra Valley in Saurashtra. The Lower Palaeolithic tools have been found in the Bellan Valley in UP, Ajmer in Rajasthan, Bhimbetka hillside, Chhotanagpur Plateau in Jharkhand, adjoining areas of West Bengal, Mahanadi Valley of Odisha, Coastal Visakhapatnam area of Andhra Pradesh and Attioram Pakkam in Tamil Nadu.

b. Middle Palaeolithic Culture

The Middle Palaeolithic Age began around 150,000 B.C. and ended in 40,000 B.C. During this period the tools and weapons used became a bit more advanced. Tools were made from flakes which were thin pieces of stone that have been found

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in different parts of India with regional variations. The principal tool comprises blades, points, borers, knives and scrapers, all made of flakes. Remnants of these tools have been found at different sites around India. In fact, some very important sites have been found that contained evidence of how much Indian technology had advanced passed the preceded period of the Palaeolithic Age.

The important sites of the Middle Palaeolithic Age in India have been found in the Sohan Valley, the Valley of Narmada, South of Tungabhadra Rivers, the Bellan Valley and the Visakhapatnam Coast. The middle Palaeolithic industry of Central and peninsular India is sometimes referred to as the Nevedan industry after the site of Navasa, where the pioneering archaeologist H.D. Sankalia first discovered middle Palaeolithic artefacts. The tools, which include a wide variety of scrapers, are made of smooth, fine-grained stone. There is evidence of middle Palaeolithic living and factory site at Chirki near Nevasa in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra.

c. Upper Palaeolithic Culture

The Upper Palaeolithic age is the third and last phase of the Palaeolithic age. This age began around 40,000 B.C. and ended in 10000 B.C. The climate of this period saw dramatic changes. The climate was less humid. It was the last phase of the ice age and the climate became 29 comparatively warm. In the world context, it marks the appearance of new flint industries and men of the modern type (Homo Sapiens). The use of blades became more common. The upper Palaeolithic tools have been found in different parts of India.

The upper palaeolithic sites are found in the Chhotnagpur region, the Damin area of Rajmahalhills, Rohri hills in upper Sindh in Kashmir Valley, in the Vindhya region and Baghor in Madhya Pradesh. The upper Palaeolithic cave sites of Kurnool and Muchchatla in Andhra Pradesh are the only places in the subcontinent where tools made of animal bones have been found. It indicates that the upper Palaeolithic people shared their landscape with the animals. Caves and rock shelters for use by human beings in the upper palaeolithic phase have been discovered at Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh. This period saw the upper Palaeolithic give way to the start of the following Mesolithic cultural period.

General Characteristics of The Palaeolithic Culture

The life of Palaeolithic people living in different parts of the subcontinent was based on their adaptations to the specific environment. They were mainly hunting-gathering communities. They lived in caves and hollows of Trees. Their shelters were made of rock, branches, grass, leaves or reeds. There was no permanent settlement. The habitation site of Bhimbetka gives evidence of continuous occupation over centuries. They tend to be mobile or nomadic to some extent, moving from one place to another in search of food. They ate foods like fruits, roots, leaves of the trees, the flesh of animals etc. For hunting and other purposes, they used different kinds of tools made of hard rocks.



The main tools used by them are hand axes, sticks to dig the earth, scrapers, blades and burins etc. There were no institutions of formal government, no formal permanent leaders, not even the powerful chiefs. Animals, plants and landscapes may be worshipped or may form the focus of rituals. We get some references about the use of fire in the Kurnool caves. The fire was lighted outside the caves at night only to avoid the danger from wild animals.

1.4 THE MESOLITHIC CULTURE

Prof. Gordon Childe says that man developed “an aggressive attitude to his environment” and gradually entered into the Neolithic age or New Stone Age. But midway between the old stone and the New Stone Age, Scholars Speak of a Mesolithic period, which was characterized by the making and use of small stone implements. The stone implements are of minute size and hence are called microliths.

The Mesolithic period roughly ranges between 10,000 and 6000 B.C. In the case of India, it started about 8000 B.C. and continued 30 up to about 4000 B.C. Climatic changes brought about changes in fauna and flora and made it possible for human beings to move from one place to another. The Mesolithic people lived on hunting, fishing and food gathering and at a later stage they also domesticated animals.

Characteristics of The Mesolithic Culture

The characteristic tools of the Mesolithic Age are Microliths or tiny tools. Microliths range in length from under 1 cm to 5 cm. The tools are mostly made on short parallel-sided blades made of cryptocrystalline silica stone such as quartzite, chalcedony, jasper and agate. Their tools include miniature versions of some of the upper Palaeolithic tool types such as burins, points and scrapers. Mesolithic sites are found in Rajasthan, Southern UP Central and Eastern India and also South of the river Krishna. Bagor in the Bhilwara district of

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Rajasthan is one of the best-documented Mesolithic sites. The site remained occupied for 5000 years from the fifth millennium BC onwards. Bones of wild and domesticated animals have been found at some Mesolithic sites at Bagor and Tilwara in Rajasthan, Langhraj, Kanewal and Loteshwar in Gujrat, Adamgarh and Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh and Sarai Nahar Rai, Mahadaha and Damdama in Uttar Pradesh.

The collection of the bones of different animals from the above sites provides the earliest evidence for the domestication of animals in the Indian part of the subcontinent. The most noticeable feature of this period was the concentration of population along river valleys, heralding a settled form of life in which food-gathering turned into food production. The evidence from Mesolithic sites from different parts of the subcontinent suggests movement and interaction among communities. Factory sites located at the source of raw materials must have been meeting grounds for different groups. The evidence from the burial sites of Swami Nahar Rai, Mahadaha and Damdama confirms the presence of grave grounds is often taken as an indication of some shorts of belief afterlife. There are a few examples of portable Mesolithic art. A few engraved bone objects have been discovered at sites such as Bhimbetka.

The first rock painting in India was discovered by A.C.L. Carlleyle in 1867-68 at Sohagighat in the Kaimur hill of Uttar Pradesh. Till now 150 Mesolithic rocks art sites have been found in various parts of India. The various types of rock paintings are an important source of information regarding the lives of Mesolithic People. The Mesolithic people obtained their food through, hunting and gathering. However, the animal bones found at some Mesolithic sites indicate that the beginning of the 31 domestications of animals can be traced to this phase. Undoubtedly this phase paved the way for the rise of Neolithic culture.

The Mesolithic Human Life

a. Taming the animals

In the lives of Mesolithic men, some changes had come because of the lives of the previous Paleolithic men. Although they still largely depend on hunting, now they have started domesticating animals like buffalo, dogs, sheep-goat, cow-ox, etc. The earliest evidence of the domestication of animals had been found in Adamgarh of Madhya Pradesh and Baghore of Rajasthan.

b. Burial of the Dead

These people were aware of the burial process of the dead bodies. It is confirmed by the graves that have been found in Sarainahar Rai and Mahdaha of Pratapgarh district (UP).

They buried the dead in the grave and places foodstuff, tools-weapons, etc as grave goods along with them. It is believed that they considered the life of the next or another world.

From some archaeological sites such as Adamgarh, etc, the skeleton of the dog was found with a human skeleton, it seems that the dog was the old companion of man. The first man domesticated the dog.

Many sites of the Mesolithic age have been excavated in which findings of graves have been in maximum number. Moreover, it is a fact that the human skeleton began to be available in the Mesolithic age.

c. Mesolithic Tools

The microliths used during the Mesolithic period were very small in size varying in lengths from 1 to 8 cm and were largely made out of chipped or flaked pieces.

Some of these tools have geometric forms such as triangles, trapezes, arrowheads, etc. These tools could be tied or fixed to other objects to form an arrow or a spear.



Microliths

d. Geographical Distribution of the Mesolithic Sites

The distribution of Mesolithic sites indicates that the Mesolithic cultures covered almost the entire India from north to south and east to west. Important sites of this culture are Langhnaj (District Mehsana) in Gujarat; Bhimbetka (near Bhopal) in Madhya Pradesh; Chopani Mando (near Allahabad in Belan Valley) in Uttar Pradesh; Birbhanpur (District Burdwan) in West Bengal; Sanganakallu (District Bellary) in Karnataka; and Tuticorin in southern Tamil Nadu.

e. Subsistence Pattern

The Mesolithic people still subsisted on hunting and gathering, but now there was a shift in the pattern of hunting from the big animals in the Palaeolithic period to the smaller animals which could be attacked with the help of bows and arrows. In addition to this, fishing and fowling also became important. The faunal remains of cattle, sheep, goat, buffalo, pig, rat, bison, hippo, dog, fox, lizard, tortoise, fish, etc. have been found from different Mesolithic sites.

1.5 THE NEOLITHIC CULTURE

The domestication of plants and animals marked a special kind of human interference in nature. This resulted in the growth of a new type of culture popularly known as Neolithic culture. The term Neolithic is derived from the Greek words "Neo" meaning new and "Lithos" meaning stone. Hence it is New Stone Age or Neolithic Age.

The term was coined by Sir John Lubbock in 1865. In the world context, the period of the Neolithic age began between 9000 and 3000 B.C. Early Neolithic farming was limited to a narrow range of plants, both wild and domesticated, which included wheat, millet and spelt and the keeping of dogs, sheep, goats, cattle and pigs. The Chief characteristic that distinguishes men from animals is their ability to think and move from progress to more progress. As time passed, men naturally acquired more knowledge than what they possessed during the Mesolithic phase and gradually entered the Neolithic Phase.

Characteristics of the Neolithic Culture

The Neolithic settlements in the Indian subcontinent are not older than 6000 B.C. The chief characteristics of the Neolithic age are settled life, animal husbandry pottery and some form of cultivation that depended solely upon the use of stone. The beginnings of animal and plant domestication did not mean the end of the hunting-gathering way of life. Communities that practised, animal rearing and agriculture usually continued to hunt and forage for food. Food production is the most important aspect of the Neolithic phase.



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The people of this age used a large variety of tools and implements of polished stone. The most common being the axes, which have been found in the greater part of the country. The other important tools made by the people of the Neolithic age included celts, chisels, mace-heads, arrowheads, saws etc. Animal bones were also used to make needles, blades and other tools.

The people of the Neolithic age also knew about the art of pottery. This is testified by the discovery of several remains of pottery from the different sites. The common items of pottery were chatties, bowls, lothas, and big pots to store food grains and water. People used a variety of colours in pottery. The most common colours used in pottery were red, brown, yellow etc. The pottery was made with wheels. One of the greatest inventions of Neolithic man was the invention of the wheel. The invention of the wheel made the life of the Neolithic people more comfortable.

The Neolithic people lived in caves and decorated their walls by painting scenes of leaves, flowers, hunting, dancing etc. They knew spinning and weaving, as also making of boats. The chief food of the Neolithic age was fruits, vegetables, roots, nuts, the flesh of the animals, fish, pulses and milk products. People used very scanty dresses. Generally, they covered their bodies with barks of trees and the skin of animals. At a later stage, they discovered clothes of cotton and wool. Hunting and fishing were the main occupation of the people. The art of agriculture was not known to them during the early stage but later on, they developed the art of cultivation of grains. They also domesticated various animals. There was no specific religion. People of the Neolithic age generally worshipped the spirits of their ancestors and the forces of nature.

The relics of the Neolithic age are found in great abundance in different parts of India. From Burzaham in Kashmir valley pit dwellings are found. There are also traces of mud-brick houses several burials with skeletons have been found. The earliest date for Burzaham is about 2400 B.C. from the available evidence it becomes apparent that the Neolithic people in Southern India reached a fairly high degree of civilization in the Godavari River valley. They usually settled on the tops of granite hills or plateaus near the river banks. They used stone axes and blades. They possessed cattle, sheep and goats. Fire baked figurines of animals suggest that they domesticated different animals.

The Neolithic tools have been found in the hills of Assam as well as in the Garo hills of Meghalaya on the northeast frontier of India. The neolithic settlement of Mehrgarh gives clear evidence of the transition from hunting to animal domestication. In Southern Uttar Pradesh, where over 40 neolithic sites have been identified in the course of exploration in the Belan, Son, Rihand, Ganga and Lipari rivers. The important Neolithic sites excavated include Maski, Brahmagiri, Hallur, Kodekal and Takkalakota in Karnataka, Paiyampalit in Tamil Nadu, Piklihal and Utnur in Andhra Pradesh, Koldinwa and Mahagara in Uttar Pradesh and Kanjun (Sohn valley) in Madhya Pradesh. The Neolithic culture in this area emerged out of the well-established Mesolithic phase. The process of food production and its associated cultural developments eventually led to the emergence of proto-urban settlements and then full-fledged cities.



The Neolithic Human Life

a. Beginning of agricultural activities

Sometimes this period is termed the 'Neolithic Revolution' based on important changes in man's socioeconomic life.

The use of sharp and polished Neolithic tools made it easier to cultivate the soil. It was accompanied by the practice of domestication of animals. These changes in turn resulted in the emergence of settled agricultural communities.

The culture of this age was very much developed with respect to the cultures of previous ages. Men of this age became food producers along with food consumers. They became familiar with crop cultivation.

From which place the crop cultivation begin first of all? – It is a matter of controversy. Most scholars believe that crop cultivation began at Mehargarh, in the Indian subcontinent. The oldest evidence of agriculture was found in Mehargarh which lies in the Bolan district of Baluchistan Province.

The main cultivated crops of Neolithic men were – wheat, Barley, Paddy, Millets, various types of vegetables, etc.

The oldest evidence of Wheat and Barley cultivation was found in Mehargarh (Bolan district, Baluchistan Province, Pakistan) in the Indian subcontinent.

The oldest evidence of the Paddy cultivation was found in Koldiwada (Allahabad district, Uttar Pradesh) in the Indian subcontinent as well as in the world.

b. Domestication of animals

Although men of the middle stone age become familiar with animals, in this period men's relations became much more intimate with animals. In other words, in this age animal husbandry became extended.

The main animals that were domesticated by the Neolithic men were – dogs, Sheep, Goat, Horse, etc

The occupation of Neolithic men included – animal hunting, fish catching, sheep-goat taming, etc.

Due to the extension of agriculture and animal husbandry, the living styles of men became changed.

Their nomadic life (wandering life) came to an end now and they used to live a life of a farmer that settled in a place.

c. Clothes

In this age, the Neolithic men started growing cotton and learnt about clothes. The clayey remains of spindle and loom from Neolithic sites indicated that Neolithic men knew about clothes behaving with the thread of wool, jute and cotton. The oldest evidence in the world of cotton was found in Mehargarh (Bolan district, Pakistan).

d. Houses

Generally, Neolithic men lived in huts that were made with bamboo and clay. (Exception: Kashmir, Punjab, etc)



In Kashmir valley and Punjab (Pakistan), Neolithic men dwelled in pits, which is called 'pit dwelling'. They dig the ground in circular or oval shapes and made houses to live in. To step down in or step up from the pit, they made niches as clay-stairs made in the wells to step down or to step up. Some small holes at short distances were made for embedding the posts on the edges of the pits which are called 'post holes. With the help of these posts, thatch of grass and straw were laid over pits so that they can protect themselves from wind, sunshine and rain.

The archaeological pieces of evidence of pit dwelling have been found in Burzahom and Gufkharal of Kashmir and Saraikholah of Punjab (Pakistan).

e. Pottery

Potter's Wheel was invented by Neolithic men in 4000 B.C. which is believed to be a very important invention of technological advancements by men.

And due to this invention, the pottery that was made from the potter's the wheel had become possible, which was made by hand in the previous time (ages). With the existence of the wheel, the process of painting on the surface of pottery became popular.

f. Burial Process

North India: In North India, there were two types of burial processes –

- Complete Burial
- Partial Burial

In the complete burial process, a circular pit was dug first and after that pit, the dead person was laid flat on the back.

In the partial burial process, selected bones of the dead person were buried in a grave that was dug in the ground.

The custom of burial of the pet animal dog with their master was found at Burzahom and Gufkharal of Kashmir. The evidence of the burial of the pet animal goat with their master was found at Mehargarh of Baluchistan (Pakistan).

Probably, these pet animals were placed to eat by the dead person in the next world.

South India: In South India, there were two types of burial processes –

- Complete/Extensive Burial
- Partial Burial

Under complete/extensive burial process, the corpse of an old male-female had buried in the graves that were dug in the ground. In the grave pottery, implements etc were placed as grave goods with the corpse. The corpse of babies was completely buried after placing them into pots (pot burials).

Under the partially buried process selected bones of the dead person were buried in the graves.



The Neolithic tools consist of the ground tools having smooth surfaces, well rounded and symmetrical shapes. The grinding made the tools sharper, polished and more effective than those in the earlier period.

The ground stone tools of the Neolithic period included different types of axes called 'Celt'. Besides the stone tools, the sites of this period have also yielded various types of bone objects such as needles, scrapers, borers, arrowheads, pendants, bangles and earrings.

g. Geographical Distribution of the Neolithic Sites

The Neolithic sites were spread over almost all the regions of the Indian subcontinent. In the north-western region, Mehrgarh is a classic site in the Kachi plains of Baluchistan. The excavations at Mehrgarh have revealed the evidence of houses built by Neolithic people. These were built of sun-dried bricks. These houses were divided into small rooms. The evidence of the cultivation of crops like wheat, barley and cotton was discovered here.



Neolithic tools

The important sites in Kashmir Valley include Burzahom and Gufkral. The dwelling pits, either circular or rectangular, at these sites form an important feature of Neolithic culture.

The Belan Valley along the edge of the Vindhyan plateau near Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh also has many Neolithic sites such as Koldihwa and Mahagara. The Neolithic tools (both stone and bone), pottery, other artefacts, and floral and faunal remains have been found at these sites.

In Bihar and mid-Gangetic Valley region Chirand is the most popular Neolithic site. Several Neolithic sites are presently covering the hills of Assam, Meghalaya and Nagaland.

The tools like Neolithic Celts, small ground axes along with the remains of pottery have been found in this area.

In South India, the Neolithic settlements were discovered along the rivers Bhima, Krishna, Tungabhadra and Kaveri. Some important sites are Sanganakallu, Brahmagiri, Maski, Piklihal, Hallur in Karnataka; Utnur, Nagarjunakonda, Budihal in Andhra Pradesh; and Paiyampalli in Tamil Nadu. These sites have yielded dwelling pits along with the evidence of cultivation of cereals and domestication of animals. Millet (Ragi) was one of the earliest crops cultivated by the villagers of South India.



In short, the Neolithic cultures created the conditions which helped in the growth of towns in the later period.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What is pre-history?
2. Fill in the Blank.
Mesolithic age is characterized by _____ or tiny tools.
3. State whether True or False.
Palaeolithic man ate roots, fruits, nuts and the flesh of wild beasts.
People made small huts for their shelter during the Palaeolithic age.
4. What are microliths?
5. Name any two sites of the Mesolithic period?

1.6 THE CHALCOLITHIC CULTURE

After the end of the Neolithic Age, human civilization entered a new phase known as the Chalcolithic period. It was a phrase applied to the pre-Harappan when stone and copper were used. Copper was the first metal to be discovered in India. Based on the use of 33 metals, a new culture developed, which is called Chalcolithic culture. However, the transition from the use of stone to metal is a slow and gradual process. The use of metal during this period in different parts of India was not uniform.

While in Northern India copper was the metal that came to be used after stone, in Southern India iron replaced stone without the intermediate stage of use of copper. Bronze which is an alloy made of copper and tin was in use in India simultaneously. The Chalcolithic age of India was a period of copper – bronze. The Chalcolithic age probably started between 3000 B.C. and 1000 B.C. The earliest settlements belonging to this phase are found in southeastern Rajasthan, the Western part of Madhya Pradesh, Western Maharashtra and also in eastern India. Extensive excavations have exposed Ahar and Gilund in Southeastern Rajasthan, Malwa, Kayatha and Eran in Western Madhya Pradesh, Jorwe, Nevasa, Daimabad, Chandoli, Songaon and Inamgaon in Maharashtra, Chirand, Pandu Rajar and Mahishadal in West Bengal, Senwar, Sonpur and Taradin in Bihar and Khairadih and Narhan in Uttar Pradesh.

Characteristics of the Chalcolithic Culture

People of the Chalcolithic Age used tools made of stone. Also, the stone blades and stone axes were found in large numbers in South India. In other settlements, the people used copper tools like axes, Chisels, swords and harpoons. These tools were better, sharper and more permanent. The people of Ahar and Gilund in Rajasthan used household utensils made of copper. People of this age domesticated animals and practised agriculture. They reared cows, sheep, goats, pigs and buffaloes. They produce wheat and rice and in addition to these staple crops, they also cultivated bajra, barley, pulses etc. All these food grains have been found on the bank of Narmada in Maharashtra.

The people of eastern regions lived on fish and rice as fish hooks have been found in Bihar and West Bengal. The people of this period were generally not acquainted with burnt bricks. Their houses were made of mud bricks. However, the people in Ahar lived in stone

houses. At Inamgaon in Maharashtra, large mud houses with ovens and circular pit houses have been discovered. The largest settlement of Chalcolithic sites has been discovered so far in Jorwe and Daimabad in Madhya Pradesh. A large number of bronze tools have been discovered in Daimabad.

The people of the Chalcolithic age used different types of pottery. Black and red types of pottery were commonly used. It was thrown on the wheel and occasionally painted with white linear designs. The Chalcolithic people were very expert in coppersmiths and also skilful workers in stone. They were experts in arts and crafts. Tools, Weapons and bangles of copper 34 have been unearthed. They manufactured beads of semiprecious stones such as carnelian, steatite and quartz crystal. The people knew the art of spinning and weaving as cotton flax and silk threads have been found in Maharashtra. Burials are found in Maharashtra in which people buried their dead in urns along with the copper objects under the floor of their house in the north to the south positions. The Chalcolithic people worshipped the mother goddess as proved by the discovery of terracotta figures of women.

It is the general belief of the scholar that the chalcolithic culture was rural. People belonging to this period usually founded rural settlements on the banks of rivers. They used stone tools supplemented by some copper tools. They were the first to use painted pottery. They founded large villages in peninsular India and cultivated food grains in abundance. They domesticated different animals. They did not know the art of writing.

1.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

History (from the Greek word – Historia, meaning “inquiry”, knowledge acquired by investigation) is the study of the past. History is an umbrella term that relates to past events as well as the discovery, collection, organization, presentation and interpretation of information about these events. The term Palaeolithic is derived from the combination of two Greek words ‘paleo’, which means old and ‘lithic’ meaning stone. Therefore, the term Palaeolithic age refers to the Old Stone Age. Palaeolithic people lived primitive human life. They were largely dependent on nature giving things and hunting. Their food was fruit, meat or roots. They did not know how to grow grains and vegetables.

The term Mesolithic is the combination of two Greek words, Meso and Lithic which means middle and stone, respectively. Hence, the Mesolithic Stage of prehistory is also known as the Middle Stone Age. It was the transitional phase between the Palaeolithic and the Neolithic Ages. The last phase of prehistory is termed Neolithic. The term Neolithic is derived from Greek ‘Neo’ which means new, and ‘Lithic’ meaning stone. Thus, the term ‘Neolithic Age’ refers to the ‘New Stone Age’ of human culture. The tools like Neolithic Celts, small ground axes along with the remains of pottery have been found in this area.

1.8 REVIEW QUESTIONS

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by the Neolithic?
2. In which age was fire discovered?



3. Name at least 3 tools used during the Mesolithic period.
4. Use of pottery was seen in which period? Give some insights on the same.
5. Who was John Marshal?

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Trace the various phases in the Palaeolithic Age of India.
2. Why did the hunter-gatherers travel from place to place? In what ways are these similar to /different from the reasons for which we travel today?
3. Give detailed insights into the geographical spread of the Paleolithic culture.
4. Give a detailed description of the agricultural activities during the Neolithic period.
5. Describe the Chalcolithic culture in detail.

1.9 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. What is the name of the Mesolithic Age?
 - a. Middle Stone Age
 - b. New Stone Age
 - c. The Ice Age
 - d. Stone Age
2. Neolithic Age began after _____.
 - a. Chalcolithic phase
 - b. Palaeolithic phase
 - c. Neolithic phase
 - d. Mesolithic phase
3. What is the meaning of 'Lithic'?
 - a. Toy
 - b. Age
 - c. Ice
 - d. Tool
4. 'Wanderers' was a general name given to the people of which age?
 - a. Chalcolithic phase
 - b. Palaeolithic phase
 - c. Neolithic phase
 - d. Mesolithic phase
5. The term Palaeolithic is a _____ word.
 - a. Latin
 - b. Greek
 - c. Sanskrit
 - d. None of these
6. Mesolithic age is characterized by _____ or tiny tools.
 - a. Microliths
 - b. Hunting

- c. Houses
 - d. None of these.
7. One of the greatest inventions of Neolithic man was _____.
- a. Wheel
 - b. Fire
 - c. Jewellery
 - d. None of these.
8. Neolithic age began after _____ age.
- a. Chalcolithic phase
 - b. Palaeolithic phase
 - c. Mesolithic Phase
 - d. None of these.
9. _____ were the first to use painted pottery.
- a. Chalcolithic People
 - b. Palaeolithic People
 - c. Mesolithic People
 - d. Neolithic People
10. The Palaeolithic phase is largely divided into how many sub-phases?
- a. Two
 - b. Five
 - c. Three
 - d. Four

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THE INDUS SARASWATI CIVILIZATION

STRUCTURE

- 2.1 Learning Objective
- 2.2 Introduction
- 2.3 Origin of Indus Saraswati Civilization
- 2.4 Main Sites
- 2.5 Town Planning and Architecture
- 2.6 Economy
- 2.7 Religion
- 2.8 Arts
- 2.9 Decline
- 2.10 Devolution and Continuity
- 2.11 Relationship of Indus – Saraswati Civilization and Vedic Civilization
- 2.12 Chapter Summary
- 2.13 Review Questions
- 2.14 Multiple Choice Questions



2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

After completion of this unit, students will be able to:

- Know about the origin of the Indus Sarasvati Civilization.
- Learn about the main sites, town planning, and architectural structure.
- Economy, art, and religion followed during the Indus Sarasvati Civilization.
- Understand why it is important to know about our past.
- Understand our present in a better way.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

The Indus Valley Civilization (also called the Harappan Civilization, the Indus-Saraswati or Hakra Civilization) is one of the oldest societies that included more than 2600 known archaeological sites. Those places were located around the Indus and Sarasvati rivers in Pakistan and India, which is an area of around 1.6 million square kilometres. The largest Harappan site is Ganweriwala which was located on the bank of the Saraswati River.

Before the excavation of these Harappan cities, scholars thought that Indian civilization had begun in the Ganges valley as Aryan immigrants from Persia and central Asia populated the region around 1250 BCE. The discovery of ancient Harappan cities unsettled that conception and moved the timeline back another 1500 years, situating the Indus Valley Civilization in an entirely different environmental context.

At its peak, the Indus Valley Civilization may have had a population of over five million people. The Indus cities are noted for their **urban planning**, a technical and political process concerned with the use of land and the design of the urban environment. They are also noted for their baked brick houses, elaborate drainage systems, water supply systems, and clusters of large, non-residential buildings.

The Indus civilization was as old as the civilization of the valleys of Nile and Tigris. For thousands of years that civilization was lying buried under the earth. Modern men had no idea of it. Everybody believed that civilization in India began with the Aryans. However, till the first quarter of the 20th century, the modern world was completely in dark regarding the civilization. In 1856 when the British were constructing a railway line from Lahore to Multan, they found burnt bricks near Harappa. The railway authorities informed the Archaeological Survey of India. It was only in 1872 that the notice was taken.

It was in 1920, that Daya Ram Sahani eminent archaeologist started excavations at Harappa and in 1921 and another archaeologist R.D. Banerji started excavating Mohenjodaro. The formal announcement of the discovery of the Indus or Harappan civilization was made in 1924 by John Marshall, Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India. The principal archaeological remains were of two cities – Mohenjodaro and Harappa. Mohenjodaro is situated in the Larkana district of Sindh on the bank of the river Indus and Harappa is in the Montgomery district of Punjab on the bank of the river Ravi.

The word Mohenjodaro means “Mound of the dead” or “City of the dead”. Earlier it was known as Harappan culture as this culture was first noticed at Harappa. Subsequently, this culture was discovered in many sites on the bank of the Indus Valley, hence called the

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Indus Valley civilization. At present both the cities are in Pakistan. In the subsequent years, further excavations were carried out at various other sites which confirmed that the Indus Civilization of Harappan Culture was not confined to the provinces of West Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, Gujrat, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh but 35 covered a much wider area. The area of the Indus Valley Civilization extended from Jammu in the North to the Narmada in the South and from Baluchistan in the west to Meerut in the northeast. The area covered by the Indus Culture was much greater than that occupied jointly by the contemporary civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia. The Harappan culture as consisting of at least three phases –

- Early Harappan phase
- Mature Harappan phase &
- Late Harappan phase

The early Harappan phase was the formative phase of the culture. The mature Harappan phase was the urban phase. The late Harappan phase was the post-urban phase when the cities declined. Scholars have tried to determine the period of the Indus Valley civilization. Sir John Marshall, the Director-General of Archaeology found some similarities between the Indus and Mesopotamian civilizations. On that basis, he put the time between 3250 B.C. and 2750 B.C. Some other scholars compared various things found in Mohenjodaro with those found in Babylon. On that basis, they believed that the civilization perhaps prospered after 3550 B.C. Sir Mortimer Wheeler, Director General of archaeology fixed the time of the Indus Civilization between 2500 B.C. and 1500 B.C.

The advent of radiocarbon dating in the 1950s offered the prosthetic pact of the more scientific way of dating civilization. D P. Agarwal suggested the date 2300 – 2000 BCE. Recent calibrated C-14 dates give a time frame of about 2600 – 1900 BCE. But the most commonly accepted view is that the Indus Valley civilization flourished between 2300 B.C. and 1750 B.C. The inhabitants of the civilization are not clear. Archaeologists by examining the skeletal remains at Indus Valley sites believe that Mongoloid, Proto-Australoid, Alpine and Mediterranean people were the inhabitant of the great civilization.

Geographical Extent of Indus Valley Civilization

The first sites of this civilization were discovered in the valley of Indus and its tributaries. Hence it was given the name Indus Valley Civilization. At the time of the partition of India in August 1947, only 40 settlements belonging to this civilization had been discovered. But the research carried out by the archaeologists has altered the picture completely.

Today, the count of Harappan sites has risen to about 1022 of which 406 are in Pakistan and 616 in India. Of these, only 97 sites have so far been excavated. The area covered by the Harappan Culture zone is huge, ranging between 680,000 to 800,000 square kilometres. This ancient civilization, like any other, cannot properly be studied based on its present-day political boundaries. The geographical distribution should be its basis. The 1022 settlements, discovered so far are distributed over a wide geographical area. The pattern of the distribution of 36 of these settlements in terms of rivers shows that only 40 settlements are located on the Indus and its tributaries about large settlements are located on the vast plains between the Indus and Ganges.



Some settlements are found beyond Saraswati System, a number of them in Gujrat and a few in Maharastra. Besides Mohenjodaro and Harappa, the remains of the expansion of this civilization have been found at Chanudaro, Judeeirjo – daro and Amri in Sindh, Sutkagendor, Sotakakoh, Balakot, Nal and Kalat in Baluchistan, SutKotada, Dholavira and Lothal in Gujrat and Kalibangan in Ganganagar district of Rajasthan. Many more sites have been discovered at Kotla Nihangkaan near Ropar in Punjab, Alamgar and Sharanpur in Uttar Pradesh, Banwall and Rakhigarhi in Hissar district of Haryana and the valley of Narmada and Tapti and Manda in Akhnoor district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Two other smaller sites excavated in recent years are Rojdi in Saurashtra and Desalpur in the Kutch district. Excavations in all these sites have shown the existence of a well-developed Indus Culture. The area covered by the Indus Culture is much greater than that occupied jointly by the contemporary civilization of Egypt and Mesopotamia.

2.3 ORIGIN OF INDUS SARASWATI CIVILIZATION

Indus-Saraswati civilization is the largest civilization in the ancient world developed in the Indus Valley of India over 12,000 years ago. The Indus and Saraswati River valleys of Bharatvarsha (present India and Pakistan) were the home to the ancient civilization of Indus-Saraswati.

The early cities of India developed along the Indus and Saraswati River was the largest and most advanced civilization in the ancient world.

There are 2,600 known Indus sites, from enormous urban cities like Mohenjo-Daro and Mehrgarh to small villages like Nausharo. The cities of the Indus Valley Civilization were well-organized and solidly built out of brick and stone. Their drainage systems, wells and water storage systems were the most sophisticated in the ancient world. They also developed systems of weights and trade. They made jewellery, game pieces and toys for their children. From looking at the structures and objects which survive we can learn about the people who lived and worked in these cities so long ago.

But the mighty Saraswati River dried up, and what was once a fertile area became a desert. The people of the region moved to other parts of India and beyond. By 2000 B.C. the civilization entered a period of decline.

2.4 MAIN SITES

Important sites of this civilization are:

SITES	STATE/ PROVINCE	ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS
Harappa (Buried city)	West Punjab, Pakistan	2 rows of six granaries with a brick platform, stone symbol of lingam and yoni, Virgin Goddess, clay figures of mother Goddess, wheat and barley in a wooden mortar, copper scale and mirror, vanity box, dice. Sculpture: Dog chasing a deer (bronze), nude male and nude dancing female (stone), red, sandstone male torso.

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Mohenjodaro (Mound of the Dead)	Sindh	The great bath, The great gratin (largest building), multi-pillared assembly hall, proto-Shiva seal, clay figures of Mother Goddess, Dice. Sculpture: Bronze dancing girl, steatite image of a bearded man.
Kalibangan (Black Bangle)	Rajasthan	Decorated bricks, bangle factory, wheels of a toy cart, wells in every house. Remains of a massive brick wall around 'both the Citadel and lower town (lower town of Lothal is also fortified), bones of camel, tiled floor.
Chanhudaro (Lancashire of India)	Sindh	Inkpot, lipstick, carts with a seated driver, ikkas of bronze, imprints of dog's paw on a brick. Only city without Citadel.
Daimabad	Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra	Bronze images of Charioteer with chariot, ox, elephants and rhinoceros.
Amri	Sindh	Actual remains of Rhinoceros.
Alamgirpur	Western Uttar Pradesh	Impression of cloth oil a trough.
Lothal (Manchester of Indus Valley Civilization)	Gujarat	Rice husk, fire altars, grinding machine, tusks of the elephant, a terracotta figure of horse and seal, dying vat, painted jar (bird and fox), terracotta, ship; houses with entrance on main streets, impressions of cloth on some seals, rood chess, the instrument of measuring 180, 90 and 45-degree angles, artificial dockyard, etc.
Ropar	Punjab	Buildings made of stone and soil; Dog buried with humans. One inscribed steatite seal with typical-Indus pictographs; oval pit burials
Banawali	Haryana	Oval-shaped Settlement, only city-with radial street, lack of systematic drainage pattern. Toy plough, largest number barley grains.
Surkotada	Gujarat	Both Citadel and lower town were fortified with the stone wall. First actual remains of horse bones. Cemetery with four-pot burials.
Dholavira	Gujarat	Only site to be divided in into 3 parts. Giant water reservoir, unique water harnessing system, dams and embankments, a stadium, rock-cut architecture.
Sutkagendor	Baluchistan	A twofold division of township Citadel and Lower Town

2.5 TOWN PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE

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Excavations at Harappa, Mohenjodaro, Kalibangan, Lothal, Surkotada and many other Indus sites show a well-planned town planning of truly amazing nature. The two cities, Mohenjodaro and Harappa were built on a uniform plan. The people of this civilization were experts in the art of town planning. The distance between Harappa and Mohenjodaro is 483 kilometres and they were linked together by the river Indus. Each city consisted of two parts:

- a. Acropolis or citadel &
- b. Lower City

To the West of each was a citadel built on a high platform. The citadel is 30-40 feet high and 400 x 200 feet in length and breadth, having bricked floors. The citadel was the central place with special buildings meant for the ruling class people. To the east were the town proper and the main hub of the residential area of the ordinary people. The citadel and the town were further surrounded by a massive brick wall. The ruins of the city reveal an elaborate system of sanitation and drainage. The roads were straight and cut across one another almost at right angles. The roads of main streets were 30 to 34 feet wide and layout with great skill, dividing the city into blocks, within which were networks of narrow lanes.



Town Planning

There was a covered drain on both sides of the 37 main roads. The drains of the private houses were connected with the main drain. The drainage systems were very impressive. There was also an arrangement for street lighting which is evident from the discovery of light posts in the streets. The buildings of Mohenjodaro can be divided into three groups, such as dwelling houses, public buildings and the Great Bath.



The citadel in
Mohenjo-daro

The Great Bath, Mohenjo-daro

A bird's eye view of
Mohenjo-daro

Mohenjo-Daro

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The dwelling-houses were of different sizes and structures. The houses have big spacious room, kitchen, bathroom and a courtyard. Most of the houses were doubled storeyed. With staircases leading to the upper storey. Each house was provided doors, windows, proper system of ventilation and sanitation. Almost in every house, there was a bathroom and near the bathroom, there was a well. Both burnt and sundried bricks were used to construct the houses. Local made mortar was used as the binding material. The roofs of the houses were flat and made of wood.

The ruins of some big and spacious buildings with elaborate structures and designs have also been discovered from Mohenjodaro. A big hall has been unearthed at Mohenjodaro which has been named a collegiate building. It was twenty massive pillars made of Kiln-burnt bricks. This could probably be an assembly hall. The most remarkable and largest building excavated at Harappa is the great granary. It was built on a raised platform to protect it from floods. It measures 169 feet long and 130 feet in breadth. The granary was divided into storage blocks for storing the food grains. One important structure of the Indus Civilization is the dockyard discovered at Lothal in Gujrat. This is enclosed by walls of burnt bricks. The eastern and western walls measured 212 M and 215M respectively in length, while those on the north and south measured 37 M and 35 M. The scholars have identified it as a dockyard. Here the ships and boats come for loading and unloading of goods.

The drainage system

The Drainage System of the Indus Valley Civilization was far advanced. The drains were covered with slabs. Water flowed from houses into the street drains. The street drains had manholes at regular intervals. Housewives were expected to use pits in which heavier parts of the rubbish will settle down while only sewerage water was allowed to drain off. All soak pits and drains were occasionally cleaned by workmen. In every house, there was a well-constructed sink, and water flowed from the sink into the underground sewers in the streets. This elaborate drainage system shows that the Indus Valley people were fully conversant with the principles of health and sanitation.

Perhaps the most impressive engineering feat accomplished by the people of the Indus Civilization in Mohenjo-Daro over 4,500 years ago is the network of effluent drains built of brick masonry, which served as the city's sewerage system. The drains mostly ran along past the houses on one side of the generally unpaved streets, some 50 or 60 cm below street level. U-shaped in cross-section, the sides and bottoms of the drains were built of bricks set in clay mortar, while the open-top could be covered in various ways. The width of the open-top was dictated by the dimensions of the covering bricks, which ranged from 25 × 13 × 5.75 cm to 29.5 × 14.6 × 7.6 cm. The drains built of the smallest size bricks vary in width from 17 to 25 cm and in depth from 15 to 50 cm—that is, the equivalent of between two and eight brick courses. Thus the drains range from 260 cm² to 1,200 cm² in cross-section. The loose roofing could be removed for cleaning as required.

The drains sloped at a gradient of about 2 cm per meter and met at varying levels, depending on cross-section and period. Constructions on curves were sited in such a way that frictional loss was minimized. Wherever a drain had to traverse a longer distance or



several drains met, a brick cesspit was installed; this was the simplest method to avoid clogging caused by solids settling. The effluent flowed into such a brick shaft at a high level, filled it, and then flowed out the other side at a slightly lower level. The suspended matter gradually formed a deposit that could be removed via steps leading down into the pit, which was likely covered by a loose wooden roof.



Drainage System

The Harappan town had a very good drainage and sanitary system. The main drain was associated with every house ensuring the proper dumping of waste. To check the maintenance, inspection holes were provided. The drains were covered and connected to the bigger sewerage outlets, which ensured the channel of dirt out of the city

The bath and kitchen waters, as well as drainage from the latrines, and the roof drainage, usually did not run into the street drains direct, but entered them via tightly brick-lined puts, with outlets to the street drains about three-quarters of the distance above the bottom. The most unique aspect of planning during the Indus Valley civilization at Lothal was the system of underground drainage. The main sewer, 1.5 meters deep and 91 cm across, is connected to many north-south and east-west sewers. It was made from bricks smoothed and joined together seamlessly. The expert masonry kept the sewer watertight. Drops at regular intervals acted like an automatic cleaning device



Houses

The houses were of different sizes varying from palatial buildings to ones with two small rooms. The houses had a well, a bathroom, and a covered drain connected to the drain in

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the street. The buildings were made of burnt bricks, which have been preserved even to this day. Sun-dried bricks were used for the foundation of the buildings and the roofs were flat and made of wood. The special feature of the houses was that rooms were built around an open courtyard. Some houses were double storied. Some buildings had pillared halls; some of them measured 24 square meters. It is assumed that there also must have been palaces, temples or municipal halls.



Great bath

The most interesting and remarkable structure of the Indus Valley is the Great Bath of Mohenjo-Daro. It is an example of beautiful brickwork. The bath measures 180 feet in length and 108 feet in width. In the centre of the bath, there is a swimming pool, which is 39 feet in length, 23 feet in breadth and 8 feet in depth. There are galleries around the bath. There are steps on both sides to enter the bath. The bath is made of burnt bricks and connected with a fine drainage system for filling and draining out the water. Freshwater was supplied from a huge well nearby. On one side of the bath, there were 8 small rooms. Those rooms were perhaps used by the people to change their clothes after bath. It is suggested that the great bath was used by the people for ritual bathing during religious ceremonies. 38 The straight and wide streets, clean and simple dwelling houses, drainage system, huge granaries, public buildings and great Bath were the main features of the cities of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. They create surprise those three thousand years before the Christian era the inhabitants of Indus Valley lived such an excellent urban life.



Great granary



Another large building in the city was the Great Granary which was made about 45 meters long and 15 meters wide. It was meant to store food grains. It had lines of circular brick platforms for pounding grain. There were barrack-like quarters for workmen. The granary also had smaller halls and corridors. This granary is divided into 27 rooms of different sizes and shapes. It was considered to be the largest building in Mohenju-Daro.



The assembly hall

An important feature of Mohenjo-Daro was its 24 square meters pillared hall. It had five rows of pillars, with four pillars in each row. Kiln baked bricks were used to construct these pillars. Probably, it was the Assembly Hall or the ruler's court. It is said that it also housed the municipal office which had the charge of town planning and sanitation.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS


1. A very special tank, which archaeologists call the 'Great Bath', was built in the area of _____.
2. List some important sites of the Indus Valley Civilization.
3. Describe town planning in brief.
4. List at least three major points related to Mohenjodaro.
5. Give a brief explanation of the drainage system during the Indus-Sarasvati Civilization.

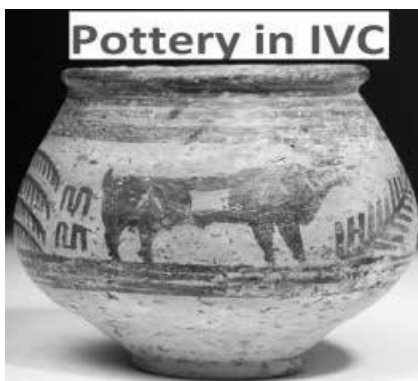
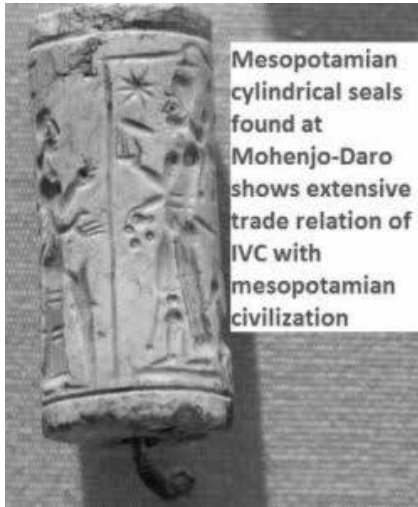
2.6 ECONOMY

The copper/bronze industry flourished at sites such as Harappa and Lothal, and copper casting and hammering were used. Shell and bead making industry was very important, particularly at sites such as Chanhu-daro where mass production of beads and seals is in evidence.

The Harappan people grew wheat, barley, rice, ragi, jowar, and cotton, and raised cattle, buffalo, sheep, goats and chickens. Camels, elephants, horses, and asses were used for transportation.



FEATURES	DESCRIPTION	SIGNIFICANCE
<p>Agricultural Economy</p>	<p>The main crops were Wheat, Barley, Rice (found in Lothal and Rangpur only), Dates, Mustard, and Cotton (1st in the world).</p>	<p>It shows the advancement of Harappans in agriculture technology – used wooden ploughshare, Well irrigation (Alladinho, Dams, and irrigation canals (Dholavira)</p>
<p>Manufacturing</p> 	<p>Terracotta: figurines of animals, humans (more female figurines than male figurines), Bangles, seals.</p> <p>Art of Bead-making (Chanhudaro and Lothal), jewelry- gold and silver jewelry. A lot of necklaces made of gold, silver, and semi-precious stones have been found.</p> <p>Harappans did not use Iron but used Copper, bronze, silver, and gold.</p> <p>The number of pure copper artefacts was found to be a far greater number than alloyed bronze ones.</p> <p>Harappans were the first to use silver in the world.</p>	<p>A large number of terracotta articles show that it was used by common people.</p> <p>Also, Harappans were good at metallurgy and producing alloys.</p> <p>There was specialization of tasks- Goldsmiths, bronze-smiths, brick-makers.</p> <p>Copper artefacts don't mean technological backwardness but it was their cultural preference in all likelihood.</p>

<p>Pottery</p> 	<p>The Harappans used Red and Black pottery (Redware painted with black designs) and also knew the use of Potter's wheel with ease.</p>	<p>It shows the expertise of Harappans in pottery making e.g. Glazed pottery (Harappa), incised pottery, perforated pottery, etc.</p>
<p>Trade</p>  <p>Mesopotamian cylindrical seals found at Mohenjo-Daro shows extensive trade relation of IVC with mesopotamian civilization</p>	<p>Harappans had trade with Mesopotamia (Sumeria), Central Asia, Persia, Afghanistan Makan (Oman), and Dilmun (Bahrain). Trade was through the barter system.</p> <p>Export items: Teak (obtained from Gujrat), Amazonite (Hirapuri), Slate (Kangra), Lead (Kashmir and South India), Copper (from Baluchistan and RJ (Khetri mines).</p> <p>Import Items: Jade (from Central Asia); Turquoise (from Khorasan); Lapis Lazuli, Gold, Silver, Tin (from Afghanistan) (Gold was also obtained from Iran and Kolar mines in Karnataka); Steatite (Iran).</p>	<p>It shows the advanced trade relation of Harappan civilization with other parts of India as well as also with other contemporary civilizations.</p> <p>Harappan seals were found at Susa, Ur, and Nippur (Mesopotamia), Failaka, and Bahrain (Persian Gulf).</p> <p>Mesopotamian three-cylinder seals have been found in Mohenjo-Daro.</p>



Weights and measures



Copper Balance of Mohenjo-Daro



Weights in IVC

Weights followed a binary system — 1, 2, 8, 16, 32 to 64, 160, 320, 640, 1600, 3200, and so on.

Weights were made of chert, limestone, and steatite and were generally cubical.

The measure of length was based upon a foot of 37.6cm and a cubit.

The standardization and accuracy of weights and measures throughout the IVC were remarkable.

Seals



Harappan Seals

Harappan seals are made up of Steatite (soft stone).

Size- half an inch to 2.5 inches.

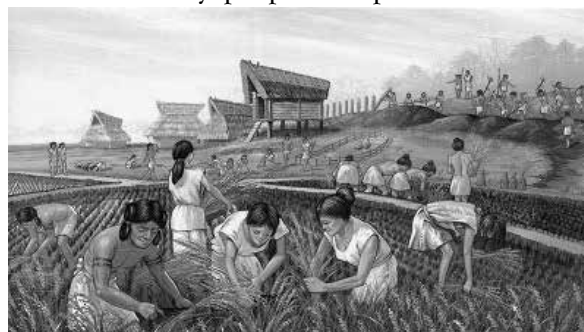
Shape-generally square and rectangular seals with carved animals and inscriptions were used.

The hump less bull is the most used animal in seals.

Harappan seals are the **greatest artistic creation** and were used to mark **ownership of property** and in **trade**.

Agriculture

Agriculture was the main occupation of the Indus Valley people. Crops such as wheat, barley, peas and bananas were raised. In those days, there was enough rain in that region and occasional floods brought a great deal of fertile soil to the area. People used to plough the land with wooden ploughshares drawn by men and oxen. From the existence of granaries, it is concluded that there were surplus food grains.



Domestication Of Animals

The people of Harappa domesticated animals like oxen, buffaloes, pigs, goats, sheep, etc. Camels and asses were used as means of transport. Dogs and cats were kept as pets. The humped bull was considered a great asset in the farming community. Goldsmiths made jewellery of gold, silver and precious stones. People were also engaged in brick-laying and

the art of sculpture. The making of seals was developed during this period. Bronzsmiths made various types of weapons and tools such as knives, spears, saws and axes which were used in daily life.

Trade

Traders carried on trade in the country as well as with other countries like Egypt, Babylon and Afghanistan. Many seals that were found in Mesopotamia show that trade existed between the two countries. The seals were made of terracotta and were used by merchants to stamp their goods.

The people of the Indus Valley used weights and measures in their business transactions. They used 16 and its multiples such as 64, 160 and 320, in measurement and weight.

2.7 RELIGION

The people of the Indus Valley Civilization had an advanced type of religious faith. No temples or any positive religious material has been discovered in Harappa and Mohenjodaro. However, some of the seals, sealings, statues, figurines and stone images found in the ruins of Mohenjodaro and Harappa help in forming an idea about the religious beliefs and practicals of the people. In Harappa, numerous terracotta figurines of women have been found. Probably the image represents the Goddess of Earth or Mother Goddess. She is almost nude except for a short skirt, wearing many ornaments and her headdress looks like a fan. The Harappan looked upon the earth as a fertility goddess and the source of all creation and so they worshipped her. It is made up of terracotta and it is made by hand.



Mother Goddess

John Marshal suggested that the Harappan also worshipped a male god represented on a steatite seal discovered at Mohenjodaro, usually referred to as the Pashupati seal. This god has three heads and horns. He is represented in the sitting posture of a yogi placing one foot on the other.

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He is flanked by four animals – an elephant, rhinoceros, a tiger and a buffalo below his throne. At his feet appear two deer. The figure is identified as the god Shiva, who in later literature is described as Mahayogi and Pasupati (Lord of the animals). The people also practised the worship of Linga and Yoni symbols. Numerous symbols of the Linga and Yoni made of stone have been found in Harappa.

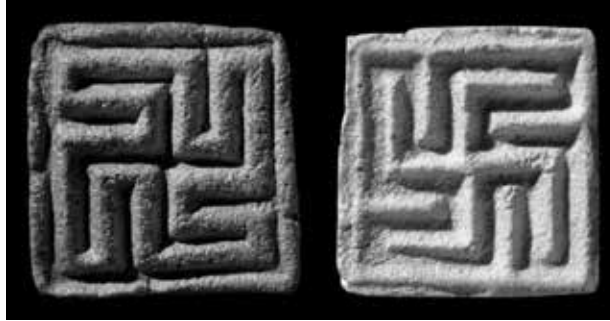


Pashupati Seal

The Harappan seals, sealings, amulets and copper tablets depict a number of trees, plants and animals. Some of which may have had a certain importance. The people of Indus Valley also worshipped trees. One of the sacred trees was the peepal tree. In one of the seals, a God is seen standing and surrounded by the branches of the peepal tree. This tree continues to be worshipped to this day by the Hindus.

The Indus Valley people also worshipped animals and many of them are represented in seals. The animals like the humped bull, the tiger, the goat, the rhinoceros, the crocodile, and the snake are worshipped. They also worshipped mythical and demigods. The most important of them is the humped bull. The animals surrounding Pasupati Siva indicate that these were worshipped. Amulets have been found in large numbers. Probably the Harappans believed that ghosts and evil forces were capable of harming them and therefore used amulets against them. No temple has been discovered from the ruins of Harappa and Mohenjodaro. It is not clear, therefore, how the people worshipped their gods and goddess. The images or figures were all found in the dwelling houses of the common man. It may be that the people of the Indus Valley offered worship in their own houses.

The Swastik and the wheel symbol of some seals indicate the worship of the Sun god. The Great Bath was probably the scene of an elite ritual activity involving ceremonial bathing. The most striking evidence suggests ritualistic practices from the fire altars found on the citadel mound at Kalibangan. A triangular terracotta cake found at Kalibangan has a carving of a horned diety on one side and an animal being dragged by a rope by a human on the other. It may be the practice of animal sacrifice.



Swastik Symbol on Seals

Harappan cemeteries have been located at sites such as Harappa, Kalibangan, Lothal, Rakhigarhi and Surkotada. Burial was the usual rite. The people had three types of funeral custom; complete burial, fractional burial, and burial of ashes and bones. Fifty-seven graves were identified between 1937 and 1947, which showed that the bodies were extended from north to south, the head towards the north, in a simple pit or brick chamber. Grave goods including food, pottery, tools and ornaments were placed along with the body. Multiple burials of men and women were discovered at Lothal.

It seems as if the religion of the ancient Indus Valley and the future Hinduism of India has similarity in many respects. Worship of gods and goddesses, animals, and trees, as was prevalent in Indus Valley, is also seen in the Hindu mode of Worship.

Most historians are of the view that Harappa and Mohenjodaro were governed by a Priest-King. The stone bust of a male figure found at Mohenjodaro has been given the label, "Priest-King". Harappan society was highly disciplined and had a strong corporate element; the Harappans may have been ruled by councils rather than priest-kings. The uniformity in town planning, drainage system, buildings, pottery, vessels and the seals suggests a strong centralized authority and municipal administration as well. It appears that the life of the people and various activities were regulated to a great extent by some sort of centralized authority.

2.8 ARTS

There is a great variety of standardized, mass-produced craft items at Harappan sites. The artifacts are far greater in quantity and range and show greater technical skill than those found in earlier cultural phases. The people used many tools and implements of stone but they were very well acquainted with the manufacture and use of copper and bronze. The Harappan civilization is marked by a large number of copper and bronze objects.



Artefacts

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Copper and bronze artefacts included vessels, spears, knives, axes, bows, arrows, daggers, fish hooks, needles, mirrors, rings, bangles, etc. Several copper furnaces were found at Harappa and copper workshops were found at Lothal. The Harappan people developed the art of making stone sculptures in the round. In the art of metal sculpture also, great heights were achieved. The famous bronze female figure in a dancing position has been discovered by Mohenjodaro.

The dancing girl wears ornaments and has a nicely combed hairstyle. Making of the seals, jewellery and bead are the important craft of Harappa. People did not know about the use of Iron, because no iron tools or weapons have been discovered in the Indus Valley. Huge brick structures suggest that brick lying was an important craft.

Pottery

The Harappan Pottery reflects efficient mass production. Pottery kilns were found at Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Nausharo and Chanudaro. It can be regarded as an index of the economic and artistic standards of the people. The Harappan people used a great variety of pottery, including black-on-red, grey, buff and black and red wares. They were experts in the use of the potters' wheel. Most pots were wheel turned. The typical Harappan Pottery is a fine, sturdy, wheel-made ware with bright red slip, decorated with painted, black designs. The great bulk of the pottery such as houses, dishes, Jars, and Squares are wheels – turned but some hand–made pottery has also been recovered from different sites. Cooking pots of various sizes have been found. The large jars may have been used to store grain or water. Only one painted jar has been found with animals arranged in rows. There are small vessels in several colours such as red, black and green that have been found. Harappan sites have yielded plenty of terracotta's. We get many figurines made of fire-baked earthen clay, commonly called terracotta. These were either used as toys or objects of worship. There are figurines of animals. Such as bulls, monkeys, buffaloes and dogs. There are toy carts with solid wheels. Human figurines include 41 male figurines and more numerous female figurines of various types. Terracotta masks and bangles have been found at Mohenjodaro and Harappa.

**Pottery**



Indus Ornaments, Pottery and Seal

Seals

The greatest artistic reaction of the Harappan culture is the seals. The Indus people had developed their process of writing, which is evident from the discovery of seals at Mohenjodaro and Harappa. More than 2000 seals have been unearthed but it is unfortunate that so far the scholars have been unable to decipher the scripts written on the seals. Most of the seals are square or rectangular. The average size of the square seals is about 2.54 cm. A few cylindrical and round seals have also been found. Most of the seals are made of steatite.



Silver seals

Two fine silver seals were discovered at Mohenjodaro and some copper seals were found at Lothal (refer to the figure above). The majority of seals carry short inscriptions with pictures of one-horned animals called unicorns, buffaloes, tigers, rhinoceroses, goats, elephants, antelopes and crocodiles. Some seals, however, the bear script only and some bear-human and semi-human forms. The inhabitants of Mohenjo-Daro attached great importance to these seals.

Script and Language

The biggest mysteries about the Indus Valley Civilization are the language and writing system. It is believed that people living in various parts of the Harappan culture zone spoke different languages and dialects. The writing on the seals was probably in the language of the ruling elite. Some scholars have suggested that this language belonged to the Dravidian family of language, while others have suggested the Indo-Aryan family. So far, the scholars have no unanimity on language and are unable to decipher the Harappa script. A total of about 3700 inscribed objects have been discovered from Harappan sites. Most of the writing appears on seals and sealings, some on copper tablets, copper and bronze implements, pottery and other objects. Most of the inscriptions are very short, with



an average of five signs and the longest one has 26 signs. There are 400 – 450 basic signs and the script is logosyllabic i.e., each symbol stood for a word or syllable. The people were familiar with the art of writing. They wrote from right to left.

2.9 DECLINE

The Indus Valley Civilization declined around 1800 BCE and scholars' debated which factors resulted in the civilization's demise. One theory suggested that a nomadic, Indo-European tribe called the Aryans invaded and conquered the Indus Valley Civilization, though more recent evidence tends to contradict this claim. Many scholars believe that the collapse of the Indus Valley Civilization was caused by climate change. Some experts believe the drying of the Saraswati River, which began around 1900 BCE, was the main cause of climate change, while others conclude that a great flood struck the area.

Various elements of the Indus Civilization are found in later cultures, suggesting the civilization did not disappear suddenly due to an invasion. Many scholars argue that changes in river patterns caused the large civilization to break up into smaller communities called late Harappan cultures.

Another disastrous change in the Harappan climate might have been eastward-moving monsoons or winds that bring heavy rains. Monsoons can be both helpful and detrimental to a climate, depending on whether they support or destroy vegetation and agriculture.

By 1800 BCE, the Indus Valley climate grew cooler and drier, and a tectonic event may have diverted or disrupted river systems, which were the lifelines of the Indus Valley Civilization.

The Harappans may have migrated toward the Ganges basin in the east, where they could have established villages and isolated farms. These small communities would not have been able to produce the same agricultural surpluses to support large cities. With the reduced production of goods, there would have been a decline in trade with Egypt and Mesopotamia. By around 1700 BCE, most of the Indus Valley Civilization cities had been abandoned.

2.10 DEVOLUTION AND CONTINUITY

At sites such as Bhagwanpura (in Haryana), archaeological excavations have discovered an overlap between the final phase of the Late Harappan pottery and the earliest phase of Painted Grey Ware pottery, the latter being associated with the Vedic culture and dating from around 1200 BCE. This site provides evidence of multiple social groups occupying the same village but using different pottery and living in different types of houses. Over time the Late Harappan pottery was gradually replaced by Painted Grey Ware pottery and other cultural changes indicated by archaeology include the introduction of the horse, iron tools and new religious practices.

There is also a Harappan site called Rojdi in the Rajkot district of Saurashtra. Its excavation started under an archaeological team from the Gujarat State Department of Archaeology and the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania in 1982-83. The report says that although there were obvious signs of cultural continuity between the Harappan

Civilization and later South Asian Cultures, many aspects of the Harappan 'sociocultural system' and 'integrated civilization' were 'lost forever.'

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2.11 RELATIONSHIP OF INDUS – SARASWATI CIVILIZATION AND VEDIC CIVILIZATION

This relationship generates a landmine of topics for debates. You may consider it a riverbed between Indus and Central India which is now a small seasonal river called Ghaggar in India and Hakra in Pakistan. Many Indus Valley Civilization sites are along this river bed. Also, Rig Veda (the oldest of Vedas) mentions a river that coincides with the region in general and they call it Sarasvati. However, we have no clue as to what the Indus Valley Civilization people called it.

The problem between associating Indus Valley Civilization and Vedic Civilisation boils down to 2 problems. Vedas swear by the horse (with 27 ribs and all) while Harappans only know of wild asses (26 ribs) and no more. There are no horse bones, drawings or even toys of horse borne carts – there are bullock carts though.

The second question is that Vedic literature discusses an entirely nomadic life and there are no fixed places of stay or worship. Harappans were highly urbanised for almost a thousand years. If Indus Valley Civilization practised any religion, then there is very little evidence. So, the connection is not obvious.

Having said this, some well-made, well-preserved seals in the Indus Valley Civilization appear to represent one of the great gods of Hinduism – Shiva. Shiva is a very interesting god – he is the lord of animals (Pashupati), is intellectual and short temper. In many ways, he is different in temperament from other gods of the Vedic period. The others (Vishnu, Indra and Bramha) also have some connectivity with the Avetha of Iran from where the Vedic people presumably came. Hence it can be argued, with some merit, that Shiva was an Indus Valley Civilization god assimilated into the Hindu Pantheon when the Vedic people came to India during the post-urban declining phase of the Indus Valley Civilization when the cities had been abandoned. That is the closest you have, to a synthesis of data but the subtleties can be argued ad infinitum. However, every statement in this response can be questioned.

2.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Indus Valley Civilization (also called the Harappan Civilization, the Indus-Saraswati or Hakra Civilization) is one of the oldest societies that included more than 2600 known archaeological sites

At its peak, the Indus Valley Civilization may have had a population of over five million people. The Indus cities are noted for their **urban planning**, a technical and political process concerned with the use of land and the design of the urban environment.

It was in 1920, that Daya Ram Sahani eminent archaeologist started excavations at Harappa and in 1921 and another archaeologist R.D. Banerji started excavating Mohenjodaro. The formal announcement of the discovery of the Indus or Harappan civilization was made in 1924 by John Marshall, Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India.

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The principal archaeological remains were of two cities – Mohenjodaro and Harappa. Mohenjodaro is situated in the Larkana district of Sindh on the bank of the river Indus and Harappa is in the Montgomery district of Punjab on the bank of the river Ravi.

The excavations of the ruins showed a remarkable skill in town planning. The main streets and roads were set in a line, sometimes running straight for a mile, and were varying in width from 4 meters to 10 meters. Most of these roads and streets were paved with fire burnt bricks.

The Drainage System of the Indus Valley Civilization was far advanced. The drains were covered with slabs. Water flowed from houses into the street drains. People also worshipped animals such as the bull, buffalo and tiger. The worship of mythical animals is evident from the existence of a human figure with a bull's horns, hoofs and a tail.

The ruins of some big and spacious buildings with elaborate structures and designs have also been discovered from Mohenjodaro. A big hall has been unearthed at Mohenjodaro which has been named a collegiate building. It was twenty massive pillars made of Kiln-burnt bricks. This could probably be an assembly hall. The most remarkable and largest building excavated at Harappa is the great granary. It was built on a raised platform to protect it from floods. It measures 169 feet long and 130 feet in breadth. The granary was divided into storage blocks for storing the food grains. One important structure of the Indus Civilization is the dockyard discovered at Lothal in Gujrat. This is enclosed by walls of burnt bricks. The eastern and western walls measured 212 M and 215M respectively in length, while those on the north and south measured 37 M and 35 M. The scholars have identified it as a dockyard. Here the ships and boats come for loading and unloading of goods.

The people of the Indus Valley Civilization had an advanced type of religious faith. No temples or any positive religious material has been discovered in Harappa and Mohenjodaro. However, some of the seals, sealings, statues, figurines and stone images found in the ruins of Mohenjodaro and Harappa help in forming an idea about the religious beliefs and practicals of the people. In Harappa, numerous terracotta figurines of women have been found. The Harappan Pottery reflects efficient mass production. Pottery kilns were found at Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Nausharo and Chanudaro. It can be regarded as an index of the economic and artistic standards of the people. The Harappan people used a great variety of pottery, including black-on-red, grey, buff and black and red wares. They were experts in the use of the potters' wheel.

The Indus Valley Civilization declined around 1800 BCE and scholars' debate which factors resulted in the civilization's demise. One theory suggested that a nomadic, Indo-European tribe called the Aryans invaded and conquered the Indus Valley Civilization, though more recent evidence tends to contradict this claim. Many scholars believe that the collapse of the Indus Valley Civilization was caused by climate change. Some experts believe the drying of the Saraswati River, which began around 1900 BCE, was the main cause of climate change, while others conclude that a great flood struck the area.

2.13 REVIEW QUESTIONS

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SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Discuss some of the brief features of the art & culture during the Indus Valley civilization.
2. Which site was famous for jewellery making & what kind of jewellery was made there?
3. List the archaeological findings at Lothal.
4. List any 5 sites of the Indus Valley Civilization with at least two unique features.
5. Describe Great Bath in brief.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Why did the Indus Valley Civilization develop on the banks of the river Indus?
2. Describe the economic conditions of the Indus Valley People.
3. Write about the pottery of the Indus Valley Civilization.
4. Describe any two features of the drainage system in the Indus Valley Civilization.
5. Throw some light on the origin of the Indus-Saraswati Civilization.

2.14 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Of the following sites associated with the Indus Valley Civilization, one located in India is?
 - a. Lothal
 - b. Mohenjo-Daro
 - c. Harappa
 - d. None of the above
2. Which of the following is the most important feature of the Indus Valley Civilization?
 - a. Burnt bricks
 - b. Gold coins
 - c. The sound system of administration
 - d. None of these.
3. Lothal is a site where dockyards of which of the following civilizations were found?
 - a. Indus valley
 - b. Mesopotamian
 - c. Egyptian
 - d. Persian
4. Indus Valley Civilization is also known as the Harappan Culture because:
 - a. The site of Harappa is six times larger than the Mohenjo-Daro site
 - b. The Indus Valley Civilization is considered the elementary/initial stage of the Vedic Culture and Harappa is believed to be the same as Harappa mentioned in the Vedas



- c. Harappa was the first site to be excavated in the Indus Valley
 - d. The most important/significant evidence of the achievements of this civilization has been excavated from Harappa
5. Which site provided evidence of maritime trade during the Indus Valley Civilization?
- a. Mohenjo-Daro
 - b. Lothal
 - c. Kalibangan
 - d. Roper
6. Which among the following throws light on Indus Valley Civilization?
- a. Archaeological finds
 - b. The Harrapan script
 - c. The rock edicts
 - d. None of the above.
7. The local name of Mohenjo-Daro is:
- a. Mound of Living
 - b. The mound of Survivor
 - c. Mound of Dead
 - d. Mound of Great
8. Which one of the following Harappan sites is NOT located in Gujarat?
- a. Surkotada
 - b. Rangpur
 - c. Sutkagendor
 - d. Desalpur
9. Which was the only city of the Indus without fortification?
- a. Kalibangan
 - b. Mohenjo-Daro
 - c. Harappa
 - d. Chanhudaro
10. Which was the biggest building in Mohenjodaro?
- a. Great Bath
 - b. Granary
 - c. Huge Hall
 - d. Two Storey Building

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CONTENT AND CLASSIFICATION OF VEDIC AGE

STRUCTURE

- 3.1 Learning Objective
- 3.2 Introduction
- 3.3 Vedic Saraswati River
- 3.4 Evidence of Vedic Saraswati River
- 3.5 Problem Concerning the Original Home & Identity of The Aryans
- 3.6 Chapter Summary
- 3.7 Review Questions
- 3.8 Multiple Choice Questions



3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

After completion of this unit, students will be able to:

- Know about the Vedic Saraswati River.
- Learn about the historicity of the Vedic Saraswati River.
- Learn about the problems concerning the original home & identity of the Aryans.

3.2 INTRODUCTION

The Vedic Age was between 1500 BC and 600 BC. This is the next major civilization that occurred in ancient India after the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization by 1400 BC. The Vedas were composed in this period and this gives this age the name. The Vedas are also the chief source of information about this era. The Vedic Age started with the coming of the Aryans or Indo-Aryans.

The Indo-Aryans were a part of an expansion into the Indus Valley and Ganges Plain from 1800-to 1500 BCE. This is explained through Indo-Aryan Migration and Kurgan Theories.

The Indo-Aryans continued to settle the Ganges Plain, bringing their distinct religious beliefs and practices.

The Indo-Aryan Migration (1800-1500 Bce)

Foreigners from the north are believed to have migrated to India and settled in the Indus Valley and Ganges Plain from 1800-1500 BCE. The most prominent of these groups spoke Indo-European languages and were called Aryans, or “noble people” in the Sanskrit language. These Indo-Aryans were a branch of the Indo-Iranians, who originated in present-day northern Afghanistan. By 1500 BCE, the Indo-Aryans had created small herding and agricultural communities across northern India.

These migrations took place over several centuries and likely did not involve an invasion, as hypothesized by British archaeologist Mortimer Wheeler in the mid-1940s. Wheeler, who was Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India from 1944 to 1948, suggested that a nomadic, Indo-European tribe, called the Aryans, suddenly overwhelmed and conquered the Indus River Valley. He based his conclusions on the remains of unburied corpses found in the top levels of the archaeological site of Mohenjo-Daro, one of the great cities of the Indus Valley Civilization, whom he said were victims of war. Yet shortly after Wheeler proposed his theory, other scholars dismissed it by explaining that the skeletons were not those of victims of invasion massacres, but rather the remains of hasty burials. Wheeler himself eventually admitted that the theory could not be proven.

ORIGIN OF ARYANS

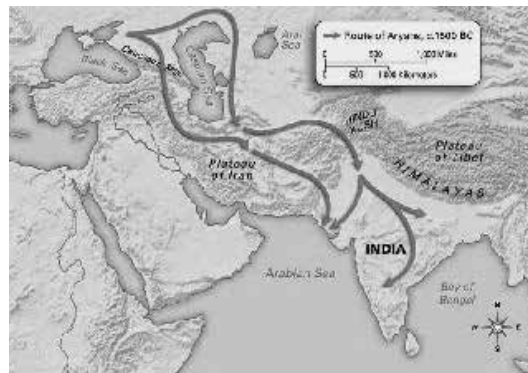
3000 B.C — Aryan community is found to be existing in the region between the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea. It is believed that over time Aryans have completely exhausted various resources available in that region. Being nomadic people, they set out to find new pastures of land to settle and exploit the available resources. Owing to such nomadism, Aryans were believed to have traveled away from the Eurasia region in different directions.

It is to be noted that the entire community of Aryans did not travel as a single large group but as a number of small groups. These small groups traveled in different directions from the Eurasia region. Pieces of evidence show the presence of Aryans in Persia, China, Afghanistan, and Indian regions in Asia; and Ukraine, Greece, Italy, Russia and Germany in Europe. However, in our discussions, we will be concerned about that particular group of Aryans who have reached Persia. Being nomadic people, they have halted at many points and settled at various places before reaching Persia. Sources show that they have reached Persia only by early 1500 B.C.

‘Persia is now present-day Iran. Persia, the name has a biblical origin whereas Iran means ‘Aryan’s land’ in Sanskrit/Persian. The name changes from Persia to Iran happened in the 1930s (1935 to be specific). The story behind the name change is related to Persia wanting to identify themselves with the *Aryan Movement* that had by then started in Germany (by the Nazis). It was important for Persia to do that because Germany was a rising star in Europe by then. Persia or the Shah of Persia wanted to grab this as an opportunity to build strong relations with Germany. Unfortunately, little did they know what Germany would do in the post-1935 period to the Jews and the rest of Europe. However, the name Iran continued without reverting to the old name.’

Entry Into India

After reaching Persia, the Aryans started moving towards Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Afghanistan and finally entered Pakistan-India through *Khyber and Bolan Passes*. It is important to note that, surprisingly the Indus Civilization vanished around the same period. Few historians believe that Aryans have invaded the Indus Valley Civilization resulting in their downfall. However, there is no solid proof of Aryans coming into contact with the IVC or massacring them.



Aryan Language

Now, in contrast with what we know about the Aryans, the Indo-Aryans (Aryans who settled in India) have a written script for their language and that is *Sanskrit*. It gets more interesting as we analyze. Consider the languages: Sanskrit, Persian, Greek, Latin, German and Russian i.e., the languages of the places which came under the influence of Aryans at one time or the other. These languages share similarities in terms of their words, semantics and/or grammar. This supports the theory that Aryans were a linguistic group i.e., Aryans were a large group of people sharing a common language and this language doesn't have a script. So, as per the theory wherever Aryans settled for a considerable period, they adopted the local script for their language. Therefore, many words, semantics and grammatical similarities are found in these languages. However, they might also belong to the same race and have a common language. Which makes them a racial group. Hence, it becomes difficult to separate language from a race and vice-versa.



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Impacts Of the Aryan Invasion

So, what happened from 1500 B.C to 600 B.C? Let's see what are the impacts of the advent of Aryans on the Indian Sub-Continent in chronological order (almost).

Aryans have entered India through Khyber and Bolan Passes. By the time Aryans entered North-West India, they were met with native Indians also famously referred to as Dravidians. Physically speaking, Dravidians are dark and short while Aryans are White and Tall.

Aryans started moving from North-West India into the Ganges River basin. They have made settlements near the Doab region, the region where Ganges and Jamuna rivers intersect. Further, they started conquering and forming settlements along the Ganges River. They later extended their settlements into the North-East. The above-mentioned task of extending the Aryan footprints from North-West to North-East India was not simple. With the resources and Aryan technology of ancient times, it may take years, centuries, or a couple of centuries, for Aryans to cover and make settlements to such a large extent.

Aryans of Eurasia traveled across continents to enter India and make settlements. But these Aryans finally settled in India. Ultimately, the settled Aryans lived in India for so long that they have become more Indian than European due to the influence of the surroundings. Over time, they have adopted our culture and practices.

Post-Invasion Effects

From the time they entered the Indian sub-continent. They have had huge conflicts with the native Dravidians in the initial stages. The Caucasian Foreign Aryans started ruling the native dark and short Dravidians.

Due to their influence in the northern parts of India, the Dravidian population might have shifted towards Southern India. Over time, the Indo-Aryans and Dravidians started making peaceful cooperation and learned to get along.

Centuries passed and finally the cooperation between Dravidians and Aryans invaded and people; the Natives and the Foreigners gave rise to mutual influences. The Dravidians are said to have adopted the religion from the Aryans. And Aryans too have adopted the Dravidian Deities or Gods and few of their religious practices/rituals.

The Aryans learnt the fine art of Agriculture and Architecture from the Dravidians. Aryans being nomads, never required neither agriculture nor architecture before. So the influences were mutual rather than just Aryans influencing the Dravidians. Hence, together they came up with a new Indian Culture that was neither purely Aryanistic nor purely native Indianistic.

Over time, developed, what is now called the Hindu religion (Hinduism). They also had racial stratification (Brahmana, Ksatriya, Vaishya and Sudras) as a part of this culture. This is how Aryans became Indians. Aryans no longer had to be nomadic or pastoral. Sanskrit was the language that was predominantly used in Ancient India.

The Kurgan Hypothesis

The Kurgan Hypothesis is the most widely accepted scenario of Indo-European origins. It postulates that people of a so-called Kurgan Culture, a grouping of the Yamna or Pit Grave culture and its predecessors, of the Pontic Steppe were the speakers of the Proto-

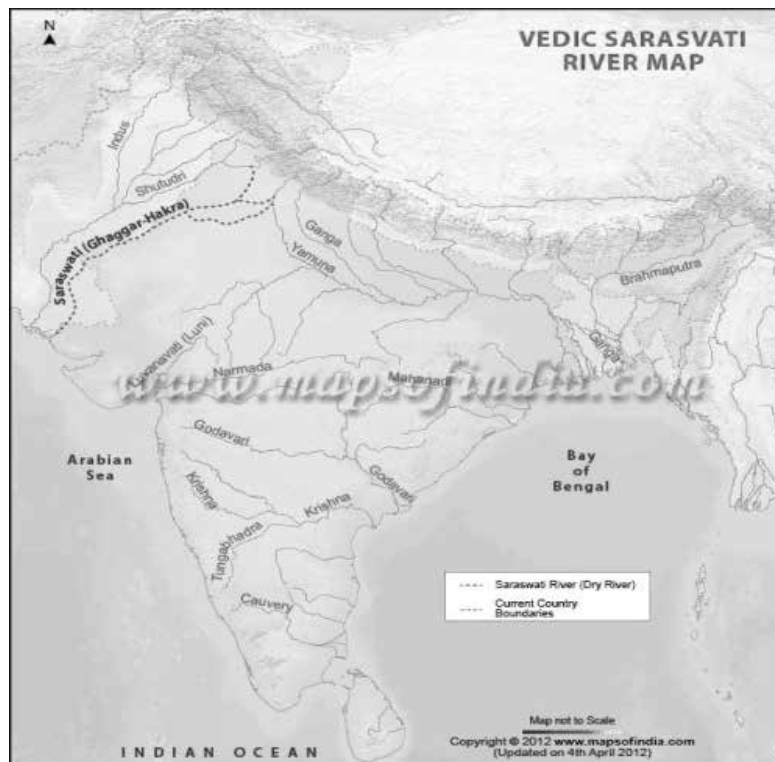
Indo-European language. According to this theory, these nomadic pastoralists expanded throughout the Pontic-Caspian steppe and into Eastern Europe by early 3000 BCE. The Kurgan people may have been mobile because of their domestication of horses and later use of the chariot.

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3.3 VEDIC SARASWATI RIVER

Being one of the chief Rig Vedic Rivers, as per the Hindu scripts and texts, the Saraswati River is also famously known as the Ghaggar-Hakra River. The Saraswati River is mentioned between the east of Yamuna and west of Sutlej in the early Rigvedic 'Nadistuti' hymn. But later in the other Vedic scriptures, it is said that the Saraswati River dried up in a desert. This river is a transboundary to India as well as to Pakistan. Also, this river flows through both nations together only in the monsoon season.



In the area before the Ottu barrage, the Saraswati River is anciently known as the Ghaggar and where it crosses this barrage it becomes Hakra. The Ghaggar river acts as a transboundary river to India in the monsoon weather whereas the Hakra, which is an extension of Ghaggar in India becomes the dehydrated canal in Pakistan. The Ghaggar originates from the Shivalik Mountains of the Himachal Pradesh and runs through the states of Punjab, and Haryana and even flows through some parts of Rajasthan. Two irrigation channels are supplied by this river in Rajasthan.

The foothills of the mountainous region of the district of Ambala in Haryana act as the source of the contemporary river Sarsuti which joins the Ghaggar in Punjab. Also, the dehydrated Sutlej waterway meets the Ghaggar in Hanumangarh and this channel is known as the Naiwal Channel. The Chautang River (Drishadvati) meets the Ghaggar in Suratgarh.

CONTENT AND
CLASSIFICATION OF
VEDIC AGE

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It is believed that about some 10,000 years ago, during the liquefaction of the Ice Age glaciers in the Himalayan Mountain Ranges, the Ghaggar River was flowing in full strength, which can be understood by the broad palaeo-channel of this river. Also, it is seen that it gradually joined the currently waterless canal of the Hakra River, which led to the river pouring into the Rann of Kutch.

The detention of the tributaries by the Yamuna River and Indus River System is believed to have caused the dehydration of this river. Also, the cutting down of trees: Deforestation and overgrazing are the other reasons for the dehydration of the river water and the desiccation in most of its drainage basin. Though originally all these events took place much before 1900 BCE, it is believed by some historians, researchers, and environmentalists that all this might have taken place in the 1900 BCE itself.

3.4 EVIDENCE OF VEDIC SARASWATI RIVER

A few researchers have concluded the Ghaggar river is the Saraswati of Rig Vedic times. The pieces of evidence presented are:

- Presence of coarse-grained white or grey sand: Researchers have discovered white mica layers 3-10 meters below the surface on both sides of the modern Ghaggar in a stretch of 300 km up to the border with Pakistan. Such white mica is found in glacier-fed Himalayan rivers like Ganga and Yamuna. Researchers have found by the Argon-Argon dating method that the ages of the mica samples in the sand of Ghaggar overlap with those of the rocks of the higher Himalayas.
- According to some researchers, the Ghaggar river had been perennial in two phases – the first phase between 78,000 to 18,000 BCE and the second phase between 7000-2500 BCE. This study, published in Nature magazine, makes a compelling case for the identification of the Ghaggar-Hakra with the Saraswati River. The researchers say that the end of the second perennial phase coincided with the beginning of the decline of civilization.
- Research shows that the Sutlej River was flowing into the Ghaggar River to make it perennial for the Early Harappans.
- Photographs sent by American satellite Landsat showed the presence of underground water in a definitive pattern in the Jaisalmer area. It was then that scientists started thinking about the possibility of a large palaeo-channel in Rajasthan that could belong to a big river. Remote sensing images of ISRO and the Geological Survey of India (GSI) also found the existence of palaeo-channels of a mighty river in seven to eight places, all lying on the west of the Aravalli ranges. According to many researchers, nearly 2,000 of the 2,600 Harappan sites that have been discovered are situated on the old palaeo-channels of the Saraswati.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. River Saraswati is mentioned in which hymn of Rig Veda?
2. How is river Saraswati related to India and Pakistan?
3. What is Naiwal Channel?

4. Saraswati is anciently known as the _____ River.
5. When Saraswati crosses _____ barrage it becomes _____ River.

3.5 PROBLEM CONCERNING THE ORIGINAL HOME & IDENTITY OF THE ARYANS

There are different theories associated with the Aryans, their origin and possible migration/invasion in the Indian Subcontinent. These are as follows:

- **Central Asian Theory** – This theory was propounded by Prof. Max Muller, a German scholar of comparative languages. As per this theory, the Aryans originally lived in Central Asia. With the comparative study of the “Avesta” (Iranian text) and the “Vedas”, one finds a striking linguistic relationship between them not just words but concepts also. The interchangeability between ‘h’ and ‘s’ an incredible consistency in this change as seen in Hepta Hindu (Sapta Sindhu), Ahura (Asura), Haoma (Soma), Daha (Dasa), further substantiates the claim.
- **European Theory** – Sir William Jones, Giles (Hungary), Shroeder (France), and Morgan (Western Siberia) are supporters of this theory. As per this theory, the Aryans inhabited Europe and voyaged to various places and the Aryans who came to India were an offshoot of the Europeans. The proponents of this theory established the resemblance of Sanskrit with the European languages. For example, the Sanskrit words Matri and Pitri are similar to the Latin Mater and Pater. Suryyas and Maruttash of the Kassite (Mesopotamia) inscriptions are equivalent to the Vedic Surya and Marut.
- **Theory of North Pole/Arctic Theory** – According to Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the Northern Arctic region was the original home of the Aryans. He commented that the Rig Veda comprises specific references to a place where harsh cold and long days and nights of six months each are found.
- **Tibet Theory** – Swami Dayanand Saraswati was the proponent of this theory. According to this theory, Tibet is the original home of the Aryans with reference to the Vedas and other Aryan texts.
- **Indian Theory** – Dr. A.C Dass, Ganga Nath Jha, Sri L.D Kalla, Sri D.S Trivedi have acknowledged this theory. According to this theory, the Aryans were the residents of the Sapta Sindhu. This region stretched from the river Indus, reaching up to the Saraswati River. Kashmir and Punjab were also under this region. The sacrificial rituals of the Vedic Aryans point to their Indian origin. The river hymns in the Rig Veda mention the names of the rivers of this region. The flora and fauna mentioned are mostly similar to the Himalayan region. Regarding the affinity of the Indian and European languages, this theory states that in the language of the Aryans, there are a plethora of Sanskrit words, but this is not the case with the latter. If Aryans had come from outside, their ancient Literature (Vedas) should have been found there, but no Vedic literature has been found outside India.

The most accepted view is that there was a series of Aryan immigrants and they came to the subcontinent as immigrants. The earliest Indo-Aryans lived in the geographical



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area covered by Eastern Afghanistan, Punjab and the fringes of Western Uttar Pradesh. Some rivers of Afghanistan, such as the river Kubha (Kabul) and the river Indus (Sindhus) and its five tributaries are mentioned in the Rig Veda. The five tributaries are the Jhelum (Vitasta), Beas (Vipasa), Chenab (Askini), Ravi (Parushni), and Satluj (Sutudri). The Sindhu, identical to the Indus, is the river par excellence of the Aryans. Another river mentioned is the Sarasvati, now lost in the sands of Rajasthan, the area represented by it is covered by the Ghaggar river. The whole region in which the Aryans first settled in India is called the land of seven rivers.

3.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Vedic Age was between 1500 BC and 600 BC. This is the next major civilization that occurred in ancient India after the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization by 1400 BC. The Vedas were composed in this period and this gives this age the name. The Vedas are also the chief source of information about this era. The Vedic Age started with the coming of the Aryans or Indo-Aryans. Aryan community is found to be existing in the region between the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea. It is believed that over time Aryans have completely exhausted various resources available in that region. Being nomadic people, they set out to find new pastures of land to settle and exploit the available resources. Owing to such nomadism, Aryans were believed to have traveled away from the Eurasia region in different directions. It is to be noted that the entire community of Aryans did not travel as a single large group but as a number of small groups. These small groups traveled in different directions from the Eurasia region. Pieces of evidence show the presence of Aryans in Persia, China, Afghanistan, and Indian regions in Asia; and Ukraine, Greece, Italy, Russia, and Germany in Europe.

Aryans have invaded the Indus Valley Civilization resulting in their downfall. However, there is no solid proof of Aryans coming into contact with the IVC or massacring them. Aryans were a large group of people sharing a common language and this language doesn't have a script. So, as per the theory wherever Aryans settled for a considerable period, they adopted the local script for their language. Therefore, many words, semantics and grammatical similarities are found in these languages. Aryans were a large group of people sharing a common language and this language doesn't have a script. So, as per the theory wherever Aryans settled for a considerable period, they adopted the local script for their language. Therefore, many words, semantics and grammatical similarities are found in these languages.

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A few researchers have concluded the Ghaggar river is the Saraswati of Rig Vedic times because of the presence of coarse-grained white or grey sand: Researchers have discovered

white mica layers 3-10 meters below the surface on both sides of the modern Ghaggar in a stretch of 300 km up to the border with Pakistan. Such white mica is found in glacier-fed Himalayan rivers like Ganga and Yamuna. Also, research shows that the Sutlej River was flowing into the Ghaggar River to make it perennial for the Early Harappans.

Apart from this, there are many theories related to the original home and identity of the Aryans which include: Central Asian Theory, European Theory, Tibet Theory, etc.

3.7 REVIEW QUESTIONS

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Name the different theories associated with the Aryans.
2. List some of the reasons for the dehydration/loss of the Saraswati River.
3. Give a brief description of the Theory of North Pole/Arctic theory.
4. Name all the tributaries of the river Indus.
5. Explain the Kurgan Hypothesis.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Describe the European Theory in detail.
2. List the pieces of evidence that why the Ghaggar river is the Saraswati of Rig Vedic times.
3. Describe the Indian Theory in detail.
4. Give some insight into the Vedic Saraswati River.
5. Who gave the Central Asian Theory? Give some insights into the same.

3.8 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. On which riverbank the Rig Veda had been written?
 - a. Indus River
 - b. Narmada River
 - c. Kaveri River
 - d. Saraswati River
2. Who gave the Tibetan theory about the origin and identity of Aryans?
 - a. Bal Gangadhar Tilak
 - b. Mahatama Gandhi
 - c. Jawaharlal Nehru
 - d. Swami Dayanand Saraswati
3. Which River is considered to be the Saraswati River of Rig Veda?
 - a. Indus River
 - b. Ghaggar River
 - c. Yamuna River
 - d. Luni River
4. The water of Ghaggar River eventually got poured into?
 - a. Bay of Bengal



- b. Rann of Kutch
 - c. Arabian Sea
 - d. None of the above
5. Which River originates from the Shivalik mountains of Himachal?
- a. Mahanadi
 - b. Satluj River
 - c. Brahmaputram River
 - d. Ghaggar River
6. Two irrigation channels are supplied by _____ river in Rajasthan.
- a. Lohit River
 - b. Ghaggar River
 - c. Son River
 - d. Brahmaputra River
7. _____ River was flowing into the Ghaggar River to make it perennial for the Early Harappans.
- a. Sutlej River
 - b. Kaveri River
 - c. Narmada River
 - d. Ram Ganga
8. There are _____ tributaries of river Indus.
- a. Three
 - b. Four
 - c. Six
 - d. Five
9. Askini is the other name for which river?
- a. Jhelum River
 - b. Narmada River
 - c. Satluj River
 - d. Chenab River
10. The whole region in which the Aryans first settled in India is called the
- a. Land of seven rivers
 - b. Mound of dead
 - c. Both A and B
 - d. None of the above

◆◆◆◆

UNIT

IV

EARLY VEDIC CULTURE

STRUCTURE

- 4.1 Learning Objective
- 4.2 Introduction
- 4.3 Society
- 4.4 Economy
- 4.5 Polity
- 4.6 Religion
- 4.7 Town Planning and Architecture
- 4.8 Chapter Summary
- 4.9 Review Questions
- 4.10 Multiple Choice Questions



4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

After completion of this unit, students will be able to learn about the ways:

- The people lived related to their environment during the early Vedic Period.
- The architecture they built and the religious lifestyles.
- The development of art during this period.
- Additionally, you'll become aware of how art once again declined during this period.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

Understanding the aspects of early Vedic civilizations seems interesting, but learning about how early Vedic societies reflected their period of enlightenment, progress and steady decline already seems daunting. One can easily get stuck in all the fascinating yet overwhelming history by losing their way within all this vast knowledge, so before you do that, you might want to know how best to approach studying such disciplines!

The Rig Vedic Civilization or The Early Vedic Period

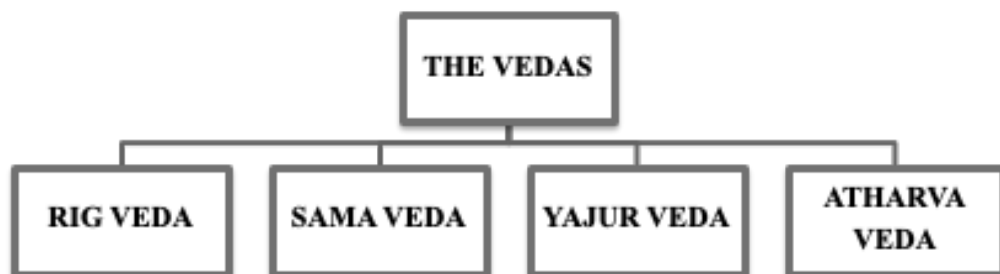
(1750-1000 BCE)

The Advent of the Aryans constitutes a landmark in the history of ancient India. Their civilization is known as the Vedic Age civilization which flourished many years after the decay of the Indus Valley civilization. The Aryans entered India through the North-Western passes and at first settled in the Saptasindhu region of Punjab or the land of seven rivers, namely, Sindhu (Indus), Vipash (Beas), Vitasta (Jhelum), Parushni (Ravi), Asikni (Chenab), Shutudri (Satluj) and Saraswati. The early civilization of the Indo Aryans grew up in this region. Gradually the Aryans succeeded in establishing their supremacy over the whole Valley of rivers Indus and Ganges and developed their own political and social system.

The Vedic Age has been divided into two parts for the sake of convenience –

- Early Vedic Age (1500-1000 B.C.) &
- Later Vedic Age (1000 – 600 B.C.).

The history of the Vedic period is based mainly on Vedic texts which were compiled during the Vedic Age.





Rig Veda

- It is the oldest Veda and depicts the life of early Vedic people in India. UNESCO has included the Rig Veda in the list of literature signifying World Human Heritage.
- Its text consists of 1028 hymns (Sukta) which are divided into ten Mandalas or books.
- Mandalas 2 – 7 form the oldest part of the Rig Veda Samhita and are called “family books” as they are ascribed to particular families of seers/rishis.
- Mandala 8 – Here, the hymns are dedicated to various gods and have been mostly composed by the Kanva clan.
- Mandala 9 – All the hymns are dedicated entirely to Soma.
- Mandala 1 – It is primarily dedicated to Indra and Agni. Varuna, Surya, Mitra, Rudra, and Vishnu have also been mentioned.
- Mandala 10 – It contains Nadi Stuti Sukta praising the rivers. It also contains Nasadiya Sukta and Purush Sukta. It contains hymns that are traditionally chanted during marriage and death rituals.
- The only surviving recension of Rig Veda is the Shakala Shakha.
- The Upaveda of Rig Veda is the Ayurveda.

Sama Veda

- The Sama Veda or the “Veda of Chants” is the collection of verses drawn almost wholly from the Rig Veda, that are provided with musical notations and are intended as an aid to the performance of sacred songs.
- It contains the famous Dhrupada Raga, later sung by Tansen in medieval times.
- Recensions (Shakhas) of the Sama Veda are Kauthuma, Ranayaniya and Jaiminiya (Talavakara).
- Sama Veda’s Upaveda is the Gandharva Veda.

Yajur Veda (Worship or Ritual Knowledge)

- This Veda deals with the procedure for the performance of sacrifices. It is further divided into-
 - Shukla Yajur Veda/ Vajasaneya / White Yajur Veda – it contains only the mantras. It contains the Madhyandina and Kanva recensions.
 - Krishna Yajur Veda / Black Yajur Veda – it includes mantras as well as prose explanations/commentary. It contains Kathaka, Maitrayani, Taittiriya and Kapishthala recensions.
 - The Upaveda of the Yajur Veda is the Dhanur Veda.

Atharva Veda

- It concerns itself with magic spells to ward off evil spirits or dangers.
- It is considered to be a non-Aryan work and is classified into 20 kandas or books, with 711 hymns.



- It contains Shaunaka and Paippalada recensions.
- Shilpa Veda is the Upaveda of Atharva Veda.

Brahmanas

The Brahmanas consist of details about the meaning of Vedic hymns, their applications and origin stories. Every Veda has several Brahmanas attached to it.

- Aitareya or Kaushitaki Brahmanas were allotted to Rig Veda for detailing.
- Tandya and Jaiminiya Brahmanas to Sama Veda for detailing.
- Taittiriya and Shatpatha Brahmanas to Yajur Veda for detailing.
- Gopath Brahmana to Atharva Veda for detailing.

Aranyakas

The Aranyakas are also called “forest books” as they were written chiefly by hermits residing in the forests for their students. They lay emphasis not on sacrifices but meditation. They are in fact, opposed to sacrifices and many of the early rituals. They are the concluding portion of the Brahmanas and philosophically interpret rituals.

Upanishads

The literal meaning of Upanishad is to “sit near someone”. There are 108 Upanishads, of which 13 are the most prominent. It introduces the concept of ‘Atman’ and ‘Brahman’. It states that the core of one’s self is neither the body nor the mind, but the Atman or the “soul”. It further points out that the core of all creatures is the Atman itself and can be experienced through meditation. According to the Upanishads, the Brahman is the underlying substance of the universe. It is an unchanging ‘Absolute being’. The Upanishads are mainly philosophical and speak of the highest knowledge

- Satyamev Jayate is the National Emblem taken from Mandukyopanishad
- The Chandogya Upanishad refers to the first 3 ashrams and discusses the (mainly two) types of marriage:
 - Anuloma marriage – the marriage of a man in his varna or below his varna. It is the most accepted and common form of marriage in society.
 - Pratiloma marriage – the marriage of a woman in varna lower than her own. It is not sanctioned by the Vedas.

Vedanta

The Vedanta reveals the final aim of the Vedas and signifies the end of the Vedas. It condemns sacrifices, and ceremonies and denotes the last phase of the Vedic period.

4.3 SOCIETY

The family was the basic unit of the Rig Vedic society. It was patriarchal and Monogamy was the usual norm of marriage but the chiefs at times practised polygamy. Marriages took place after attaining maturity. After marriage, the wife went to her husband’s house. The family was part of a larger grouping called vis or clan.



One or more than one clan made Jana or tribe. The Jana was the largest social unit. All the members of a clan were related to each other by blood relation. The membership of a tribe was based on birth and not on residence in a certain area. Thus the members of the Bharata tribe were known as the Bharatas. It did not imply any territory.

The Rig Vedic society was simple and largely egalitarian. There was no caste division. The occupation was not based on birth. Members of a family could adopt different occupations.

However certain differences did exist during the period. Varna or colour was the basis of initial differentiation between the Vedic and non-Vedic people. The Vedic people were fair whereas the non-Vedic indigenous people were dark in complexion and spoke a different language. Thus, the Rigveda mentions *arya varna* and *dasa varna*. Here *dasa* has been used in the sense of a group different from the Rigvedic people. Later, *dasa* came to mean a slave.

Besides, certain practices during this period, such as the concentration of a larger share of the war booty in the hands of the chiefs and priests resulted in the creation of some inequalities within a tribe during the later part of this Vedic phase.

The warriors, priests and ordinary people were the three sections of the Rigvedic tribe. The *sudra* category came into existence only towards the end of the Rigvedic period. This means that the division of society in the early Vedic period was not sharp. This is indicated by the following verse in the Rigveda: "I am a poet; my father is a physician and my mother grinds grain upon the stone. Striving for wealth, with varied plans, we follow our desires like cattle." The women in society enjoyed respectable position. She was married at a proper age and could choose a husband of her own choice. She could take part in the proceedings of the tribal assemblies called *Sabha* and *Samiti*.

4.4 ECONOMY

The early Vedic Aryans were pastoralists. Cattle rearing was their main occupation. They reared cattle, sheep, goats, and horses for purposes of milk, meat, and hides. This conclusion was made after analyzing the literary evidence in Rig Veda. A large number of words are derived from the word *go* meaning cow. A wealthy person was known as *gomat* and the daughter was called *duhitri* which means one who milks the cow. The word *gaveshana* means the search for cows, but it also means battle since many battles were fought over cattle. The cows were thought of as providers of everything. Prayers were offered for an increase in the number of cattle.

All the above and many more references show that cattle breeding was the most important economic activity of the Rig Vedic Aryans.

However, this is not to suggest that the early Vedic people did not know about agriculture. The evidence for agriculture in comparison with pastoral activities in the early portions is meagre and mostly late insertions.

A few references show that they had knowledge of agriculture and practised it to supplement their food requirements. They produced *yava* (modern *jau* or *barley*), which was rather a generic word for cereals. Apart from cattle-rearing and small-scale cultivation, people were engaged in many other economic activities. Hunting, carpentry, tanning, weaving, chariot-making, metal smeltery etc. were some such activities. The products of these activities were

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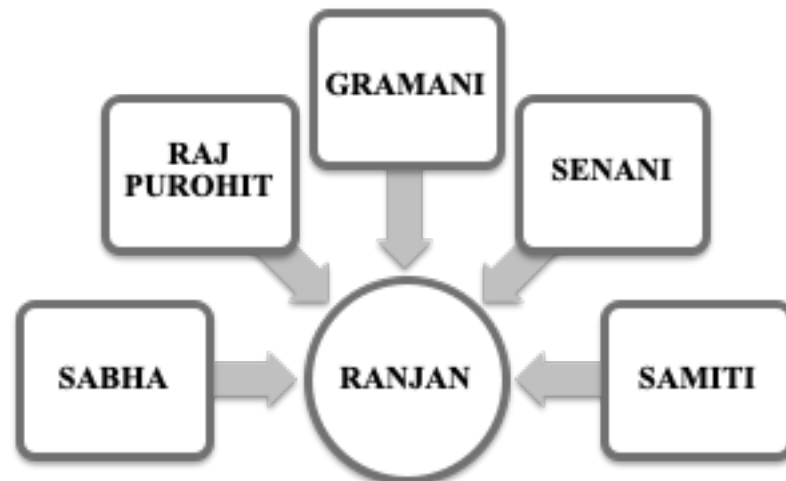
exchanged through barter. However, cows were the most favoured medium of exchange. The priests received cows, horses and gold ornaments as fees for performing sacrifices.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Explain the term Vedanta.
2. Describe the main occupation of the early Vedic people.
3. How important was agriculture in the life of early Vedic people? Explain.
4. Describe the forms of marriages during the early Vedic period.
5. On what basis was the early Vedic society divided?

4.5 POLITY

The chief social unit of the Aryans was known as Jana. The chief of this unit was the political leader called Rajan. The main function of the chief was to protect the Jana and cattle from the enemies. He was helped in his task by the tribal assemblies called sabha, Samiti, Vidatha, Gana, and Parishad.



Political Structure of the Early Vedic Period

Out of these sabha and Samiti were the most important assemblies. All aspects of life were discussed in these assemblies. These may include wars, distribution of the spoils of wars, judicial and religious activities etc. Thus, these assemblies in a way limited the powers of the chiefs. Interestingly, women were also allowed to participate in the deliberations of the sabha and Samiti. The post of the chief was not hereditary. The tribe generally elected him. Though the succession in one family was known but that was not based on the rule of primogeniture (i.e., the eldest son acquiring the position). The purohita assisted and advised the chief on various matters. Other than the purohita, there were a limited number of other officials who assisted the chief in the day-to-day tribal affairs.

Senani, Kulpa, Gramani, etc. are some of the functionaries which find mentioned in the Rigveda. The sena or army was not a permanent fighting group and consisted of able-bodied tribesmen who were mobilized at the time of the wars.

Takshan, the carpenter, and rathakara, the chariot maker was responsible for making chariots. There is no official mention of a collector of taxes. The people offered to the chief

what is called Bali. It was just a voluntary contribution made by ordinary tribesmen on special occasions. All this shows that the early Vedic polity was an uncomplicated system based on the support and active participation of all the tribesmen. This situation, however, changed during the later Vedic phase.

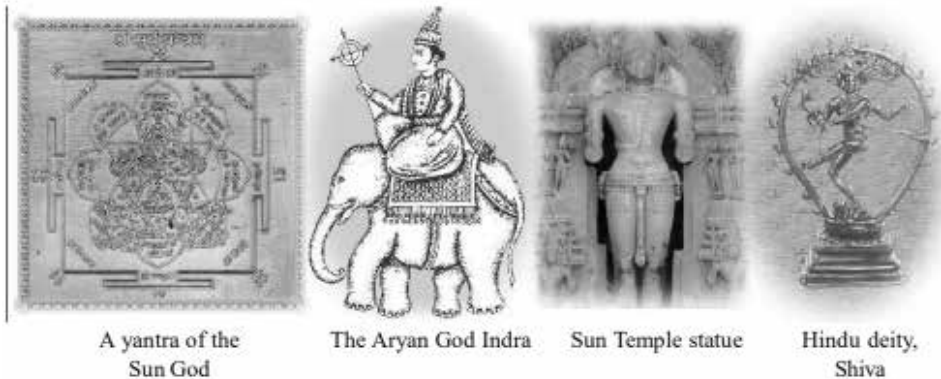
4.6 RELIGION

The prayers to propitiate gods for physical protection and material gains were the main concerns of the Rigvedic people.

The Rig Vedic gods were generally personifications of different aspects of natural forces such as rains, storms, sun etc. The attributes of these gods also reflect the tribal and patriarchal nature of the society as we do not find many goddesses mentioned in the text.

Indra, Agni, Varuna, Mitra, Dyaus, Pushana, Yama, Soma, etc. are all male gods. In comparison, we have only a few goddesses such as Ushas, Sarasvati, Prithvi, etc which occupy secondary positions in the pantheon. The functions of different gods reflect their needs in society.

Thus, since the Rigvedic people were engaged in wars with each other they worshipped Indra as a god. He is the most frequently mentioned god in Rigveda. He carried the thunderbolt and was also respected as a weather god who brought rain.



Artifacts of the Early Vedic Period

Maruts the god of storm aided Indra in the wars in the way tribesmen aided their leader in the tribal wars. Agni, the fire god was the god of the home and was considered an intermediary between gods and men. Soma was associated with plants and herbs. Soma was also a plant from which an intoxicating juice was extracted. This juice was drunk at sacrifices.

Varuna, another important deity, was the keeper of the cosmic order known as Rita. This Rita was an important aspect of tribal set-up. Pushan was the god of the roads, herdsmen and cattle. In the life of the pastoral nomads, this god must have been very important.

Other gods were similarly associated with other aspects of nature and life. All these gods were invoked and propitiated at yajnas or sacrifices. These sacrifices were organized by the chiefs of the tribes and performed by priests. Gods thus invoked in the sacrifices supposedly rewarded the sacrificers with success in wars, progeny, increase in cattle and long life. It

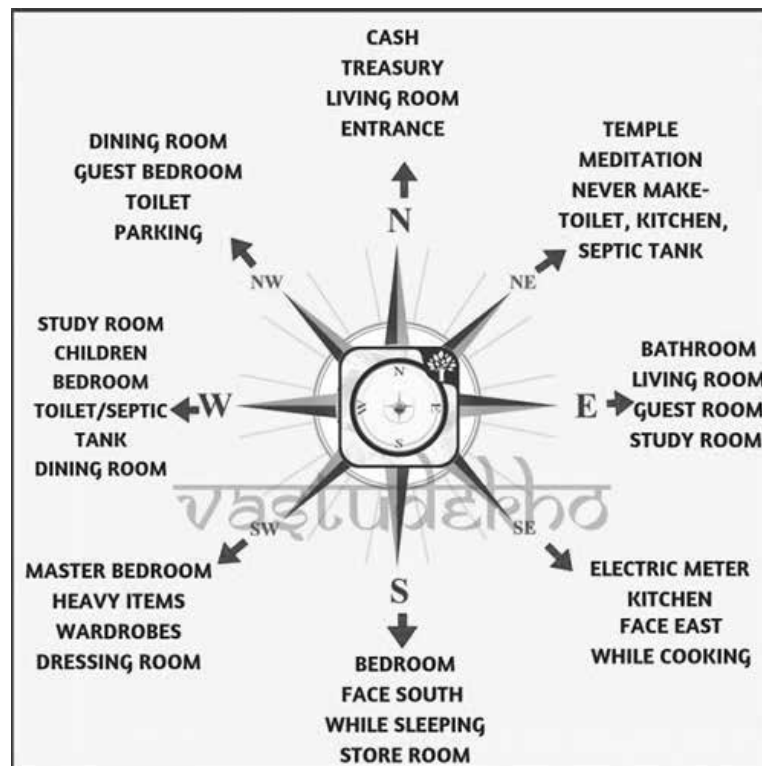
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also brought a large number of gifts in the form of dana and dakshina to the priests. It is important here to note that during the entire Vedic phase people did not construct temples nor did they worship any statues. These features of Indian religion developed much later.

4.7 TOWN PLANNING & ARCHITECTURE

In simple words, it was known as Vastu Shastra or Vedic architecture. To define Vastu Shastra - Vastu, which means physical environment and Shastra meaning knowledge or principles, is one of the traditional Hindu canons of town planning and architecture. Its current popularity stems from its focus on a wholesome approach to space and form. A home can be so much more than a special space that creates and influences good health, happiness, family harmony and enlightenment.

Vedic architecture reliably gives our homes these influences by using laws of nature that connect individual intelligence with cosmic intelligence. Vastu Shastra in essence unifies many subjects together like science, art, astronomy and astrology. It can also be said as an ancient mystic science that was used for designing and building ancient palaces. Vastu Shastra according to believers helps one to make lives better by securing the living space and preventing things from going wrong.



Vastu Shastra

Vastu is the science of direction, which combines all the five elements of nature and balances them with an individual and the material. The five elements namely:

- Earth
- Water

- Air
- Fire and
- Space

According to scriptures, ancient sages and seers had known the secrets of using all the five elements of this universe and their special characteristics and influences such as the magnetic field, gravitational effect etc. This knowledge formed the base for what evolved as Vastu Shastra. The five elements otherwise also called “Paanchbhootas” of nature, pave the way for enhanced health, wealth, prosperity and happiness in an enlightened environment.

Most importantly Vastu extracts the positive energies of the five basic elements of nature –

- The solar energy of the sun
- Lunar energy of the moon
- Wind energy
- Magnetic effects of earth and
- The heat energy of fire

and balances them to bring harmony into the life of a person planning to build or live on-premises.

There are four categories of Vastu:

- The Earth site or Bhoomi, which is the principal dwelling place on which everything rests
- The structure or the Prasada, which would be the building
- Moving vehicles or Yaana
- Furniture or Sayana.

So, the principles of Vastu Shastra extend from the macro-level to the micro-level which includes site selection, site planning, and orientation. It also deals with zoning and disposition of rooms, proportional relationships between the various parts of buildings, and the character of the building.

Significantly the rampant sense of faithlessness in anything that modern science fails to explain, it is practically impossible to even dream of a home or office confirming the laws of “Vastu”. Its current popularity stems from its focus on a wholesome approach to space and form. Some perfect examples of Ancient Buildings that have been built as per Vastu:

- The Taj Mahal - Agra, India
- Prashanti Nilayam - Puttaparthi, India
- The temple of Lord Sri Venkateshwara - Tirupati, India
- Nirmal Hriday Bhawan - Calcutta (Mother Teresa), India
- Vivekananda Rock Memorial - Cape Camorin (Kanyakumari) , India
- Vijaynagar Steel Plant - Torangallu, India
- The Sun Temple in Konarak -Orissa, India, etc





4.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Advent of the Aryans constitutes a landmark in the history of ancient India. Their civilization is known as the Vedic Age civilization which flourished many years after the decay of the Indus Valley civilization. Gradually the Aryans succeeded in establishing their supremacy over the whole Valley of rivers Indus and Ganges and developed their own political and social system. The history of the Vedic period is based mainly on Vedic texts which were compiled during the Vedic Age. There are 4 Vedas and each Veda generally has 4 parts – Samhita, Brahmana, Aranyaka, and Upanishads. The four Vedas are – Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda, and Atharva Veda.

The family was the basic unit of the Rig Vedic society. It was patriarchal and Monogamy was the usual norm of marriage but the chiefs at times practiced polygamy. Marriages took place after attaining maturity. The early Vedic Aryans were pastoralists. Cattle rearing was their main occupation. They reared cattle, sheep, goats, and horses for purposes of milk, meat, and hides.

The chief social unit of the Aryans was known as Jana. The chief of this unit was the political leader called Rajan. The main function of the chief was to protect the Jana and cattle from the enemies. He was helped in his task by the tribal assemblies called sabha, Samiti, Vidatha, Gana and Parishad.

Vedic architecture reliably gives our homes these influences by using laws of nature that connect individual intelligence with cosmic intelligence. Vastu Shastra in essence unifies many subjects together like science, art, astronomy and astrology. It can also be said as an ancient mystic science that was used for designing and building ancient palaces. Vastu Shastra according to believers helps one to make lives better by securing the living space and preventing things from going wrong.

The Rig Vedic gods were generally personifications of different aspects of natural forces such as rains, storms, sun, etc. The attributes of these gods also reflect the tribal and patriarchal nature of the society as we do not find many goddesses mentioned in the text.

Vastu is the science of direction, which combines all the five elements of nature and balances them with an individual and the material. The five elements namely: Earth, Water, Air, Fire, and Space.

According to scriptures, ancient sages and seers had known the secrets of using all the five elements of this universe and their special characteristics and influences such as the magnetic field, gravitational effect, etc. This knowledge formed the base for what evolved as Vastu Shastra. The five elements otherwise also called “Paanchbhootas” of nature, pave the way for enhanced health, wealth, prosperity, and happiness in an enlightened environment.

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4.9 REVIEW QUESTIONS

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Describe the forms of marriages during the early Vedic period.
2. Was the Early Vedic society egalitarian in nature? Give reasons for your answer.
3. How did inequalities appear in the Early Vedic society?
4. What was the main function of the fire god Agni?
5. On what basis do we say that the attributes of the Rigvedic gods reflect the tribal and patriarchal nature of the society?

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Indicate the geographical location of the Early Vedic people.
2. Describe the functions of the popular assemblies during the early Vedic period.
3. Who were the Aryans? Where did they spread out from?
4. Give a detailed description of town planning and architecture in the early Vedic period.
5. Who did the early Vedic people worship and why?

4.10 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. 'Vastu' is the science of _____.
 - a. Water
 - b. Direction
 - c. Life
 - d. None of the above
2. The chief social unit of the Aryans was known as _____.
 - a. Jana
 - b. Rajan
 - c. Gana
 - d. None of these
3. Lunar energy is related to?
 - a. Sun
 - b. Moon
 - c. Fire
 - d. Heat
4. _____ was the main Occupation of early Vedic Aryans.
 - a. Agriculture
 - b. Cattle rearing
 - c. Hunting
 - d. None of the above
5. Vedic age has been divided into how many parts?
 - a. Four
 - b. Three

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- c. Five
 - d. Two
6. What was the other name of Carpenter?
- a. Takshan
 - b. Rathakara
 - c. Jana
 - d. Gana
7. Prayers were offered for an increase in the number of _____.
- a. Cows
 - b. Rain
 - c. Marriages
 - d. None of the above
8. Which is the oldest Veda?
- a. Yajur Veda
 - b. Sama Veda
 - c. Rig Veda
 - d. Atharva Veda
9. There are ____ Vedas in total.
- a. Five
 - b. Seven
 - c. Eight
 - d. Four
10. Which Veda is related to 'Worship'?
- a. Yajur Veda
 - b. Sama Veda
 - c. Rig Veda
 - d. Atharva Veda

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LATER VEDIC CULTURE

STRUCTURE

- 5.1 Learning Objective
- 5.2 Introduction
- 5.3 Society
- 5.4 Economy
- 5.5 Polity
- 5.6 Religion
- 5.7 Town Planning and Architecture
- 5.8 Decline of Later Vedic Period
- 5.9 Chapter Summary
- 5.10 Review Questions
- 5.11 Multiple Choice Questions



5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

After completion of this unit, students will be able to learn about the ways:

- The people lived related to their environment during the later Vedic Period.
- The architecture they built and the religious lifestyles.
- The development of art during this period.
- Additionally, you'll become aware of how art once again declined during this period.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

The transition from the early to the later Vedic period was marked by the emergence of agriculture as the dominant economic activity and a corresponding decline in the significance of cattle rearing. Several changes went hand in hand with this. For instance, several large kingdoms arose because of the increasing importance of land and long-distance trade. The late Vedic period, from ca. 500 B.C.E. onward, more or less seamlessly blends into the period of the Middle kingdoms of India known from historical sources.

This age witnessed the composition of three later Veda Samhitas namely:

- Samveda Samhita
- Yajurveda Samhita
- Atharvaveda Samhita

Also, the Brahmanas and the Upanishads of all the four Vedas and later on the two great epics:

- The Ramayana &
- The Mahabharata

All these later Vedic texts were compiled in the Upper Gangetic basin in 1000—600 B.C. During the period represented by Later Samhitas, the Aryans covered the whole of Northern India, from the Himalayas to the Vindhyas.

The spread of Aryans over the whole of India completed before 400 B.C. Of the new kingdoms in the east, the most important were Kurus, Panchalas, Kasis, Kosalas and Videhas.

Gradually the Aryans moved toward South India. It is believed that their southern movement began during the period of Brahmana literature, about 1000 B.C., and went on steadily till they reached the southernmost extremity of the Peninsula in or sometime before the fourth century B.C.

The great grammarian Katya Yana who flourished in the fourth century B.C. knew the countries of the south such as Pandya, Chola, and Kerala. But the Aryan colonization in the South was not as complete as in the north. With the progress of the Aryans in Northern India, their center of civilization was shifted towards the east. The territory between Saraswati and Ganga was the seat of the Aryan civilization.

Kingdoms

The late Vedic period was marked by the rise of the 16 Mahajanapadas referred to in some of the literature. The power of the king and the Kshatriyas greatly increased. Rulers gave themselves titles like *ekarat* (ruler), *sarvabhauma* (ruler of all the earth), and *chakravartin* ('who moves the wheel'). The kings performed sacrifices like *rajasuya*, (royal consecration) *vajapeya* (including a chariot race), and, for supreme dominance over other kings, the *Ashvamedha* (horse sacrifice). The coronation ceremony was a major social occasion. Several functionaries, in addition to the *purohita* and the *senani*, took part. The role of the people in political decision-making and the status of the *Vaishyas* as such was greatly decreased.

Although the Vedas are not widely studied in contemporary India except by scholars, they continue to impact many aspects of life, especially ethics and obligations within the family and society. Many aspects of Hindu practice are still derived from or taken wholly from the Vedas. One definition of a Hindu is someone who reveres the Vedas, even if they have little else in common.



16 Mahajanapadas

The Vedic period represents one of the cradles of humanity. On the one hand, the literary legacy does not contain much by way of historical information. On the other, this legacy takes us back to one of the very earliest of any human society; Feuerstein, Kak and Frawley argue that India, from the Vedic period to today, represents "the oldest known continuous civilization on earth," although some would challenge this statement, championing China's claim. Vedic society's sophisticated organization, its



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profound interest in human origins and in the question of the meaning and purpose of life combined with a refusal to speculate, its championing of order against chaos and order within a society, all suggest a maturity that is often associated with humanity at a much later stage of development.

The possibility that the ancient world was a more inter-connected world, with links stretching across several continents, may also merit scholarly investigation. An interconnected world may also have been an inter-dependence world. The development of human civilization as the result of the mixing and mingling of ideas across geo-political borders weakens race-based claims that some ethnic groups have contributed more than others to this process. Some argue in favor of an ancient global civilization that stretched around the world, offering this as an explanation of similarities in architecture, technology and myth; “The fact that the standardized myths and ritual are found in detail around the world begs the explanation of at least one such global civilizations long ago” and according to one writer such similarities are more similar the further back we go. She continues, “In investigating such cultural commonality, it would be reasonable to conclude that our current global civilization is not the first.”

5.3 SOCIETY

The family remains the basic unit of the Vedic society. However, its composition changed. The later Vedic family became large enough to be called a joint family with three or four generations living together.

The rows of hearths discovered at Atranjikhhera and Ahichchhtra (both in western Uttar Pradesh) show that these were meant for communal feeding or for cooking the food of large families. The institution of gotra developed in this period. This means that people having common gotra descended from a common ancestor and no marriage between the members of the same gotra could take place. Monogamous marriages were preferred even though polygamy was frequent.

Some restrictions on women appeared during this period. In a text, women have been counted as a vice along with dice and wine. In another text, a daughter has been said to be the source of all sorrows. Women had to stay with their husbands at their place after marriage. The participation of women in public meetings was restricted.

However, the most important change was the rise and growth of social differentiation in the form of the Varna system. The four Varnas in which society came to be divided were:

- Brahmanas
- Kshatriyas
- Vaishyas
- Shudras

The growing number of sacrifices and rituals during the period made the Brahmanas very powerful. They conducted various rituals including those related to different stages of agricultural operations. This made them all the more important.



The Kshatriyas, next in the social hierarchy, were the rulers. They along with Brahmanas controlled all aspects of life. The vaishyas, the most numerous varna were engaged in agriculture as well as in trade and artisanal activities. The Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas were dependent on the tributes (gifts and taxes) paid to them by the vaishyas.

The Shudras, the fourth varna were at the bottom of the social hierarchy. They were ordained to be in the service of the three upper varnas. They were not entitled to the ritual of upanayana samskara (investiture with sacred thread necessary to acquire education).

The other three varnas were entitled to such a ceremony and hence they were known as dvijas. This can be construed as the beginning of the imposition of disabilities on the Shudras as well as the beginning of the concept of ritual pollution.

Another important institution that began to take shape was ashrama or different stages of life. Brahmacharya (student life), grihastha (householder), and vanaprastha (hermitage) stages are mentioned in the texts. Later, sannyasa, the fourth stage also came to be added. Together with varna, it came to be known as varna-ashrama dharma.

Position Of Women

During the later Vedic age, the women also lost their earlier status. Polygamy or marrying several wives by man became a social vice. The higher castes practiced this system because of their wealth. Child marriage also appeared. The Dowry system was practiced. Women gradually lost their right to property. Of course, the women still enjoyed their equal position with men in religious matters. They still received education and could show their talent.

Celebrated women like Gargi and Maitreyi showed their merit in the spheres of highest learning. On the whole, the Later Vedic Society became the forerunner of the social systems of future Hindu India.

5.4 ECONOMY

During the later Vedic phase, agriculture became the mainstay of the Vedic people. Many rituals were introduced to initiate the process of agriculture. It also speaks of ploughing with yokes of six and eight oxen. The buffalo had been domesticated for agricultural purposes. This animal was extremely useful in ploughing the swampy land.

The god Indra acquires a new epithet 'Lord of the Plough' in this period. The number and varieties of plant food increased. Apart from barley, people now cultivated wheat, rice, pulses, lentils, millet, sugarcane etc. The items of dana and dakshina included cooked rice. Thus, with the beginning of food production agricultural produce began to be offered in the rituals. Tila, from which the first widely used vegetable foodoil was derived increasingly, came to be used in rituals.

The main factor in the expansion of the Aryan culture during the later Vedic period was the beginning of the use of iron around 1000 BC. The Rig Vedic people knew of a metal called ayas which was either copper or bronze.

In the later Vedic literature ayas were qualified with Shyama or Krishna meaning black to denote iron. Archaeology has shown that iron began to be used around 1000 BC which is also the period of later Vedic literature.

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The northern and eastern parts of India to which the Aryans later migrated receive more rainfall than the north-western part of India. As a result, this region is covered with thick rain forests which could not be cleared by copper or stone tools used by Rig Vedic people.

The use of iron tools now helped people clear the dense rain forests, particularly the huge stumps left after burning, more effectively. Large tracts of forestland could be converted into cultivable pieces in relatively lesser time. The iron plough could turn the soil into deeper portions making it more fertile. This process seems to have begun during the latter part of the Rig Vedic period but the effect of iron tools and implements become evident only towards the end of the Later Vedic period. There has been a continuous increase in the population during the later Vedic period due to the expansion of the economy based on agriculture. The increasing number and size of Painted Grey Ware (PGW) settlements in the doab area show this.

Over time, the Vedic people also acquired better knowledge of seasons, manuring and irrigation. All these developments resulted in the substantial enlargement of certain settlements such as Hastinapur and Kaushambi towards the end of the Later Vedic period. These settlements slowly began to acquire characteristics of towns. Such rudimentary towns inhabited mainly by the chiefs, princes, priests and artisans were supported by the peasants who could spare for them some part of their produce voluntarily or involuntarily.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Which animal was extremely useful in ploughing the swampy land?
2. What played the main role in the expansion of the Aryan culture during the later Vedic period?
3. Name the four varnas in which society came to be divided were?
4. Why no marriage between the same gotra could take place?
5. Name the three Veda Samhitas.

5.5 POLITY

The changes in material and social life during the later Vedic period led to changes in the political sphere as well. The nature of the chiefship changed in this period. The territorial idea gained ground. The people started to lose their control over the chief and the popular assemblies gradually disappeared. The chiefship had become hereditary. The idea of the divine nature of kingship gets a mention in the literature of this period. The Brahmanas helped the chiefs in this process. The elaborate coronation rituals such as vajapeya and rajasuya established the chief authority. As the chiefs became more powerful, the authority of the popular assemblies started waning.

The officers were appointed to help the chief in administration and they acquired the functions of the popular assemblies as main advisors. A rudimentary army too emerged as an important element of the political structure during this period. All these lived on the taxes called Bali, the Shukla, and the Bhaga offered by the people. The chiefs of this period belonged to the Kshatriya varna and they in league with the Brahmanas tried to establish complete control over the people in the name of dharma. However, all these elements do not show that a janapada or territorial state with all its attributes such as a standing army

and bureaucracy had emerged in the later Vedic period but the process has started soon after the Vedic period in the sixth century BC, we notice the rise of sixteen mahajanpadas in northern India.

5.6 RELIGION

We have already noted that in the later Vedic period agriculture had become an important activity of the people. Changes in material life naturally resulted in a change in their attitude towards gods and goddesses too. Continuous interactions with the local non-Aryan population also contributed to these changes.

Thus, Vishnu and Rudra who were smaller deities in the Rig Veda became extremely important. However, we do not have any reference to different incarnations or avatars of Vishnu, which we are so familiar with, in any of the Later Vedic texts. Another important feature was the increase in the frequency and number of the yajna which generally ended with the sacrifices of a large number of animals. This was probably the result of the growing importance of a class of Brahmanas and their efforts to maintain their supremacy in the changing society. These yajnas brought to them a large amount of wealth in form of dana and dakshina. Some of the important yajnas were - ashvamedha, vajapeya, rajasuya etc.

You must have heard about these yajnas in the stories of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. In these yajnas which continued for many days a large part of the gifts went to the Brahmanas. The purpose of these yajnas was twofold. Firstly, it established the authority of the chiefs over the people, and secondly, it reinforced the territorial aspect of the polity since people from all over the kingdom were invited to these sacrifices.

You will find it interesting to know that people began to oppose these sacrifices during the later Vedic period itself. A large number of cattle and other animals which were sacrificed at the end of each yajna must have hampered the growth of the economy. Therefore, a path of good conduct and self-sacrifice was recommended for happiness and welfare in the last sections of the Vedas, called the Upanishads.

The Upanishads contain two basic principles of Indian philosophy viz., karma and the transmigration of the soul, i.e., rebirth based on past deeds. According to these texts, real happiness lies in getting moksha i.e., freedom from this cycle of birth and re-birth.

During the later Vedic period, much of the simplicity of the Rig-Veda religion was lost. The hold of the priestly class became more absolute. The priests developed complicated modes of worship. Sacrifices became more common. The rites and rituals became more difficult. Superstitions are entered in the name of religion. Fear of evil spirits and witches came in. Philosophical and theological speculations became more complex.

Despite such developments, the later Vedic sages laid greater emphasis on the faith in the Supreme Being, the Absolute. The concept of the Param Brahma or the Paramatma dominated the man's mind. The supreme gods like Vishnu or Siva were paid greater devotion.

The later Vedic period produced many religious doctrines to influence Indian thought forever. The doctrine of Karma or results according to deeds, Maya or illusion, Mukti or the supreme release, Janmantara or the transmigration of souls etc. made a deep impact on





the Aryan mind. The individual soul or Jiva came from the universal soul or Brahman and could go back to that origin. This was possible through the most correct ways of life and thought. Tat Tvam Asi or That Thou Art it was the identification of the individual Atman with the universal Atman. The supreme goal of life was the Moksha or the liberation when the individual soul was absorbed in the universal soul. Thus, on one side, there developed deep spiritual ideas in the later Vedic age which had no parallel elsewhere in the world. On the other side, deep-rooted superstitions began to dominate the mind of the common man making religious practices mostly meaningless. Amid such developments future Hinduism was beginning to take its shape.

5.7 TOWN PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE

The later Vedic people were agricultural and led a settled life. But since they cultivated with the wooden ploughshare and primitive method, the peasants could not produce enough for feeding. Hence the peasants could not contribute much to the rise of towns. Although the term nagara is used in later Vedic texts we can trace only the faint beginnings of towns towards the end of the later Vedic period. Hastinapur and Kausambi (Allahabad) can be regarded as primitive towns belonging to the end of the Vedic period. They may be called proto-urban sites.

On the whole, the later Vedic phase registered a great advance in the material life of the people. The pastoral and semi-nomadic forms of living were relegated to the background. Agriculture became the primary source of livelihood and life became settled and sedentary. Supplemented by diverse arts and crafts the Vedic people now settled down permanently in the upper Gangetic plains.

5.8 DECLINE OF LATER VEDIC PERIOD

The Decline of Vedic culture began after the Mahabharata War. Most of the Kshatriyas of the North took part in the Mahabharata war and were killed in very large numbers, the number was so high that a saying came into being that all the Kshatriyas were exterminated. Iranian Nagavanshs, which included Jats, were the first who brought Iron and Iron technology with them. The Iron war weapons were much stronger than the war weapons of copper. This proved their superiority over the Aryan race. The basis of indigenous tribal society was the prevalence of the Sangha or republic system, where every member of Sangha was compulsorily a warrior or Kshatriya well versed in the art of using arms or they had a citizen's army. This was the main cause of the downfall of Vedics and arising of Nagavanshis into power.

The Decline of Vedic culture began after the terrible destruction of the Mahabharata War. Manu was appointed as a chief officer or as a (religious) administrative authority in Vedic society. It is said that only fourteen Manus were appointed during the period of the exaltation of the Aryan people. The fourteenth Manu was Suparna, who is dated about 950 B.C. which is also an accepted period of the Mahabharata war by many a scholar. But this fourteenth Manu was the last one to adorn this exalted position. In usual circumstances fifteenth, Manu would have been appointed between 700-500 B.C. But, by this time the circumstances of Vedic society had changed to such an extent that after 950 B. C. no Manu could be appointed.

What was the reason behind this mishappening? There were three reasons.

- Due to the horrible destruction of the Mahabharata war, Vedic culture and power had fallen into disuse.
- A fresh wave of Naga-Asuras, the builders of Megaliths had reached between 1000-800 B.C. from the West, who were dead opponents of the Aryan race, and equipped with iron technology and strong iron war weapons.
- Development of non-Vedic Jainism and Buddhist culture which attacked, Vedic culture with its full force after the Mahabharata War.

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Differences Between Early Vedic Age and Later Vedic Age

EARLY VEDIC PERIOD	LATER VEDIC PERIOD
The caste system was flexible and based on profession rather than birth.	The caste system became more rigid in this period with birth being the main criterion.
There was no concept of Shudra or untouchables.	Shudras became a mainstay in the Later Vedic period. Their sole function was to serve those of the upper castes.
Women were allowed a greater degree of freedom in this period. They were allowed to participate in the political process of the time to a certain extent.	Women were restricted from their participation in society by being relegated to subordinate and docile roles.
Kingship was fluid as the kings were elected for a fixed period by the local assembly known as <i>Samiti</i> .	As society became more urbanized in this period, the need for stable leadership was realized. Thus the absolute rule of the Kings became more and more prominent.
Early Vedic society was pastoralist and semi-nomadic in nature.	Society became more settled in nature. It became centred around agriculture in general.
In the Early Vedic Period, the barter system was more prevalent with little to no monetary value transaction being part of the exchange.	Although the barter system was still in practice, it was largely replaced by the exchange of gold and silver coins known as <i>Krishnala</i> .
Rigveda. This text is cited as the earliest text from this period.	Yajurveda, Samaveda, Atharvaveda

5.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this unit, you got to learn about the later Vedic age which witnessed the composition of three later Veda Samhitas namely: Samveda Samhita, Yajurveda Samhita and Atharvaveda Samhita. Also, the Brahmanas and the Upanishads of all the four Vedas and later on the two great epics: the Ramayana & the Mahabharata. The most important change was the

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CULTURE*

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rise and growth of social differentiation in the form of the Varna system. The four Varnas in which society came to be divided were: Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, vaishyas & Shudras.

Another important institution that began to take shape was ashrama or different stages of life. Brahmacharya (student life), grihastha (householder), and vanaprastha (hermitage) stages are mentioned in the texts. Later, sannyasa, the fourth stage also came to be added. Together with varna, it came to be known as varna-ashrama dharma. During the later Vedic phase, agriculture became the mainstay of the Vedic people. Many rituals were introduced to initiate the process of agriculture. It also speaks of ploughing with yokes of six and eight oxen. The buffalo had been domesticated for agricultural purposes. This animal was extremely useful in ploughing the swampy land. The use of iron tools now helped people clear the dense rain forests, particularly the huge stumps left after burning, more effectively. Large tracts of forestland could be converted into cultivable pieces in relatively lesser time.

On the whole, the later Vedic phase registered a great advance in the material life of the people. The pastoral and semi-nomadic forms of living were relegated to the background. Agriculture became the primary source of livelihood and life became settled and sedentary. Supplemented by diverse arts and crafts the Vedic people now settled down permanently in the upper Gangetic plains.

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5.10 REVIEW QUESTIONS

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Name the new kingdoms in the east that came into existence in the later Vedic period.
2. Give a brief description of the agricultural importance in the later Vedic period.
3. Name the Varnas in which society came to be divided in the later Vedic period.
4. Name some variety of plants that were cultivated during the later Vedic age.
5. Give a brief description of the two great epics.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Define all the four Varnas in detail.
2. Give a detailed description of the town planning and architecture in the later Vedic period.
3. What is meant by Painted Grey Ware culture?



4. How was society organized in later Vedic times?
5. Give an account of the material life of the later Vedic people. Is it correct to call them an agricultural community?

5.11 MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. The society was divided into how many Varnas?
 - a. Four
 - b. Five
 - c. Two
 - d. Three
2. Among them which town can be regarded as the town belonging to the end of the Vedic period?
 - a. Lothal
 - b. Banawali
 - c. Ropar
 - d. Hastinapur
3. Many rituals were introduced to initiate the process of _____.
 - a. Agriculture
 - b. Rain
 - c. Construction
 - d. None of these
4. The most important change was the rise and growth of social differentiation in the form of
 - a. Varna system
 - b. Town Planning
 - c. Agriculture
 - d. None of these
5. Which kind of marriages were preferred?
 - a. Polygamous
 - b. Monogamous
 - c. Both
 - d. None of these
6. The Upanishads contained how many principles of Indian philosophy?
 - a. Three
 - b. Four
 - c. Two
 - d. Five
7. _____, the first widely used vegetable food oil came to be used in rituals.
 - a. Tila
 - b. Olive
 - c. Refined
 - d. None of these

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8. 'Lord of the Plough' was the name given to which God?
 - a. God Indra
 - b. God Surya
 - c. God Agni
 - d. None of these
9. The territory between Saraswati and _____ was the seat of Aryan civilization.
 - a. Narmada
 - b. Brahmaputra
 - c. Ganga
 - d. Kaveri
10. PGW stands for?
 - a. Painted Grey Ware
 - b. Pre-Gram War
 - c. Proto-Grind Wave
 - d. None of these

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ANSWER KEY

UNIT I

QUESTION	ANSWER	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	a.	6	a.
2	d.	7	a.
3	b.	8	c.
4	b.	9	a.
5	b.	10	c.

UNIT II

QUESTION	ANSWER	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	d.	6	a.
2	a.	7	c.
3	a.	8	c.
4	c.	9	d.
5	b.	10	b.

UNIT III

QUESTION	ANSWER	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	d.	6	b.
2	d.	7	a.
3	b.	8	d.
4	b.	9	d.
5	d.	10	a.

UNIT IV

QUESTION	ANSWER	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	b.	6	a.
2	a.	7	a.
3	b.	8	c.
4	b.	9	d.
5	d.	10	a.

UNIT V

QUESTION	ANSWER	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	a.	6	c.
2	d.	7	a.
3	a.	8	a.
4	a.	9	c.
5	b.	10	a.

NOTE

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Suggestive Reading

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Web Resources

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