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100 நபர்களுக்கு மேல் அரசு பணியில் அமர வைத்துள்ள நிறுவனம்.

Vedic Culture in North India and Megalithic Culture in South India

Vedic Age

- ❖ First phase of urbanization.
- ❖ A new era, called Vedic Age began with the arrival of Aryans.
- ❖ Vedic Age – It is a period in the History of India between 1500 BC (BCE) – 600 BC (BCE). It gets its name from four ‘Vedas’
- ❖ The Aryans were Indo–Aryan language speaking, semi nomadic pastoralists.
- ❖ They came from Central Asia through Khyber Pass of Hindu Kush Mountains.
- ❖ Though cattle rearing was their main occupation, they also practiced slash and burn agriculture.
- ❖ Slash and burn agriculture - It is a farming method that involves clearing the land by cutting and burning all the trees and plants on it.
- ❖ Cultivation is done there for a short time and then abandoned.
- ❖ People then move to a new piece of land for cultivation.

Time, Spread and Sources

Time, Spread and Sources	
Geographical range	North India
Period	Iron Age
Time	1500 BC (BCE) –600 BC (BCE)
Sources	Vedic Literature
Nature of Civilisation	Rural

Aryans and their Home in India

- ❖ Aryans of the Rig Vedic Period were semi- nomadic. pastoral people with cattle as their main source of wealth.
- ❖ In the Rig Vedic times, the Aryan homeland was the Punjab, called Sapta Sindhu, the land of seven rivers.
- ❖ Around 1000 BC (BCE), Aryans in India moved eastward and settled in Indo-Gangetic Plain.
- ❖ Use of iron axes and ploughs became widespread.

Four Vedas

1. Rig 2. Yajur 3. Sama 4. Atharva

Sources

Vedic literature

Classified into two broad categories.

1. Shrutis - The Shrutis comprise the four Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads.
sacred, eternal, and an unquestionable truth.
'Shruti' means listening (or unwritten) transmitted orally.
2. Smritis - A body of texts containing teachings on religion Ithihasas, Puranas, Tantras and Agamas. Constantly revised.
'Smriti' means definite and written literature.

National Motto

- ❖ “Satyameva Jayate” “(Truth alone triumphs)” is taken from Mundaka Upanishad.

Classification of Vedic Age

Two phases of Vedic Age

1. Early Vedic Period 1500 – 1000 BC (BCE)
2. Later Vedic Period 1000 – c.600 BC (BCE)

Vedic Culture

Polity and Society

- ❖ The Rig Vedic polity was kinship - based.
- ❖ Kula (clan) was the basic unit of the polity.
- ❖ under a head called Kulapati.
- ❖ families joined together to form a Grama (village).
- ❖ headed by Gramani.
- ❖ A group of villages was called Vis (clan) headed by Vishayapati.
- ❖ Rajan as the head of the Jana (tribe) Janasyagopa (guardian of the people).
- ❖ several tribal kingdoms (Rashtras) during Rig Vedic period (Bharatas, Matsyas, Puras).

King

- ❖ Main responsibility of the Rajan was to protect his tribe.
- ❖ Powers were limited by tribal assemblies namely Vidhata, Sabha, Samiti and Gana.
- ❖ Vidhata, (the tribal assembly) was the oldest.
- ❖ Sabha - a council of elders.
- ❖ Samiti - assembly of people.
- ❖ The king appointed a purohit (chief priest) to assist him.
- ❖ In economic, political and military matters, the king was assisted by the Senani (army chief).
- ❖ When the Aryans moved east ward- into Ganges-Yamuna-Doab regions, the early settlements were replaced by territorial kingdoms.
- ❖ Hereditary kingship began to emerge.
- ❖ Power of the king increased Many Janas or Tribes were amalgamated to form Janapadas or Rashtras in later Vedic period.
- ❖ Importance of Samithi and Sabha diminished and the Vidhata completely disappeared.
- ❖ Bali was a voluntary contribution of the people to the King.
- ❖ In the later Vedic period bali was treated as tax.
- ❖ The Kuru and Panchala kingdoms flourished and large cities like Ayodhya, Indraprastha and Mathura also emerge during this period.

- ❖ **Bali** - a tax consisting of 1/6 of the agricultural produce or cattle for a person.

Social Organization

- ❖ The Vedic family was patriarchal. Fair complexioned Aryans distinguished from dark complexioned non-Aryans whom they called Dasyus and Dasas.
- ❖ Early Vedic Society there were three divisions (Treyi) ; the general public were called Vis, the warrior class was called Kshatriyas and the Priestly class was named Brahmanas.
- ❖ At a later stage, non-Aryan skilled workers sudras.
- ❖ Does not have adequate amount of material evidences.

Status of women

- ❖ In Rig Vedic society, women relatively enjoyed some freedom.
- ❖ The wife was respected as the mistress of the household.
- ❖ Child marriage and sati were unknown.
- ❖ No bar on the remarriage of widows.
- ❖ Nevertheless, the women were denied right to inherit property from their parents.
- ❖ They played no role in public affairs.
- ❖ In the later Vedic period the role of women in society, as well as their status, even within the family, declined.
- ❖ The rules of marriage became much more complex and rigid.
- ❖ Polygamy became common.
- ❖ Widow remarriage was not encouraged.
- ❖ Education was denied to women.

Economic Life

- ❖ Economy in the Vedic period was sustained by a combination of pastoralism and agriculture.
- ❖ Ochre Coloured Pottery (OCP) was attributed to this period.
- ❖ Horses, cows, goats, sheep, oxen and dogs were domesticated.
- ❖ The staple crop was yava (barley).

- ❖ No mention of wheat or cotton in the Rig-Veda, though both were cultivated by the Indus people.
- ❖ Two crops a year were raised.
- ❖ In the later Vedic period the Aryans tamed elephants, Pottery of this period was Painted Grey Ware Culture.
- ❖ Use of iron plough and axe helped to put more areas of land under cultivation.
- ❖ The idea of private possession of land came into existence.
- ❖ Trade became extensive.
- ❖ Barter system They used Nishka, Satmana (gold coins) and Krishnala (silver coins) for business transactions.

Metals Known to Rig Vedic People

- Gold (Hiranya) • Iron (Shyama) • Copper/ Bronze (Ayas)

Religion

- ❖ Rig Vedic Aryans worshipped mostly the earthly and celestial gods like Prithvi (Earth), Agni (fire), Vayu (wind), Varun (rain), Indra (Thunder).
- ❖ Female deities like Aditi (goddess of eternity) and Usha (appearance of dawn).
- ❖ Their religion was Yajna centered.
- ❖ The mode of prayer was recitation of Vedic hymns.
- ❖ Prayed for the welfare of Praja (children) Pasu (cattle) and Dhana (wealth).
- ❖ Cow a sacred animal. No temple, Idol worship had not yet come into existence.
- ❖ Later on priesthood became a profession and a hereditary one.
- ❖ Indra and Agni lost their importance.
- ❖ Prajapathi (the creator) Vishnu (the protector) and Rudra (the destroyer) became prominent.

Education

Gurukula System of Education

- ❖ Word Gurukula is a combination of the Sanskrit Word Guru (teacher or master) and Kula (family or home).
- ❖ Shishyas resided with their guru and served them.
- ❖ Students received education through oral tradition meaning rote learning, and were required to memorise everything.
- ❖ Subjects the four Vedas, Ithihasas, Puranas, grammar, logic, ethics, astrology, maths and military science.
- ❖ Only Dvijas could be Shishyas. No women could have formal education.

Age – based Ashramas

- ❖ Towards the end of the later Vedic period the concept of four stages in life (the four ashramas) developed.
- ❖ Brahmacharya (Student Life)
- ❖ Grihastha (Married Life)
- ❖ Vanaprastha (Going to the forest to meditate)
- ❖ Sanyasa (Leading a life of an ascetic so as to attain Swarga)
- ❖ The early Vedic culture in northern India coincided with Chalcolithic cultures that prevailed in other parts of the sub-continent.
- ❖ People used copper (chalco) and stone (lithic), it was called Chalcolithic period.
- ❖ The later Vedic culture in north India and the Iron Age in south India belong to the same period.
- ❖ Towards the end of Iron Age, people stepped into what is known as Megalithic Culture (600 BC (BCE) and AD (CE) 100).
- ❖ Megalithic Period in ancient Tamilakam synchronised with the pre Sangam period.
- ❖ The Black and Red Ware Pottery became the characteristic of the Megalithic period.
- ❖ The term ‘Megalith’ is derived from Greek.
- ❖ ‘Megas’, means great and ‘lithos’ means stone.
- ❖ Using big stone slabs built upon the places of burial is known as Megalith.

Some of the Megalithic / Iron Age Archaeological Sites in Tamil Nadu

Adichanallur – Thoothukudi District

- ❖ Artefacts unearthed were Urns, pottery of various kinds (Red Ware, Black Ware), iron implements, daggers, swords, spears and arrows, some stone beads and a few gold ornaments.
- ❖ Bronze objects representing domestic animals and wild animals unearthed.

Keezhadi – Sivagangai District

- ❖ The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) excavated an ancient town dating to Sangam Age in Keezhadi village at Tirupathur taluk.
- ❖ Evidence for brick buildings, and well laid – out drainage system.
- ❖ Tamil – Brahmi inscription on pottery, beads of glass, carnelian and quartz, pearl, gold ornaments and iron objects, shell bangles, ivory dice dated samples as 200 BC (BCE).
- ❖ Evidence of ancient Indo -Roman trade relations.
- ❖ **Periplus mentions the steel imported to Rome from Peninsular India was subjected to duty in the port of Alexandria.**

Porunthal – Dindigul District

- ❖ Grave goods, glass beads (in red, white, yellow, blue and green), iron swords, pottery with Tamil Brahmi scripts, pots filled with rice, semi-precious metals quartz, carnelian, bangles made of glass and shell.
- ❖ The discovery of iron sickle, pike, and tip of ploughs provide evidences that they had the practice of rice cultivation in Tamil Nadu. staple food.

Paiyampalli – Vellore District

- ❖ Iron artefacts, along with Megalithic Black and Red Ware Pottery.
- ❖ Evidence for iron smelting has come to light at Paiyampalli.
- ❖ The date of this culture, 1000 BC (BCE).

Kodumanal – Erode District

- ❖ Identified with the Kodumanam of Pathittrupathu.

- ❖ 300 pottery inscriptions in Tamil – Brahmi have been discovered
spindles, whorls (used for making thread from cotton) and pieces of cloth,
along with tools, weapons, ornaments, beads, particularly carnelian.
- ❖ Menhir found at burial site is assigned to the Megalithic period.
- ❖ The people who lived during the last stages of the New Stone Age began
to follow the Megalithic system of burial.
- ❖ The dead body was placed in a big pot along with burial goods.
- ❖ **Dolmens** are Megalithic tombs made of two or more upright stones with a
single stone lying across the burial site.
- ❖ Found in Veeraraghavapuram village, Kanchipuram district,
Kummalamaruthupatti, Dindigul district, and in Narasingampatti,
Madurai district.
- ❖ **Menhir**–In Breton Language 'Men' means “stone” and 'hir', “long.”
- ❖ Monolithic pillars planted vertically in memory of the dead.
- ❖ Menhir at Singaripalayam in Tirupur District and at Vembur in Theni
District points along the banks of River Uppar.
- ❖ Found at Narasingampatti, Madurai district, Kumarikalpalayam and
Kodumanal in Erode district.
- ❖ **Hero Stones** – A Hero Stone is a memorial stone raised in remembrance
of the honourable death of a hero in a battle or those who lost their lives
while defending their village from animals or enemies.
- ❖ Hero stones are found at Maanur village near Palani, Dindigul district,
Vellalankottai, Tuticorin district, and Pulimankombai, Dindigul district.