

## Short-Answer Questions

### 1. Who were the Aryans?

**Ans.** Indo-European speaking people were called Aryans. A branch of these people called Indo-Aryans came to India around 1500 BC.

### 2. Which was the capital city of the Kauravas and that of the Pandavas?

**Ans.** Hastinapur

### 3. Which is the main source of information regarding the early Aryans?

**Ans.** Vedic Literature

### 4. Who was a 'Gramini'?

**Ans.** The village chief was called Gramini.

### 5. Define the Sabha and the Samiti.

**Ans.** The Sabha comprised some distinguished people of the village while the Samiti comprised all the villagers.

### 6. Name any two weapons of offence of the Aryans.

**Ans.** Bows and arrows.

### 7. What was the head of an Aryan family called ?

**Ans.** Grihapati

### 8. Name any two pastimes of the Aryans.

**Ans.** Dancing and singing.

### 9. Give the names of two women-scholars who composed the Vedic hymns.

**Ans.** Vishwara and Upala.

### 10. Give the names of the four Vedas.

**Ans.** The Rigveda, the Yajurveda, the Samaveda, the Atharvaveda.

### 11. From which Veda we form an idea of the Early Vedic Civilisation?

**Ans.** The Rigveda.

**12. Name any two characteristics of the religion of Aryans.**

**Ans.** The Aryans were impressed by the forces of nature such as the Sun, the Fire, the Wind whom they worshipped as gods. During later Vedic Period many new rituals and sacrifices were introduced. The religious practice had become so complex that it was beyond the understanding of common people.

**13. Give the names of any two gods of the Rig Vedic Aryans and the Later Vedic Aryans.**

**Ans.** Gods of Rig Vedic Aryans - Shiva, Vishnu  
Gods of the later Vedic Aryans - Agni, Varuna

**14. Give the names of the four 'Varnas'.**

**Ans.** Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras.

**15. Why did the Aryans attach so much importance to the religious sacrifices?**

**Ans.** The sacrifices were performed by Aryans to propitiate the gods who in turn would bless their people with peace and prosperity.

**16. Give the names of the two Epics.**

**Ans.** The Ramayana and the Mahabharata

**17. Give one feature of the political organisation of the Aryans during the Rig Vedic Civilisation.**

**Ans.** The king had to seek and secure the help of his people for his own safety against other contenders or also against his enemies.

**18. Give one important feature of the economic activity during the Rig Vedic Civilisation.**

**Ans.** Agriculture was the chief occupation of the Aryans.

**19. What is the importance of the Upanishads?**

**Ans.** The Upanishads have great importance since they contain valuable information about the social and religious condition of the Aryans.

**20. Describe the significance of the Vedic literature.**

**Ans.** Most of the Indians regard Vedas as the 'Revealed wisdom'. The Upanishads are the source of Indian philosophy.

Historically, the *Manu Smriti* and other *Dharam Shastras* have much importance as they contain a lot of knowledge concerning laws and the judicial system of the Hindus.

**21. What is meant by PGW?**

**Ans.** PGW (Painted Grey Ware) is a very fine, smooth pottery consisting of open-mouthed bowls and dishes. It was made from high quality clay with various geometric patterns printed on it in black or deep chow late brown.

**22. How did the discovery of iron help in the progress of the civilisation?**

**Ans.** With the help of iron implements, later vedic people were able to clean dense forests and bring more land under cultivation. Iron sickles ploughs driven by oxen and hoes were used to get more yield.

**Structured Essay-Type Questions**

**1. The advent of the Aryans in India and their occupations in this land are an important event in the History of India. In this context, describe briefly:**

- (a) One important change in the political field in the Later Vedic Period.
- (b) One important change in the religious life of the Aryans in the Later Vedic Period.

**Ans. (a) Spread of the Aryans:** By this time, the Aryans had spread to the inner parts of India. Generally, they had occupied the whole of Northern India and parts of the Southern India. Some Southern kings had also come to take part in the Mahabharata War.

**(b) Religious life**

**Rise of New Gods:** The nature-gods of the Rigvedic Age like Indra, Varuna, Surya(Sun), Prithvi (Earth) Agni (Fire) were now replaced by new gods such as Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesha, Parvati, Rama, Krishna etc. These new gods became quite popular among the people.



**2. With reference to the Vedic literature, explain the following:**

- (a) Which is the Vedic literature ?
- (b) Which is the main source of information regarding the ancient Aryans in India?
- (c) Which is the oldest of the Vedas?
- (d) Mention any one feature of the Rig Veda.
- (e) Name the Vedic text which contains hymns to be sung in praise of gods and goddesses.

**Ans.** (a) It consists of not only the four Vedas but also other allied books like the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas, the Upanishads, the Sutras, the Vedangas, the Upavedas, the Darshanas, the Puranas, the Epics and the Dharmashastras etc.

The Vedic literature can be divided into two groups on the basis of their age of composition:

- (i) Early Vedic literature which comprises of the four principal Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads etc. and:
  - (ii) The Later Vedic Literature comprising of the Sutras, the Vedangas, the Upavedas, the Darshanas, the Puranas, the Mahakavyas or the Great Epics and the Dharmashastras etc. The first group of literature is generally called as the 'Sruti Literature' (Revealed) and the second group is called as the 'Smriti Literature'.
- (b) Historians have derived more knowledge from the literary evidence i.e. the Vedic Literature than from any other source about the history of the Indo-Aryans. The literary evidence or the Vedic Literature can be classified into several categories. However, each of them throws light on one or the other significant aspect of the Aryan life.

The term 'Vedic literature' has a vast scope. The word 'Veda' itself is derived from the root 'Vid' which means 'to know'. Thus, Veda means wisdom or knowledge. In other words, Vedas may be called the store-house of the Aryan wisdom.

- (c) Rig Veda is the oldest veda and historians place its period of composition as early as 1500 B.C. It has about 1028 mantras or hymns written in praise of various gods representing various aspects of Nature. It contains the *Gayatri Mantra*. Much of Indian philosophy is based on the Rigveda.
- (d) It has the *Gayatri Mantra* which contains much of the Indian philosophy
- (e) The Rig Veda contains 1028 mantras or hymns written in praise of gods and goddesses.

**3. With reference to the religion of the Aryans, explain the following :**

- (a) Mention the names of two deities of the Early Vedic Aryans.
  - (b) What form of worship did the early Aryans follow?
  - (c) Give two main sources of the history of the Vedic Period.
- Ans.** (a) Varuna and Indra were the gods of the early Vedic Aryans. Varuna knew all the mysteries of the universe. God Indra was worshipped so that he may protect his devotees from the holocaust of wars and fill their granaries by sending timely rains.
- (b) The Aryans' way of worship was very simple. They had not built any temples as is done these days nor did they worship idols. They recited mantras or hymns in the open-air. All the members of their families took part in the chanting of the hymns. They were impressed by the forces of nature such as Sun, Earth, etc.
- (c) The sources of the Vedic Period were
- The Vedas (Rigveda, Samveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda), the Brahmanas, the Aranayakas and the Upnishads.
  - The Sutras (Srauta Sutras, Griha Sutras and Dharma Sutras), Vedantas and Upavedas. Six school of Indian philosophy (Sankhya Shastra of Kapila) Yoga Shastra of Patanjali, Nayaya Shastra of Gautama, Vaisheshik Shastra of Kanva and Purva Mimansa of Jaimini and Uttar Mimansa of Vyasa) the Puranas, the Epics and Dharma Shashtras including Manu Smriti.

**4. The political organisation of the Early Vedic kingdoms underwent changes with the emergence of powerful kingdoms during the Later Vedic or the Epic Period. In this context describe briefly :**

- (a) The political organisation of the Aryans of the early period.
- (b) The emergence of large kingdoms and the growth of royal power during the Later Vedic Period.

**Ans. (a)** Political Organisation and Administration of the Rigvedic Aryans

- **Status of King:** The Early Aryans lived in tribes which they called 'Janas'. Each Jana had its own chief or king who was generally a hereditary successor. The king had to seek and secure the help of his people for his own safety against other contenders or also against his enemies. He could exercise limited authority in the discharge of his duties, viz. to defend his people, to give them justice and lead them in war etc. He could realise some taxes to meet his expenses.
- **The King and His Ministers:** There were several ministers, especially the commander-in-chief and Purohit to assist the king in the discharge of his administrative duties. They could serve their people by giving proper advice to the king.
- **Local Self-Government:** During this period, local self-government was an important institution. The Gramini was the chief functionary in a village. He maintained peace and order in the village and in times of war led the people to the battle-field. He was also the chief of the village council of the Gram Sabha and generally decided small cases. In the village hierarchy, he held the most responsible post.
- **The Sabha and the Samiti:** There were two councils of chosen members from among the people to assist the king. One of them was called



the 'Sabha' while the other was called the 'Samiti'. The Samiti was a body that represented the whole tribe while the 'Sabha' was composed of only the distinguished members.

In this way, we can say that both these institutions (the Sabha and the Samiti) had great importance and they exercised control over the king so that he did not turn into an autocrat. Thus, we can say that despite their monarchical system, there were glimpses of democracy in the administrative system of the Aryans.

(b) **Powerful Empires:** Small tribal states had vanished and in their place new powerful empires of Kulu, Panchal, Kosala, Magadha, Kashi, Anga etc. had come into being. Some of the kings performed the Aswamedha Yajna for bringing them under subjugation and assumed the title of 'Samrat' or Emperor. The states had expanded both in their territories and powers.

- **Increased Powers of the King:** The expansion in the territorial limits of the different empires had also increased the powers of the kings considerably. He no longer recognised the authority of the Sabha or the Samiti. The kingship had become purely hereditary. His chief duties, as before, were to keep peace in his kingdom and to protect the people against foreign invasions, to punish the criminals and to dispense with justice.
- **More State Officials to Assist:** During the Rigvedic period, the king was assisted by his Purohita, Commander-in-chief and Gramini etc. But now there was a large army of new officials such as the treasurer, the personal attendants, the chief justice, the prison officer etc. Many new officials had been inducted to carry out the royal duties.