

Ancient Period

One Mark Questions

I. Answer the following questions in one word or a sentence each.

Question 1. What do you mean by the term Arya?

(or)

What is the meaning of the term Arya?

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

Question 2. From which word is the term veda derived?

(or)

From which language is the term veda derived?

Answer: Veda is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Vid' which means wisdom.

Question 3. What is meant by veda?

Answer: Veda means knowledge or wisdom.

Question 4. Name the first veda. (or) Which is the earliest among the vedas?

Answer: There are four vedas, and Rig veda was the first to be composed.

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

Answer: During Vedic period, the eldest male member was the head of the family. He was called KulapathiorGrihapathi.

Question 6. What was the main occupation of the Aryans?

Answer: Agriculture was the main occupation of the Aryans.

Question 7. What was 'Kshetra'?

Answer: Aryans called the cultivated land as 'Kshetra'

Question 8. What was considered as wealth by the Aryans?

Answer: Cattle (cows) was considered as wealth by the Aryans.

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

Answer: Upanayanam was the ceremony performed to send a child to school. Vedic education commenced with the ceremony called upanayanam.

Question 10. Which part of India became the birthplace of Vedic culture?

Answer: Saptha Sindhu (present Punjab) area, called as Brahmavarta or Aryavarta, which means "Country created by God for the Aryans" was the birthplace of Vedic culture.

Two marks Questions

II. Answer the following questions in two words or two sentences each.

Question 1. Name any two vedas?

Answer: The four vedas are

1. Rig veda
2. Yajur veda
3. Sama veda
4. Atharvana veda

Question 2. Which two political institutions assisted the King in the administration, during the vedic period ? (or)

Which were the two representative assemblies of the vedic age?

Answer: Sabha and Samithi were the two political institutions which assisted the King in the administration of the land during the vedic period.

Question 3. Name any two varnas?

(or)

Which were the four varnas in the vedic age?

Answer:

- Brahmanas
- Kshatriyas
- Vaisyas and
- Shudras.

Question 4. Name the ashramas of Aryans.

Answer:

- Brahmacharya (acquiring education)
- Gruhastya (house holder)
- Vanaprastha (dwelling in the forest) and
- Sanyasa (complete renunciation)

Question 5. Mention some amusements of the vedic people.

Answer: Gambling, chariot racing, horse racing, music, dancing etc., were the different forms of amusements.

Question 6. Name a few learned women of the vedic period.

Answer: Gargi, Maitreyi, Shashwati, Lopamudra, Apala, Arundhathi, Ghosha, Vishwavana were some of the famous learned women of the vedic period.

Question 7. What were the two intoxicants consumed by the vedic people?

Answer: Soma and sura were the intoxicants consumed by the vedic people.

Question 8. Which coins were used by the vedic people as the medium of exchange?

Answer: Nishka (a piece of gold) and Shatamana were the coins used.

Five Mark Questions

III. Answer the following questions in 15 to 20 sentences each.

Question 1. Give an account of the political condition of Aryans.

Answer: Political condition: During the early vedic age, their organization was tribal in character. Some of the important tribes were the Bharatas the Purus, Yadus, Anu etc. They were called 'Janas'. The primary unit of the administration was the village (Grama) and Gramini was the head of the grama. Next administrative unit was the 'Vis' headed by 'Vispathi'. The King (Rajan) was the head of the state.

Duty of the Kings: The tribes quarrelled with each other over cattle ownership and territories. The primary duty of the King was the protection of his tribe and he received gifts from the people. King (Rajan) was assisted by the purohita, sangrahati, senapati, vispathis and graminis in the administration. Sabha (group of elders) and Samithi (group of experts) acted as a check on the possible misuse of power by the King. Sabha and samithi were two powerful bodies, who acted on democratic lines and decisions were taken by a majority of votes. The laws were based on customs and traditions.

During the later vedic period, the Kingdoms were divided into provinces and further subdivided into gopas, vishyas and gramas. Kingship became hereditary. Kuru, Panchala, Kashi, Videha, Vidharbha etc., were the important Kingdoms. Imperialism came into existence. Kings began to perform (yagas) sacrifices like Rajasuya, Ashwamedha and Vajapeya for establishing their political supremacy. The Kings were assisted by a council of ministers and officers. The sabha and samithi also continued to monitor.

The military consisted of infantry, elephant riders and the cavalry. Simple weapons of the early vedic age were replaced in the later vedic age by improved war weapons like bows and arrows, swords, spears, maces, axes etc. Helmets and armours used for protection made their appearance.

Question 2. Explain the social conditions of Aryans during the vedic period.

Answer: Social conditions: The early vedic people developed a highly organised society, that was based on the principle of monogamy. Polygamy was practiced only among the royal families. The eldest male member was the head of the family and

was called 'Kulapathi' or 'Grihapathi'. There was no system of child marriage but widow remarriage prevailed. Marriage was considered a sacred bond and after marriage the bride lived in the house of the bridegroom. Usually a joint family system prevailed among the Aryans.

Social divisions: The social divisions, chaturvarnas were based on professions. They were Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. People could change professions and hence change their varnas. Thus, there was mobility among the varnas.

Position of the women: The status of women in the family and in the society was high and they had equal rights with men. Women were educated and highly civilized for e.g., Gargi, Maithreyi, Apala, Ghosha, Vishwavara and others. Girls had considerable freedom in selecting their life partners. Women freely moved out of their houses and attended public functions. A high standard of morality was maintained.

Food and entertainment: People consumed wheat, barley, rice, fruit, vegetables, fish and meat and intoxicating drinks like soma and sura. Aryans wore clothes made of cotton and wool. Ornaments were used by both men and women, made of gold, silver and flowers. Gambling, chariot and horse racing, hunting and dance were the popular entertainments. Education on the whole was oral. It aimed at the development of character and was religious in nature.

During the later vedic period, polygamy and polyandry came into practice. Patriarchal system still continued, and the joint family system was quite common. Women were still allowed to get higher education and participate in the religious rites. But the women were now under the protection of father or husband or a son. On the whole, position of the women had considerably come down.

Varnas turned into many castes. Caste system became hereditary and very rigid. Brahmanas and Kshatriyas enjoyed a higher status compared to Vaishyas and Shudras. Life of an individual was divided into four stages called ashramas. They were Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa. Education was imparted by learned teachers to the students. The aim of education was to develop knowledge, character, truthfulness and devotion. Gurus enjoyed great respect.

Living standard of the people was usually the same as it was in the early vedic civilization. People still lived in villages and small towns. Agriculture was the main profession of the people.

Question 3. Enumerate the religious condition of Aryans.

Answer: Vedic religion is also known as ancient (sanatan) Hinduism and Brahmanical religion. The early vedic Aryans worshipped nature Gods. They

worshipped Indra (God of Heaven), Varuna (rain), Agni (fire), Vayu (air), Surya (sun), Pruthvi (earth), Soma (plants), and Aditi and Usha the female Goddesses. There was no idol worship. The mode of worship was in the form of prayers and sacrifices.

The vedic people believed that God was most powerful, strong and moved the universe. Cow was considered a sacred animal and slaughter of cows was forbidden. Rig veda prescribed elaborate rules and procedures for the performance of sacrifices. Hotri, Adhvasya and Udgathri were the important priests to get favours from the God. Sacrifices were performed with milk, grains, ghee, soma and juice etc.

In the later vedic period, the practice of religion became highly complex and rigid. Idol worship came into existence. The number of Gods increased, and new deities like Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwara, Ganesha, Kartikeya, Parvati, Laxmi, Kali, Durga etc. came to be worshipped. The practice of vedic religion became costly. They believed in magic and considered that with the help of magic and sorcery, many evils befalling could be prevented. New ideas had developed about soul. Vamas, Ashramas and Purusharthas (Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha) were an integral part of the vedic religion.

The entire life of a Hindu was guided by samskaras. It also believes in the concept of the transmigration of soul. The main objective of the soul is to attain salvation (Moksha). They developed the concept of monism-Atman (the true self) and Brahman (the ultimate reality). Knowledge was the best means of salvation. Bhakti, Jnana, Karma and Yoga were prescribed as the many paths to attain salvation. They also began to believe in the Karma theory. Karma must be rewarded in the next life. So Aryans lived a very pure, simple and contented life. The sacred books of Hindus are the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas and Smritis. Ramayana and Mahabharata were also given much importance.

Question 4. Write a short note on education and science during vedic age.

Answer: There were no regular educational institutions in the present sense of the term. Education was imparted in Gurukulas, Pathashalas, Agraharas, Temples and Ghatikas. Education on the whole was oral. Education was imparted by learned teachers to the students, who stayed with the teacher throughout their educational career. The aim of education was to develop knowledge, character, truthfulness and devotion. The teacher enjoyed great respect. The Panchalaparishad was a great academy of learning.

Higher education was imparted at the universities like Kanchi and Taxila. Education commenced with a ceremony called upanayanam. Both men and women received education. Gargi, Maithreyi, Lopamudra, Shaswathi and others were important

women scholars. Vedas, Puranas, philosophy, logic, mathematics, astronomy, astrology, medicine etc, were the important subjects taught. Sanskrit was the medium of instruction.

Science: Aryans achieved great progress in mathematics, geometry, medicine and metal lurgy. Calculations like the distance between the Sun and Moon, Earth and Moon and Sun and Earth were known to them. They also had knowledge of the occurance of eclipses, movement of Comets etc. Cure of diseases was done by using herbs, roots, leaves, oils, salts and mud. They followed the lunar calendar. We can see in the manufacture of the chariots, textiles, metal goods, musical instruments, ornaments etc of these people, the progress made by them in technology.