

Revision Notes

Class- 6 Social Science(History)

Chapter 4 - What Books and Burials Tell Us

The Rigveda

- The Rigveda is considered one of the oldest forms of writings composed more than 3500 years ago. It includes several thousand hymns that are known as sukta. These hymns praise the goddesses and gods of ancient times. They were:
 1. Agni, the god of fire.
 2. Indra, the warrior god,
 3. Soma, a plant that produces a special kind of drink.
- Most of these hymns were taught, composed, and learned by the men. Women composed a few of them too.
- The Rigveda is in Vedic or old Sanskrit. It was recited by the people and not just read. Written scripts were printed less than 100 years ago.

How historians studied the Rigveda

- Some of the hymns were found in the form of dialogue. One of the conversations between Vishvamitra, Sutej, and Beas is worshiped as a goddess.
- The Rigveda has many prayers for the children, horses, and cattle.
- Horses played an essential part in the battle.
- Battles were fought for water, land, and to capture land and people. No regular army was present. Assemblies were formed where such discussions were held, and later war was fought.
- The leaders kept all the wealth to themselves, and the remaining one was distributed among others.

People of Rigveda

The Rigveda has the mention of two groups of people in it -

- The Priest: Also called the brahmins. They performed all the rituals of Hinduism.

- **Rajas:** Unlike the later kings, they did not have a palace, capital, or army. They also do not levy taxes on the people of the state. Two words describe the people of Rigveda.

1. Jana

2. Vish

Aryas were the ones who composed the hymns. Their opponents were known as Dasyus and Dasas. The term dasa refers to slaves. Slaves were the men and women who were captured in war.

Manuscripts of the Rigveda

- Rigveda contained various prayers for children, horses, and cattle. The priests performed yajnas for the well-being of the people of the state.
- The wealth was distributed among the people, leaders, and priests. Wars were fought to capture wealth and other parts of the country. Most of the men participated in the war.
- Rigveda divided people into two groups. One is 'Jana,' and the other is 'vish'.
- The Megaliths is a large stone found in the Rigveda period, and people placed it to mark the cemetery. This practice began more than 3000 years ago. It was influential throughout the southern part of India, the Deccan plateau, and Kashmir. They all had a standard feature. The dead people were buried by using special pots that were called Red and Black Ware.

Social Difference

- Various objects were found with skeletons. The scholars feel that these objects may be the dead person's belongings.
- The people buried were divided into different statuses. Rich people were buried using stone beads, gold beads, and copper beads. At the same time, the poor people were buried by using pots.

Discrimination after death

- People who belonged to the same family were found buried in the same place. Significant spots were to recognize the burial spot of the family members. Boulders placed or stone circles helped to serve as the signpost.
- The bodies were brought through the previous portholes.

Occupation of the people of Inamgaon

- Archaeologists have found various types of crops in the fields of Inamgaon. Some of them are sesame, peas, millets, pulses, rice, barley, and wheat.
- These crops are grown and supplied to the people of Inamgaon.
- Animals were also a source of food for the people as cuts on bones were found.
- Several fruits were consumed by the people of Inamgaon, namely dates, Jamun, amla, and ber.

Burial Spots of Families

- Some of the burial chambers had many skeletons and objects that were present in them, which indicates that more than one member was buried in the same chamber.
- A hole was present in the chamber, which allowed the people to use it for the burial of more than one person.
- These burial sites were marked by using stones that were available in that period.

Battles

- The Rig Veda also talked about various battles for livestock and land.
- People used to meet in the assemblies organized by the head and discussed peace and war-related issues.
- Wealth obtained was distributed among the leaders, people, and priests.

Vedas

- At first, the famous Rigveda was spread orally and was not written.
- Knowledge passed on in such a way is called 'Shruti.'
- The Vedic teachers used to help the students to memorize the hymns and pronounce the words correctly.

Sanskrit and other languages

- There are many similarities between the Sanskrit language and other European languages such as English, Latin, and German, as found by the scholars.

- Therefore, scholars have concluded that Sanskrit is part of the Indo-Western language family.
- Several other languages also belonged to this group. They were Kashmiri, Hindi, and Sindhi.

Skeleton Studies

- A study of the bone structures helped the archaeologists to differentiate between the female and the male skeletons.
- The skeletons were ancient and could only be understood after examining them properly. The pelvic or hip area of a woman is more significant than that of a man.

Special Burial at Inamgaon

- Scholars found old burials of 3600 and 2000 years. The adult people were buried on the grounds.
- There was a unique case where a man was buried in a big four-legged jar made of clay in a large courtyard of a multi-storey house.

There are few decorations and equipment on the tombs, indicating that they belonged to the wealthy.

Writing Evidence

- The first writings of China were found about 3500 years ago. They were written on animal bones. These bones were known as oracle bones. It is said that the Chinese people did not use iron.
- Megaliths refer to the big stones that people used to identify the burial spot.
- Dasyus/Dasas: Dasas or Dasyus were referred to as the opponents of the Aryas. The word was later transformed to slave.
- "Sukta" refers to hymns written by ancient people during the Rigveda period.

Important Dates

- About 3,600 years ago: This period marked the beginning of the settlement of Inamgaon.
- About 3500 years ago: 15700 B.C marked the beginning of the Rig Vedic composition that formed an essential part of ancient history.

- About 2,700 years ago: 700 BC marked the end of the settlement of Inamgaon.
- Around 2000 years ago: In this period, Charaka wrote the famous 'Charaka Samhita.'

Important Question and Answers.

1. How is Rigveda different from the books that we read today?

Ans: Rigveda is surely very different from the books that we read in the present day. Rigveda was initially practiced orally. It was not written anywhere. Only after years of practice were they written by scholars. Today we have printed and written books available everywhere. We can quickly access any book that we want to read, be it the books of ancient times or modern whereas, Rigveda was recited and passed on from one generation to another. Rigveda was written down after several decades after the time it was first composed.

2. How are the people of the Rig Vedic society depicted?

Ans: According to the Rig Veda, people were divided into two major groups. The priests were also called the Brahmins and the rajas. The priests performed various rituals. They enjoyed a unique position in society. All respected the priests. The rajas were the ones who ruled the states. The rajas did not collect any tax, nor did they have any capital, palaces, or states. The people were described by two words Jana and vish. Aryas were the ones who composed the hymns, and they had their opponents who were called dasas or dayus.

3. Write a short note on megaliths.

Ans: Megaliths referred to stone boulders that were used in marking the burial sites. These megaliths were used in large parts of the country. They were found in South India, the Deccan plateau, and in the northeastern part of Kashmir. Megaliths are found in various places. Some of them were found underground, while some were found on the surface. In some places, stone boulders were left standing in large numbers to mark the position of the burials. The dead person's family could recognize it, and hence, the member of that same family was buried in a similar spot.

4. How does Rigveda depict cattle, chariots, horses, and battles?

Ans: Rig Veda was one of the oldest forms of scriptures used by the ancient people. Rig Veda has several prayers for the horses and cattle. The people of the Vedic period fought wars to capture the belongings of other cities and people, water, land, and cattle. In these wars, horses were used by the warriors. Most of the men participated in the battles. They did not have any regular army. Assemblies were held in specific places to discuss and meet the matters of peace and war. Brave warriors were chosen as the leader.

5. How did the burials indicate social differences?

Ans: Archaeologists have found few boulders and large stones standing on the ground. These indicated that the place had a burial ground beneath. All the burials had a few standard features. The dead people were buried with pots that were red and black. Weapons and tools were also found alongside them. Other things such as ornaments, horse equipment were also present. These objects helped the archaeologists to find out the social difference between the dead burials. Dead bodies that had gold and copper objects were of the rich people, whereas other skeletons that had pots belonged to the poor people.