

**Introduction:**

In this chapter we learn about Mahabharata and ancient India. From 600 BC to AD. Until 600, many important changes took place in the economic and political life of India. The changes of this period left a deep impression on contemporary society. Social inequalities began to increase as a result of the unequal distribution of wealth. The historian used the textual tradition for a number of reasons. According to a text written in ancient times the most popular and famous is the Mahabharata, which was composed between 500 BCE and 500 CE. Kinship is a system of relationships between such relatives that determines our relationship based on lineage. These relationships are based on the lineage or lineage developed by the family. The paternal lineage is the lineage that appears from father to son, then to grandson and grandson. The Pitrvansh is prevalent even before the Mahabharata, although the Mahabharata supports it.

**1. Social Histories using the Mahabharata**

From 600 BC to AD. Until 600, many important changes took place in the economic and political life of India. The changes of this period left a deep impression on contemporary society. During this period various handicrafts and different social groups also flourished. Social inequalities began to increase as a result of the unequal distribution of wealth. The historian used the textual tradition for a number of reasons. According to a text written in ancient times the most popular and famous is the Mahabharata, which was composed between 500 BCE and 500 CE. Historians believe it was written by a Vedic essayist, but many historians consider it to be the work of several authors. The Mahabharata was originally called Jail and has only 8800 verses. Later the number of poems increased to one lakh.

In 1919 V.S. An important work began under the leadership of Sukhatankar, a prominent Sanskrit scholar who persevered in crafting a critical version of the Mahabharata.

**The different types of social organizations during this period are as follows;**

- Monopoly family
- Polyandrous family
- Polygamous family
- Convenient family
- Patriarchal family
- Maternal family
- Neolocal family
- Rural family
- Urban family
- Joint family
- Small family

Kinship is a system of relationships between such relatives that determines our relationship based on lineage. These relationships are based on the lineage or lineage developed by the family. The paternal lineage is the lineage that appears from father to son, then to grandson and grandson. The Pitrvansh is prevalent even before the Mahabharata, although the Mahabharata supports it.

Historians often use textual traditions to understand socio-economic changes in society. In such a situation, it is important to remember who created what and for whom. The language and manner in which the text is transmitted are also important.

## 2. Kinship, marriage rules and various rituals:

Families are usually part of a larger network of people defined as relatives or 'kinsmen', although family relationships are often considered 'natural' and defined in many different ways based on blood.

Reconstructing the family ties of ordinary people is much harder than that of upper-class families.

The Mahabharata valued the ideal of the patriarchy. Under patriarchy, sons can claim the throne or other resources when their father dies.

The idea of Pitrvansh is also accepted in the Rig Veda.

Daughters have no right over the resources of the home. Also, relatives wanted to marry them in families outside. Giving a daughter as a gift at a Kanya-dan or wedding is an important religious duty of the father.

Since 500 BCE, symbols of social behavior have been compiled in the Dharma Sutras and Dharma-Shastras written in Sanskrit. Manu-smriti is the most important theology compiled between 200 BCE and 200 CE.

The rules of social behavior were given by the Brahmins. There are eight types of marriages, the first four of which are considered good and the rest are condemned. People are classified according to their respective tribes. There are two important rules regarding tribes:

Women were expected to abandon their father's tribe and adopt their husband's tribe.

There can be no more members of the same tribe

In the case of the Satavahanas rulers, it is clear that many of the wives of the Satavahanas rulers retained the names of their paternal tribes against the Brahmin rule.

Blood marriage or marriage within the endogamous group is prevalent in many societies in South India.



### DO YOU KNOW?

- Dwij:** The Kotwijis were the people who adopted the sacred thread system in the later Vedic period.
- Endogamy:** It refers to the arrangement of marriage in a caste-like unit.
- Polygamy:** The practice of having more than one wife.
- Polyandry:** Having more than one husband.
- Tamasha:** The Sanskrit word means clan of a person.

### DO YOU KNOW?

- Kinship:** Individuals belonging to the same family.
- Politics:** The form or process or system of government.
- Relatives:** A person with blood ties.
- Patriarch:** A system of identifying the lineage of father to son, grandson, etc.
- Matrivanshi:** A system of identifying lineage from the maternal side.
- Adi Parva:** Adi Parva is the first volume of the Sanskrit version of the Mahabharata.

## 3. Social differences:

The Dharma-Shastras and Dharma contain rules about the ideal 'profession' of the four sects or castes.

Brahmins study and teach the Vedas, perform yagnas and Kshatriyas take part in war, protect and do justice to the people; Vaishyas are engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry and trade; And appointed Shudras to serve the three 'higher' castes.

According to the scriptures only Kshatriyas can become kings. But in reality political power is effectively dependent on the ability to mobilize support and resources and is seldom born.

Gautama Putra Shri Satakrni was the Brahmin who destroyed the pride of the Kshatriyas. Ordered that there should be no extramarital affair between members of the four castes.



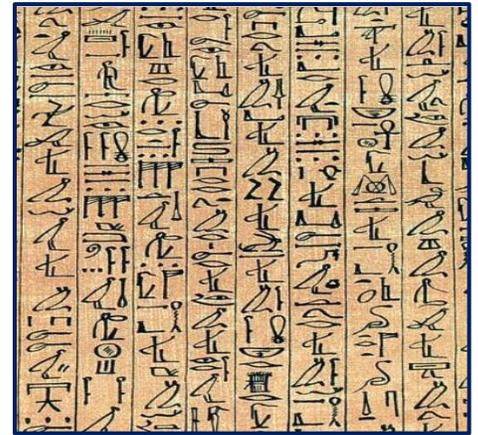
Castes that share a common occupation or occupation are sometimes organized into communities or communities. There are other sects in the society beyond the four castes like Nishad (people living in the forest). Ekalavya is believed to belong to this class.

Sometimes non-Sanskrit speakers are labeled as filthy and looked down upon.

The Brahmanical texts developed a sharp social division by classifying certain social groups as 'untouchables'.

Those who 'pollute' such as handling corpses and dead animals are called 'Chandala'. Manu smriti prescribes the duties of the Chandalas, who must live outside the village, use discarded utensils and wear clothes and iron ornaments from the dead.

Historians derive references to different social facts about Chandala from non-Brahmin texts.



#### 4. Social status and property rights:

According to Manusmriti, after the death of the parents, the ancestral property should be divided equally among the sons, with a separate share for the elders.

Women have no right to their ancestral property but are allowed to keep dowry as gifts they receive during the marriage.

According to the Brahmanical text, apart from gender, color is the criterion for controlling access to wealth. The only 'occupation' referred to by the Shudras was slavery, with a variety of occupations listed for men of the first three castes.

Buddhists recognize differences in society but do not regard them as natural or inflexible. He rejected the idea of status claims based on birth.

There are other possibilities as well; In cases where liberals are respected, the worst are criticized.

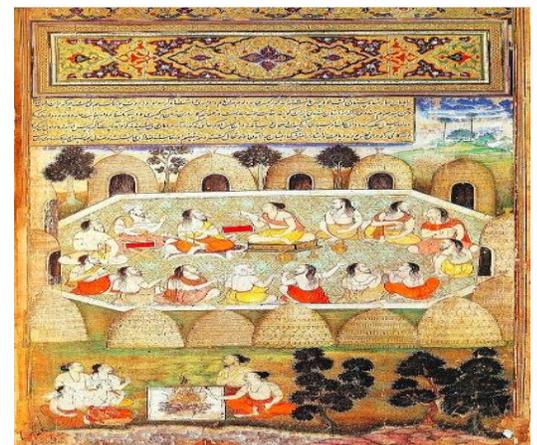
Buddhists have developed an alternative understanding of the institutions needed to control social inequalities and social conflicts.

The king's organization relied on human choice, taxes as payment for the services provided by the king.

#### DO YOU KNOW?

- Indra:** God of war, rain, and valor, one of the main deities of the Rig Veda.
- Dharma Sutras:** These are texts written in Sanskrit by Brahmins.
- Aryan:** They are Central Asian people settled in the northwestern part of the subcontinent.
- Tajima Nikaya:** This is a Buddhist scripture. It was part of a conversation between a king named Avantiputta and Kachan, a disciple of the Buddha.
- Tribe:** People of the same type and the same left.

#### 5. The Mahabharata:



## The Great Indian epic

Leading Indian culturalist V.S. Sukthankar along with his team began the work of preparing a complex version of the Mahabharata. Part of this was the collection of Sanskrit manuscripts of texts written in different scripts from different parts of the country.

Historians initially accepted texts written in Sanskrit as the main source, but later they also relied on Pali, Prakrit, and Tamil texts to reconstruct social history.

### DO YOU KNOW?

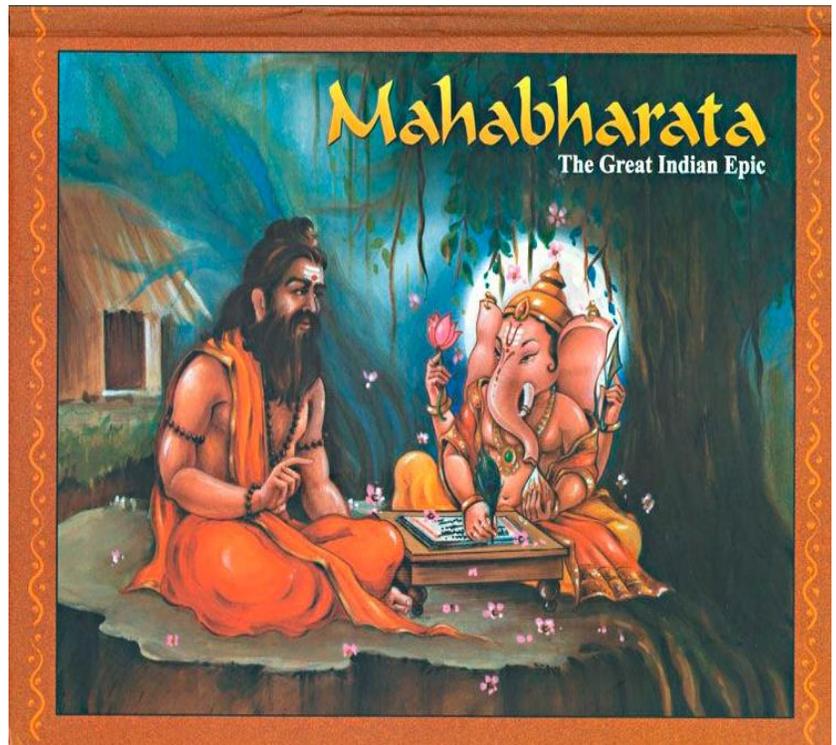
**Shrines:** An association of artists and merchants of ancient India. It is also known as the Guild.

**Chandala:** Untouchables of ancient India, who did small jobs.

**Consensus:** That means great elections. A person elected by the whole people.

**Nishad:** A hunting club.

**Epic:** A long poem about the actions of great men and women or the history of a nation.



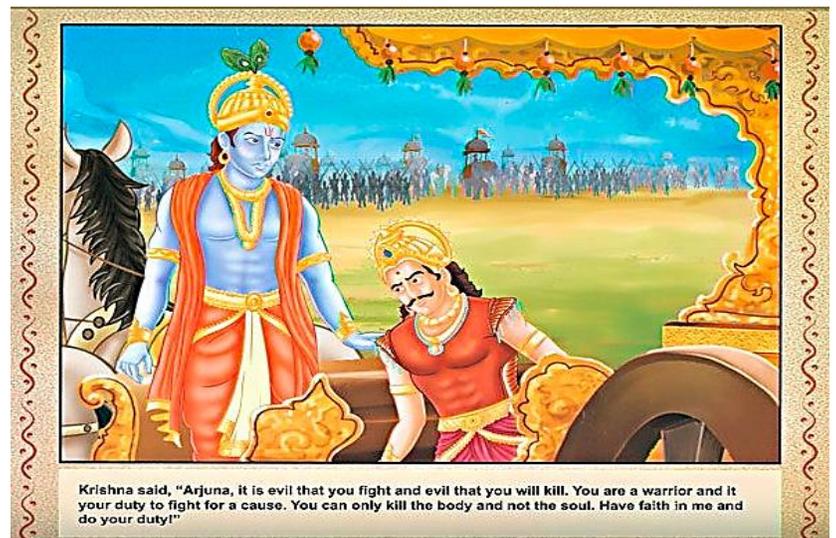
## 6. Significance of the Mahabharata:

Historians examine whether the texts were written in Prakrit, Pali, or Sanskrit. They try to find out about the authors who shaped the text with their perspectives and ideas.

The Sanskrit used in the Mahabharata is much simpler than the Vedas.

Historians classify the content of the text under two broad headings, including articles and informative prescriptions and social norms.

The Mahabharata was written in several stages. This is not the work of any single author. However, it is traditionally attributed to a sage named Vyasa.



The Mahabharata contains detailed descriptions of wars, forests, palaces, and settlements.

Draupadi's marriage to five Pandavas is one of the most challenging episodes in the Mahabharata.

It refers to polygamy (having multiple wives per woman) in the ruling classes.

Some historians believe that polygamy was undesirable from a Brahmin point of view, but it was prevalent in the Himalayan region due to the shortage of women during the war.

### DO YOU KNOW?

Ashtadhyayi of Panini, work on Sanskrit grammar in **500 BC**.

Early Buddhist texts (in Pali), including Tripitaka **500-100 BC**.

**500 BCE-400 CE** Ramayana and Mahabharata (in Sanskrit)

An anthology of **200 BC** myths (in Sanskrit)

**300 CE** Bharata's Natyashastra, an essay on Natyashastra (in Sanskrit)

**400-500 CE** Sanskrit plays an important role in the compilation of Kalidasa's works on astronomy and mathematics by Aryabhata and



## Questions For Practice

1. On what material were the ancient inscriptions written?  
(a) Paper (b) Metal  
(c) Stone (d) Wood
2. Who won the battle of Mahabharata?  
(a) Pandavas (b) Kauravas  
(c) Maurya (d) All of above
3. Which of these is the most important theology?  
(a) Manusmriti  
(b) The Mahabharata  
(c) Ramayana  
(d) None of these
4. According to the scriptures, only \_\_\_\_\_ can rule the country?  
(a) Brahmin (b) Kshatriya  
(c) Vaisya (d) Shudra
5. Which of these rulers followed endogamy?  
(a) Satavahanas  
(b) Pandavas  
(c) Maurya  
(d) None of these
6. Who among the following was the wife of the Pandavas?  
(a) Pradevi Gupta (b) Gautami  
(c) Draupadi (d) None
7. Called Duryodhana and his brothers  
(a) Kauravas (b) Pandavas  
(c) Malaches (d) Nishad
8. Which of these books came earlier?  
(a) Rig Veda  
(b) The Mahabharata  
(c) Manusmriti  
(d) None of these
9. According to the texts, only \_\_\_ can rule the country?  
(a) Brahmin (b) Kshatriya  
(c) Vaisya (d) Shudra
10. How many verses are there in Mahabharata?  
(a) 20 Lakh (b) 50 Lakh  
(c) One lakh (d) More than one lakh
11. In what type of marriage can a woman have multiple husbands?  
(a) Endogamy (b) Exogamy  
(c) Polygamy (d) Polyandry
12. Who won the battle of Mahabharata?  
(a) Pandavas (b) Kauravas  
(c) Maurya (d) None
13. Which of these is the most important theology?  
(a) Manusmriti  
(b) The Mahabharata  
(c) Rig Veda  
(d) None of these
14. According to the scriptures, only \_\_\_\_\_ can rule the country?  
(a) Brahmin (b) Kshatriya  
(c) Vaisya (d) Shudra
15. Which of these rulers followed endogamy?  
(a) Satavahanas  
(b) Pandavas  
(c) Maurya  
(d) None of these
16. Who among the following was the wife of the Pandavas?  
(a) Pradevi Gupta (b) Gautami  
(c) Draupadi (d) Dithya
17. Called Duryodhana and his brothers?  
(a) Kauravas (b) Pandavas  
(c) Malaches (d) Nishad
18. Which of these is the most important theology?  
(a) Manusmriti  
(b) The Mahabharata  
(c) Rig Veda  
(d) None of these
19. According to the texts, only \_\_\_ can rule the country?  
(a) Brahmin (b) Kshatriya  
(c) Vaisya (d) Shudra
20. How many hymns are there in Rig Vedas?  
(a) 1078 (b) 1020  
(c) 1786 (d) 1028
21. Who among these was the wife of the Pandavas?  
(a) Pradevi Gupta  
(b) Gautami  
(c) Draupadi  
(d) None
22. Known as Duryodhana and his brothers?  
(a) Kauravas (b) Pandavas  
(c) Malaches (d) Nishad
23. On what material were the ancient inscriptions written?  
(a) Paper (b) Metal  
(c) Stone (d) Wood
24. Which of the following professions is Kshatriya?  
(a) Make sacrifices and give gifts  
(b) Teaching the Vedas  
(c) Commerce  
(d) Agriculture
25. Which of the following statements is incorrect regarding the duties prescribed for Chandala in Manusmriti?  
(a) They had to live on the outskirts of the village.  
(b) They had to use discarded characters.  
(c) They must wear the old clothes of the villagers and ornaments made of shells.  
(d) It is his duty to act as executioners and to dispose of the corpses of those who have no relatives.
26. Which of the following tactics was developed by the Brahmins to enforce the rules of the caste system from C. 600 BC to 600 AD?  
(a) Brahmins emphasize that the caste system is divine.  
(b) Brahmins tried to convince the people that their profession and status would be determined by birth.  
(c) The Brahmins advised the kings to see to it that the people obeyed the rules of the caste system in the state.  
(d) All of these.
27. Which of the following statements about the importance of gender discrimination in early societies from C. 600 BC to 600 AD is correct?  
(i) Societies are patriarchal in nature.

- (ii) Women are allowed to grant land.  
 (iii) Sons are considered important for the continuation of the family.  
 (a) 'I' only.  
 (b) Both 'ii' and 'iii'  
 (c) Both 'i' and 'iii'  
 (d) All of the above
- 28.** Which of the following is correct about the classification of persons in terms of 'Gotra' in the Brahmanical system after about 1000 BCE?  
 (a) After marriage, women are expected to leave their father's tribe.  
 (b) They are about to adopt the tribe of their husbands.  
 (c) Another important rule is that members of the same tribe may not marry.  
 (d) All of these.
- 29.** Who wrote the original story of the Mahabharata?  
 (a) Brahmins (b) Kshatriya  
 (c) Sudras (d) None of these
- 30.** What is the purpose of the team? Sukthankar?  
 (a) Prepare a complex version of the Mahabharata  
 (b) Translate the Mahabharata into English  
 (c) Prepare a critical version of Manusmriti  
 (d) Translate Manusmriti into Tamil
- 31.** Name the legend of ancient India?  
 (a) Mahabharata  
 (b) Rig Veda  
 (c) Manusmriti  
 (d) None of these
- 32.** The total number of Vedas present in?  
 (a) 4 (b) 5  
 (c) 3 (d) 6
- 33.** How many years ago was the Mahabharata written?  
 (a) 100 years (b) 50 years  
 (c) 1000 years (d) 500 years
- 34.** A very ambitious project related to the critical edition of the Mahabharata was launched during the year?  
 (a) 1919 AD (b) 1717 AD  
 (c) 1616 AD (d) 1920 AD
- 35.** The following are two of the most popular memories?  
 (a) Manusmriti and Yajnavalkya Smriti  
 (b) Narada Smriti and Parashara Smriti  
 (c) Paras Roy Smriti and Hanuman Smriti  
 (d) Vishnu Smriti and Shaiva Smriti
- 36.** In the opinion of historians, much of the information found in the epics is relevant?  
 (a) From the Rig Veda period  
 (b) From Vedic times  
 (c) From the time of the Mauryan  
 (d) None of these
- 37.** The growth of the Kaur (Kuru) dynasty occurred when the two major tribes merged?  
 (a) Bharata and Rahu  
 (b) Bharat and Kuru  
 (c) India and Turvey  
 (d) None
- 38.** The word Kshatriya has a literal meaning?  
 (a) King  
 (b) Warrior  
 (c) Savior  
 (d) A state or territorial authority
- 39.** How many verses of the original text are mentioned in the preface of the Mahabharata?  
 (a) 1,00,000 (b) 50,000  
 (c) 24,000 (d) 5,000
- 40.** Mentioned as the capital of the Kauravas?  
 (a) Hastinapur (b) Indraprastha  
 (c) The issuer (d) All

## Solutions

- |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (c)  | 2. (a)  | 3. (a)  | 16. (c) | 17. (a) | 18. (a) | 28. (c) | 29. (a) | 30. (c) |
| 4. (b)  | 5. (a)  | 6. (c)  | 19. (b) | 20. (d) | 21. (a) | 31. (c) | 32. (a) | 33. (c) |
| 7. (a)  | 8. (a)  | 9. (b)  | 22. (d) | 23. (b) | 24. (a) | 34. (a) | 35. (a) | 36. (b) |
| 10. (d) | 11. (d) | 12. (a) | 25. (d) | 26. (d) | 27. (c) | 37. (b) | 38. (d) | 39. (c) |
| 13. (a) | 14. (b) | 15. (a) |         |         |         | 40. (d) |         |         |

