

EARLY VEDIC PERIOD

Estimated from 1500 BCE to 1000 BCE

❖ GEOGRAPHY & SETTLEMENTS

- Early Vedic Period marks the migration of **Indo-Aryans** into the **Indian subcontinent**
- Settlements primarily in the **north-western** region of the Indian subcontinent
- **Major regions:** **Sapta-Sindhu** (Seven Rivers) region
- Settlements along the banks of rivers like the **Indus**, **Sarasvati**.

❖ SOCIETY & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- Tribal society based on **kinship** and **clans**
- Tribal units called "**Janas**" or "**Jatis**"
- **Raja** (**king**) as the central authority
- **Rajan** (**chief**) as the leader of the tribe
- Presence of **warrior class** (**Kshatriyas**), **priests** (**Brahmins**), and **common people** (**Vaishyas**)
- Social hierarchy based on birth (**varna system**) - **Brahmins**, **Kshatriyas**, **Vaishyas**, **Shudras**

❖ RELIGION & RITUALS

- Polytheistic religion
- Worship of **natural forces** and **deities** (**devas**)
- **Agni** (**fire god**), **Indra** (**thunder god**), **Varuna** (**god of cosmic order**), and others revered
- Performance of **yajnas** (**ritual sacrifices**) and prayers
- Importance of **hymns and prayers** (**Rigveda**)
- Role of Brahmins as priests and custodians of religious rituals

❖ LITERATURE & ORAL TRADITION

- Preservation of knowledge through oral transmission
- **Rigveda** - **Oldest Vedic text, collection of hymns**
- Samaveda, Yajurveda, Atharvaveda - **Other Vedic texts**
- Rich **poetic and metaphoric** language
- Composed and recited by **Rishis** (**sages**)

❖ ECONOMY & LIVELIHOOD

- **Pastoral and agricultural** economy

- Cattle rearing and agriculture (wheat, barley, rice, pulses)
- Importance of cattle wealth (go-dhana)
- Barter system for exchange of goods
- No known coinage system during this period

❖ POLITICAL SYSTEM & GOVERNANCE

- Tribal chief (Rajan) as the political authority
- Assembly of tribes (Sabha) for decision-making
- Importance of counsel (Purohita) for advice to the king
- Emergence of kingdoms (Mahajanapadas) in later Vedic period

❖ SETTLEMENTS & DWELLINGS

- Semi-nomadic lifestyle in the early phase
- Later settled agricultural communities (grame)
- Simple houses made of wood, reeds, and thatch
- Settlements fortified with wooden palisades
- Development of villages (grama) and towns (nigama) over time

❖ TECHNOLOGY & SKILLS

- Knowledge of metal working (copper, bronze)
- Horse-drawn chariots used in warfare
- Skill in agriculture and irrigation techniques
- Weaving, pottery, and carpentry skills
- Use of horse and oxen for transportation and ploughing

❖ DECLINE & TRANSITION

- Gradual transition to the later Vedic period

- **Socio-political changes** with the emergence of **kingdoms**
- Transition from **pastoral** to **settled** agricultural communities
- Transformation in **religious practices and rituals**