

Society in the Rig Vedic Period

- ◆ Society was predominantly **patriarchal**.
- ◆ Family structure was patrilineal, and inheritance was through the male line.
- ◆ **Women** had a respectable position but were subordinate to men in the patriarchal framework.
- ◆ **Family (Kula):** The basic unit was the family (Kula), led by the eldest male, known as Kulapa.
 - The **family** was often extended, with multiple generations living together.
 - The **Grama** was a group of families, not necessarily settled, and was governed by the **Gramini** (village head).



- ◆ **Kinship-based Society:** Society was organized around kinship ties, with strong tribal bonds.
 - The Vedic society was **tribal**, and the concept of a **settled village** did not exist in early Vedic times.

Social Organization

- ◆ **Tribal and Egalitarian Society:** According to R.S. Sharma, the early Vedic society was tribal, **egalitarian**, and lacked a rigid caste system.
- ◆ **Class Division:** The Rig Vedic society had **professional mobility**, Occupation was **not based on birth** and people could adopt various professions.
 - A person could adopt different professions, as shown in the example from **Mandala IX**: "My father is a physician, my mother is a grinder, I am a poet."
- ◆ Initial social differentiation was based on **Varna** (colour), distinguishing between the **Vedic** and **non-Vedic** people.
- ◆ **Slavery:** Slaves existed in society, primarily for domestic work, and were not involved in productive activities.



Social Structure in the Rigvedic Tribe

- ◆ The **Rigvedic society** were primarily divided into three sections:
 - **Warriors (Rajanyas)**
 - **Priests (Brahmins)**
 - **Common People** (peasants, artisans, etc.) (Vish)
- ◆ The **Shudra** category did not emerge until the **end** of the Rigvedic period.

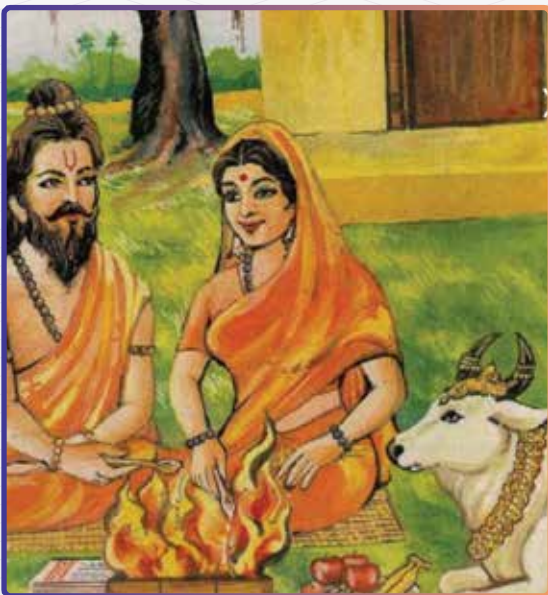


Caste System

- ◆ The **caste system had not evolved during the Rigvedic period.**
- ◆ Professional mobility was encouraged, and inter-class marriage and inter-dining were common.
 - **Anuloma:** Higher Varna man marrying a lower Varna woman.
 - **Pratiloma:** Lower Varna man marrying a higher Varna woman.

Position of Women

- ◆ **Gender Equality:** Women were given equal educational opportunities and could participate in religious rituals.
- ◆ **Role in Society:** Women held an important role in society, enjoying the freedom to participate in public life and festivals. They also took part in public sacrifices alongside men.
- ◆ **Property and Education:** Women had access to education and property rights.



- ◆ **Notable Female Scholars:** During the **Rigvedic period**, more than **27 women scholars** are mentioned. Notable examples include **Viswavara, Apala, Lopamudra** (who composed two verses of the Rigveda), and Gosha. These women were referred to as '**female Rishis**' or '**Rishikas**' in the Rigveda. Many of them contributed to the hymns of the Vedas and were known as '**Brahmavadinis**', meaning those who spoke or taught the Vedas.



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GARGI

♦ Marriage Practices:

- The institution of marriage was **well-established**, with both bride price and dowry being practiced.
- There were eight distinct types of marriages, each with its own customs:



Type of Marriage	Description
1. Brahma	Arranged marriage where the bride's parents choose a groom with knowledge of the Vedas.
2. Prajapatya	Arranged marriage where the groom's family approaches the bride's family, both having equal education.
3. Gandharva	Love marriage based on mutual consent between the bride and groom, with Vedic rituals; family consent might not be involved.
4. Deva	The groom marries the daughter of the person officiating the sacrifice .
5. Arsha	The groom pays a bride price (Shulka) for the marriage; might be condemned in some contexts if the couple is not compatible.
6. Asura	The groom pays money to the bride's family for the marriage.
7. Pisacha	The groom seduces the bride under undefined or questionable conditions for marriage.
8. Rakshasa	The bride is forcibly taken by the groom after her family members are harmed or hurt.

- **Monogamy** was the norm, but **polygamy** and **polyandry** existed in some cases.
- **Widow Remarriage** was allowed, and the **Niyoga** system (levirate marriage- The widow marrying her dead husband's brother or next in kin if she is childless.) was prevalent.
- **Child Marriage** was prohibited.
- **Social Evils:** There were no practices like **Sati** or **Dowry** during this period.

Recreation and Lifestyle

- ◆ **Recreational Activities:** Both men and women engaged in **dancing, singing**, and playing musical instruments.
 - **Horse races** and **gambling** were male-dominated pastimes.
- ◆ **Food Habits:** The daily diet included **barley, wheat, beans, vegetables**, and **milk products**. **Non-vegetarian food** like meat from ox, goat, and birds was common.
- ◆ **Alcohol: Soma** and **Sura** were consumed, with **Soma** used in religious rituals, and **Sura** being a secular, stronger drink.




Clothing and Ornaments

- ◆ **Clothing:** Men and women wore **cotton** and **woolen garments**, and **deer skin** was also used. Women wore **gold ornaments**, and both genders adorned themselves with various jewelry.
- ◆ **Hair and Appearance:** Women braided their hair, and both men and women used oils and adornments to enhance their appearance.

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