

## 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 **Gram** 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.

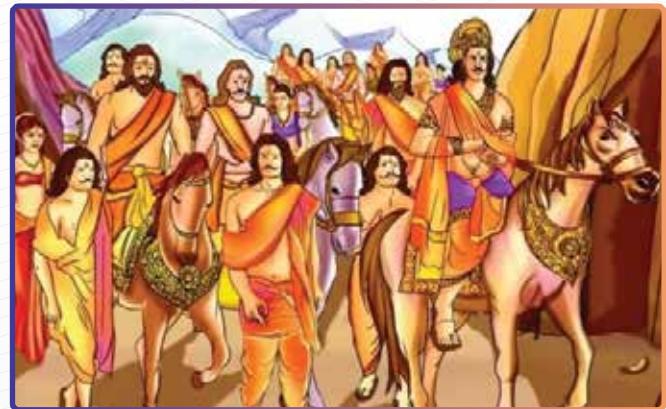
- The Vedic society was **tribal**, and the concept of a **settled village** did not exist in early Vedic times.

## 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.

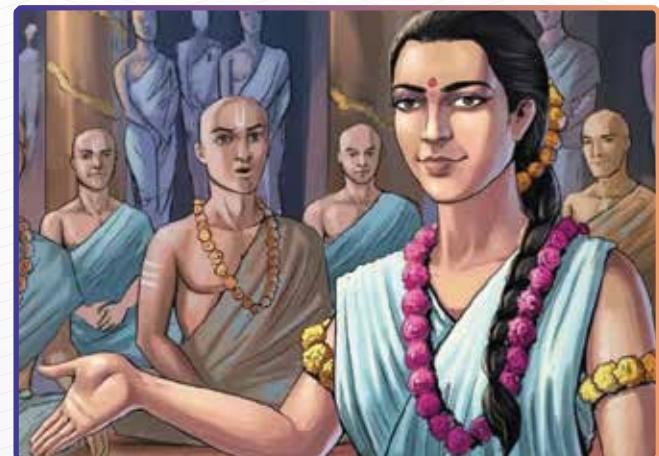


## Caste System

- ◆ 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.


**GHOSHA**

**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:

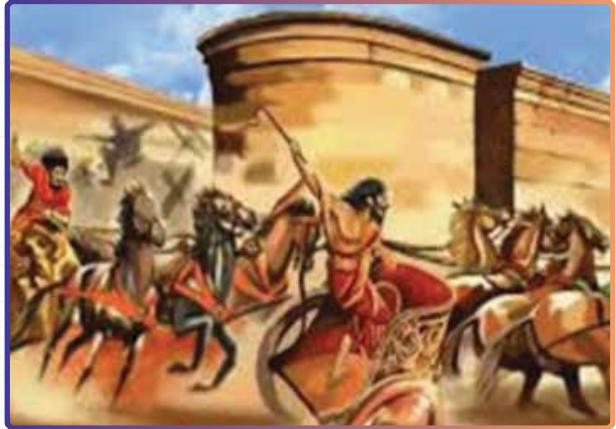


Type of Marriage	Description
1. Brahma	<b>Arranged marriage</b> where the bride's parents choose a groom with knowledge of the Vedas.
2. Prajapatya	<b>Arranged marriage</b> where the groom's family approaches the bride's family, both having equal education.
3. Gandharva	<b>Love marriage</b> based on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