

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q1

Underline the changes in the field of economy and society from Rig Vedic to later Vedic period.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2024 · GS I · 10 marks · Indian Heritage and Culture

Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

Core demand of the question

- Underline the changes in the economy from the Rig Vedic to the later Vedic period
- Underline the changes in society across the same span

Revision summary

In the Rig Vedic period, cattle were the main form of wealth, the plough was limited, and there was little regular tax.

Later Vedic texts show settled agriculture, iron, crafts and dues to the chief.

Society moved from kin tribe and relatively open gender roles toward a harder varna order.

King and Brahmana rose together through large sacrifices such as **rajasuya** and **ashvamedha**.

Women's ritual and public space narrowed as upanayana and household dharma became male gates.

- **Economy and society changed as one:** surplus made rank, and rank organised surplus.

Introduction

The Rig Veda describes people who lived mainly by herding on the north-western plains. Their wealth was counted in cattle, and their politics were organised around the tribe and the assembly. The later Vedic books - the **Yajur Veda**, the **Sama Veda**, the **Atharva Veda**, and the **Brahmanas** - belong to a later time when many of these groups had moved east into the **Ganga-Yamuna** region. Economy and society changed together. The plough and iron increased food surplus. That surplus supported **varna** ranks, regular dues, and a king who stood at the centre of large rituals.

Body

Changes in the economy

In the Rig Vedic period, cattle were the main form of wealth. A gavishti was a raid to capture cows. Gifts to priests were often cows and horses. Farming existed, but it was not yet the main source of livelihood. There was little town-based craft, little regular tax, and no large standing army that needed a big grain store.

Later Vedic texts describe **settled agriculture**. Rice and barley were grown in the middle Ganga belt. **Krishna ayas** (dark metal, usually read as iron) made it easier to clear forest and to plough more deeply. Crafts became more specialised. Carpenters, smiths, potters and

weavers appear as distinct groups. **Bali** and **sulka** are named as dues paid to the chief. Grants of land to priests also become more important. Trade was still limited, but the household was no longer only a herding unit.

- **Pastoral wealth:** Early hymns measure status in cattle, horses, and the generosity of the rajan in the vidatha and the sabha.
- **Settled farming:** Later books and the **Satapatha Brahmana** assume the plough, the furrow, and a village that can support a large yajna.
- **Craft and tribute:** Specialists and regular dues show a surplus economy, not only a camp of herders.

Changes in society

Rig Vedic society was organised mainly by kinship. Jana and vis mattered more than a fixed caste ladder. Women appear as hymn composers and as participants in ritual. Widow remarriage and a more open domestic life are visible in the hymns. Varna is named, but a person's work was not yet locked for life.

Later Vedic society became more ranked. The **Brahmana** and the **Kshatriya** claimed ritual and political leadership. The **Vaishya** was the paying householder. The **Shudra** was tied more firmly to service. Ideas of **gotra** and **ashrama** grew. The king's **rajasuya** and **ashvamedha** turned kingship into a public ritual of rank. Women's public role became narrower. Upanayana became a gate for twice-born males. The village (grama) sat inside a territorial unit called a **janapada**.

- **From clan to rank:** Assemblies became weaker as the rajan became a territorial lord with priestly support.
- **Varna as duty:** Later texts teach dharma by birth more firmly than the early hymns.
- **Gender and ritual:** The later household became more patriarchal because the large sacrifice became a specialist male science.

These two changes belong to one process. A plough economy needed a ranked society to organise labour, and a ranked society needed surplus to support king and priest.

Flow diagram

Rig Vedic pastoral jana -> Eastward Ganga settlement
 Eastward Ganga settlement -> Iron plough surplus
 Iron plough surplus -> Crafts tribute king
 Iron plough surplus -> Varna gotra ashrama
 Varna gotra ashrama -> Rajasuya ashvamedha

Conclusion

From the Rig Vedic period to the later Vedic period, the economy moved from cattle wealth toward settled farming, iron tools, crafts and tribute. Society moved from a kin-based tribe toward a clearer varna order around king and priest. This was a long settlement of the **Ganga plains**. It was not the sudden invention of caste in a single hymn.

Facts & figures

Krishna ayas

Later Vedic texts name a dark metal, commonly read as iron, linked to forest clearance and the agrarian shift.

Satapatha Brahmana

A later Vedic prose text that assumes large royal sacrifices and a settled ritual economy in the Ganga country.

Rajasuya and ashvamedha

Royal consecration and horse sacrifice through which later Vedic kings claimed territorial and cosmic rank.

Vidatha, sabha, samiti

Early Vedic assemblies that share power with the rajan; they recede as later kingship becomes more territorial.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-1/2024/underline-the-changes-in-the-field-of-economy-and-society-from-rig-vedic-to-later-vedic-period/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com