CHAPTER - II

VEDIC AND LATER VEDIC PERIOD
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The society of the Vedic Aryans was highly advanced. Though the sacrificial cult gained ascendancy, yet, they did not have only a life of the religious cults. The society did not ignore sports. There are numerous references to playing of dice, hunting, chariot-racing, archery, dancing and singing in the Vedic literature. The detailed account of sports and pastimes prevalent during the Vedic and later Vedic period is as follows:

SPORTS

HUNTING

In the time of the *Rgveda*, hunting was an established sport which not only enhanced one's energy, but also helped to acquire horns, skins, etc. Wild animals were hunted for the protection of the domestic animals and also for food and recreation. For hunting, arrow was sometimes employed, but as is usual with primitive man, the normal instruments of capture were nets and pitfalls. Birds were regularly caught in nets (*pāsa*), the bird catcher being called *nidhā-pati* (master of snares). The net was fastened on pegs, as is also done in modern times for catching birds. Pits were used for catching antelopes (*ṛṣya*), and so were called (*ṛṣya-da*).
Elephants were captured, as in the Greek times, perhaps through the instrumentality of tamed females. Apparently wherein the boar was captured in the chase, dogs were also used. However, the passage from which this view is taken is of uncertain mythological content. There is also an obscure reference to the capture of the buffalo (gaura), but it is not clear whether the reference is to shooting with an arrow or capturing by means of ropes; perhaps a lasoo or a net was used. The lion was captured in pitfalls or was surrounded by the hunters and slain. One very obscure passage refers to the lion being caught by ambuscade, which perhaps merely alludes to the use of the hidden pit.

References to hunting are also found in the Atharvaveda. Panini names hunting as lubdhayoga and a hunter as marga (i.e. one who shoots mrga, deer) and paksika or sakunika (a bird-trapper). The hunters moved with a pack of hounds. In shooting, arrow provided with barbs were used which caused extreme pain when they pierced a body. In the Ramayana also there are references that show that hunting was a popular sport. Hunting, fowling and fishing appear to have been fairly popular with the people; however, addiction to them was prohibited. Beaters and hounds were used in hunting. An elephant was captured with the help
of other tamed animals after being made to fall in the pit specially made for that purpose. Mention is also made of deer being first captivated by music and then caught by the hunter. The epic Mahābhārata also indicate the popularity of hunting. It seems hunting was a prerogative of the kings. Mostly sharped arrows were used in hunting animals. The killing of deer was highly commended. King Pāṇḍu is stated to have killed a couple of deer with one arrow.

FISHING

It is evident from both the literary and archaeological sources that fishing was fairly common. In the epic, Rāmāyana, there is a reference to the shooting of fish with bow and arrow. It was also hooked. Fishing hooks discovered at Atranjikhera dated to be between c.1200-600 B.C., further attest that fishing was prevalent in that period.

DICING

There are numerous references in the Vedic and the later Vedic literature to the playing of dice that attest its popularity among the people of the age. The detailed note of the term and the methodology of the game of dice is as follows:

Different names for the Game of Dice

The game of dice was called aṅgakṛiḍā or vibhītaka in
The word *dyūta* is used in the *Sūtra* literature but is left undefined there. In the *Ramayana* also *dyūta* is mentioned. In the *Mahābhārata* too the term *dyūta* is used for dice play.

**Words Used to Denote Gamblers**

There are many words which denote gamblers. In the *Rg* period the most popular word used to denote gambler was *kitava*. In the *Rgveda* dicer is described as leader of great horde (*Senanir Mahato gapasya*). The *Samhitas* of the *Yajurveda* denote different types of gamblers. They are *Ādīnavadarśa*, *Kalpin*, *Adhikalpin* and *Sabhāsthāpu*. They are explained by Mahīdhara in his commentary as follow:

Ādīnavadarśaṁ ādīnavo daśastāṁ paśyati tathābhūtam kalpinam kalpakam adhikalpinam adhikalpanākaraṇām.

In the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* some other names such as *Sabhāvin* and *Bahissad* are given. Another word used in the *Rgveda* and the *Atharvaveda* which denotes a professional gambler is *Śvaghnin*. The word *Durodara* when used in masculine, gender denotes gambler, *Dyūtakāraṇ* is also used to denote a gambler. According to *Pāṇini* *ākṣika* and *Śalākika* refer to a gambler.

**The Types Of Dice Used for the Game**

The terms used for dice in sanskrit are *akṣa*, perhaps for the eye-like dots on the dice. Other terms used to
designate the dice were vibhītaka, pāṣaka, śālakā, bradhna, etc.

Dice were called vibhītakas as they were got from the vibhītaka trees which grew on mountain slopes. The vibhītaka nuts are described as brown (babhru) in colour in the Vedas. The vibhītaka nuts were round in shape with five slightly flattened sides. The size of the vibhītaka nut was not very big. Besides the natural fruit, imitations of wood and even gold seem to have been in use. Sāyaṇācārya remarks that the dice used in games consisted either of gold cowries (shells) or of gold dice shaped like vibhītaka nuts.

aksāḥ kapardakāḥ suvarṇanirmitāḥ
vibhītaka phalāṇi sauvarpāṇī ityēkṣa.

In the ritual game at Agnyādheya and Rājasūya ceremonies dice of gold, silver, ivory were used and the vibhītaka nuts were used on certain occasions is mentioned in the Baudhayāna Śrauta Sūtra.

The Mahābhārata also makes mention of several types, i.e. those made of gold, ivory and of different colours like black and red.

Many game pieces of various shapes, viz., conical, discoid with knot, cylindrical and cubical have been discovered at Atranjikhera dated to be between c. 1200-600 B.C. This shows that the game of draught of
chess had started by that time.

**USE OF BOARDS**

The references found in the *Vedas*, *Brāhmaṇas* and *Śūtra* literature make it clear that no board was used to throw dice on it. A depression made in the ground alone served the purpose.

The words *irīṇa* and *adhīdevana* used in the *Vedas*, *Brāhmaṇas* and *Śūtras* refer to places on which the dice are thrown. The *Mahābhārata* refers to dicing-cloth. This used to be spread over the place where dice were thrown.

*Upastīrṇa sahā rājan sarve tvayi kṛtakaṇāḥ.*

**Terms Related to Dice Play**

*Kṛta, treta, dvāpara* and *Kali* are the technical terms used to denote different throws of the game. The throw named *kṛta* brings total win for the gambler. In the gambler's hymn of the *Ṛgveda* the word *kṛtani* stands for lucky throw at dice. The word *kṛta* is used in the sense of the winning throw at different places in the vedic literature.

*sa sevyena yamatī vrādhataścit sa dakṣīṇe saṅgrbhītā kṛtāni.*

(with the left hand he controls even the increasing wealth, in the right he holds accumulated winnings.)
Apostamba and Kātyāyana, Upaniṣads consider kṛta as the winning throw. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad also states kṛta as the winning throw. In the Sābhāparvan of the Mahābhārata Śākuni is described by Vidura as Kṛta-hasta i.e. one who takes the winning throw. The throw called kali is said to bring complete loss to the player. In Atharvaveda kali is used as a losing throw. Sāyaṇa in his commentary on the Atharvaveda observes;

Kali śabda-vācyasyāgamane parājayo bhavati.

From the Satpatha Brāhmaṇa it appears that another name for kali was abhibhū. Nīlkanṭha commenting on the Mahābhārata says that there is no victory if the throw is kali: kalipate jayonasti.

The throw named tretā gives success to the gambler comparatively lesser than the success brought by kṛta. The throw named dvāpara gives success to a player in a lesser degree compared to tretā. The Mahābhārata also refers to dvāpara.

nākṣāṃksipati gāndīvaṁ na kṛtam dvāparam na ca.

Rudradutta explains the throw (asyah) as follows: "when all dice in a throw are divisible by four, it is termed
as kṛta, when three dice are left over after division by four, it is tretā; when two dice remain over, it is dvāpara; and when the remainder is a single die, the throw is called kali". In other words, kṛta was the name of the die or the side of the die marked with four points or dots. Tretā was a throw of a die as well as the side of the die marked with three dots. A die or the side of the die marked with two dots was called dvāpara and the die or the side of the die marked with one dot was called kali. The other two important words are durodara and glaha. According to the Amarakośa, the word durodara means gambling if it is used in a neutral gender. When used in a masculine gender, it means gambler.

The Method of Playing Dice
According to Lüders, one throws a certain number of dice on the place of playing (adhidevana) and the other then throws a number of dice so as to make multiple of four or five. The result is made known in the terms of kṛta, tretā, dvāpara and kali. It is kṛta if the total number of dice is divisible by four or five. If three dice are left over after division by four or five, it is tretā, etc.

Gambling House
During the Ṛgvedic period people used to play the game
of dice in an assembly hall called sabhā. In the 58
Yajurveda we have the word Sabhāsthāṇu name given to
the dicer because of his constant presence in the Sabhā. 59
The Atharvaveda makes mention of Sabhā as the place of
gambling.
There are many references to gambling halls in the 60
Mahābhārata. According to the epic the assembly hall
built by Dhṛtarāṣṭra had a thousand pillars and hundred
doors made out of gold and studded with diamonds. The
hall was named Toranāspatikā.

The Officers in Charge of Gambling Houses
Right from the vedic period it appears that gambling
houses were under the supervision of some important
persons. According to Śāyaṇa the word Sabhāvin found in
the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa denotes the keeper of the
gambling hall.
Aksāvāpa has been referred to a public person who was in
charge of gambling halls of the state and collected the
tax money due to the king. 63
Brāhmaṇas and Samhitās of the Yajurveda also make
mention of Aksāvāpa. It is evident from the above note
on dice play that the game of dice was widely popular
amongst the people of vedic age. However, it was severely
condemned owing to severe losses that it entailed. The
hymn No. 34 of tenth mandala of Rāṣṭrade presents a
realistic picture of a repenting gambler, the trials and tribulations faced by him in life. The seer of this hymn is Kavaṣa Ailūṣa who is said to have been a gambler himself. Yāska, the author of Nirukta also says that this hymn is composed by one sage who had lost everything in diceplay. (ṛṣerāṣa-paridyunasyaitdargam vedayante). Dice along with wine and anger is considered one of the causes which leads men astray, in the Ṛgveda (na sa svo dakṣo varupa dhrutiḥ sā surā manyurvibhīdako acittīḥ). However, the Yajurveda associates gambling with religious rituals. The Sūkla Yajurveda (Vājasaneyī Samhitā) contains a reference to dice play, and it is in connection with the great sacrifice Rājasūya. In the passage we have a reference to the priest who hands over the five dice to the king as a mark of victory (abhibhūrayetāste pāṇcha diśeḥ kalpantām). Baudhāyana-sūtra holds the view that dicing is the first cause of impurity. The game of dice was condemned along with women and drink in the Rāmāyana. In his declaration to Kausālyā Bharata says that one who is responsible for Rāma’s exile must be compared to a person given to wine and women and gambling. In the Mahābhārata also, gambling was considered as a vice. Dhrtarāṣṭra was not in favour of it, though, out
of pressure brought by his son he invited Yudhiṣṭhira for the game. Vidura who unwillingly carried his invitation to Yudhiṣṭhira considered gambling as the root cause of all maladies and tried to avert the game.  

Krṣṇa emphasised that gambling is the worst of all evils. Despite, severe condemnation of playing dice its popularity never diminished. It continued to amuse the people through the vedic and later vedic age.

ARCHERY

The practice of archery as a sport, by no means commenced when the use of bow in war ceased. Indeed, its general popularity as an amusement was the greatest when it was most formidable as a military weapon. Though essentially practised by the lower classes from necessity as well as from choice, the elites including kings and the princes also practised shooting with bow for pleasure and for sporting purposes.

The dhanuṣ (bow) which was also called dhanvan was compared to a stout staff bent into carved shape (vakra) and of a bow string (jyā) made of a strip of cow hide, which joined the ends. The tips of the bow, when the string was fastened was called ārtṇi, relaxed when not in actual use. The bow was specially strung up when needed for shooting. The arrow which was called iṣu, bāpa, sāru or sārya, usually consisted of
three parts: viz, the shaft (sālya) which was made of reed still known as sāra, the head of which was either of horn or of metal, copper, bronze or iron and the feather socket (parṇa-dhi) to which feathers were stuck up or fastened to make it fly swiftly through the air. It was shot from the ear. The arrow was about five spans or three feet long. The quiver or the arrow-holder was called isudhi, which was carried by every bowman slung on his back. It was probably also called niṣāṅga. The archer used a leather hand-guard called hastaghna on its left hand for its protection from the impact of the bow string.

In the Rigveda there is mention of Sāmana, a general popular festivity. In those gatherings bowmen flocked there, to win prizes at archery. (Jyā, ivāṁ sāmane-pārayantī and cīścā kṛṇoti sāmanā vagatya isudhiḥ). No specific mention is made of the organisation of the group competition at archery in Sūtra period.

In the epics the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata there are references to the organisation of exhibitions that enabled the archers to show their prowess at archery. In the Rāmāyana, in Bālakanda, it is stated that king of Mithilā, the father of Sītā, had organized a svayamvara for his daughter, and the person who showed the exemplary skill at fastening of the string of bow...
would be the suitable match. Lord Rāma and Laksmana are described as highly skilled archers. Sugrīva, the ruler of Kiṣkindhā, with a view to ascertain Rāma's actual strength requested him to pierce with his arrow one of the seven sal trees standing there. Rāma pierced all the seven trees standing in a line with a single arrow and that same arrow returned to the quiver from where it emerged. In the Mahābhārata, Ekalavya shot seven arrows into the barking dog's mouth before he could shut it. Arjuna shot seven arrows into a cow's hollow horn swinging on a rope. The feat was amulated by Karna who is said to have never aimed an arrow twice. The Varāha Samhitā & the Abhilasitārtha Chintāmani have mentioned two hundred and eighty four varieties of games played with the help of bow and arrow. A few important games are as follows:

1. Matsyabhedha Literally it means 'piercing of fish'. In this game a fish was tied on the top of a bamboo, about 20 feet high, and a bucket filled with water was kept at the root. The archer was supposed to hit at the fish by seeing the shadow that fell into the water. Arjuna had won Draupadī as his wife in such a tournament.

2. Kharjurī-bhedha- Literally it means 'piercing a tree'. In this game the archer was expected to pierce the trunk
of a tree with successive arrows.

3. **Guru-Praṇāma** - Literally it means 'salutation to the preceptor'. Before the commencement of any competition etc. the archer was to shoot five arrows, one after the other towards his guru's feet either touching or falling near his feet. Arjuna used to salute his preceptor Dronācārya in a similar manner.

4. **Vikāṭarjuna** - Literally meaning 'a difficult game', it comprised of shooting two targets simultaneously.

5. **Yamālārjuna** - It was more or less like Vikāṭarjuna in which two targets at a distance were struck simultaneously.

6. **Mālavidyādharma** - Literally meaning 'like a garland'. In this game the arrows are to be shot in a very high speed like a lightening to form a straight line or a garland in the air.

7. **Draudhabhedha** - In this game an earthen pitcher was kept floating on the flowing water of a river and the archer was to break the pot into pieces by a single arrow from the distance of about twenty feet.

8. **Syūta** - Literally meaning 'to stitch'. Two pieces of leather were stitched together with one or more arrows.

9. **Sababhedha** - Literally means to 'hit a sound'. Here the target was not visible and the archer was to hit the target after hearing the sound.
10. Kāśṭhāckhedana - In this game the archer was supposed to pierce the wood.

Chariot-race, Horse-race and Horse-riding

The Vedic Aryans were exceedingly fond of horses, horse-riding, horse-racing and chariot-racing. It is surprising that some European scholars, e.g. Macdonell holds the view that though the horses were employed to draw chariots, yet, it was not used for riding by the Vedic Indians. Macdonell says that no mention is made of riding in battle. Keith also writes in the Cambridge History of India, (P. 98).

"Though horse-riding was probably not unknown for other purposes, no mention is made of this use of the horse in the war"

There are many references in the Rgveda that supports the statement that horse-riding was practised during the Vedic period. In the Rgveda 1.162.7, we come across the following passage:

"Forth, for the regions of the gods, the charger with his smooth back is come, my prayer attends him." Again "horses made of gold (i.e. golden manes) hath he, his feet are iron less fleet, than he, though swift as thought, is Indra. The gods have come that they may taste the oblation of him who mounted, first of all, the courser". Then there are other two verses: "where are
your horses, where the reins? How came ye? How had ye the power? Rein was on nose and seat on back. The whip is laid upon the plank. The heroes stretch their thighs apart, like women when the babe is born.

There are also many other references to horse riding in the Rigveda. "The Ashvins used to come riding on their horses." Indra has been thus invoked in another verse: "O Indra come thou to us from the distant region riding on thy two handsome horses and drink this Soma" yet in another verse, mention is made of horse riding, "Adorable Āditya, may I pass (safe) in your car from the illusion (you desire) for the malignannt, the snares which are spread for your foes, (in like manner) as a horseman (passes over a road)." The word used in the verse is asviva i.e. 'like a horseman'. The Maruts or the gods of wind rode on fleet of horses as did also Mitra and Varuṇa, Agni also rode on red horses Viṣṇu and Indra are said to travel on clouds, as people ride on "trained horses". There is also mention of a victorious hero returning home on his fleet of horse.

Riding is also clearly mentioned in the Rigveda 1.162.17, which says: "If one, when seated with excessive urging hath with his heel or with his whip distressed thee, all these thy woes, as with the oblations, ladle at sacrifices, with my prayer I famish." All these references to horse-riding support that horse riding was in vogue in Vedic period.

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The Ṛgvedic Aryans were exceedingly fond of horse-racing and chariot-racing, not only for the sake of fun and excitement that they afforded, but also for exercising the horses, the riders and the chariot drivers and keeping them always fit and efficient. Every village must have possessed its own race-course where the horses were regularly exercised, and where races were run on special festive occasion and prizes given away to the winners.

The race-course was called Kāṣṭhā or ājī and appears from the Ṛgveda to have been a quasi circular one to a mark (kārṣṭa) and back again. In the Ṛgveda the course is described as broad (uryā) and the distance as measured out. Prizes (dhana) were offered. Other words for victory and prizes are kāra and bhara. The persons who instituted a race is referred to as ājī-kṛt and Indra is called ājī-kṛt (race marker) and ājī-pati lord of the race.

The Swift steeds (vājin, atya) used for the races were often washed and adorned. They were groomed in the morning and evening. The horse has various names in the Ṛgveda. It was called atya (the runner), arvānt (the swift), vājin (the strong), sepati (the runner), and haya (the speeding). Horses of various colours were known green (harita, hari), ruddy (arupa, arusa,
The mares were preferred to horses because of their swiftness and sureness for drawing chariots. The chariots of the Maruts were sometimes drawn by mares. The horses were so much valued that they were on occasions ornamented with pearls and golds.

Like the horse-race, the Ṛgvedic Aryans were fond of chariot-races also, for it was "the peaceful preparation for the decisive struggle on the battle-field, for the joyous war in which they delighted, and which plays so large a part in the songs as well as in the life of the people". The hymn VIII. 69 of the Ṛgveda is believed to contain the prayer of the charioteer for the victory before the race. In the Śāmanas a general popular festivity there used to be races of horses. The mention of the race is made in 9.96.9 of the Ṛgveda (Indur Vājīṇa sapṭiḥ sāmanījīgāti).

In the Atharvaveda also mention is made of horse race. The horse is referred to as vājin. In the Atharvaveda the hymn (VI,92,162) prays for the success of horse-rider in the race.
Racing of chariots and horses continued to be a sport in the later Vedic period also. The chariot-race was elevated to form an essential part of the Vājapeya sacrifice in which the sacrificer was made victorious. The Śrauta Sūtra informs us about the chariot-race at the Vājapeya ceremonies. Seventeen horses yoked to chariots were used for a race and in the race sacrificer was allowed to win. Seventeen drums, arranged on the northern Śroni (way) of the vedi (altar), were simultaneously beaten at the time of the race.

Chariot racing formed a part of the Rājasūya in which the king-elect was allowed to win. The Upanisad are full of descriptions of the chariot and its wheel, but do not mention a race. During the Brāhmaṇic period, too, horse and chariot race was widely enjoyed. Even gods indulged in these games. Aitareya-Brahmana recounts the story of horse-racing competition amongst the gods as to who should drink the Soma first. All the gods began to clamour and contend that honour. They all decided to hold a horse-race competition and unanimously agreed that he who would stand first in that competition would be given the proud privilege of drinking the Soma first. The god of wind Vāyu, stood first, Indra second, Mitra, Varuṇa third. Horse-race was called Āji-dhāvana.
Sāthpata-Brāhmaṇa 5-1-1-3 also refers to a chariot race held amongst the gods to settle the dispute regarding priority. There was a winning post called Kaśṭhā in the horse-race and chariot race. Beating of drums or bands was always the main feature of the racing competitions.

In the Mahābhārata also mention is made of a chariot race. After the imparting of knowledge of skills at arms, Guru Drona arranged a tournament where his various students could demonstrate their skills at arts. In that festival Yudhisthira is stated to be the best chariot driver. This reveals in fact that chariot-race was a popular sport during the period. Even Lord Kṛṣṇa acted as a charioteer of Arjuna.

WRESTLING (MALLAKHĪḌĀ)

Of vigorous sports, which might have been popular, we read of wrestling. The clear evidence to this game is made by Panini in his Astādhyāyī. The Rāmāyana also refers to some agile movements of wrestlers (mallas) as part of their art. The Mahābhārata makes mention of samājāvata in which wrestling competitions were held. These competitions were held in the arena (raṅga mandala, raṅgāgana) specially made for the occasion, a balcony (prekṣa-gāra) was also prepared for the
audience. The mention is made of great festival of Sāukara in the city of Virāṭa in The Mahābhārata, in which a great competition of wrestling was held. Wrestlers from all over the world came to participate in that festival to show their prowess. It seems people immensely enjoyed watching such competitions.

There used to be terms for different moves. Like the handgrip was known as musṭḥi bandha. For defensive fight the term was kritdāva for offensive it was called pratikrit. To box was termed sannipāt. To punch was called avadhūt. To punch the opponent after making him fall on ground was called pramāṭh which was like term used as (buttock) in modern terminology in wrestling. To make the person fall over the shoulder was called unmathan. Likewise to punch with the thumb and the index finger was called talākhya half closed fist was called vajra. To kick was called pādoddhat. To drag the opponent forcefully was termed as prakāraṇā. To drag while swinging was called abhyākāraṇa. To drag backwards was called vikāraṇa.
DANCE AND MUSIC

Music supplies melody and harmony. It is dance that brings in rhythm and harmony. The artistic life of the vedic Aryans included the art of dancing also. The terms mentioned in the *Ṛgveda* 144-145 *nṛta*, *nṛtyatām*, 257 refer to dancing. There are certain hymns that make us infer that dancing was really practised and enjoyed, viz, "when the Gods lived in the pool, when the world was yet water, then a pungent particle went forth as if they were dancing" 147 *(ātra vo nṛtyatām iva tīvra rāṇur āpa yataḥ)*.

"The *soma*-pressing stones cry aloud calling upon Indra with the intoxicating *soma*; they took the sweet juice into their mouth, seized by the sisters - fingers - the bold stones danced, filling the earth with shouts" 148 *(Samrabhya dhīrah svāruḥbhīr anartiṣur āghosavantab phīvim upabdhibib)*.

"They danced like the black deer in the stall" 149 *(suparpā vācām akratopa dyavy ākhare kṛṣṇā iṣīrā anartiṣub)*. Men danced with bamboo sticks holding them aloft *(brahmānaśtvā satakrta ud vamśam iva yemire)*. Indra danced at the battle through excitement *(bhina...*
Adolf Kaegi in Der Rigveda, die älteste literatur der Inder, p.19, writes: "wives and maidens attire themselves in gay robes and set forth to the joyful feast; youths and girls hasten to the meadow when forest and field are clothed in fresh verdure to take part in the dance. Cymbals sound, and seizing each other, lads and damsels whirl about until the ground vibrates, and the clouds of dust envelop the gaily moving throng". It appears from the hymns (prāṇco agāma nṛtaye hasāya) that people enjoyed dancing on the occasion of death as well, may be to enliven the sad gloomy atmosphere. There were even assemblies and gatherings that promoted the dancing. The term sāmana comes frequently in the Ṛgveda. From the celebrated hymn addressed to Usās.

"She decks her beauty, shining forth with sunbeam like women trooping to the festal meeting."
"Like women at a gathering fair look on and gently similing they inclined to Agni."

And from the Vṛṣākapi hymn; "From olden time the metron goes to feast and general sacrifice." It can be inferred that "Śāmāna" in the Rgveda meant a great festival and not battle or combat.

The Yajurveda refers to vamśa nartin (pole-dancer). Dancing, which comes to man as naturally as breathing or laughing, must have been a popular way of spending an evening or celebrating an occasion. We have yet to find a primitive society which did not indulge in this recreation. But the Upaniṣads tell us very little about dancing, ceremonial or otherwise. They merely mention dancing and singing together nṛtayagīte.

Dancing was quite popular during the Brahmanic period also. Dancing was practised by both men and women. The terms nṛttam, nartanam are mentioned in both the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa and Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa. The rhythmic movements of a dance are referred to in Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa which reads as follows: 'Days and nights rotate and follow each other in a regular rhythmic manner like dancing' (pratipadāśca ahaśceti punarāvṛttam punarnīnṛttam). It is clear from this passage that there were prescribed rules for
dancing in the Vedic age. Sātpatha Brāhmaṇa refers to both singing and dancing. When the goddess Vāk was sent by gods to dupe the Gandharvas and fetch soma which was stolen by the Gandharvas. She (Vāk) danced and sang songs to entice the demi-gods or Gandharvas (yā (Vāk) nṛttayād itamupavavarta.) She deluded the Gandharvas with her song and dance, and took soma out of their hands.

Like its preceding age, Sūtra period also was enlivened by the performances of dances. The Kath. G.S. and the Śūkh. G.S. prescribe the performance of a dance at a pre-wedding ceremony performed on behalf of the bride. It appears that some people earned their livelihood by singing and dancing, for the Gaut. D.S. lays down the injunction that those who live by playing on musical instruments, singing and dancing should not be invited to a Śrāddha feast. The Baudh. D.S. refers to such persons as who earned their livelihood by making performances on the stage and by imparting instruction in dramaturgy. The ĀP. D.S. advises a king to exercise full control over arms, dancing, singing and music in his kingdom. The Sūtras forbid a student to perform and to attend dancing, singing and music.

Dancing is also referred to in the epics. In the Rāmāyana it is mentioned that the palaces of kings
had dancing girls to entertain them. There are references that suggest us that people feasted their eyes and ears upon dancing and songs perfomed by the musicians. In the palace of Rāvana, at Laṅkā, the beautiful description of dancing girls is given by Hanumān in Sundarkāṇḍa. It is mentioned there that all the damsels after having tired after dancing had retired to sleep. Some slept embracing the vīṇā betraying a graceful posture of dancing. This shows that dancing was done in the accompaniment of musical instrument.

That the males, besides the females also received training in these arts is made evident in the Mahābhārata. Arjuna told Virāṭa "I shall teach singing and dancing of different kinds and playing on instruments to the females of Virāṭa's family." If Arjuna were not himself adept in these arts how could he claim to impart education in dancing and singing?

Music has also ever enjoyed a place of importance in Indian life. As regards music, Keith says: "Music too had advanced beyond the primitive stage, and already the three types of instruments, percussion, string and wind were represented by the drum used among other purposes to terrify the foe in battle, the lute and the flute the
last named instrument being said to be heard in the abode of Yama where the holy dead dwell. The hymns themselves prove that singing was highly esteemed."

If music was not an integral part of *Rgveda* then there is no meaning in the compilation of *Samaveda* which is nothing but the *Rgveda* set to music. Further the refrains of the *Rgveda* are mostly lyrical. There were mainly meant to be sung. For instance in the dialogue hymn of *Vṛṣākapi* there is a refrain, *(viṣvamad Indra Uttarabh)*. Now Indra too is one of the characters in the dialogue. Then how can he too glorify himself. It is evident that something like the Chorus or the Orchestra is necessary to sing it. Seven women sang songs in praise of the *Soma*, when squeezing out the juice from the plant with their fingers. The *Sāmans* were divine songs sung and set to music. The *gāthās* were songs in verse. The *gāthā-pati* was the 'lord of song'. *gāthān* meant 'leading a song', *ṛjugāthā* meant singing 'correctly', and *gāthīn* meant the 'singer'.

The *Dānastutiḥ* were songs sung in praise of kings or nobles who gave rich gifts to the poets. They were probably like ballads describing the feats of the heroes. Thus music had an important place in *Rgvedic* age.

The musical instrument mainly used by the *vedic* Aryans were *dundubhi* which was used both in war and peace.
Karkari was the name of musical instrument which was probably something like the lute. The Maruts had Kgopa or vIna for their musical instrument. It has also been called vapa in another verse, dhamantchas vānam (playing upon the lyre). Max Muller, however, translated it as voice and remarked. "There is no authority for vāpa meaning either lyre or flute in the vedas". But this remark seems to be gratuitous. The sounds produced by the Maruts, when blowing have been compared to the notes produced by playing upon the lyre. The word also means the flute as a whistling noise is produced when winds blow through the chinks of the doors and the crevices in the walls. Sāyaṇa has interpreted the word as a sort of lyre (Ina - visēgan). But probably flute would be the more appropriate meaning. Vepu (flute) may have been a later corruption of vāpa. The word aghāti occurs in the Rigveda and according to Macdonell and Keith, means the 'cymbal' used to accompany dancing. In the Atharva veda also mention is made of Saman singer. That the instruments of music like vepu, cymbals, lutes, drums were commonly used is inferred from the various hymns.
Music also played an important part in the Upanisadic life. Besides the sacrifices, where singing of the psalms of the Samaveda was an inseparable part of the ceremony, many sacraments required ceremonial singing and dancing. The newly wed bride was asked to perform before her new relations and the expectant mother was asked to sing merrily in the Simantonnayana ceremony. The groom was expected to sing a gāthā after the bride's treading on the stone. On the basis of the evidence provided by the Katha, it can be deduced that music was the particular field of specialisation for women (Ramalj Sarthah, Sāturvah). The Satpatha-Upanishad tells us that speech, being a female, was won over by the devas when they performed dance and music for her, because in this world women are always won over by singing and dancing.

The sacrificial ceremonies had provisions for ritualistic singing and playing on instruments also. The udgātri priests sang in order to secure immortality for the Gods, offering for the fathers, hope for men, grass and water for the cattle, heaven for the sacrificer and food for himself. Those who sang the sāman with knowledge obtained all their desires.
The Upaniṣads mention a variety of sounds. The high sounding one was good for cattle and belonged to Agni. The undefined one belonged to Prajāpati, the defined one to Soma, the soft and smooth to Vāyu, the smooth and strong to Indra, the heron like to Brhaspati and the ill-sounding to Varuṇa.

The Maitrāyani knows of seven kinds of sounds—the sounds of the rivers, a bell, a brass vessel, a wheel, the croaking of frogs, rain and as when one speaks in a still place.

Many musical instruments make their appearance to illustrate philosophical points. Among them are dundubhi, Śāṅkha, vīpā, lambara and tūrya.

Dundubhi was a percussion instrument since its player is called dundubhya-ghāta i.e. the beater of the drums and not the more usual vāda, as in vīpāvāda. The Brhadāraṇyaka refers to the vacant space within a dundubhi. Śāṅkha or the conch shell was also referred to as an instrument but whether it played musical notes or just blew a sound is not clear. Vīpā is still a popular instrument in India. It was played solo or accompanied by songs. Vīpāvāda was the lute-player whereas vīpāgāthin was the person who sang gāthās to the accompaniment of vīpā. Lambara or its alternative term...
Acjambara denotes a percussion instrument. This is borne out by the allusion to the empty space within it. Tūrya occurs in the Kātha where beautiful maidens are mentioned having chariots and tūryas with them. On philological grounds, it might be equated with turhi the bugle heralding the arrival of a notable person or the commencement of war.

The seers of the Brāhmaṇa literature like the seers of Saṁhitā literature had a keen ear for music. They tried to catch the musical element in the sounds of nature. The Satpatha Brāhmaṇa remarks, "when it rains hard, a musical sound as that of the Sāma Chant is heard " (yadā balavad varsatī Sāma ivopādīṃ kriyate). Brāhmaṇas often mention that singing and dancing were woman's pastimes and not man's (nṛttam gītam strīnām krama). It seems women i.e. wives of Sāma vedic priest (udgātra) were formerly entrusted with the singing of Sāma chants in sacrifices; later on they were supplanted by their husbands. Satpatha-Brāhmaṇa states, "the udgātras actually perform the duties of their wives in singing Sāma Chants" (Pāṭini-karmāyā ete atra Kurvanti yadudgātāraḥ). Musical instruments like vīṇā (lute) and dundubhi (drum) are often mentioned. The lute was looked upon as a graceful and sacred instrument. It was identified with Śrī or grace; when a man attains grace
Sri lutes are played in his honour. Brahmins sing in accompaniment to the lute for year. \(\text{(yadā vai puruṣah Śrīyap gacchati vipāsmai vādyate, brāhmaṇau, Vīṇāgāthinau Samvatsaram, gāyataḥ)}\). Vīṇā is an embodiment of grace. \(\text{(Śrīyai va etadrūpaṇ yaḥ vīṇā)}\).

Sometimes Śamans were chanted accompanied by the beating of drums. He sings Śaman, in accompaniment to the sound of drum \(\text{(Dundubhinabhi Sāmagatī)}\). One who used to sing in accompaniment to lute was called Vīṇā-gāthī. Sometimes many lutes were attuned and played on simultaneously giving rise to a chorus of lutes. Vīṇā-ganagana was the master of chorus of lutes. This term is in S.B.

Song is also mentioned as the source of livelihood of some persons. It was not a customary rule that one would have to sing traditional songs. A singer was given the option to compose songs and sing the same. In Śatpatha-Brāhmaṇa, a brāhmaṇa sang songs composed by himself. 'A Brāhmaṇa lute player sings three strophes composed by himself striking up the uttamandrā tune'. The term uttamandrā may be construed either with the lute or with the tune. In certain sacrifices and during horse races or chariot races drums were beaten. In the vājapeya sacrifice seventeen drums used to be beaten.
simultaneously (Atha saptadasā̤ dundubhInā̤ nuvedyatam.

Sāminvanti).

Instrumental and vocal music was also the source of entertainment in the age of Sūtras, as in its preceding age.

Music comprised nṛtya (dance), gītā (song), vāditra (instrumental music) and sometimes also nātya (stage-acting). In the days of Pāṇini music was regarded as an art (Śilpa). It was not only the instrumental music which was characterised as an art, but in the category of art were also included dance and vocal music.

Most of the festive occasions were enlivened by sweet voices of singers and melodious notes of musical instruments. Many kinds of musical instruments were played on at the Mahāvarta festival which was full of fun and frolic and which provided ample entertainment to all sections of society.

"The chanting of certain Sāmans forms an important part of Mahāvarta. During its performance the Udgātri priest sits on an easy chair, the Hotri is seated on a swing, the Adhvaryu takes his seat on a plank and others are provided with seats of grass. The Priests chant the prescribed Sāmans, and the wives of those who
participate in the Sattra sing some of the Sāmans after them. When the udgātrī (Sāṅkh. S.S.) or a brāhmaṇa plays on a harp (vāna or bāna) of a hundred strings, the wives of the participants play on musical instruments (mentioned below) in tune with him. Lutanists (AP.S.S.) blow shells (Sāṅkhas), reed pipes (Nāqīs), and wooden flutes (Tūnavaś) and all sorts of joyous sounds are produced. There is a funny and frivolous dialogue between a student and heatāera. Drums (Dundubhis) placed in different corners of the sacrificial place are beaten with drum sticks, and an earth drum (Bhumi-dundubhi) which consists of an oxhide stretched over a hole in the ground is sounded with the toil of the same hide. An Ārya and a Śūdra present a sham fight for a round piece of white leather, and the former emerges victorious in this combat. In a comic dialogue between a Brāhmaṇa and a Śūdra the performers of the sattra are praised by the former and censured by the latter. Armoured Kesatriyas equipped with bows and arrows, driving in chariots round the sacrificial ground, shoot arrows at a skin stretched between two posts, with such a skill that the arrows just stick in the skin and do not pierce it through. A number of maid servants, carrying jars full of water on their heads, go thrice round the mārjāliya shed, dancing, beating the ground with their right feet, and
"As regards musical instruments played by the wives of the participants, the Mān.S.S. states that they play on all kinds of lutes beginning from the one called kāndaṃvīṇā which is made of reeds, and the Kat. S.S. mentions godhāvīṇakās (small lutes covered with the skin of godhā) and kāndaṃvīṇās. The Baudh S.S. (xvi.21) speaks of āghātīs (Cymbals), pīchchholās (flutes), and kākaraṅkās (lutes). The Sāṅkh. S.S. (xvii.3) describes a lute (vīṇā) of hundred strings and says that the wives should provide themselves with ghāṭakarkarīs, avaghāṭarīkās, kāndaṃvīṇās and pīchchhorās (flutes) and it adds that a pīchchhorā is sounded by blowing and that a kāndaṃvīṇā which is also called Ghāṭarī is played with a plectrum (vādana). The ĀP.S.S. (xxi 17.16) prescribes apāghāṭalikās, tambalavīṇās, kāndaṃvīṇās and pīchchholās and the Hir. S.S. (XVI 6.21) mentions apāghāṭalikās, tālukavīṇās, kāndaṃvīṇās, pīchchholās, alābu and kapiṣṭhāṇīs. According to the Drah. S.S. (XI. 2,6-8.) apāghāṭalikā stands for two types of musical instruments namely kāndaṃvīṇā and pīchchhorā."

"The Grihya sūtras also refer to songs and musical instruments. The Kath. G.S. (17.2) states that during pre-wedding rites the bride plays on a reed pipe (nāḍī),
a wooden flute (tuṅava), a panava (a kind of cymbal), a
drum called mridāṅga and all other musical instruments
to the accompaniment of songs. At the Śīmantonnayana
Ceremony the wife of the sacrificer sings a song and two
lute players play on lutes. The Bhār.G.S. (1.72) enjoins
upon the bridegroom to sing a song (Gāthā) at the time
of wedding. According to the Mān. G.S. (10.7) a harp
(bāṇa) should be played when the bride is ceremonially
sprinkled under the yoke of a chariot or a cart, and the
same sūtra (1.9.29) lays down that four unwidowed women
should play on a musical instrument named nandī at a
pre-wedding rite".

The idea of having a concert of different
instrumentalists was known to Pāṇini. The band was
collectively known as tūrya and individual members as
tūryāṅga. Pāṇini makes mention of dārdurika. It
appears that the dārdurika was a player of a drum made
of an earthen jar. That some people were versed in
maintaining rhythm by clapping hands to the
accompaniment of music is borne out by such expressions
as pāṇigha and tādgāha.

The epic Mahābhārata also provide sufficient references
that attest that signing and playing of musical
instrument was popular. That the males besides the
females also received training in these arts is evident from the case of Arjuna who told Virāṭa "I want to train your daughter in fine arts of dancing and music." Musical instruments like vīnā, cymbals, lute and conchshell were used. The very fact that Rāmāyana was recited by Lava and Kuśā in the most melodious style with Jātis etc., in the court of Rāma, supports our point that singing was quite popular in those days.

In Rāmāyana the two famous capitals of the period viz. Ayodhya and Laṅkā, have been described as reverberating with the sound of music which was perpetually played there. Music was further a necessary accompaniment of all functions, social as well as religious. Vālmīki displays familiarity with several technical terms of music such as tāna (the musical tone), sapta svara (the seven notes of all musical scale) the base, the middle and the high tones produced from three sthānas, tāla (the musical measure), laya (cadence) and mūrcchā (the musical modulation).

There is also a long list of musical instruments which were played upon by the people.
GAMES OF THE CHILDREN

It seems children had many games to play. Many crude shaped figures found during the excavations suggest that modelling of animals was also a favourite recreation for the children. Many such modelled animals have been found at Hastinapura, Sonpur, Atranjikhera, Eran, dist. Sagar, Navdatoli. Playing with balls and marbles was also favourite among the children. Balls made of stone and terracotta, marbles made of terracotta have been discovered at Chandoli Sonpur, Nevasa, Maheshwar, and Navdatoli. Reference to Kanduka kṛīḍā or playing ball is clearly made in the epics, the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyāna. In the Mahābhārata Guru Dronācārya helped the children to take out their ball, which had fallen in the Well with the help of arrows. In the Rāmāyāna in the Yuddhakāṇḍa Sugrīva is described as bounding up like ball used in Kanduka play. This shows that ball playing was popular those days. It seems children also enjoyed playing counters. This is evident from the discovery of terracotta discs at various sites viz., Hastinapur,
Atranjikhera, Mathura, Navdatoli, Toycart, was also a favourite toy that children enjoyed playing with immensely. Children also enjoyed swinging. That men and women also enjoyed swinging alike is manifested in the Rigveda. The swinging was enjoyed by the Atharvan is indicated in hymn iv. 37.5.

"Where are your swings, green and whitish, where cymbals (and) lutes sound together-thither go away Ye Apsaras ye have been recognised". Use of swings in the period of Sūtra is also referred to. The priest used to sit on swing in a Mahāvarta festival.

TAMING OF PETS

The word Svāpada occurring in a domestic context, denotes the presence of cats and dogs and the house hold is entreated to look after them and to provide food to them. The detailed description of honey, honey comb and bees hints at an apiary.

A passage in the Chandogya Upaniṣad shows that a falcon was kept as a pet. It is mentioned with its legs tied with a string, which shows that it was used for hawking. In the Rāmāyana the royalty and perhaps also the rich were fond of keeping pet birds and animals. The kekayarāja had a special breed of dogs brought up in his place (Anatagha-cara-puśān). Likewise, the palaces
of Ayodhya and Lanka have been shown as crowded by birds and deer. Hanumān suspected that Sītā might be wailing in some lonely corner like a tame sārikā in a cage (Kvacillālapyate nūnapaṇjarastheva sārikā) and Mālyavān pointed out to Rāvana that ever since Sītā was brought to Lanka, the sārikās were making inauspicious shrieks in the houses. The mention of peacocks, swans and kraunches roaming about in flocks in the palace of Rāvana at Lanka is made. In the palace at Lanka also parrots, peacocks, kraunches swans are stated to be crackling.

DRINKING

Drinking as a means of recreation dates back to the Vedic period. Sōma was partook by the Vedic Aryan which was nothing but an intoxicant. The ninth mandala of the Ṛgveda deals with the brewing and distilling of Sōma. In the Rāmāyana wine is described as the tranquillizer of all suffering (Sarva Soka vīnā sīni). Women also equally participated in drinking bouts. In Rāvana's cellar intoxicated ladies are said to have been strutting, staggering and rolling. In the Mahābhārata Draupadī and Subhadrā are stated to be addicted to wine.
It seems people enjoyed going to gardens, which were specially made for recreating purposes. Epics bespeak of people visiting gardens for pleasure. These gardens invariably contained parks, groves, fascinating lawns, flower beds, ponds crystal racks etc. In the Rāmāyana there is a graphic description of the Asokavātikā of Rāvaṇa at Lanka as well as the groves and orchards of Rāma at Ayodhya. Occasionally young people visited gardens and parks to enjoy picnic. Gardens were also resorts of sportive people.

FAIRS AND MERRIMENTS

The word Sāmana frequently occurs in the Rgveda. It is either battle or festival. According to Pischel 'Sāmana' in the Rgveda does not generally mean combat or battle, but only 'general popular festivity' 'Feast versammlung'. The poets used to go to that festive gathering to win fame (hoteva yāti Sāmanesu rebhan), bow men flocked here to win prizes at archery (Jyā iyam sāманe pārayantī: cīcā kṛṇoti Sāmanavagatya isudhib). Women flocked to enjoy themselves or to meet their lovers, horses to run races. (Indur vāj na saptib sāmanītī jīgāti).
The festivity lasted through the night until the morning redness of the dawns appeared over the eastern skies. Throughout the gathering there used to be the immortal glow of Agni (Sāmanagnusucaj jātavedāb, Sāmanagnadahas citrabhāno). It is not only the young damsels that visited these places, but also the old ladies, aged, spinsters and possibly the courtesans also were a party there.

In some of the Himalayan Cis-sutlej states, even to this day are held similar fairs, notably one at Solan and another at Sipī, where women congregate in large numbers and enjoy themselves in various ways. The vedic Sāmana must have degenerated into these modern institutions, for, while at the former, women, both young and elderly, were given an opportunity of selecting their husbands, at the latter, they were sold like goods and chattels and allowed no choice of their own.

The Vedic Sāmanas appear to have popular institutions as they attracted poets, artists, archers and skilful riders of horses, who competed with one another besides ordinary men and women also had their own motive behind such gatherings. They afforded relaxation, recreation and amusements and must have been eagerly looked forward to by the ordinary folk, as they gave them an
Philosophical discussions seem to be one of the most popular forms of entertainment in the time of the Upanishads. The kings arranged them, like the sports in ancient Greece and Rome, as competitions. The brahmanas and the kings enjoyed them alike. They were held during the free time of the long drawn sacrificial Sattras. The winner not only won monetary prizes but was also highly acclaimed by the elite. Mostly, the learned brahmanas, who acted as priest in the sacrifices, participated but even kings and their humble subjects could make a name for themselves. The cases of the kings, Pravâhaṇa, Āśvapati and Ajātāsātrū and the commoners Raikva, the cart driver and Satyakāma, the Śūdras son could be cited as examples.

The Sūtras also make mention of festive gatherings called samājas which offered ample opportunities for amusement but the authors of the Sūtras had no high opinion of such gatherings. The ĀP.D.S. forbids a student to attend samājas, both the ĀP.D.S. and the Vas. D.S. impose this restriction on a graduate. The mention of the great festival, viz, Mahāvarta is alluded to in the text earlier.

In the epic Rāmāyaṇa also there is mention of big feasts and merriments which were organised on large scale, viz,
In the epic *Rāmāyana* also there is mention of big feasts and merriments which were organised on large scale, viz, *Asvamedha*. Periodical *Samśkaras* like *Āgrāyana* also afforded regular opportunities for rejoicings. Special mention must be made in this connection of the festival *Indra-dhvaja* to which there are numerous allusions in the epic. The *Indra-dhvaja* appears to have been a public festival celebrated on the full moon day of *Āśvina* when the crops were ripe and ready for being reaped. A week earlier than the actual festival a lofty pole decorated with flags and festoons was raised in honour of Indra, the guardian of rain and also of agriculture. On the final day the ropes or the other contrivances supporting the pole were removed so that it fell down with a great thud.

In the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* (67-12) it has been mentioned that in the country where there is no rule of any king, there are many indisciplines and shortcomings like (1). There is no provision for democracy (2) there would be no gardens (3) there would no entertainments and festivals (4) no gardens where girls could go and amuse themselves (5) no male can go out with ladies on chariots for outing and people could not go out in gatherings for discussions. This indicates the presence of *Samājas*, or *Sabhās* which shows mass gatherings or
entertainments.

In the *Mahābhārata* also there is mention of group celebration of festival like that of the festival of Śaṅkara at Virata.

Then there is mention of grand celebration of the birth of Uttarā's son. In which people from all the corners of the Kingdom were invited. Food, clothes and other valuable gifts were given to the people.
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