CHAPTER – II

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Amongst the ancient civilization, the civilization of the Veda holds a unique place by virtue of its many-fold aspects. Among the Vedic literature, the Rgveda contains great cultural heritage, which is regarded as the repository of the essence of Indian culture. This Veda reveals the earliest phase of the Vedic life. The Rgveda is replete with all the aspects of life visualized by the Vedic seers, i.e. socio-economical, political, religious and philosophical and historical and the like. The society of the Rgvedic age evolved out from the ideas and the mode of life of the Āryans, migrated to India. The Sapta-Sindhu was the cradle of the Rgvedic culture, the major part of which was inhabited by the Āryans. During the Rgvedic period, the Āryans had developed a unique culture and an ideal civilization.

Class distinction

The Rgvedic Āryans still lived as united social body and bore the name of viś1, which includes men of all professions or ranks. Caste distinction had not yet developed. During this period, the rules to regulate social customs were still in a state of formation. However, a Rgvedic verse of the Puruṣa Sūkta in the tenth mandala contains the names of the four castes.2 The Puruṣa Sūkta states that the four castes formed the body of Puruṣa, the embodied Spirit or Man personified, the Brāhmaṇa was his mouth, Rājanya was made his two arms, Vaiśya was his two thighs and the Śūdra sprang from his feet. The relation of the four castes with the parts of human body symbolically represents the fourfold functions of the civic life. In this context, Griffith observes, 'The Brähman is called the mouth of Puruṣa, as having the special privilege, as a priest, of addressing the Gods in prayer. The arms of Puruṣa became the Rājanya the prince and soldier who wield the sword and spear. His thighs, the strongest parts of his body, became the agriculturist and tradesman, the chief support

1. sa darśataśrīraitirīghre vanvane śiśriye takvavirva /
   janamjanam janyo nātic manyate viśa ā kṣeti viśyo viśamviśam // R.V., 10.91.2
2. brahmano sya mukhamāśīdbhū rājanyāḥ kṛtaḥ/
   urū tadasya yadviśyāḥ padbhyam śūdro ajāyata // Ibid., 10.90.12
of society; and his feet, the emblems of vigour and activity, became the Śūdra or labouring man on whose toil and industry all ultimately rests.\(^3\) Manu also supports this view in his *Manusmṛti*.\(^4\) Besides the *Puruṣa Sūkta*, there are traces of the division of people into Brahma, Kṣatranī and Viś in the verses of the Rgvedic *Brhaspati Sūkta*.\(^5\) In this hymn there is prayer to the Āśvins to promote the prosperity of the Brahma, the Kṣatra and the Viś and give spirit to secure intellectual progress, strengthen the ruling power and secure cattle prosperity. Moreover, the fourfold division of society is hinted in another Rgvedic verse of the first mandala: *ksatraya tvam śravase tvam mahīyā īṣṭaye tvam aṣṭamānaḥ tvam aṣṭamānāḥ* vessel aṣṭamānaḥ eva uṣā aṣṭigarbhavanāṁ viśvā!\(^6\)

It means - ‘One to high sway, one to exalted glory, one to pursue his gain, and one his labour; All to regard their different vocations, all moving creatures hath the Dawn awakened.'\(^7\)

In this context, Griffith also observes that ‘This verse apparently alludes to a division into four castes or classes, regal and military, priestly, mercantile, and servile.'\(^8\)

The word *brāhmaṇa* occurs rarely in the *Rgvedasamhitā*\(^9\) while *brahman* ‘a priest’ is of constant occurrence.\(^10\) According to Griswold, the word Brahman (non-neut. Brahma) occurs often in the *Rgveda* in the sense of ‘sacred formula’, ‘prayer’,

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4. adhyātmanamadhyāyanam yajanam yajanam taḥīha / dānām pratiyagam caiva brahmaṇānāṃmakalpayat // Manu., 1.88
5. prajānāmi rākṣanam dānāmiyādhiyāyanameva ca / visayeṣvaprasaṅkṣeṣa kṣatryasya samāsataḥ // Ibid., 1.89
6. pāṇāṅgāṁ rākṣanam dānāmiyādhiyāyanameva ca / vanāḥkṣaṇām kṣustam ca vaiyāsyāṃ kṛṣṭiveva ca // Ibid., 1.90
7. ekameva tu śūdrasya prabhuh karma śāmādiṣat / eteṣāmeva vāmāṁ na suṣrūṣāmanāstīyaya // Ibid., 1.91
8. i) brahma jinvatamuta jinvatam dhiyo hatam rākṣamī ṣūdevamamīvāh // R.V., 8.35.16
   ii) kṣatram jinvatamuta jinvatam nrhataṁ rākṣamī ṣūdevamamīvāh // Ibid., 8.35.17
   iii) dhēnūjinvatamuta jinvatam viṣu hatam rākṣamī ṣūdevamamīvāh // Ibid., 8.35.18
9. ibid., 1.113 6
10. Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 1.113.6, p.74
11. Ibid.
12. Cf īṣārāṃ prajā yadbrahmanah saṁyajante saṅkāyāh / atāhā tvam vi jahurvedyābhīhrohabrahmāno vi carantu tv // R.V., 10.71.8
   Also vide, Ibid., 10.71.9
13. . brahmaṇī brahmaṇe anyasyājanāṃ / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.108.7
   ukhasamitaścāryam brahmaṇe vṛttamāṇīvā // Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 2.39.1
   Also vide, Ibid., 1 10.1, 1.33.9, 1.101.5, 1.158.6, 4.50.8, 5.29.3, 5.32.12, 7.7.5, 8.7.20, 8.31.1, 8 32.16, 8.35.16, 8.64.7, 9.96.6, 10.28.11, 10.71.11

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'spell'. It was the inherent potency of the sacred formula, due to a magical conception thereof, which led finally to the supreme conception of brahman as identical with atman, the 'soul' of the universe.11 In the Rgvedic verses, the term brahman also means spell, which is clearly interpreted by Sāyaṇācārya as – brahmanā stotrarūpena mantrenā... A3 or brahmanā stotrena statisdhanabhūtena... A3 Brahma in the sense of hymn or prayer is mentioned with the verb gāyata, i.e. sing in several passages of the Rgveda.14 The new productions of the poets are spoken of under the appellation of brahma as interpreted by Sāyaṇācārya as – navyaṁ navataram brahma stotram aśkari asmābhiḥ kriyate... A5 The term brahmāṇi, i.e. prayers16 is also interpreted by Sāyaṇācārya as – kāroḥ stoturhotuḥ karturyajamānasya vā brahmāṇi mantrān...,17 i.e. prayers of the Hotr priest. Griffith translates the term as 'the devotions of the Singer'.18 In a Rgvedic verse, Brahmanaspati is said to be the lord of the prayers or mantra19 or the generator of prayers.20 According to Griffith, the 'father of all sacred prayer'.21 In the Rgvedic period, the Brāhmaṇas are the special class of priest22, reciter of the hymn, sage or poet23, carrier of prayers24, a son or descendent of a Brahman25, a person distinguished for genius or virtue, or elected by special divine favours to receive the gift of inspiration26, highest heaven of speech27. Their prominent duty is that of the priesthood. The term brahman is also applied to the gods like

12. Sāyaṇa on R.V., 1.82.6
13. Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 2.17.3
   Also vide, Ibid., 2.27, 2.24.3, 5.40.6, 6.65.5
14. ... devattani brahma gāyata/ Ibid., 8.32.27
   Also vide, Ibid., 1.37.4
15. Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 4.16.21
16. Cf. brahmāṇi pariśvyānāṁ karmāṇi stutilakṣaṇāṇi.../ Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 7.70.5
17. Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.177.5
18. Griffith, R.T.H., op cit., on 1.177.5, p. 121
19. iyestharājam brahmaṇāṁ brahmaṇāsapatam a naḥ śrūvannātibhiḥ śīda sādanam / R.V., 2.23.1
20. Cf. ... jānītā brahmaṇīm ./ Ibid., 2.23.2
22. tavāṅge hotram tava potraṁtvvaṁ tava nēṣṭraṁ tvamagnudṛṭyataḥ /
   tava praṣāstraṁ tvamadhvarṣaṁ yasi brahma cāṣi grhaṇaḥś ca no dame // R.V., 2.1.2
   Also vide, Ibid., 10.91.10
23. ...brahma brahmaṁ stotā.../ Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.80.1
   Also vide, Ibid., 2.12.6
24. brahmaṇām brahmaṇāḥḥaṁ / Ibid., 6.45.7
25. brahmaṇāt brahmaṇāḥḥaṁsaṁbaddhāḥ.../ Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.15.5
   brahmāputraṁ yathā brahmaṇāḥḥaṁsī savanaṣu śastraṁ śaṁsatsa. / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 2.43.2
27. ...brahmaṇāḥ vācaḥ paramam vyoma / R.V., 1.164.35
Indra\textsuperscript{28}, Agni\textsuperscript{29}, Soma\textsuperscript{30} etc.

The Brāhmaṇas, the Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas occupied the higher position in the society and thus, the upper limbs of Puruṣa are stated to have been transformed into the upper castes, whereas, a Śūdra is said to have sprung from the feet. In comparision to other classes, the Brāhmaṇas enjoyed more privileges. The supremacy of the Brāhmaṇas over other classes was gradually acquired by mental, moral and spiritual qualities. A Rgvedic verse refers that a king lives happily in his own house, his sacrificial offerings increase, the subjects of their own bow down to him who employs and honours a Brahman, i.e. a Brāhmaṇa.\textsuperscript{31} The Brahman or \textit{purohita} was a very important member of the society, because he had to accompany the King to the battlefield to secure his victory\textsuperscript{32}, and in some cases cure the diseases\textsuperscript{33} by means of his prayers. About the position of the Brāhmaṇa, R.S. Sharma observes – 'In no other Indo-European society the priestly stratum enjoyed such authority as it did in Vedic Society.'\textsuperscript{34}

There is no clear indication about a separate warrior caste in the Rgvedic society. In time of necessity, all man bore arms for the state. A Rgvedic verse mentions the fight of common people, viz. the \textit{viś}.\textsuperscript{35} The use of the word \textit{kṣatriya}, exclusively connected with royal authority,\textsuperscript{36} finds frequent occurrence in the \textit{Rgveda}.

The word \textit{rājanya} is used in the sense of Kṣatriya as interpreted by Sāyaṇācārya in his commentary of the Rgvedic verse.\textsuperscript{38} Moreover, in this \textit{Veda} the term \textit{kṣatra} is seen

\textsuperscript{28} indro brahmendra rṣirnдраḥ purū puruhūtaḥ / Ibid., 8.16.7
\textsuperscript{29} asādi vṛto vahniirājanavāganvānigrhaṁ nṛṣadane vidhartā / Ibid., 7.7.5
\textsuperscript{30} brahmaṁ devānāṁ padavīḥ kavyāṁrśirvypānāṁ mahiṣo mṛgānāṁ / śyeno grhrūnāṁ svadhirvanānāṁ somaḥ pavitrmatyeti rebhan // Ibid., 9.96.6
\textsuperscript{31} sa itkṣetī sudhitā okasi sve tasūm iīṁ pinvate viśvadānīm / tasmai viśaḥ śvayamevā namante yasminbrāhmaṁ rājani pūrva eti // Ibid., 4.50.8
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 7.18
\textsuperscript{33} ...brāhmaṇo vadvyaḥ kṛnīti karotī cīkītām... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.97.22
\textsuperscript{34} Vide, Chakravarty, Uma., \textit{The Social and Familial Relationships from the Rgveda to the Vedāngas}, p. 5
\textsuperscript{35} kṛtṝyanti kṣiṣyape yuga ugrāṣuṣṭaṁ so mitho armaśātu / saṁ yadvīso vāyṛtranta yuddhaṁ āśīnema indrayante abhiśe // R.V., 4.24.4
\textsuperscript{36} mama dvītī rāṣṭram kṣatriyasya viśvāyorviśve anṛtā yathā naḥ / Ibid., 4.42.1
\textsuperscript{37} na dūṭya praśya tāṣṭha eṣaḥ tathā rāṣṭram guṇam kṣatriyasya / Ibid, 10 109.3
\textsuperscript{38} rājanyaḥ ksatriyatvajājītman. / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 10 90 12
used in the sense of strength. The arms are the seat of strength. So, the Puruṣa Śūkta holds that the Kṣatriyas are related to the arms of the Divine Puruṣa. Gods like Mitra and Varuṇa are called Kṣatriyas, the rulers. The viś or the common people gave its name to Vaiśya. In the Rgvedic hymn, the term śūdra seems to embrace all persons subjugated by the Āryans. The creation of Śūdra from the feet of the Puruṣa indicates that he is destined to be a servant to the other three classes. The Rgvedasamhitā refers to the slaves. King Trasadasyu is mentioned to have presented to Sobhari Kaṇva fifty female slaves. The chariots full of such slave-wives carried by Kakṣīvān on the occasion of his marriage is referred to in the Rgveda. In the later Rgvedic age, the Śūdra women were used as concubines by the upper class.

In the Rgvedic age, a rigid distinction of caste is not seen, which is seen in the later Rgvedic age. There was no specific demarcation among different creeds and communities. According to J. Muir also, in the Puruṣa Śūkta the production of the human race is described without allusion to any primordial distinction of castes. Rādhākrishnan states that had the Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras developed into rigid castes in the Vedic period, they would have been mentioned certainly more than twice in the Rgveda, as is actually the case. It is clear that classes existed in the Rgvedic society, but they had not yet developed into castes.

Varna which means colour was a distinguishable mark between the Āryans and the non-Āryans. The Āryans were white in complexion, which is shown by the word

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39. kṣatriyasya balasya śe tāvarobhavati... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 4.12.3
kṣatriyasya kṣatram balam... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 5.69.1
Also vide, Ibid., 7.64.2
40. rtavānā ni śedatuh śāmṛājyāya sukratū /
dhṛtavrata kṣatriyā kṣatramātaṇaḥ // Ibid., 8 25.8
41. viśaḥ samigrāme vartamānāḥ śatrubhūtāḥ praajas... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.69.3
viśaḥ praajas tatra bhavaḥ viśyāḥ... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.126.5
Also vide, Ibid., 4.24.4, 6.26.1
42. adāmme paurukutsyaḥ pañcāsataṃ trasadasuye vardhūnām /
manmiṣṭho ayaḥ satpatiḥ // Ibid., 8.19.36
43. upa miśyāḥ svanayena dattā vadhūmanto daśā rathāsō asthuḥ /
ṣaṭṭhiḥ sahasramuṇ gavyamāttauṣatākṣīvāv abhīpitve ahyām // Ibid., 1.126.3
Also vide, Ibid., 7.18.22
44. S.B., 1.2.9.8
47. Vide, Ibid., p.226
48. sasanātyā uta śūryam saśāndraḥ sasaṇa puruhojaṣam gām /
hiranyayamata bhogam sasaṇa hatvē dasyunprāryam varnamāvat // R.V., 3 34.9
śvityna or white- complexioned as interpreted by Sāyaṇācārya as – śvityebhiḥ śvetavarnairalāmkārenā diptāṅgaiḥ sakhibhiḥ... Vasiṣṭhas⁵⁰ and Trṣus⁵¹ were
called śvitynas, whereas, Dāsas or non-Āryans were called kṛṣṇayoni⁵² or kṛṣṇatvac.⁵₃
In the Rgvedic society, the Āryan people constitute the Āryavarna⁵⁴ and Dāsas the
Dāsavarna.⁵₅ During the Rgvedic age, castes were determined not by birth but by
virtue. There may be variations in the intellectual abilities of the human being.⁵₆ So,
this Veda gives emphasis on performance of work according to one’s aptitude, natural
ability and capacity. There was freedom and mobility of labour and the occupations
prescribed to the four varṇas had not yet developed in the society. It is seen that
members of the same family took different professions for their livelihood:
kāruraham itato bhīṣagupalaprakṣinī nanā / nānādhiyo vasūyavo’nu gāiva
tasthimendrāyendo pari srava //⁵⁷

Here it is noted that Śīśu the seer of the hymn is a poet, his father is a physician
and his mother a parcher of corns. They have opted for various professions in order
to earn their livelihood. Moreover, from the Rgvedic verses it is known that Viśvāmitra
who belonged to the ruling class acted as a priest.⁵⁸ The descendants of the seer
Bṛhgu were master carpenters who had expertise in making chariots.⁵⁹ A person of
lower order could become member of the higher one by developing his qualities.
Ghoṣā Kākṣivatt, daughter of Kakṣivān is a female seer.⁶⁰ In the Vājasaneyisamhitā,
it is seen that Śūdras had the right of studying the Vedas.⁶¹ Such references indicate

49. Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.100.18
50. śvityافقo mā daksinataskarpāra dhīyanjīvaḥ abhi hi pramananduḥ /
uttisthanavo pari bariṣo Ṉṛṇa me dūrādavitave vasiṣṭhaḥ // Ibid., 7 33 1
51. Ibid., 7.83.8
52. kṛṣṇayonih nikṛṣṭajatḥ dāsī upakṣapayitrī.../ Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 2.20.7
53. indrāḥ samatsu yajāmnāmāryamī pṛavadiśveṣu śatamūtripatīsi śvarmitīheṣvājīsi /
manave śāsadavatātvacām kṛṣṇāmarandhayat / Ibid., 1.130.8
54. Ibid., 3.34.9
55. yenemā viśā cyavanā kṛtāni yo dāsam varṇamadharām guhāḥ / Ibid., 2.12.4
56. samau ciddhastau na samam vīviṣṭaḥ sammātāra cīnā samam duhāte /
yamayocinā samā vīryaḥ jījati cistesau na samam prūtaḥ // Ibid., 10.117.9
Also vide, Ibid , 10.71.7
57. Ibid., 9 112.3
58. mahāḥ śurdevāja devajotistabhnāsindhumānavanī nrcaṅśaḥ /
viśvāmīro yadhavatubhāsūpamapriyāya kuśikebhirindraḥ // Ibid., 3.53.9
59. etam vām stomamaśvināvikarmatanāksaṁa bhīrgavo na ratham /
nyamkrṣaṁa yoṣanām na marge niyam na sūnum tanayam dadhaññah // Ibid., 10.39.14
60. Ibid., 10.39.1-14, 10 40.1-14
61. yathemām vacam kalyāṇamvadānī janēbhyaḥ /
brahmārjaṇyābhīyām śūḍrāya cāryāya ca svāya cārānāya...// V.S., 26.2
that the professions were not exclusive and hereditary. The *Rgvedasamhitā* however mentions heredity in one of the verses of the second *mandala* where it is said, *brahmaputraiva savanesu śaṁsasi*,\(^62\) i.e. the Brahmaputra, or Brahman priest’s son. Inter-caste marriages were permitted in the society.\(^63\) The idea of impurity and prohibition have not yet arisen and it can be stated undoubtedly that the Śūdras did not form a class of untouchables in the society. Socio-economic equality of a man to a man is propounded by the Ṛgvedic seers. The Vedic seer always tried to establish sense of brotherhood, harmony and peace in the lives of the Vedic people. One of the Ṛgvedic verse hints that no one is superior (*ajyeśṭhāsaḥ*) or inferior (*akanisyṭhāsaḥ*) and all are brothers (*bhr̥tarāḥ*).\(^64\) In this context, the *Samjñānasūktā* contained in the tenth *mandala* of the *Rgveda* can be referred to, which describes the fundamental stands of the socialist ideology and principles of unity.\(^65\) It illustrates beautifully that all in the society must endeavour to move together, sit together, and discuss together with unanimity in mind and hearts, giving due respect to elderly and seniors. Thus, the Ṛgvedic seers had progressive thought behind the structure of the society based on order rather than the caste system. However, with the passage of time this classification became more and more rigid, and these classes tended to become absolutely hereditary by the end of the Ṛgvedic period.

Besides the four classes mentioned above, other groups of people residing in the society were Dāsas and the Dasyus. The terms *dāsa* and *dasyu* are applied to demons and goblins or the barbarous aboriginal tribes of India which stand mainly for the non-Āryan enemies. About Dāsa and Dasyu, J. Muir observes—'...the words Dasyu and Dāsa are applied to demons of different orders, or goblins ( Asuras, Rāksasas, etc. ) ; but it is tolerably evident from the nature of the case, that in all, or at least some of the texts ... we are to understand the barbarous aboriginal tribes of India as intended by these terms.'\(^66\) Such people had developed their own culture and society different from the Āryans. The Āryans called the people of non-Āryan society as Dāsas. In the first phase of settlement, the Āryans had to fight with the

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\(^62\) R.V., 2.43.2  
\(^63\) Ibid., 1.116.10, 1.126.3, 5.52-61, 5.81-82, 10.65.12  
\(^64\) Ibid., 5 60.5  
\(^65\) Ibid., 10 191  
\(^66\) Vide, Muir, J , op.cit., vol. 2, part 2, p. 364
aborigines whom they called the Dāsas or Dasyus. The Rgvedic verses contain prayers to punish or kill the Dāsas. The Rgvedic verse, Indra is seen pushing Dāsavarna into a cave which indicates defeat of Dāsas at the hands of the Āryans. The non-Āryan Dāsas, being admitted into Āryan-society, began to serve the Āryans, and the word dāsa, therefore, acquired the meaning of servant. The word dāsa is used in the sense of slave in the Rgvedic verses, like.

According to Sāyanācārya, the word dāsapravarga in the present context, means alternatively assemblage of slaves, e.g. dāsapravargam...dāsanām karmākārnām pravargo yasmin tam/anekairbhṛtyairupetamityarthah...

In the Vālakhilya hymns, there is mention of the dāsas, i.e. a hundred slaves, who are placed in the same category as animals. Another word applied to the aborigines is dāsyu. The Rgvedasamhitā draws a line of demarcation between the Āryans and the Dasyus. Yāska in his Nīrukta gives the etymology of the terms ārya as the son of a lord or king, e.g. ārya tisvaraputraḥ and dāsyu as dasyurdasyateḥ / kṣayārthāt / upadasyantsmin rasāḥ / upadāsayati karmāni, i.e. Dasyu comes from the root das, to destroy, or, in him moisture is consumed, and he destroys (religious) rites. The verses of the Rgvedasamhitā distinguish the two from each other in several respects, i.e. in colour, language, in custom and religion. The Āryans are depicted as the most excellent race consisting of the three highest classes, wise performers of...
rites, wise worshippers, wise people, one to whom all should resort, excellent through performance of ceremonies. Śāyaṇācārya connects the word ārya as an epithet to Manu, i.e. man in his commentary of the Rgvedic verses as- āryāya viduṣe manuṣaśabdo manuṣabdaparyāyāḥ... or as āryāya manave... J

The aborigines or the Dasyus differed from the Āryans in complexion and structure. They are described as black-skinned. The Dasyus or Dāsas constituted a 'class'. The Rgveda describes how Indra made the Dāsavarna to hide in the caves, e.g. yenema viśvā cyavanā kṛtāni yo dāsam varṇamadharam guhākah Śāyaṇācārya renders śadrādikam for dāsam varṇam. Griffith translates the term as 'brood of demons'. Macdonell and Keith as 'Dasa colour (Varṇa)'. Thus, it can be stated that the Dāsavarna means either the Śūdras and other inferior tribes, or the vile destroying Asuras. The Dasyus are snub-nosed or mouthless. The word anāsa is explained by Śāyaṇācārya as anāśah āśyarāhitān..., i.e. mouthless, voiceless, unintelligibly speaking and Griffith as 'flat-nosed barbarians'. The Dasyus differed from the Āryans in language. Their language appeared as unintelligible to the Āryans. They are described as hostile speakers. However, in case of observance of religious rites and customs, the Dasyus are devoid of rites, no sacrificing, lawless, enemies

76. āryan viduṣaḥ anuṣṭhātṛn... / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.51.8
77. āryā vidvāṁsaḥ stotārāḥ... / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.103.3
78. āryāya viduṣe... / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.117.21
79. āryaṁ arañṭyaṁ sarvaṁgantavyaṁ... / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.130.8
80. āryaṁ āryaṁ karmāṇuṣṭhātṛtvāṁ sreṣṭhāṁ... / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 6.33.3
81. Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.117.21
82. Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 4.26.2
83. ...manave śāsadavratāntvacam kṛṣṇamarandhayat. /Ibid., 1.130.8
Also vide, Ibid., 9.41.1
84. Ibid., 2.12.4
85. āryaṁ varṇaṁ śūdrādikam... / Śāyaṇa, Ibid.
86. Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 2.12.4, p. 137
89. R.V., 5.29.10
90. Śāyaṇa, Ibid.
91. Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 5.29.10, p. 249
92. mṛdrāvacaḥ humitaṁgandiyānmasūrān... / Śāyaṇa on R.V., 5.29.10
93. ākarmā avidyāmānayāgaṅgadikarmā dasyuḥ... / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.22.8
94. ayāyānāḥ yajnavirodhināḥ... / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.33.4
Also vide, Ibid., 1.33.5
95. avratān vrataṁiti kṛṣṇamaṁ karmavirodhīnastān dasyūn... / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.51.8
who destroy the observers of Vedic rites\textsuperscript{96}, without \textit{brahman}\textsuperscript{97}, i.e. ‘prayerless’\textsuperscript{98}. They are the worshippers of phallic emblems\textsuperscript{99} or who do not follow the ritual of fire-worship. However, they are wealth-seeking\textsuperscript{100} and possessed of strong forts.\textsuperscript{101}

Moreover, in the Rgvedic verses, Sāyaṇācārya interprets the term \textit{dasyu} as the \textit{Virṭra}, the robber, the withholder of the fertilizing rain: \textit{dasyum coram \textit{virṛtaṁ} ghanena kathinena vajreṇa vadhīrhi tvāṁ hatavān...}\textsuperscript{102} As contrasted with men,\textsuperscript{103} they are the Asuras and Piśācas who destroy.\textsuperscript{104} The Dāsas are interpreted by Sāyaṇācārya as – \textit{dāśa upakṣapayitrīn karmavirodhino balaprayāṇasurān...}\textsuperscript{105}, i.e. Asuras like Vala who destroy religious rites. They are the enemies, devoid of religious ceremonies.\textsuperscript{106}

The term \textit{dāśi} is also mentioned in the Rgvedic verses in the sense of destroyer of religious rites of all the people.\textsuperscript{107} Thus, from such references it can be stated that the Dasyus are a class of demons, enemies of gods and men, and sometimes the word means a savage, a barbarian.

In the \textit{Rgvedasamhitā}, prayer is made to Indra to fight against the Dasyus in order to increase the strength of the Āryans.\textsuperscript{108} Divodāsa’s greatest foe was the Dāsa Śambara, a descendant of Kulitara.\textsuperscript{109} Indra, the Āryan leader, exhilarated by the drinking Soma, attacked the strongholds or rather fortified cities of the aborigines led by their chiefs. He devastated the ramparts possessed by Śambara and killed him.\textsuperscript{110} Pipru was the stronger Dasyu enemy of Rjiśvān. Indra favoured Rjiśvān by destroying Pipru’s ramparts.\textsuperscript{111} Thus, Indra is represented as having subjugated the

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{96} dasyavah teṣaṁ naṣṭāḥ satravah śatavah... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid , 1.51.8
\item Also vide, Ibid., 1.103.3
\item \textsuperscript{97} abrahma vedoktakarmavāṣṭikyāraḥ iṣṭaḥ dasyuvah... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 4.16.9
\item \textsuperscript{98} Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 4.16.9, p. 209
\item \textsuperscript{99} śiśnadevāḥ brahmacaryāḥ iṣṭaḥ... / Sāyaṇa on R.V., 7.21.5
\item Also vide, Ibid , 10.99.3
\item \textsuperscript{100} ahandāśa vrśabhah āsana-vasana-dvāraja varcinam śambarāṁ ca / Ibid., 6.47.21
\item \textsuperscript{101} Ibid , 1 103.3, 1.131.4, 2 20 8
\item \textsuperscript{102} Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.33.4
\item \textsuperscript{103} dasyuh... amuṇuṣṭaḥ manuṣyasamvyavahārāvāhyāḥ asurasākṛtyāryaḥ... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.22.8
\item \textsuperscript{104} dasyum upakṣapayārīṇasamsurapiśācādikāṁ... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.117.21
\item Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 6.33.3
\item \textsuperscript{106} dāśāṁ dāśāḥ karmāṭīnāḥ śatavah... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 6.60.6
\item \textsuperscript{107} dāśāṁ karmanam upakṣapayātīrṇī viśvāḥ sarvāḥ viśvāḥ prajāḥ... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 6.25 2
\item \textsuperscript{108} sa jātubhārnā śraddadāhāna ojah puro viḥhindānacaradvi dāśāḥ / vedānvajrajñasyaye hetimāyāryāṁ saho vardhayā dyumāṁindra // Ibid , 1.103 3
\item \textsuperscript{109} Ibid , 4.30.14
\item \textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 1 51.6
\item \textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 1.51.5
\end{itemize}
Dāsas and Dasyus. 112 Having killed the Dasyus, he protected the Āryavarna. 113 So, he is known as Dasyughna 114, Dasyuhan 115, Dasyuha 116 etc. Indra is also asked to discriminate between the sacrificing Āryans and non-sacrificing Dasyus. 117 The Āryan deity Soma is also described as killing the Dasyus. 118 Thus, the Āryans were the winners of battles they fought against their enemies, i.e. the non-Āryans in which they killed the non-Āryan enemies in large numbers, captured their cattle and destroyed their ramparts. However, in course of time, the Āryans amalgamated with the aborigines. Keith also recognized that in the age of the Rgveda there was going on a steady process of amalgamation of the invaders and the aborigines, whether through the influence of intermarriage with slaves or through friendly and peaceful relations with powerful Dāsa tribes. 119

There was another division of society – the division into tribes, for which the term jana meaning people was used, e.g. paṅcajanaḥ 120, yādavajana 121 etc. There are other epithets used to indicate the fivefold Āryan people like paṅca cārṣanyah 122, paṅca kṛṣṭayah 123, paṅca kṣitayah 124 that possessed some common characteristics. A Rgvedic verse clearly mentions the five tribes as the Anus, Druhyus, Yadus, Turvaśas and the Pūrus. 125 R. N. Dandekar also states that there were two major waves of migration of Āryans into India. They were organised in tribal groups transformed

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112 Ibid., 4 28.4
113 Ibid., 3.34.9
114 Indra dasyughnā dasyūnām satrūnām hantrā ... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 4.16.10
115 Ibid., 10 47 4
116 dasyuḥā dasyūnāmupakṣapayitrāṇām hantendraḥ ... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 6.45.24
117 vi jānḥāryāṁye ca dasyavāvo bariśmatē mantraḥāṃ Śāsadavrataḥ / śākī bhava yajamāṇasya ceditā viśvettā te sadhamādeṣu cākan / Ibid., 1.51.8
118 suvitasya manamah'ī ti setumu duśvāyum / sāhvaṁ so dasyumavratam / Ibid., 9.41.2
119 Vide, Chakravarty, Uma., op.cit., p. 121
120 indriyāṁ śatākrato yā te jāneṣu paṅcasu. / R.V., 3.37.9
   Also vide , Ibid., 3.59 8, 6.14.4, 8.32.22, 9.65.23, 10.45.6
121 udāṅtakakuḥo divamuṣārṇaḥ śatāduryuṣu ddat / śrāvasā yādvaṁ janaṁ / Ibid., 8.6.48
122 paṅca cārṣanyāḥ cārṣanayo manoṣyāḥ ... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 5.86.2
   Also vide, Ibid., 7.15.2, 9.101.9
123 asmākāṁ dyummadādī paṅca kṛṣṭiśecā svarṇa śuṣucita duṣṭam / Ibid., 2.2.10
   Also vide, Ibid., 3.53 16, 4.38.10, 10.60.4
124 yā ekācārṣanāṁ yāstāṁ māyāyati / indraḥ paṅca kṣitāṁ / Ibid., 1.7.9
   Also vide , Ibid., 1.176.3, 5 35 2, 6.46.7, 7 75.4, 7.79.1
125 yadindragñi yaduṣu turvaśeṣu yaddṛhuṣyvanuṣu pūrṣuṣu sthāḥ / atāḥ pari vrśanāvā hi yātamatāḥ somasya pibatam sutasya / Ibid., 1 108.8
into territorial states. Five of them became prominent; they were Puru, Anu, Druhyu, Turvaśa and Yadu; they are often referred to in the \textit{Rgveda as pañca Janah}.\footnote{Vide, Chakravarty, Uma., op.cit., p. 109} However, according to Śāyaṇācārya’s interpretation in some verses of the \textit{Rgveda} the five tribes comprised the four castes and Niśādas or indigenous barbarians.\footnote{pañcajanēsu niśādanaścaśeṣa caturṣu janeṣu . . / Śāyaṇa on R.V., 3.37.9 \textit{pañcaśu krṣṭu janeṣu niśādanaścaśeṣa caturṣu varṇeṣu ...} / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 2.2.10} The term \textit{pañcaksitayāḥ} also means the four castes and Niśādas or indigenous barbarians, those who are fit for habitations as referred to in the Śāyaṇācārya’s commentary.\footnote{pañca niśādaścaśeṣa mānīṁ kṣitnāṁ nivāsāḥḥantiṁ varṇaṁmanugrahīteti śeṣaḥ / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.7.9} According to Wilson, the phrase \textit{pañca kṣitnām}, i.e. the five classes of men is used to imply the four castes, Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras, and Niśādas, barbarians, or those who have no caste, intending possibly the aboriginal races of India, all in a very low stage of civilization, like the Gonds, Koles and Bhils of the present day.\footnote{Wilson, H.H., \textit{Rgveda Samhita}, vol. 1, on 1.7.9, pp.22,23} But Griffith remarks that the expression seems to mean the Āryan settlements or tribes only, and not the indigenous inhabitants of the country.\footnote{Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 1.7.9, p. 5} 

\textbf{The four Āśramas or the four stages of life} 

The word \textit{dharma} derived from the root \textit{dhr}, appears to be used in the sense of upholder or supporter or sustainer.\footnote{atra ca dharmasabdah sadvidhashmarātadharmaśasyatāḥ / tādātāḥ vardhamanā śraddhā bhārata dharmo \textit{vardhamadharmo} gunadharmo nīmmitadharmo sādhārāmadharmaśceti / Mitākṣarā on Yājñavalkya, 1.1} The concept of \textit{dharma} is a far-reaching one which embraces the whole life of man. Dharma is of six-fold, viz. \textit{varṇadharmā, āśramadharmā, varṇāśramadharmā, guṇadharmā, naimittikadharmā} and \textit{sādhārānadharmā}.\footnote{Ch Up., 2.23} Among these, \textit{varṇa} and \textit{āśrama} are regarded as the pivots from which the whole \textit{dharmaśāstra} revolves. In the \textit{Chāndogya Upaniṣad} also, the word \textit{dharma} stands for the duties of the āśramas,\footnote{132. atra ca dharmasabdah sadvidhashmarātadharmaśasyatāḥ / tādātāḥ vardhamanā śraddhā bhārata dharmo \textit{vardhamadharmo} gunadharmo nīmmitadharmo sādhārāmadharmaśceti / Mitākṣarā on Yājñavalkya, 1.1} where it is stated that there are three branches of \textit{dharma}, i.e. the stage of householder which constitutes sacrifice, study and charity, the stage of a hermit that constitutes austerities and lastly the stage of a Brahmacārin dwelling in the house of his preceptor and making himself stay with the family of his preceptor. Āśramadharmā forms the central core of Hindu
ethics. It is one of the important foundation stones of the Vedic social system in which the entire social life depends. The aim of Āsrama system is a coordinated and well balanced social evolution. It is stated that the Divine Brahman, for the welfare of the world, and for the protection of righteousness, laid down four modes of life.\textsuperscript{134} According to the Āpastamba Dharmasūtra, there are four āsramas, viz. the stage of householder, the stage of staying in the house of the teacher, stage of being a muni and the stage of being a forest dweller.\textsuperscript{135} Gautama also enumerates the four asramas as Brahmacārī, Grhastha, Bhiksu and Vaikānasa.\textsuperscript{136} Manu states that the first part of man’s life is called Brahmacārī in which he learns at his teachers house, in the second part he marries and becomes an householder, discharges his debts to the forefathers and to the gods by begetting sons and performing yajñas respectively. Then he resorts to the forest, i.e. becomes a Vānaprastha. After spending the third part of his life in the forest he spends the rest of his life as a Sannyāsin.\textsuperscript{137} Thus, the āsramas are of fourfold, viz. Brahmacārī, i.e. life of study, Grhastha, i.e. life of a householder, Vānaprastha, i.e. life in the forest and Sannyāsa, i.e. life of a hermit. As the word āśrama is derived from the root śram, to exert or to labour, in all the stages of life the individual had to perform specific duties prescribed for them. Performance of the duties laid down for each stages help in the attainment of eternal being or heaven as reward. The stages of life denoted by the word āśrama were not totally unknown in the Vedic period. During the Rgvedic age, all such stages had not fully developed, but their presence can be estimated by the mention of the names of its members in the Rgvedic verses.

**Brahmacārī**

The life span of human being is divided into four stages of which Brahmacārī comes first. The term brahmacārī itself indicates its importance which helps in the attainment of Brahma. The spiritual fire in man which lifts one from the animal plane of existence to the spiritual or divine plane is called tapas.\textsuperscript{138} The path of knowledge demands the discipline of the body and mind, and rousing up of the intellectual power through tapas. The common tapas prescribed for all is

\textsuperscript{134} Mbh., 191 8
\textsuperscript{135} catvāra āśrama gṛhasthayamācārīyakulam maunam vānaprasthyamiti // Āp. DhS., 2.9.21.1
\textsuperscript{136} G.Ds., 3.2
\textsuperscript{137} Manu., 4.1, 5 169, 6.1, 2, 6.33
\textsuperscript{138} Vide, Bose, A C, Hymns from the Vedas, p. 8
Brahmacarya, i.e., education through the cultivation of the higher intellect and attaining a powerful spiritual personality. It denotes the stages of life of a Brahmacārin or religious student. It is undeniably true that there were no educational institutions for the public in the age of the Rgveda. From the time of the Upanayana, a student begins to stay at the residence of his preceptor, observing the rules of Brahmacarya. Upanayana is one of the important ceremonies of the life of a brahmacārin which can be explained as either taking the boy near the ācārya or that rite by which the boy is taken to the ācārya.139 P.V. Kane refers to the Rgvedic verse 3.8.4 and observes that this is a verse that clearly indicates that some of the characteristics of Upanayana, described in the grhya sūtras, were well known even then. There the sacrificial post (yūpa) is praised as a young person ... here comes the youth, well dressed and encircled (the boy by his mekhala and the post by its raśanā) ... Here in ‘un-nayantU we have the same root that we have in upanayana.140 But according to some scholars, basing on this single verse it is illogical to establish that during the Rgvedic age the upanayana ceremony was similar to the custom, belonging to the later period.141 About the method of learning it can be stated that during the Rgvedic period the basic method of learning was learning by rote under the direct instruction of teacher. The teacher recited the hymns, and the disciples repeated them after him as a frog croak one after another.142 In the Rgvedic period, the literature to be studied appears to have been very vast. A Rgvedic verse refers to the verses learnt by the four principal priests, viz. Hotā, Udgātā, Adhvaryu and Brahmā.143 It is also stated that persons studied together showed great disparity in their mental advancement, abilities and tendencies.144 Besides such references, the Rgvedic verses do not give any information about the method of education, rules of conduct and observances to be followed by a Brahmacārin. The pivot of the educational system of ancient India was the teacher variously known as ācārya, guru and upādhyāya. The word ācārya does not occur at all in the RV; guru

139. Vide, Kane, P.V., History of Dharmasastra vol. 2, part. 1, p. 269
140. Ibid.
141. Chakravarty, Uma., op.cit., p. 93
142. yadeśīmanyo anyasya vācāṃ śaktasyeva vadatī śikṣamānāḥ / sarvam tadeśī samrdheva parva yatsuvāco vadathanādhyapsu // R.V., 7.103.5
143. ṛcām tvah pośamāste pupussvān gāyatram tvo gāyati śākvarṣa / brahmā tvo vadatī jātīvidyāṃ yajñasya mātraṃ vi mimita u tvah // Ibid., 10.71.11
144. Ibid., 10.71.7
occurs six times but not in the sense of a teacher; the word *upanayana* is totally absent in this Samhitā. The term *brahmacārī* is mentioned in one of the Rgvedic verses, where a *Brahmacārī* is recognized as a limb of the god’s body. With *Brahmacarya* or elevation to the spiritual plane, a man is said to become a member of the God’s own body. But this term is not used in the technical sense of a Vedic student. From the legend as quoted by Sāyanācārya, it is clear that the divine Br,haspati was identified with *Brahmacārī* whose wife Juhū or Vāk had been deserted by her husband. Here the term *brahmacārī* is interpreted by Sāyanācārya as – *brahmacārī jāyābhāvena brahmacārī caratī...* i.e. without a wife. Though the practice of *Brahmacarya* may not have existed fully during the Rgvedic period, it can be surmised that all the elements that make up the life of a religious student were there. As time rolled on, the practise of studentship developed and was more strictly regulated by custom. In the later Rgvedic period, there are detailed discussions about the glorification of *Brahmacārī*.

**Gārhaṣṭhya**

The second mode of life is Gārhaṣṭhya or the life of a householder. The individual with the spiritual discipline of *brahmacarya* was required to pursue the material interests of household life. This is considered to be the root of all other modes of life. The Smrīts highly praise the life of a householder. Manu states that just as all creatures exist depending on air, so do all the āśramas depend upon the householder. This mode of life is indirectly mentioned in the Rgvedic verses, which is inferred from the use of the terms *grhapati*, i.e. master of the house, *grhapati* as well as from the household duties

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145. Vide, Chakravarty, Uma., op.cit., p. 72
146. brahmacārī caratī veviśadviṣaḥ sa devatām bhavatyekāmaṃgām /
   tena jāyāmanvavindadbhaspatiḥ somena nītam juhvām na devāḥ // R.V., 10.109.5
147 Sāyana, Ibid.
148 A.V., 11.5
149. Manu, 3.78,79
150 yathā vāyum samāśarītya vartante sarvajantavaḥ /
   tathā grhaṣṭhamāśarītya vartante sarvā śāramāḥ // Ibid., 3.77
151 tavāgne hotram tava potarmtvīyam tava neṣṭram tvamagnidṛṣṭīyataḥ/
   tava praśāṣistrām tvamadhvarīyasi brahmā cāsi grḥapatiśca no dame // R.V., 2.1.2
   abhi no naryam vasu vīraṁ prayatadaksiṇam /
   vamam grḥapatum naya // Ibid , 6.53 2
152. pūṣā tveto nayatu hastagṛhaltāvinī tvā pra vahatām ratsena /
   grhaṁ gaccha grḥapatni yathāśo vaśiṁ śavamvidathām vādāsi // Ibid., 10.85.26
153. iha priyam prajayā te samṛdhyaṭāmasmin grhe gṛhapatyaṁ jāṛṛhi // Ibid., 10.85.27
   Also vide, Ibid , 10.85.36
mentioned here. The purpose of marriage, in the time of the *Rgveda*, was to enable a man, by becoming a householder, to perform sacrifices to the gods and to procreate sons. This view is supported by Dharmasūtras also.\(^{154}\) In the *Sūryā Sūkta*, the marriage vow spoken by the groom to the bride when taking hold of her hand is that gods like Bhaga, Aryaman and Pūṣan gave her to him for gārhapatya, i.e. for attaining the position of a house-owner or householder.\(^{155}\) In this *Sūryā Sūkta*, the household duties, obligations and the householder’s life is manifest.\(^{156}\)

The *Rgveda* shows eagerness for children in a family. So, the bride is blessed for sons and grandsons.\(^{157}\) The newly-wedded bride is advised to be watchful over the domestic fire here. The first duty of the wife was to give her co-operation in all religious acts. Even in the Brāhmaṇas, it is stated that without a wife the husband had no right to perform a sacrifice.\(^{158}\) The *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra* also states that there can be no separation between husband and wife, for since marriage they have to perform religious acts jointly.\(^{159}\) The Rgvedic verses refer to the performance of religious rites and worship of gods by the husband and wife together.\(^{160}\) The main duty of a householder is to institute sacrifices and liberally reward the officiating priests.\(^{161}\) Thus, the ideal of a strict monogamic marriage is placed here. Here both man and woman became the two rulers of the household. The *Veda* advised to become benevolent to each other and treat the guest as a *deva*.\(^{162}\) The Veda also enjoins *dana* or giving away of gifts in the shape of wealth and food as a noble duty that an individual should perform. Hospitality was an essential domestic virtue during the Rgvedic period too. House of an inhospitable man is no home and he finds no one to

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\(^{154}\) dharmaprajāsamanpanne dāre nānyamā kurvita / Āp.Dhs., 2.5.11.12

\(^{155}\) grbhnāmi te saubhagatvāya hastam mayā patyā jaradāśtiryaḥathāṣaḥ / bhago aryamā śavītā puramīdhirmahyām tvādurgārhapatvāya devāḥ // R.V., 10.85.36

\(^{156}\) Ibid., 10.85

\(^{157}\) ihaiva stam mā vi yauṣṭām viśvamāyuryasānutam / kṛṣṭantau putraṁśātpātramādānuḥ sve grhe // R.V., 10.85.42

\(^{158}\) ayaśaḥ vā eṣaḥ yo paṃśukah / na ārajanḥ praṭajyeraḥ // T.B., 2.2.2.6

\(^{159}\) jyāṭapyortarn vībhīṣo vidyate / pāṇigrhaḥāḍdhi saḥatvam karmasu / Āp.Dhs., 2.6.13.16-17

\(^{160}\) afjantī mitrami sudhītam na gobhiryaddampatī samanāsā kṛṣṇoṣi / R.V., 5.3.2

agne sārdha mahate saubhagāya tava dyumnyuttamānī saṅtu / sam jāṣṭpyamānī suṣayamā kṛṣṇoṣvā satrīyatāmabhi tiṣṭhā mahāṃsi // Ibid., 5.28.3

yā damastī samanāsā sunuta a ca dhāvataḥ / devīśo nityayāśīrā // Ibid., 8.31.5

Also vide , Ibid., 1.72.5

\(^{161}\) Ibid., 6.53.2

\(^{162}\) atithidevo bhava / T.Up., 1.11.2
comfort him.\textsuperscript{163} It is stated that a good householder must share his food with the needy. A miser who does not donate is considered a sinner and cannot obtain worldly happiness as it is stated- kevalāgho bhavati kevalādī.\textsuperscript{164}

\textbf{Vānaprastha}

There were some people in ancient India who followed the path of knowledge either by foregoing family life, which was rare in the Rgvedic times or by withdrawing from it when his sons were enough to take charge of the family, and living in forest āśramas. About Vānaprastha Manu also states similarly.\textsuperscript{165} Vaikhānasā appears to have been the ancient name for Vānaprastha. In the Anukramaṇī one hundred Vaikhānasas are said to be the seers of a Rgvedic hymn.\textsuperscript{166} Though Brahmacarya and Gārhashṭha were the main āśramas during the Rgvedic period, references can be found to the life of a recluse also. In the hymn to Aranyāṇī or dense forest as contained in the tenth mandala of the Rgvedasamhitā, life in the forest is hinted at.\textsuperscript{167} From the description contained in the hymn, it appears that the Āryan settlements were encircled by deep forests. Such forests were different from the villages and full of various kinds of lives bristling with night noises.\textsuperscript{168} A man is described roaming fearlessly from one forest to another having detached from the villages and afraid of none.\textsuperscript{169} There is reference to people who lived in such forests and heard the sounds of birds and beasts at night.\textsuperscript{170} Forests were natural bower of branches and creepers rich in food and full of sweet fruits which were eaten by such people living there.\textsuperscript{171} Form such references the existence of a recluse in the Rgvedic period can be inferred.

\textbf{Sannyāsa}

The fourth and the last stage in man’s life, i.e. Sannyāsa or the life of ascetics

\begin{footnotes}
\item[163] na sa sakhā yo na dadāti sakhye sacābhuve sacamāṇāya pitvaḥ / apāsmātpreyāṃna tadoko asti prnantamanymararananm cidadchet // R.V., 10.117.4
\item[164] Ibid., 10.117.6
\item[165] grhaṇastu yadā paśyedvalīpalītamātmanah / apatyayavāva cāpatyam tadārṇayam samāśrayet // Manu., 6.2
\item[166] samtyajya grāmyamāhārāri sarvāni caiva paricchadam / putresu bhā́ryāṁ nikṣipya vanāṁ gacchetaṁva vá// Ibid., 6.3
\item[167] R.V., 9.66
\item[168] Ibid., 10.146
\item[169] 10.146 1,2
\item[170] 10.146.1
\item[171] 10.146.5
\end{footnotes}
is not directly mentioned in the Rgveda. In the stage of Sannyāsa, abandonment of all actions, i.e. kāmya karma that spring from the desire to secure some object or other is ordained. At this stage, a man became a parivrājaka, i.e. a religious wanderer, dedicated to the spiritual service of the world. The parivrājaka is also called Vrātya, the wanderer in the Veda.172 In the Vedic period, there were some ascetics, but it can be stated that the idea of renunciation was not popular in the society because the Vedic seers often pray for mundane wellbeing, i.e. son, wealth and victory. The expression of the feeling of dissatisfaction with this world, desire to escape from life is not noticed. But there are references to seven seers who sat them down to their austere devotion.173 Various kinds of tapas or religious fervour are also referred to in the Śāyanācārya’s commentary thus- janāḥ tapasā kṛcchacāndrāyāṇaṇadīnā yuktāḥ santāḥ anādhrṣyāḥ pāpairapradhrṣyāḥ bhavantil ... tapasā yāgādirūpaṇa śādhanaṇa svaryayuḥ svargam yānti prāpnuvanti / ... mahat tapaḥ anyairduṣkaraṁ rājaśūyāśvamedhādikāṁ hiranyagarbhadīyapāsanāṁ vā.../174 That means the austerities like kṛcchacāndrāyāṇa by which the ascetics are rendered unassailable by sin, the sacrifices by which they have gone to heaven and other penances like Rājaśūya, Āsvamedha etc. P.V. Kane observes that a person who belongs to the last āśrama is variously called parivrāt or parivrājaka (one who does not stay in one place but wanders from place to place), bhikṣu (one who begs for his livelihood), muni (one who ponders over the mysteries of life and death), yati (one who controls his senses).175 Though the word yati is used in the Rgvedic verses, its meaning seems to be different. Yati is the name of an ancient race of ascetics or clan connected with the Bṛgus in two of the Rgvedic verses.176 But Śāyanācārya interprets the term in one of the passages thus – yatibhyah karmasūparatebhhyo ‘yasṣtabhyo janebbhyaḥ .../177 According to Śāyanācārya’s interpretation of another verse, they are the Aṅgirases, e.g. yatayaḥ niyatā aṅgirasah.../178 Wilson takes them to be ‘pious sages’.179

172 A.V., 15.11.1,2
173. devā etasyāmvadadanta pūrve saptaśayaṛapase ye niṣeduh / R.V., 10.109.4
174 Śāyana, Ibid., 10.154.2
175 Vide, P.V Kane, op.cit., vol. 2, part 1, p. 417
176 R.V., 8.3.9, 8.6.18
177. Śāyana, Ibid., 8.3.9
178. Śāyana, Ibid., 8.6.18
179 Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 8.6.18, p. 396
The term muni denotes an ascetic of magic powers. The term muni is mentioned in the sense of sons of Vātaraśna, who used to wear soiled garments. They were also the seers of transcendental state: vātaraśnasya putrāḥ munayaḥ atindriyārthadarśino jūtivātajūtpraśravītayāḥ piśāṅga piśāngāni kapilavṛttāni malā malināṇi vallakalārūpāṇi vāsāṃsi vasate acchādayanti...

In another passage, they are described as keśin, i.e. wearing long loose hair:

keśyagnim keśi viṣam keśi bibharti rodasī / keśi viśvāṁ svadṛṣe keśīdam jyotirūṣyate //

Such Munis were the friends of gods by pious deeds. The Rgveda calls Indra the ‘friend of Munis’, i.e. indro munināṁ sakhā. Munis help in the performance of rites and have been called associate of every God in the holy work. They utilize their occult powers for the good of the world. They forsake all sorts of worldly manners of livelihood and attain eternal happiness. Due to such renunciation of the worldly pleasures, the munis lived in a state of divine ecstasy or supreme bliss which is explained by Sāyanācārya. Thus, it can be stated that during the Rgvedic age, the idea of leading the life of contemplation and mortification was there though there is no such detailed account of Sannyāsa, in a well developed form.

Son in the Rgvedic family

By giving up their nomadic habits, the Vedic Āryans developed a healthy family life in the villages. However, there are references to fortified cities too. The family of the Rgvedic period was of the patriarchal type, which centered on the head of the house called Grhapati and his wife called Grhapatini. During the Rgvedic

180. Sāyana on R. V., 10.136.2
181. Ibid., 10.136.1
182. munirdevasyadevasya saukṛtyāya sakhā hitaḥ / Ibid., 10.136.4
183. Ibid., 8.17.14
184. ...devasya sakhā sakhibhūtah...saukṛtyayā suṣṭhu devanuddiṣṭa kriyamāṇaṁ yāyātmaṁ karma sukṛtam / tasya bhāvāya samyagamanuṣṭhāpanāya hitaḥ nihitaḥ... / Sāyana, Ibid., 10.136.4
185. Ibid.
186. unmadatā mauneyena vātā ā tathūmar vayam / sarvedasmātāṁ yūyāṁ martaṁ abhi paśyathu // Ibid., 10.136.3
187 mauneyena munibhāvena laukikasarvavyavahāravisarjanena unmadatā unmatā unnattā unnattavādācarāntaṁ / Sāyana, Ibid., 10.136.3
188. yathā śamāsadvidārṣe catuṣpaṁ viśvāṁ puṣṭam grāme asminnāḥturam / Ibid., 1.114.1
Also vide, Ibid., 1.44.10
189. Ibid., 1.58 8, 4.30.20
190. Ibid., 6.53.2
191. Ibid, 10 85.26
period, the normal family was larger than a nuclear one. Besides husband and wife, the family consisted of elders, sisters, sons and daughters. In a Ṛgvedic verse, the size of such a family is mentioned, in which the bride is expected to rule over her husband’s family. Moreover, another Ṛgvedic verse depicts a family having a daughter and her parents, the master of the house, the Kinsmen, other men walking about and women sleeping in the court at night. In such a family, the birth of a son was the most important desire of the Vedic householder’s life. Zimmer observes that ‘The purpose of marriage was maintenance and procreation of one’s family; that was possible only through a male child,’ From very ancient times, it is believed that a man was born with the burden of three-fold debts, viz. Devarna (debt to the gods), Ṛṣirṇa (debt to the seers) and Pitrṇa (debt to the forefathers). These three debts can be repaid by performing yājñas, by brahmacarya or student-hood and by begetting sons respectively. A worthy son brought fulfilment to the life of his father by the maintenance of the lineage and offering of oblations to the dead. Thus, the purpose served by a son was the payment of debt to the forefathers and securing of immortality. Manu declares that a putra is so called because he saves his father from the hell called puṁ. Moreover, the Ṛgvedic society needed heroic sons to fight with the enemies. So, there were yearnings for getting sons in the Ṛgvedic verses. God Soma is said to confer a son who is karmanya, i.e. well-versed in worldly activities, sādanya, i.e. skilled in household duties, vidathya, i.e. devoted to the performance of sacrifices like Darśapūrṇamāśa and sabheya, i.e. eminent in a

192 samrajñāṁ svāsare bhava samrajñāṁ svāśravam bhava /
naṇāndari samrajñāṁ bhava samrajñāṁ adhudevṛṣu // Ibid., 10.85.46

193 sastu mātā sastu pitā sastu śvā sastu viśpāṭīḥ /
sasantu sarve jñātayah sastvayamabhito janaḥ // Ibid., 7.55.5
ya āste yaśca caraṭi yaśca paśyati no janaḥ...// Ibid., 7.55.6
Also vide, Ibid., 7.55.8

194. Vide, Chakravartī, Uma., op.cit., p. 163

195 jayāmāno vai brāhmaṇastrībhirśrīvāja jāyate brahmacaryena ṛṣibhyo yaṭhena devebbhoyoh
prajāyāḥ pītrbhyaḥ eṣa vā anṛṇo yāḥ pūrī yatvā brāhmaṁcārvāṇaḥ / T.S., 6 3.10 5
ṛṇam ha vai jāyate yo’sṭi / sa jāyamāna eva devebbhyā ṛṣibhyāḥ pītrbhyaḥ manusyebbhyāḥ /
S.B., 1.7.2.11

196. mo şu deva daṇḍa svarava pādī divaspāri /
mā somasya śambhuḥ saṁe bhūma kāḍā cana vittam me asya rodast // R V., 1.105.3

197. Manu, 9.138

198 anganā rayīmaśnavatposameva divedive /
yāsasam viravattamam // R.V., 1.1.3
Also vide, Ibid., 1.91.20, 1.92.13, 3.1.23, 10.85 45, 10.85.45, 10.183.1
sabhā or well-versed in all the scriptures, as interpreted by Śāyaṇācāryya as—putram/karmaṇaṁ laukikakarmaṇaṁ kuśalāṁ sadanyam / sadanāṁ grham / tadarham / gṛhakāryaṣṭāmītyṛthāḥ / vidathyam / vidantyeṣu devāṇiśi vidathāḥ yajñāḥ / tadarham/darśaṇapūrnamāśādyānugānushān-aparamītyṛthāḥ / sabheyam sabhāyāṁ sādhum / sakalaśastraḥbhiṣṭāmītyṛthāḥ।

Children were regarded as the symbols of racial immortality. The Rgvedic seers realised that though immortality has not been given to man, he has received something similar to it, i.e. sons and grandsons.200 A Rgvedic verse prays for securing immortality through progeny.201 It is also stated in the Brāhmaṇas thus—prajāmanu prajāyaśa tadu te martyāmrtaṁ.202 Putra is the usual name used to denote a son.203 In some places the term sūnu is also used.204 In the Rgvedic family, the grown up sons always kept their fathers company, sat with him for receiving instructions205 and obeyed his orders.206 In the Rgvedic society, father-son relationship was held as the most important and the most sublime. An affectionate father was easy of access for the son. In a Rgvedic verse, it is mentioned that the sacrificer approaches Agni as a son does to his father.207 A son calls on his father whenever needed.208 The son also without any delay listens to his father’s order.209 An affectionate father was always anxious for the welfare of his son,210 who stands for all that is good and kind.211 A son had sweet relationship with his mother too. The mother-son relationship is imagined in between the relationship of goddesses and their devotees. In a family, mother had deep love and affection for her son.212 A son is described as the dearest to his mother.213 So, a mother embraces and

199 Sayana, Ibid., 1.91.20
200 Ibid., 4.54.2
201 jātaveda yaśo asmāsu dhehi prajābhīragnē amṛtatvamāṣyāṁ / Ibid., 5.4.10
202 T.B., 1.5.5.6
203 R.V., 2.29.5, 5.47.6, 6.9.2
204 Ibid., 1.1.9, 6.2.7, 7.81.4
205 purah sadaṁ śarmanasado na virā anavadyā patijūṣṭeṣva nārī / Ibid , 1.73.3
206 piturna putrāṁ kratun jūṣantā śroṣaye asya śaśaṁ turāsah / Ibid., 1.68.5
207 sa naḥ piteva sūnave’gne śūpāyano bhava / sacasvā naḥ svastaye //Ibid., 1.1.9
208 Ibid., 7.32 3
209 Ibid., 1.68.5
210 śaṁ no bhava hrđā a pīta indo piteva soma sūnave suśevaḥ / Ibid., 8.48 4
211 Ibid., 1.1.9, 4.17.17
212 prati me stomamadīturjagrhyāṭsūnuni na mātā hrdayam suśevasam / Ibid., 5.42.2
213 tasyāste ratnabhāja Īmahe vayāṁ syāma māturaṁ sūnavaḥ / Ibid., 7.81.4
gladdens her son with earnestness and warmth of heart. It is mentioned that Soma 
delights his mothers heaven and earth. So, it can be said that mother was equally 
affectionate towards her son.

During the Rgvedic time, the parents as an overall guardian, had complete control 
over their children. The fathers did not hesitate to inflict physical punishment to their 
sons for their mistakes. Rjráśva is stated to have lost his eyesight by the curse of his 
father for destroying hundred sheep belonging to their co-villagers. The story of 
Šunahšēpa reflects the authoritarian nature of a father. Even a father is seen chastising 
his son for gambling. It is seen that the gambler in the Aksa Sūkta of the Rgveda 
became subject of ill-treatment by his brother and parents as well:

\textit{anye jāyaṁ pari mr̥ṣantyasya yasyāgr̥hadvedane vājyakṣaḥ / pitā mātā bhr̥tāra enamāhurna jānīmo nayātā baddhametam} //

It is stated that the eldest male member continued to exercise his powers till he 
became too old, when his place was taken by the eldest son. When the father grows old his sons might divide their father’s property. So, it is probable that partition took place during the father’s lifetime. A 
son born of the body, i.e. a aurasa putra does not transfer his paternal wealth to a sister 
but makes her the receptacle for the son of her husband. Adoption was not favoured 
during the Rgvedic time and therefore, there are references to prayer for the birth of a 
new-born aurasa putra. So, a sonless father instead of adopting a son stipulates 
that his daughter’s son (i.e. putrikāputra) will be his son who can perform his funeral 
rites. It appears to be the putrikāputra’s right of inheritance:

\begin{enumerate}
\item 214. sīnum na mātā svatana jannīva sā yathā pratiṅghyāsīōya paritūṣyati. / Sāyana, Ibid., 5.42.2
\item 215. sa sūnurmatārā śucirjāto jāte ārocayat / Ibid., 9.9.3
\item 216. satam mesānvrkye cakṣadānamrjraśvam tami pitāndham cakāra / Ibid., 1.116.16
\item Also vide, Ibid., 1.117.7
\item 217. Ibid., 1.24 12-15, 5.2.7
\item Also vide, A.B., 7.12-18
\item 218. prā va eko mimaya bhūryāgo yanmā piteva kitavām śaśaśa / R.V., 2.29.5
\item 219. Ibid., 10.34.4
\item 220. vi tvā na raḥ purutrā saparyanpiturna jivrervi vedo bharaṇa / Ibid., 1.70.5
\item 221. Ibid., 7.18.23
\item 222. Ibid., 1.70.5
\item 223. Ibid., 3.31 2
\item 224. na śeśo agne anyajātamastamacetānasya mā patho vi dukṣaḥ / Ibid., 7.4.7
\item Also vide, Ibid., 7.4.8
\item 225. Ibid., 3.31 1
\end{enumerate}
Position of Women in the Rgvedic society

Ancient India recognized the importance of woman with her great qualities and inner dignity, in shaping the whole society. Giving importance to women Manu says, 'Where the women are honoured, there the gods rejoice, but where they are dishonoured, all activities become fruitless.' The Rgvedic society is based on the family, where a proper place was assigned to women. The position of women, as known from the Rgveda, was neither low nor humiliating. The community was showing proper concern and respect for women, allowing them considerable freedom of social life. The position of women in the Rgvedic society can be determined from the stages mentioned below.

Birth of a daughter

The family in the Rgvedic period being patriarchal in character, the birth of a son was naturally a source of joy to the parents. The Rgvedasamhitā traces that the couple paid their attention to the birth of a son in the families but they did not deprecate the birth of daughters as it is noticeable in the later Rgvedic period. But it has to be pointed out that the daughter is less desirable than the son. Moreover, the Rgvedasamhitā does not prescribe any ritual to be performed by the parents for the birth of a daughter which is referred to in the later Rgvedic age. In this context, B.S. Upadhyaya observes, 'We find a very frequent longing for a male child in the Rgveda ....It is surprising, however, that no desire for the birth of the daughter is ever expressed in the entire range of the Rgveda ....' Besides, in the Rgvedic society, the parents were equally affectionate towards their son and daughter. It is seen that a daughter was much loved and taken care of and fondly brought up by their parents. Parent's relationship towards their daughters can be gleaned from the mythological allusions met with in the Rgvedic verses. In mythological words, it is stated that mother had nicely decorated her daughter. The daughters inherited the glory of her parents. A sonless father or the father of a daughter only stipulates

226. Manu., 3.56  
227. A.V., 6.11 3 , 8.6.25  
228 Br. Up., 4.4.18  
229. Vide, Chakravarty, Uma., op.cit., p. 178  
230. R.V., 1.185.5  
231 susamkāṣā mātrmrṣṭeva yoṣavistavan kruṇe dṛṣe kam / Ibid., 1.123.11  
Also vide, Ibid., 10.17.1 , 10.85.13
that his daughter’s son will be his son who can perform his funeral rites.\textsuperscript{232} In a family, couple is seen desiring to reach their full extent of life with sons and daughters growing by their side.\textsuperscript{233}

**Female Education**

Regarding the education of girls, the *Rgvedasamhitā* does not remain silent. Though in the *Rgvedasamhitā* there is no specific mention of any educational institution for women study, but it can be easily inferred that they were given due freedom for education in the Rgvedic society. They received liberal education in the branches of physical, intellectual and spiritual instructions. Women were not debarred from the Vedic studies. In the *Rgvedasamhitā*, there were women seers who left an indelible mark in the composition of hymns. In the Rgvedic age, there were many woman seers of the Vedic mantras or Brahmavādinīs. According to the *Sarvānukramanikā*, there are as many as twenty women among the ‘seers’ or authors of *Rgveda*.\textsuperscript{234} Śaunaka’s *Brhaddevatā* enumerates as many as twenty seven female seers or rṣikās\textsuperscript{235} viz. Ghośā\textsuperscript{236}, Godhā\textsuperscript{237}, Viśvavārā\textsuperscript{238}, Apālā\textsuperscript{239}, Juhū\textsuperscript{240}, Aditi\textsuperscript{241}, Indrāni\textsuperscript{242}, Saramā\textsuperscript{243}, Romaśā\textsuperscript{244}, Urvaśī\textsuperscript{245}, Lopāmudrā\textsuperscript{246}, Vāk\textsuperscript{247}, Śraddhā kāmāyanī\textsuperscript{248}, Indramātā\textsuperscript{249}, Rātnī\textsuperscript{250}, Śūryā\textsuperscript{251}, Yami\textsuperscript{252}, Paulomi\textsuperscript{253} etc. Some of these perhaps may have been mythical personages. The hymn starting with *aham*

\begin{thebibliography}{253}
\bibitem{232} Ibid , 3.31 1
\bibitem{233} putrīnā tā kunārinā viśvamāyurvyāṣnutāḥ/ ubhā hiranayeśasā // Ibid., 8.31.8
\bibitem{234} Vide , Altekar, A.S., *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, p. 10
\bibitem{235} BD, 2.82-84
\bibitem{236} R.V., 10.39.40
\bibitem{237} Ibid., 10.134.7
\bibitem{238} Ibid., 5 28
\bibitem{239} Ibid., 8.91
\bibitem{240} Ibid , 10 109
\bibitem{241} Ibid , 10 72
\bibitem{242} Ibid., 10.86, 10 145
\bibitem{243} Ibid., 10.108
\bibitem{244} Ibid., 1.126.7
\bibitem{245} Ibid., 10.95
\bibitem{246} Ibid., 1.179.1,2
\bibitem{247} Ibid., 10 125
\bibitem{248} Ibid., 10.151
\bibitem{249} Ibid., 10.153
\bibitem{250} Ibid , 10 127
\bibitem{251} Ibid , 10.85
\bibitem{252} Ibid , 10.154
\bibitem{253} Ibid, 10.159
\end{thebibliography}
rudrebhirsabhisrámi... known as Vák Súkta of the tenth maṇḍala of the Rgveda,254 is composed by Vák, the Speech personified, the daughter of sage Ambhṛna. It is an unparalleled philosophical revelation which give rise to the concept of Šabdabrahma. It is seen that woman like Viśvavarā, not only composed verses in praise of Agni and other gods but also worshipped the gods with oblation.255 The last two r̥ks of Viśvavarā hymn are included in the Sāmidheni verses recited in kindling the sacred fire in the New and Full Moon sacrifice.256 Such female seers are called Brahmavādinīs – one of the two classes of women students. Another class is called Sadyodvāhā.257 The Brahmavādinīs were life-long students of theology and philosophy who aimed at a very high excellence in scholarship. Sāyanācārya in the commentary of a Rgvedic verse states that Ghoṣā, the daughter of Kakṣīvān was a Brahmavādinī: ghoṣānāma brahmavādinī kakṣīvātī duhitā ...258 In the Upaniṣadic age too, women enjoyed almost every privilege as men. In the Br. ādārānyaka Upaniṣad, it is depicted that Gārgī was a learned seer who took part in the discussion of highest truth with Yājñavalkya in the court of King Janaka of Videha.259 Maitreyī, one of the two wives of Yājñavalkya, is also found to be a learned lady who was taught the knowledge of Ātman, the Ultimate reality by Yājñavalkya, on her request to do so.260

Music and dance formed the principal recreations of people during the Rgvedic period. So, girls were instructed in the fine arts, such as dance and music. The Rgvedasamhitā refers to professional female dancers called nṛtī.261 Women also practised different types of hand works such as, weaving262, knitting263 and the like. The art of embroidery was very much popular at that period and women had mastery in that art.

During the Rgvedic period, women also used to receive military training. There
are many references in the *Rgvedasamhitā* in which women were very bravely taking part in the war with their husbands. Viśpalā, the wife of King Khela, had lost her leg in fighting, and it was replaced by an iron leg through the grace of the Āśvins. This instance shows her braveness. Another women named Mudgalāṇī, was very famous for her bravery, having military education and strategies of war. Mudgalāṇī or Indrasenā, the wife of the sage Mudgala, helped her husband in the pursuit of robbers who had stolen their cows, drove her husband’s chariot to battle and defeated them with the help of husband’s bow and arrows and recovered the stolen property. Such references help to understand that women in the Rgvedic age had efficiency in war. They were well-trained in drawing chariots as well as in the use of weapons like bows and arrows.

**Women as a daughter and sister**

Women were, in general, accorded a place of honour in the Rgvedic society. As the family being patriarchal in character, a son was naturally preferred to a daughter. In the *Rgvedasamhitā*, a girl was denoted by the terms like *kanyā, duhitā* etc. In a verse addressed to the Goddess Dawn, it is stated that Goddess Dawn goes to Sūrya like a *kanyā*, i.e. a lovely girl. Sāyaṇācārya in his commentary to the relevant verse explains the term *kanyā* as *kamanīyā*. While giving the meaning of the term, he quotes Yāṣkā who states – *kanyā kamanīyā bhavati kveyai neta yeti*, i.e. A maiden is called kanyā because she is an object of love or because to whom should her hand be given. Yāṣkā however furnishes one more interpretation of the term – *kanatervā syāt kāntikarmanah*, i.e. The term *kanyā* can be derived from *kan*, meaning to shine. It means that she shines with her beauty and enamours all and as such she is an object of love. While the Goddess Uṣas is compared to a *kanyā*, she is described...
as vivasanā, i.e. unclothed. Generally, a girl of tender age is meant here by the term kanyā. Yāska gives the synonym of kanṭnaka as kanyā, e.g. kanṭnake kanyake 271 Sāyaṇācārya explains the term kanṭnaka in his commentary of a Rgvedic verse as – kanṭnakeva kamanīye śālabaḥaṇjike iva...,272 i.e. a lovely doll. As the word śālabaḥaṇjikā refers to a doll, thereby, the lustful nature of a girl is hinted at. The term duhitā is used in many passages of the Rgvedasamhitā which means generally a daughter, e.g. duhitā putrī...273 According to Macdonell and Keith, the word duhitṛ appears to be derived from duḥ, to 'milk', in the sense of one who nourishes a child, rather than as the ‘milker’ of the primitive family...274 But A.C. Das observes that the etymology does not support the view. According to his opinion, the duty of the grown-up daughters (duhitṛ) was to milk the cows, as Duhitr literally means ‘the milker’.275 However, Yāska gives the etymology of the term as – duhitā durhitā/ dāre hitā/ dogdherva276, i.e. The daughter is so called because it is difficult (to arrange) for her welfare, or she fares well at a distance or (the word duhitā) is derived from (the root) duḥ (to milk). In the commentary of the Rgvedic verse, Sāyaṇācārya interprets the term duhitā as – duhituḥ sarvasya dogdhṛyāḥ...277

As the joint family of the Rgvedic age consists of parents, husband and wife, children, brothers and sisters, a girl has co-operative and harmonious relationship with her brothers and sisters. Brother also played a very important role in his sister’s life like a father. The sweet relationship between a brother and a sister is rightly noted in the Rgvedasamhitā.278 As interpreted by Sāyaṇācārya, the brother was very much beneficial to his sister : svasṛṇāṁ bhrāteva yathā bhrātātīśayena hitakaro bhavati...279 The brother had some control over his sister in a family. From the Rgvedic accounts, it is clear that pity is expressed for a girl without a brother, and

271. Ibid.
272. Sāyaṇa on R.V., 4.32.23
273. Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.40.5
   Also vide, duhituḥ svaputryāḥ.../ Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.61.5
   duhituḥ putrikāyāḥ.../ Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 3.31.1
275. Vide, Das, A.C., Rgvedic Culture, p. 123
276. Nir., 3.4
277. Sāyaṇa on R V., 9.97.47
278 jāṁsih sūndhunāṁ bhrāteva svasrāṁibhyānāṁ rājā vanānayati / Ibid., 1.65.4
279. Sāyaṇa, Ibid.
she supposed to be destitute in such condition. So, it was feared that a girl in the absence of a brother, might ruin and the wicked one might take the advantage of her helplessness.\textsuperscript{280} Yāska in his \textit{Nirukta} states that one should not marry a girl bereft of a brother, for his (husband’s) son belongs to him (to the father of the girl).\textsuperscript{281} It is to be noted that in the absence of a brother, a daughter approached her forefathers with obligations to perform the duties of a son as stated by Sāyaṇācārya in the commentary of a Rgvedic verse, i.e. \textit{abhrāteva bhrāṭraḥit eva puṁsah pitrādīn prati...gacchati/ ...sati svabhṛtārī sa eva pituh pindaḍānādikāṁ saṁtanakṛtyaiṁ karoti/ tasyābhāvāt svayameva tatkaruṁ pitrādīn gacchati} /\textsuperscript{282}

Sweet and harmonious relationship between sisters are also mentioned in the Rgvedic verses through mythological allusions,\textsuperscript{283} e.g. Uṣas or dawn and Rātri or night described as ideal sisters.\textsuperscript{284} Ten sisters are mentioned to have worked harmoniously.\textsuperscript{285} In a Rgvedic verse, sisterly relationship is imagined between the rivers also, where seer Viśvāmitra addresses the two rivers Vipās and Śutudrī as two sisters.\textsuperscript{286} According to Sāyaṇācārya’s interpretation, the term \textit{svasṛ} is used here to indicate the sisters : \textit{svasāraḥ bhaginyah...} /\textsuperscript{287}

\textbf{Marriage and age of marriage}

Marriage was one of the well established ceremonies to be performed for a daughter during the Rgvedic period. It was regarded as a social and religious duty and necessity for the Vedic people. It helps the people to enter into the holy life by performing rituals connected with the \textit{Garhapatya} fire, kindled at the time of their marriage. For the purpose of marriage no particular age restriction was applied to girls. It can be inferred that in the Rgvedic society, no girl was married before her puberty and were married at an advanced age. They were well-trained and grown up

\begin{footnotes}
\item[280] Ibid., 4.5.5
\item[281] \textit{nābhṛāṛāṁ upayaccheta tokam hyasya tad bhavati / ityabhṛāṛkāyā upayamanapratidīnḥ pratyakṣaḥ / pituśca putrabhāvāḥ / Nir., 3.5}
\item[282] Sāyaṇa on R.V., 1.124.7
\item[283] \textit{samāno aṁrā ṣvāsroranantastamyāyāḥ carato devasīste / na methete na tathatāḥ sameke naktōṣāḥ samanāsā śṛṣṭe // Ibid., 1.113.3}
\item[284] Also vide, Ibid., 9.89.4, 9.98.6
\item[285] \textit{svasā ṣvāsre jyātīṣyaṇaḥ yonimraigapātaśyaḥ pratiṣćeṣṭvyaḥ / vyucchantī raṁśīṁhīḥ śṛṣṭyāṁhvāṁkante samanāgāva vrāh // Ibid., 1.124.8}
\item[286] Ibid., 3.29.13
\item[287] Sāyaṇa, Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
at the time of their marriage. From the Sūryā Sūkta or the marriage hymn mentioned in the tenth manḍala of the Rgveda, it can be stated that at the time of marriage, the bride was mature enough and grown up fully. In this sūkta the daughter of Sūrya was given away to Soma in marriage only when she herself yearned for a husband.289 On the occasion of the marriage ceremony after going to her husband’s house, a wish is expressed in favour of the bride that she is entitled to be a queen over her father-in-law, her mother-in-law, her husband’s sister and brothers.290 Some of the verses of the marriage hymn, describe the consummation and procreation through marriage.291 This would have been possible only in case of a mature and grown up bride. In the Rgvedic verse Vimada was described as an Arbhaga groom,292 who has won his wife after defeating his rivals as interpreted in the Śāyanācārya’s commentary— 

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\text{arbhaga bālāya svayāmvaralabdhāhāryāya vimadāyā etatsaṁjñāya rājārṣaye madhyemārgam svayāmvarārthāmagataiḥ tāṁ alabhamānairanyairnapaiḥ saha yoddhumaśaknuxvate’pi tasmai senājuvā śatrusenāyāḥ prerakena śatrubhiḥ dusprāpena rathena you aśvinau jāyāṁ bhārīyāṁ parairanukrāntāṁ nyūhatuḥ śatrāṇnihatya tādiyāṁ grhaṁ prāpayāmāsatuḥ} / 
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Griffith translates the term arbhaga as youthful Vimada. The Āśvins assisted Vimada, who was attacked when returning home with newly-won bride, whom they carried to his house in their own chariot.294 According to A.S. Altekar, 'This expression, however, denotes tenderness rather than childhood, for Vimada who has been described as an arbha bridegroom is seen to be defeating his rival in battle and winning his bride.'295 As the Rgvedic brides were mature enough, they had freedom to select their partners in life. There are references to brides selecting the partners of their own choice.296 In the Rgvedasamhīta, there are references to unmarried girls growing old in their parent’s

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\begin{align*}
288. & \text{ anyāmiccha prapharvyaṁ sam jāyāṁ patyā srja / Ibid., 10.85.22} \\
289. & \text{ Also vide, Ibid., 10.85.9} \\
290. & \text{ Ibid., 10.85.9} \\
291. & \text{ samrājñī śvāsūre bhava samrājñī śvāśravāṁ bhava / nanandari samrājñī bhava samrājñī adhi devṛṣu / Ibid., 10.85.46} \\
292. & \text{ Ibid., 10.85.23,27,37,41,42,43,45} \\
293. & \text{ Ibid., 1.51 13, 1.116.1} \\
294. & \text{ Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.116.1} \\
295. & \text{ Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 1.116.1, p. 77} \\
296. & \text{ Vide, Altekar, A.S., op.cit., p. 50} \\
\end{align*}
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bhadra vadhārbhavati yatsupeśāḥ svayāṁ sā mitraṁ vanute jane cit / R.V., 10.27.12
house. This Veda also refers to amāju, i.e. The spinster or one who grows old in one’s parent’s house. There are instances of a maiden longing for the company of a husband, greeting her lover. It is seen that an aged women was also chosen to get married to a man if found suitable. Thus, Ghośā is mentioned who, by the grace of the Āśvins was married when she nearly passed her youth. From such references it is clear that the unhealthy custom of child marriage was not in vogue in the Rgvedic society. It can be said that although marriage was regarded as necessary and desirable for all, the Rgvedic society did not insist on its performance in case of the absence of a suitable match.

Women as a wife

The treatment received by the bride in her new home after marriage as depicted in the Śrīyā Śūkta or the Vivāha Śūkta reveals the position of a wife in her husband’s home, her household duties, relationship with other members of the family and the ideals which were expected to be followed by the couple. In a man’s life, the existence of a wife was an indispensable necessity for the maintenance of the family line and consequently the wife enjoyed an honourable status in the family as well as in the society. So, in the Rgvedic age, the brides were treated with great consideration, regard and affection. The role of woman as a wife was recognized as much praiseworthy. She is stated to be the ornament of the house and she is embodiment of home itself. In this context, Sāyaṇācārya states: jāyāiva gr haṁ bhavati/ na gr haṁ gr, hamityāhurgr, hinī gr, hamucye ati smr teh... / The wife is the most auspicious and is treated as the mistress (samrajñī) of the house. From the marriage hymn it is noticed that the bride is expected to take the reins of the entire household from her elderly relations. The happiness of conjugal life can be attained with a fully devoted wife. The chaste

297. amāju riva piroh sacā satt samānādā sadasastvāmiye bhagum/ Ibid., 2.17.7
298. abhi tvā yośano daśa jāram na kanyāṇūsat / Ibid., 9.56.3
299. Ibid., 1.117.7
300. durokaśocī kṛutura nityo jāyeva yonāvaraṁ viśvasmai / Ibid., 1.66.3
301. jāyedastari maghavantsedu yonih../ /Ibid., 3.53.4
302 Sāyaṇa, Ibid
303. ...kalyāṇirjāya suranam grhe te / Ibid., 3.53.6
kalyāṇāḥ bhadrarūpāḥ… / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 4.58.8
304. samrajñī śvaśre bhava...samrajñī adhi devṛṣu / Ibid., 10.85.46
305 Ibid.
306 devo na yaḥ prthivim viśvadāyā upakṣueti hitamitro na rājā / purṇāsadhah śārmasado na vṛś anavadyā patijuṣṭeva nārī // Ibid., 1.73.3
wife who is dear to her husband is even compared to the purity of the Vedic god Agni.\textsuperscript{307}

Woman as a wife is denoted by the terms patni, jāyā and the like. A patni had the right to perform sacrifices with the husband which is clearly marked in the \textit{Rgveda}, i.e. \textit{patnisahitā yajamāṇāḥ vi tatāsre yajñāṁ vitanvate / yadvā yajñē payovratādīnā atmānamupakṣayanti...}.\textsuperscript{308} The word \textit{patni} is formed by substituting the final \textit{i} of \textit{pati} with \textit{na} and the feminine suffix \textit{nī} added to it and the word so formed means a wife, who participates in the sacrifices of her husband, i.e. who shares the fruits of sacrifice performed by her husband – \textit{patiśabdasya nakārādeśāḥ syād yajñena sambandhe / tatkarṭkayajñāsya phalabhokṛtyarthāḥ / dampatyoh sahādhikārāt...}.\textsuperscript{309} The term \textit{dampatī} denotes a pair who enjoy happiness and cooperative conjugal life.\textsuperscript{310} The husband and wife regarded as the joint owners or lord of the house is indicated by the term \textit{dampatī}.\textsuperscript{311} Śaṅkara interprets the term as – \textit{dampatīm gārhapatyādirūpena grāhasya pāḷakam / dama itī grāhanāma...}.\textsuperscript{312} According to A.S. Altekar, the word \textit{dampatī} means ‘two joint owners of the household’ excludes a third person from the conjugal life.\textsuperscript{313} Such instances show the high status of women at the time of the \textit{Rgveda}. The term jāyā in most of the cases denotes a wife.\textsuperscript{314} Śaṅkara also interprets the term as – \textit{jāyā bhāryā…},\textsuperscript{315} i.e. a wife. According to Macdonell and Keith, Jāyā regularly denotes ‘wife’, and, as opposed to \textit{Patni}, wife as an object of marital affection, the source of the continuance of the race.\textsuperscript{316} Jāyā as a wife was gracious to the friends and relatives and devoted to her husband.\textsuperscript{317} Moreover, the term jani is used to denote a wife.\textsuperscript{318} Śaṅkara in his commentary interprets the term as – \textit{janitvaṁ...jāyātvaṁ...},\textsuperscript{319} i.e. the wife. The term

\textsuperscript{307} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{308} Sayana, Ibid., 1.131.3
\textsuperscript{309} vasyākaranasiddhāntakaumudī on patyurno yajñāsasmiyo (Aṣṭā, 4.1.33 ) Śūtra no 490
\textsuperscript{310} aṃjanti mitram sudhitam na gobhiryaddampati samanasā krności / R. V., 5.3.2
\textsuperscript{311} viśvāsām tvā viśām patim havāmahe sarvāsām samānam dampatim bhujue satyagīrvāhasam bhujue / Ibid., 1.127.8
\textsuperscript{312} Śaṅkara, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{313} Vide, Altekar, A.S., op.cit., p. 104
\textsuperscript{314} jāyeva patyai uśāti suvāsī uśā hasreva ni rījīte apsaḥ / R.V., 1.124.7
Also vide, Ibid., 3.53.4 , 3.53.6 , 4.3.2 , 10.10.7
\textsuperscript{315} Śaṅkara, Ibid., 10.34.3
\textsuperscript{316} Vide, Macdonell, A.A., & Keith, A.B., op.cit., vol. 1 , pp. 285, 286
\textsuperscript{317} R. V., 10.34.2
\textsuperscript{318} purū sahasrajanayo na patnīdūvasasyantī svasāro ahrayaṁ / Ibid., 1.62.10
tamīṁ giro janayo na patnī surabhīṣṭamam nārāṁ nasaṁ / Ibid., 1.186.7
\textsuperscript{319} Śaṅkara, Ibid., 10.18.8
refers to the begetting of children as interpreted by Śāyaṇācārya as – *janayah ... apatyotpādayitryo yositah...*\(^{320}\), *janayah na utpādayitryah patnīḥ patnyah...*\(^{321}\) According to Macdonell and Keith, there is distinction of sense between the words *jani* and *patnī*, as *jani* means 'wife' as bearing children (from *jan*, 'beget'), while *patnī* was 'wife' as being 'mistress' of the house (feminine of *pati*, 'lord', 'husband').\(^{322}\)

The husband and wife constituted an indivisible unit in all spheres of life. In the *Aksa Sūkta*, the gambler expressed his feeling that he engaged himself in playing dice so much that he did not mind to attend his domestic business and alienated his devoted wife,\(^{323}\) as a result of which he fell into untold miserable plight. Domestic happiness is based on the love of the couple.\(^{324}\) It is stated that happiness of a husband lies in the home where lives a gracious consort.\(^{325}\) At that period conjugal relationship was given much importance and it was a matter of pride of the society.\(^{326}\) The wife looked after the comforts of her husband and is seen ministering his wants.\(^{327}\) In a Rgvedic verse, India's wife is depited as offering Soma juice at the advent of India's departure to the battlefield which signifies that a wife reinforced the martial spirit of her husband.\(^{328}\)

**Monogamy and Polygamy**

In the age of the *Rgveda*, monogamy was the rule, whereas, polygamy was an exception. V.M. Apte remarks that the Rgveda certainly permits polygamy..., though monogamy may have been the rule.\(^{329}\) All the rituals described in the Rgvedic verses bring forth the idea that the householder has got only one wife, who should help him in the performance of the rites. The ideal of monogamy was held in high esteem. From the oath and promises taken by the pair at the time of marriage ceremony and from various references to home life, it is clear that monogamy prevailed generally in the Rgvedic society. Instances of monogamy can be seen in the *Sūryā Sūkta*,

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320. Śāyana, Ibid., 5.61.3  
321. Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.P86.7  
322. Vide, Macdonell, A.A., & Keith, A.B., op.cit., vol. 1 , p. 275  
323. R. V., 10.34.2  
324. Ibid., 1.122.2, 10.32.3  
325. apāṣ somamastamindra pra yāhi kalyāṇājyā surṣanāṁ grhe te / Ibid., 3.53.6  
326. Ibid., 1.66.3, 1.73.3, 1.82.5, 8.31.5, 10.149.4  
327. Ibid., 1.122.2  
328. Ibid., 4.24.8  
329. Vide, Chakravarty, Uma, op cit, p. 141
where the bridegroom takes the hand of the bride for happy fortune and wishes to reach old age with her.\textsuperscript{330} The ideal of monogamic marriage in which the husband and wife are united into an abiding duality is described in the \textit{Sār̥yā Sūkta}.\textsuperscript{331} The Rgvedic seers describe only one loving wife who was the main source of domestic felicity of the husband.\textsuperscript{332} But there are also some references which trace the prevalence of polygamy side by side.\textsuperscript{333} For the kings and nobles, plurality of wives was a useful instrument in strengthening their political power by contracting matrimonial alliances. Among the seers, marriage of seer Sobhari with the fifty daughters of Trasadasyu, son of Purukutsa is one of the instances of polygamy.\textsuperscript{334} Polygamy among the kings and nobles indicates their wealth and reputation in the society. A.S. Altekar observes, 'The rich probably regarded plurality of wives as a proof of their wealth, reputation and social position.'\textsuperscript{335}

Though polygamy was practised in the Rgvedic period, it was recognized that plurality of wives never contributed to domestic felicity which even made husband's life miserable. As a result of polygamy feeling of hatred and jealousy grow up among the co-wives. The \textit{Rgveda} in one place compares Tṛta, who was confined in the walls of the narrow well, to the miserable condition of a husband troubled by his jealous wives, i.e. \textit{saṁ mā tapantyābhītah sapatnīriva parśavaḥ}.\textsuperscript{336} In this context the term \textit{sapatnī} is interpreted as \textit{sapatnīriva / saṁānah ekaḥ patiryāsāṁ tāḥ sapatnyo yathaikāṁ patimabhītah piśayanti / parasparam vā piśayante}.\textsuperscript{337} According to Griffith, \textit{sapatnī} means 'rival wives.'\textsuperscript{338} In another place, it is mentioned that between the two poles of the car called \textit{havirdhānaśakaṭa}, the bull is pressed very tightly as a man in the midst of two wives.\textsuperscript{339} Here the term \textit{dvijāniḥ} indicates the existence of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{330} \textsuperscript{grbhnami te saubhaṇgyāya hastam maṁ paṭyā jaraṇaṁjñayāyaah} / bhago ayaṁ ma savītta Puranāṁdhīrmahyām tvaḍurghṛbhaptāya devāḥ // R.V., 10.85.36
\item Also vide, Ibid., 10.85.26,46
\item \textsuperscript{331} \textsuperscript{hāiva stam maṁ vi yaustam viśvaṁ ayuryaśānutam} / kṝñaṁ nair putrāṃ apnaṁprabhāmānāṁ aṣe gaṁe // Ibid., 10.85.42
\item \textsuperscript{332} \textsuperscript{apāḥ somamastaminḍra pra yāṁ kalyāṇorjyāḥ aṣaṇgaṁ gṛhe te} / Ibid., 3.53.6
\item \textsuperscript{333} Ibid., 1.105.8
\item \textsuperscript{334} Ibid., 8.19.36
\item \textsuperscript{335} Altekar, A S., op.cit., p. 104
\item \textsuperscript{336} R. V., 1.105.8
\item Also vide, Ibid., 10 33.2
\item \textsuperscript{337} Sāyana, Ibid , 1.105 8
\item \textsuperscript{338} Griffith, R T.H., op cit., on l 105 8, p 67
\item \textsuperscript{339} ubhe dhuraib vahurpiṇbdamāno'ntaryeṇeva carati dvijāniḥ // R.V., 10.101.11
\end{itemize}
two wives in a home, as interpreted by Sāyaṇācārya –dvijānih dvijāyah tayorantāh carati/340 Such co-wives living together craved the love of her husband and naturally the neglected wife very often took to the performance of rites in order to win her husband’s love. In the tenth maṇḍala of the Rgvedasamhitā, there is a hymn for winning the husband’s affection from a co-wife. Indrātri expresses her extreme intolerance and ill-feeling towards her co-wife.341 By the application of a climbing plant, having medicinal properties, she plans to suppress her co-wife and gain her husband’s love.342 Śaśi Paulomi, also called Indrātri, the consort of Indra, claims herself to be the destroyer of the rival wife.343 Thus, polygamy was in vogue in the Rgvedic society.

Polyandry

Polyandrous relationship was not totally unknown to the Rgvedic seers. Through mythological allusions, the Rgvedic verses give instances of Polyandry. The polyandrous relationship of the Maruts with Rodasī is alluded to.344 Sāyaṇācārya in his commentary states that Rodasī is the wife of Rudra. i.e. rodasī śabdena rodanasvabhāvo rodraḥ / tasya strī rodasīti kecidāhūḥ / apare tu marutāṁ striyo rodasīti nāmadheyamityāhūḥ/345 Elsewhere, he states that it is the lightning, the bride of the Maruts rodasī marutpatnī vidyut vā.../346 In another place, it is stated that Śūryā the daughter of the Sun came to the Aśvins for friendship and elected them as husbands.347 Ludwig states that she came intending to avail herself of the services of the Aśvins as bridesmen, and then they became her bridegrooms instead.348 She mounted the chariot of the Aśvins.349 Moreover, the term sūryāyāḥ patī in the fourth maṇḍala of the Rgveda indicates that the Aśvins were the lords of Śūrya’s daughter.350

340. Sāyana, Ibid.
341. Ibid., 10.145
342. Ibid., 10.145.1
343. asapatnā sapataṅghī jayantyabhibhūvari / āvṛkṣamanīyāsātī varco rādhō astheyāmīvā // Ibid., 10.159.5
Also vide, Ibid., 10.159.6
344. Ibid., 1.167.4
Also vide, Ibid., 1.167.5,6
345. Sāyana, Ibid., 1.167.4
346. Sāyana, Ibid., 1.167.5
347. a vām patīvsam sākhṛyāya jagnuśī yōṣavṛūta jenyā yuvāṃ patī / Ibid., 1.119.5
348. Vide, Griffith, R T.H , op.cit., on 1.119.5, p. 81
349. R.V., 1.116.17, 1,167.5
350. tadū śu vāmajrāṁ ceti yānam yena patī bhavathāḥ sūryāyāḥ / Ibid., 4.43.6
Sūryā, which is indicated by the term *vara*. Sāyaṇācārya interprets the term as *vara varau*... According to Griffith, 'the groomsmen.' According to Uma Chakravarty, 'Some grammatical uses like *pati* and *śvaśura* in plural number in marriage hymns may also indicate polyandry in that society.' Such instances illustrate the practice of polyandry during the Rgvedic age. But A.S. Altekar holds that the custom of polyandry was practically unknown to Hindu society. He states, 'In the Vedic marriage hymn Sūryā is married to Aśvins; the latter, however, are not two persons but a twin deity. The marriage of lady Rodasī (sky) with Maruts (Storm-gods), is figurative...It is also true that there are some passages in Vedic literature where the wife is mentioned in connection with husbands in plural. The plurals in these cases are, however, either generic or used *majestatis causa*.

In later Rgvedic period however polygamy was permissible but polyandry was banned. **Women as a mother**

Motherhood has been the most desirable status of every woman. The status of a woman is heightened by the birth of a son. Wife plays an important role in the maintenance of the lineage of her husband's family by begetting children. Winternitz observes, '...according to the Brāhmanical lookout the wife paves the path for heavenly bliss for her husband, she gives him sons who would take care that the lineage is maintained...' A man is not complete till he is united with a wife and gives birth to children. In the later Rgvedic period childlessness was regarded as a great misfortune. So, in the marriage ritual, prayer is offered to Indra to bless the newly married bride with ten sons and make her fortunate. As a mother, her deep love and affection for children is depicted in the Rgvedic verses.

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351. *somo vadhyurabhadaśvināstāmūhā vara* / Ibid., 10.85.9
353. Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 10.85.9, p. 594
354. Chakravarty, Uma., op.cit., p. 149
355. Altekar, A.S., op.cit., p. 112
356. A.B., 3.23.12, S.B., 9.1.4.6, T.S., 6.5.1.4, 6.6.4.3
357. Vide, Chakravarty, Uma., op.cit., p. 23
358. *...aṭha yadaiva jāyāṁ vindate 'tha prajñyate tarhi sarvo bhavatī / S.B., 5.1.6.10*
359. *ya vā pariṁ patriṁ sa pariṁāvattī / Sā nirṛtiḥ kṛtā tadāvaśāyaṁ nirṛtītām rūpam tadevaitacamayati / Ibid., 5.3.1.13*
360. R.V., 10.85.45
   Also vide, Ibid., 10.85.42
361. Ibid., 9.61.14, 10.94.14
gives the picture of a mother who delights her son by embracing him with the earnestness and warmth of heart: \( \text{prati me stomaditirjagbhya\text{"s\text{"t\text{"unum na m\text{"t\text{"a hr\text{"yam sus\text{"evam} /}^{362} }\)

There is a beautiful picture of a mother taking a child in her lap in another Rgvedic verse.\(^{363}\) In a family, a mother was fond of her son who was dearer to her as interpreted by Śāyaṇācārya in a verse — \( \text{mā\text{"tur\text{"a s\text{"nava\text{"ḥ / yathā m\text{"aturjanany\text{"ḥ s\text{"nava\text{"ḥ putr\text{"ḥ priyatamā bhavanti...}^{364} }\)

The natural parental affection is clear from the instance of a daughter being nicely decorated by her mother.\(^{365}\) Sarasvatī is poetically conceived as an affectionate mother in the Rgveda. Like a mother, Sarasvatī also does good to the worshippers as if they are its own children. Her motherly nature is clear from her epithet \textit{ambitame},\(^{366}\) which means best of mothers. Similarly, Heaven and Earth are imagined as the parents of Śoma.\(^{367}\) As interpreted by Śāyaṇācārya, the term \textit{mā\text{"tarā} in the present context means heaven and earth:} \( \text{mā\text{"tarā ā\text{"t\text{"mano m\text{"tar\text{"au dyā\text{"vap\text{"r,thivyau...}^{368} }\)

Griffith translates the term as ‘parents’.\(^{369}\) In the later Rgvedic period, motherhood was elevated to the rank of a god.\(^{370}\)

**Women in the rituals**

Religious rights and privileges was accorded to women and their role in religious practices and observations throw immense light on their position in the society. The position of wife is duly stressed for the performance of religious duties in a family. A woman was allowed to participate in rituals only by virtue of her status as the wife of a sacrificer. The famous Śūryā Śūkta of the Rgvedasamhitā states that the husband marries the wife for \textit{gār\text{"hapatya}, i.e. the estate of a householder.\(^{371}\) It also enjoins, that marriage enables a man to perform sacrifices to the gods and to procreate sons.\(^{372}\)

The tie of marriage was a binding force throughout the life and the sacrificer is said

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362. Ibid., 5.42.2
363. a putraso na m\text{"t\text{"ar\text{"i vibhr\text{"r\text{"aḥ s\text{"nau dev\text{"\text{"s barhi\text{"s\text{"aḥ sadantu /} Ibid., 7.43.3
364. Ś\text{"ya\text{"n., Ibid., 7.81.4
365. susamk\text{"sā m\text{"\text{"t\text{"ar\text{"aṣeva yo\text{"t\text{"v\text{"istan\text{"vām kr\text{"\text{"s\text{"e d\text{"\text{"\text{"r\text{"e kam /} Ibid., 1.123.11
366. Ibid., 2.41.16
367. sa s\text{"\text{"n\text{"\text{"u\text{"m\text{"t\text{"ar\text{"ā \textit{\text{"sucir\text{"j\text{"ātā jātē arocayat /} Ibid., 9.9.3
368. Ś\text{"ya\text{"n., Ibid.
370. m\text{"\text{"t\text{"\text{"d\text{"\text{"e\text{"v bhava.../ T\text{"\text{"\text{"\text{"Up., 1.11.2
371. R.V., 10.85.36
372. Ibid., 10.85.24, 43
to have offered their oblations to the gods in the sacrifice accompanied by their wives.373 In religious rites and ceremonies, presence and co-operation of a wife were as necessary as that of the husband. Because, an *apatnika*, i.e. a person without a wife cannot perform sacrifice: *ayajñiya vaiṣa yo'patnikah*374 It is to be noted that the wife was girded with a *yoktra*, a triple cord made of muñja grass to endow her with the right to sacrifice. In a Rgvedic verse it is stated that the bride is girded with the girdle after she has been bathed, combed and dressed for the marriage ceremony, in order to make her fit for sacrifices and achieve the fulfilment of life.375

So, all the rituals are to be performed by the husband with the help of his wife. During the Rgvedic period, a particular place is assigned to a woman along with her husband in their religious worship. There are several references which speak of the co-operation of husband and wife in all religious rites.376 The term *vīthotra* as interpreted by Sāyana Cārya indicates that the couple loved yajñas, i.e. *vīthotra vīthotrau/vīthī priyakaro hotrā yajño yayostau / anena yajñena tayoḥ sukhādikāṁ saṁbhavati / tādṛśau*377 The wife used to take an active part in family sacrifices. Household fire was reared by the husband and wife378 and the wife used to offer oblations in the sacrifice together with her husband.379 From the Gṛhyaśūtras also, it is clear that women enjoyed certain rights in the performance of domestic rites.380 The *Rgvedasamhitā* contains references to practices prevalent in the days of yore when a woman or the wife of a sacrificer could offer oblations by herself also. A Rgvedic verse describes a woman named Apālā who is seen taking a Soma twig,
while returning from her bath, and offering by herself as a sacrifice to Indra.\textsuperscript{381} Viśvavatā is another lady who is referred to have performed sacrifice in every morning and evening. She is seen praising gods like Indra by \textit{stotra} and offering oblation which consists of \textit{purodāsa}.\textsuperscript{382} Sāyaṇācārya clearly states that a woman named Indrātī went to sacrifice and probably started some rites, i.e. \textit{nāri stri rītasya satyasya vedhāḥ vidhātri vīrīṇi putravati indrapatiṇī indrasya bhāryendrāṇī smāhotraṁ śma saṃścīnāṁ yajñāṁ khalu ...purā gacchati / mahīyate stotrbhiḥ stūyate ca} /\textsuperscript{383} In the later Rgvedic age, it is noticed that the Vedic hymns or Sāmans during the sacrificial session were sung by the wives of the \textit{Udgāt} priests.\textsuperscript{384} Thus, as the husband and wife were the indispensable participants in religious rites and observances, it can be stated that the religious status of a woman is as high as that of her husband. In this context, the remark of Winternitz deserves mention, who says- '...it is reckoned as absolutely essential, that the husband and wife together perform the sacred ceremonies. This participation of the wife in the sacrifices proves at all events that the position of woman in the oldest period of the \textit{Rgveda} was not yet so law as later, when the law-books absolutely forbid women to sacrifice, and to repeat sacred texts.\textsuperscript{385}

\textbf{Widow in society}

Widows had their right place in the society even after the death of their husband. The word \textit{vidhavā} indicating widowhood occurs several times in the \textit{Rgvedasāṁhitā}.\textsuperscript{386} The term \textit{vithura} is also applied in the same sense as referred to in the Sāyaṇācārya’s commentary thus-\textit{vithureva} /... \textit{bhartrā viyuktā jāyā}.../\textsuperscript{387} The Rgvedic verses contain very little evidence regarding the pitiable condition of widows in society. In the first \textit{mandala}, it is stated that a women who is deprived of her husband trembled from national distress or calamity caused by the king.\textsuperscript{388}

\textsuperscript{381} kanyā vārvāyatī somamapi srutāvidat /
astānī bharantyabravīdendrāya sunavai tvā śakrāya sunavai tvā // R.V., 8.91.1

\textsuperscript{382} samiddhāh agnirdhī śociṁśraeśāpyāṇānuśasamurvīyā vi bāhī /
eti prācī viśvavārā namobhīrdeva īśānī haviṣṇā ghṛttāct // Ibid., 5.28.1

\textsuperscript{383} Sāyaṇa, Ibīd., 10.86.10

\textsuperscript{384} Cf. S.B., 1.1 4.13, 14 3.1.35

\textsuperscript{385} Winternitz, M., \textit{History of Indian Literature}, vol.1, pp. 66,67

\textsuperscript{386} kaste mātaram vīdhvāmācakraccayum kastvāmājīghāṁsaccaranantam / R.V., 4.18.12
Also vide, Ibid., 10.18.7, 10.40 2,8

\textsuperscript{387} Sāyaṇa, Ibīd., 1.87.3

\textsuperscript{388} vīdhureva / yathā bhartrā viyuktā jāyā rājopadravādiṣu satsu nirālambā satī kampate tadvat /
Sāyaṇa, Ibīd.
There is no clear reference to the custom of Satī, according to which a widow immolates herself on her husband's funeral pyre. Divergent views are held on the subject of the prevalence of this custom in the Rgvedic period. In the funeral hymn, a widow is depicted to have laid down beside the body of her husband. Likewise according to the verse of the Rgvedasāṁhitā, the wife was made to rise after she had once laid by the side of her dead husband. In the opinion of A.S. Altekar, the very verse of the funeral hymn '...seeks to dissuade the widow from burning herself on her husband's funeral pyre by following the archaic Satī custom, which had gone out of vogue.' In another verse of the same hymn, it is mentioned that the un-widowed women came forward to anoint the corpse before the ceremonies begin, and contains no reference to the burning of widows. In this context, Adolf Kaegi remarks: '...with a very slight forgery it would give the highest sanction, the Vedic authority, for the custom of burning the widow on the grave of the husband.' A.S Altekar denies the existence of the custom of sacrificing the wife at the husband's death by saying: 'Nor is it referred to in the funeral hymns of the Rgveda, where it would certainly have been mentioned if it had been in existence.' This shows clearly that the custom of self-immolation was not in vogue in the days of the Rgvedasāṁhitā. That the widows continued to live after the death of their husband is clearly indicated in the Rgvedic verses, which relate to widows.

Remarriage of Widows

During the Rgvedic period, it is noticed that widows were not to burn themselves with their dead husband nor the Vedic seers wanted them to remain widows throughout their life. In the Vedic age, regular marriages to widows occur in a very few number. Certain verses of the Rgvedasāṁhitā have given rise to various questions whether they refer to niyoga or to remarriage of widows. According to Sāyaṇācārya's

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389. "udṛṣṭva nāryābhī jīvalokāṁ gatāṣuṣmētumāṁ śeṣa ehi / hastagrābhāṣya didhiṣṭaṣtavēdāṁ patyurjñātvaṁabhī saṁ bābhūthā // Ibid., 10.18.8
390. Ibid.
391. Altekar, A.S., op.cit., p. 150
392. R.V., 10.18.7
393. Kaegi, A, The Rigveda, p.171
394. Altekar, A.S., op.cit., p.117
395. R.V., 10 40.2
396. Ibid., 10.18.7,8
commentary, a Rgvedic verse indistinctly mentions about the invitation by the husband’s brother to the wife of the departed either to marry or to give her support.\textsuperscript{397} On the basis of it, it cannot be said that there were some traces of widow remarriage in the Rgvedic society. The custom of widow remarriage is seen in the \textit{Atharvaveda}, which lays down a ritual to secure the union of the new couple in heaven.\textsuperscript{398}

**The system of \textit{niyoga} or levirate**

One of the common customs prevalent in ancient India was \textit{niyoga}, i.e. to have a child either from the dead husband’s brother or some other near relation with full consent of the elders, even of the husband. Those women whose marriage had been consummated were permitted to raise offspring through the system of \textit{niyoga}. In the Rgvedic age, a son by levirate union is preferred rather than by adaptation.\textsuperscript{399} There are frequent allusions to the practise of levirate or \textit{niyoga} in the Rgvedic verses.\textsuperscript{400} It is seen that in the absence of her husband a widow goes to her brother-in-law or has relation with him which is clearly referred to in the commentary of \textit{Sāyaṇācārya} thus – \ldots\textit{sayane vidhaveva yathā mṛtabhartṛkā nari devaram bhartrbhrātaramabhimukhīkarotī}.\textsuperscript{401} Yāska in his \textit{Nirukta} interprets the term \textit{devara} alternatively as the second husband, e.g. \textit{devarah kasmādviśyo vara ucyate}.\textsuperscript{402} In the \textit{Manuśmṛti} also it is stated that in certain circumstances the widow shall be married to her brother-in-law and their union shall only subsist until one son has been procreated.\textsuperscript{403} Moreover, in a Rgvedic verse, Vadhrimātī is stated to have obtained a son during the impotency of her husband.\textsuperscript{404} The Āśvins are praised to have given a son named Hiranyahasta to her.\textsuperscript{405} In another verse, it is referred to that because of the incaptivity of Purukutsa, son of Durgaha, his wife propitiated the seven seers, who by the favour of Indra and Varuṇa obtained a son named Trasadasyu for her.\textsuperscript{406}

\textsuperscript{397} tvām hastagrābhasya pāṅigrāhāni kurvataḥ didhiṣoḥ garbhasya nidhātuḥ tava asya patyuḥ sambhandhādāgataṃ idam janitvam jāyētvamabhilakṣya sam bahbhūtha sambhūtiśi anumaraṇanīścayamakāṛṣṭḥ tasmādāgaccha//

\textit{Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 10 18.8}

\textsuperscript{398} A.V., 9.5.27,28

\textsuperscript{399} R.V., 7.4.7,8

\textsuperscript{400} Ibid., 1.117.24, 4.42.8, 6.62.7

\textsuperscript{401} Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.40.2

\textsuperscript{402} Nir., 3.15

\textsuperscript{403} Manu, 9.69,70

\textsuperscript{404} R.V., 1 116.13

\textsuperscript{405} Ibid., 1.117 24

\textsuperscript{406} asmākamatra pitarastā āsantsapta ṛṣaya daurgahe budhyamāne / ta āyajanta trasadasyumasyā indram na vrtrataramarghādevam // Ibid., 4.42 8
So, it is clear that a widow was not under the pressure of rigorous restrictions during the Rgvedic age.

There was difference of opinion as to whom the child born of niyoga belonged. As regards the paternity of the child begotten through niyoga, the Rgvedic verses mention that the child belongs to the man who begets it.\(^{407}\) Yāska in his *Nirukta* also supports this view.\(^{408}\) In some cases it is probable that the child begotten at a living husband’s request on his wife belongs to the husband. From such foregoing statements it appears that in some cases *niyoga* was resorted to even when the husband was alive.

**Woman’s right to property**

The legal position of a woman or her right to property is not clearly mentioned in the *Rgvedasamhitā*. A father’s legitimate son was the sole heir of the ancestral property and in a Rgvedic verse he is referred to as leaving no share of that property to his sister.\(^{409}\) A father stated to have distributed the property amongst his sons during his lifetime.\(^{410}\) However, the unmarried daughters are mentioned to have given the share of paternal property along with their brothers.\(^{411}\) In ancient India the daughter’s right of inheritance in competition with a brother was not recognized. But regarding a brotherless daughter, there were differences of opinion. A brotherless daughter succeeded in establishing her right of inheritance. A girl child having no brother is called *abhrātā*.\(^{412}\) Such brotherless women used to come back to her father to look after her parents or to perform their funeral rites.\(^{413}\) They had their legal right to inherit the paternal property also.\(^{414}\) If, in a family, the only daughter was given in marriage and if she became mother, her son could be the heir to the

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\(^{407}\) Ibid., 7.4.7,8

\(^{408}\) Nir., 3.2,3

\(^{409}\) na jānaye tānvo rikhāmāraikcakāra garbhām saniturnidhānam / R.V., 3.31.2

\(^{410}\) yathā pītā pratiṣṭhānte vyavahāraṣajñāya putrāya svaktyasya dhanasya bhāgam daḍāti...

\(^{411}\) Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 3.45.4

\(^{412}\) amājūriva pītṛḥ saćā sati samānādā sadasastvāmiye bhagam / kṛdhi praketamupa māsyā bhara daddhi bhāgam tanvo yena māmahaḥ // Ibid., 2.17.7

\(^{413}\) bhrātātva bhrātṛrahitav... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.124.7

\(^{414}\) dhanānāṁ sanaye gartārugiva. / garita iti grhaṇāma.../atraucityena rājapurṣaśāḥ nyāyanurṣruṣtāḥ ādhiṣṭhitām śthānamucyate tadārohati gartāruk / yathā loke kācīt gatabahartyaḥ yonit dhanānāṁ svaktyarikthānāṁ sanaye lābḥāya gartamāgcchati / tān tā suṁbhāḥ vācārya yadītyam rikhām labhate cet aksāḥ samītya tadītyam dhanāṁ vitaranti / Sāyaṇa, Ibid.
property of his maternal grandfather. In this context, A.S. Altekar observes, 'It appears to refer to an agreement by the father of an only daughter with his son-in-law to the effect that his first son will revert to the maternal grandfather to continue his family.'

Yāska in his Nirukta cites the verse under discussion and states- prāśāsti voḷhā santānakārmane duhituh putrabhāvam / duhitā durhitā / dūre hitā / dogdhervā'.

The Rgvedasanihītā contains very little reference to strīdhana, i.e. a special kind of property given to women on certain occasions, over which dominion was conceded to women. The concept of strīdhana was vitally connected with the custom of making gifts to the bride on the marriage ceremony. The Śūryā Sūkta or the wedding hymn refers to gifts that were sent to the groom's house with the bride. On the occasion of marriage, cows and other objects were given for pleasing the girl to be married as interpreted by Śāyaṇācārya- vahatuḥ / kanyāpriyārtham dātavyo gavādipādārtho vahatuḥ / or tām śūryām vahatunā sāha soṃāya prāyacchāḥ /

It is stated that Savitr sent the bridal gift of Śūryā in the beginning of the ceremony. Reference is made to sending of presents specially the cows etc., on Aghā, i.e. Maghā nakṣatra and the taking away of the bride after marriage on Arjunī, i.e. Phālgunī Nakṣatra, probably the next day. Such cows were beaten or driven away from the house of Śūryā's father to the groom's house.

Even the bride is sent by her father to the groom's house with lady attendants. There is also a reference to wealth being given away by the spouse's brother (syāla) to his brother-in-law which indirectly refers to dowry. In certain occasions, a worthless or defective son-in-law, bereft of necessary qualifications, used to give wealth to the father of the bride to
induce him to give her in marriage.\textsuperscript{424} Such son-in-law is called \textit{vijamāṭr} as interpreted by Śāyaṇācārya thus- \textit{vijamāṭh} / śrutābhīrūpyādībhīrugunāirvijnām jāmāṭā yathā kanyāvate bahu dhanam prayacchati kanyālābhārtham tato'pyatiśayena dātārāu...ityarthah \textsuperscript{425}

The \textit{Rgvedasamhitā} is silent about the share given by a husband to his wife. A Rigvedic verse refers to the partition of father’s property among his sons during his life time, but indicates nothing about the share received by the wife on such occasion.\textsuperscript{426}

**Freedom of women in the society**

In the age of the \textit{Rgveda}, women were not compelled to lead a life of seclusion. On the contrary, they were allowed to participate in social activities of the people. Freedom of women in the society is referred to in many a context in the \textit{Rgvedasamhitā}. In the \textit{Śūryā Śākta} or wedding hymn, just before the bride’s departure from her father’s house, it is expected that the bride should be able to speak with composure in the gathered people.\textsuperscript{427} At the end of the marriage ritual, the bride is required to be shown to all the guests assembled there in order to wish her prosperity.\textsuperscript{428} There was also freedom for the movement of a woman in public gatherings like the Samanas.\textsuperscript{429} The term \textit{samana} being explained by Śāyaṇācārya as the sacrificial ground.\textsuperscript{430} Griffith renders it as ‘a gathering’\textsuperscript{431} or ‘festal meeting’.\textsuperscript{432} In another place, Śāyaṇācārya interprets the term as – \textit{samane saṁgrāme...}\textsuperscript{433} or \textit{samana yuddhānī}\textsuperscript{434}, i.e. the battle. Yāska construes it as conflict or battle.\textsuperscript{435} \textit{Samana} in another verse, is interpreted as \textit{samaneva samanaskeva yoṣā}, i.e. women of the same

\textsuperscript{424.} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{425.} Śāyaṇā, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{426.} ...piṭūrṇa jīvṛvṛtv evaḥ bharaṇa / Ibid., 1.70.5
\textsuperscript{427.} Ibid., 10.85.26
\textsuperscript{428.} Ibid., 10.85.33
\textsuperscript{429.} Cf., Macdonell, A.A., & Keith, A.B., op.cit., vol. 2, p. 429
\textsuperscript{430} samaneṣu yajñeṣu... / Śāyaṇa on R.V., 7.2.5
\textit{samane yajñe}... / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.143.4
Also vide, Ibid., 9.97.47
\textsuperscript{431.} Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 4.58.8 , p. 236
\textsuperscript{432.} Ibid., on 1.124.8, p. 86
\textsuperscript{433.} Śāyaṇa on R.V., 6.75.3
\textsuperscript{434.} Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 6.75.5
\textsuperscript{435} vāksyanteva gacchanti kārṇām priyamiva sakhīyaṃṣum pariṣṭōjanāna/ yoṣevā [śīkṣte]
sabdotaṃ karoti /
vitattādhi dhanuṣī jyeyam samane saṁgrāme pārayantī [pāram nayanțī] / Nir., 9.18
thought. According to Monier Monier-Williams, it means a meeting, festival, amorous union, conflict, etc. Thus, it can be inferred that the Rgvedic women freely enjoyed the festivals specially meant for recreation. Women are described as utilizing the opportunity of meeting with the strangers there. It is thus apparent that there was no restriction on women mixing with men on festive occasions. Women took active part in the important occasions and came out in the public with gay adornment. A verse of the Rgvedasamhitā mentions about a well-attired wife who remains in the women's apartment, but sometimes comes out in public probably to attend a meeting. The Rgvedic verse refers to the term jāra, i.e. a lover or an adulterer and jārin, i.e. a female lover or an adulteress. Such references reflect the picture of a society where freedom was given to both the sexes. Sometimes such unrestrained freedom made the maiden at times daring enough to elope with her lover.

Thus, all these references prove that in the Rgvedic times, there was no purdā system among the Aryans and they enjoyed freeness and spontaneity of life to a certain extent.

As against the considerate treatment of women, a few passages are mentioned in the Rgvedasamhitā, in which the women were looked down upon also. A Rgvedic hymn suggests that at that period, wife had been staked by the husband as chattel.

In one passage, the gambler's wife is depided as an object of other man's intrigues.
It is seen that the gambler’s wife suffered without a complaint but after sometime she left him.447 In the marriage of Kakṣīvat with the daughter of Svanaya, the king is stated to have given away to the groom, chariots full of vadhus along with the bride.448 The Rṣis were also presented with female slaves.449 Trasadasyu is credited with having given away fifty female slaves to the seer Kāṇva Sobhāri.450 According to Griffith, in the present context, by the term vadhu here handmaids or female slaves, the wives or daughters of conquered Dāsas, appear to be meant.451 Allusions to immorality on the part of women are not lacking. A Rgvedic verse refers to a woman who hates her husband and is of evil conduct.452 There is reference to woman who gives birth to a child secretly and leaves it aside.453 The line nīṣkṛtam na yоṣaṇā of a verse of the Rgveda is explained as a maid, or a woman, resorts to her rendezvous (with her lover).454 Paramours or secret lovers are known to the Rgveda which is indicated by the term jārīṁ.455 In one context of the Rgveda, Śāyaṇācārya refers thus- jārāvīva pатyāvīva ṛcaraṇī/ na pumaryatīva yatt patim parityaṁjyestatathaṁ sаincaranimate vyabhisacarīṁīva/456 which indicates an unchaste wife or an adulteress. Prostitution was also seen.457 It is referred to in the Śāyaṇācārya’s commentary that- jāro na yathā jāraḥ yoṣaṇān asatīṁ striyaṁ prāptum prāptūṁ saratī458, i.e. a man or secret lover goes to an unchaste woman. In regard to the cases of prostitution in the Rgvedic age, the remark of Winternitz deserves mention who states- ‘It is by no means necessary, as some scholars do, to think of courtesans, when it is said that beautiful women, flock to the festival gathering. It is not to be denied, however, that already at the time of the Rgveda, many solitary, unprotected women- “brotherless maidens” as

447 dveṣṭi śvaśrūpā jāya runaddhi na nāthito vindate mardītāram / Ibid., 10.34.3
448. Ibid., 1.126.3
449. Ibid., 6.27.8, 8.19.36
450. Ibid., 8.19.36
452. Cf., patiripo na janayah patidveśiyah striya iva durevāh duṣṭagatayo durācārā... papāsāh pāpāḥ santoḥ anṛttīṁ mānasasatyārahitīṁ asatyāḥ... / Śāyaṇa on R.V., 4.5 5
453. rahasāstrīva / rahasānyairajāñātā pradeśe sāyata iti rahasāvvyabhicārīṁ / sā yathā garbhāṁ pātīyitvā dūrācārde śaṇaḥjyastat tadvat / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 2.29.1
454. Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 10.40.6, p. 560
455. nyuptascā bābhhravo vācacakrata emideśām nīṣkṛtam jārīṁīva / R.V., 10.34.5
456. Śāyaṇa, Ibid , 7.76.3
457. sarajjaro na yoṣaṇāṁ varo na yomāsaḥ / Ibid., 9.101.14
458. Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 9.101.14
a poet calls them—gave themselves up to prostitution...  

Women were, in general, accorded a place of honour in the Rgvedic society. In one place it is also admitted that ‘many a woman is more firm and better than a godless and niggardly man.’ The statement is made for Śaśiyasī, the wife of Taranta. But misogynists of the age, no doubt, spoke about women in an indecent manner. Some of the unfavourable statements to women contained in the Rgvedasamhitā can be cited. Indra declared that the mind of woman is uncontrollable and her intellect has little weight. Another verse addressed to Purūravās intimates that there can be no friendship with women because they have the hearts of hyenas.

Considering the general position of women as delineated above, it can be summed up that women in the Rgvedic age being members of a male dominated society were treated with mixed feelings. In certain circumstances women were found occupying a dignified position in the society and in other places they were looked down upon also. It is seen that women in her various stages of life receive proper concern and respect and enjoyed considerable freedom in the various activities of the social life. The high honour given to a woman is indicated by the subhage, i.e. the graceful one. Specially, her status as a mother and wife was an honoured one. As a wife she was a true support to her partner in every walk of life. The high position of the wife is shown by the fact that she participated in the sacrifices with her husband. The Rgveda thinks of the wife not only as a joint ruler but also as a queen (samrājñī) exercising her sovereignty over all the members of the household, including the parents of her husband. She is also desired to mother her husband in his advanced years. Women were also free to participate in public life and occupied the same position even in intellectual life. The morality of the Rgvedic seers seems to be fairly high as an unmarried daughter is given the share of paternal property in the Rgvedic society. Besides honour paid to her, women were in certain circumstances regarded as the property of the husband and there was

459. Winternitz, M., op. cit., vol. 1, p. 67
460. uta tvā strī śaśiyasī purīso bhavati vasyasī / adevatrādārādhasah // R.V., 5.61.6
461. Ibid., 8.33.17
462. strαnān strαnān kṛtān sakhyān na vai saṁtī /... etā etāṁ sakhyāṁ sālāvṛkānāṁ hṛdayānī tēṣāṁ hṛdayānī yathā vatsādhānāṁ visvāsthāpānāṁ ghaṭaukkāṁ tadvat / Sāyana, Ibid., 10.95.15
463. subhage sūṣṭhau bhajanīye...// Ibid., 10.10.12
464. daśāyāṁ putrāṁ dhehi patimekādaśāṁ kṛḍhi / Ibid , 10.85.45
prevalence of the practise of using women as chattel in the society. Moreover, there are some foul remarks about women in the *Rgveda* among which one is put in the mouth of a woman herself. Prostitutes and courtesans were not wanting in the society. Cases of conjugal unfaithfulness and sexual immorality were not rare. So, it can be stated that there are many diversified opinions as regards the attitude towards the status of women in the Rgvedic society.

**System of Education in the Rgvedic society**

Every society has its separate educational system according to its practices. In the Rgvedic period, great importance was attached to education. There is no evidence pointing to individual or particular seats of learning during the Rgvedic age. The *Rgveda* is silent about the institution where education was imparted. There is no explicit reference to *Upanayana*, i.e. initiation ceremony also. The word *brahmacārīn* is mentioned but not in the sense of religious disciple. The practise of studentship and the custom related to it are discussed in the later Vedic period. In the *Rgvedasāṁhitā*, the word *śikṣaṇ* and *śikṣamāṇa* etc., are used to mean imparting knowledge. That the worthy students duly approached the teacher is also known indirectly from some Vedic expressions. The wise and intelligent Varuṇa is seen giving instructions to his worthy disciple. The passage *ugāya vipra uparāya śikṣaṇ* which is interpreted by Sāyaṇācārya as **-yugāya yuktāya uparāya upa samīpe ramamāṇāyāntevasine mahyain śikṣaṇ upadiśan...** rightly introduces the system of education in ancient India. The pupil generally made a parting present to the teacher at the close of his life of studentship. There is no reference to the educational fee to be given by the pupils.

**Method of learning**

Oral transmission of knowledge has been an integral part of Indian tradition. The *Rgvedasāṁhitā* does not give any information clearly about the method of

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465. Ibid., 10.95.15
466. brahmacārī carati veviśavisaḥ sa devānām bhavatyekamān gasa tenā jatāmanvavindah bhashpatiḥ somena nītām juhvanī na devāḥ // Ibid., 10.109.5
467. A.V., 11.5, S.B., 11.3.3.1
468. vidvānpadasya guhyā na vocadya śikṣaṇ / R.V., 7.87.4
469. Vidvānpadasya guhyā na vocadya śikṣaṇ // Ibid., 7.87.4
470. uvācā me varuṇo medhīrāya triḥ sapta nāmāhdhīyā bibharti // Ibid., 7.87.4
471. Sāyaṇa, Ibid.
education except referring to a verse in the *Mandukasūkta*, where it is stated that education was imparted orally and learning was by rote, i.e.

\[ \text{yadeśāmanyo anyasya vācaṁ śākṣatyeva vadati śiśyāṁṇaḥ / sarvaṁ tadeśāṁ samṛdheva parva yatsuvaśo tadathanādhyapsu //} ^{472} \]

In this verse, the croaking of the frogs at the starting of the rains after the dry season, is compared to pupils reciting the verses after the teacher. It indicates the system of study by rote where at first the teacher recites the passage which is quickly imitated by his disciples. Here in this *sūkta* the frogs are compared with the Brāhmaṇas. Like a *Vratacārin*, i.e. a religious student, who have taken the vow of silence for one year or engaged in religious austerities\(^{473}\), the frogs in the dry season remain quiet for a year have uttered forth speech, impelled by the cloud.\(^{474}\) These Brāhmaṇas perform their year-long rite, during which they achieve enlightenment and have lifted up their voices.\(^{475}\) Yāska in his *Nirukta* also states- *samvatsaram śiśyāṁṇa brahmaṇaḥ vratacārino'bruvanāḥ / api vopamārthe syāt/ brahmaṇaṁ iva vratacārino iti / vācaṁ parjanapṛśā prāvādīśurmanḍākāḥ /*^{476} Sāyaṇācārya in his commentary refers it to Gavāmayaṇa, a sacrificial session, which lasts a whole year.\(^{477}\) The Brāhmaṇas like the frogs keep the twelve months god appointed order and never neglected it.\(^{478}\) At the coming of the rains, the frogs who had been burnt and scorched by the hot weather greet each other with merry croaking as ‘a son his father’.\(^{479}\) And one repeats the croaking of the other, as the pupils repeat the words of the teacher and learn the lessons of the teacher.\(^{480}\) The terms *śākta* in the verse under discussion indicates the teacher and *śiśyāṁṇa* the student. Sāyaṇācārya states-

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\(^{472}\) Ibid., 7.103.5
\(^{473}\) *vṛatacārīṇaḥ vratam samvatsaramāstraṭmakaṁ karmācarantaḥ brahmaṇaḥ / evambhūtā brahmaṇaṁ iva samvatsaram śāratpravr̥ti vā varṣatorekam samvatsaram śāsayaṁṇaḥ śiśyāṁṇa varṣanārtham tapaścaranta.../*Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 7.103.1
\(^{474}\) Ibid.
\(^{475}\) *brahmaṇaṁ somino vācamārakte brahma kṛtvantaḥ parivatsariṇām / Ibid., 7.103.8*
\(^{476}\) *Nir., 9.6*
\(^{477}\) *parivatsariṇam sāmavatsarikam gavāmayaṇikam brahma stutāṇastraṭmakaṁ kṛtvantaḥ kurvantaḥ brahmaṇāsaḥ/* Sāyaṇa on R.V., 7.103.8
\(^{478}\) *naraḥ netaraḥ...devahitiṁ devaṁ kṛtam vidhānam...dharma ityevarīrūpam jugupuḥ gopāyāṁ /...dvādaśasya dvādaśamāśātmakasya samvatsaraśya ṛtum tari tari vasantādikam na pra minanti na hiṁsanti / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 7.103 9*
\(^{479}\) Ibid., 7.103.3
\(^{480}\) Ibid., 7.103.5
śikṣamāṇah śikṣyamāṇah śīṣyāḥ śāktasyeva śaktimataḥ śikṣakasya vācaṁ yathānuvadatī tadvat /481/ At that period a student was required to memorize the scriptures. The Brāhmaṇas developed a unique system of mnemonics. They laid stress on learning by rote which was necessary for getting pronunciation, accentuation and modulation by the pupil. A Rgvedic verse refers to the modulation of voice diversely.482 Such method of teaching was regularly practised which is clear from the contexts of the Rgvedasamhitā.

As already indicated, knowledge was imparted to the learners by recitation or oral transmission. A great importance was attached to the utterance of letters and syllables. Such utterance was regulated by metres. A Rgvedic verse states that the seven generic metres of the Veda are produced by the conjunction of syllables which are the chief elements of metre.483

Art of writing or knowledge of aksaras

During the Rgvedic age, education was primarily a matter of hearing and memorizing by repetition of the verses of the teacher in the manner of the croaking of frogs. Thus, it is doubted for the art of writing was known to the people of the Rgvedic age or not. A Rgvedic verse refers to an ignorant men who ever seeing does not see speech, ever hearing, does not hear it.484 The word paśyān in the present context is interpreted by Śāyaṇācārya as paśyān api manasā paryālocayannapi..., i.e. at that period the Āryans do not seem to have used a script and there is no reference to writing. Yāska in his Nirukta states- aṃpyekāḥ paśyannā paśyati vācaṁ / api ca śrṇvannā śṛṇotyēnām485 He also states that to another person the knowledge reveals herself, i.e. manifestes the meaning.486 This is the praise of one who understands the meaning. It is seen that young pupils stood reverently round their preceptor for receiving their lessons or instructions.487

481. Śāyana, Ibid.
482. samāṇāṁ nāma bibhrato virūpāḥ pūrtrā vācami pipiśuvadantah / Ibid., 7.103 6
483. aksārena aksārenaiva sapta vānīḥ vāgadhiṣṭhitāni sapta echantāmi mimate nīmānāṁ kurvanti / Śāyana, Ibid., 1.164.24
484. uṭa tvaḥ paśyānā dadaṛa vācamuta tvaḥ śrṇvannā śṛṇotyēnām / uṭo tvasmāi tanvāṁ vi saśre jāyeva patya uṣatī suvāsāḥ // Ibid., 10.71.4
485. Nir., 1.19
486. Cf., aṃpyekasmī tavanā visarṣa iti svamātmānaṁ viśrṇute / jhānāṁ prakāśanamarthasayaḥ / Ibid.
487. yuvordānāya subhāḥ asaścātā rathamā tāśtrurvacasmā na mantave / yābhirdhiyov vaḥāḥ karmanistaye tābhīrū śu utibhirāśvinā gatam // R.V., 1.112.2
Mental Aptitude and Understanding

The method of education naturally varied with the capacities of pupils. A Rgvedic verse refers to the difference of mental aptitudes and occupations among men. It is stated that friends, having similar eyes and ears, were unequal in respect of their power of speed of mind, or the knowledge and wisdom attained by the mind like tanks of varying depths. The terms madhyamaprajñān, alaprajñān and mahāprajñān in the present context, as interpreted by Śāyaṇācārya, indicate men with medium, low and high ability. A verse refers to Vāk or speech in all its four forms, viz. parā, paśyantī, madhyamā and vaikhāri, of which three are stated to be hidden in guhā, i.e. in the depths of the soul, while the fourth one is manifest as the ordinary language of people. It indicates that the four varieties were known to the Brāhmanas who had achieved mastery of their minds but the ordinary people know only the fourth one.

The understanding of the meaning of the text was considered important and vital to education than the mechanical recitation of it without insight into the inner meaning. Mere knowledge of the texts, i.e. the Veda used for ritual purpose is unprogressive without the knowledge of the Akṣara, according to the Rgveda. It is stated that who is steadfast and thoroughly understand the meaning of speech is counted indispensable in the assemblies of the learned. No one can overpower him who knows the meaning well. But one who merely recites the word without understanding its meaning, wanders with an allusion, that is barren, or with a mere symbol of speech, having only grasped its form and sound without perceiving its sense. Such a person (kevalapāṭhakā), is incapable of performing any sacrifice or winning its fruit. Those, who devoid of wisdom, attain speech, having sin producing only. It is also mentioned that those, who create speech, through wisdom or those

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488. nanānām vā u no dhiyo vi vratāni janānām / Ibid., 9.112.1
489. aksanvantah karnavantaḥ sakhīyo manojaśvivasamā bahbhūvah / Ibid., 10.71.7
490. catvāri vākparimita padāni tāni vidurbrahmaṇā ye manuṣaṇāḥ / guha trīṇi nihiṁ nayuganti turyamā vāca manuṣyaḥ vadanti / Ibid., 1.164.45
491. manuṣino manuṣaḥ svāmiṁāḥ svādhiṁāmanasāḥ brāhmaṇāḥ...sabdabrahmaṇo’dhigantāro yoginaḥ parādīcāvāri padāni vidūh jānanti / turyamā tu padāmi vaikhāriśamajākkāman manuṣyaḥ sarve vadanti / Śāyana, Ibid.
492. rco aksare parame vyomanyasmindevā adhi viśve niśedah / yastamata veda kimcā kañcāra kariṣyati ya ittadvedita ime samāsate / Ibid., 1.164.39
493. Śāyana, Ibid., 10.71.5 Also vide, Nir., 1.20
494. R.V., 10.71.9
who possess knowledge of the śāstras, good fortune is placed upon their word.495

Role of Sanighas, Yajñas in imparting knowledge

The Jñānasūkta describes the significance of knowledge obtained from the power of Vāk. It analyses the significance of Vākṣakti which refers to Vedārtha-jñāna, Vedābhyāsa etc.496 Jñāna or knowledge is said by Śāyaṇācārīya to mean Paramabrahma-jñānanam which teaches man his own nature and how he may be reunited to the supreme spirit.497 The understanding of the Veda is regarded as essential to divine knowledge. The knowledge which was excellent and free from defect is revealed by the grace of Sarasvatī through the Vedic learning.498 The wise reached the path of speech by sacrifice. The seers were the repository of such speech who revealed it. Their speech or words thus acquired in sacrifices were spread far and wide.499 Such speech was suitable for being imparted to pupils. According to Wilson also, the verse refers to the diffusion of learning, i.e. those who have studied the Veda have afterwards taught it to others.500 Thus, yajña was the primary centre of learning and education in those days. It is believed that wisdom of the pious enhances by performing yajñas.501 Without the Vedic speech and knowledge, all speeches are useless. For which, one misses the way of performing any religious ceremonies or good deeds.502 A R̥gvedic verse mentions brāhmaṇa-sanighas, i.e. assemblies where united the learned Brāhmaṇas, i.e. who possess the investigated Brahma, consisting of knowledge, divine lore (sruti), thought and wisdom.503 In the present context, it is stated that such Brāhmaṇas abandoned from such assemblies, the one who is ignorant. The
Rgvedasamhita mentions Gayatri prayer for the rousing of the intellect (dhi).\textsuperscript{505} This Gayatri par excellence is believed to be the single mantra representing the Vedas as a whole, and has been passed on through the ages by the oral tradition of the enlightened people as a whole.\textsuperscript{506} The Rgvedic Sarasvatī also symbolises the light of intellect or knowledge (dhiyāvasuh).\textsuperscript{507} Sarasvatī, the inspirer of all gracious thought is accepted as stirring up bright mind and intellect as referred to in the Śāyaṇācārya’s commentary: sūnṛ tāṁṁh priyāmāṁ satyavākyānāṁ codayitrī prerayitrī.\textsuperscript{508} The regions of Sarasvatī acquired a reputation as the home of Rgvedic learning and culture.

**Education for all-round development**

During the Rgvedic age, the ideals of education were concerned with the all-round development of the personality of a student. It helped in the development of individual personality as well as socialisation of the person. The education imparted moral, mental and intellectual training. Such training formed the very pivot of the educational system and the development of character was the ideal of that system. The environment of learning was, during the Rgvedic age, conducive to the intellectual development of the student. The Rgvedic education gives much stress on truth.\textsuperscript{509} Penance or religious austerities had great significance in the Rgvedic education. In one passage, it is stated that heaven can be attained by performing arduous penance.\textsuperscript{510}

In the Vedic education, hard work was always prized high. Gods also help them who get tired by hard work (śrāntasya sakhyāya devāh).\textsuperscript{511} The Rgvedasamhita tries to make people well-versed in all the sciences and to acquire abundance of manly spirit.\textsuperscript{512}

An enormous mass of literature had already grown in the Āryan society by the age of the Rgveda. There existed different branches of knowledge. The knowledge of elementary astronomy, nakṣatras, or medical science, basic sciences like agriculture, animal husbandry, arts and crafts etc., are referred to in the Rgvedic passages which

\textsuperscript{505} Ibid., 3.62.10  
\textsuperscript{506} Vide, Bose, A.C., op.cit., p. 67  
\textsuperscript{507} R.V., 1.3.10  
\textsuperscript{508} Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.3.11  
\textsuperscript{509} Ibid., 3.55.3  
\textsuperscript{510} tvam rayim puruvirāmu naskṛdhi tvam tapaḥ pariṣṭuyājayaḥ svah / Ibid., 10.167.1  
\textsuperscript{511} śrāntasya śrāntānepuyuktāте sakhyāya sakhitvāya na bhavanti devāḥ / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 4.33.11  
\textsuperscript{512} visvā viśvāni vayunāni jñānāni jñātavyāni /...vidvān jānan pauruṣopetaḥ svayam pumān pumānīsam dhanvināḥ visvataḥ sarvataḥ pari pātu raksati / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 6.75.14
are useful to their practical life.

Knowledge of the science of Astronomy

The science of astronomy was known to the Rgvedic Aryans. The Rgvedic verses refer to yuga. In one verse the term yuga is interpreted as dasame yuge dasayugaparyantam... which indicates the tenth age of human being or perhaps the tenth decade. According to P.V. Kane, it probably means a period of five years. The units of time divided into six seasons are alluded to. It is stated in the Sāyanācārya's commentary that there are six seasons of the year or the seasons are regarded as five by the combination of Hemanta and Śisira. P.V. Kane refers to it as the groups of five years (yuga) each divided into six seasons. The term saṁvatsara meaning a year and parivatsara meaning the year's courses are mentioned in the Rgvedic verses. The year is called saṁvatsara, because people live together by them. In one place, the term parivatsarīna is mentioned which is interpreted as -parivatsarīnaṁ saṁvatsarikāṁ gavāmayānikāṁ... i.e. a year long rite which refers to Gavāmayana. It is stated that the words saṁvatsara and parivatsara possibly meant simply year and also successive years of a cycle of five years. Some of the verses of the Rgveda refer to a year with its three seasons, i.e. summer, rainy season and winter, five seasons in the year, taking the winter and the dewy season together, or six seasons, a year with twelve months, seven hundred and twenty days and nights of the year (taking the day and the night separately) and three hundred and sixty days (taking the day and the night together, i.e. as one) in a mystic language. The Rgvedasamhitā mentions a good number of nakṣatras (lunar

513. Ibid., 1.158 6, 3.26.3
514. Sāyana, Ibid., 1.158.6
515. Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 1.158.6, p. 105
516. Kane, P.V., op.cit., vol. 5, part. 1, p. 486
517. solhā yuktāḥ pañcāpañcā vahanti mahadevānasuratvamekam / R.V., 3.55.18
518. Sāyana, Ibid.
519. Kane, P.V., op.cit., vol. 5, part. 1, p. 486
520. R.V., 1.161.13, 1.164.44, 7.103.1, 7.9, 10.190.2
521. parivatsare paryagate vatsare sampūrṇe/ satrānta ity rthah / Sāyana, Ibid., 10.62.2
522. saṁvatsarāḥ samvasante'sminbhūtatāni / Nir., 4.27
523. Sāyana on R.V., 7.103.8
524. Vide, Kane, P.V., op.cit., vol.5, part. 1, p. 487
525. dvādaśa etatsamkhyātkāḥ pradhayaḥ...dvādaśa māsāḥ.../ṛṣīṛi trisamkhyākāni
526. Ibid., 1.164.11,12,13
527. grīṁmavarṣahemantākhyānyāśritāni/ Sāyana on R.V., 1.164.48
mansions) in connection with the performance of ceremonies. The term *nakṣatra* is used several times in the *Rgveda*. Varuṇa is said to be the chief of the lords of natural order. His laws are inviolable and the nakṣatras duly reappear for that. The term *ṛkṣā* is also used to indicate the nakṣatras, i.e. *ṛkṣāḥ sarve'pi nakṣatraviśesāḥ*. The *Rgvedasamhitā* mentions tiṣya—an asterism regarded as shaped like an arrow and containing three stars. In one place Śāyaṇācārya interprets tiṣya as *nakṣatra* and in another place as synonymous with Āditya. The term *pañca devā rtuṣaḥ* in a Rgvedic verse, is explained by the scholars as the five gods who are the planets that do not appear all at once but according to their respective seasons (*rtuṣaḥ*). Ludwig also supports this view. The term *vena* mentioned in a Rgvedic verse is interpreted as- *venah kānta etatsamjño madhyasthāno devaḥ jyotijarāyuh*, i.e. the god of the middle region. According to Griffith, it apparently means the Sun as he rises in the mist and dew of the morning or the Gandharva, Śūrya. But P.V. Kane takes it to be the Venus. There are references to other nakṣatras, viz. Aśvin, Arjun, Aghā, Ādrā etc., in the *Rgveda*.

**Medical science**

Though the hymns of the *Rgvedasamhitā* are mainly devoted to prayers to the gods, it also gives information regarding the medical science. The terms *bhiṣaj*, i.e. a physician and *bhiṣaktamah*, i.e. the best of all physicians. During the Rgvedic

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527. Ibid., 10.111.7
Also vide, Ibid., 1.50.2, 3.54.19, 7.86.1, 10.85.2
528. Ibid., 1.24.10
529. Śāyaṇa, Ibid.
530. Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 5 54.13, p. 267
531. tiṣyam nakṣatram... /Śāyaṇa on R.V., 10.64.8
532. tiṣyah ādityo na... /Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 5.54.13
533. ā rodaś aprnādota madhyam pañca devā rtuṣaḥ saptasapta /Ibid., 10.55.3
534. Vide, Kane, P.V., op.cit., vol. 5, part.1, p. 494
536. Śāyaṇa on R. V., 10.123.1
537. Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 10.123.1, p. 629
538. Ibid., on 10.123.5, p. 630
539. Kane, P.V., op.cit., vol. 5, part. 1, pp. 494,495
540. nakṣatrebhiḥ aśvinīādibhiḥ... /Śāyaṇa on R. V., 10.68.11
541. Ibid., 10.85.13
542. Ibid
543. ārdrādīvādaśavṛṣṭinakṣatṛag... /Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 4.33.7
544. śataṁ te rājanbhiṣajāh sahasramurvī gabhītrā sumatiṣe astu /Ibid., 1.24.9
Also vide, Ibid., 1 157.6
545. mā tvā rudra cukrudhāmā namobhurāṇa duṣṭut viṣabha mā saḥhit / unno vīrā arpaya bheṣajebhirbhiṣaktamam tvā bhīṣajjām śṛṇomī //Ibid., 2.33.4
age, various diseases were known to the people and herbal plants were used to cure such diseases. Because of their tremendous healing properties, these are called the mothers. \[546\] Śāyānācārya interprets the passage in point thus; 

\[mātr̥yaddhitakāritvā mātr̥tvopacāraḥ/ aṭhava mālara ārogyanirmāryaḥ\] Such herbs can seize upon the life from death, for which they are called jīvagrība. \[548\] Different types of plants, viz. fruitful, fruitless, flowery and flowerless are referred to in the Ṛgvedic verses. \[549\] Moreover, to remove the diseases various herbs are mentioned, i.e. aśvāvat, i.e. rich in steeds, somāvat, i.e. rich in Soma, ārjayanti, i.e. rich in nourishments and udojasa, i.e. rich in strengthening power. \[550\] In one place, the Ṛgvedasainhīta mentions a climbing plant i.e. vīrūḍh possessing various medicinal properties. \[551\] The Ṛgvedic Āryans believed on the natural treatment. Āpah, Sūrya and Agni have been declared as the promoters of health which can remove various kinds of ailments. The Ṛgvedic people recognised the hygienic and curative powers of water. \[555\] Āpah or the waters are called amīvacātaniḥ, because with their healing power they drive away the disease. \[556\] The rays of Sūrya were considered to be curative of heart’s disease and Jaundice. \[557\] The people in the Ṛgvedic age believed that the heat of Agni can remove the diseases and make one free from pain and sickness. \[558\] They also believed in the action of light on the process and storage of energy in the body of plants. \[559\] The Ṛgvedic Āryans were acquainted with various other diseases,

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546. śatam vo amba dhāmāni sahasramuta vo ruhāh/
adhā satakratvo ythiamimām me agadam kṛta // Ibid., 10.97.2
osadhīriti mātarastadvo devṛupa bruve // Ibid., 10.97.4

547. Śāyāna, Ibid., 10.97.4

548. jīvagrība mṛtyoḥ sakāśājīvo'pahriyate...// Śāyāna, Ibid., 10.97.11

549. yāḥ phalinīṛīṇā aphaḥ apūṣpā yāśca pūṣpiniḥ // Ibid., 10.97.15

550. Ibid., 10.97.7

551. Ibid., 10.145.1

552. Ibid., 10.9.4

Also vide, Ibid., 1.23.21, 10.9.6.7

553. Ibid., 1.50.11

554. Ibid., 7.1.7

555. Ibid., 10.9

556. āpa ivā u bhesajīrapo amīvacātaniḥ/
āpah sarvasya bhesajīstāste kṛṇvantu bhesajam // Ibid, 10.137.6

557. hrdrogam mama sūrya harimāṇam ca naśaya // Ibid., 1.50.11

558. viśā agne'pa dahārāttreyebhistapobhirādaho jarutham /
pra nivaram cātuyasvānāṃ // Ibid., 7.1.7

559. tve agne viśve amṛtāsa adruha āsā devā haviradanyāhutam /
tvāyā martāsah svadanta āsūtim tvam garbho vṛudhāṁ jajñīṣe śucī // Ibid., 2.1.14
viz. Yaksma\textsuperscript{560}, Rājayaksma\textsuperscript{561}, skin disease called Kuṣṭha\textsuperscript{562}, eye diseases\textsuperscript{563} etc. The Rgvedic verses mention the internal disease called Rājayaksma which is characterized as entering and possessing each and every parts and different organs of the body.\textsuperscript{564} Plant materials were utilized to prevent its attack.\textsuperscript{565} Water was used in the therapy.\textsuperscript{566} Another hymn addressed to Yakṣmā reveals the anatomical knowledge of the Vedic people.\textsuperscript{567} One disease called apvā which is said to confuse her victim’s mind, to seize his limbs and then to depart, to burn him in the heart and to cause the unfriendly ones to suffer from blind darkness.\textsuperscript{568} According to Griffith, apvā was a sort of colic, or dysentery, likely to attack soldiers in the field.\textsuperscript{569} Recognising the value of food, the Āryans prayed to Indra to give food and drink to the hungry.\textsuperscript{570} Sometimes herbs were also used to remove it.\textsuperscript{571} In a Rgvedic verse, Varuṇa, the presiding deity of diseases connected with excessive accumulation or loss of water in the bodies, is eulogized to remove the thirst of the worshippers during the sea voyage.\textsuperscript{572} According to Griffith, in the present context, the perpetual thirst of dropsy may be intended.\textsuperscript{573} One of the Rgvedic hymns gives information about various kinds of embryonic and uterine diseases which have been regarded as curable.\textsuperscript{574} The Dream charm of the tenth mandala contains the elements about the cure of psychological imbalances.\textsuperscript{575}

Due to their rich medical knowledge, the Rgvedic Āryans rose in different fields, i.e. medicine, surgery, treatment of disease caused by demons, etc. Some of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{560} Ibid., 1.122.9, 10.97.11,12, 10.163.1-6
\item \textsuperscript{561} Ibid., 10.161.1
\item \textsuperscript{562} kuṣṭharogena bhartāramaprāpya pitṛṣade... jārām prāpnuvatyai ghoṣāyai... / Sāyana, Ibid., 1.117.7
\item \textsuperscript{563} Ibid., 1.118.7
\item \textsuperscript{564} āhāṛṣaṁ tvāvīdaṁ tvā punarāgāḥ punarnava / sarvāṅga sarvāṁ te ca$kṣuḥ sarvamātyuṣca te'vidam // Ibid., 10.161.5
\item Also vide, Ibid., 10.163
\item \textsuperscript{565} Ibid., 10.97.11,12,13
\item \textsuperscript{566} Ibid., 9.49.1
\item \textsuperscript{567} Ibid., 10 163
\item \textsuperscript{568} amāśaṁ cittam pratilobhayantī grhaṇāṅgānyapve parehi / abhi prehi nirdha laḥṣu śokairandhenāṁ mātrastamaṁ sacantāṁ // Ibid., 10.103.12
\item Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 10.103.12, p. 617
\item \textsuperscript{569} mā no akrte puruḥta yonāvindra kṣudhyadbhyo vaya āṣutim dāḥ / R.V., 1.104.7
\item \textsuperscript{570} Ibid., 10.97.6
\item \textsuperscript{571} Ibid., 7.89.4
\item \textsuperscript{572} Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 7.89.4, p. 378
\item \textsuperscript{573} R.V., 10.162
\item \textsuperscript{574} Ibid., 10 164
\end{itemize}
the achievements of the Rgvedic Āryans in the field of medical science are as follows—Viśpala, the wife of the king Khela, lost a foot in battle and received an iron leg from the Aśvins at the prayer of Khela’s family priest Agastya. The Aśvins made walk the lame Parāvṛj who was unable to travel and relieved Rjrasva from blindness. Such Aśvins also healed Ghoṣā the daughter of Kakṣīvat, who was afflicted with leprosy. The Aśvins relieved Atri from the effects of heat. Soma healed all that is sick, the blind was able to see and the lame to walk. Though these references are found in connection with the Aśvins and Soma, yet, it may be resumed that these medical practices were known in the then society.

Thus, it can be said that the Rgvedic Āryans had the knowledge of different aspects of the science of medicine. They were conscious of the physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of all human beings as well as the animals in order to promote a life of hundred winters.

Knowledge of Technology and other Industries

Various references scattered in the Rgvedic verses prove the existence of technical and industrial education in the society. The Rgvedic Āryans had some technological knowledge too. There are references to three wheeled, three seated chariot of the Aśvins. Mention is made of three cars which were hundred footed and endowed with six horses which can swiftly travell. The material art was highly developed during the Rgvedic period. The standard of its material civilization is indicated in the architecture and cities of the Rgvedic age. Besides the art of making houses, the Rgvedic Āryans were acquainted with various arts like weaving, leather-working, jwellery-making, carpentry, garland-making, art of pottery etc.
Aryans were also acquainted with the art of warfare and making of various weapons manufactured of metal as well as bone and wood. Knowledge of the science of agriculture and cattle-rearing of the Vedic people is depicted in many verses of the \textit{Rgvedasamhitā}. All these will be discussed later on in separate contexts.

**Education of different classes**

Education during the Rgvedic age was not confined to caste and did not go by birth but by inner worth as it is seen from the references to kings or Kṣatriyas elevated to the position of seers. The \textit{Rgvedasamhitā} mentions several seers who were originally kings or Kṣatriyas. A verse refers to the names of five seers, viz. Rjrāśva, Ambarīṣa, Surādhā, Sahadeva and Bhayamāna\textsuperscript{585}, of whom Ambarīṣa the son of the king Vṛṣṇa sagiras is also the seer of a Rgvedic hymn.\textsuperscript{586} Trasadasyu the son of king Purukutsa is the seer of the Rgvedic hymn\textsuperscript{587}, Tryaruna and Aśravamedha.\textsuperscript{588} Purumīha,\textsuperscript{589} Prāṇu, the son of Vena\textsuperscript{590} are other seers of the Rgvedic hymns.

In due course of time, the difference between the Āryans and the non-Āryans was being wiped out as the non-Āryans had access to education like that of the Aryans. The \textit{Rgvedasamhitā} speaks of the five classes of men, who praised Agni or offered sacrifice to him.\textsuperscript{592} According to Sāyaṇācārya, \textit{paṇca janāḥ} means the five men.\textsuperscript{593} Mahīdhara interprets the term as the four chief priests and the \textit{yajamāna}.\textsuperscript{594} In the \textit{Nirukta} of Yāska it is stated that the five people are the four castes with \textit{nīṣāda} as the fifth, i.e. \textit{ca tvāro varṇaṁ nīṣādah paṇcama ityaupamanyavah}.\textsuperscript{595} Agni is said to be the seer, chief priest of all the five races.\textsuperscript{596} A Rgvedic verse refers to Soma which was pressed among the five races, i.e. \textit{janeṣu paṇcaṣu / nīṣādapaṇcaṁāśca tvāro varṇāḥ paṇca janāḥ / teṣu ca ye vā somā abhiṣutaḥ...}.\textsuperscript{597} Among the different classes

\textsuperscript{585} etat̄ett̄a indra vṛṣṇa ukthāṁ vārstāgirā abhai gyṛṇanti rādhah /
\textit{rjrāśvaḥ prastibhirambarīṣaḥ sahadevo bhayamānāḥ surādhāḥ} // \textit{Ibid., 1.100.17}
\textsuperscript{586} ibid., 9.98
\textsuperscript{587} ibid., 4.42
\textsuperscript{588} ibid., 5.27
\textsuperscript{589} ibid., 4.43,44
\textsuperscript{590} ibid., 10.133
\textsuperscript{591} ibid., 10.148
\textsuperscript{592} vilum cidnāmabhinaḥparāyaṇanā yaadagnimayajanta paṇca / \textit{Ibid., 10.45.6}
\textsuperscript{593} paṇca janāḥ maṇuṣyāḥ... / Sāyaṇa, ibid.
\textsuperscript{594} Vide, Wilson, H.H., \textit{op.cit., vol. 6, on 10.45.6, p. 150}
\textsuperscript{595} Nir., 3.8
\textsuperscript{596} agnirṣīḥ paṇcamaṁpaṇcajanyāḥ purohitāḥ / R.V., 9.66.20
\textsuperscript{597} Sāyaṇa, \textit{Ibid., 9.65.23}
of people the Nisadas according to Macdonell and Keith denote the non-Āryan tribes who were not under Āryan control, as the Śūdras were.598 It is also stated that the name nisāda might easily be applied to the whole body of aborigines outside the Āryan organization.599 According to Yāska, Nisada (hunter) lives by killing animals.600 Such Nisadas must have had considerable access to the learning of the Vedas which made them able to take part in the sacrifices like the Āryans. The Vājasaneyi Samhitā also mentions equal right to study the Veda of all classes.601

The salient features noted above about of the Rgvedic educational system prove that education during the Rgvedic age functioned as a social organization and helped to create strong personalities. Such educational system wielded great influence on the growth of socio-cultural thought. It can be stated that religious instruction was not only the subject to be taught to the students. The Rgvedic verses give emphasis on secular or non-religious education too, which improved the economic aspect, political aspect, religious life, arts and crafts, agriculture, industry and soon. So, it can be stated that a harmoniously balanced emphasis was laid on the religious, social and cultural aspects of the life of an individual to develop a broad and humanitarian outlook of the students.

**Customs**

**Marriage Ceremony**

The Rgvedasamhitā reveals the manners, customs and aspirations of the Āryans. There are a few specific hymns that are particularly concerned with popular rites and ceremonies. The secular or non-religious hymns of the Rgvedasamhitā give knowledge of the way of living of the Vedic Āryans and their culture and civilization. Among the non-secular hymns, mention may be made of the Sāryā Sukta602 or the Vivāha Sūkta contained in the tenth maṇḍala of the Rgvedasamhitā which exercised influence on the later day Vivāha sāṁskāras. The Sāryā Sūkta gives beautiful picture of marriage system prevalent in the then Indian society. It reveals the depth and sanctity of marriage and the position of women in the society and household as well. Marriage was regarded as the religious sacrament and a holy institution. At that

598 Vide, Macdonell, A.A., & Keith, A.B., op.cit., vol. 1, p. 453
599 Vide, Ibid., vol. 1, p. 454
600 nisādaḥ kasmat / nisadanā bhavati / Nir., 3.8
601 V.S., 26.2
602 R.V., 10.85
period, marriage was for getting the mutual support of husband and wife and the 
propagation of children. It is stated by Manu that a perfect man consists of man, wife 
and child.\footnote{Manu., 9.45} The \textit{Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa} also says that a person who is unmarried is 
unholy.\footnote{ayajñīyo va esa yo’patniḥkaḥ / T.B., 2.2.2.6} The marriage hymn, mainly delineates the ceremony of marriage in general 
and the marriage of Sūryā, the daughter of the Sun, in particular. The marriage of 
Sūryā with Soma is presented in this hymn as the prototype of all earthly marriages. 
It consists of forty-seven verses and some of the verses of this hymn are dedicated to 
the marriage ritual, and others are related to the manuals of domestic ritual. 

Wealth, beauty, health, intelligence, and good family were the important reasons 
for marrying a particular bride or groom.\footnote{Asv. Gr" 1.5 2, Ap. Gr" 3.20, Bau. Ds" 4.1.12,} During the Rgvedic age, physical charm 
and wealth of the bride helps her to win a husband easily. Riches along with beauty 
made it easier.\footnote{RV" 10.27.12} In the \textit{Rgvedasamhitā}, it is seen that sometimes some physical 
defect or disease made maidens to remain unmarried, e.g. Ghoṣa could not marry in 
her early age because of her skin disease.\footnote{Ibid., 1.107.7} 

Gifts were given by a bride’s father at the time of marriage irrespective of her 
physical perfection. He gave her away well adorned and decked with ornaments.\footnote{pariṣkṛtasa indavo yöṣeva pitṛyāvatī / 
vayuni somā asṛṣṣata // Ibid., 9.46.2} The maiden’s brother gave her rich presents out of natural affection as referred to in 
the Sāyaṇācārya’s commentary- \textit{vivāhakāle iti syālah kanyābhrātā / sa yathā 
fhaginprītyatham bahu dhanam prayacchati...}.\footnote{Sayapa, Ibid.; 1.109.2} It is also deserved that in some 
cases bride-price had to be paid by a son-in-law who is less qualified, which is 
referred to by the term \textit{vijāmātṛ} and the term is explained by Sāyaṇācārya thus- 
\textit{srutābhīrūpyadibhirgunaivrīhino jāmātā yathā kanyāvate bahu dhanam prayacchati 
kanyālābhārtham...}.\footnote{vijamateti śaśvaddākṣiṇājāh kṛttāpatimācakṣate / asusamāpta iva varo’bhīpretah / Nir., 6.9} 
In this context, Yāska in his \textit{Nirukta} states that the people in 
the south apply the term \textit{vijāmātā} to the husband of a purchased maiden. By this is 
meant a bridegroom, whose relationship is not quite complete as it were.\footnote{vijamateti śaśvaddākṣiṇājāh kṛttāpatimācakṣate / asusamāpta iva varo’bhīpretah / Nir., 6.9}
Forms of marriage

The eight forms of marriage recognised by the Smṛtis are well known. These are Brāhma, Daiva, Ārṣa, Prājāpatya, Asura, Gāndharva, Rākṣasa and Paisāca, i.e. brāhma daivastathaivārṣaḥ prājāpatyastathāsuraḥ / gāndharvo rākṣasaścaiva paisācaścāsto’dhamah ī.612

Such forms of marriages have their roots in the Vedic literature. In the Rgvedic period, there existed several forms of marriages, i.e. Svayamvara, Gāndharva, Rākṣasa, Asura, Brāhma etc. But these forms are not specifically referred to by name. In the Rgvedic period, the young persons seemed to have enjoyed considerable freedom in the selection of their life partners. There is reference to beautiful brides selecting their own husbands among a number of suitors.613 This is a reference to the Svayamvara type of marriage. The Svayamvara type of marriage was in vogue in the age of the Brāhmaṇas also.614

Gāndharva was another type of marriage which was consummated before the due performance of the sacred rituals, naturally came to be known after them. The existence of this form of marriage can be seen by the free life in the society and from the free love-making.615 In the Rgvedasamhitā there is reference to young unmarried women meeting their lovers secretly.616 Sometimes young damsels are also mentioned who visit their lovers and go to each other cheerfully.617

Another form of marriage is called Rākṣasa, or more appropriately described as Kṣattra which was accomplished by capture and elopement. In this type of marriage the victor carried away the bride and married her. In the Rgvedasamhitā, the elopement of Vimada with his bride, the daughter of Purumitra can be regarded as an instance of this type of marriage.618

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612. Manu., 3.21
Also vide, Yāj S., 1.58-61
613. R.V., 10.27.12
614. A.B., 7.33
615. jāraḥ pāradrīkāh a sasāt’tūn upapatyāgamanadhyānena tṣat svapatrīti puranidhimīva prakṛṣṭaśaradhrārinīṃ yoṣītāṃvīvā tīm yathā svasam ketena sa prabodhayati tadvat.../ Śāyana on R.V., 1.134.3
616. jaṁīvaḥ yathā kāmavyāsaṇenaśāh bibhootyamānān śva śairinī śām kṣetasthānānī yati.../ Śāyana, Ibid., 10.34.5
617. yoṣitam gacchan abhigacchan jāro na jāra iva / sa yathā śām kṣetitasasyāḥ kāmāprāśaḥ gudho gacchatvā.../ Śāyana, Ibid., 9.38.4
jāraḥ priyām na priyāt rasasatamīṃ strīmanyān bādhamānaḥ san yathābhigacchatī tadvat / Śāyana, Ibid., 9.96.23
618. Ibid., 1.116.1, 1 117.20, 10.39.7
In the Asura form of marriage, payment of some compensation to the relatives of the bride with a view to marrying the bride is seen. In the Rgvedic time, there is reference to bride-price being payed by the worthless groom (vijāmātr) and accepted by the father.619

Brāhma, Daiva, Prājāpatya and Ārśa are the four approved form of marriages. Among them, in the Brāhma marriage, the father carefully selects the son-in-law, invites him to his house and offers him his daughter according to proper religious rites, along with such presents as he can conveniently give on account of natural affection.620 The marriage of Sūryā, daughter of the Sun with Soma as described in the Sūryā Sākta can be regarded as an instance of this type.621 Here, by the approval of the father622 a day was fixed for marriage ceremony in which the parents played an important part in arranging and financing the marriage of their daughter.

In the Daiva type of marriage, a grown-up daughter was offered in marriage to an officiating priest by the sacrificer. It is mentioned that priests very often received from their princely patrons, noble maidens or slave girls for services at sacrifices who were called ‘Vadhūs’. For the example of this type of marriage in the Rgvedic age, the story of Śyāvāśva can be cited.623 It is stated that the story of Śyāvāśva narrated in the Brhaddevatā (5.50) in connection with Rg 5.61 makes an approach to the daiva form.624

In the Rgvedic period, the rules of castes were not fully developed. Caste did not raise any barrier in the way of marriage. There were no restrictions in marrying outside one’s varṇa and taking food with other castes during the Rgvedic age. There are instances of both Anuloma625 and Pratiloma626 type of marriages. Some verses of the fifth maṇḍala of the Rgvedasamhitā627 are interpreted by the Brhaddevatā as

619. Ibid., 1.109.2
620. Vide, Altekar, A.S., op.cit., p. 47
621. R.V., 10.85
622. Ibid., 10.85.8
623. Ibid., 5.61
624. Vide, Kane, P.V., op.cit., vol. 2, part. 1, p. 525
625. R.V., 1.116 10
626. Ibid., 8.1.34
627. Ibid., 5.61 17,18,19
referring to the marriage of the Brahmana sage Śyāvāśva to the daughter of King Rathavīti Dārbhya. The prince Svanaya Bhāvayavya married Romasa who was the daughter of Brhaspati.

At that period, marriages among near relations were discouraged. Incest was considered a great sin as it is illustrated by the dialogue between Yama and Yamī.

From the above discussion, it is derived that the institution of marriage was well established in the Rgvedic period which was regarded as a social and religious duty and necessity, the aim of which is to attain Dharma, Artha and Kāma. When religious consciousness developed in the society, marriage became a religious duty of every individual. The kernel of the Vedic ritual was also maintained in the marriage ceremony.

Funeral rites

In the Rgvedasamhitā there are five hymns which furnish information about the funeral rites. Among the hymns only the eighteenth hymn narrates fully the funeral process. From these hymns, it is clear that cremation and burial were practised by the people of the Rgvedic age. The epithet agnidagdhāḥ is applied to the dead who were burnt on the funeral pyre, e.g. pitarah agnidagdhāḥ agnīnā bhasmīkr tāh / śīṃasānām prāptā ityarthah. Moreover, the term agnisvattah is interpreted by Śāyaṇācārya as agnīnā svādītā etannāmakāh pitarah... , i.e. whose bodies have been burnt. According to A.A. Macdonell, 'Cremation was, however, the usual manner of disposing of the dead, and the later Vedic ritual practically knew this method alone, sanctioning only the burial of ascetics and children under two years of age. According to Griffith in a Rgvedic verse, a goat was slaughtered and laid limb by limb on the corpse. But Śāyaṇācārya interprets the term ajo bhāgah

628. Vide, Kane, P.V., op.cit., vol 2, part 1, p. 447
629. Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 1.126, p. 87
630. romāśa nāma brhaspati putṛṛ brahmavādin.../ Śāyaṇa on R.V., 1.126.6
631. na vā u te tanvā tanvam sam pāpacyam pāpamāhuryaḥ svastāram nigacchāt / anyena matpramudah kalpayasva na te bhratā subhage vastyetat // Ibid., 10.10.12
632. Ibid., 10 14,15,16,17,18
633. Ibid., 10.15.14
634. Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 10 15.14
635. Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.15.11
636. Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 10.15.11, p. 540
638. Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 10 16.4, p. 540
as \textit{jananarahitah sarirendriyādibhāgavyatiriktō ntarapurusolaksano yah bhāgaḥ}...\footnote{Sayana on R.V., 10.16.4} Griffith holds that the caul and other parts of a slaughtered animal were used to cover the corpse to prevent too quick and complete cremation.\footnote{Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 10.16.7, p. 540} According to Wilson too, the fat and marrow of a cow was used to cover it.\footnote{Wilson, H.H., op.cit., vol. 6, on 10.16.7, p. 51} At the death of a person or while the body of the departed is being partially consumed on the funeral pile, Agni is prayed to send the corpse to the Pitṛs.\footnote{mainamagne vi daho mābhī soṣo māṣya tvaṃcāni cikṣipo mā śaṭrām / yadā śrāṃkrono jātavedo'theraṇaṃ pra hiruṭātipīṭhonyaḥ// R.V., 10.16.1} The various parts of the dead man’s body were directed to go to appropriate places.\footnote{Ibid., 10.16.3} The existence of a next world, the realm of the two kings Yama and Varuṇa is indicated in a Rgvedic verse.\footnote{Ibid., 10.14.7} It is said that the relatives and friends of the dead assembled around the deceased at to the funeral ground.\footnote{Ibid., 10.18.1,2} A stone was placed between those present at the funeral ground and the dead and it indicates a line of demarcation between the dead and the living persons.\footnote{Ibid., 10.18.4} Women with fragrant balm and unguents entered the circle and approached the widow beside the dead man and asked to leave her husband’s body.\footnote{Ibid., 10.18.7} In a Rgvedic verse the dead husband’s brother made the widow leave her husband’s body and asked to go to the home of the living, i.e. sons and grandsons etc., by the saying-\textit{udīrṣva nāryabhi jīvalokām gatāsumetamupa šeṣa ehi / hastagrāḥasya didhiṣostavedam patyurjanītvamabhi saṁ babhūthal}\footnote{Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 10.16.14, p. 541} The Rgvedic verse thereby clearly notes that the widow-remarriage was a defunct custom during the time of the Rgveda and it was practised only with a symbolical ritual. Bloomfield states that after the fire has consumed the corpse, water is poured upon it to extinguish it. Then furthermore certain water plants are put there. In addition to these a frog...is put upon the place where the fire has burned. These,...are symbolically supposed both to prevent and extinguish fire.\footnote{R.V., 10.18.13} After the burning of the corpse the bones and ashes that were kept in an urn was buried.\footnote{From the funeral hymns it is seen that a...}
farewell address was presented to the dead.\textsuperscript{651}

**Manners and Morals**

The Rgvedic verses supply information on the manners and morals of the Aryans during that period. The Aryans, like all civilised people cherished certain fundamental notions of etiquette and ethical values. The ethical principles are so smoothly embedded in this Veda that they can upgrade one's consciousness to the right path. Truth, honesty, good thoughts, good deeds, hospitality, uprightness, liberality and benevolence are praised by them, while theft, robbery, telling lies, jealousy, witchcraft, seductions were denounced.

**Truth and Righteousness**

The Rgvedic verses give much stress on truth which has its bindings over thoughts, words and deeds. A Rgvedic verse gives reference to truthful speech and activities.\textsuperscript{652} The seers seem to entreat the gods to grant the power with which they can speak only truth.\textsuperscript{653} Even the gods are invoked to remove falsehood far from the people.\textsuperscript{654} Untruth is condemned and the gods punish the people for telling a lie.\textsuperscript{655} It is believed that the avengers follow the falsehood of that man who is untruthful.\textsuperscript{657} Mitra and Varuṇa are the chasteners of all falsehood as referred to in the Śāyanācārya's commentary—mitraḥ aryamā varuṇah ca trayo’pi anṛtasya pāpasya bhūreḥ prabhūtasya cetārah hantārah santi bhavanti…\textsuperscript{658} Agni is entreated to bind in his fetters the evil spirits who with their falsehood injures the truth.\textsuperscript{659} It is also stated in the Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa that Varuṇa seizes that person who speaks untruth.\textsuperscript{660} Righteousness is also highly extolled. Ṛta is supposed to be the ethical order or law. In one place, both Ṛta and satya appear to mean almost the same thing.\textsuperscript{661} However, the term anṛta means opposite to Ṛta and satya.\textsuperscript{662} Varuṇa, who is closely connected

\textsuperscript{651} Ibid., 10.14.7,8
\textsuperscript{652} rtam vadanṛtadyumna satyam vadantsatya karman / Ibld., 9.113.4.
\textsuperscript{653} samiddhe agnivrta midvadema mahaddevanāmasuravatvamekam / Ibld., 3.55.3
\textsuperscript{654} idamāpaḥ pra vahata yatkin ca duritām mayi / yayāvhamabhidudroha yayā śeṣa utānṛtam // Ibld., 1.23.22
\textsuperscript{655} pāpāsaḥ santo anṛtā asatyā idam padamajanaḥ gabhīram / Ibld., 4.5.5
\textsuperscript{656} Ibld., 1.152.1, 7.49.3
\textsuperscript{657} druhāḥ sacante anṛtā janānām na vām nityānyacite abhūvan / Ibld., 7.61.5
\textsuperscript{658} Śāyaṇa, Ibld., 7.60.5
\textsuperscript{659} Ibld., 10.87.11
\textsuperscript{660} anṛte khalu vai kriyāmane varuṇo grhūṭi / T.B., 1.7.2.6
\textsuperscript{661} R.V., 9.113.4
\textsuperscript{662} Ibld., 10.10.4
with the *rta*, is supposed to be the ethical god of the *Rgveda*. His laws are established as he is called *dhṛtavrata*. Wilson translates the term *dhṛtavrata* as the ‘observant of obligations’. God Āditya is called *ṛtvān*, i.e. true to eternal law.

**Hospitality and Kindness**

Hospitality to the guests has been repeatedly enjoined in the Rgvedic verses. Hospitality or serving the guest was looked upon as a religious duty in the Rgvedic society. King Divodāsa acquired the title of *atithigva* on account of his remarkable hospitality. Sāyaṇācārya interprets the term *atithigva* as *atithigvāya atithibhirgantavyāya divodāśasya...*. Griffith states that *atithigva* is another name of the liberal prince Divodāsa. In the *Rgvedasanhitā* the divinities are depicted as guests and the sacrificers the hosts. God Agni is praised to be the favourite guest of the Vedic sacrificer, as categorically stated in the passage —...*atithirna prīṇāno hoteva sadma vidhato vi ārthā* which is explained by Sāyaṇācārya as — *atithirna sukhasane upaveśitaḥ arghapādyādibhiḥ satkṛto 'tithiriva prīṇānaḥ havirbhistarpanīyāḥ so'gnih...* In the present context, Agni is described as lying in a pleasant spot and pleased like a guest. Agni is also called the guest of men or the most beloved guest. Agni is said to be the friend of him who offers him hospitality in the usual order as referred to in the Sāyaṇācārya’s commentary— *yah ca pumān te tava ātithyam atithiyogyaṁ pūjāṁ ānuśak anukrameṇa jujoṣat prāpayati tasya punaḥ sakhā taduciaphalaprad-ānenopakarto bhavati* / The term *ātithya* is mentioned in a Rgvedic verse which is interpreted by Sāyaṇācārya as-*ātithya / akasmādāgato 'tithiḥ / ātaducitaṁ sakārartapam karma ātithyam*/ The Rgvedic

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663. Vide, Griswold, H.D., op.cit., p. 341
664. ādityesu pra varuṇe dhṛtavrata marutsu viśvabhānuṣu / R.V., 8.27.3
665. H.H. Wilson, op.cit., vol. 5, on 8.27.3, p.150
666. R.V., 2.27.4
667. Ibid., 1.51.6, 1.112.14, 4.26.3, 6.47.22
668. Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.51.6
669. Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 1.51.6, p. 33
670. R.V., 1.73.1
671. Sāyaṇa, Ibid.
672. huve vāḥ sudyotmānaṁ suvṛkṣitam viśāmagnimatīthīṁ suprayasam / Ibid., 2.4.1
673. adhā hi viśvādīyośi priyo no atihīḥ / Ibid., 6.2.7
674. Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 4.4.10
675. dvādaśa dvātmyadahohasyātīthīye rājanṛbhavah sasantaḥ / Ibid., 4.33.7
676. Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 4.33 7

Also vide, Ibid., 1.76.3
seers urge Agni to bring Indra to the sacrificial ground as the sacrificers desire to entertain Indra as their guest.\textsuperscript{677} The \textit{Atharvaveda} states that feeding a guest is considered meritorious which is as good as performing a sacrifice.\textsuperscript{678}

Virtues of hospitality are described in the hymn which is ascribed to Bhikṣu.\textsuperscript{679} It was a primary duty of the householder in the Vedic society to supply food to the guest. The Rgvedic verses condemned those who harden their heart against the needy\textsuperscript{680} and praise the bounty of others who minister to the physical comforts of the feeble.\textsuperscript{681} In case, one has no chance to earn, he should be provided food by man who has wealth in abundance.\textsuperscript{682} The \textit{Rgveda} enjoins upon the householder not to eat alone, and not to eat before feeding others. Taking food without feeding a hungry person was considered a sin, e.g.

\begin{verbatim}
moghamannam vindate apracetaḥ satyaṁ braviṁ vadha itsa tasya / nāryamanāṁ pūsyati no sakhāyaṁ kevalāgho bhavati kevalādi //\textsuperscript{683}
\end{verbatim}

One the other hand, he who gives food to the poor is sure to befriend even his enemies.\textsuperscript{684} It is also stated in the \textit{Atharvaveda} that the householder should take his food after the guests have partaken of it.\textsuperscript{685}

\textbf{Charity and Liberality}

The charitable acts are extolled in the \textit{Rgveda}. It stated that those who perform charitable acts get immortality and long life and go to the highest abode.\textsuperscript{686} Liberality is highly praised in the \textit{Rgvedasamhitā}.\textsuperscript{687} A passage of the \textit{Rgvedasamhitā} directly states –

\begin{verbatim}
-nā bhōjā mamruṇa nyarthamīyurṇa riṣyanti na vyathante ha bhōjāḥ / idam yadvisvam bhuvanam śvācātatasarvam dakṣinābhyo dadati //\textsuperscript{688}
\end{verbatim}

That means the liberal givers do not die, they do not go to destruction. They suffer no injury and no pain. Their liberality or \textit{dakṣinā} gives them all this world and

\begin{verbatim}
677  Ibid., 1.76.3
678  A.V., 9.6
679. R.V., 10.117
680. Ibid., 10.117.2
681. Ibid., 10.117.3
682. Ibid., 10.117.2,3
683. Ibid., 10.117.6
684. Ibid., 10.117.3
685. A.V., 9.6.38
686. nākasya prṣṭhe adhi tiṣṭhati śrito yah prṣṭāḥ sa ha deveṣu gacchati / 
tasmā āpo gatewayāni sindhavastasmā iyaṁ daksinā pīrvate sadā // R.V., 1.125.5
Also vide, Ibid., 1.125.6
687  Ibid., 10.107.8-11
688. Ibid., 10.107.8
\end{verbatim}
the entire heaven. It is also stated that the dwelling-place of a liberal giver is adorned like a lake full of lotus blossoms, delightful as a palace of the God.\textsuperscript{689} Bṛbu, the Paṇi-chief was praised for his generosity and gifts,\textsuperscript{690} whereas, the Paṇis were condemned for their illiberality and selfishness.\textsuperscript{691}

**Humanity and Brotherhood**

The Rgvedic verses inculcates the ethics of collective living through mutual love and concord for the promotion of co-operation, fraternity and friendship in society. It mainly proclaims the message of unity and equality. The seed of human rights can be found in the passage- \textit{manurhitah}\textsuperscript{692} interpreted by Sāyaṇācārya as- \textit{manurhitah manuṣyatih}...\textsuperscript{693} The Rgvedic seers expressed their feelings for the wellbeing of all in the society. Unity of all human-beings was the general concept inter-woven in the Rgvedic verses. Wishes to live together, to walk together, to speak together, to unite through the understanding of one another’s mind in order to achieve happiness are indicative of welfare of all.\textsuperscript{694} Human responsibility is not only confined to wellbeing of the people living in the earth. Besides, man is to be involved with benevolent idea for other creatures of the universe.\textsuperscript{695} So, in the Rgvedic age cows were adored as mothers\textsuperscript{696} and were considered \textit{aghnya}, i.e. not to be killed.\textsuperscript{697}

**Morality and Sin**

The Rgvedic people were very much conscious of family relations and chastity of mind and body. Monogamy, as mentioned earlier, was highly appreciated and there was a sharp feeling of hatred against sexual crimes, such as adultery etc.

In spite of such great emphasis being laid on morality, cases of deviation from normal conduct were not unknown to the Rgvedic seers. Instances of adultery, incest and prostitution were not lacking. Adultery was common in the Rgvedic society. The word for adulterer is \textit{jāra}\textsuperscript{698} and for adulteress is \textit{jārinī}.\textsuperscript{699} There is a reference to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{689} Ibid., 10.107.10
\item \textsuperscript{690} Ibid., 6.45.33
\item \textsuperscript{691} \textit{panim puṣpasilam vanijmadāṛjanam avasam kevalam svāṭmaṇa eva tarpakam...} / Sāyana, Ibíd., 6.61.1
\item \textsuperscript{692} Ibid., 10.26.5
\item \textsuperscript{693} Sāyana, Ibíd.
\item \textsuperscript{694} Ibid., 10.191.2,3,4
\item \textsuperscript{695} \textit{sam no bhava dvipade \textit{sam} catuspade /} Ibíd., 7.54.1
\item \textsuperscript{696} Ibid., 8.101.15
\item \textsuperscript{697} Ibid., 1.164.40
\item \textsuperscript{698} Ibid., 1.66.4, 6.55.4
\item \textsuperscript{699} Ibid., 10.34.5
\end{itemize}
an unwedded mother who abandons her secretly born child in some distant place for fear of social ostracism.\textsuperscript{700} The practise of illicit sexual relations between brothers and sisters perhaps, was prevalent during the Rgvedic age. For instance, in one place Pūšan is called his sister’s lover.\textsuperscript{701} It is probable that because of the prevalence of such practise, Yamī persuades her brother Yama to have illicit relations with her.\textsuperscript{702} But Yama refused to Yamī’s amorous demand and vehemently condemned the act because incest was considered as a sin.\textsuperscript{703} According to him, such act was also against the law of Varuṇa whose spies observe men’s actions.\textsuperscript{704}

The Rgvedic seers often enjoined the performance of righteous actions in an individual’s life. Consequently they perceived the notion of sin also, which is marked in the Rgvedasamhitā. Commission of any unrighteous actions or anything wrong countenanced in the society is termed sin or evil. In a general way it may be said that it is an act which is regarded as a willful rebellion against or disobedience of some law supposed to be laid down by God or Revelation.\textsuperscript{705} The idea of sin in the Rgveda is bound up with the conception of rta. So, the peculiar characteristics of the Rgvedic idea of sin is that all wrong doing, whether against gods or men is a breach of this law, i.e rta. The awareness of sin was ever present in the minds of the Rgvedic seers which is expressed by the terms āgas\textsuperscript{706}, enas\textsuperscript{707}, āgha\textsuperscript{708}, durita\textsuperscript{709}, duskṛta\textsuperscript{710}, anhās\textsuperscript{711} etc. Moreover, the word pāpa, in the sense of ‘sinful’ or ‘sinner’\textsuperscript{712}, and pāpata, in the sense of ‘sinfulness’\textsuperscript{714} appears in the Rgvedic verses. In a Rgvedic verse it is
stated that sin is not due to a man’s own power or will, but is rather due to fate, thoughtlessness, intoxications, anger or dice, i.e. *na sa svo dakṣo varuṇa dhrutiḥ sa surā manyurviḥdako acittiḥ / asti jñāyānkanīyasya upāre svapnaścānadanṛtasya prayotā* ।

There are seven boundaries of man which have made by the wise. A man who goes beyond even one of them becomes distressed or sinful. The *sapta maryāḍāḥ*, i.e. the seven limits are referred to in the Śāyaṇācārya’s commentary as - *kāmājebhyāḥ krodhajebhyāscoddhṛtāḥ pāṇamāksāḥ striyo mṛgayā daṇḍāḥ pārusyamanyaduṣanāmiti sapta maryāḍāḥ* । In the present context, Yāska in his *Nirukta* mentions the seven sins, viz. theft, adultery, killing of a learned man, abortion, drinking, habitual addiction to wickedness, and false accusation of heinous crime.

Drinking of *sura* and gambling are the vices which are described as immoral or sinful. Intoxication and gambling are such vices which suppress the human soul, and hinder the proper development of personality. So, the Rgvedic verses criticise such vices and advice that one should engage in agriculture, rather than waste his time and money in gambling.

Anger, jealousy and hatred are considered as sin or immoral acts. It is wished that anger should not overpower them, and wrath should be destroyed and driven away, so that, it may not harm them. According to the *Ṛgveda*, war is the last means of resisting evil. Wrath or moral indignation produces the driving power in battle and also keeps it under control. Prayer is made to drive away jealousy and hatred.

Theft has been condemned in the Rgvedic verses. There are references to thieves.

715. Ibid., 7.86.6
716. *sapta maryāḍāḥ kavyastatakṣustāsāmēkāmīdabhīyamūro gāt/ āyorha skambha upamasya nīle pathām visarṣe dharuṇeṣu tasthau* // Ibid., 10.5.6
717. Śāyaṇa, Ibid.
718. *steyam talparohanam bravahatytām bhṛtahatytām surāpanam duṣkritasya karmanāḥ punah punah sevām-pātakṛntodyamīti* / Nir., 6.27
719. *na sa svo dakṣo varuṇo dhrutiḥ sa surā manyurviḥdako acittiḥ* / R.V., 7.86.6
720. *aṅgirnā dīvyāḥ kṛṣimitkrṣasvasa vīte ramaśva bahu manyamānaḥ* / Ibid., 10.34.13
721. *nahi manyuḥ pauṣitaya śe hi vaiḥ priyajāta* / Ibid., 8.71.2
722. Ibid., 10 152.3
723. Ibid., 10 84.1,2
724. Ibid., 7 89.5
who steal garments or food or animals and deserve condemnation and punishment from the public or the king. The Rgvedic verses mention the existence of mūrādevā, who were engaged in the act of murder as referred to in the Sāyaṇācāryya’s commentary- mūrādevān mārakavyāpārān rākṣasān... It is probable that the term asutrpa, i.e. ‘insatiable’ used in the same context, indicates the practise of murdering people as interpreted by Sāyaṇācāryya- asutrpaḥ manusyāṇāmasubhīṣṭptā... That the murder was regarded as against the law of Vedic morality is clear from prayers to gods for protection from the murderers and for their destruction. A person who in his utmost need cooked and eaten or desired to eat flesh of dogs was not excused by the gods. It is stated that Vāmadeva who well knew right and wrong, was by no means rendered impure, though desirous, when oppressed with hunger, of eating the flesh of dogs for the preservation of his life.

The Rgveda refers to consciousness of guilt and a realisation of the consequences unless the god’s mercy is obtained. The seers of the Rgveda being conscious of sin or guilt entreated the gods, particularly Varuṇa and Āditya to excuse them and free from the consequences of sin. Varuṇa is implored to remove the sin of committing any act of offence towards the fellow beings. A hymn contains prayer to Agni ending with the line ‘May his light chase our sin away’, e.g. apa nah soṣucadagham Here the worshipper asks for forgiveness for his sin at the end of every mantra. The sins committed by blame, by imprecation, whether waking or sleeping, all hateful acts and evil doings are asked to remove from the worshipper to the distant places by Agni. Savitṛ is also asked to declare the worshippers as

725 Ibid., 1.50.2, 1.65.1, 4.38.5, 5.79.9, 6.12.5, 7.86.5
726 Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.87.14
Also vide, Ibid., 10.87.2, 10.162.5
727 Vide, Wilson, H.H., op.cit., vol. 6, on 10.87.14 , p. 297
728 Sāyaṇa on R.V., 10.87.14
729 Ibid., 1.36 15, 10.162.3
730 Ibid., 10 87 14
731 avartyā śuna āntrāṇi pece na deveṣu vivide maṛḍtāram / Ibid., 4.18.13
732 Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 4.18.13, p. 213
733 R.V., 1.25.1,2,3
734 Ibid., 2.28.5, 2.29.1, 4.12.4, 7.86.4, 7.88.6,7, 7.89.5
735 Ibid., 5.85.7
736 Ibid., 1.97
737 Ibid., 10 164 3
It is stated that the Sun, is appealed to as the best judge of the suppliant's innocence. There is also prayer for forgiveness of sins against all kinds of people like friends as well as the neighbours. As the guardians of law, the sole duty of the gods is to punish the violation or to reward the keeping of rta, the transcendent Cosmic Law. They believed that when God was angered by their transgressions, he smote them with adversity, destruction, disease and death. On the other hand, people believed in the rewards of the righteous deeds. It is even stated that the noble actions of the pious can benefit the other. The gods were considered as inflicting diseases upon the sinful persons. It is stated that the dishonest man who hates Mitra and Varuṇa and pour no libations himself causes the Yakṣmā to enter his heart. The disease is also associated with committed sins. In the Rgvedasamhita the conception of sin is identified with the idea of disease. It is believed that the water removes or carries away the sin. The sin and its consequences are also cured by medicinal herbs, e.g. 

\[
\text{mundantu mā sapathyādatho varunyāduta / atho yamasya padbīsāt sarvasmāddevakilvisūt ī/}
\]

That means—'May they liberate me from the sin produced by curse, from the sin caused by Varuṇa, from the fetters of Yama, from all guilt caused by the gods.'

In the present context, the term devakilviśa indicates that sin is sometimes brought upon man even by the gods. Indeed devakilviśa seems to mean outright the sins committed by the gods as interpreted by Sāyaṇācārya—

\[
\text{devakilviśāt devaiḥ krītātpāpānmuṇcāntu /}
\]

Dress, Ornaments and Decorations

The dress code of India which is varied in nature must have gone through certain stages of evolution before it has reached the present state. In the Rgvedic period, people

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738. Ibid., 1.123.3
739. Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 1.123.3, p. 85
740. R V., 5.85.7
741. Ibid., 1 25.2, 1.189.3, 9 73.8, 10.89.8
742. Ibid., 5.4.11
743. Ibid., 7.35.4
744. Ibid., 1.122.9
745. Ibid., 6.74.2.3
746. Ibid., 1.23.22
747. Ibid., 10.97.16
748. Vide, Wilson, H H., op cit, vol 6, on 10 97.16, p 347
749. Sāyana on R.V., 10.97.16
used to put on beautiful garments and decorated themselves. Goddess Uṣas is described as a loving matron who is well attired and unmask her beauty to her husband, Śūrya. The Rgvedic verses often refer to maidens adorning themselves waiting to meet their lover. It appears that the art of spinning and weaving was in practise during that period. The art of weaving was the special concern of the women and vāsas, i.e. clothes are directly referred to in the Rgveda. The words otave, vayanti, etc., also found in the Rgvedic mantra. God Pūṣan is called a weaver of garments. Along with the art of spinning and weaving came into being the art of dyeing also. In the Rgvedic period the clothes were made of bark, skin, wool and cotton. The Rgvedasāṁhitā records the use of barks with regard to the clothes of a few Brāhmaṇa sages specially the sons of Vātaraśanā. The Maruts are described as wearing deer skins. The Rgvedasāṁhitā refers to Gāndhara which was famous for its wool. The bank of river Paruṣṇī was also rich in the production of woolen clothes. A Rgvedic verse directly refers to the preparation of woolen clothes such as the woolen filter etc., i.e. ādhisāmānāyāḥ patiḥ śucāyāśca śucasya ca / vāsovāyo’vīnāmā vāsāṁsi marmrjat //

According to Griffith, the term śāmulya means a woolen robe which is interpreted by Śāyaṇācārya as – śāmulyam / śāmalamityṛthaḥ / śamalaiś śārīram malam/śarīracchannasya malasya dhārakaṁ vastrāṁ... That the people were well-attired was known from the application of various terms in the Rgvedasāṁhitā,

750. jayeva patya uṣāt suviṣṭa uṣā hasreva ni ripte apsaḥ / Ibid., 1.124.7
751. Cf., bhojayāsvam sami mṛjantyaśuṁ bhojayāste kanyā śumbhamāṁ / Ibid., 10.107.10
752. Ibid., 2.3.6, 2.38.4, 5.47.6
753. vāsovāyo’vīnāmā vāsāṁsi marmrjat / Ibid., 10.26.6
754. otave vayantāyah yajantyaśca vāstrīnām vāstrāṁ / Sayana, Ibid, 10.130.2
755. ime vayanti pitaro ya ayayuh pra vayetāṁsate tate / Ibid., 10.130 1
756. Ibid., 10.26.6
757. Ibid., 10.136.2
758. Also vide, A.V., 6.115.3
759. vātaraśanāḥ vātaraśanasya purtāḥ munayah...piśangā piśangāni kapilavatāṁ ātma saṁhitā / Śāyaṇa on R.V., 10.136.2
760. Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 1.166.10, p. 115
761. gandhāravām avika iva / gandharah desah / tāddevāśāh ayano meṣṭaḥ yathā romasāḥ... / Śāyaṇa on R.V., 1.126.7
762. Ibid., 4.22.2, 5.52.9
763. Griffith, R.T.H., op. cit., on 10.85.29, p. 595
764. Śāyaṇa on R.V., 10.85.29
such as suväsā, suvasana etc. The terms peṣas, i.e. embroidered garment, adhivastra, i.e. outer cover or veil or adhivāsa, vastra, i.e. bridal garment etc., are also found in use. Sica is the ‘border’ of a garment according to Adhivastra, Vastra, i.e. outer cover or veil or Adhivasa, Vadhuya, i.e. bridal garment etc., are also found in use. Sica is the ‘border’ of a garment according to Macdonell and Keith. The two Rgvedic passages refer to a son clutching the hem of his father’s robe to attract his attention and to a mother covering her son with the edge of her garment. Women dressed in white garments are referred to in the Rgvedasamhitā. There is no distinct difference of the garments of men and women.

Military outfits

In warfare the Rgvedic Āryans used to wear helmets. The Maruts are seen wearing golden helmets. Indra is called suṣipraḥ which means having handsome helmet, cf. suṣipraḥ / śipraśabdena śirastraṇamabhidhiyate / sobhanaśirastraṇopetaḥ. The words varman and drāpi occur in the Rgvedic verses in the sense of body armour or coat of mail. In the Rgvedic period the warriors were armed with bow and arrow, sword or axe etc. So, the warriors used to wear handguard called hastaghna as a covering to avoid the friction of the bow-string. The Lātyāyana
Śrauta Sūtra has hastatra as its equivalent in sense.782

Ornaments

In the Rgvedic period, both men and women wore various kinds of ornaments. Mani or jewel is used both by men and women.783 A jewel was certainly used for adorning the neck which is clear from the epithet manigrīva-having a jewel on the neck.784 Jewels as ornaments are mentioned in the later Rgvedic literature too.785 People in the Rgvedic period decorated themselves with the golden ornaments or other metallic ornament. Hiranyapaśas or ornaments of gold worn by men and women.786 The epithets Supeśas and Hiranyapaśas respectively refer to young girls wearing beautiful ornaments.787 The deities are also described to have worn the golden ornaments, which is clear from the epithet hiranyakarna, i.e. gold-eared.788 In the Rgvedic period, the brides were decorated with various ornaments. For instance, the bridal ornament called kurtā – the head ornament is referred to in the Rgvedasāṁhitā.789 People used to wear ornament called khaḍi, i.e. anklets790 or armlets791 or bracelets.792 The multicoloured necklace known by the term niśka is also referred to in the Rgvedasāṁhitā.793 The epithet niśkagrīva indicate the person wearing the gold necklace.794 Another ornament used by the people of the Rgvedic age called rukma795, i.e. ornament of gold796 which was worn on the breast797 is mentioned in the Rgvedasāṁhitā. The epithet rukmavakṣas, i.e. wearing golden ornaments on the breast is also found in the Rgvedasāṁhitā.798 In the Brāhmaṇas it

782. L Šr., 3.10.7
783. R.V., 1.33.8
784. manigrīvaṁ ratnādyupetakāntāham / Śāyana, Ibid., 1.122.14
785. A.V., 1.29.1, T.S., 7.3.4.1, A.B., 4.6
786. R.V., 8.31.8
787. strtrṣpā supeśāḥ śobhanālarikārā.../ Śāyana, Ibid., 10.114.3
788. hiranyakarmanā hiranyavikākaraṇadālādyupetakarmanā.../Śāyana, Ibid., 1.122.14
790. khaḍisv hastapādaśhitaκātaκesu / Śāyana on R.V., 5.53.4
791. Also vide, Ibid., 5.54.11
792. skandhapradesēṣu khaḍayāḥ alakāraviśeṣāḥ ā mukta bhavanāti.../ Śāyana, Ibid., 7.56.13
793. khaḍihastamsa kaṭakaḥastamsa.../ Śāyana, Ibid., 5.58.2
794. viśvaratīmī bahuvidhārāpayuktani niśkam hāram.../ Śāyana, Ibid., 2.33.10
795. Also vide, Ibid., 8.47.15
796. niśkagrīvaḥ niśkena suvarṇenalaṁkārṭagrīvaḥ / Śāyana, Ibid., 5.19.3
797. Ibid., 1.166.10, 4.10.5, 5.53.4, 5.56.1
798. ruṃkhaḥ suvarṇaratānāṃnimitānayābharaṇāni.../Śāyana, Ibid., 1.166.10
799. ruṃkṛṣṇu urohaḥgānaḥ / Śāyana, Ibid., 5.53.4
800. ruṃkavakṣasāḥ / ruṃkhaḥ rocamānābharaṇāṃ vakṣaṣi urasi yeṣām.../ Śāyana, Ibid., 2.34.2
Also vide, Ibid., 2.34.8
indicates gold plate.\textsuperscript{799} Besides ornaments made of gold and other metals, garlands\textsuperscript{800} were also used as decorative items. The Gods Aśvins are described as \textit{puṣkarasraj}, i.e. lotus wreathed.\textsuperscript{801}

**Hair dressing**

Hair dressing was practised both by men and women. The hair of both men and women were plaited or braided.\textsuperscript{802} The epithet \textit{opaśa} used in the \textit{Rgvedasāṃhitā}\textsuperscript{803} and the \textit{Atharvaveda}\textsuperscript{804} and later literature\textsuperscript{805} means a plait probably used in hair dressing.\textsuperscript{806} The epithets \textit{pr̥thuṣto}, i.e. having broad braids\textsuperscript{807} and \textit{visiṣṭastukā}, i.e. having loosened braids applied to Rodas\textsuperscript{808} are found in the \textit{Rgvedasāṃhitā}. Goddess Sinīvāli has been noted for her long broad tresses.\textsuperscript{809} That the custom of wearing the hair in braids or plaits was in practise is known from the use of the word \textit{kaparda}.\textsuperscript{810} The epithet \textit{kapardin} is applied to god Rudra.\textsuperscript{811} Griffith states that God Rudra is called \textit{Kapardin} as wearing hair braided and knotted like a cowry shell (\textit{kaparda}).\textsuperscript{812} Sometimes the hair of women was woven into four of these braids which is referred to by the term \textit{catuṣkapardā}, e.g. \textit{catuṣkapardā catuṣkōṇā yuvatiḥ strīrūpā supeśāḥ śobhanālaṁkārā ghr. tapratikā ghr. tapramukhahaviṣkā...}\textsuperscript{813} It was the characteristics of the Vasiṣṭhas to have long hair which was braided and coiled on the right.\textsuperscript{814} Men in theṚgvedic society kept beards or shaved them. The term \textit{śmaśru} to mean beard is explained by Sāyanācārya thus- \textit{śmaśru / śma śarīram / tatra śritam sthitam keśaromādiṁ...}\textsuperscript{815}

\textsuperscript{799} S.B., 3.5.1.20, T.B., 1.8,2,3
\textsuperscript{800} sraksu mālyeṣu / Sāyaṇa on R.V., 5.53.4
\textsuperscript{801} Also vide, Ibid., 4.38.6, 8.47.15
\textsuperscript{802} puskarasrajā puskarāmālināu svarpākṣamalābhārāṇāu aśvināu devau... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.184.2
\textsuperscript{803} agrataḥ sthitāḥ / yadvā / angulīnmaitaṭ / angulīya iva akutilāḥ / keśinTh
\textsuperscript{804} keśāsthāḥyordvahāvāvikārṣṇyopetāḥ. / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.140.8
\textsuperscript{805} Ibid., 1.173.6, 10.85.8
\textsuperscript{806} A.V., 6.138 1.2, 9.3.8
\textsuperscript{807} Cf., P.Gs., 4.1.1
\textsuperscript{808} Vide, Macdonell, A.A., & Keith, A.B., op.cit., vol. 1, p. 124
\textsuperscript{809} pr̥thuṣto pr̥thuśeśasāṃghāte... / Sāyaṇa on R.V., 10.86.8
\textsuperscript{810} visiṣṭastukā visiṣṭaśeśasāṃghā viprāṅapeśasāṃghā vā... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.167.5
\textsuperscript{811} sinīvāli pr̥thuṣṭukē yā devānāmśi svasā / Ibid., 2.32.6
\textsuperscript{812} Ibid., 6.55.2
\textsuperscript{813} imā rudrāya tavase kapardine kṣayadvīrāya pra bhārāmahe matṛḥ / Ibid., 1.114.1
\textsuperscript{814} kapardināma jaṭābhīryuktam... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.114.5
\textsuperscript{815} Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 1.114.1, p. 75
\textsuperscript{816} Sāyaṇa on R.V., 10.14.3
\textsuperscript{817} dakṣiṇataskapardāḥ / dakṣiṇe śirasa bhāge kapardāscōḍā yeṣānī te dakṣiṇataskapardāḥ / cūḍākarmaṇi dakṣiṇato vasiṣṭhānamāti smaryate / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 7.33.1
\textsuperscript{818} Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.142.4
God Indra has been described as wearing beards in the *Rgvedasamhitā*.\(^{816}\) The use of the words *vapṭr*, i.e. a barber\(^{817}\) and *ksura*, i.e. a blade\(^{818}\) indicate that shaving was known to them.

Women in the Rgvedic period used to put unguent to anoint their eyes.\(^{819}\) The women attending the funeral were expected to embellish their bodies with fragrant balm and unguent.\(^{820}\)

So, from the above references it is known that the people were highly interested in dress and ornaments for decorating themselves.

**Arts and Amenities of life**

The *Rgvedasamhitā* contains in itself the knowledge of various arts. Having a peep into the *Veda*, it can be said that among the various arts of life music, dance and playing on musical instruments occupied an important place in the life of the Rgvedic Āryans. Though it is generally held that the *Sāmaveda* laid the foundations of the musical traditions, yet, the *Rgveda* cites that singing was given a prominent place at that period. People set their heart and mind on music which was a very important source of recreation. Such arts were generally performed and utilized to propitiate the deities. It is seen that music when performed adeptly becomes centre of attraction to all.\(^{821}\) There are references to singing song in praise of Soma.\(^{822}\) The last three hymns of the ninth *mandala* are meant to be sung at the time of the extraction of the Soma juice. The Sāmans were divine songs sung and set to music and it is said in the *Puruṣa sūkta* of the *Rgvedasamhitā* that Sāmagāna or Sāma hymns originated from Puruṣa—the great Primeval Being.\(^{823}\) The gāthās were also songs in verse.\(^{824}\) The term *gāthāpatt*-lord of the hymns or songs is referred to in the *Rgvedasamhitā*.\(^{825}\)

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816. Ibid., 10.23.1,4
817. vapṭeva yathā vapṭā nāpito vapatī munḍayati... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.142.4
818. kṣurāḥ kṣuradvārāḥ / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.166.10
     nāpitasya bāhvoriva sthitam kṣuram iva / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 8.4.16
819. Ibid., 10.85.7
820. Ibid., 10 18.7
821. Ibid., 7.32.20
822. Ibid., 9.66.8
823. tasmādyajnat sarvahuta raḥ sāmāni jaṭāre /
     cchandāṃsi jaṭāre tasmādajustasmādajāyata // Ibid., 10.90.9
824. gāthāhi gātāvyam stotram gāyat gāyat / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.167.6
     Also vide, Ibid., 5.44.5, 8.32 1
825. Ibid, 1.43.4
Sāyanācārya in his commentary of a Rgvedic verse explains the term as -gāthāpatim 
stutipālakam,
826 i.e. the lord of hymns. The term gāthīn is also related to music.827
Sāyanācārya interprets the term as -gāthinah giyamānasāmayukta udgātārah,
828 i.e. the singers with high praise.829 It is to be noted that the term Gāthīn, merely means
singers, although Sāyanācārya renders it as 'the Udgātris with Sāmas to be chanted.'830
Similarly, gāthāntī, i.e. the leader of the song is mentioned in a Rgvedic verse.831 The
Dānastutis were also the songs sung in praise of kings and nobles.832 These were
probably like ballads. The long battle song is sung in praise of the brave deeds of a
hero.833 The frog hymn also refers to the musical chanting of the Brāhmaṇas.834 Pupils
recited the words of a teacher in various ways of modulation.835 So, it can be inferred
that modulation was practised. At that period song was sung in the accompaniment
of dance and instruments.

The Rgvedic people were familiar with vocal and instrumental music. There
are three types of instruments, viz. percussion, string and wind. Among these,
percussion instrument like Dundubhi or drum836, wind instrument like flute made of
bamboo837 and stringed instrument like Vīnā or lute838 are mentioned. Drum was
used both in war and peace.839 The Rgvedic seer requests the ulākhala, i.e. mortar to
produce a lusty sound like the drum of a victorious host.840 The Rgvedic people
believed that the loud sound of Dundubhi could drive away the enemies841 as well as
all dangers and misfortune.842 The Atharvaveda invokes a war-drum.843
may be made of Bhūmi Dundubhi in the later Rgvedic age. Among these, the most popular musical instrument called Vinā is mentioned in the later Samhitas also. Besides, the Rgvedasamhitā also mentions other instruments like Karkarī, Vāna, Nāḍī, Gargara, Kṣonī, and Āghāṭi. Karkarī is a particular stringed instrument which is not described in detail in the Rgvedasamhitā. Vāna was another important stringed instrument comprised of seven strings. Vāna was another instrument called Nāḍī which is sounded in the palace of Yama for his gratification. He is also glorified with songs. It appears that Nāḍī was an aerophone, like Venu which produced pleasing sound.

Gargara is another instrument which produces sound like that of a gargara according to Śaśiśācārya’s commentary thus- gargaraḥ gargaradvaniyukto vādyaviśeṣo... According to Wilson, it means a drum. Kṣonī is a type of Vinā as referred to in the Śaśiśācārya’s commentary-kṣonasya/kṣonah sabdakārī viniṃviśeṣah.

Āghāṭi is another instrument which is translated by Wilson as a cymbal. Macdonell & Keith

844. A.Ār., 5.1.5
845. T.S., 6.1.4
846. karkarīyathi karkaririva vadasi / karkarivādyaviśeṣah / Śaśiśā on R.V., 2.43.3
847. vānasya vādyasya saptadāvātumśādādādīsaptasvadopeto... / Śaśiśā, Ibid., 10.32.4
848. nāḍī vādyaviśeṣo... / Śaśiśā, Ibid., 10.135.7
849. gargaraḥ gargaradvaniyukto vādyaviśeṣo... / Śaśiśā, Ibid., 8.60.9
850. kṣonasya / kṣonah sabdakārī viniṃviśeṣah / Śaśiśā, Ibid., 1.117.8
851. āghāṭibhiriva / āghāṭayo ghātaliṅkāḥ kandavīṇāḥ / Śaśiśā, Ibid., 10.146.2
852. mātā yamanturyāthasya puṇyābhiḥ vānasya saptadāvātijjanah / Ibid., 10.32.4
853. utte śuṣmāsa īntre śindhorūmeriva svunāḥ / vānasya codayā pavim // Ibid., 9.51.1
854. somam pavamānam udiśya vānām vādyaviśeṣam sākam sahaiva pra vadanti prāvādayanti /

855. marutah vānāṃ śatasaṃkhyaḥbhīḥ tantrībhīryuktāṃ vināviśeṣam dhāmantāḥ vādyantāḥ

856. iyamāṃ yamāṃ pavamānam udiśya vānām vādyaviśeṣam sākam sahaiva pra vadanti prāvādayanti /

857. Śaśiśā, Ibid., 1.85.10
858. iyamāṃ yamāṃ pavamānam udiśya vānām vādyaviśeṣam sākam sahaiva pra vadanti prāvādayanti /

859. Śaśiśā, Ibid., 8.60.9
860. Wilson, H.H., op.cit., vol. 5, on 8.69.9, p. 276
861. Śaśiśā on R.V., 1.117.8
862. Wilson, H.H., op.cit., vol. 6, on 10.146.2, p. 469
also states that Āghāṭi is a musical instrument, the ‘cymbal’ used to accompany dancing.\(^{863}\) The synonym of Āghāṭi as referred to in the commentary of Sāyaṇācārya is kāṇḍavīṇa, i.e. āghāṭībhirīva / āghāṭayo ghāṭalikāh kāṇḍavīṇāh \(^{864}\) The Aitareya Āraṇyaka also mentions the instrument Kāṇḍavīṇā.\(^{865}\) According to Roth, the word Bakura means musical instrument.\(^{866}\) But Sāyaṇācārya in the Rgvedasamhitā interprets it as the thunderbolt.\(^{867}\) According to Yāska, it means one who gives light, or who inspires awe, or who runs effulgent.\(^{868}\) 

Like music, the art of dancing also developed as the pastime of both men and women. The Rgvedic hymns preserved some accounts of dancing prevalent in the contemporary Indian society. This Veda refers to the dancing of the gods which caused clouds of dust to rise.\(^{869}\) It indicates the Vedic people’s love and fondness for dancing in open air. Even Goddess Uṣas is presented well-decked like a dancer appearing in the east.\(^{870}\) Her dancing figure and pause gives us the idea of Vedic aesthetic sensibility. Dancers in the Rgvedic society were very much particular about their costumers. They must have been wearing beautiful robes. There were professional female dancers called nṛtā who danced with embroidered garment and bared their breast for attraction.\(^{871}\) It is likely that such female dancers had a community of their own. In the Gautama Dharmasūtra it is clear that some people earned their livelihood by singing and dancing.\(^{872}\) The Rgvedasamhitā also mentions one kind of dance with bamboo sticks.\(^{873}\) Allusion is also there to swings in the Rgvedasamhitā.\(^{874}\) In the Rgvedasamhitā allusion is made to dancing and laughter as a part of enjoyment after a funeral.\(^{875}\)

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863. Vide, Macdonell, A.A., & Keith, A.B., op.cit., vol. 1, p. 53
864. Sāyaṇa on R.V., 10.146.2
865. A.Ār., 5.1.5
867. bakuro bhāsamāṇo vajraḥ / Sāyaṇa on R.V., 1.117.21
868. bakuro bhāskarāḥ / bhiyāmkarāḥ / bhāsamāṇo dravatī vā / Nir., 6.25
869. R.V., 10.72.6
870. Ibid., 1.92.4
871. nṛtṝiva nṛtyantā yuṣīdvā / peśāmsi / rūpanāmithāt / sarvairdārśanīyāṇī rūpāṇyūṣā adhi vapate... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid.
872. G.Ds., 15.18
873. R.V., 1.10.1
874. Ibid., 7.88.3
875. Ibid., 10.18.3
876. Vide, Ibid., 7.87 5
877. Ibid., 10.18.3
In the Rgvedic period dramatic performances were not practised. But the dramatic elements are not absent. There are certain hymns in the \textit{Rgveda}\textsuperscript{876} which are known as \textit{Ākhyāna} hymns or \textit{Samvāda} hymns or ballads or mythological ballads and form a connecting link with the epic and dramatic poetry. These are in the form of dialogues, and hence, are called dialogue hymns. Such dialogue hymns provided dramatic elements. According to Macdonell, "The earliest forms of dramatic literature in India are represented by those hymns of the \textit{Rgveda} which contain dialogues such as those of Saramā and the Paṇīś, Yama and Yāmī, Purūravās and Urvaśī, the latter, indeed, being the foundation of a regular play composed much more than a thousand years later by the greatest dramatist of India."\textsuperscript{877} Max Müller and Sylvan Levi also suggest that the dialogue poems of the \textit{Rgveda} might be a kind of dramas. This idea has been taken up by other scholars who try to prove that these \textit{Samvāda} hymns are really speeches belonging to some dramatic performances connected with the religious cult.\textsuperscript{878} Winternitz remarks that most of these hymns are simply ballads of the half-epic, half-dramatic type.\textsuperscript{879} He also suggests that the dialogue hymns are parts of the ballads used by the Epics, Purāṇas and Buddhist literature.\textsuperscript{880} It is seen that in a Rgvedic hymn the conversation among Indra, Aditi and Vāmādeva bring out dramatic element.\textsuperscript{881} The theme of the hymn Purūravās and Urvaśī\textsuperscript{882} is the portrayal of a pathetic love-plea that probes into the deepest grounds of human psychology and is embedded with human dreams, feelings and emotions. Inspite of a romantic ballad, it can be called a ballad with an implied moral. According to I. Nalin, this hymn is a drama for entertainment staged during the dreary sessions of sacrifice.\textsuperscript{883} Moreover, Yama-Yamī hymn reveals dramatic element.\textsuperscript{884}

\textbf{Other means of recreation}

The Rgvedic people were fond of merry-making and pastime. The people of the Rgvedic age spent their leisure in various amusements like dice-playing,
racing, hunting etc.

**Dice-playing**

References to dicing in the *Rgvedasamhita* point to the popularity of this gave. In the Rgvedic society gambling had great charm to some persons. During the Rgvedic age, gambling of dice took such a dimension that there was appointed place for gambling. The *Sabha* or public assembly hall was used for dice playing. 885 The dice player was called the leader of the group. 886 He is also called *sabhāstāgu* due to his devotion to the dicing place (*sabhā*). 887 The epithets *kitavā* 888, *śvaghnī* 889, etc., are used to indicate a dicer or a gambler. The term *śvaghnī* in a Rgvedic verse is interpreted as *śvaghnī parasvānām hantā kitavā* 890, i.e. a gambler who piles his winnings. 891 Yāśka in his *Nirukta* explains the term *śvaghnī* as *śvaghnī kitavo bhavatī svām hanti / svām punarāśritam bhavatī* 892 The term *akṣa* 893 and *devan* 894 means the game of dice. Dice was played on the ground with a variable number of nuts of *Vibhīdaka* 895 which is also called *Vibhītaka*. Such dice are brown in colour, i.e. *babhru – babhravah babhruvārṇā akṣāḥ*...  896 There is no clear trace of cowries as dice in the *Rgvedasamhita*. 897 It is seen that the gamester fears (his adversary) holding the four (dice), until they are thrown, i.e. *akṣadyūtāṁ kurvatorubhayormadhye yah pumān caturāḥ catuḥsaṁkhyaśākān kapardakān dadamānāt dadato haste dhārayataḥ puruṣāt a nighātoḥ kapardakaniṁpataryantāṁ bibhipīt āsyā jayo bhavisyati na bhavisyati ity anyo bhitiṁ pṛāṇvūyāt* 898 It means, where two men are playing together, the man who has not the throw of the dice is in anxious apprehension

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885. kitavāḥ...sabhāṁ kitavasambhandhimīṁ eti gacchati / Sāyana, Ibid., 10.34.6
886. mahato ganasya samghasya yah...senāṁ netā... / Sāyana, Ibid., 10.34.12
888. R.V., 2.29.5, 5.85.8, 10.34.3,7,10,11,13
   Also vide, A.V., 7.50.1, 7.109.3
889. śvagnī / śvaghnī kitavāḥ / Sāyana on R.V., 8.45.38
   Also vide, Ibid., 10.42.9
890. Sāyana, Ibid., 10.43.5
891. Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 10.43.5, p. 562
892. Nir, 5.22
893. Vide, Macdonell, A.A., & Keith, A.B., op.cit., vol. 1, p 2
894. devane dyūte... / Sāyana on R.V., 10.43.5
   Also vide, Ibid., 10.27.17
895. vibhīdakah dyūtasādhanāṁ 'kṣaḥ / Sāyana, Ibid., 7.86.6
   Also vide, Ibid., 10.34 1
896. Sāyana, Ibid., 10.34.5
897. Ibid., 1.41.9
lest it should be against him. Wilson remarks that by the passage catuḥsāmkhyākān kapardakān as interpreted by Sāyaṇācārya in the present context, he means ‘four cowri shells’. The number of dice used was certainly large which is given as fifty-three. Ludwig, Weber and Zimmer render it as fifteen, but to Roth and Grassmann, the number is fifty-three. In the game the dice were thrown. Dice were probably thrown on a dice-board. By the term iriṇe varṛtānāḥ, Sāyaṇācārya refers to the dice ‘rolling on the dice-board’, e.g. iriṇe āśphāre varṛtānāḥ pravartamānāḥ prāvepāḥ pravepiṇāḥ kampanaśīlā ṛkṣāḥ The names of some of the throws of the game of dice go back to the Rgveda and the Atharvaveda. Kṛṣṇa means a throw and is clearly mentioned in the Atharvaveda. This term is also found in the Rgvedic hymns but not clearly explained as the throw. According to Macdonell and Keith, there were more throws (ayāḥ) than one which is proved by a Rgvedic verse of the tenth Maṇḍala (10.116.9). There is reference to throwing fours.

The Aksasūkta of the tenth maṇḍala starts with the excitement of victory and grief of defeat in the game of dice. Some of the verses of this sūkta praise gambling. It is stated that to the winning player dice are the givers of sons as it is pointed out by Sāyaṇācārya thus – jayataḥ kitavasya kumāradesṇāḥ dhanadānena dhānyatāṁ lambhayantaḥ kumārāṇāṁ dātāro bhavantī Wilson states that by acquiring wealth through the means of gambling a family may be reared. The dice

899. Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 1.41.9, p. 28
900. Wilson, H.H., op.cit., vol. 1, on 1.41.9, p. 137
901. R.V., 10.34.8
902. Vide, Macdonell, A.A., & Keith, A.B., op.cit., vol. 1, p. 2
903. Vide, Ibid.
904. R.V., 10.34.1,8,9,
Also vide, A.V., 4.38.3
905. Sāyaṇa on R.V., 10.34.1
Also vide, Ibid., 10.34.9
906. A.V., 7.52
907. R.V., 10.42.9, 10.43.5
908. Vide, Macdonell, A.A., & Keith, A.B., op.cit., vol. 1, p. 3
909. caturāścīddamānādavibbhyādā nidhāṇōḥ /
na duruktāya śpṛḥaṇet / R.V., 1.41.9
910. prāvepa mā bhṛhato mādayantī pravātejā iriṇe varṛtānāḥ /
 somaśeṣeva mājuvataṣya bhakṣo vibhīṣako jāgṛvīrmahyamacchān / Ibid., 10.34.1
911. Ibid., 10.34.7,8,12
912. Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.34.7
913. Wilson, H.H., op.cit., vol.6, on 10.34.7, p. 115
are mentioned as the monarchs of their own jurisdiction without bowing down to anybody. Even the King himself pays homage and reveres them.\footnote{114} In the Rgvedic period people were so much indulged in the game of dice that sometimes they gambled away their possessions and finally even their own persons. In the Akṣasūkta it is described that the gambler who was engrossed in playing dice fell into untold miserable plight.\footnote{115} He was so deeply engaged in playing dice that he did not mind to attend his domestic business, as a result of which the economic condition of his family randown. He fell into irreparable debts for which his debtors molested his wife.\footnote{116} Moreover, the gambler lost all sympathy of his kith and kin and has been foresaken by all as his father, mother, brother etc.\footnote{117} Even the dice are seen paining and torturing the gamester like a goad.\footnote{118} Involved in debt the gambler goes by night to the dwellings of others to plunder as referred to in the Śāyanaçırya's commentary-
\begin{quote}
ṛṇāvā aksaparājayaāṛṇavān kitavaḥ sarvato bibhyaddhanam steyajanitam icchamāṇāh kāmayamāṇāh anyeṣāṁ brahmāṇādināṁ astaṁ grham/ naktam rātrau upa eti cauryāṛthamupagacchati
\end{quote}
\footnote{119} The term vrśala used for the gambler\footnote{220} which means an outcast\footnote{221} indicates the dice-playing to be a vice-practise. Wilson translates the term as a sinner.\footnote{222} So, the Vedic seers advice to give up the practise of dice-playing and engage in agriculture in order to release the gambler from his deplorable condition.\footnote{223} The Nirukta of Yāska also marks that dice-playing is censured and agriculture is praised as a measure against it in the Rgveda.\footnote{224} Varuṇa is entreated by Vasiṣṭha to forgive the sins that might have been committed through wine, wrath, dicing or indiscretion.\footnote{225} So, dicing was condemned by the Vedic people and it was regarded as a vice.
Racing

Horse-racing was one of the favourite amusements of the Rgvedic people. The term āji used in the Rgvedic verses express the sense of ‘a race’ and sense of ‘battle’ also.926 The term vāja which means ‘strength’, ‘speed’ is also used in the sense of horse-race.927 Horse, ass or mule were generally used to pull the chariots. The chariot of the Āśvins is drawn by two asses.928 The racecourse was called Kāṣṭha.929 A wooden pole called Kārṣma is interpreted by Śāyanācārya as the goal for the chariot-race.930 The term kārṣman according to Griffith apparently means a line or furrow drawn across the end of the race-course.931 Wilson states that Śāyaṇācārya explains Kārṣman as ‘the god-attracting battlefield called a sacrifice’, devānāmākṛṣṇanavati yajñākhye samgrāme.932 Prizes were given to the winner as the term dhana meaning prize is often found in the Rgveda.933 In some verses, it possibly means the contest.934 In such races swift steeds were used935 and such horses were often adorned on festive occasions with pearls and gold.936 References are met with to war horses.937 Dadhikṛṣṇas is said to be the divine war horse.938 In the Rgvedasamhitā, Agni is prayed for success in a coming chariot-race.939 According to Geldner, the Mudgala hymn in the Rgveda gives a comic picture of a horse-chariot

926. Vide, Macdonell, A.A., & Keith, A.B., op.cit., vol. 1, p. 53
Also vide, R.V., 6.24.6
Also vide, vājī vejanavān somākhyośvāḥ / Śāyaṇa on R.V., 9.36.1
928. Ibid., 1.116.2
929. kārṣmaśabādah kāṣṭhavacanah / ājiṃ dhāvanto yoddhāro yam gantumicchanti tasyām kāṣṭhīyāṃ vājī kaśicīsavo yuddham bhajamāna akramit akramate / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 9.74.8
930. kārṣmaśabādha kāṣṭhavāc / yathā kāṣṭham ījīdhāvanasya avadhitayā nirdiṣṭam lakṣyam / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.116.17
Also vide, Ibid., 9.74.8
932. Wilson, H.H., op.cit., vol. 5, on 9.36.1, p. 449
933. tādaṇīṃ dhanāḥ dhanam dhṛṣṇave yo dhṛṣṇupūrṇhārṣayitā śatrūnāṃ jeta bhavati…jayato dhanam bhavatīyathāḥ / Śāyaṇa on R.V., 1.81.3
Also vide, Ibid., 9.53.2
934. Ibid., 1.31.6, 5.35.7, 7.38.8, 8.5.26, 8.8.21
935. uktante aśvā atyaśvāṃ nadasya kāraṇaisturayanta āśubhiḥ / Ibid., 2.34.3
Also vide, Ibid., 7.69.1, 9.109.10
936. Ibid., 1.126.4
Also vide, śyāvatam na yathā śyāvavāraṃ aśvam kṛṣṇebhīḥ sauvarnaśāmśrīvaranairālaṃkāryaṃ taddvat / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.68.11
937. Ibid., 6.46.13,14, 9.37.5, 9.86.3, 9.108.2, 10.6.6
938. Ibid., 4.38, 4.39, 4.40
939. Ibid., 10.156.1
Here in this hymn, the heroic act of victory by a brave woman charioteer called Mudgalānti is described. Moreover, there is mention of a victorious hero who returned home on his fleet horse. Even gods like Indra, the Aśvins, the Maruts, Mitra and Varuṇa, Agni and Viṣṇu are depicted as riding on their horses. In a Rgvedic verse Indra is mentioned as riding on his horse and swiftly proceeding to the battle like the war horse. Horse-chariot racing competitions were seen among the gods. Among the Āryans, the winning of the race as sport, was considered important to get one’s daughter to marry. For instance, Sūryā, the daughter of Sūrya was asked to get into the chariot of the Aśvins, as they won the race. In the present context Wilson states that Sūrya was desirous of giving his daughter Sūryā to Soma, but all the gods desired her as a wife; they agreed that he who should first reach the sun, as a goal, should wed the damsel. The Aśvins were victorious, and Sūryā, well pleased by their success, rushed immediately into their chariot.

**Hunting**

In the Rgvedic society, hunting was not merely a pastime but also the source of their livelihood. Hunting must have been practiced as a sport by the Rājanya class. There were hunters in the Rgvedic age which is clear from the use of the word śvaghni. Sāyaṇācārya takes the word śvaghni for a Fowler’s wife who used to cut birds into pieces. Thus, the bird catchers are meant who used the flesh as their food. Various types of instruments are used for hunting. Birds caught in nets, hunting of the boar with dogs,
Jion captured in pitfalls, wild bull caught by bowstring, chasing of deer by bow, pits used for catching antelopes are occasionally referred to in the Rgvedic verses.

In the Rgvedic society there were jesters who used to provide entertainment to people. Besides as a means of recreation Somarasa was drunk by people as a stimulant. Wine drinking was the luxury of life. Moreover, in the Rgvedic period there were Samanas, which were some kind of festival specially meant for recreation. According to Sāyanācārya, it is a sacrificial ceremony in some cases and also means samgrāma. Griffith considers it as ‘a gathering’ or ‘festal meeting’. According to Roth, it is either battle or festival. Pischel thinks that it was a general popular festivity to which women went to enjoy themselves, poets to win fame, bowmen to gain prizes at archery, horses to run races etc. So, it is found that the Samana is interpreted diversely by the scholars which indulge both festival for recreation and religious purpose.

Art and Architecture

Art and architecture was highly developed during the Rgvedic period. Architecture or the art of making house had made some advance during the Rgvedic period. At that period physical features, soil and climate affected much in making the houses. Houses were made of clay, stone, mud bricks and wood. References are found to house with mud walls. In the Vedic age, the building of a house or other construction formed a part of religious ceremony. So, in the hymn attributed to seer Vasiṣṭha, prayers are offered to god Vāstospati, the presiding deity over house or Vāstu for the safety of the house and the prosperity of its dwellers. In accordance to their characteristics the

957. Ibid., 10.28.10
958. Ibid., 10.51.6
959. Ibid., 8.2.6
960. Ibid., 10.39.8
961. Ibid., 1.141.7
962. Ibid., 10.107.9
963 samanesu yajīṣeṣu.../ Sāyana, Ibid., 7.2.5
Also vide, Ibid., 9.97.47, 10.86.10, 10.143.4
964. samane samgrāme.../ Sāyana, Ibid., 2.16.7
965. Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on-1.124.8, p. 86
967 Vide, Ibid.
968. mṛṇmayam mṛdādibhirnirmitam grham.../ Sāyana on R.V., 7.89.1
969. Ibid., 2.14.6, 2.20.5
970. Ibid., 7 89.1
971 Ibid., 7.54
Vedic houses were variously called *Grha*, *Sadma*, *Prasadma*, *Chardis*, *Šarma*, *Vešma*, *Harmya*. Such houses were constructed to suit the needs of the people which vary from small to big ones. Among these *Sadma* seems to be a kind of house where sacrifices took place. Sayanaācārya in his commentary interprets the term as *sadma yajñagrham* /Prasadma also reveals the same meaning which are spacious. *Chardis* is a type of dwelling house with a covering or a house with tripleguard which protects one from heat, cold and rain or a three-storeyed abode. The term *chadis* also used to mean the roof. *Šarma* indicates the three storeyed house or a house which consists of three rooms. *Vešma* is the dwelling place which can be a natural bower of branches and creepers in the forest. On the other hand *Harmya* means big houses or palaces comprising many rooms which can be closely shut up. The Rgvedic verses indicate the considerable height of the building called *Harmya* or its position on the top of a house. The term is also used to denote a dark pit or heated pit. Indra is said to be the destroyer of harmyas of the Asuras.

As people depended on agriculture in the Rgvedic period, the houses were large enough to contain not only the family but also the cattle. References are there to big residential houses with hundred doors and thousand pillars, house...
with several rooms. In the Rgvedic verse mention is made to ladies’ apartments in the house.994

In the later Vedic age an advanced stage of construction is exhibited in the various shapes of Vedic altars. In the Rgveda, mention is made to the well decorated houses which are compared to the lakes with lotus blossoms.995 The Rgvedasamhitā also indicates the strength and stability of the houses which contain thousands of pillars.996

There were ramparts and ditches to protect the villages from enemies or from natural calamities. The Rgvedasamhitā mentions the term pur, which means a big town. Fortified palaces were also called Pur.997 The term pūrpati is used to indicate the leader or owner of it.998 The non-Āryans possessed more number of such Purs in comparison with the Āryans. Śambara who had hundred stone made forts or stronghold is referred to in the Rgvedasamhitā.999 The art of construction was in practise and the architects easily made iron forts or cities1000, cities with hundred fortifications1001 or forts consist of a series of concentric walls, forts made of stone or other hard materials1002, fortified big towns1003, the castles hundredfold1004, autumnal forts1005 which may refer to the forts in that season being occupied against the attack of enemies or against inundations caused by overflowing rivers. Griffith mentions it to be the strongholds on high ground occupied in the rainy season.1006 Griffith further refers it to be the strong places on elevated ground occupied by the Dāsas or original
inhabitants during the rains and autumn or they may refer to the forts which belong to the demon named Šarat.\textsuperscript{1007}

Besides these, the Rgvedic people were well acquainted with the art of construction of tanks for the preservation of drinking water or tubewells,\textsuperscript{1008} construction of roads,\textsuperscript{1009} construction of ports,\textsuperscript{1010} sea bound ships or boats\textsuperscript{1011} etc.

So, from the above discussion, it can be said that architecture and the art of construction was of high standard at that period.

**Domestic Furniture and Utensils** – Besides the art of making houses there are references to the development of the arts like making of domestic furniture and utensils. *Talpa* or bed or couch is mentioned in the *Rgveda*\textsuperscript{1012} and the later literature.\textsuperscript{1013} Ladies are seen reclining here.\textsuperscript{1014} Probably it was kept in the inner apartments of a house. *Vahya* denotes a ‘couch’ or ‘bed’ used by women which is held by Macdonell and Keith.\textsuperscript{1015} Of course, Śāyanācārya in his commentary of the relevant verse interprets the term as *vahyam vahanam* \textsuperscript{1016} The Rgvedic verses also mention *Proṣṭha* or bench\textsuperscript{1017}, *barhana* or pillow of the couch.\textsuperscript{1018} *Kośa*, i.e. a vessel filled brimful with treasure.\textsuperscript{1019} There were other implements for household purposes, *e.g.* *Gharma* or a caldron of metal\textsuperscript{1020} or a heated vessel in which fresh milk was poured in the Pravargya ceremony introductory to the Soma-sacrifice\textsuperscript{1021}, *Pacana* or a wooden vessel\textsuperscript{1022}, earthen and metal vessels or jars called *Kalaśa*\textsuperscript{1023}, skin vessels

\textsuperscript{1007} Ibid., on 6 20.10, p. 297
\textsuperscript{1008} R.V., 1.85.10
\textsuperscript{1009} Ibid., 1.35.11
\textsuperscript{1010} Ibid., 7.68.7, 10.143.5
\textsuperscript{1011} Ibid., 1.25.7, 1.131.2, 2.39.4, 7.88.3, 9.70.10, 10.101.2, 10.143.5
\textsuperscript{1012} Ibid., 75.58
\textsuperscript{1013} A.V., 5.17.12, T.S., 6.2.6.4, T.B., 2.2, 5.3
\textsuperscript{1014} R.V., 7.55.8
\textsuperscript{1015} Vide, Macdonell, A.A., & Keith, A.B., op.cit., vol. 2, p. 278
\textsuperscript{1016} Śāyana on R.V., 7.55.8
\textsuperscript{1017} Vide, Macdonell, A.A., & Keith, A.B., op.cit, vol 2, p. 54
\textsuperscript{1018} cīttrā upabarhanāṁ caṇṣurā abhyāṣṭānāṁ / R.V., 10 85.7
\textsuperscript{1019} Also vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 10.85.7, p. 593
\textsuperscript{1020} pūrṇam udākena pūrītam kośam na pātramviṣa vasana hiranyādinā dhanena nṛṣṭānī.../ Śāyana on R.V., 10.42.2
\textsuperscript{1021} Also vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 10.42.2, p. 561
\textsuperscript{1022} sanītaṇāṁ sobhanavaraṇaḥ gharmasācit...hiraṇḍmayāḥ yaḥ kalaśāḥ āṣitaḥ / Śāyana on R.V., 5.30.15
\textsuperscript{1023} Also vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 5.30.15, p. 250
\textsuperscript{1024} Vide, Ibid.
called *Dṛti* and *Karotara* for storing curd\textsuperscript{1024}, Soma juice\textsuperscript{1025}, wine\textsuperscript{1026} etc. *Āsecana* is another kind of vessel to hold liquids\textsuperscript{1027} or a vessel out of which the broth is sprinkled.\textsuperscript{1028} There were drinking vessels called *āhāva*\textsuperscript{1029} for animals, kumbhas made of clay and baked but easily broken\textsuperscript{1030}, *śūla* or a spit used for roasting flesh\textsuperscript{1031}, *ukhā* or a wooden vessel\textsuperscript{1032}, *dhmātri* or a blower\textsuperscript{1033}, *ūrdara* or a vessel used for measuring grain\textsuperscript{1034}, *sthivi*\textsuperscript{1035} or winnowing-basket connected with corn.\textsuperscript{1036} Various utensils for religious rituals or sacrifices like *caru* or a caldron heated on fire\textsuperscript{1037}, ladle called *juhū*\textsuperscript{1038} and *upasecanī*\textsuperscript{1039}, *srucō*\textsuperscript{1040}, *darvi* or wooden ladle\textsuperscript{1041}, piece of stone called *grāvan*\textsuperscript{1042}, *adri*\textsuperscript{1043}, *dṛṣad* are mentioned in the Rgvedic verses. *Dṛṣad* means merely a stone\textsuperscript{1044} which was placed on another stone as a support when it is used in connection with Upala, the lower and the upper millstone, or mortar and pestle may be meant.\textsuperscript{1045} It was probably used for pounding Soma.\textsuperscript{1046} Moreover, mention is made to strainer called *pavitra* made

\textsuperscript{1024.} Ibid., 6.48.18  
\textsuperscript{1025.} drtīḥ madhunāḥ madhuryāśmābhīrdattasya somasya saṁbandhitena madhunāḥ pūrṇaḥ āhītaḥ śṛāvīta vartate tataḥ dṛte... / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 8.5.19  
\textsuperscript{1026.} kārotaro nāma vaidalascarmavestito bhājaniviśeṣo yasyaṁ surāyāḥ śṛāvaṇam kriyate / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.116.7  
\textsuperscript{1027.} rasasya kvāhitasya āsecanāni āsecanānaśādhanāni tathā usmanāy... pāṭāni / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.162.13  
\textsuperscript{1028.} Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 1.162.13, p. 108  
\textsuperscript{1029.} āhāvān / āhūyante pānārthamī gāvo’ tretyāḥ āhāvā nipānāni / atraucityādagnīcyayanapradeśakarṣaṇārthagopānāśadhanadrumamayapānāpātraṁyucyante / Śāyaṇa on R.V., 10.101.5  
\textsuperscript{1030.} bibheda girīṁ navamīnma kumbhamā gā indro akrūta svayugbhiḥ / Ibid., 10.89.7  
\textsuperscript{1031.} Ibid., 1.162.11  
\textsuperscript{1032.} ukhāyāḥ śṛāvītāḥ mīkṣanām pākaparīkṣāsādhanāni kāṣṭhāni... pāṭāni / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.162.13  
\textsuperscript{1033.} dhmāteva / kāmrātro yathā bhrāṭrādibhibhirgāminī samivardhayati tadvatsvātmanām vardhayatīyarthāḥ / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 5.9.5  
\textsuperscript{1034.} Ibid., 2.14.11  
\textsuperscript{1035.} bhṛhaspatiḥ parvatebyo viṣṇu yā ṣrīgā ṣrī vāvamīva sthivibhyaḥ / Ibid., 10.68.3  
\textsuperscript{1036.} Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 10.68.3, p. 582  
\textsuperscript{1037.} ināroṣomā samaghaṃ samabhyaghvam tapurayastu caruraṅgivā / R.V., 7.104.2  
\textsuperscript{1038.} juhavāḥ homasādhanābhūtīyāḥ srucāḥ... / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 8.43.10  
\textsuperscript{1039.} juhābhīḥ samipurnāḥhtihibhirhomapātraḥ... / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.21.3  
\textsuperscript{1040.} Also vide, Ibid., 1.145.3  
\textsuperscript{1041.} Ibid., 10.21.2, 10.105.10  
\textsuperscript{1042.} Vide, Macdonell, A.A., & Keith, A.B., op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 373,374  
\textsuperscript{1043.} Vide, Macdonell, A.A., & Keith, A.B., op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 373,374  
\textsuperscript{1044.} Ibid., 10.94.5, 10.175.3
of sheep’s wool\textsuperscript{1047}, dhiṣanā, the planks on which the pressing of Soma takes place\textsuperscript{1048}, vessel called amatra into which the Soma, after being pressed is placed\textsuperscript{1049}, camasa or wooden vessel\textsuperscript{1050}, graha or somapātra\textsuperscript{1051} etc.

In the Rgvedic society every useful work of art was appreciated. The prime artisan of the Rgvedic period from which the seers seek favour is Tvaṣṭr\textsuperscript{1052}. As an artisan, he is famous for making Indra’s golden thunder weapon\textsuperscript{1053}, copper or iron thunderbolt\textsuperscript{1054}.

\textbf{Food and Drinks in the Rgvedic society}

The Rgvedic Āryans laid importance on healthy food\textsuperscript{1055}. They used to recite a prayer to food before taking meals\textsuperscript{1056}. They took their meal in sitting posture\textsuperscript{1057}. Feeding a guest was a meritorious act for the householders. It is condemned to take food without feeding a hungry person\textsuperscript{1058}. In the \textit{Rgvedasānhitā}, the hymn to \textit{Pitu} or the praise of food mentions all the articles of food except meat\textsuperscript{1059}. There are various words or epithets of food found in the Rgvedic verses which indicate the interest of the people of the Rgvedic age towards a good and qualitative food. The term \textit{bhojana} derived from the root \textit{bhuj}, to eat or enjoy, indicates food in general\textsuperscript{1060}. The term \textit{pitu} which means food is explained by

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1047} Ibid., 1.28.9
\item \textsuperscript{1048} Also vide, Ibid., 3.36.7, 8.33.1, 9.6.3, 9.37.1
\item \textsuperscript{1049} Ibid., 1.109.3
\item \textsuperscript{1050} Also vide, Ibid., 1.109.4
\item \textsuperscript{1051} Ibid., 10.114.5
\item \textsuperscript{1052} Ibid., 1.13.10
\item \textsuperscript{1053} Ibid., 1.48.3
\item \textsuperscript{1054} Ibid., 9.86.18
\item \textsuperscript{1055} Ibid., 10.117.2
\item \textsuperscript{1056} Also vide, Ibid., 2.13.6
\item \textsuperscript{1057} Also vide, Ibid., 8.1.34
\end{itemize}
Sayanacarya as pālaka madho mādhuryopeta pito...pānasādhanāna । The word *pitu* is derived from the root *pā*, to protect or *pā*, to drink or from *pyāy*, to swell. Food is called *Pitu* because it protects and provides nutriment. Soma is also referred to as *Pitu*. Food is also called *sina*. Andhas* Andhas* which comes from the root *ā-dhyāy* asun, to think indicates food. It is probably the liquid substance - sometimes a name for Soma plant. The term *śravaṇas* comes from the root *śru*-to hear, which also indicates food. *Idā* is used in the sense of food in the Rgvedic verses. *Nighaṇṭu* quotes that *idā* means earth, speech, food and cow in the Vedas. The epithet *ārjā* comes from the root *ārjay* meaning, to invigorate. The term *iṣa* is used in the sense of sacrificial food. According to *Nighaṇṭu* and *Niruktā*, it is one of the names of food. The epithet *svadhā* in the Rgveda means food or sacrificial food. *Adma* means a meal which is eaten. Other synonyms of food are vāja, cana, vayās, prayas etc.
The Rgvedic Aryans used cooked food which is clear from the terms *pakva* or *pacata*.1081

**Cereals and Pulses**

Among the foodgrains, the *Rgvedasamhitā* repeatedly mentions *yava* or barley1082, particularly fried barley. It was regularly cultivated by the Vedic Aryans as a principal food grain.1083 It was not cultivated in all the six seasons. It only thrived well when the land was moistened by a shower of rain probably in winter.1084 The sowing1085, ripening1086 and ploughing1087 of *yava* is mentioned. According to Macdonell and Keith, *Yava* in the Rigveda appears to be a generic term for any sort of ‘grain’ and not merely ‘barley’. The latter sense is probably found in the Atharvaveda, and is regular later.1088 Vṛthi or rice is not referred to in the *Rgveda* but is alluded to in the *Atharvaveda*.1089 It is believed that in the Atharvavedic age the Aryans were acquainted with paddy while moving towards the east. The word *dhānā* used in plural indicates some particular type of grains or cereals.1090 These are sometimes parched which is clear from the passage *bhṛjjāti dhānāḥ* /1091 Rāhul Śāṅkṛtyāyana holds that *dhānā* is the name, given to fried cereals in the *Rgveda*.1092 The word *dhānā* comes from the root *dhā*, to place, which means roasted grains and according to Yāska, it is called so because it is placed in a frying pan or on a frying board.1093 The word *dhānya* denotes grain of that name in general.1094 The *Rgvedasamhitā* mentions *bijam* with *dhānya*.1095 The tillers of the ground who sow

1081. pakvā pakvānyanānāni.../ Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 6.63.9
    pacatā pacatāni savanlyapurodāṣṭādmi ca.../ Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.116.8
    pacatā pacatām kuryāt.../ Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 4.24.7
1082. Ibid., 1.23.15, 1.117.21, 1.135.8, 1.176.2, 2.5.6, 2.14.11, 5.85.3
1083. uto sa mahyamindubhiḥ saṣṭhyātī anusēsīḍhāt//Ibid, 1.23.15
1084. yavo vrṣṭvā modate / Ibid., 2.5.6
    Also vide, Ibid., 5.85.3
1085. yavanī vrκṇaśvīṇā vapanṭeṣaṇī duḥantā manuṣṭya dasrā / Ibid., 1.117.21
1086. dādharā ksemamoko na rayvo yavo na pakvo jetā janānām / Ibid., 1.66.3
    Also vide, Ibid., 1.135.8
1087. Ibid., 1.176.2
1089. A.V, 6.140.2, 8.7.20
1090. dhānāḥ bhṛṣṭayavah.../ Sāyaṇa on R.V., 3.35.7
    Also vide, Ibid., 1.16.2, 3.52.1.7, 8.91.2
1091. Ibid., 4.24.7
1092. Śāṅkṛtyāyana, R., *Rgvedic Ārya*, p. 44
1093. dhānāḥ bhṛṣṭayāvalaiḥ / Sāyaṇa on R.V., 5.12
    Also vide, A.V., 3 24.2,4, 5.29 7
1094. R.V., 5.53.13, 6.13.4, 10.94.13
    Also vide, A.V., 3 24.2,4, 5.29 7
1095 R.V., 5.53.13
    Also vide, Ibid., 10.94.13
seed are indicated by the term dhanyākṛt. Godhūma or wheat is not mentioned in the Rgvedic verses, which is mentioned in the later literature. Pulses are also not mentioned in the Rgveda. This Veda is silent about salt.

Food items

In the Rgvedic period principal foods were barley flour and its various preparations mixed with milk products. Purodāśa or a cake is used for sacrificial purpose and offered to gods. Men offered it from front which is clear from Śāyanācārya’s words: purodāśam purastāddātvam... Aśpa was a kind of cake made of barley or rice mixed with ghee and offered to the gods which was also called Purodāśa. Mess of grain prepared by cooking it in water or milk is called odana. Rice boiled in milk was called Pāyasa or Kṣtrapākamōdana. Karambha was a kind of porridge made of fried barley flour mixed with curd or ghee and it was offered to God Pūśan. It was generally made of unhusked, slightly parched and kneaded barley grains. When barley corn was fried and ground into powder, it was called Saktu. Saktu or the parched barley meal was commonly used. According to Macdonell and Keith, it probably means ‘groats’ as opposed to fine meal.

Yāska in his Nirukta explains the term as – saktuḥ sacateḥ /

1096. dhanyākṛtah kṛṣṭivalah bījamiva yathā prācānti tadvat... / samparcayantityarthah / Śāyana, Ibid., 10.94.13
1097. V.S., 18.12, 19.22.89, S.B., 12.7,1,2; 2,9
1098. purodāśam purodāśikhyam haviḥ vṛhi bhakṣaya... / Śāyana on R.V., 3.41.3
   Also vide, Ibid., 3.28.2, 3.52.2, 6.23.7, 8.31.2
1099. Ibid.
1100. S.B., 4.2.5,19
1101. apūpavantam savantyapurodāśopetam... / Śāyana, Ibid., 3.52.1
   Also vide, Ibid., 3.52.7, 8.91.2, 10.45.9
1102. S.B., 2.2.3, 12.13
1103. Ibid., 2.2.3, 12.13
1104. gṛ̤tavantam gṛ̤ttena yuktam apūpam purodāśam... / Śāyana on R.V., 10.45.9
1105. puṣaṇvate te cakṛmā karambham harivate haryaśvāya dhānāḥ / apūpamaddhi saṇgo marudbhīḥ somani piṣa vṛ̤ṣṭhā śūra vidvān // Ibid., 3.52.7
   Also vide, marudbhīḥ saṇgaḥ tvam apūpam purodāśam addhi bhakṣaya / Śāyana, Ibid.
1107. kṣtrapākam kṣtrapākam odanam pāyasa / Śāyana on R.V., 8.77.10
1108. karambho dadhimīśrāḥ saktavaḥ / Śāyana, Ibid., 3.52.1
   karambhām dadhimīśrāṃ saktum... / Śāyana, Ibid., 3.52.7
   karambhāṃ gṛ̤tēṣiṣtakam saktvātmakam / Śāyana, Ibid., 6.57.2
1109. ya enamādideśātī karambhādītī puṣaṇam / na tena deva ādiṣe // Ibid., 6.56.1
1110. Ibid., 10.71.2
Dairy products

Milk formed one of the principal ingredients of the Vedic food. Among its various preparations, ghee and curd were commonly used. Cows' milk is known by the terms ks\'tra, \footnote{1115} payas\footnote{1116} and go.\footnote{1117} Dadhi was the sour milk and curd.\footnote{1118} Mantha was the name for a churn.\footnote{1119} Dadhi was also used for mixing with Soma which is clear from the term dadhy\'asira.\footnote{1120} Gh\'rta or clarified butter was used as food.\footnote{1121} They used to eat the mixture of curds and minute globules of butter which was called pr\'syad\'iya.\footnote{1122} Butter was heated to clarify it\footnote{1123} which was mixed with Soma juice also.\footnote{1124} Butter was thrown into the fire for which Agni is called gh\'rtaprat\'ika,\footnote{1125} gh\'rtapr\'\'\'tha\footnote{1126} and gh\'rtapasatta.\footnote{1127} The other favourite dishes of the Rgvedic people were gava\'sira and yava\'sira made of Soma juice mixed with milk and Soma mixed

\footnote{1112} Nir., 4.10
\footnote{1113} paktih pacan riricyat ind\'\'\'ya dady\'\'t / S\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'\'##durdhāvo bhavati / kasatervā syādviparītasya / vikasito bhavati\footnote{1112} i.e. it comes from the root sac, to cling as it is difficult to wash, or it is derived from the root kas, to shine (by metathesis) because it is fully blown or swollen in size when heated. Pākti means a cooked object.\footnote{1113} According to Macdonell and Keith, it probably means a kind of ‘cake’.\footnote{1114}
Meat-eating

Meat was undoubtedly consumed by the people of the Rgvedic period. It was used as food in the Rgvedic age. In the Rgvedic period, special sanctity was assigned to the cows which is clear from the term *aghnya*, i.e. not to be killed. But it cannot prove that meat-eating was condemned at that period. Meat-eating was prevalent on special occasions like great feasts and gatherings and also religious festivals. The Rgvedic verses refer to the slaughter place called *śasana* where bulls and cows were slaughtered. The use of such flesh is seen in sacrificial purposes.

Animal’s flesh was cooked and offered to the gods. Bulls, cows were slaughtered and their flesh was offered as *havya* to Agni. Bulls were sacrificed to Indra. Cooking of bull was regarded as a custom in the primitive days. Gods are seen giving large number of buffaloes. Sage Bharadvāja prayed to Indra to grant him and his worshippers food with cow. In the Rgvedic period, flesh was roasted on spits or boiled in pots. A man is seen cooking the entrails of a dog in extreme destitution. Flesh of birds was also probably eaten. Fish is mentioned in the *Rgvedasamhitā*. But fish does not appear to have been used as food.

Fruits and Vegetables

In the *Rgvedasamhitā*, plants are alluded to and are invoked as mothers.

1128. i) gavāśīraḥ gavyamī paya śāśrārayaṇaśadhanam...somasya.../ Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 2.41.3
    ii) abhiśūram yavāśīram yavamayaḥ saktubhirmiśritam / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 2.22.1
1129. he aghyne / gonāmaitat / ahananiye he gauh tvam / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.164.40
1130. śasane viśasanalāṃ gāvo na paśava iva āṇkā śparcaṇāhataḥ santah.../ Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.89.14
1131. Ibid., 1.161.10
1132. Ibid., 1 162.3
1133. Also vide, Ibid., 1.162.10,11, 5.29.7,8, 6.17.11,13, 8.12.8
1134. Ibid., 6.16.47
1135. Ibid., 10.27.2, 10.86.13,14
1136. Ibid., 1 164.43
1137. Ibid., 8.77.10
1138. mandrasya kaverdivyasya vahnerpārmanmannām vacanasya madhvah / apī nastasya sacanasya deveśo yuvāsa grāte goārāḥ // Ibid., 6.39.1
1139. Ibid., 1.162.11
1140. Ibid., 1.162.13
1141. Cf., Ibid , 1.92 10
1142. Ibid., 7.18.6, 10.68.8
1143. satam vo amba dhāmāni sahasrāmputa vo ruhah / adhā satatkruvo yūyunimam me agadm kṛta // Ibid , 10.97.2
Also vide, Ibid., 6.49.14, 7.34.23, 7.35.5, 10.97.4
Some plants drove away diseases from which medicines were prepared.\footnote{1144} Some of them are blossoming and productive and also fruit-bearing.\footnote{1145} Forests also contained a large variety of fruits.\footnote{1146} The trees are described as full of ripe fruits are described in the \textit{Ṛgveda}.\footnote{1147} Forests were rich in wild berries of \textit{Aśvattha},\footnote{1148} \textit{Āmra}, i.e. mango\footnote{1149} and vegetables like \textit{Urvāruka}, i.e. cucumber,\footnote{1150} lotus stalk\footnote{1151} etc.

\textbf{Drinks}

As already stated above, milk was undoubtedly a common drink of the \textit{Ṛgvedic} age when the country was abounded in milch cows of good quality. The \textit{Ṛgvedic} Āryans quenched their thirst not only by milk and water but also by stronger drinks. The drink which was valued most was \textit{Soma}, the juice of a plant used only for sacrificial purposes. It was the favourite beverage on religious occasions. \textit{Soma} plant was brought from some mountains specially the Mujavat.\footnote{1152} \textit{Soma} plant was pounded by stones, i.e. \textit{grāvan},\footnote{1153} or \textit{adri}.\footnote{1154} They were sometimes pounded in a mortar with a pestle.\footnote{1155} In a verse of the \textit{Ṛgveda} it is stated that ten women squeezed the pounded plant with their fingers while singing in the praise of the \textit{Soma}.\footnote{1156} The part of the \textit{Soma} plant which was pressed is called \textit{aṁśu},\footnote{1157} which was purified by being pressed through a sieve.\footnote{1158} The colour of the juice was \textit{babhrua}, i.e. brown\footnote{1159}, \textit{hari}, i.e. tawny,\footnote{1160} \textit{aruṇa}, i.e. ruddy.\footnote{1161} It was described as savoury (\textit{svādu}), sweet
(madhumān), pungent (tīvra) and full of flavor (rasavat). The Soma-juice was pressed in large quantities and was mixed with honey, milk, curd, grain, to improve its taste. Sometimes, it was served with karambha, dhānā, aparā, purodāśa etc. In the sacrifices, Soma was offered to the gods and the remains were drunk by the purohitas at the end of the offerings. The term pañcadaśa, i.e. ‘fifteenfold (Soma)’ or ‘fifteenfold strong juices’ is mentioned in the Rgveda. Pañcadaśa, according to Sāyaṇācārya, means the juices of the Soma-plant whose leaves grow during the light half of the month and die away during the dark-half.

Following Sāyaṇācārya, Wilson also states that Soma is called “fifteenfold”, because its leaves grow during the light half of the month one by one on the fifteen days, beginning with pratipat (the 1st day), and similarly die off during the dark half of the month, or else because the Soma offered at noonday is accompanied by the Trivrit and Pañcadaśa Stomas. The effect of the Soma-juice on the consumer was exciting and exhilarating. The most heavenly nectar Soma bestowed powers of eloquence and immortality. It enabled men to concentrate their mind, made them active, cured their diseases and bestowed long life. The warriors also took Soma on the eve of a battle. The beverage called Pānta is also identified with Soma. Thus,

1162. Ibid., 6.47.1
1163. Ibid., 1.19.9
1164. Ibid., 5.27.5, 8.2.3, 9.46.4, 9.64.28
1165. Ibid., 5.27.5, 9.101.12
1166. Ibid., 5.27.5
1167. Ibid., 3.52.7, 6.29.4
1168. Vide, Wilson, H.H., op.cit., vol.6, on 10.27.2 , p. 34
1169. Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 10.27.2, p. 547
1170. R.V., 10.27.2
1171. Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 10.27.2, p. 547
1172. Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 10.27.2, p. 547
1173. Vide, Wilson, H.H., op.cit., vol.6, on 10.27.2 , p. 34
1174. Ibid., 8.48
1175. Ibid., 9.106.2
1176. Ibid., 10.88.1
1177. Vide, Ibid., 1.155.1
the people of the Rgvedic age were very much addicted to Soma. Surā or wine was an ordinary drink. In the Manusmṛti, it is said to be of three kinds, viz. gaudī, paîṣī and mādhva distilled from molasses, meal or the flowers of the madhuka plant. Surā was an intoxicating liquor under the influence of which men committed sins and crimes. Drinking of Surā was regarded as one of the seven sins forbidden by the Vedas and is classed with anger, senselessness and dicing. The swillers of wine are mentioned in the Rgvedasamhitā. Wine drinking was classed as an evil not only in the Rgveda but also in the Atharvaveda also. Among the sweet drinks, honey was used with food. The honey-comb is referred to in the Rgveda which states that it was taken out from two kinds of bees, one Āraṅgara and the other Sāraghā.

Economic Aspect of the Rgvedasamhitā

The Rgvedasamhitā bears ample evidences regarding the social life of the Āryans. The social life of the people was connected with the economic factors. With the advent of civilization, various occupations and economic activities were resorted to in the society. The sphere of economic activity extended in course of time and various arts of living were known to the Rgvedic Āryans. They were accustomed to agriculture, cattle-rearing, craft work, the art of garment-making like weaving and knitting, metal-work, leather-work, work of construction, trade and commerce, etc. Moreover, priest, physician, smiths, wood-worker, potter, artists, musicians, barber, hunter, etc., were also found in the society of the Rgvedic age. The people of the Rgvedic age earned their livelihood through such various occupations. In this regard, a verse can be cited which depicts different means of living in the Rgvedic society.

1178 Ibid., 1.116.7, 7.86.6
1179. Manu., 11.94
1180. R.V., 7.86.6
1181. kavayaḥ medhāvina ṛṣayaḥ sapta maryādāḥ / kāmajebyaḥ kroḍhajebhyascodhdṛtāḥ
   pāṇamakṣaḥ striyo mṛgaya danḍaḥ pāruṣyaamanayaduṣaṇamiti sapta maryādāḥ / . . sapta
   maryādāḥ / avasthitāḥ . . tyaktavanta ityarthā / Śāyana, Ibid., 10.5.6
   Also vide, Nir., 6.27
1182. Cf, R.V., 7.86.6
1183. surāśvāḥ / surayaḥ vṛddhāstadvat pramattā nāstikāḥ te tvāṁ pīyanti / pīyatirhūmsākarma /
   Śāyana, Ibid., 8.21.14
1184. Ibid., 8.2.12
1185. A.V., 6.70.1
1186. R.V., 1.19.9, 10.24.6
1187. Ibid., 10.106.10
cf. kāruraham tato bhīsagupalaprakṣiṇī nanā / nānādhiyo vasūyavo’nu gāiva
tasthimendrāyendo pari srava // 

i.e. 'A bard am I, my dad’s a leech, mammy lays corn upon the stones. Striving for wealth, with varied plans, we follow our desires like kine. Flow, Indu, flow for Indras sake.'

Here it is seen that the members of the same family took different professions for their livelihood. There was freedom and mobility of labour and the occupations, prescribed to the four varṇas had not yet developed in the society.

**Agriculture**

Amongst the principal occupations, agriculture was the principal means of living of the Vedic Āryans. Economic stability depended upon it which was regarded as a respectable profession at that period. The physical features, soil and climate of the Sapta-Sindhu region helped the people much to engage in agriculture.

From the Rgvedic hymns, it is understood that in the Vedic age the Āryans lived together in villages. The word *grama* has been used in the sense of a village which denotes a settled state of existence. The most important factor in the practise of agriculture is land. It is mentioned that Indra bestowed the Āryans new lands for establishing agricultural settlements. When the Āryans first entered the land of seven rivers they had to make lands amendable to agriculture. At that period, villages were divided into three parts, i.e. the village proper, arable land and pasture lands. The arable land was under private ownership and the pasture land was considered to be the common and undivided property of the village. Villages were surrounded by kṣetras, i.e. fields which were presided over by Kṣetrapati or lord of the field. For agricultural purpose, fertile plot of land was selected. The land which was fit for cultivation was known as *urvara* i.e. fertile which was divided into fields properly measured with a rod.
Various stages of agriculture

In the Rgvedic verses, various stages of agriculture are referred to, i.e. ploughing, sowing, reaping, making bundles of sheaves and thrashing and winnowing. In the hymn dedicated to agriculture, various agricultural personifications are addressed, i.e. Kṣetrapati, Śunāśtra and Sītā. According to Wilson, it is said in the Grhya Sūtras that each verse is to be silently repeated, with an oblation to fire, at the commencement of ploughing. In agriculture first of all, the ground was made prepared by ploughing and manuring. Cowdung was used for manuring which is mentioned by the term sakrt. After manuring, the seeds were sown on the ground which was done by reciting a Ṛgvedic vese, e.g.

yunakta śrā vi yugā tanudhvāṁ kṛte yonau vapateha bijam /
girā ca śruṣṭiḥ sabharā asanno nediya itsṛṇyāḥ pakvameyāt //

To carry on agricultural work, the people of the Ṛgvedic age made use of a plough- the sine qua non of agriculture, ploughshare, a pair of oxen, a mattock, sickle etc. Plough is called a śrā or lāṅgala. The terms śuna and śrā used in the Ṛgvedic hymn are defined by Roth as ploughshare and plough. Griffith translates it as two deities or deified objects who bless or are closely connected with agriculture. In the Ṛgvedasamhitā a ploughshare is called phāla made of iron and wood. The pole of the plough is called ḫā, to which the yoke or yuga was fastened and tied with ropes. At that period, oxen were used to draw the plough which were bound with traces and urged with the goad, i.e. asṭrā by the

1196. Ibid., 10.48.7, 10.94.13, 10.101.4, 10.131.2
1197. Ibid., 4.57
1198. Wilson, H H., op cit., vol. 3, on 4.57, p. 319
1199. R.V., 1.161.10
1200. Ibid., 10.101.3
1201. Ibid., 2.14.11, 8.78.10, 10.48.7, 10.68.1,3, 10.71.2, 10.94.13, 10.101.3,4,7, 10.117.7
1202. yunakta śrā vi yugā tanudhvāṁ kṛte yonau vapateha bijam /Ibid., 10.101.3
1203. Ibid., 4.57.4
1204. Ibid, 4.57
1205. Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op. cit., on 4.57.5, p. 235
1206. Vide, Ibid.
1207. R.V., 4.57.8
1208. Ibid, 1 184.3, 3.53.17
1209. Ibid., 4.57.4
1210. Ibid., 10.102.8
ploughman. The *Atharvaveda* also mentions bulls which were used to draw the plough. The *Rgvedasamhita* mentions the term *stūta* which means the furrow and she is addressed as a deity. Indra is praised to bless the work by pressing down and deepening the furrow and Pūšan to guide its course. The seeds were sown in the furrow. The process of cleansing food grains and grinding them were known to the Rgvedic Āryans. The grains were carted to their homes and stored in granaries called *ūrdara*. It was measured with a *khār* before being stored. The grains were stored in a basket called *sthivi*. According to Griffith, it is a measure, basket or instrument connected with corn. Thus, the grains were stored in a place free from dust, etc., from which quantities were extracted whenever needed.

Agriculture was practised either through the absence of irrigation system or by artificial irrigation system.

**Agriculture without irrigation system**

The Vedic Āryans depended upon timely rain for their cultivation. For timely rain, the devotees prayed to gods like Indra and the Maruts. God Indra was prayed for timely rain and thus, Indra is called *apāṁ netā*, i.e. carrier of water. Similarly, the Maruts are invoked for rain. Besides, rivers were also addressed to increase the fertility of the soil to the growth of grains and plants. River Sarasvatī is called *vājinīvati* or *vājini* as its waters cause grain fields abundantly fertile

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1211. A.V., 6.91.1
1212. R.V., 4.57.6,7
1213. Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 4.57.6, p. 235
1214. *indrah stūm ni grhnatu tām pūśānu yacchatu / sa naḥ payasvatā duhmuttārāmuttārām samām // R.V., 4.57.7*
1215. Ibid.
1216. *upalapraksinī nānā / Ibid., 9.112.3*
1217. Ibid., 1.9.8
1218. Ibid., 2.14.11
1219. Ibid., 4.32.17
1220. *bhāsapatih parvatebhyo vītūryā nirgā ṛpe yavamiva sthivibhyah / Ibid., 10 68.3*
1221. Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 10.68.3, p. 582
1222. *R.V., 10 68.3*
1223. Ibid., 4.57.8
1224. Ibid., 1.85.5
1225. *meghabhedanadvārā apāṁ netā prerakaḥ saḥ Indraḥ...// Sāyana, Ibid., 2.12.7*
1226. Ibid., 1.3.10, 2.41.18, 6.61.3,4, 7.96.3
1227. Ibid., 6.61.6
resulting in profuse yield of harvest. The bank of the river Sarasvatī was the source of cultivation which helps to get food and grow immense crops by the Āryans.

**Agriculture by artificial irrigation system**

People of the Rgvedic period did not solely depend upon rain for watering the land. In this Veda, there is mention of both natural and man-made irrigation.\(^{1230}\) In a Rgvedic verse the word *khanitrimā ēpah*, i.e. water produced by digging indicates artificial irrigation system.\(^{1231}\) There are references to artificial waterways known as *kulyā*\(^{1232}\), *kevata*\(^{1233}\), *avata*\(^{1234}\) etc. Water of such *avata* or artificial well were unfailing (*aksitam*) and were always full of waters.\(^{1235}\) The fields were watered by such wells. Water was supplied into fields by means of irrigation canals from rivers, streams, ponds, lakes and tanks.\(^{1236}\)

**Agricultural products**

In the Rgvedic period, the major part of the cultivated land of the village was devoted to growing crops. For that village site was generally placed along the river banks which made irrigation easier and the raising of crops more secure. *Yava* or barley was mainly cultivated\(^{1237}\) which needed rain.\(^{1238}\) It is said that when the land was moistened by a shower of rain then barley thrive well.\(^{1239}\) *Dhānya* or paddy is another crop that was cultivated by the Vedic Āryans.\(^{1240}\) The word *dhānāḥ* in the *Rgvedasamhitā* is explained by Sāyaṇācārya as *bhraṣṭayavatandulān* which indicates that the barley and rice was roasted and taken as a food item.\(^{1241}\)

\(^{1230}\) *ya āpo divyā utā vā svartani khanitrimā utā vā yāḥ svayamjāḥ / samudrārtha yāḥ śucayah pāvakāstā āpo devirīha mānavantu // Ibid., 7.49.2*

\(^{1231}\) Ibid.

\(^{1232}\) *āpo na sādhumabhi yatsamakṣarantsomāsa indram kulyāva hradam // Ibid., 10.43.7*

\(^{1233}\) *mākriṃeṇaṃkṛti riśanāmākṛti samā śāri kevate // Ibid., 6.54.7*

\(^{1234}\) *avataḥ kūpah // Sāyana, Ibid., 1.85.10*

\(^{1235}\) Also vide, *Ibid., 4.50.3, 10.101.5,7*

\(^{1236}\) Ibid., 10.101.6

\(^{1237}\) *sākam gavah suvate pacyate yavo na te vāya upa dasyanti dhenavo nāpa dasyanti dhenavah // R.V., 1.135.8*

\(^{1238}\) Also vide, *Ibid., 5.85.3*

\(^{1239}\) Ibid., 2.5.6, 5.85.3

\(^{1240}\) Ibid., 1.162

\(^{1241}\) Sāyana, *Ibid., 1.162*
as mentioned in the *Rgveda* possibly means rice seed or seed of corn.\textsuperscript{1242} Paddy cultivation required plenty of rain. So, there is prayer for rain\textsuperscript{1243} or prayers for the growth for plenty of food, cattle and kine.\textsuperscript{1244} Cultivation of the crops required some special skills too and the Vedic Āryans had the knowledge of such skills. They adopted various means and methods to avert such scarcities and famines. The enemies of agriculture which may bring danger in producing abundance of crops were birds\textsuperscript{1245}, insects\textsuperscript{1246}, demons\textsuperscript{1247}, natural factors\textsuperscript{1248}, etc. People engaged in agriculture kept away birds from robbing them of the growing corn by uttering loud cries.\textsuperscript{1249} They had to eradicate all the obnoxious weeds from the fields. Inspite of all such destroying elements the granary of the cultivator was always full of *yava*.\textsuperscript{1250} Thus, it can be noted that barley and paddy were the two staple crops that were cultivated by the Rgvedic Āryans, whereas *godhūma* or wheat was not mentioned in the *Rgvedasamhitā*.

From the study of the Rgvedic hymns, it can be said that agriculture is coeval with human civilization. With the dawn of civilization, man took to this occupation as the principal means of his livelihood. From the *Aksasūkta* it is clear that by cultivation only one would get honour as well as wealth.\textsuperscript{1251} For all such reasons, agriculture attained a considerable importance during the Rgvedic period which was the prime source of Vedic economy.

**Cattle breeding**

The other profession which was not less important than agriculture was cattle breeding. It was an important means of living and chief source of income at that period.

**Necessity of cattle**

From the study of the Rgvedic hymns, it is clear that after the development of agriculture cattle remained the principal wealth of the Vedic Āryans.

### Agricultural stage increased the value of cattle. Because without such animals,

\textsuperscript{1242} Ibid., 5.53.13, 10.94.13
\textsuperscript{1243} Ibid., 4.57.1, 7.101.3,4, 10.50.3, 10.105.1
\textsuperscript{1244} a nah pavaṣya vaṣumaddhirapya vadasaśvavādgomadiyavamatsuvtyam / yāyaṁ hi soma pitaro mama sthana divo mūrdhānaḥ prashṭītā vayakṛtaḥ // Ibid., 9.69.8
\textsuperscript{1245} Ibid., 10.68.1
\textsuperscript{1246} A.V., 6.50
\textsuperscript{1247} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1248} Ibid., 6.50.142
\textsuperscript{1249} R.V., 10 68.1
\textsuperscript{1250} Ibid., 2.14.11
\textsuperscript{1251} Ibid., 10.34.13
agriculture could not be undertaken. Because of the importance of cattle in agriculture, every householder was eager to possess their own cattle and fertile land to use in cultivation, i.e. sa hi śardho na mārutam tuviśvanirapnasvatīrvarāsviṣṭanirārtanāsviṣṭaniḥ.\footnote{Ibid., 1127.6}

The possession of a large number of cattle provided them not only with food and drink, but also clothing, the primary need of human life. From such animals they gained milk and meat used in daily life and also sacrificial purposes. From the cattles possessed by the kings they made gifts to the priests, singers and to the needy one. At that period gift to the needy was considered meritorious. Besides, the gifts of cow, horses, asses, camels, etc., were given.\footnote{Ibid., 1.126.2, 5.30.12, 15, 7.18.21, 22, 8.1.32, 33, 10.85.13, 4.24.10, 4.41.6, 9.326-328} Even cattle were used as gift in marriage ceremonies too.\footnote{Ibid., 10.85.13} Cattle became a unit of exchange and trade. Cattle were exchanged for the necessities of life. At that period, cow was a unit of exchange.\footnote{Ibid., 4.24.10}

Such animals were used for riding and transport purposes both in war and peace.

**Cattles**

For all such reasons, the Vedic Āryans paid their attention to the growth and improvement of cattle—the chief wealth during the Rgvedic period. Among the four castes, the Vaiśyās were the agriculturalists and could manage to produce fine breeds of cattle. According to Manu, when Prajāpati created cattle, he made them over to the Vaiśyās and if a Vaiśya is willing to keep them, it must not be kept by any other caste.\footnote{Manu., 9.326-328} Moreover, chiefs and leaders of men owned large herds of cattle. The Rgvedasamhitā divides such animals into three classes, viz. vāyavya or those of the air, āranya or those of the forest and grāmya or those of the village.\footnote{R. V., 10.90.8} Among such type of animals, individual ownership was known of the grāmya animals. The principal grāmya or domestic animals consisted of cow and horse.\footnote{Ibid.}

Due to the economic importance and its products, cow became indispensable among the various domesticated animals at that period. It remained for a long time
as the standard of value in ancient India. For social and religious activities cows played an important role. The Rgvedic seers laid so much importance to cows that a hymn is addressed to a cow also. From this hymn, it is clear that for pasturing the cattle grazing grounds were used. **Gostha** was the place where the cattle used to graze or stand or take rest. Moreover, the term vrāja also indicates the place where cattle were taken out for grazing or the stables that are filled with kine. The cows and other animals were taken out from the gosīhas for pasture in the morning and they returned in the evening. For the purpose of grazing, the cattle were placed under a cowherd, who after grazing the cattle led them to the respective houses. The Vedic Āryans prayed to god Pūșan- the god of shepherd, protector and multiplier of cattle to protect their cattle from robbers and cattle lifters. In the Rgvedic period, people were eager to increase their cattle. So, they prayed to gods to pour down rain for the growth of grass in the pasture lands or to wet the grazing grounds with rain waters. At that period, cow was valued for the following reasons, viz. i) In religious activities cow was offered to the gods, ii) Cow’s milk formed one of the principal ingredients of the food of the Vedic Āryans, iii) Cows were killed for food, iv) Cowdung was used for manuring and fuel, v)
Cowhide was used for various purposes.\(^{1271}\) vi) Cow was used as gift,\(^{1272}\) vii) Cow was used as the standard of value in purchasing articles\(^{1273}\) etc.

On account of its usefulness, cow was considered *aghnyā*, i.e. not to be killed.\(^{1274}\) Besides cow, the other domesticated animals were bull or *ṛṣabha*,\(^{1275}\) buffalo or *mahīṣa*,\(^{1276}\) horse or *aśva*,\(^{1277}\) ass or *gardabha* or *rāsabha*,\(^{1278}\) camel or *uṣṭra*,\(^{1279}\) sheep or *avī*,\(^{1280}\) dog or *śvan*,\(^{1281}\) elephants\(^{1282}\) etc. Such domesticated animals were used for various purposes, i.e. for ploughing,\(^{1283}\) drawing chariots,\(^{1284}\) for food and drink,\(^{1285}\) riding,\(^{1286}\) for warfare,\(^{1287}\) racing,\(^{1288}\) manufacturing woolen garments,\(^{1289}\) domestic utensils\(^{1290}\) etc.

**Trade and Commerce**

Both trade and commerce were the important sources of economy at that period. The Vedic Āryans were well versed both in the internal trade and trade with foreign countries too. Trade and commerce was regulated by a group of people called Pani. They are described as selfish and niggardly.\(^{1291}\) The *Ṛgvedasamhitā* mentions the word *vanij* for a trader and there is reference to a wandering merchant.\(^{1292}\)

From the use of the verb *krt* in this *Veda*, it can be inferred that at that time

\(^{1271}\) Ibid., 6.48.18  
\(^{1272}\) Ibid., 10 107 7  
\(^{1273}\) Ibid., 4.24.10  
\(^{1274}\) Also vide, Manu., 3.29  
\(^{1275}\) aghnyā / gorāma itat / ahananīyā gauḥ.../ Sāyana on R.V., 1.164.27  
\(^{1276}\) Also vide, Ibid., 1.164.40, 4.1.6, 5.83.8, 8.69.2, 10.87.16, Nir., 11.43  
\(^{1277}\) R.V., 10.85.10  
\(^{1278}\) Ibid., 5.29.7, 8.35.7,9, 9.87.7  
\(^{1279}\) Ibid., 1.163.9, 2.27.16, 4.42.5, 10.75.8  
\(^{1280}\) rāsabhasya bhavadyāśvasthānyasya gardabhasya.../ Sāyana, Ibid., 1.34.9  
\(^{1281}\) Also vide, Ibid., 3.53.23  
\(^{1282}\) Ibid., 1.138.2, 8.5.37, 8.46.22,31  
\(^{1283}\) Ibid., 1.138.4, 4.22.2, 9.109.16, 10.26.6  
\(^{1284}\) Ibid., 2.39.4, 7.55.2,5, 8.46.28, 10.14.10,11, 10.86.4  
\(^{1285}\) Ibid., 4.4.1, 8.33.8, 10.40.4  
\(^{1286}\) Ibid., 4.57.4  
\(^{1287}\) Ibid., 1.34.9, 10.85.10  
\(^{1288}\) Ibid., 5.29 7.8  
\(^{1289}\) Ibid., 1.163.9, 2.27.16, 4.42.5  
\(^{1290}\) Ibid., 9.37.5, 9.86.3, 9.97.54  
\(^{1291}\) Ibid., 2.34.3, 7.69.1, 9.109.10  
\(^{1292}\) Ibid., 4.22.2, 10 26.6  
\(^{1293}\) pra suvāno akṣāḥ sahasradhārastīrah pavitrani vi vāramavyayam // Ibid., 9.109.16  
\(^{1294}\) panim paṇanaśīlam vanijmadārjanam avasam kevalam svāṭman eva tarpakam ācaḥhāda ājaghāna...// Sāyana, Ibid., 6.61.1  
\(^{1295}\) etā dhīyam kṛṇavāma sakẖāyopayā yā mātā ṛṇuta vrajam goh /  
\(^{1296}\) yayā manuvīśīśipram jīgāya yayā vanigvānkurāpā purīṣam // Ibid., 5.45.6
purchasing of thing was done.\textsuperscript{1293} But, all exchange was done by the system of barter, i.e. the exchange of one article for another.\textsuperscript{1294} Due to the absence of coins the barter system was pursued by the exchange of commodities. Cow had become a unit of value and a medium of exchange where things were valued at the worth of so many cows. Indra’s image is sold away for ten cows.\textsuperscript{1295} Moreover, Soma plant was bartered for kine.\textsuperscript{1296} Next comes the stage where the medium of exchange was some articles commonly found and valued for its utility. Gradually pieces of gold called \textit{niska} were used as means of exchange. In a Rgvedic verse there is reference to a priest who claims to have received a hundred niskas along with a hundred horses as fee for a hundred sacrifices.\textsuperscript{1297} \textit{Niska} was probably a piece of gold of a fixed weight and a sort of currency too. According to Macdonell and Keith, \textit{niska} in the \textit{Rgveda} and in the later period, denotes a gold ornament worn on the neck.\textsuperscript{1298} Sāyaṇācārya also interprets the term \textit{niska} as a gold chain.\textsuperscript{1299} Besides \textit{niska}, mention is made of lumps of gold called \textit{hiranyapinda}. In a verse, Garga speaks of ten lumps of gold along with ten horses and some other articles.\textsuperscript{1300} In the Rgvedic society the word \textit{śulka} is used for price.\textsuperscript{1301} At that time there was no silver currency. Haggling between the buyer and the seller is seen but bargain once made, held good.\textsuperscript{1302} A beautiful scene of haggling is seen in a verse of the \textit{Rgveda} where it is noted that the seller thought that ten cows were not adequate for an image of Indra.\textsuperscript{1303} Barter system existed in the period of \textit{Atharvaveda} too.\textsuperscript{1304}

At that period loans and rates of interest were also well known. Pānis were described as usurer who used to lend money to the needy one. Reference to debt

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1293} krñātī krayām karoṭi / tadānti h e kretāro yuṣmākām madhye evampi samayāḥ kriyate / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 4.24.10
\item \textsuperscript{1294} Ibid., 4.24.9
\item \textsuperscript{1295} ka imañā daśabhīrmamendrāni kṛñātī dhenubhīḥ / yadā vṛtrāni jaṅghanadathainām m e punardadat // Ibid., 4.24.10
\item \textsuperscript{1296} Ibid., 8.32.20
\item \textsuperscript{1297} Ibid., 1.126.2
\item \textsuperscript{1298} Vide, Macdonell, A.A., & Keith, A.B., op.cit., vol. 1, p. 454
\item \textsuperscript{1299} niśkena suvaṇenālakṣātraṅgāḥ / Sāyaṇa on R.V., 5.19.3
\item \textsuperscript{1300} daśāvandaśa kōśāndāsa vastrādhiḥbhōjaṭā / daśo hiranyapindāndivodasdastāniṣṭām // Ibid., 6.47.23
\item \textsuperscript{1301} śulkāya mūlāya na para deyāṁ na viṃśiṇāi / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 8.1.5
\item \textsuperscript{1302} Ibid., 4.24.9
\item \textsuperscript{1303} Ibid., 4.24.10
\item \textsuperscript{1304} A.V., 3 15.4
\end{itemize}
contracted at dice is met with in the *Rgveda*. In the *Aṣṭāṣṭakā*, the result of the non-
payment of a debt is seen which may force the dicer into slavery. It is seen that creditor
put pressure on debtors or their friends, relatives to pay off the debt for which
persons involved in debt had to suffer their days in anxiety. So, prayers are offered to
Varuṇa for the forgiveness of sins that may have been committed through dicing etc.

In trade, sometimes the traders travelled to distant lands in view of larger profits.
Both inland and foreign trade were known. At that period internal trade was
carried on both by river and land. There are references to all kinds of transport and
means of communication. Caravans consisting of bullocks, steeds, camels, dogs, etc., were used to export agricultural products from one place to another.
There is also reference to trading in distant lands. Such trade and commercial
enterprise shows the growth of mutual interdependence between the various parts of
the country. The trade with the neighbouring provinces was mainly carried by river
or sea transport. Various products were exported to neighbouring provinces by water
communication. According to Bühler also, sea travel was quite familiar to the
Āryans. References to sea-going ships and merchants who undertook sea-voyages
in search of wealth indicate the existence of trade with the countries across the
seas. Reference is made to a mythological voyage for three days and nights along the
dry bed of the ocean to the shore of the sea in a ship of hundred oars. Bhujyu, a
Rājarṣi, son of Tugra, rescued when in danger of drowning. It is stated that Bhujyu
had embarked on a maritime expedition against the enemies of his father, but
encountered a storm, in which his vessel was lost; he was saved, and brought back to
his father by the intervention of the Asvins. Varuṇa was the lord of the ocean who
knew the paths of the ships and of the winds. Vasiṣṭha also describes his sea

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1305. R.V., 10.34.10
1306. Ibid., 10.34.4
1307. Ibid., 7.86.6
1308. Ibid., 1.56.2
1309. Ibid., 8.46.30
1310. Ibid., 8.46.28
1312. R.V., 1.48.3
1313. Ibid., 1.116.4, 5
1314. Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., *op.cit.*, on 1 112.6, p. 72
1315. Vide, Wilson, H.H., *op.cit.*, vol. 1, on 1.112.6, p. 351
1316. vedā yo vināṁ padamantarikṣena pataḥ / veda nāvaḥ samudriyaḥ // R.V., 1.25.7
voyage with Varuna. Such references make it clear that at that period, the Vedic Aryans were conversant with the sea voyages for business purposes.

Other Occupations

The sphere of economic activity extended in course of time because agricultural products could not meet all the requirements of the society. So, the people of the Rgvedic age earned their livelihood by dint of their labour in various fields. It is to be mentioned that in ancient India like today both men and women were engaged in earning their livelihood. The various professions that existed in the society of the Rgvedic age is discussed below-

Physician

Of the various professions mentioned in the Rgvedasamhita, a very important one is that of the physician who was held in great respect. That the specialists in the branch of medical science were prevalent in the society is known from the mention of the terms bhiṣajā, i.e. a physician and in one place bhiṣaktanah, i.e. the best of all physicians. The Rgvedic Aryans had concept of diseases based on the fundamental notion that illness were caused by demonic entities which entered the body. So, a physician is also known by the term rakṣohā or rakṣohanta, i.e. a fiend-slayer. In one place he is known as anitvaccatanaḥ, i.e. the chaser of a disease. The physician always had store of herbs at hand. God Rudra is regarded as the best of the physicians as interpreted by Sāyana- rudra...bhiṣajāṁ cikitsābhijñānāṁ madhye bhiṣaktamam atiśayena bhaiṣajyasya kartāram...

He is said to be the lord of every medicine and health as referred to in the Sāyana's commentary- viśvasya bhaṣajasya ausadhasya kṣayati, iśvaro bhavati/ sārīrasya sāṁsārikasya ca ariṣṭasya śamanāya śvaravyatiriktasya ausadhasya abhāvādbhiṣaktamatvāccāsyā bhaṣajasyavāmitvam/ He is the lord of medicines like water. Other gods associated

1317. Ibid., 7.88.3
1318. šatam te rājanbhīṣajāḥ sahasramurvti gabhīrā sumatiṣte astu / Ibid., 1.24.9
1319. Also vide, Ibid., 1.157.6
1320. saḥ bhīṣak ucyate rakṣohā rakṣohanta / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.97.6
1321. anitvaccatanaḥ / anitvā vyādhiḥ / tasya cātanaścātayita nāśayita... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid.
1322. Ibid., 10.97.6
1323. Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 2.33.4
1324. Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 5.42.11
1325. rudram jālāsabhaṣajam / Ibid., 1.43.4
with the medical practices are the Asvins or the Nāsatyas\textsuperscript{1326}, Varuṇa\textsuperscript{1327}, Soma\textsuperscript{1328}, Agni\textsuperscript{1329}, Savitr\textsuperscript{1330}, the Ādityas\textsuperscript{1331} etc. Besides \textit{Ṛgveda},\textsuperscript{1332} the Asvins are called the physicians of the gods in later literature too.\textsuperscript{1333} Such gods are worshipped to remove the diseases. During the Rgvedic age, herbal plants were also used to drive away the malady and release one from pain and grief. The hymn in praise of \textit{osadhi} with special reference to their curative powers indicates that herbs were used for curing diseases.\textsuperscript{1334}

**Handicrafts**

Many useful art of living also flourished during the Rgvedic period in which a large number of people were engaged. Several handicrafts, such as pottery, carpentry, metalwork, jewellery, weaving and leather-work etc., were common in the Rgvedic period.

**Pottery**

Some people developed themselves to industrial pursuits like pottery. The potter manufactured earthenware used for domestic and sacrificial purposes. They made pots and vessels of clay, e.g. \textit{kalaśa} made of clay and wood,\textsuperscript{1335} \textit{kumbha} or earthen jar\textsuperscript{1336} which was easily broken,\textsuperscript{1337} \textit{ukhā} or cooking pot\textsuperscript{1338} etc. It is stated that \textit{ukhā} usually mentioned in connection with sacrifice, from the \textit{Ṛgveda} onwards, which was made of clay (\textit{mṛṇmayaḥ})\textsuperscript{1339}.

**Carpentry**

Carpenter or couch-builders were well known in the Vedic age.\textsuperscript{1340} The application of the root \textit{taks}, to mean to carve out signifies that the profession of carpentry was in vogue in the Vedic society. One group of people called \textit{takṣan}\textsuperscript{1341}.

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\textsuperscript{1326} Ibid., 1.34, 1.46, 1.116.15, 16, 19, 7.71.2, 8.18.8, 8.22.10, 10.39.3
\textsuperscript{1327} Ibid., 1.24.9
\textsuperscript{1328} Ibid., 1.91.12, 8.48.11
\textsuperscript{1329} Ibid., 1.12.7
\textsuperscript{1330} Ibid., 1.35.9
\textsuperscript{1331} Ibid., 8.18.10
\textsuperscript{1332} nāsatyaḥ...bhisajau devānmāi vaidyabhitau / Śāyana, Ibid., 1.116.16
\textsuperscript{1333} aśvinau vai devānāmi bhisajau / A.B., 1.18
\textsuperscript{1334} R.V., 1.97
\textsuperscript{1335} Ibid., 1.117.12
\textsuperscript{1336} kalaśaḥ dronakalaśaḥ... / Śāyana, Ibid., 3.32.15
\textsuperscript{1337} Ibid., 1.116.7, 1.117.6, 7.33.13, 10.89.7
\textsuperscript{1338} Ibid., 8.18.10
\textsuperscript{1339} ukhāyāḥ sthālyāḥ nīkaṇṭam pākaparikṣātādhanam kāśṭham... / Śāyana, Ibid., 1.162.13 Also vide, Ibid., 1 162.15
\textsuperscript{1339} Vide, Macdonell, A.A., & Keith, A.B., op.cit., vol. 1, p. 83
\textsuperscript{1340} R.V., 1.105.18
\textsuperscript{1341} Ibid., 9 112 1
and *tāṣṭa*\(^{1342}\) were seen working in wood work. The *Rgveda* gives reference to the pains of the carpenter in bending over his work.\(^{1343}\) The carpenter or *taksan* was an indispensable artisan for society, for it was the carpenter who did all sorts of work in wood, e.g. the making of chariots (*ratha*), wagon (*anas*), boats and ships. He also made domestic utensils and furnitures. He was expert in carved work of a finer type.\(^{1344}\)

Construction of rathas was considered to be an important occupation in the Rgvedic age. The victory of war depended upon the skill of the chariot-maker in making chariots. The rathas were the chief means of transport by land which were skillfully made by the *taksan*.\(^{1345}\) *Kuliśa*, i.e. an axe is mentioned as one of his tools in making the chariots.\(^{1346}\) The Bhrgus also made chariot.\(^{1347}\) According to Sāyanācārya, the Bhrgus are the bright or dexterous carpenters, i.e. *bhrgavah diptāstaksānah* / \(^{1348}\) Many gods and goddesses are stated to have travelled by such rathas. A well-built car made by a carpenter is invoked as divine protection.\(^{1349}\) So, it can be said that the chariot-makers had an important position in the society. Another important means of transport made by carpenter was wagon or *anas*\(^{1350}\) drawn by oxen.\(^{1351}\)

References are there to household utensils as well as sacrificial utensils made of wood. These were wooden vessels or throughs called *drona*,\(^{1352}\) spoons or *camasa*,\(^{1353}\) laddle called *sruc*\(^{1354}\) for pouring clarified butter on fire.

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\(^{1342}\) taṣṭeva taṣṭa takṣako rathānimātā.../ Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.61.4
\(^{1343}\) Also vide, Ibid., 1.130.4, 10.93.12
\(^{1344}\) taṣṭeva prṣṭyāmyṛ/ yathā takṣaṇaṇaṇimaprṣṭakleṣāḥ taṣṭā vardhaṅkaḥ tadapanodanāya ārdhvabhīmukho bhavati tadvat / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.105.18
\(^{1345}\) Ibid., 1.161.9
\(^{1346}\) Ibid., 1.61.4, 1.30.6, 5.73.10, 10.93.12
\(^{1347}\) dvitā hotāram manusaśca vādhato dhiyā rathām na kuliśaḥ samrnvati / Ibid, 3.2.1
\(^{1348}\) bhrgavaḥ na bhrgavaḥ va ratham atakṣaṃ.../ athavā rathakāra bhrgavah / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.39.14
\(^{1349}\) Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 4 16.20
\(^{1350}\) Also vide, Wilson, H.H., op.cit., vol. 3, on 4.16.20 , p. 211
\(^{1351}\) R.V., 6.47.26,27,28
\(^{1352}\) Ibid., 10.85.10
\(^{1353}\) anah śakatāḥ.../ Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.86.18
\(^{1354}\) anadvahaurathasya vodhana.../ Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.85.10
\(^{1355}\) drone drume kāṣṭhe... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 6.2.8
\(^{1356}\) Also vide, Ibid., 6.37.2
\(^{1357}\) camasam tam somadhāranakṣamam kāṣṭhapāṭraviṣeṣam.../ Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.20.6
\(^{1358}\) Also vide, Ibid., 4.35.2,3
\(^{1359}\) srucēva yathā srucē juhvaḥ.../ Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.110.6
\(^{1360}\) Also vide, Ibid., 1.144.1
Metal-work

Blacksmiths and goldsmiths are separately mentioned in the *Rgvedasamhitā*. The blacksmith, i.e. the *karmāra* are mentioned in this *Veda*\(^{1355}\), who manufactured articles of metal like iron etc. From the Rgvedic verses little is known of the smith’s methods of work as well as of his tools. It is mentioned that the blacksmith smelted the ore in the furnace using the bellows.\(^{1356}\) The fire, in the proximity of one blowing with a bellows, blazes up and the smith smelts the ore in the fire. So, he is called *dhmātṛ*,\(^{1357}\) i.e. the smelter.\(^{1358}\) *Ayas*, i.e. iron was used profusely\(^{1359}\) and the blacksmith manufactured some of the important articles like agricultural implements,\(^{1360}\) horse feet,\(^{1361}\) razor\(^{1362}\) etc. References to household articles made of ayas are mentioned in the *Rgvedasamhitā*. There were metal vessels or jars called *kalāṣa*\(^{1363}\) or metal or earthen jar.\(^{1364}\) Moreover, the car of Mitra and Varuṇa is called *ayāḥsthiṇa*,\(^{1365}\) i.e. iron-pillared. At that period weapon making art also developed.\(^{1366}\) The manufacture of different weapons also required the services of blacksmiths. Reference to many-bladed thunderbolt of Indra made by the skilful *Tvāṣṭṛ*,\(^{1367}\) the arrow with a tip of *ayas*,\(^{1368}\) various weapons made of *iron*,\(^{1369}\) etc., are found.

Moreover, the use of metal or iron is seen in other places too. There is description of towns and cities of iron in the *Rgvedasamhitā*.\(^{1370}\) In those days, artificial limbs made of iron were used to join the limbs. For instance, the broken leg of Viśpalā was

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1355. Ibid., 10.72.2
1356. karmāraiva sa yatāḥ bhasthayāṇśaṁupadhamati prajvalanārthavevam aṁ sam adhamat udapādayadityarthalḥ / Śāyana, Ibid., 10.72.2
1357. dhmāteva / karmāro yathā bhastrādibhiragnim samvārthayati tadvatsātmānaṁ vardhayaṭṭyarthalḥ / kincira dhmāṭṭari yathā / yatāḥ dhmāṛṣṭaṁpe vidyamano'gnistena dhmayaṁmaṁaḥ sa ātmānaṁ śiśte tīkṣṭkaroti.../ Śāyana, Ibid., 5.9.5
1358. Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 5.9.5, p. 242
1359. R.V., 6.3.5, 8.29.3
1360. Ibid., 10.117.7
1361. pādāḥ ayas ayanayāḥ ayaḥpiṇḍaśaṃśaṁ śiśte ityarthalḥ / Śāyana, Ibid., 1.163.9
1362. Ibid., 8.4.16
1363. Ibid., 1.117.12
1364. Ibid., 4.32.19
1365. ayāḥsthiṇaṁ ayaḥmayaśaṅkum gartam ratham he varaṇa he mitra yuvām.../ Śāyana, Ibid., 5.62.8
1366. Ibid., 5.52 6, 5 57.2, 6.27.6, 7.83.1
1367. tvāṣṭṛ viśvanirṛṭmaṁ yadvajram...indram... sahasrabhrṭim anekābhīrthābhīrhīryuktam / Śāyana, Ibid., 1.85.9
1368. alakta ya ruruśṛṣṭryatho yasya ayo mukham / Ibid., 6.75.15
1369. Ibid., 6.3.5
1370. Ibid., 1.53.7, 2.20.8, 4.27.1, 10.58.8
replaced by an iron leg. The Rbhus are described with jaws of iron and Agni is described as with the teeth of iron. However, in another verse the term ayodanstra is interpreted by Sāyaṇācārya as— ayodanstra / daśatiti daṇṣṭra cakradhārā / ayomayibhscakradhārabhiryuktān / yadvā daṇśanasādhanā�ṣṭayo daṇṣṭrāh / ayomaya ārṣṭayo yesāṁ / Following Sāyaṇācārya, Wilson translates the term as ‘armed with iron weapons.’

Goldsmiths are also referred to, who generally manufacture ornaments of gold. From the Rgvedic verses, it is proved that there were abundance of gold and their use in that age. The bank of Sindhu was rich in gold or gold ornaments. According to Macdonell and Keith also, the metal called hiranya was won from the bed of rivers. Hence the Indus is called ‘golden’ and ‘of golden stream.’ Melting of gold and other metal by the goldsmith, i.e. svarṇakāra is referred to in the Rgvedasāṁhitā. Numerous ornaments of gold made by the goldsmith are spoken of in this Veda. These are ornament for the ear called karnāśobhana, ornament for neck, ornament worn on the breast called rukma, ornaments used in hand called khādi etc. Sometimes the khādis were used on the shoulders too. The Maruts were called rukmavakśas, i.e. the breasts adorned with gold. They were also described as wearing golden breast plates. Golden ornaments also

1371. Ibid., 1.116.5
1372. ṛbavāḥ... suṁsīprāḥ / śīre hanūnāśike vā / ayovatsārabbhūṭaśīprāḥ... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 4.37.4
1373. Jātavedāḥ... ayodanstraḥ ayomayadamsṭraḥ / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 10.87.2
1374. Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.88.5
1375. Wilson, H.H., op.cit., vol. 1, on 1.88.5, p. 274
1376. R.V., 10.75.8
1378. dravirna / dravirdravayitā svarṇakāraḥ / sa yathā svarṇādikam dravayati... / Sāyaṇa on R.V., 6.3.4
1379. Ibid., 1.117.5, 1.122.14, 5.19.3, 6.3.4
1380. karnāśobhanā kārnābharaṇāni... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 8.78.3
1381. Ibid., 7.56.13
1382. vaksahṣu uṛaṭhathaśe rukṣmaḥ suvarṇaratnādēnaṁ vaksahṣu / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 1.166.10
1383. khādiḥaḥ hastapādasthitakatakeṣu... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 5.53.4
1384. skandhapradeśeṣu khādiyahāḥ alamkāriśeṣeḥ... / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 7.56.13
1385. rukmavakśasah / rukṣmaṁ rocmaṁbharaṇam vaksasah uṣasi yesāṁ tādṛśiḥ he marutaḥ / Sāyaṇa, Ibid., 2.34.2
1386. Vide, Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 5.55.1, p. 267
1387. hiranyayāṁ hirai.yavarnāṁ atkān kavacān / Sāyaṇa on R.V., 5.55.6
formed part of the gift to brides by their relatives. There were profuse use of gold in the Rgvedic age, which is clear from the mention of articles made of gold, viz. gold tuban, golden helmets, horse with golden trappings, chariot wrought of gold belonged to the Nāsatyas, goden seat and reins of gold, golden wheels and axle of gold etc. Such profuse use of gold indicates the sound economic condition of the people of the Rgvedic age.

**Weaving**

The Rgvedasamhitā bears earliest references to weaving. The art of spinning and weaving developed at that period. The word vayanti gives reference to the existence of the art of weaving. Quoting the Rgvedic verses, J. Muir also states - “Weaving ... was universally practised, as we learn from the ... metaphorical use of the verb ve, “to weave”, for the composition of hymns etc.” Both men and women took keen interest in it during the Rgvedic period. Mention is made of night who was compared with the young women engaged in weaving. Another Rgvedic verse also mentions that mother wove cloths for her sons. Similarly, men also involved in weaving. In the Rgvedasamhitā, the art of weaving is compared with the sacrifice. The comparison of weaving with the sacrifice indicates that it was considered sacred. Together with the act of weaving, mention may be made of the subsidiary industry of embroidery. In the present context, the term pesāmsi is translated by Griffith as broidered garment. However, Śāyaṇacārya interprets the

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1388. śatam rāṣṭro nādhāmānasya niśkāṁchatamaṁvānpratāntasya ādam / śatam kakṣṭīva asurasya gonaṁ divi śravajārtam tātāna / Ibid., 1.126.2
1389. hiranyayāḥ hiranyamayaḥ śiprāḥ uṣṣāmamayaḥ / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 5.54.11
1390. hiranyādiprāṭ śipram śirastraṇam / suvarṇāmayaśirastraṇāḥ / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 2.34.3
1391. Also vide, Ibid., 8.7.25
1392. Ibid., 1.126.4, 10.68.11
1393. Ibid., 8.5.35
1394. Ibid., 5.5 29
1395. vayanti tāṇṭunottūṁcā samtanvanti / vastrarūpena nispādayanti / Śāyaṇa, Ibid., 6.9.2
1396. Ibid., 1.92.4
1397. R.V., 2.3.6, 2.38.4, 5.47.6, 10.26.6
1398. Ibid., 1.61.8, 7.33.9.12, 10.130.1
1400. Ibid., 1.92.4
1401. Ibid., 1.126.4
1402. Ibid., 8.5.28
1403. Ibid., 10.130.1
1404. Griffith, R.T.H., op.cit., on 1.92.4, p. 58
term peśâmsi vapate as- peśâmsi / rûpanâmaîtâ sarvairdarsâmyâni rûpañyusâ adhi vapate svâmanyadhihikâm dhârayati\textsuperscript{1405} which means U̸sás displays graces, like a dancing girl. According to Macdonell and Keith too, the term peśas denotes in the \textit{Rgveda} and later an embroidered garment such as a female dancer would wear.\textsuperscript{1406} Thus, it can be said that weaving and knitting was an useful means of living.

**Tanning or Leather work**

Tanner or craftmen who manufactured articles of leather are mentioned in the \textit{Rgvedasamhita}. Leather work was in a fairly developed stage.\textsuperscript{1407} The hides of animals were tanned and used for various purposes. Leather workers knew the art of softening leather. References are there to skin which was moistened.\textsuperscript{1408} The tanner tanned leather for the manufacture of various articles from it. At that period skin clothing and utensils, made of animal skin were in great use. There were leather rope,\textsuperscript{1409} leather garment, chariots covered with cow skin,\textsuperscript{1410} domestic utensils like \textit{drti}\textsuperscript{1411} or leather bags in order to store large quantities of liquids, skin vessels for storing honey,\textsuperscript{1412} curd,\textsuperscript{1413} skin filter,\textsuperscript{1414} pavitra or sieve made of sheep’s wool either woven or plaited for purifying Soma juice.\textsuperscript{1415} Besides, cow hide was used for manufacturing a string to the bow.\textsuperscript{1416} From such references it is easily understood that leather industry was highly developed during the Rgvedic period.

**Garland- making**

The \textit{Rgvedasamhita} yields little information about the art of garland-making. Besides other ornaments, the people of the Rgvedic age used to wear garlands which is clear from the term \textit{sraj} or garland made either of flowers or golden lace wrought.

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\textsuperscript{1405} Sāyana on R.V., 1.92.4
\textsuperscript{1406} Vide, Macdonell, A.A., & Keith, A.B., op.cit., vol. 2, p. 22
\textsuperscript{1407} R.V., 1.85.5, 5.85.1, 6.8.3, 7.63.1
\textsuperscript{1408} carmeva parimitamalpam carma yathà aprayatnena kledyate.../ Sāyana, Ibid., 1.85.5
\textsuperscript{1409} Ibid., 10.101.6
\textsuperscript{1410} Ibid., 6 47.27
\textsuperscript{1411} drtim iva carmamayam surâpâtramiva.../ Sāyana, Ibid., 1.191.10
Also vide, Ibid., 6.48.18, 7.89.2, 8.5.19
\textsuperscript{1412} Ibid., 8.5.19
\textsuperscript{1413} Ibid., 6.48.18
\textsuperscript{1414} Ibid., 1.28.9
\textsuperscript{1415} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1416} pavitraih pavanaih bharitraîh /...taih madhvah mādhuryopetān somān punanti śodhayanti /
Sāyana, Ibid., 3.36.7
Also vide, Ibid., 8.33.1
\textsuperscript{1416} Ibid., 6.75.11
into flowers.\textsuperscript{1417} It proves that there were garland-makers whose profession was to make flower garlands or wreaths.\textsuperscript{1418} Thus, garland-making is alluded to in the \textit{Rgveda} a few times.

\textbf{Miscellaneous Occupations}

According to the \textit{Rgveda}, there were certain people who earned their livelihood by hunting. Barbers and usurers are often referred to in this \textit{Veda}. These are discussed below-

\textbf{Hunting}

Hunting was one of the important sources of livelihood. The people of the Rgvedic age were engaged in hunting to protect agricultural field and domesticated animals from wild beasts. The word \textit{svaghnin} indicates the existence of hunter, gamester or professional gambler in the Rgvedic age.\textsuperscript{1419} Sayanācārya takes the word for a fowler’s wife who used to cut birds in pieces.\textsuperscript{1420} The term also indicates bird catchers for their flesh to be used as food. They made use of various kinds of instruments for hunting, e.g. arrow,\textsuperscript{1421} nets\textsuperscript{1422} or pitfalls\textsuperscript{1423} and even the animals\textsuperscript{1424} too.

Like the animals, fish was also caught from water\textsuperscript{1425}, probably from the deep water.\textsuperscript{1426}

\textbf{Barber}

Barbers are also alluded to in the \textit{Rgvedasamhitā}. Reference to barber is seen in a Rgvedic verse where the term \textit{vaprī} indicates the barber.\textsuperscript{1427} Sayanācārya in his

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1417} Ibid., 5.53.4
\item \textsuperscript{1418} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{1419} Ibid., 1.92.10
\item \textsuperscript{1420} ibid., 5.22
\item \textsuperscript{1421} Ibid., 2.42.2
\item \textsuperscript{1422} Ibid., 3.45.1
\item \textsuperscript{1423} Ibid., 10.28.10
\item \textsuperscript{1424} Ibid., 10.86.4
\item \textsuperscript{1425} Ibid., 7.18.6
\item \textsuperscript{1426} Ibid., 10.68.8
\item \textsuperscript{1427} Ibid., 10.142.4
\end{itemize}
commentary explains the term as — \textit{vaptā nāpito vapti munḍayati}.../\textsuperscript{1428} The term \textit{nṛtā} is also used to indicate the barber.\textsuperscript{1429} The Barber used razor as his instrument.\textsuperscript{1430}

**Usurer**

The \textit{Ṛgvedasāṁhitā} gives indication of the existence of money transactions. Debts were contracted for various purposes which lead men to poverty and make them homeless and destitute.\textsuperscript{1431} According to Yāska in his \textit{Nirukta}, the term \textit{bekanāṭa} means the usurer because they make their principal sum double, or because they advance on security of double value, or because they demand double price.\textsuperscript{1432} People were pressurised by usurer for the repayment of debt.\textsuperscript{1433} Debtors were frequently bound by their creditors by ropes presumably as a means of putting pressure on them.\textsuperscript{1434} The repayment of debt is also rightly noted in the Ṛgvedic verse.\textsuperscript{1435}

The \textit{Ṛgveda} speaks of the existence of slaves which were employed in the society. Economic discrimination in the society led one to slavery. Mention may be made of the gift of fifty slave girls in a Ṛgvedic verse.\textsuperscript{1436}

Thus, from the above discussion, it can be said that the economy of the country was rural one. The greater part of Indian population then lived in villages and depended on agriculture, cattle-breeding and handicrafts for their livelihood. At that period, people on the whole were prosperous and led a life of peace and contentment. But a few traces from the \textit{Ṛgveda} furnish the data that all members of society did not possess equal amount of wealth. There was distinction between the rich and the poor. The term \textit{maghavan} refers to the representatives of the rich,\textsuperscript{1437} who were distinguished by their liberality. There was another class which was bereft of wealth and booty. The misery of the starving people is described in the \textit{Ṛgveda}.\textsuperscript{1438} During that period, there was sense

\textsuperscript{1428} Sāyana, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1429} nṛtṛvīva / nṛ tū vati keśena riktkaroti nṛtūṁnāpitaḥ / Sāyana, Ibid., 1.92.4
\textsuperscript{1430} nāpitasya bāḥvoriya sthitam kṣurāṁ ivā / Sāyana, Ibid., 8.4.16
\textsuperscript{1431} Ibid., 10 34
\textsuperscript{1432} bekanāṭaḥ khalu kusādino bhavanti / dvigunākārino vā / dvigunādāyino vā / dvigunām kāmayanta iti vā / Nir., 6.26
\textsuperscript{1433} R.V., 10.34
\textsuperscript{1434} rajjvā baddhametani kitavanī he kitavāḥ yūyami nayata yathetadeśāṁ prāpayateti / Sāyana, Ibid., 10.34.4
\textsuperscript{1435} Ibid., 2.27.4, 8.47.17
\textsuperscript{1436} adāmme purukutsyah pārcīসāstam trasadaśyanvadhūnāṁ / mamniṣṭho ariyaḥ satpatiḥ // Ibid., 8.19.36
\textsuperscript{1437} Ibid., 4.17.8
\textsuperscript{1438} Ibid., 10.117
of morality in earning money. The Rgvedic verses hold that everyone should earn his livelihood in honest and proper way. By doing so, one can gain prosperity which is stable.\textsuperscript{1439} From the prayer found in a Rgvedic verse, it is clear that nobody was allowed to possess wealth beyond his limit.\textsuperscript{1440} Thus, with the sense of morality, the Rgvedic Āryans earned their livelihood by dint of labour in various fields. High ideals of morality were often emphasized to be practised by all the people in the society.

\textsuperscript{1439} Ibid., 1.132.2
\textsuperscript{1440} Ibid., 1.81.9