Republics in Vedic Age
Setauket Aruneya Gautama to the samiti of Panchals mention, at the time Pravahan Javali was
the king of Panchala presenting himself in the samiti. The speaker wanted to prove himself
‘Brilliant’ not be contradicted, in the samiti. To these deliberations would also refer the prayer
in the Arthavaveda.

“May the enemy not win the debate--- overcome the debate of those that debates against us,
render them avoid of force!”

“Overcome than the debate of him i.e. hostile to us o Indra Encourage us with thy might! Render
me superior in debate.”

That question other than political were also occasionally in the samiti is born record of
Svataketu. Svataketu a younger learned who as the Chhandogya Upanishad says claimed
complete knowledge of the sacred and philosophic literature at the age of 24. As we see that
after completing the education the youngsters presenting himself before the samiti, also called
Parishad of Panchala. King Pravahan Javali puts five questions none of which the presumptuous
young man (Kumara) could answer, and had go away with the remark of Javali. ‘How could
anybody who did not know these things say that he had been educated?’ Here, we find the
Samiti acting as a sort of national academy.

Samiti’s another to function is to dev loped a society. In samiti was a product of
developed not early in Vedic age. The developed stage of debate to win over the opinion of
others, all point to a culture of considerable degree. We think that samiti was equivalent early
folk assemblies of Western Europe.

The president of the samiti was called Pati or Isana or president. For intense see the
mantra cited in Paraskara Grihya sutra. ‘The lord (Isana) of this assembly is a man
insuperable in his power.'
As we observe above, that the whole were considered to be present in the samiti should be preferred. We already find in the Vedic period the principle of representation appreciated and variously acted upon ;we have the gramini or the ‘leader’ of the town or village ,as a representative person in the coronation ceremony. From a passage in the ‘hymn to the land’ of the Aritharvaveda, where the samiti of the whole land are referred it seems that those who are assembled (semagarh)were the ‘village together’(samgramma).Saryata Manava ‘woundred about’woth his gramma. In later times in Law books ‘the village’ fight out legal disputes; the village is even find. The gramini was the key stone of the village administration. We have the village together meeting (samgramma) desirous of agreement in Taittereya Brahmana it seems that the village formed on the basis of the constitution of the samiti if not originally certainly in later times.

The Samiti had a very long life. In Vedic Index we find Samiti and Sabha were the two daughters of Prajapati the creator. Thiers continuous existence attested by Rgveda and Atharveda and later in Chhandogya Upanishad (800 B.C.-700B.C.) which nearly marks the end of Vedic period.

The Sabha

There was another noteworthy constitutional organism in the Vedic Period and later. It was Sabha the sister of Samiti. This is also a popular assembly. Prayer for co-operation in the Sabha shows that discord in the Sabha assembly was much as disliked and dreaded as in the Samiti. The Sabha called Narishta which Sayana explains as a resolution of many that can not be broken or violated. Hence from the inviolability the name is derived with reference to this name, the speaker wishes that ‘all those that sit assembled in thee, Uttar speech in harmony with
me.' Free discussion was thus held in the Sabha and a resolution of the Sabha was considered binding on all the inviolable.

Probably, it was a standing and stationary body of selected men working under the authority of the Samiti. Sabha means lit. 'A body of men shining together.'

Those entitled to a seat there in were invested, so to say with lustre. They are pointedly alluded to. They were object of special respect. The Sabha had a president was called Sabhapati. It seems there was elders in the Sabha. Elders and Fathers of councils in other ancient bodies holding executive authority.

It seems it was an appellation court 'criminal' of criminal courts. In the Purushamedha of the Sukla-Yajurveda, Sabha chara 'one going to the Sabha' in dedicated as victim of justice. Again, Rgveda describes himself as free from blame. The White Yajurveda mentions the people free from sins and committed in the Sabha.

Jataka spoke verse in the subject of Sabha, that in Sabha they had no good people, they do not speak out of dharma (justice) are not good that those who avoid personal sentiments and speak out justice are called the good people.

It seems Sabha, a later Rgvedic institution, the expression Sabha is used in several sense, for intense, to denote a hall a house the gambling hall the royal court. This references is found in Rgveda. Samiti was later institution before Sabha.

Vidatha and Sena:— Sabha and Samiti were the popular assembly in ancient time. Vidatha was a religious assembly, where the people gathered which had existed even earlier than the Samiti. It seems to have been a present assembly from which the Sabha, Samiti and Sena differentiated for we find the Vidatha associated with civil, military and religious function (roth). In earlier time Sena or the army, which was in early times in the 'nation-in-arms, was regarded as a body
by itself and evidently as a constitutional unit. Yet references of Sena is not available, it was only a constitutional unit.

In the post Vedic period education was separately organized in Charanas; which were a species of Vedic faculties. The Parishad or convocation of learning had evidently separated from the national Parishat or Samiti. Economic life similarly was crystallized in trade guilds and guild merchants whose existence is traced in Jataka and Dharamasutra.

In this period national life thus expressed itself in to various self-governing institutions, and doing so, it really carried forward in Vedic trades and communal institutions.

Notes & References

1- In Vedic times, the Hindu society was devided into janas tribes or nations for eg. Anus yadus, Kuru, But at the same time they werew consciouss of the fact that they all belonging to one common race for all of them called themselves “Arya” (आर्य) The people or tribes were called Visah (विश) from which the word Vaishya (One of the people, ‘the commoner’) is derived. On vedic society consult Zimner, Attinsisches Leben see also McDonall & Keith, Vedic Index, sub. Arya & Jan

2 विशस्त्या सर्ववासुः Rgveda X.173 Arthavaveda VI 87-9

पुरायते स जजित्वात् कल्पताधिः; Arthavaveda VI 88,3

त्वा विशेष वृत्तताः राज्याय; Arthavaveda III 4,2

Also Arthavaveda III 345 see chapter XXIII on vedic kingship.

3- Cf. नार्त्त समिति कल्पते Arthavaveda V,19.15
4- See Jayaswal K.P. Hindu Polity ch. XXXIII Page, 319-320.

5- Arthavaveda-Veda VI 64.

6- RgVeda – X.191.13.

7 समानो गन्तः सम्मिरिति समानी।
समानं गति सहचिलमेषाम।।

8 राजा न सत्य: सम्मिरितिवर्यः। RgVeda


10- Arthavaveda VII . 12.1; XII 1.56.

11- When he has arrived at the Samiti he should murmur superior to my adversaries. I have come hither brilliant not to be contradicted ! अभिमूलोहामाम
विराज्ञितविशायः।।

12- A vedic test quoted in Parakara- Grihya Sutra III 13.4 see SBE XXIX Page, 363.

13- SBE XLII 137-138.

14- Chhandogya Upanishad Grihya – Sutra III 13.4.

15- S.B.E. XXIX 362. Original
अस्या पर्षद ईशानः सहस्र सुदुष्टरो जन इति।

16- See Ch. XXIII

17- ये ग्रामः यदर्थ्यं या सम्अविषयां।
ये संग्रामः समितदलसबू चारुवेदम् ते॥

18- In Several passages, the word (gramma) occurs with what appears to lie derivatives sense of body of men”. -MaCdonell & Keith – Vedic Index I
Page,245.

19- See, Kasika on Panini V 3.112.

देवदलो ग्रामीणेन त इमे देवदलकः:
20- संग्रामे संख्ये समयकामः
अप्रवृत्तपुक्त्तिमारमत्स्य समयः
शासुमः समिष्टिस्यन्ते

Bhatta Bhaskar Mishra on T.S.

21- Atharva- Veda VII 12.

22- नरिष्टा अहिष्षिता परेशनिभावः वहकः संभूपा वधेकः वाक्यः
वर्द्धेऽस्तम्भः न परेशनिभावः अतः अनशिकस्यवावधावः नरिष्षेष्टति नामः

23- Cf. Jayarama सल्ल्यम्मण सप्तिवः भारतिति समा। Paraskara-Grihya, III 13.1

24- Arthar- Veda white Yajur- Veda XVI 28.

25- Cf. white Yajurveda XVI 24: नामः समाभ्या समाप्तिस्यमञ्चः

26. Ibid.

27- धर्म समावरण 30.6.

28. Rig- Veda X. 71. 10.

29- सवर्ण नन्दिनि यशसाक्ष्यन समस्वेन संभद्रा सत्यवः
किंतुवर्षयुगलितं द्यूतयह किंतू भवन्ति वाजिनाय।

30- न सा समाय यथा न सति संता न ते संतो ये न भगन्ति धर्मः
चां च दोस्यं च यथाय प्राहू धर्मः भगन्त्वा च भवन्ति संतोः

31. Rg-Veda viz. in X.71.10.

32- विदवस्य धीमि क्रष्ट्र राजां छृत्रि वविद्वस्य|
A.V. XV. 9.2.

33. त समाय च समिष्टिभ सेरमां च|
R.V. III 38.5; II. 1.4;

This and this reference in Prithivi- Sukta (A.V. XII. 1.56). Conclusively prove that the Sabha was a distinct institution like the Sena and that it was not the building where Samiti met, as taken by the same sections.