

CHAPTER – VI

VEDIC SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, CULTURAL THOUGHTS AND CLASSICAL SANSKRIT LITERATURE

The early Vedic societies, Vedic Aryans were living in small groups. Each of the group had its own divergent socio-cultural tradition. The Vedic society was liberal and progressive. There were no rigid restrictions on the public and private life of human in this society. Social mobility was of a very high order. It was possible for a person to change his *Varṇa* status by changing his occupation in the Vedic period.

6.1. Varṇa System :

Vedic Aryans were a civilized and cultured people. That is why they had tied their society in a certain system. *Varṇa* system is an ancient system of Hindu society. Under this system, the entire society was divided into four *Varṇas* *Brāhmaṇas*, *Kṣatriyas*, *Vaiśyas* and *Śūdras*. There is a mention of four *Varṇas* in a hymn of the famous *Puruṣasūkta* of the *Ṛgveda*.¹ In this *mantra* the word *Rājanya* has been used in place of *Kṣatriya*. It is noteworthy that in the entire *Ṛgveda*, the words *Rājanya*, *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra* have been used only once in that *mantra*. Most scholars are of the opinion that this *Sūkta* is of later period. Hence it cannot be considered of the pre-*Ṛgvedic* period. On the other hand, the words *Brāhmaṇa* and *Kṣatriya* are used many times in the *Ṛgveda*. There is no congregation in which these words are not used. It appears that as long as the Aryans lived in the *Saptasindhu* region, they did not have the *Caturvarṇa* system. All Aryans were called *Viś* which means people or masses. In the *Ṛgveda*, the sage who sees the *mantras* calls himself *Viś*. This meaning remained safe till the cosmic Sanskrit. Later, the word '*Viśam Pati*' used for the king continued to mean the lord of the people. The meaning of the

¹ ब्राह्मणोऽस्य मुखमासीद् बाहू राजन्यः कृतः । ऊरु तदस्य यद्वैश्यः पद्भ्यां शूद्रो अजायत ॥ RgV., X.90.12

word *Viś* has been used in the later literature of the word *Vaiśya*. All people included in the word *Viś* except the king and the priest.

Aryans were people of two specific *Varṇas*. Due to their power and knowledge, they used to become rulers and priests respectively. The ruling class was called *Kṣatriya* or *Rājanya*. The word *Kṣatriya* is derived from *Kṣatra* which means rule. This word *Kṣatra* did not refer to any caste like *Viś*. Gods like Varuṇa, Indra etc. have also been called *Kṣatriyas* because they rule the world. Among the Aryans, the king was hereditary so the members of the royal family were called *Kṣatriyas* in the traditional way. They had a reputation among the world. But if the king was separated from the rule, then he was removed from that post, at that time they were within the general world. On the other hand, any Aryan who was not from the royal family, if he became the ruler then he is called *Kṣatriya*.

The most important class among the Aryans was that of the priest, who was called *Brāhmaṇa*. It is noteworthy that this *Brāhmaṇa* class was also not any specific caste like *Kṣatriya*. Although Atri, Kāśyapa, Bhrgu etc. were among the Aryan families in the beginning of the Vedic civilization, who had mastered the priesthood and had a prestigious position. But it was not a caste. Leaving any state among the Aryans, they adopted *Brāhmaṇa* instinct.

Thus it is clear that there was no such thing as caste system in the pre-Vedic period. According to the Vedic social system, the society was divided into three classes namely *Brāhmaṇas*, *Kṣatriyas* and *Viśyas*. Wherever the Aryans went, they expanded their kingdom. There they also made their social system. Gradually this department became hereditary rigid. The reason for this was that when the Aryans moved east and expanded their kingdom, they lived there fighting with those people. They were the colour of black as compared to Aryans. It is mentioned in *Ṛgveda* that Aryans belonged to the colour of white.²

The Aryans had thrown out the people of other *Dāsavarṇa* living in their *Saptasindhu* region to make Aryan *Kṣetra*. But in the past it became difficult to separate them. After that, they also started living together and became a part of their own society. In this way two *Varṇas* of ancient Vedic Indian society

² ṚgV., I.100.18

were formed namely *Ārya* and *Dāsa*. There are mention in the *R̥gveda*, *Āryaviśā*³ and *Dāsaviśā*⁴. This is where the caste system started. The Aryans came to be known as *Āryavarṇa*⁵ and the *Dāsa* is known as *Dāsavarṇa*⁶. The *R̥gveda* not only mentions *Āryavarṇa* and *Dāsavarṇa* but also depicts the sage *Āgastya* protecting both the *Varṇas*.⁷ It is clear from this that the Vedic society was divided into two *Varṇas* namely *Āryavarṇa* and *Dāsavarṇa*. It is noteworthy that when the *Dāsas* got into a relationship with the Aryans, they started working in their house. Since then the word became the reader of the servant. Due to the prevalence of the word *Dāsa* in this sense, they stopped calling themselves *Dāsa* and used the word *Śūdra* in its place. In the later Vedic period, these Aryans and *Śūdras* became the two classes of Vedic Indian society. In the *R̥gvedic* period, where the Aryans hated the slaves, there the *Śūdras* became a part of their society in the later Vedic period and started getting involved in sacrificial works.⁸ Thus, in the later Vedic period, the three *Varṇas* of the Aryans along with the *Brāhmaṇa*, *Rājanya*, *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra* became famous as the four *Varṇas*. The position of *Śūdras* was good in the society. It is mentioned in the *Maitrāyaṇīya Samhitā* that the *Śūdras* were also prosperous at that time.⁹ The atonement for the sin committed for Aryan and *Śūdra* was the same.¹⁰ For the prosperity of *Śūdras* and Aryans, the gods have been equally prayed.¹¹ In this way the administrators of the Vedic society recognized only four *Varṇas* namely *Brāhmaṇa*, *Kṣatriya*, *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra* in the name of *Varṇa* system. There were many castes within each *Varṇa*, but there were only four *Varṇas*.

³ *R̥gV.*, X.11.4

⁴ *Ibid*, II.11.4; IV.28.4

⁵ *Ibid*, III.34.8

⁶ *Ibid*, II.12.4

⁷ *Ibid*, I.79.6

⁸ Chauvey, B. B. *The Institution of Sacrifice in Its Sociological Perspective*, (vol. 22), p.96-97

⁹ *MaiS.*, IV.2.7.10

¹⁰ यद्भामे यदरण्ये यदसभायां यदिन्द्रिये । यच्छूद्रे यदर्य एनश्चकृमा वयम् । यदेकस्याधि धर्मणि तस्यावयजनमसि स्वाहा ॥ *TaiS.*, I.8.3.4

¹¹ रूचं नो धेहि ब्राह्मणेषु रूचं राजसु नस्कृधि । रूचं विश्येषु शूद्रेषु महि धेहि रुचा रूचम् ॥ *Ibid*, V.7.6.10

(i) Brāhmaṇas :

Brāhmaṇas provide education and spiritual leadership. They determine the vision and values of any society. Traditionally their basic needs were fulfilled so that they could devote themselves to their spiritual pursuits. They are expected to live very frugally. They study and teach the Vedas. They perform sacrifices and religious ceremonies, and teach others that such rituals should be performed.¹²

(ii) Kṣatriyas :

Kṣatriyas are the protectors of society. They must protect the citizens from harm, especially women, children, cows, *Brāhmaṇas*, and the elderly. Manu says that for study, protection of the people, offering sacrifice, etc. *Kṣatriyas* are created by Brahṁā.¹³

(iii) Vaiśyas :

Vaiśyas are the productive class. This *Varṇa* and two upper *Varṇas* are called *Dvija*. They accept the sacred thread (symbolising spiritual initiation) and perform certain rituals and rites. The protection of animals, lending money, studying, farming etc. duties are created for the *Vaiśyas*.¹⁴

(iv) Śūdras :

The *Śūdras* are the only section of the society which is permitted to accept the employment from others. Other *Varṇa* are commercially and financially self-sufficient. *Śūdras* have to serve others *Varṇas*.¹⁵

6.2 Family System :

The Aryans had happy family life. Their family was united. There were many members in a family. The family was patriarchal. The father was the master of the house, so he was called *Gṛhapati*. There is a mention of the

¹² अध्यापनमध्ययनं यजनं याजनं तथा । दानं प्रतिग्रहं चैव ब्राह्मणानामकल्पयत् ॥ MS., I.88

¹³ *Ibid*, I.89

¹⁴ *Ibid*, I.90

¹⁵ *Ibid*, I.91

words *Putraih* and *Naptr̥bhiḥ* quoted in a hymn of *R̥gveda's Vivāhasūkta*.¹⁶ The mention of *Śvaśur* and *Śvaśru* quoted in other *mantra* only.¹⁷ It is known from this that people lived together in the family for three generations. A father had many children. The word *Vīra* is used for the son. In the *R̥gveda*, an ideal Vedic son has been called mighty, skilled in worldly deeds, skilled in household chores, one who performs rituals, able to sit in the assembly, that is, skilled in the scriptures and one who increases the fame of the father.¹⁸ The son is called as *Apatya*. Because the progeny tradition continued with him, it did not break. Among the Aryans, it was customary to consider the son born of his wife as a son because he carried forward the progeny tradition. It is clearly stated in the *R̥gveda* that a son born of another, however happy he may be, cannot be his own son. Because the water given by him reaches only to whom he is a son.¹⁹

In the later Vedic period also, the important position of the son in the family was maintained for both social and economic reasons. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* considers the word *vira* to be synonym with son.²⁰ The son is considered as his soul. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* says that the soul is born in the form of a son, because the father supports the sons in old age, but the son supports the father in his youth.²¹ In the *R̥gveda* also there is an indication of a family in which the father had no sons, but only girls, then the marriage of the eldest girl was done on the condition that the first son born of her would be the successor of the girl's father's family. Generally it was not considered good for a married girl to stay in her father's house or for a girl who has attained puberty to stay in her father's house for a long time. It was considered a curse.²² That's why the girl usually lived in the father's family only till she got married.

¹⁶ इहैव स्तं मा वि यौष्टं विश्वमायुर्व्यश्रुतम् । क्रीक्तन्तौ पुत्रैर्नमृभिर्मदमानौ स्वे गृहे ॥ R̥gV., X.85.42

¹⁷ सम्राज्ञी श्वशुरे भव सम्राज्ञी श्वश्रूवां भव । ननान्दरि सम्राज्ञी भव सम्राज्ञी अधि देवृषु ॥ *Ibid*, X.85.46

¹⁸ सोमो धेनु सोमो अर्वन्तमाशुं सोमो वीरं कर्मण्यं ददाति । सादन्यं विदध्यं सभेयं पितृश्रवणं यो ददाशदस्मै ॥ *Ibid*, I.191.20

¹⁹ *Ibid*, VII.4.7-8

²⁰ पुत्र वै वीरः । ŚB., III.3.1.12

²¹ पूर्ववयसे पुत्राः पितरमुपजीवन्ति उत्तरवयसे पुत्रान्पितोपजीवति ॥..... *Ibid*, XII.2.3.4

²² AV., I.14.1-4

The daughter-in-law who came after the son's marriage was also a part of the family. She was called *Sanuṣā*. There is also mention of the husband's brothers and sisters living together in the family. The words *Devara* and *Nanandṛ* were prevalent respectively as relative words with husband's brother and sister.²³ The son's son in the family was called *Naptr*.²⁴ Thus in the Vedic Aryan family, father-mother, son-daughter, brother-sister etc. lived together in one house. For an ideal family, harmony of all the members of the family was essential.²⁵

6.3. Marriages System:

Marriage was a very important ceremony in the Vedic period. This was the beginning of household life. By witnessing the fire, the father or brother of the girl dedicated his daughter or sister to a suitable groom. Marriage took place only after attaining puberty. There was no practice of child marriage. The marriage took place with the permission and consent of the parents. But the wishes of the girl were also taken care of. The girl had the right to choose her husband. In the Vedic period there was no marriage in the same *Gotra*. On the basis of *Yami-yamī Sūkta* of the *Rgveda*, some western scholars have inferred that the practice of marriage between brother and sister was prevalent at that time. A sister could propose marriage to her brother. But this opinion is always baseless. In the *Yami-yamī* hymn itself, this type of marriage has been described as a sinful act.²⁶ It has been prohibited. It is mentioned in the Vedic period that the younger brother or sister could not get married while the elder brother or sister was there. The word *Parivividāna* has been used for the one who marries with the elder brother.²⁷ If the younger sister gets married while the elder sister is there, then the word *Edidhiṣu* is used for her in the Vedas. Polygamy was prevalent among the Vedic Aryans.²⁸ It is told in the *Aitareya*

²³ RgV., X.85.46

²⁴ *Ibid*, X.85.42

²⁵ AV., III.30

²⁶ न वा ते तन्वा तन्वं स पृच्यं पापमाहुर्यः स्वसारं निगच्छात् । RgV., X.10.12

²⁷ MaiS., IV.1.9

²⁸ पतिं न पन्तीरुशतीरुशन्तम् । RgV., I.62.11

Brāhmaṇa that after the death of a girl's husband, she could marry another man.²⁹ The practice of widow remarriage was prevalent in the Vedic period. After the death of her husband, she could marry her brother-in-law.³⁰

The marriage hymns of the *Ṛgveda* and the *Atharvaveda* throw light on the marriage customs of the Vedic Aryans at that time. Before the marriage, the people of the other side used to go to the father of the girl and asked for the girl from him.³¹ The marriage was fixed only when the girl's father agreed. Various religious texts like *Manusmṛti*, *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* and the Vedas have mentioned eight different forms of marriages. Eight marriages are *Brahma*, *Daiva*, *Ārṣa*, *Prājāpatya*, *Asura*, *Gāndharva*, *Rākṣasa* and *Piśāca*.

(i) **Brahma Vivāha :**

Brahma marriage is the most popular type of marriage. It is the highest ranked among all the eight forms of marriages. Manu has also given great importance to this form of marriage. In *Dharma* texts, this marriage has been described as the gift of a daughter to a man chosen by father himself. According to *Manusmṛti*³², in this ty of marriage ceremony a girl is accepted as gift.

(ii) **Daiva Vivāha :**

*Daiva-vivāha*³³ is a marriage related to the rite of the gods. This marriage is opposite to *Brahma-vivāha*. In this marriage, the father gives his daughter to a priest as a *Dakṣinā* for participating in the sacrifice which is organized by the father of the bride. During this marriage, the groom does not come looking for a bride but the parents of the bride go looking of the groom for her daughter. This marriage is considered inferior to the *Brahma* marriage because, in *Daiva* marriage, the father uses his daughter as a sacrifice and it is considered disrespectful for women to go in search of a groom.

²⁹ AiB., III.23

³⁰ को वां शयुत्रा विधवेव देवरं मर्यं न योषा कृणुते सधस्थ आ । *RgV.*, X.40.2

³¹ *Ibid*, X.85.9

³² आच्छाद्य चार्चयित्वा च श्रुतिशीलवते स्वयम् । आहूय दानं कन्याया ब्राह्मो धर्मः प्रकीर्तितः ॥ *MS.*, III.27

³³ यज्ञे तु वितते सम्यगृत्विजे कर्म कुर्वते । अलङ्कृत्य सुतादानं दैवं धर्मं प्रचक्षते ॥ *Ibid*, III.28

(iii) Ārṣa Vivāha :

The third form of marriage is *Ārṣa* Marriage.³⁴ This is different from *Brahma* and *Daiva* marriages. The father of the bride does not have to give anything to the groom in *Ārṣa* marriage. But the father of the groom is the one who gives two cows or bulls to the father of the bride. This marriage was not considered noble marriage. Marriage was treated as a commercial transaction where the bride was exchanged for cows and bulls.

(iv) Prājāpatya Vivāha :

Prājāpatya marriage³⁵ is similar to *Brahma* marriage. But there is no tradition of *Kanyādāna* in *Prājāpatya* marriage. The father of the bride searches for the groom. In this marriage, the father addresses the couple while leaving his daughter with the condition. The basic condition requested by the father of the bride is that the groom should treat the bride as a partner and fulfill their religious and secular duties together.

(v) Asura Vivāha :

This marriage is one of the most reprehensible form of marriage. In this marriage, the father gives away her daughter after the groom has provided the wealth that he can, to the father of the bride and the bride herself. The *Rāmāyana* mentions that an extravagant amount of price was given to the guardian of Kaikeyī for her marriage with the king Daśaratha. This is basically a commercial transaction where the bride is purchased. According to the *Manusmṛiti*³⁶, to hunt a girl voluntarily by giving money to the girl's father, uncle etc.

(vi) Gāndharva Vivāha:

This marriage is different from others. There is a mutual agreement between the girl and boy to get married.³⁷ This mutual consent arises from pure lust. The approval of parents does not play a role.

³⁴ एकं गोमिथुनं द्वे वा वरादादाय धर्मतः । कन्याप्रदानं विधिवदार्षो धर्मः स उच्यते ॥ *Ibid.*, III.29

³⁵ सहोभौ चरतां धर्ममिति वाचाऽनुभाष्य च । कन्याप्रदानमभ्यर्च्य प्राजापत्यो विधिः स्मृतः ॥ *MS.*, III. 30

³⁶ ज्ञातिभ्यो द्रविणं दत्त्वा कन्यायै चैव शक्तितः । कन्याप्रदानं स्वाच्छन्द्यादासुरो धर्म उच्यते ॥ *Ibid.*, III. 31

³⁷ इच्छयाऽअन्योन्यसंयोगः कन्यायाश्च वरस्य च । गांधर्वः स तु विज्ञेयो मैथुन्यः कामसम्भवः ॥ *Ibid.*, III. 32

(vii) Rākṣasa Vivāha :

Rākṣasa marriage is performed by kidnapping the bride and brutally killing her family and relatives. In some texts, another condition that needs to happen is that the groom will fight with the bride's family while following the ceremonial steps in a peaceful wedding.³⁸ However, this condition is not essential for having *Rākṣasa* marriage. P.V. Kane says:

“A noble Indologist, this form of marriage is named *Rākṣasa* because *Rākṣasas* or demons are known from history to have been ensuing cruelty on their captives.”³⁹

This marriage was practised by *Kṣatriyas* or military classes. *Rākṣasa* marriage resembles the authority of a victor over the person held captive in war.

(viii) Paiśāca Vivāha :

It is placed as the last form of marriage as it is the most cruel form of marriage among the eight marriages. In this, when the girl is sleeping, drunk or mentally ill, then the man seduces the women and enters into sexual activity. The girl and her parents have to bear the shame of such antics and she has to agree to the marriage with the man.⁴⁰ *Paiśāca* means ghosts who work in secret at night.

Except these eight marriages, it is found other two marriages namely *Anuloma Vivāha* and *Pratiloma Vivāha*. The marriage of a man of a higher caste with a girl of a lower caste was called *Anuloma* marriage.⁴¹ The marriage of a girl of a higher caste with a man of a lower caste was called *Pratiloma Vivāha*. The intermarriage between *Varṇas* give arise to new castes. Vaśiṣṭha mentions the following examples:

- (a) The offspring of a *Śūdra* and a *Brāhmaṇa* woman becomes a *Caṇḍāla*.
- (b) The son born by the marriage of a *Śūdra* man and *Kṣatriya* woman is called *Vaina*.

³⁸ हत्वा छित्वा च भित्वा च क्रोशन्तीं रुदन्तीं गृहात् । प्रसह्य कन्याहरणं राक्षसो विधिरुच्यते ॥ *Ibid.*, III.33

³⁹ HD., *Vivāha* part.

⁴⁰ सुप्तं मत्तं प्रमत्तं वा रहो यत्रोपगच्छति । सः पापिष्ठो विवाहानां पैशाचश्चाष्टमोऽधमः ॥ MS., III. 34

⁴¹ GauD, IV.14-15; MS., X.13; YāS., 95; Vasiṣṭa-smṛti., XVIII.7

- (c) If the marriage has done between a *Śūdra* man and *Vaiśya* woman and then their son is called *Antyavasāyī*.
- (d) The son born to a *Brāhmaṇa* woman by a *Vaiśya* becomes *Ramaka*.
- (e) The son begotten by a *Vaiśya* on a *Kṣatriya* woman, a *Paulakāsa*.
- (f) The son born by the marriage of a *Kṣatriya* man and a *Brāhmaṇa* woman is called becomes a *Sūta*.
- (g) If the marriage has done between a *Brāhmaṇa* man and a *Śūdra* woman then their son is a *Parāsava*.

6.4. Status of Women in the Society :

The position of women was respected in the Vedic society. There are four forms of woman like daughter, wife, mother and general. Generally, the birth of a girl child in the family was not considered auspicious. But if a girl child was born, she would get the affection as son. It is considered good to have a son in every male dominated society. It is also the desire of a mother that her son should be born. But this does not mean that sorrow was observed when a girl child was born. In fact, the same rites were performed for the girl child as for the son. There was a system of good education for the girl like the son. In the *Atharvaveda*, there is mentioned the celibacy of girls, that is, study of the Vedas. It is clearly said that a girl attains a young husband through celibacy.⁴² At that time there were two classes of *Brahmacārinī* girls namely *Brahmavādinī* and *Sadyodvāhā*. *Brahmavādinī* was the name of the girls, she used to practice celibacy throughout her life without getting married. She studies the *Dharmaśāstra* and *Daśana* lifetime. *Sadyodvāhā* was the noun of those girls who used to get education before marriage. She also used to study Vedas in her student life. She obtained the knowledge of *Karmakāṇḍa* which she had applied the knowledge at home. Along with the remembrance of the *Ācāryas*, *Sulabhā*, *Maitreyī*, *Gārgī* etc. are also remembered in the *Brahmayajña*. Music and arts were specially taught to girls. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* is cited that the *Udgātra Karma* used in the *Yajña* was basically

⁴² ब्रह्मचर्येण कन्या युवानं विन्दते पतिम् । AV., XI.5.18

performed by women. But gradually she stopped and Udgātā started that work in her place.⁴³

After marriage, the important role of a woman starts in the form of *Patnī*. The wife had a very important place in the Vedic society. She was considered the owner of the house. In the marriage hymns of the *Rgveda* and the *Atharvaveda*, only the wishes made for the bride give a clear knowledge of her condition. The word couple or *Dampatī* used for husband and wife is indicative of the fact that along with the husband, the wife was also the owner of the house. She was considered as the beauty of the house.⁴⁴ In fact, the wife is the home.⁴⁵

The goal of wifehood is the attainment of motherhood. That is why in the Vedic society, as a mother, woman had a paramount place. She takes care of the sons, so there is no one more important than the mother for them.⁴⁶ In the Vedic period, there is a feeling of respect towards women in general. She is endowed with equal rights and duties with men. The status of women was good in the Vedic period from every point of view. Women could move freely in social festivals. They came and visited each other's houses to participate in social festivals. Women went to other's house to see the new bride as found in the *Rgveda*.⁴⁷ Women also took part in agricultural work along with men. Women used to do all the work related to the house. Women were given special knowledge of music and dance. There is also an indication of the slave system among women in the Vedic period. In the royal families, there were many slaves along with the queens.

6.5. Status of Education in Vedic Period :

The condition of education in the Vedic period was good. Education was not under the state administration but under independent *Ācaryakula*. The full responsibility of its operation was of the Chancellor. But it was also the duty

⁴³ पत्नीकर्मैव वा एतेऽत्र कुर्वन्ति यदुदुगातारः । ŚB., XIV.3.1.15

⁴⁴ जायवे योनावरं विश्वस्मै । RgV., I.66.5

⁴⁵ जयेदस्तं मघवन्त्येदु योनिः । Ibid, III.53.4

⁴⁶ मातेव यद् भरसे पप्रथानो जनंजनं धायसे चक्षसे च । Ibid, V.15.4

⁴⁷ सुमङ्गलीरियं वधूरिमां समेत पश्यत । सौभाग्यमस्यै दत्त्वायाथास्तं वि परितन ॥ Ibid, X.85.33

of the state administration to always keep in mind that no damage should be done to the ashrams where the students used to study. There are six components of education – teacher, learner, education center, subject of education, parents and society. In the Vedic period, the use of the word *Brahman* for the one who is the head of education is found. In fact, at that time the work of imparting education was under the *Brāhmaṇas*.⁴⁸ The common designation of a disciple in the Vedic period was *Brahmacārī*. The importance of celibacy and its religious and social prestige have been mentioned in the *Brahmacarya-sūkta* of the *Atharvaveda*.⁴⁹ Two types of *Brahmacārī* are mentioned in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. A celibate lived in *Gurukula* and come home after completing his studies. The second *Brahmacārī* was the one who used to spend his whole life staying in the *Gurukula*.⁵⁰ From whom the *Brahmacārī* could not accept alms in almsgiving from another person. He accepted alms from the one who was more praiseworthy. If such a person was not found, he could have taken alms from *Guru's* wife or his mother.⁵¹

The healthy ideal form of Vedic education was based on a healthy relationship between the teacher and the disciple. Both of them used to pray to god every day before starting the lesson that they may protect them together, make both of them a partaker of knowledge, may their knowledge be brilliant, may they not hate each other etc.⁵²

There were three main institutions for imparting education in the Vedic period namely *Āśrama*, *Pariṣad* and *Sammelana*. The centres which imparted education in a stipulated time were called *Āśrama*. These were also called *Gurukula* or *Ācāryakula*. These *Āśramas* are situated in the open lap of nature in the forest far away from the city. At the time of entering the *Āśrama*, the *Upanayana* ceremony of the disciples was performed. The aim of the disciple

⁴⁸ विद्या ह वै ब्रह्मणमाजगाम तवाहमहिमा । Ni., II.3

⁴⁹ AV., XI.5

⁵⁰ त्रयो धर्मस्य स्कन्धा यज्ञोऽध्यायनं दानमिति । प्रथमस्तप एव द्वितीयो ब्रह्मचार्यार्च्यकुलवासी , -तृतीयोऽत्यन्तमात्मानमाचार्यकुलेऽवसादयन् ॥ ChāU., II.23.1

⁵¹ स एवं वद्वान् यस्या एव भूयिष्ठं क्षात्रे तं भिक्षेतेत्याहुस्तल्लोक्यमिति ,। ŚB., XI.3.3.7

⁵² सह नाववतु सह नौ भुनक्तु सह वीर्यं करवावहै । तेजस्वि नावधि तमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै । *Kaṭhapaniṣd*, *Śāntipāṭha*

was to achieve the ideals of the *Guru*. After completing his education in the *Āśrama*, the *Brahmacārī* was given a bath, due to which he was called a *Snātaka*. He could not begged from anyone after *Snātaka*. The convocation sermon given by the *Guru* to the disciple served as a beacon for the future life of the disciple. By listening to the teachings, the cultural consciousness of the disciple used to get enlightened, which is a great aim of education.

There were also councils for getting higher education in the Vedic period. These councils used to be for those people who, even after spending their student life, engaged themselves in the search for truth and knowledge. It is mentioned in *Chāndogyopaniṣad* that the King Pravahaṇa Jaibali was a member of the *Pañcāla* Council.⁵³ No one hesitated to attend these councils. If a *Guru* was unable to answer any question, he used to send him to similar councils where the disciple would clear his doubts. In the Vedic period, there was a third type of institution for the spread of education, which can be called *Sammelana*. These conferences were organized by the kings. From time to time, scholars from all over the country were called to debate on a particular subject. The one who was victorious in the debate was rewarded. This type of conference is mentioned in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, whose convenor was King Janaka. In the Vedic period, the work of giving education was also done by the father. It was not necessary that the learner should go to other *Gurus* and get knowledge. He used to get education even while staying with his father. The reason for the improved condition of education in the Vedic period was also the sublime sentiment towards education of the society of that time.

6.6. Vedic Economy :

The economic condition of the Aryans was very good in the Vedic period. They did not lack anything in their life. They themselves used to produce everything useful for life. Various types of business were popular for earn money. Everyone had prior freedom to work and earn money in the Vedic period. The happiness of material life depends only on economic progress. That is why the Aryans always prayed that they should become the masters of

⁵³ ChāU., I.8

all kinds of wealth and may his life never be lacking. Their main wealth was food, grains, cattle, etc. Domestication of animals was the main economical activity of Aryans. The most importance animals of the Vedic Aryans are the cow and the horse. Other customs were hunting and food gathering activities. Vedic Aryans used to consume different types of food like *Yava* or barley, *Vrihi* or rice and *Godhuma* or wheat.

The Vedic culture was mainly village centred. Village was the criteria for civilization and culture. Keeping aside the luxury amenities of urbanization, the Aryans preferred rural life. So naturally the rural economy was an important factor in maintaining proper financial. Agriculture and animal husbandry were the base of rural economy. Along with trade, crafts and technology made major contributions to the Vedic economical system.

(i) Agriculture :

Agriculture was the principal industry. It was the main occupation of the people. Agriculture is mentioned in the fourth palace of the *Rgveda* but it is believed to have been added later. Food is the most important of all types of wealth, because it is the means of life. Anyone cannot live without food. That is why; the motto of the economic life of the Aryans was that “अन्नं बहु कर्त्वीत”. Aryans were an agricultural caste. Their main work was agriculture. This was their main means of livelihood. They were not only familiar with agriculture but was an accomplished farmer. They knew that in which season which food could be produced in abundance. They knew very well that what means should be used to make the land more fertile. In the *Rgveda*, there is a mention of assistants in agriculture and equipment related to agriculture. The word *Sīra*⁵⁴ and *Lāngla*⁵⁵ are used for plough. This instrument was used for plow the land. Bullocks used to pull it. Two, four, six, eight, twelve and twenty-four oxen are also mentioned to be plough together. The rope that tied the yoke to the neck of the bullocks was called *Varatrā*.⁵⁶ As well as the word *Varatrā* is used for

⁵⁴ शुनं न ।:फाला वि कृषन्तु भूमिं शुनं किनाशा अभि यन्तु वाहै :शुनं पर्जन्यो मधुना पयोभिःशुनासीरा :
॥ शुनमस्मासु धत्तम्RgV., IV.57.8;

युनक्त सीरा वि युगा तनुध्वं कृते योनौ वपतेह बीजम् । गिरा च श्रुष्टिः सभरा असन्नो नेदीय इत्सृण्यः
पङ्कमेयात् ॥ X.101.3-4

⁵⁵ शुनं वाहाः शुनं नरः शुनं कृषतु लाङ्गलम् । शुनं वरत्रा बध्यन्तां शुनमष्टामुदिङ्गय ॥ *Ibid*, IV.57.4

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, IV.57.4

the rope that is tied in the pitcher to draw water from the well.⁵⁷ The name of drive the bulls is *Aṣṭra*. The name of the iron leaf attached under the plough was *Phāla*, with which the land was plowed. In one *Sūkta* of the *R̥gveda*, there is a mention of complete agricultural work.⁵⁸ In the first three *mantras* of this *Sūkta*, the presiding deity of the region '*Kṣetrapati*' has been prayed to make it favourable for agriculture, to give sufficient rain and to protect it from all kinds of evils. In the remaining five *mantras*, there is a prayer for the success of each agricultural work. In this *Sūkta* the use of words like *Bāhā*, *Lāṅgala*, *Varatrā*, *Aṣṭā*, *Sītā*, *Phāla* etc. confirms that the Aryans were perfect masters in agriculture. Agriculture has also become the subject of *mantras* of Vedic sages, they indicative of the importance of agriculture. In one *mantra*, the sages advise to do agriculture only and be happy considering the money received from it as sufficient.⁵⁹

The field was called *Hrbāra* or *Kṣetra*. The word *Kṣetra* is used for agricultural land. These fields were measured. A person had complete authority over his farm.⁶⁰ It is noteworthy that the farm was in the possession of the father, the head of the family. It was only after the death of the father that it used to come under the authority of the sons. There was no division of the fields during the time of father. The land was of two types *Urvarā* and *Ārtanā*.⁶¹ To make the land fertile, manure was added to land. Land was a special kind of immovable property which could not be bought or sold in general. But the land could be donated to the *R̥tvika*.⁶² Plough and harrow, mattock and hoe were used for the farming. Sometimes water was conducted in irrigation channels. System of irrigation and application of manure were also used in Vedic age. Many Vedic hymns were composed in honor of deities who prayer for a good harvest, timely gives the grains or rainfall or well-being of the domestic animals. There are two harvests in the year especially for

⁵⁷ वसंगेव पूषर्या शिम्बाता मित्रेव ऋता शतरा शान्तपन्ता। वाजवोच्चा वयसा घर्म्येष्ठा मेर्षेवेषा सपर्या पुरीषा

11 *Ibid*, X.106.5

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, IV.57

⁵⁹ कृषिमित्कृषस्व वित्ते रमस्व बहु मन्यमानः । *Ibid.*, X.34.13

⁶⁰ इमानि त्रीणि विष्टपा तानीन्द्र विरो हय। "... शिरस्ततस्यादिदम उपोदरे । *Ibid*, VIII.91.5

⁶¹ स हि शर्धो न मारुतं तुविष्वणिर् अप्रस्वतीपूर्वरास्व इष्टनिर् आर्तनास्व इष्टनिः। आदद् धव्यान् आददिर् यज्ञस्य केतुर् अर्हणा ।

अध स्मास्य हर्षतो हृषीवतो विश्वे जुषन्त पन्थां नरः शुभे न पन्थाम्। *Ibid*, I.127.6

⁶² ŚB., XIII.6.2.18

barley. The grain was threshed. The chaff was winnowed away. The corn was ground in a mill. At that time, there are major products were barley and wheat. Bread was made from the flour. At the same time, there were oil seed and cotton plantation.

People were always conscious so that agriculture should not be harmed. Birds, insects etc. used to destroy the crop. In the *Rgveda*, there is mentioned of the words of the farmers protecting the crop from birds.⁶³ Locust was a big enemy of agriculture. The word *Maṭaci* is used for them in the Upaniṣads.⁶⁴ In the *Atharvaveda*, a complete hymn mentions to protect agriculture from pests.⁶⁵ Prayers were made to the deities to protect the crop from both excessive rain and no rain. In the *Rgveda*, the whole process of agriculture is mentioned together in one *mantra*.⁶⁶ After harvesting the crop, human used to cut it and tie it in pulleys which were called *Paraṣa*.⁶⁷ After that, the grain and straw were used to separate the grain by rubbing it. The person who separated the grain from the straw was called *Dhāvyaḥkṛt*.⁶⁸ They used to measure the grain with a vessel called *Urdara* and keep it in the cellars. The store in which grains were kept is called *Sthivi*. Agriculture was more important than hunting with the bows or capturing game with snares or than fishing. In fact, the Aryans were the real agriculturists who considered agriculture as the main source of their economic power.

(ii) Animal Husbandry :

Along with agriculture, the second major means of livelihood of the Aryans was animal wealth. In an agricultural society, the importance of the animal increases in the same way, because without it agriculture cannot happen. There are three types of animals mentioned in the *Puruṣasūkta* of the

⁶³ उदप्रुतो न वयो रक्षमाणा वावदतो अन्नियस्येव घोषाः। गिरिभ्रजो नोर्मयो मदन्तो बृहस्पतिमभ्यऽर्का
अनावन् ॥ RgV., X.68.1

⁶⁴ ChāU., I.10.1

⁶⁵ AV., VI.50

⁶⁶ युनक्तु सीरा वि युगा तनुध्वं कृते योनौ वपतेह बीजम् । गिरा च श्रुष्टिः सभरा असन्नो नेदीय इत्सृण्यः
पक्वमेयात् ॥ RgV., X.101.3

⁶⁷ ŚB., VIII.4.2.5

⁶⁸ तदिद्वदन्त्यद्रयो विमोचने यामन्नञ्जस्पा इव घेदुपब्दिभिः । वपन्तो बीजमिव धान्याकृतः पृञ्चन्ति सोमं न
मिनन्ति वप्सतः ॥ RgV., X.94.13

Rgveda namely *Vāyavya*, *Āraṇya* and *Grāmya*.⁶⁹ In the *Taittirīya Samhitā*, there is mention of lion, cow, goat, horse etc. In the *Rgveda*⁷⁰, cow, horse, goat and sheep are considered to be the main once. They are born from the Supreme lord in *Sarvahut-yajṇaa*. There are two categories of the animals, *Upayadanta* and *Anyalodanta*. Horse and donley come in *Upayadanta* categories,⁷¹ cow comes in the *Anyalodanta* categories.⁷² That is, along with agriculture, animal husbandry played an equally important role in strengthening the economic status of the people.

Cattle rearing were an important occupation in the Vedic are. The cow was treated with worship and respect by the Aryans as a source of wealth and economic prosperity. The cow was the main form of property. The cow was the most important and useful animal of the Aryans from both economic and religious point of view. Milk, curd, ghee etc. were all obtained from the cow for food. It has been clearly mentioned in the *Śatapatha* that milk, curd, cream, ghee, etc. are obtained from the cow only.⁷³ Milk, ghee etc. for *Agnihotra* was obtained from the cow, hence the name of the cow is *Agnihotrī*. Cows were given in *Dakṣinā*, so the word *Dakṣinā* also became a sign of cow. Cow was considered valuable. That's why while buying Soma for doing the *Somayāga*, the seller was given a cow in the form of clay.⁷⁴ An entire hymn in the *Rgveda* is addressed in the glory of the cow.⁷⁵ The importance of cows was not only religious but also used in practical. Cows only make the weak fat and an unattractive person beautiful. The sound of cows enhances the beauty of the house. Hence they property was the symbol of prosperity of an Aryan family. Ordinary Aryans, sages and kings used to keep cows in their houses. There were thousands of cows in the houses of sages and kings. The white cow

⁶⁹ तस्माद्यज्ञात्सर्वहृत*Ibid*, X.90.8

⁷⁰ तस्मादश्वत्साऽअजायन्त ये के चोभयादतः । गावो ह जज्ञिरे तस्मात्तस्माज्जाताऽअजावयः ॥ *Ibid*, X.90.10

⁷¹ या ते चक्ररेक शफे पशुनामुभयादति । गदर्भे कृत्या यां चक्रं प्रति हरामि ताम् ॥ AV., V.31.3

⁷² यदन्यतोदत् तद् गवां रूपम् । *TaiS.*, II.1.1.9

⁷³ गोवै प्रति ध्रुक् तस्यै श्रुतं तस्यै शरः तस्यै मास्तु तस्या आतश्चनं तस्यै नवनीतं तस्यै घृतं तस्या आमिक्षा तस्यै वाजिनम् । *ŚB.*, III.3.3.2

⁷⁴ मह्यैस्त्ववे गोर्महिमा । *Ibid.*, III.3.3

⁷⁵ आ गावो अगमन्तु भद्रमक्रन्त्सीगन्तु उप ऋषभस्य रेतस्युपेन्द्र तव वीर्ये ॥.....*RgV.*, VI.25. 1-8

is called *Kakī* and *Śukrā*.⁷⁶ The black cow is called *Kṛṣṇa* and the red cow is known as *Rohiṇī*.⁷⁷ Cows were milked three times in the morning, before noon and in the evening. There are called *Prātardoha*, *Samgava* and *Sāyamgoha*. The cow used to give more milk in the morning, but the milk was less in the noon and evening.⁷⁸ The god Puṣan was worshiped by the Aryans as the protector of cows. The number of cows owned by a family or individual reflects its economic status. The Aryans also domesticated other animals like horses, dogs, donkeys, goats etc. They were specially stamped by their owners to identify them among large herds of animals.

Apart from the cow, there were goats among the animals that gave milk, which the Aryans reared. In the *Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā*, the word *Ajapāla* has been used for those who keep goats. There is mention of doing *homa* with goats' milk in the *Taittīriya Saṁhitā*.⁷⁹ In the *Pravargya Yāga*, the milks of goats were also given as *Ahuti* along with cow milk. Just as the cow was the main animal for milking, similarly the bull was the main animal for agricultural work. The words *Vṛṣabha*, *Ukaṣan*, *Rṣbha*, *Gau*, *Vāha* etc. are used for the bull. Bullocks were used for ploughing, threshing grain in the barn, carrying goods etc., they are called *Anaḍuh* for pulling the car.⁸⁰ In the Vedic period all the farmers kept bullocks. The bullocks were also the prosperity of the Aryans like the cows. Good farmer kept more bullocks in their house.⁸¹

In the Vedic period, the main animal of the Aryan was the horses. They were used to ride. These were very valuable. They were decorated with diamonds, pearls and gold ornaments on special occasions.⁸² In the Vedic

⁷⁶ AV., IV.38.6.7

⁷⁷ सनेमि सख्यं स्वपस्यमानः सूनुर्दाधार शवसा सुदंसाः । आमासु चिद्दधिषे पक्कमन्तः पयः कृष्णासु रुशद्रोहिणीषु ॥ RgV., I.62.9

⁷⁸ TaiS., VII.5.3.1.2

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, V.1.7.13

⁸⁰ बलं धेहि तनूषु नो बलमिन्द्रानळुत्सु नः । बलं तोकाय तनयाय जीवसे त्वं हि बलदा असि ॥ RgV., III.53.18;

AV., III.11.5 ; AiB., I.14

⁸¹ शमीमश्वत्थ आरूढस्तत्र पुंसुवनं कृतम् । तद्वै पुत्रस्य वेदनं तत्स्त्रीष्वा भरामसि ॥ AV., VI.11.1

TaiS., I.8.7.1

⁸² RgV., X.78.11

literature, the use of many words for horse is found like *Arvan*, *Atya*, *Vājin* etc. Horses of many colors are mentioned in the Vedas. During the Vedic period, a large number of horses were reared. The kings used to have a horse army in which good breed horses were kept. *Sindhupradeśa* was famous for horse. Horses were kept in stables and they were fed there.⁸³ Where the horse used for riding, it was also ploughed in the chariot.⁸⁴ Camel, girdle, etc. were prominent among the carried animals in addition to the bull and horse. The donkey is the heavy load bearer of animals.⁸⁵ The dog was a reliable domesticated animal that guarded the house and also helped in hunting. There is mentioned of elephant rearing in the Vedic period.⁸⁶ Some other animals also found in the Vedic period.

(iii) Craft :

Various arts and crafts were practiced in Vedic period. Carpentry was the most important craft. The carpenter had a high status as he was the builder of the chariot. Chariots, cars and boats were the main products for carpenters. Metal-smiths used to prepare various types of ornaments and weapons. The chariot was used in wars and battles. Making gold, silver, copper, was also practiced. The other important craft was leatherwork in the Vedic period. A special class of artisans engaged in the preparation of leather goods, mat-sewing, and horn-work. Women used to do spinning and weaving. Trade and commerce were also practiced by economical monetization. War items were an important source of information about the tribe. In fact, they demonstrated great expertise in woodworking, metallurgy, pottery, and tannery. Vedic literature attests to the existence of physicians who had the knowledge of preparing medicines from various herbal plants.

⁸³ अस्थाद् द्यौरस्थात् पृथिव्यस्थाद् विश्वमिदं जगत्। तिष्ठन्ति पर्वता इमे स्थामन्नश्वा अरंसत् ॥ AV., VI.77.1

⁸⁴ वि मृलीकाय ते मनो रथीरश्वं न संदितम्। गीर्भीर्विरुण सीमहि ॥ RgV., I.25.3

⁸⁵ गर्दभः पशूनां भारभारितमः । TaiS., V.1.5.5

⁸⁶ RgV., I.64.7

(iv) Trade :

Apart from agriculture and animal husbandry, there were many other industries related to them which people used to do. Business of wood, copper, pottery, textile, leather, etc. were prominent in business.

(a) Wood Business :

The main part of the Vedic economy was the wood business. This industry was mainly under *Takṣā*. *Takṣā* used to manufacture all the tools made from wood used for agriculture. If a farmer needed any agricultural equipment, he has gone to him and get it prepared. *Takṣā* used to manufacture the plow, the cart for carrying the same, all the wood used in the house and all the *Yajñas*. He also has done the work of fine carving.⁸⁷ In the Vedic deities, the relation of a deity named *Takṣā* is believed to be related to *Takṣā-karma*. Probably the wood industry people worship the god *Tvaṣṭā*. There was also an industry of making chariots under the wood business. The one who used to do this business was called a *Rathakāra*. It was related to the royal family, because the industry of making chariots was done independently by the chariots.⁸⁸

(b) Metal Business :

Lohāra, *Hiraṇyakāra*, *Manikāra* etc. were prominent among those who did the metal industry. *Lohāra* was building all the tools made of iron used for agriculture⁸⁹ While mentioning the work of blacksmith, it has been told that he used to melt iron by heating it in the fire and make utensils.⁹⁰ The artisans used to manufacture weapons, armour, shields etc. useful for war. In metals, the industry used to manufacture ornaments, talismans etc. from gold, silver, sis etc.⁹¹ Aryans used to wear gold and silver ornaments. Therefore, the

⁸⁷ *Kāṭhaka Samhitā*, XII.10

⁸⁸ आयमगन्पर्णमणिर्बली बलेन प्रमृणन्त्सपत्नान्। ओजो देवानां पय ओषधीनां वर्चसा मा जिन्वत्वप्रयावन् ॥ AV., III.5.1

⁸⁹ जरतोभिरोषधीभिः पर्णेभिः शकुनानाम् । RgV., IX.112.2

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, V.9.5

⁹¹ बीभत्सायै पौल्कसं बर्णाय हिरण्यकारं तुलायै वाणिजं पश्चादोषाय प्रच्छिदम् ।VāS., 30.17
TaiB., III.4.14.1

jewellery making industry was in an advanced stage at that time. Mention of Aryans wearing gems is also found in many *mantras*. In the *Atharvaveda*, the special methods of wearing the gem and the power of gem have been mentioned in many hymns.⁹² Apart from gold and silver, there were many types of gems from which the work of preparing jewellery was done by the goldsmith and the gem smith.

(c) Textile Business :

The textile business was also in an advanced stage during the Vedic period. Cotton, silk and wool were prepared and used to make clothes from them. The process of making cloth and the many definitions of the equipment used in it are mentioned in the Veda. The yarn which is stretched longitudinally in warp form is called a fibre or *Tantu*.⁹³ The thread that is woven into the width is called *Autu*. Women used to do the work of weaving cloth.⁹⁴ Along with weaving clothes, the business of embroidery was also prevalent on the wool. The word *Paśas* is used for such embroidered clothes.⁹⁵ The textile industry was very developed during the Vedic period.

(d) Leather Business :

In the Vedic period, the leather business was a major part of the economy. This business is called *Carmaṇya*.⁹⁶ Many items were made from leather in Vedic period. In the *Atharvaveda* and the *Śatpathabrāhmaṇa*, the skin of deer and goat has been described as very important.⁹⁷ Leather bags were also made. The tanners knew about the art of smoothen the leather by rubbing it. In this way the word *Ajinasandha* is used for the person who does

⁹² अभीवर्तेन मणिना येनेन्द्रो अभिवावृधे ।तेनास्मान् ब्रह्मणस्पतेऽभि राष्ट्राय वर्धय ॥ AV., I.29.1; II.4.1 etc.

⁹³ *Ibid*, XIX.2.52

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, X.7.42

⁹⁵ साध्यपांसि सनता न उक्षिते उषासानक्ता वय्यैव रण्विते। RgV., II.3.6

⁹⁶ AiB., V.32

⁹⁷ यदा वृक्कादजावयो धावन्ति बहु विभ्याती। AV., V.21.7

ŚB., V.2.1.12

the work.⁹⁸ The skin of wild animals was more useful than animals of village. Therefore, wild animals were also hunted for leather.

(e) Pottery Business :

The business of making pottery was also in an advanced stage during the Vedic period. The word *Kulāla* is used for the one who makes pottery. *Kulāla* did not only make the pottery for the house, he also used to make the pottery for the *Yajña*. The word *Mṛtpaca* is used for potters.⁹⁹ *Kulala* made the pot which kept on earthenware was called *Kaulatācakra*.¹⁰⁰

(v) Commerce :

Apart from various household industries, commerce was also a source of income. During the Vedic period, commerce was in a flourishing state. It is also mentioned in the Vedas, when something is produced, it should also be consumed. Where a commodity is produced in abundance, it cannot be consumed there. Its consumption will be more where that commodity is not produced. Therefore, the main purpose of business is made available the things where it is produced at other places where it is not produced. This leads to the exchange of things. In this the trader gets profit. Buying an item is called *triad* and selling is called *sale*. *Prapaṇa* was used for purchase and *Pratipana* was used for exchange. All trends are visible in the Vedic period. It is clearly mentioned in the *R̥gveda* that a seller unknowingly gives an article of high value to a buyer at a low price.¹⁰¹

There are mentioned the signs of the practice of weighing things in the Vedic period. The grain was measured with the *Kumbha* pot. The word *Māna* is mentioned for the weighing scale.¹⁰² The sale of medicines is mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*.¹⁰³ The trade of wool and silk was also very advanced during the Vedic period. In the *Arthvaveda*, there is the *Vānījyasūkta*, in which many

⁹⁸ यमाय यमसूथव्रम्योज्वतोकाएसंवत्सराय पर्यायिणीं परिवत्सरायाविजातामिदावत्स.....VāS, 30.15

⁹⁹ *Maitrayanīya Upaniṣad*, II.6

¹⁰⁰ ŚB., XI.89.7

¹⁰¹ R̥gV., IV.28.8

¹⁰² Tai., III. 2.6.3

¹⁰³ AV., VIII.7.11

important information related to the trade is obtained. The main purpose of business is to get money. Which things are bought is called money. The basic objective of business is the desire to make money out of money. The businessman wants that the money with which he is doing business, that money should increase, but the money should not be reduced in any way.¹⁰⁴ The most important feature of business is that the money which the person is doing business should have constant interest in increasing that money.¹⁰⁵ While going out, many difficult roads had crossed where even water was not available. That's why the Aryans always prayed that while going out, they should get water, food, milk etc. So that, they can safely buy products and earn money.¹⁰⁶

(vi) Transport :

There were many types of land routes for business in the Vedic period. At that time, there were different routes for human beings, chariots and bullock carts. The righteous used to walk on those roads as well as those with sinful attitude. Hence, prayers were also offered to the goddess earth to free the roads from all kinds of enemies and obstacles.¹⁰⁷ The main means of transport in the Vedic period was the chariot in which the horses were plowed. But its special use was for war or travel.

In the Vedic period, there was sea all around the *Saptasindha* region.¹⁰⁸ That's why Aryan travelled by sea route also. The mention of boats running in the sea is found in the Vedas.¹⁰⁹ The use of the word *Aritra* is found for those paddles from which the boat is rowed. The word *Aritr* is used for boat rower. It

¹⁰⁴ येन धनेन प्रपणं चरामि धनेन देवा धनमिच्छमानः । तन्मे भूयो भवतु मा कनीयोऽग्रे सातध्नो देवान्हविषा निःषेध ॥ AV., III.15.5

¹⁰⁵ येन धनेन प्रपणं चरामि धनेन देवा धनमिच्छमानः । तस्मिन् इन्द्रो रुचिमा दधातु प्रजापतिः सविता सोमो अग्निः ॥ *Ibid.*, III.15.16

¹⁰⁶ ये पन्थानो बहवो देवयाना अन्तरा द्यावापृथिवी संचरन्ति । ते मा जुषन्तां पयसा धृतेन यथा क्रीत्वा धनमा हराणि ॥ *Ibid.*, III.15.2

¹⁰⁷ ये ते पन्थानो बहवो जनायना रथस्य वर्तमानसश्च यातवे । यैः संचरन्तभ्ये भद्रपापास्तं पन्थानं जयेमानमित्रमतस्करं यच्छिवं तेन नो मृड ॥ *Ibid.*, XII.1.47

¹⁰⁸ राय समुद्राश्चतुरोऽस्मभ्य सोम विश्वत। आ पवस्व सहस्रिण । RgV., IX.33.6

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, I.25.7

is clear from all these references that in the Vedic period, people went out to do business by the route of sea or river.

In the Vedic period, there was no banking system like today for depositing money. The money was especially in the form of food and animals, which did not need to be deposited with anyone. Gold was the most valuable asset at that time. Jewellery was made from gold. There was a transaction in exchanging the currency made of that. The practice of taking loans on interest was prevalent in the Vedic period. It is mentioned from the *Rgveda* to the later *Samhitās*, *Brāhmaṇas* and *Āraṇyakas* and *Upaniṣads*. The word *Kusīdin* was used for those who used to give loans on interest.¹¹⁰ The one from whom the loan is taken is called *Śreṣṭhin*.¹¹¹

6.7 The Influence of the Vedic Thoughts in the Laghutrayī and Bṛhatrayī :

The study of society is great interests to the student of social, cultural and religious history. The student of ancient Indian culture has access to written and unwritten sources i.e. literary works of various authors, inscriptions, archaeological finds, etc. to form the social, cultural and religious history of ancient India. The six *Mahākāvya* provide a great deal of information about Vedic social, Sanskrit and religious history. The concept of society implies contact direct or indirect and the binding tie of relations enduring and comprehensive. Society is not relation but beings in their relationship. Thus the study of any society into account the study of the institution of caste or class, occupations, marital laws and customs, position of women food, dress, beliefs family life etc. It is well known that intermarriage between different castes was freely permitted.

For example, Agnimitra's younger queen Irāvātī, who was a Kshatriya by caste. She was probably a woman of inferior parentage, judging by her manners and general culture. Paraśurāma was considered almost a divine incarnation. He was the child of a *Kṣatriya* woman by a Brāhmin father. The word *Avarṇa* is used for such abominable and degenerate things that are

¹¹⁰ ŚB., XIII.4.3.11

¹¹¹ AiB., III.30

outside the purview of the four accepted *Varṇas*. The limits imposed by the *Śāstras* on any particular class or caste could not be violated with impunity.

(i) The Caste System :

A peculiar and important feature of the Hindu social fabric is the age-old institutions of *Varṇas* and *Āśramas*. In this, there is division and demarcation of people into four rigid categories like *Brāhmaṇa*, *Kṣatriya*, *Vaiśya* and *Śudra*. The four stages of life described by the scriptures are prescribed for the first three classes. The institution of caste characteristic the Indian society and distinguished from others where the system of class is prevalent. Attempts have been made to define caste, but the definitions advanced by difference sociologists lack the perfection in depicting the whole picture of the caste-phenomenon. There are indications in writings of Māgha, Kālidāsa and other poets. The upper classes were allowed to marry lower class women without degradation in the Vedic period.

The Brāhmin stands at the head in the traditional order and commands high respect from the time immemorial. In the poet's time, the Brāhmins were highly respected by the people and were accorded warm reception on their visit.¹¹² Kālidāsa writes about a period of Indian history when Brahmanical hierarchy had firmly established itself as the dominant cultural and spiritual force in Hindu society. Since the composition of the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Gṛhyasūtras*, the Brahmins came to enjoy the sole monopoly of ritualistic knowledge, especially connected with the *Yajñas*. They were assiduously represented to the mass mind as the main motive power which regulated and sustained the entire worldly existence.¹¹³ The poet says in the NC that *Brāhmaṇas* were not expected to drink wine.¹¹⁴ The belief, acting as a control for the deviation in the prescribed rule, was that a Brahmin lost his caste, position and status and he was deemed unfit for reaching the heights heaven where transmundane pleasures are promised for enjoyment.¹¹⁵

¹¹² NC., V.10

¹¹³ सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्राजापतिः । अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥ BhaG., III.10
यज्ञाद्भवन्ति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः । BhaG., III.14

¹¹⁴ NC, XI.68

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, IV.70, X.68

Kālidāsa tries to reconcile and unite the spiritual prowess of the Brāhmins with the martial qualities of the Kṣatriya class for the well being of the people.¹¹⁶ The conflict however which existed between the two classes and is depicted in canto XI of *Raghuvamśam* between Paraśurāma the Brāhmin warrior and Rāma the scion of the *Kṣatriya* race is an instance in point. The breaking of Śiva's bow by Rāma which was the condition prescribed for the winning of Sītā's hand in marriage appears to have incensed the irascible and jealous Brāhmin.¹¹⁷ In the canto fifteenth of RV, the insolent and almost abusive language used by an old Brāhmin against the King Rāma. As he held responsible for the premature death of his son. This is an example of unnecessary despotism and rudeness of Brahminical mindset.¹¹⁸ Apart from the theory, the king was responsible for all the accidents in his kingdom. The Brāhmin is a great and good manners due to the king. And he could present his case with respect to his king.

Brahmacārins are described as putting on *muñja*-girdles and holding *Palāśa* staff in their hands is mentioned in the NC¹¹⁹. The *Snyāsins* used to put on scarlet robes and to hold a staff in their hands.¹²⁰ This thought has taken by poet from *Manusmṛti*.¹²¹ The poet, further, refers to the *Dvijas* i.e. *Brahmāṇas*, *Kṣatriyas* and *Vaiśayis* as performing morning ablutions.¹²² *Kṣatriyas* were the hereditary ruling class. In his hands, the worldly power and wealth was concentrated. The head of the ruling clan was the king.

It was believed that the king was fully qualified to rule his kingdom because of his heredity and noble birth, even though he was an only child.¹²³ It is surprising, however, that as amply attested in the writings of Kālidāsa, Māgha etc., showed utmost respect for the *Bhūdevas* in his time. It is mentioned in the RV that Dilīpa and his successors have great reverence and recognition for the great spiritual power of their *Guru*. His success and

¹¹⁶ पवनान्निसमागमो ह्ययं सहितं ब्रह्म यदन्नतेजसा । RV., VIII.4

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* XI.71.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, XV.43

¹¹⁹ NC. XVII.180

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.187

¹²¹ MS., II.

¹²² NC., XVII.174

¹²³ ना त्रिष्णुः पृथिवीपतिः । RV.XVIII.45

prosperity mainly depended on his mystic spiritual power.¹²⁴ As stated above, the *Kṣatriyas* were the storehouses of power and wealth. This noble ideal that the kingship of the king is propagated from time to time by poets and learned men of law and wise elders. Wine and spirits were commonly used as an aphrodisiac and a necessary adjunct and inducement for sexual pleasure.¹²⁵ It may be noted that religious or auspicious ceremonies like marriages, performance of sacrifices etc. are mentioned in the writings of the classical poets.

Śūdras were not given sufficient importance to deserve any notice in the poets' writings. The *Śūdra*, who occupy the lowest rung of the social ladder, also, find a reference in the text. The position of the *Śūdras* was wretched. They were denied and barred from even hearing the sacred syllables of the Vedic Scriptures,¹²⁶ revealing thereby the strict observance of the laws as laid down by the *Smṛtikāras* and commentators. They were considered as unclean and polluting, and lived a segregated life and were maintaining themselves on poultry.¹²⁷ In the RV, we find in that account the episode of Śambūka's severe penance and his slaying by Rāma.¹²⁸ On the whole, the fate of the *Śūdras* does not seem to be enviable. But they were placed in the three upper castes

On the whole the fate of the *Śūdras* does not appear to be enviable and they were set apart for lowly service and general subservience to the three upper castes. The doctrine of *Karma* strongly impressed upon the public mind that a person's position in his present incarnation on earth was determined by his good or bad deeds in previous lives.¹²⁹

(ii) Āśtama System :

The most remarkable feature of ancient Hindu life is divided into four *Āśramas*. The four *Āśramas* are as follows : *Bramhacarya*, *Gārhashtya*, *Vānaprastha* and *Sannyāsa*. These *Āśramas* has mentioned by Kālidāsa in the

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, I.60-64

¹²⁵ KS., IV.11-12

MD., I.49; II.3,11,15,32

¹²⁶ NC., III.62

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, XX.5

¹²⁸ RV., XV 49-52

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, XIV.,62

RV.¹³⁰ The different stages of life e.g. *Gārhatya*, *Vānapratha* and *Sannyāsa* has also referred to NC.¹³¹ These stages are coming from the Vedic period. The *Gārhatya* is the very mainstay of a human life. It is aptly styled *Sarvabhogya* i.e. useful for everybody. Manu says that just as all living beings survive by taking shelter of Pranavayu, similarly all ashrams run by taking shelter of the householder.¹³²

Vānaprastha is intermediate between *Gārhatya* and *Sannyāsa*. It is mention in the RV.¹³³ Raghu's life described points towards the path of renunciation at the beginning of the eighth canto of *Raghuvamśam*. This is because after death he did not need the usual ritualistic ceremonies and offerings of oblations.¹³⁴ These *Āśramas* were completely adapted to the ancient Hindu life. Every faculty, desire and aspiration of their nature was fully exercised and satisfied.

(iii) Occupations :

The occupations in ancient India were hereditary and the occupations for different castes were laid down by the law givers and thus the mobility from one occupation to another was severely hampered and was a dream to the people. No doubt, in some cases, there was movement from one occupation to another. The poem informs us of the following occupations: Weavers, Magicians, carpenters, Tāntrika, pearl-smiths etc.¹³⁵

(iv) Costumes :

While enumerating the principle underlying the social structure, Raymond firth mentions the principle of sex which points out and distinguishes the different and divergent roles by the male and female in the society and division between the male and female is marked by the differences

¹³⁰ शैशवेऽभ्यस्तविद्यानां यौवने विषयैषिणाम् । वाद्भके मुनिवृत्तिनां योगेनान्ते तनुत्यजाम् ॥ RV., I.8

¹³¹ NC.XVII.175

¹³² यथा वायुं समाश्रित्य वर्तन्ते सर्वजन्तवः । गृहस्थाश्रममाश्रित्य वर्तन्ते चतुराश्रमाः ॥ MS., III.77

¹³³ मुनिव्रनतरुच्छ्रायां देव्या तथा सह शिश्रिये । RV., III.70

¹³⁴ न हि तेन पथा तनुत्यजस्तनयावर्जितपिण्डकाङ्क्षिणः । *Ibid.*, VIII.26

¹³⁵ NC., I.12; XV.70; XIX.54; XVII.64; XIX.6

in their costumes. People put on different kinds of clothes made of various types of cloth. A kind of fine silk-cloth called *Netra* is mentioned in NC.

Dress and ornaments are distinctive features of the human race which are different from the rest of the animal world. *Ambara*¹³⁶ is another type of fine cloth usually put on by the ladies. It resembles the sky in colour and is generally with star like shining dots.¹³⁷ The other dress is *Uttarīya* or the upper garment was worn both by males as well as females. It was worn on the shoulders to cover the portion of the chest and the back.¹³⁸ In case of ladies, therefore, it was called *Stanāmsūka* (the breast cloth). In the *Raghuvamśam*, describing the costumes of his women because of the unrestrained water sports in the Sarayū river, the king Kuśa remarked that they looked more attractive on that account.¹³⁹

We have also a reference to the *Yoga-paṭṭa* – a piece of clothe worn during meditation.¹⁴⁰ *Dukūla* is referred to in NC VI.28 and a white *Dukūla* in NC XV.21. An under wear by dancing girls spreading out in a circular fashion was called *Caṇḍātaka*. The *Kālikāpurāṇa* describes *Caṇḍātaka* as one of the stitched clothes.¹⁴¹ Thus *Caṇḍātaka* was of various colours and either plain or studded with white or chromatic dots. The Yādavābhyudaya used it in the sense of a sort of a petticoat or an underwear put on by ladies.¹⁴² The name of many dresses has mention in the poems.

(v) Ornaments :

The jewellery used by the womanhood of a country is a sure indicator for their aesthetic taste and level of culture. It has acknowledged that the dress and ornaments used by women in Kālidāsa's time were unique in their simplicity, elegance and effectiveness.

¹³⁶ “Ambara : generally a plain woven silk with patterns in the body by jacquard principle and designs of the border in dobly. The cross border in this cloth is richly inlaid by tinsel.” A critical study of Śriharṣa's *Naiṣdhiyacaritam*, Arunoday Natvarlal Jani, Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1957.

¹³⁷ NC., XX.131

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, XXI.15

¹³⁹ RV., XVI.17

¹⁴⁰ NC., 2.78

¹⁴¹ शाणवस्त्रं निशारं च तथैवातपवारणम् । चण्डातकं तथा दृश्यं पञ्च सूतान्यद्दुष्टये ॥ *Kālikāpurāṇa* 74.5-6

¹⁴² स चात्मचण्डातकमात्रभाजां क्षौमार्थिनानां स्वयमर्थमानैः । NC., IV.49

It is found that the dress and ornamentation used by the women in Kālidāsa's time were unexceptionable and unrivalled in their simplicity, elegance and effectiveness. The ornaments in the order of succession are girdle like *Mekhalā* or *Kāñci*. The important ornament is *Hāra* or necklace. A neck-collar made with stones is mentioned in *Kumārasambhavam*.¹⁴³ *Tārahara* a necklace made of big round pearls is mentioned in the *Meghadūtam*.¹⁴⁴ Like this, many such ornaments are described by the poets in their works.

(vi) Education :

In the practice of archery, a pillar was used as a target (NC XIV.59). Teachers were offered the fees at the end of the studies (NC XVI.22). The ladies were also educated and they can read and write. Their education did not terminate merely in this art of reading and writing but they were proficient in different lours and had the capacity to refute the views of others on the strength of their learning (*Pāṇḍityabala*).¹⁴⁵

The recitation of Vedic verse was preceded by the syllable *Om*.¹⁴⁶ They were recited in the morning with the proper accents.¹⁴⁷ The poet uses the word *Omkāra* to mean the commencement (NC XX.2). Different sciences were mastered by the student by hearing them from the teacher (NC VII.60).

(vii) Marriage :

Marriage is the fundamental institution of human society, in as much as the circumstances and conditions of such unions necessarily react on all other sides of social organisation. We get following information about the marriage customs and the ritual from our poem. The system of goa-exogamy was prevalent and such marriage did not take place if the bride and the groom belonged to the same *gotra* and *pravara*.¹⁴⁸ Go-betweenes were sent with presents, before the marriage, for the purpose of matchmaking (NC.V.50).

¹⁴³ नीलमाणिक्यमयी कण्ठिका । KS., XII.14

¹⁴⁴ पादस्यासैः कृणितरशनाः । MD. I.35

¹⁴⁵ NC XIV.62

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, III.75; XIX.7

¹⁴⁷ In XIX.7 the poet refers to the method of marking Udātta vowels with a vertical line above, as *Svarita* in marked in the *Rgveda*. The method, which is adopted only by the Maitrāyaṇī and the *Kāthaka Samhitā* of the Black *Yajurveda*, suggests that the poet was a student of one of these *Samhitās*.

¹⁴⁸ NC., XIV.62

Auspicious time for the marriage ceremony was fixed and the father of the bride was eager to see that it should not elapse.¹⁴⁹

Ladies were decoration the walls and floor of the bride's house by painting ornamental designs of various shapes such as lotus-blossoms, *svastika* etc. with a rice paste mixed with turmeric.¹⁵⁰ Ladies expert in this art were puffed up when selected for such a work. The facades of the houses were decorated by pearl strings and the flower garlands were hung on the roads. The different musical instruments were played upon near the bride's house.

The groom's party was received at the gate by the bride's party waiting for its arrival). The groom came to the gate on foot and was received by the bride's brother coming him half the way, while the father-in-law was also eager to receive him. The groom's party was given sweet dishes of different varieties and was entertained by the courtesans who served as waitresses. The whole atmosphere was of joy and mirth and people took interest in cutting jokes and funs at each other-never mind they become in descent at times.

To conclude, a pertinent information regarding social, economic and cultural aspects of Vedic age and their influence on the classical Sanskrit poets is provided here. The present chapter makes it clear that Vedic culture was very sophisticated and Vedic society was rich in commerce and people were leading happy and prosperous life. Classical Sanskrit poetry is the mirror to this rich Vedic culture.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, XVI.5

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, XV.12,19