

**Y**ou May have heard the Names of the Vedas, Brahmanas Aranyakas & Upanishads. Collectively they are all called the Vedic Literature. They are also called Hindu religious literature & are revered.

- ❖ The cities of the Harappan culture had declined by 1500 B.C. Around this period, the speakers of Indo – Aryan language, Sanskrit, entered the north–west India from the Indo–Iranian region, through the Khyber & Bolan Passes in the northwestern mountains.
- ❖ Their Initial settlements were in the valleys of the north–west and the plains of the Punjab.
- ❖ Later they moved into Indo–Gangetic plains. As they were mainly in search of pastures.
- ❖ By 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C., they occupied the whole of North India. The places where they settled was called Arya Vardham.
- ❖ Scholars divide this period between 1500 B.C & 600 B.C may be divided into
  - i) Early Vedic Period or Rig Vedic Period (1500 B.C – 1000 B.C).

ii) The Later Vedic Period  
(1000 B.C – 600 B.C)

### **Original Home of Aryans:**

- ❖ The original home of the Aryans is a debatable question and there are several views.
- ❖ Different scholars have identified different regions as the original home of the Aryans.
- ❖ They include the Arctic region, Germany, Central Asia & Southern Russia.
- ❖ Bala Gangadhara Tilak argues that the Aryans came from the Arctic region on astronomical calculations.
- ❖ However, the theory of Southern Russia appears to be more probable & widely accepted by historians.
- ❖ From there, the Aryans moved to different parts of Asia and Europe.
- ❖ They entered India in about 1500 B.C & came to be known as Indo – Aryans. They spoke the Indo – Aryan language, Sanskrit.

**Original Home of Aryans:**

- Central Asia Max Muller
- Tibet Dayand Saraswati
- Arctic Region B.G. Tilak
- Sapta Sindhu A.C. Das

**Vedic Literature:**

- ❖ The Vedic Literature has grown over a long period of time. Some of these still exist but many of have been lost forever. From the vedic literature we know about the life of people during vedic period & the areas in which they lived.

**Meaning of Veda:**

- ❖ The word 'Veda' is derived from the root 'Vid' which means to know. In other words, the term "Veda" signifies 'Superior Knowledge'.

**Details of Veda:**

- ❖ The Vedic literature consists of the four Vedas, Rig, Yajur, Sama, Atharva.
- ❖ The Rig Veda is the earliest of the Four Vedas it consists of 1028 hymns. The hymns were sang in praise of various Gods.
- ❖ The Yajur Veda is set to tune for the purpose of chanting during

sacrifice. It is called the book of chants & the origins of India music are traced in it.

- ❖ The Atharva Veda contains details of rituals.
- ❖ The Early phase is represented by the Rig Veda & the Later phase by all other Vedic literature which are other three Vedas (Sama, Atharva, Yajur), Brahmanas, Aranyakas, & Upanishads.

**Brahmanas, Aranyakas, & Upanishads:**

- ❖ Besides the Vedas, there are other sacred works like the Brahmanas and the Aranyakas.
- ❖ The Brahmanas are the treaties relating to prayer & sacrificial ceremony.
- ❖ The Upanishads are philosophical texts dealing with topic like the soul, the absolute, the origin of the world, & the mysteries of nature.
- ❖ The Aranyakas are called forest books and they deal with mysticism, rites, rituals, & sacrifices.

**Epics:**

- ❖ The Epics are Ramayana & Mahabharata.

- ❖ The Author of Ramayana was Valmiki.
- ❖ The Author of Mahabharatha was Vedavyas.

### **3.1 RIG VEDIC AGE (OR)**

#### **EARLY VEDIC PERIOD**

##### **(1500 – 1000 BC):**

- ❖ During the Rig Vedic Period, the Aryans were mostly confined to the Indus region.
- ❖ The Rig Veda refers to Saptasindhu or the Land of seven rivers.

#### **Saptasindhu:**

- ❖ This includes the five rivers of Punjab, namely Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, & Sutlej.
- ❖ Along with Indus & Saraswathi.
- ❖ The political, social & cultural life of the Rig Vedic people can be traced from the hymns of Rig Veda.

#### **3.1.1 Political Organisation:**

##### **Family:**

- ❖ The basic unit of political organisation was Kula (or) Family.
- ❖ Head – Father of the Family.

##### **Village (or) Grama:**

- ❖ Several families joined together on the basis of their Kinship to form a Village (or) Grama.
- ❖ Head: The Leader of Grama was known as Gramani.

##### **Vis:**

- ❖ A group of villages constituted a larger unit called Vis.
- ❖ Head – It was headed by Vishayapati.

##### **Jana:**

- ❖ The highest political unit was called Jana (or) tribe; Head - The head of Jana was Rajan (king)

##### **Prajas:**

- ❖ The people lived in the kingdom were the Prajas.
- ❖ Head – The King was called Prajapathi.

##### **Kingdoms:**

- ❖ There were several tribal kingdoms during the Rig Vedic period such as Bharatas, Matsyas, Yadus, & Purus.
- ❖ The head of the Kingdom was called Rajan (or) King.