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Preface

Dear Aspirants,

It is with great pleasure that I present to you our newest publication, **General Awareness**, designed specifically for **SSC and Railway exam aspirants**. General Awareness is an integral part of competitive exams, requiring a solid grasp of diverse topics ranging from history and geography to current affairs and scientific advancements. This book aims to streamline your preparation and enhance your confidence in tackling this crucial section.

The content has been meticulously curated to meet the demands of the latest exam patterns. It includes a wide range of previous years' questions to familiarize you with the types of queries posed, as well as an extensive collection of practice questions to test and expand your knowledge base. Every question is complemented with accurate and concise explanations, enabling you to gain a deeper understanding of the topics.

At Jayakrishnan EduTips, we are committed to supporting your academic aspirations through quality educational resources. This book is a step toward equipping you with the knowledge and clarity needed to excel in your exams. Whether you are beginning your preparation or refining your expertise, this book will serve as a trusted companion throughout your journey.

I wish you all the very best for your preparation and upcoming examinations. May this book help pave the way to your success.

Warm regards,

Jayakrishnan Ramachandran
Director, Jayakrishnan EduTips



OBJECTIVE GENERAL STUDIES-1



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History

The history of India includes the prehistoric settlements and societies in the Indian subcontinent; the advancement of civilisation from the Indus Valley Civilisation to the eventual blending of the Indo-Aryan culture, to form the Vedic Civilisation. The rise of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism, the onset of succession of powerful dynasties and empires for more than three millennia throughout various geographical areas of the Indian subcontinent, including the growth of Muslim dominions during the Medieval period intertwined with Hindu powers, the advent of European traders and privateers, resulting in the establishment of British rule in India and the subsequent independence movement that led to Partition of India and the creation of the Republic of India.

THE PRE-HISTORIC PERIOD

The pre-historic period in the history of mankind can be roughly dated from 20000 BC to 2500 BC, when the first civilisations began to take shape.

The age when the pre-historic man began to use stones for utilitarian purpose is termed as the Stone Age. The Stone Age is divided into the following broad divisions based on the specialization of stone tools made at that time.

CHALCOLITHIC PHASE (1800 BC-1000 BC)

Also known as the eneolithic period, this period saw the use of copper and bronze to make utilitarian tools. Chalcolithic cultures extended from Chotanagpur plateau to upper Gangetic basin.

Period	Age		
	Paleolithic (Old Stone Age)	Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age)	Neolithic (New Stone Age)

	Unknown - 8000 BC	8000 BC-4000 BC	4000 BC-2500 BC
FEATURES OF TOOLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rough Crude tools made by flaking sides of a stone with a heavier stone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stone tools were sharp and pointed. Stone tools attached to thick branches and tied with rope made of animal skin. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small stone tools which were finely flaked and were known as blades and burins. They had smooth surface and cutting edges.
HIGHLIGHTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Humans had come to make and use fire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bhimbetka caves near Bhopal famous for cave paintings belong to this age. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This age saw domestication of cattle farm animals. Which were used for dairy and meat products. Important invention was making of wheel.

INDUS VALLEY CIVILISATION (2500 BC-1750 BC)

- Indus Valley Civilisation was an ancient Civilisation that thrived along the course of Indus river in north-western part of Indian subcontinent.
- The civilisation was primarily urban.
- It is also referred to as 'Harappan Civilisation' owing to the fact that this Civilisation was first discovered by excavator Daya Ram Sahni in 1921.
- Mohenjo-Daro was discovered by RD Banerji in 1922.

Geographical Extent

- The Indus Valley Civilisation covered parts of Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, Gujarat, Rajasthan and fringes of western Uttar Pradesh
- It extended from Jammu in the north to mouth of the river Narmada in the south and from the Makran Coast of Baluchistan in the west to Meerut in the east.

Town Plan

- Indus Valley Civilisation had a much planned way of constructing their cities following a grid pattern.
- Main roads were in north-south direction while the alleys were in east-west direction.
- Underground covered drains were present with manholes.
- Houses were one to two storeys high, made of burnt bricks and size of brick was in ratio 1:2:4.

Agriculture and Domestication

- Wheat and barley were the main crops.
- They also produced rai, peas, sesame and mustard.
- Evidence of use of rice has been found only at Lothal.
- They were the earliest people to produce cotton.
- Oxen, buffaloes, goats, sheep and pigs were domesticated. However, humped bulls were favoured.
- Dogs and cats were regarded as pets.
- Asses and camels were used as beasts of burden.

Religious beliefs

- Chief male deity was Pashupati Shiva.

- Chief female deity was Mother Goddess.

Trade and Commerce

- Trade and commercial activities were carried out through sea as well as land routes.
- Tin and precious stones were imported from Iran and Afghanistan.
- Gold imported from Karnataka
- Copper from Rajasthan and Oman

DECLINE OF THE INDUS VALLEY CIVILISATION

- By 1800 BC, the Indus Valley Civilisation saw the beginning of its decline.
- Writings started to disappear, standardized weights and measures used for trade and taxation purposes fell out of use.
- Main causes were Aryan invasion, ecological disturbance, change in Indus river's course, low rainfall, drying of Ghaggar river etc.

Important Indus Valley Civilisation Sites have been provided in following table:

City	River Bank	Current Day Location	Starting of Excavation	Lead Excavator
Harappa	Ravi	Punjab, Pakistan	1921	Daya Ram Sahni
Mohenjo-daro	Indus	Sindh, Pakistan	1922	R. D. Banerji
Chanhudaro	Indus	Sindh, Pakistan	1930	N. G. Majumdar
Lothal	Bhogava	Gujarat, India	1955	S. R. Rao
Kalibangan	Ghaggar	Rajasthan, India	1960	Amlanand Ghosh - Marker,

				B.B. Lal- Excavat or
Banawali	Saraswa ti	Haryana, India	1973	R. S. Bisht

Archaeological discoveries at various sites

Sites	Discoveries
Harappa	Six granaries in a row, Virgin Goddess (seal), cemetery, symbols of Lungiar and Yoni, clay figure of Mother Goddess, copper scale, mirror
Mohenjo-Daro	Great bath, granary, Pashupati Shiva (seal), bronze dancing girl.
Chanhu-Daro	City without a citadel, inkpot, terracotta bullock cart.
Lothal	Dockyard, metal workers, bead maker's shops, fire alter, double burial, model of ship.
Kalibangar	Ploughed field surface, Mesopotamian seal, wheels of toy cart.
Banawali	Lack of grid pattern, town planning.
Dholavira	Water harnessing system, storm water drainage system, a large well and a bath, stadium.

EARLY VEDIC AGE : ANCIENT HISTORY

- The Vedic Civilisation is named after the Vedas, especially the Rig Veda, which is the earliest specimen of the Indo-European language and the chief source of information on the history of this period.
- The Vedic Civilisation flourished along the river Saraswati, in a region that now consists of the modern Indian states of Haryana and Punjab.

- Later, they moved to Indo-Gangetic plains.
- They were mainly cattle-rearing people, and were in search of pasture lands.
- By 6th century BC, they occupied the whole of North India, which was referred to as Aryavarta.
- The period between 1500 BC and 600 BC is divided into the Early Vedic Period or Rig Vedic Period (1500 BC - 1000 BC) and the Later Vedic Period (1000 BC – 600 BC).
- The holy book of Iran 'Zend Avesta' indicates entry of Aryans to India via Iran.
- A section of Aryans reached the frontiers of the Indian subcontinent around 1500 BC and first settled in Punjab and it is here, in this land, where the hymns of Rigveda were composed.
- The Aryans lived in tribes and spoke Sanskrit, which belonged to the Indo-European group of languages.

Area of Settlement

- Aryans entered India through the Khyber Pass (in Hindukush mountains around 1500 BC).
- According to Rig Veda, early Aryans first settled in the region called 'Sapta-Sindhu' or the land of seven rivers encompassing the present East Afghanistan, Punjab and Western UP.
- They lived here for many centuries and later shifted to the fertile valleys of Ganga and Yamuna.

Rig-Vedic Name	Modern Name
Sindhu	Indus
Vitasta	Jhelum
Askini	Chenab
Purushni	Ravi
Vipasa	Beas
Sutudri	Sutlej
Gomal	Gomati
Krumu	Kurram

Drishdvati	Ghagghar
Suwastu	Swat

Political Organisation

- The basic unit of political organization was kula or family and Kulapa was the head of the family.
- Several families joined together on the basis of their kinship to form a village or grama.
- Villages were headed by Gramini who used to represent village in Sabha and Samiti.
- A group of villages constituted a larger unit called Vish. It was headed by Vishapati.
- The highest political unit was called jana or tribe.
- The head of the kingdom was called Rajan or king. He was the leader in battle and protector of tribe.
- The Rig Vedic polity was normally monarchical and the succession was hereditary.
- There were two popular bodies (tribal organizations) called the Sabha and Samiti. The former was a council of elders and the latter, a general assembly of the entire people.
- The Rigveda did not mention any officer for administering justice.
- The officer of pasture ground was called 'prajapati', who led the heads of the families called 'kulapas' or the heads of the fighting horses called 'gramanis' to battle.

Social Life

- The Rig Vedic society was patriarchal.
- The basic unit of society was family or graham. The head of the family was known as grahapathi.
- Marriage was usually monogamous and indissoluble, but there are few instances of polyandry, levirate and widow-marriage.
- Polygamy was prevalent among the royal and noble families. There was no child marriage and the practice of sati was absent.

- Women were given equal opportunities as men for their spiritual and intellectual development.
- There were women poets like Apala, Viswavara, Ghosa and Lopamudra during the Rig Vedic period. Women could even attend the popular assemblies.
- Wheat and Barley, milk and its products like curd and ghee, vegetables and fruits were the chief articles of food.
- The staple crop was 'yava', which meant Barley.
- Chariot racing, horse racing, dicing, music and dance were the favourite pastimes.
- Gradually, the tribal society got divided into three groups warriors, priests and commoners. Later, the fourth division called dasas or shudra was also added.
- The fourth division appeared towards the end of the Rig Vedic period because it is mentioned for the first time in the tenth book of the Rig Veda.
- The term varna was used for color, the Aryans being fair and the dasas being dark.

Economic Condition

- The Aryans came to India as semi-nomadic people with a mixed pastoral and agricultural economy, in which cattle-rearing played an important role.
- The cow was, in fact, a sort of currency and values were reckoned in heads of cattle.
- Importance of the cow can be measured from the fact that many early linguistic expressions were associated with cattle.
- The cow is described in one or two places in Rigveda as 'aghnya', not to be killed; but this may imply only its economic importance.
- Whenever gifts were given to priests, it was in terms of cows and never in terms of measurement of land.
- Gavyuti was used as a measure of distance and Godhuli, as a measure of time.
- Of the other animals reared by the Aryans, the horse was the most important of them.

- Among other domestic animals, the early Aryans knew goat and sheep which provided wool, their chief textile.

LATER VEDIC AGE

- The Aryans further moved towards east in the Later Vedic Period.
- The Satapatha Brahmana refers to the expansion of Aryans to the eastern Gangetic plains.
- Kuru and Panchala kingdoms flourished in the beginning.
- After the fall of Kurus and Panchalas, other kingdoms like Kosala, Kasi and Videha came into prominence.
- The later Vedic texts also refer to the three divisions of India – Aryavarta (northern India), Madhyadesa (central India) and Dakshinapatha (southern India).

Geographical Expansion

- The later Vedic works show a wider knowledge of Indian geography that is found in the Rigveda.
- They mention the 'two seas' – the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.
- Several Himalayan peaks are also mentioned.
- The Vindhya mountains indirectly referred in the text and archaeology, shows that the Aryans expanded from Punjab over the whole of Western Uttar Pradesh covered by the Ganga – Yamuna doab and even to the borders of Bengal in the east.
- The Aryans cleared the land mainly by means of fire.
- Burning may have been supplemented by the use of the iron axe for cutting the forests in some areas towards the end of the Vedic period when this metal is referred to as Shyama Ayas (dark or black metal).

Society

- Male ancestor worship began to be practiced and the position of women started to decline.
- They could not attend the Sabha and were excluded from immolation by the widow at the death of her husband. Inheritance right were taken.

- A reference to self-immolate, the origin of the later practice of Sati, may be traced to this period. But it is certain that this practice did not prevail on any considerable scale.
- Brahmanas claimed both social and political privileges.
- With the emergence of caste system certain social norms developed.
- Marriage between the members of the same Gotra was not permitted.
- The term 'Gotra' first appeared in Rigveda with the meaning of 'a clan'. Later, it came to signify descent from a common ancestor. Gotra was primarily a Brahmanical institution adopted rather half-heartedly by other twice-born classes and hardly affecting the lower orders.
- Marriage monogamy remained the general rule. Eight types of marriages were listed for the first time.

Brahma	Marriage of a girl with the boy of the same Varna with Vedic rite and rituals.
Daiva	The father gives a daughter to a sacrificial priest as a part of Dakshina.
Arsha	A token bride price of a cow and a bull is given in the place of dowry.
Prajapatya	The father gives the girl without dowry and without demanding bride price.
Gandharva	Marriage by the consent of the two parties (love marriage).
Asura	Marriage in which the bride was bought from her father.
Rakshasha	Marriage by capture, practiced especially by warriors.
Paishacha	Marriage by seduction.

Polity

- The material and social developments of the later vedic age were amply reflected in the contemporary political system.
- The expression like 'kingdom for ten generations' suggests strengthening of hereditary succession of the king with increasing royal power.
- Formation of wider territory-based kingdoms increased the royal power. Sabha and Samiti lost its importance and Vidatha completely disappeared.
- The king's influence was strengthened by the rituals like Rajasuya, Ashvamedha, Vajepeya, etc.
- A rudimentary taxation system began with 'Sangrahitri' as treasurer of taxes and 'Bhagaduha' as tax collector.

Imp Ratnas/Officials in Later Vedic Period

Purohita	Chief Priest, also sometimes referred to as Rashtragopa
Senani	Supreme commander of army
Vrajapati	Officer-in-Charge of pasture land
Jivagribha	Police Officer
Spasas/Dutas	Spies who sometimes worked as messengers
Gramini	Head of the village
Kulapati	Head of the family
Madhyamasi	Mediator on disputes
Bhagaduha	Revenue collector
Sangrahitri	Treasurer of taxes
Mahishi	Chief Queen
Suta	Charioteer and court ministerial
Govikartana	Keeper of games and forests
Palagala	Messenger
Kshatri	Chamberlain

Akshavapa	Accountant
Athapati	Chief Justice

Economy

- With the discovery of iron, agriculture became the chief means of livelihood, but largely remained primitive.
- People continued to produce barley, but, rice and wheat became their chief crop.
- Rice was called 'Vrihi' and its use was recommended in rituals.
- The term for wheat was 'Godhume'.
- Plough became large and heavy and sometimes required as many as 24 oxen to draw it. Manure was known.
- In this period, the Vaishyas engaged in trade. Reference to moneylending first occurred in the Shatapatha Brahmana, which describes a user as 'Kusidin', though definite evidence of the use of money is wanting.
- The term 'Niska' occurring in contemporary literature has often been taken as coin. But so far no actual specimen of the coins of the vedic period have come to light.
- Bali, Sulka, Bhaga were the main heads of taxation to be paid to the king.
- Knowledge of metals advanced, in addition to gold and ayas.

THE VEDAS

The Rig-Veda

- "Knowledge of the Hymns of Praise", for recitation.
- The most important and, according to scholars, oldest of the Vedas.
- It is divided into ten books (called mandalas) and has 1028 hymns in praise of various deities.
- These include Indra, Agni, Vishnu, Rudra, Varuna, and other early 'Vedic gods'.