

Difference Between Early Vedic Period and Later Vedic Period

The Vedic Age was a significant era in Ancient Indian History. As such, the questions from this topic have always been featured in the history segment of the UPSC Prelims.

The Vedic age itself is divided into the Early Vedic Period (c.1500 - 1200 BCE) and Later Vedic Period (c.1100 - 500 BCE). The reason being that society underwent drastic changes from the time the first Vedas were written to the appearance of later Vedic scriptures.

This article will provide details about the transformation of society in the Early and Later Vedic Ages for the IAS Exam. The PDF note can be downloaded at the end of the article.

In the table below we have given in detail the differences between the Early Vedic Period and Later Vedic Period

Differences Between Early Vedic Age and Later Vedic Age			
S.No	Factors	Early Vedic Period	Later Vedic Period
1	Caste	The caste system was flexible and based on profession rather than birth	The caste system became more rigid in this period with birth being the main criteria
2	Treatment of lower castes	There was no concept of Shudra or untouchables	Shudras became a mainstay in the Later Vedic period. Their sole function was to serve those of the upper-castes
3	Role of Women	Women were allowed a greater degree of freedom in this period. They were allowed to participate in the political process of the time to a certain extent	Women were restricted from their participation in society by being relegated to subordinate and docile roles
4	Nature of Government	Kingship was fluid as the kings were elected for a fixed period	As society became more urbanized in

		by the local assembly known as <i>Samiti</i>	this period, the need for stable leadership was realized. Thus the absolute rule of the Kings became more and more prominent
5	Society	Early Vedic society was pastoralist and semi-nomadic in nature	Society became more settled in nature. IT became centered around agriculture in general
6	Economy	In the Early Vedic Period, the barter system was more prevalent with little to no monetary value transaction being part of the exchange	Although the barter system was still in practice, it was largely replaced by the exchange of gold and silver coins known as <i>Krishnala</i>
7.	Texts	Rigveda. This text is cited as the earliest text from this period	Yajurveda. Samaveda Atharvaveda