

“WEALTH AND ITS VARIOUS ASPECTS AS DEPICTED IN VEDIC LITERATURE”

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1. INTRODUCTION-

The *Vedic* literature is universally acknowledged as the oldest literature delineating perfect knowledge. Indians trace the original source of their cultural life to the Vedas which they hold to be divine truths revealed from time to time to the ṛṣis (seers) in their super-normal consciousness. The *Veda* literally means supreme knowledge without any dubiety. This literature is held in high esteem in every nook and corner of the world. In view of the human values, synthesis of ideas and expression of goodwill, the *Vedic* Literature conceived by seers earns high appreciation today.

The term *Veda* does not denote any single book; it denotes, in effect, the entire divine literature comprising *Rgveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Sāmveda*, *Atharvaveda*, *Brāhmaṇas*, *Āraṇyakas*, *Upaniṣads* and six *Vedāṅgs*. It goes without saying that the entire universe has been created by the *Brahmā* in accordance with the knowledge found in the *Veda*. It is the perennial source of all branches of knowledge. *Vedas* are recognised as the manifestation of Supreme God. Hence, Vedas are unborn and impermissible.

The *Vedic* literature, which contains divine laws for well being for entire humanity, is the most reliable source of knowledge about each and every aspect of life. Going by the *Vedic view* the body exists, but it is just the beginning and not the end of the human existence. The happiness of our bodily needs is and, no doubt, should be our objective, but not our final aim in life. The *Vedic* economic policies and the cultural beliefs formulated by the seers are interwoven. The *Vedas* do not teach us to pay no attention to the body or to shut our eyes to the economic aspect of life. Here desires confines its scope to merely providing man with his physical necessities, worldly contentment and soothe,

while spiritualism goes a step further and embraces man and his needs as a whole. One-sidedness cannot render any useful service to humanity. Therefore, both materialism as well as spiritualism should be considered parts of human goal. In short, the *Vedas* advocate the fusion of human goals for exactness of life.

In the *Vedic* tradition, there are fourfold values of human existence—*Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Mokṣa*. Out of these four *puruṣārthas*, the *Dharma* i.e. righteousness is considered more significant than *Artha* i.e. wealth, but wealth was never neglected.

Artha, "worldly prosperity; material potential; the pursuit of wealth and social status"—refers to the idea of material affluence, not to be understood solely as material assets, but all kinds of wealth including non-tangibles such as knowledge, friendship and love. *Artha* is one of the four goals of life, known as *puruṣārthas*. It is considered to be a noble goal as long as it follows the dictates of dharma. The concept includes achieving widespread fame, garnering wealth and having an elevated social standing. It is the second lowest rung on the ladder of *puruṣārthas*, above *kāma* (physical or emotional pleasure) but below *dharma* (righteousness) and *mokṣa* (liberation).

Hindu Dharma points out the importance of material wealth for the overall happiness and well being of one and all in the society. A house holder requires wealth, because he has to carry out many duties to uphold *dharma* and warranty the welfare and advancement of his family and society. A person may have the intention to uphold the dharma, but if he has no money he would not be able to perform his duties and fulfil his dharma. *Hindu Dharma* therefore rightly places material wealth as the second most important objective in human life.

The *Ṛṣis* of yore had recognised the natural human need for enjoying the pleasures of life and had provided for it in the scheme of *puruṣārthas* prescribed for human beings. The four *puruṣārthas* or ends to be striven for in human life, have given *Artha*, acquisition of wealth and other objects of enjoyment, a very significant place. However, this *Artha* should be within the perimeters permitted by dharma or righteousness as defined by the Holy Scriptures and

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practised by sages. According to *Medinikośa*, *Artha* denotes *viśaya* (subject), *dhana* (wealth), and *vastu* (material) etc-

अर्थो विषयार्थनयोर्धनकारणवस्तुषु।

अभिधेये च शब्दानां निवृत्तौ च प्रयोजने॥¹

The Arthaśāstra clarifies the term Artha as the source of the livelihood by men following various occupations.² Vālmīkirāmāyaṇa says that a man who begets wealth achieves the successive objects of life (Puruṣārtha) namely kāma and the allied. Everything falls in line with him. He who is impoverished cannot get wealth without puruṣārtha even though he nourishes the desire to have it.

The wealth serves the purpose of a friend.³ Hence the Vedic seers offer prayers towards the Almighty God-O God! May you bestow that fortunate wealth on us, which is treasured in the mountains etc., or lies under the ground, or it is hidden in the un-fathomable oceans-

यद्वीदार्विन्द्र यत्स्थिरे यत्पर्शानि पराभृतम्।

वसुं स्याहं तदा भर॥⁴

In Atharvaveda, seer says to the motherland-‘ O Mother-land, may you stabilize me with the pious wealth. O Omniscient Earth, you have your contacts with the heaven. May you make me wealthy and well-to-do-

भूमं मातर्नि धेहि मा भद्रया सुप्रतिष्ठितम्।

संविदाना दिवा कवे श्रियां मा धेहि भूत्याम्॥⁵

Vedic seer prays Agni God for bestowing prosperity-

नू नो रास्व सहस्रवत्तोकवत्पुष्टिमद्वसु।

द्युमदग्ने सुवीर्यं वर्षिष्ठमनुपक्षितम्॥⁶

i.e. Grant us indeed, Agni, wealth that may be counted by thousands, and comprising progeny, sustenance, brilliant riches, and vigour, and be never-ending and be countless and in-exhaustible.

¹ Medinikośa-17.2

² Arthaśāstra-15.1.1

³ Ṛgveda-7.72.2

⁴ Ṛgveda-8.45.41

⁵ Atharvaveda-12.1.63

⁶ Ṛgveda-3.13.7

2. IMPORTANCE OF WEALTH

Artha (Material wealth) occupies the second position amongst the fourfold value of life. It is highly vital for every human being as it is a means of happiness and enjoyment irrespective of caste and creed. Even for a Brāhmaṇa, according to Mahārṣi Manu, the earning of wealth (arthārjana) is a obligation.⁷ The significance of wealth is well imagined from the prayers sung by the worshippers for obtaining wealth-

प्रजापते न त्वदेतान्यन्यो विश्वा जातानि परि ता बभूव।

यत्कामास्ते जुहुमस्तन्नो अस्तु वयं स्याम पतयो रयीणाम्॥⁸

i.e. No other than you, Prajāpati, has given way of life to all things. May that object of our desires for which we sacrifice to you be ours, may we be the possessors of riches.

Sacrifices and worships were made for attaining productive land, pleasant homes and wealth. The Vedic seer says-

सुक्षेत्रिया सुगातुया वसूया च यजमहे।

अप नः शोचुचदुघम्॥⁹

'May we be the masters of wealth' is intense desire for Vedic people, which could be authenticated by following mantras-

रयिश्च मे रायश्च मे पुष्टं च मे विभु च मे प्रभु च मे पूर्णं च मे पूर्णतरं च मे कुर्यवं च मेऽक्षितं च मेऽक्षुच मे यज्ञेन कल्पन्ताम्॥¹⁰

i.e. May my wealth and my possessions, and my opulence and my growth, and my pervading command and my leadership, and my profusion and my greater abundance, and my bad harvest and my unwasted crop, and my food and my satiety flourish by sacrifice.

अग्ने त्वं नो अन्तम उत त्राता शिवो भवा वरूथ्यः।

वसुरभिर्वसुश्रवा अच्छा नक्षि युमन्ता रयि दाः॥¹¹

⁷ Manu Smṛti-1.88,10.75

⁸ Rgveda-10.121.10

⁹ Ibid,1.97.2

¹⁰ Yajurveda-18.10

¹¹ Ibid,15.30

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i.e. O Agni, be our nearest friend, be you a kind deliverer and a congenial companion. Come as good Agni, come as outstanding and give us wealth most splendidly renowned.

‘May God bless us with valuable wealth’ are the universal prayers of Vedic seers. Vedic seer says-

भग एव भर्गवाँ अस्तु देवास्तेन वयं भर्गवन्तः स्याम।¹²

i.e. May Bhaga, gods, be the holder of affluence, and, through him, may we be possessed of wealth.

It has been again said that-

उत त्रायस्व गृणतो मघोर्नो महश्च रायो रेवत्सकृधी नः ॥¹³

i.e. O Indra! Safeguard those who have a high regard for you, and are well-heeled in offering and deliver us wealth with great riches.

3. WEALTH FOR WELFARE OF ALL

Charity towards a needy human being¹⁴, welfare of other¹⁵, individual nourishment¹⁶, care and competence¹⁷ are certain points described in the Vedic verses regarding the utilization of wealth. Wellbeing of all was considered as the main purpose of its attainment.

4. DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

The economic philosophy of Vedas suggested an impartial sharing of food and wealth. A mantra of R̥gveda describes that a person who eats alone is nothing but a sinner - **केवलाद्यो भवति केवलादी ॥¹⁸** Similarly, Gitā condemns a person who eats single-handedly by saying that he is nothing but a sinner - **भुञ्जन्ते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात्।¹⁹** It is noted that although some hymns of Vedas advocate

¹² R̥gveda-7.41.5

¹³ Ibid, 10.22.15

¹⁴ Ibid,10.117.5

¹⁵ Yajurveda-7.14

¹⁶ Ibid, 4.8

¹⁷ R̥gveda-1.3.2

¹⁸ Ibid, 10.117.6

¹⁹ Gitā-3.13

equal allocation of wealth²⁰, yet they do not hold up absolute equality because of the fact that people are not equal in their capability, ability, temperament, propensity and outlook.²¹

5. ETHICAL EARNING OF WEALTH

Going by the Vedic literature it seems quite obvious that guiding code for the well-off life related to the ownership of wealth was essentially moral and ethical. The Vedic seers, knowing the importance of wealth to lead a satisfied and comfortable life, had established certain rules and restrictions to its attainment. Firstly, nobody was allowed to bring together unlimited wealth by encroaching upon livelihood of others. A prayer to Indra demonstrates this very clearly. Ṛṣi Gautama says to Indra, "You are able to see the wealth of those persons, who never give to others and are hoarding it beyond limit. Please distribute their wealth amongst us."²² Thus profusion of wealth, without its proper use was condemned. The various types of sacrifices were introduced by the Vedic seer to check the hoarding of wealth in a few hands. Emphasis was always laid on honest means for achievement of wealth. Seer says-"O Agni! Lead us to wealth through the right path".²³ It is pertinent to point out that the people of Vedic period longed for the wealth which could only be earned by judicious means-

त्वं देहि सहस्रिणं रयिं नोऽद्रोघेण वच्सता सत्यमग्ने।²⁴

6. VARIOUS ASPECTS OF WEALTH

6.1. AGRICULTURE

Going by the Vedic literature, it is quite evident that Agriculture has been treated as source of affluence and sustenance.²⁵ In the Vedic period agriculture was the chief livelihood of the people. The term kṛṣi occurs in the Ṛgveda quite

²⁰ Atharvaveda-3.30.6

²¹ Ṛgveda-10.71.7

²² Ibid, 1.81.9

²³ Ibid, 189.1

²⁴ Ibid, 3.14.6

²⁵ Yajurveda, 9.22

number of times.²⁶ It gives grain, strength and lustre.²⁷ The Akṣasūkta of Ṛgveda considers agriculture to be the best of all occupations and advises to give up gambling and take to farming for the welfare of the family-

अक्षैर्मा दीव्यः कृषिमित्कृषस्व वित्ते रमस्व बहु मन्यमानः।²⁸

i.e. Giving serious attention to my advice, play not with dice and pursue agriculture and be delighted in wealth so acquired.

6.1.1. FARMERS

Thought for agriculture sans farmers has no meaning. So the Vedas have made deliberations in this regard. The word ‘Kināśa’ has been used for farmers in the Vedas.²⁹ Farmers have been termed as ‘Annavid’ i.e. specialist in grains.³⁰

6.1.2 LAND

Land was recognised as wealth during Vedic period. In Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa the giving of land as fee to priests has been mentioned.³¹ It is to be noted that land was rightly considered wealth as it fulfils the basic necessities of people and of their cattle by producing food-grain and grass respectively. The Atharvaveda, Yajurveda and Taittirīya Saṃhitā mention several kinds of land. There are three broad divisions-Urvara (Fertile), Iriṇa (barren) and Śaṣpya (Pasture).³² The Vājasaneyī Saṃhitā³³ mentions lands of many kinds, such as tracts in hill area, open plains, stream land, slopes and undulating regions, flat surfaces with green pastures, low fertile regions and cultivable lands with homesteads.

6.1.3 FARMING

Methods of farming have been discussed in Vedas. Atharvaveda states many facts concerning agriculture. There is a great deal of similarity between method of farming mentioned in Atharvaveda and modern method. In

²⁶ Ṛgveda-1.23.15, 1.176.2, 10.34.13

²⁷ Taittirīya Saṃhitā-4.3.7.3

²⁸ Ṛgveda-10.34.13

²⁹ Atharvaveda-3.17.5

³⁰ Ibid, 6.116.1

³¹ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa-13.6.2.18

³² Atharvaveda-10.6.33, 4.15.12; Yajurveda-16.33, 42

³³ Vājasaneyī Saṃhitā-16.43

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa the whole process of farming has been described in four word- Karṣaṇa (cultivating the field), Vapana (Sowing seeds), Lavana (Reaping the harvest) and Mardana (Threshing).³⁴ First of all, cultivable fertile land is ploughed and prepared for sowing seeds.³⁵ Ploughing was regarded as an important process in cultivation. Prayers were offered for the ploughshare to plough the field properly and for tillers to ply rightly.³⁶ Mistakes in ploughing were corrected, as was done by a priest in reciting a hymn.³⁷ It has been described that good yield is possible in well-ploughed and fertile land-

यथा बीजमुर्वरायां कृष्टे फालेन रोहति।³⁸

The farmer after ploughing ceremony starts ploughing the field repeatedly with the prayers-

घृतेन सीता मधुना समज्यतां विश्वेदेवैरनुमता मरुद्भिः।

ऊर्जस्वती पर्यसा पिन्वमानास्मान्सीति पर्यसाऽभ्या ववृत्स्व॥³⁹

i.e. May the low lying lands so ploughed and rich with milk and wet with honey and ghee come back to us much fertilized.

6.1.4. SOWING

Sowing being an important process in cultivation was given serious attention and care in Vedic period. One of the R̥gvedic mantra says on the sowing - "Harness the ploughs fit on the yokes, now that the womb of the earth is ready to sow the seeds therein."⁴⁰ Another mantra says - "Attach the 'sira' spread apart the yokes, sow the seeds into the prepared womb".⁴¹ These two mantras suggest that after an initial ploughing the seeds were sown with the help of a plough. When the crop gets ready it was reaped with the help of a

³⁴ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa-1.6.1.3

³⁵ Atharvaveda-3.17.5

³⁶ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa-7.2.2.9

³⁷ Aitreyā Brāhmaṇa-3.38

³⁸ Atharvaveda-10.6.33

³⁹ Yajurveda-12.70

⁴⁰ R̥gveda-10.9.23

⁴¹ Ibid,10.101.3-4

sickle.⁴² The reaped corn was tied in bundles and taken to granaries, where it was threshed.⁴³ Threshing separates grain from its stalk. After threshing there was winnowing.⁴⁴ The Atharvaveda also mentions holding Śūrpa, winnowing the husk, using husk for cows, collecting rice after separating its husk etc.⁴⁵ Cleaning of grain by pounding it in mortar has also been described.⁴⁶ The cleaned grain was stored in large earthen pots after measuring its quantity. The pot used in measuring was called Ūrdara.⁴⁷

6.1.5. APPLIANCES USED IN FARMING

The development of agriculture is reflected in the number of tools and implements fashioned by any community and their effectiveness. They help overcome the difficulties presented by nature and geography. The tools and appliances used in farming have also been mentioned in the Atharvaveda. The Vedic literature mentions ‘abhṛī’ as a digging tool. It was hollow and was a span or sometimes a cubit long. The Vedic term for plough are ‘lāṅgala’ and ‘sīra’. It was made of hard wood like Khadira and Udumbara. The Ṛgvedic plough is taken to be a simple and light implement made of wood. But the reference to its well smoothed handle and its sharp pointed share⁴⁸ pointed share suggests that there was an effort to improve it to make it something of which the owner could feel proud. The Ṛgveda refers to six to twelve oxen being yoked to the plough.⁴⁹ The Ṛgvedic mantra refers to the use of horses for ploughing.⁵⁰ The whip or stick used by a ploughman to drive bullocks is known as ‘Aṣṭrā’.⁵¹

⁴² Atharvaveda-3.17.2

⁴³ Ṛgveda-10.48.7

⁴⁴ Atharvaveda-11.1.12

⁴⁵ Ibid, 11.3.4-6

⁴⁶ Ibid, 11.3.3

⁴⁷ Ṛgveda-2.14.11

⁴⁸ Atharvaveda-3.17.3

⁴⁹ Ṛgveda-6.91.1

⁵⁰ Ibid,10.9.2-5

⁵¹ Ibid, 3.17.6

6.1.6. INCREASING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

For increasing agricultural production, various other techniques and arrangements were developed by Vedic people. They include development of manuring, irrigation, pesticides etc.

6.1.7. MANURE

Evidence of use of manures are found in Vedic literature. The word 'Kariṣa' occurring in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa denoted dry cowdung.⁵² The Atharvaveda provides the reference in mentioning cowdung as a useful manure for 'śāli' variety of rice.

6.1.8. IRRIGATION

Water is essential for growth of crops. Rain water is the first and foremost source of water supply. It has been considered to be the prominent means of irrigation.⁵³ Several mantras deal with the importance of rain for good crops.⁵⁴ The Yajurveda and Taittirīya Saṃhitā, too, discuss the importance of rain.⁵⁵ But, in many cases it is either insufficient or irregular or available on time. Hence, keeping in view this very fact, Ṛgveda mentions four kinds of water used for irrigation purposes. They are-i) Divyāḥ (Rain water), ii) Khanitrimāḥ (Water of wells), iii) Svayaṃjāḥ (Spring water) and iv) Samudrārthāḥ (The water of the rivers falling into sea).

The Yajurveda and Taittirīya Saṃhitā, too, mention various means of irrigation. They are-Wells, canals, fountains, tanks, rivers and reservoirs.⁵⁶ Both small and big means of irrigation have been mentioned therein.⁵⁷

The Ṛgveda, describing the well as a means of irrigation, also mentions various appliances used in irrigation from wells. They are: Kośa (a leather

⁵² Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa-2.1.1.7

⁵³ Atharvaveda- 4.15.7

⁵⁴ Ibid, 4.15.2

⁵⁵ Yajurveda-2.16

⁵⁶ Ibid, 16.37-38

⁵⁷ Ibid, 22.25

bucket), Varatrā (rope), Aśmacakra (earthen pitcher).⁵⁸ The water taken out of wells was poured in reservoirs.⁵⁹

6.1.9. FOODGRAIN

Food-grain is an important possession. People accepted food-grain as wealth.⁶⁰ Bhojana, which is used for food, is derived from the root bhuj (to eat, to enjoy) is a name for wealth in Nighaṇṭu.⁶¹ Some epithets used for Bhojana denote the interest of the Ṛgvedic people towards a good and qualitative food, which is clear by following mantras -

विश्वस्यामृत भोजन।⁶²

मा नः प्रिया भोजनानि प्र मौषीः।⁶³

It indicates that cooking was fully developed at that time. Food is more frequently called Anna. This word is derived from the root ‘Ad’ (to eat) and thus literarily means ‘which is eaten by all creatures’.

It has been said that grain is important as the means of satisfying one’s hunger. It nourishes and cures diseases.⁶⁴ As we depend upon it for our survival, we must devote all our wisdom to improve it.⁶⁵ Human life depends upon cultivation and grain. One who gets success in cultivation can give shelter to others.⁶⁶ As human life depends upon grain or food it is Brahman for human beings. It brings light to human life and removes gloom of poverty.⁶⁷

Many mantras contain prayers for the prosperity of grain-

उच्छ्रयस्व बहुभेव स्वेन महसा यव।

मृणीहि विश्वा पात्राणि मा त्वा दिव्याशनिर्वधीत्॥

आशृण्वन्तं यवं देवं यत्र त्वाच्छावदामसि।

तदुच्छ्रयस्व यौरिव समुद्रइवैदध्याक्षितः ॥

⁵⁸ Rgveda-10.101.5-6

⁵⁹ Ibid, 10.101.7

⁶⁰ Taittiriya Saṃhitā-2.1.9.2

⁶¹ Nighaṇṭu-2.1

⁶² Rgveda-1.44.5

⁶³ Ibid, 1.104.8

⁶⁴ Atharvaveda-8.2.19

⁶⁵ Ibid, 20.76.4

⁶⁶ Ibid, 8.10.24

⁶⁷ Ibid, 19.40.4

अक्षितास्त उपसदोऽक्षिताः सन्तु राशयः।
पृणन्तो अक्षिताः सन्त्वत्तारः सन्त्वक्षिताः॥⁶⁸

i.e. Let this crop of barley spring up and grow in plenty through its magnificence. Let it overcome all the trouble in the way of growth and let not thunderbolt or natural calamities destroy it. Let this barely crop which is good eatable cooked nicely responsive to cooking process grow up there we find soil of which we speak highly. Let it spring up like the sun and be inexhaustible like ocean or space. Let the other crop in its vicinity be inexhaustible, let the gathered heap of it be inexhaustible, let the givers of the inexhaustible and let the men who eat it, be inexhaustible.

The Yajurveda mentions twelve grains- vrīhi, nīvāra, yava, godhūma, priyaṅgu, aṅu, śyāmāka, māṣa, mudga, masūra, khalva and tila. The word iḥṣu is found in Taittirīya Saṃhitā and Atharvaveda. The mantra in Taittirīya Saṃhitā⁶⁹ discusses the seasons of agriculture. Barley, for instance, is stated to ripen in summer, rice in autumn, beans and Sesamum in winter.

7. CATTLE WEALTH

Cattle wealth was highly valued during the Vedic period and that is why we find various prayers attributed to the different deities for bestowing that wealth on worshippers - स पूर्ववज्जनयञ्जन्तवे धनं समानमज्जं पर्येति जागृविः।⁷⁰ Taittirīya Saṃhitā clearly recognizes cattle as wealth - पशवो वै रयिः⁷¹ Detailed description of animals and other living beings are found in the Vedas. Animals have been classified thus: i) Grāmya-Those living in villages known as pet animals. ii) Āraṇya-Those living in the forests. This division finds place in Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā and Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā etc.⁷² The Atharvaveda stresses the importance of livestock. Let there be pet animals in every house. May there be prosperity of livestock all around. May there be livestock too alongwith food and wealth.⁷³ In Ṛgveda cows have been described as superior wealth-

⁶⁸ Ibid, 6.142.1-3

⁶⁹ Taittirīya Saṃhitā-7.2.10.2

⁷⁰ Ṛgveda-3.2.12

⁷¹ Taittirīya Saṃhitā-1.5.7.2

⁷² Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā-2.2.3

⁷³ Atharvaveda-2.26.3

गावो भगो गाव इन्द्रो मे अच्छान् गावः सोमस्य प्रथमस्य भक्षः।

इमा या गावः स जनास इन्द्र इच्छामीद्धदा मनसा चिदिन्द्रम्॥⁷⁴

i.e. May the cows be for our affluence: may Indra grant me cattle: may the cows yield the food of the first libation: these cows, oh men, are the Indra, the Indra whom I desire with heart and mind.

Separate hymns are devoted to cows.⁷⁵ Cows were also given as dakṣiṇā to the ṛtviks at the sacrifices.

Horses were too taken as superior wealth.⁷⁶ In Ṛgveda, Maruts are asked to bring wealth comprising horses.⁷⁷ They were considered as an important possession because of their utility in riding and drawing chariots. Besides, sheep, goat, elephant, mule, bull and dogs were also considered valuable wealth.

8. COTTAGE INDUSTRY

Creativeness is the product of the human mind and industry develops on creativeness. This creativeness of mind made Aryans to invent several cottage industries like spinning and weaving, metals and metallurgy, leather, wood-work, pottery, plaiting etc. Vedic economy was an agricultural economy and cottage industries were known as complementary and supplementary to agriculture. Here are some of the cottage industries-

8.1. TEXTILE INDUSTRY

Textile industry was highly developed in the Vedic period and was recognized as an important source of income. People used to weave cloth for their and others use. It is evident from the references scattered throughout the Vedic texts that people were very familiar with techniques of spinning and weaving.

Elegant dresses have played a very important role in increasing physical beauty. Wearing clothes leads to welfare and well-being.⁷⁸ Clothes have also

⁷⁴ Ṛgveda-6.28.6

⁷⁵ Ibid, 6.28 and 10.169

⁷⁶ Ibid,1.92.8

⁷⁷ Ibid, 5.41.5

⁷⁸ Atharvaveda-14.2.41

been considered to be the means of longevity and prosperity.⁷⁹ In Vedic tradition, we have copious references to the costumes which were put on in different seasons and on various occasions. We come across in the Vedic literature names of various garments which were worn by the people in that age. We have also references to many materials used in making cloth. In the R̥gveda it is said that woollen clothes were woven with a pūṣaṇa. Words like otu⁸⁰ (the woof), tantu⁸¹ (yarn), tantra⁸² (the wrap), vemana (loom), prāchīnatāna⁸³ (the wrap drawn in front), vāya⁸⁴ (weaver) are the clear evidence of the fact that the process of weaving clothes was fully in vogue in the Vedic age. The adornment and embroidery of clothes were also practiced.

Three kinds of clothes have been mentioned in the Atharvaveda viz cotton, silken and woollen. The word 'Vāsa' is used for cotton clothes⁸⁵ and Tāryya for the silken.⁸⁶ Silken cloth was prepared from the fibers of the plant known as 'Trpā'.

In the Vedic age, three garments namely i) Vāsa, ii) Adhivāsa and iii) Nīvi were worn. 'Vāsa' was the garment, 'adhivāsa' was the over-garment and the lion cloth or a piece of cloth ticked round the waist like dhoti was called 'nīvi'. Both men and women wore these garments. In addition to these three garments men also put on a garment called 'atka'⁸⁷ It was a long⁸⁸ garment with which the whole body was covered.⁸⁹ Another garment mentioned in Vedic literature is 'drāpi'. It was a close fitting⁹⁰, embroidered⁹¹, coat like⁹² garment worn both

⁷⁹ Ibid, 19.24.6

⁸⁰ R̥gveda-6.9.2

⁸¹ Atharvaveda-14.2.51

⁸² R̥gveda-10.71.9

⁸³ Taittiriya Samhitā-6.1.1.4

⁸⁴ R̥gveda-10.26.6

⁸⁵ Atharvaveda-14.1.17

⁸⁶ Ibid, 14.1.28

⁸⁷ R̥gveda-1.95.7 and 4.18.5

⁸⁸ Ibid, 2.35.14

⁸⁹ Ibid, 5.74.5

⁹⁰ Ibid, 1.166.7

⁹¹ Ibid, 1.25.13

⁹² Atharvaveda-3.13.1

be men⁹³ and women⁹⁴. This shows that sewn cloth were in vogue in the Vedic age. A garment called ‘upavasana’⁹⁵ fluttered in air.

8.2. METAL AND METALLURGY-

From very early period Aryans were familiar with metals and their uses. Many people adopted metal work as their source of livelihood. Generally five to six metals were known to the people of Vedic times as it is clear from references scattered throughout the Vedic literature, viz- Hiraṇya-Gold; Ayas, Śyāma, Kārṣṇāyasa- Iron or copper or bronze; Rajata-Silver; Loha-Copper; Sīsā-Lead; Trapu-Tin.

In Yajurveda six metals have been mentioned as hiraṇya, ayas, śyāma, loha, sīsā and trapu. Here it has been said that the sacrificer enriches himself in these metals by performing sacrifice-

**अश्मा च मे मृत्तिका च मे गिरयश्च मे पर्वताश्च मे सिकताश्च मे वनस्पतयश्च मे हिरण्यं च मेऽयश्च मे
श्यामं च मे लोहं च मे सीसं च मे त्रपुं च मे यज्ञेन कल्पन्ताम्॥⁹⁶**

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa states that metals arose from the divided body of Indra.⁹⁷ Among the metals, hiraṇya (gold) is frequently referred to in the Vedic texts⁹⁸ and this shows that Aryans considered gold very valuable. It was always associated with Gods. Gold, being sun metal, is said to be originated from fire.⁹⁹ The Atharvaveda mentions gold very frequently. It was considered to be very valuable metal. It was obtained from river-beds and that is why Sindhu is spoken of by the Vedic seers as rich in gold.¹⁰⁰ According to Atharvaveda, technique of extracting gold from mining developed in Vedic India. In a mantra of Taittirīya Saṃhitā cleansing of gold is described.¹⁰¹ The earth, therefore, has been described as ‘Hiraṇyavakṣas’ i.e. one that keeps gold in its breast.¹⁰² The

⁹³ Rgveda-9.100.9

⁹⁴ Atharvaveda-5.7.10

⁹⁵ Rgveda-10.102.2

⁹⁶ Yajurveda-18.13

⁹⁷ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa-12.7.1.7

⁹⁸ Rgveda-1.43.5, 3.34.9, 4.10.6

⁹⁹ Taittirīya Saṃhitā-6.61.7

¹⁰⁰ Rgveda-10.75.8

¹⁰¹ Taittirīya Saṃhitā-6.1.7.1

¹⁰² Atharvaveda-12.1.6

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, too mentions that gold was extracted from ores by burning them in fire.¹⁰³ Different ornaments were made of gold. Necklaces, earrings and cups were made of it.¹⁰⁴ Sometimes, chariots were also adorned with gold. In Ṛgveda, Aśvins' sky-touching chariot is described as with a golden seat, golden reins, golden supporting shaft, golden axle and golden wheels.¹⁰⁵ Gold was considered as the most highly esteemed gift and was given in the 'dakṣiṇā' to the priests. In Ṛgveda it is mentioned that Divodāsa gave ten lumps of gold alongwith other articles to a priest.¹⁰⁶ At several places in the Vedic texts poets have shown the people anxiousness to possess gold.¹⁰⁷ In Ṛgveda, Pūṣan is said as having golden vessels by which he navigates within the ocean-firmament.¹⁰⁸ Gold was recognized as a medium of exchange. The words 'Aṣṭāprūḍa' and 'Śatamāna', denoting units of exchange, are frequently mentioned in Vedic texts.¹⁰⁹

Silver also finds mention in Vedic literature. Utensils were prepared of silver in Vedic India.¹¹⁰

According to Vedic literature, copper and iron were also used frequently for economic purposes. 'Ayas' has been used for iron and copper. The Atharvaveda divides it into two. 'Lohita ayas' has been used for copper and 'Śyāma ayas' for iron.¹¹¹ In the Yajurveda, the blacksmith who heats iron etc. has been 'Ayastāpa'.¹¹² Iron-tipped arrows, iron pillared chariots of Mitra and Varuṇa, iron teeth of Maruts, the mid-air deities, iron vessels etc. are mentioned in the Vedic literature.

Coins such as niṣka, māna, śatamāna, kṛṣṇala etc. were minted from metals.

¹⁰³ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa-6.1.3.5

¹⁰⁴ Ṛgveda-2.33.10

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 8.5.28-29

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 6.47.23

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 9.27.4

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 6.58.3

¹⁰⁹ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, 5.5.5.16

¹¹⁰ Atharvaveda-8.10.6

¹¹¹ Ibid, 11.3.7

¹¹² Yajurveda-30.14

8.3. ORNAMENTS

Though the term ‘alaṃkāra’ in the sense of ornaments is noted in the post-saṃhitā period, but there are various types of ornaments mentioned in the Saṃhitās. The term ‘alaṃkāra’ is derived from the root ‘kr’ with the indeclinable ‘alaṃ’ or ‘araṃ’, which means ornaments, decoration, beautification and ornamentation etc. The word ‘Alaṃkāra’ or ‘Alaṃkṛta’ is found in Atharvaveda¹¹³ and Chāndogya-Upaniṣad.¹¹⁴

The ornaments for the body starts from the head down to the feet, i.e. head ornaments, ear ornaments, neck and chest ornaments, waist ornaments and feet ornaments. There are number of head ornaments mentioned in Vedic texts. The name of these ornaments are- ‘Stukā’¹¹⁵, ‘Kumba’¹¹⁶, ‘Kurīra’¹¹⁷, ‘Opaśa’¹¹⁸, ‘Śṛṅga’¹¹⁹ and ‘Tirīṭa’¹²⁰ etc. Like head ornaments, the description of ear ornaments are also found in the Vedic literature. Among the major ear ornaments of the Vedic period special mention may be made of pravarta¹²¹, pravartya¹²², hiraṇyakaṛṇṣ¹²³, suchakra¹²⁴, prāvepa¹²⁵ etc. Neck and chest ornaments were too popular ornaments used by both men and women in Vedic times, mentioned in the Vedic texts. In the neck and chest ornaments special mention may be made of rukma¹²⁶, niṣka¹²⁷, hiraṇya urvaśī¹²⁸. The ornaments which were worn on the wrist like a kaṅkaṇa (bracelet) mentioned in the Vedic

¹¹³ Atharvaveda-2.12.7

¹¹⁴ Chāndogya-Upaniṣad-8.8.2, 5

¹¹⁵ Ṛgveda-1.24.7

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 2.34.3

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 10.85.8

¹¹⁸ Atharvaveda-6.138.2

¹¹⁹ Ṛgveda-1.163.9

¹²⁰ Atharvaveda-8.6.7

¹²¹ Ibid, 15.2.5

¹²² Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa-3.5.3.16

¹²³ Ṛgveda-1.112.14

¹²⁴ Ibid, 10.85.20

¹²⁵ Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā-4.4.8

¹²⁶ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa-6.7.1.1., Atharvaveda-14.2.30, Ṛgveda-2.34.2

¹²⁷ Ṛgveda-5.19.3, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa-10.4.1.8

¹²⁸ Ṛgveda-7.31.3

literature were bhujan¹²⁹, khādhasta¹³⁰, pratisāra¹³¹, hasti¹³², pārihasta¹³³, hiranyabāhu and vala¹³⁴. This apart, mekhla and muñja were also popular girdles in Vedic period.

8.4. WOOD-WORK

Wood-work was largely developed as an industry in the Vedic age. It was accepted as the most important source of income. Aryans were predominantly agriculturists and they needed implements to cultivate the land and vehicles for carrying their crops from the fields. It is clear from the references scattered throughout the Vedic texts that people were much interested in making chariots. R̥gveda mentions yoking of five-hundred chariots together.¹³⁵ By checking a large number of references to chariot-making in the Vedic literature, it seems that this work was recognized as an independent industry. The carpenter was well known to the people as it is indicated in several references.¹³⁶ The services of a carpenter were especially needed when a yūpa (sacrificial post) was to be made for the sacrifice. Household and sacrificial utensils such as, dhruvā, juhū, sruva¹³⁷ (ladles), udaca¹³⁸ (bucket), camasam¹³⁹ (bowl) etc. were also made of wood. In Yajurveda, a list of utensils required in performing a sacrifice is also given as vāyavya (a spoon), droṇa-kalaśa, grāvāṇa, adhiṣavaṇa, pūtabhṛt and adhavanīya.¹⁴⁰ In Vedic literature we get references to the furniture articles made up of wood. The terms like Paryāṅka¹⁴¹ (seat), Āsandi (It is a long reclining chair resembling modern sofa. According to Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa¹⁴² it

¹²⁹ Ibid, 8.97.1 and 8.8.2

¹³⁰ Ibid, 7.56.13

¹³¹ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa-5.3.4.20 and Atharvaveda-4.40.2-8

¹³² Atharvaveda-3.22.3

¹³³ Ibid, 6.81.1-3)

¹³⁴ Aitreyā Brāhmaṇa-3.5

¹³⁵ R̥gveda-10.93.14

¹³⁶ Ibid, 9.112.1

¹³⁷ Atharvaveda-18.4.5

¹³⁸ Ibid, 4.15.16

¹³⁹ R̥gveda-4.35.2

¹⁴⁰ Yajurveda-18.21

¹⁴¹ Atharvaveda-15.3.3

¹⁴² Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa-5.4.4.1

was an elaborate seat made of Khadira wood, perforated and joined with straps.)¹⁴³, Proṣṭha (According to Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa¹⁴⁴, it was a bench and the seats with solid lower structure and without arm-rests.)¹⁴⁵, Talpa¹⁴⁶ (Bed), Vāhya¹⁴⁷ (Carriage), Śāyana¹⁴⁸ (Bed), Upastaraṇa¹⁴⁹, Upadhāna¹⁵⁰ (Pillows or cushions) denote the furniture known to Vedic India. Besides, the houses were also made of wood.¹⁵¹ Wood craft was also indispensable for agricultural and transportation purposes along with chariot-making. Boats and ships made of wood are frequently mentioned in the Vedic literature and the art of ship-building was so common to the people that the sacrificial rite was compared to ship building.¹⁵²

8.5. COSMETIC AND PERFUME INDUSTRY

In ancient India cosmetic was limited to the use of sṛk, flower garlands and gandha, sandal paste to beautify the persons of gods and men.¹⁵³ The word sugandhi, well-perfumed is used twice in the Ṛgveda in connection with Agni and Rudra who is also form of Agni. The word gandha is also found in Taittirīya saṃhitā¹⁵⁴ and Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā¹⁵⁵. In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, the term gandha is used for about twelve times.

8.6. LEATHER INDUSTRY

The leather industry was at a peak of development in the Vedic age. Several people were engaged in leather work earning their livelihood. They made various articles of leather for their use. The word carman denoting ‘hide’ is a

¹⁴³ Atharvaveda-14.2.65

¹⁴⁴ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa-7.55.8

¹⁴⁵ Ṛgveda-7.55.8

¹⁴⁶ Atharvaveda-5.17.12

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 4.5.3, 14.2.30

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 5.29.8

¹⁴⁹ Ṛgveda-9.69.5

¹⁵⁰ Atharvaveda-14.2.65

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 7.83.1

¹⁵² Ṛgveda-10.101.2

¹⁵³ Ṛgveda-4.38.6, Atharvaveda-1.14.1 and Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa-13.5.4.2

¹⁵⁴ Taittirīya saṃhitā-1.2.6.1

¹⁵⁵ Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā-2.5.2

common expression from Ṛgveda onwards.¹⁵⁶ The leatherer manufactured various articles like bow strings¹⁵⁷, thongs to fasten the parts of the chariots, reins of horses etc. There are other references which throw light on the use of skin vessels for storing soma juice¹⁵⁸, curd, honey¹⁵⁹ and wine¹⁶⁰. Dṛti 'leather bag to hold fluids' is frequently referred to in the Ṛgveda and later Vedic literature.¹⁶¹ Articles of protection for warriors in battle were also prepared by the leatherer.¹⁶² Besides, drums for war purposes were also manufactured by the leatherer.¹⁶³

8.7. POTTERY

References to pottery indicate that this art was also well known to the Aryans. They used to manufacture pots for their domestic use as well as for sacrificial purposes. Moreover, pottery was recognised as a source of income. Kalaśa and Kumbha were jars and pots respectively and made of clay or some metal.¹⁶⁴ The word kulāla denoting a 'potter' occurs in the Yajurveda.¹⁶⁵

9. TRANSPORT

Transport occupies a very important place in an economy. It connects village with village and town with town. As today, Vedic Aryans invented means of transportation and that is why India was known as a big trading centre. The Vedic period's means of transportation may be considered into three parts, viz, land transport, water transport and air transport.

The most common means of transport in the Vedic times was ratha (chariot).¹⁶⁶ It was generally used for journey, carrying loads and war purposes. Two horses were generally employed in drawing the chariots but sometimes,

¹⁵⁶ Ṛgveda-1.85.5, 3.60.2 and Atharvaveda-5.8.13

¹⁵⁷ Ṛgveda-6.46.14

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 9.66.28-29

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 8.5.19

¹⁶⁰ Ṛgveda-1.191.10

¹⁶¹ Ṛgveda-8.5.19 and Atharvaveda-7.18.1

¹⁶² Ṛgveda-6.75.14, 8.5.38

¹⁶³ Ibid, 6.47.29

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 1.117.12, 1.191.14

¹⁶⁵ Yajurveda-16.27

¹⁶⁶ Atharvaveda-5.14.5 and Ṛgveda-1.20.3, 3.15.5

three, four or five horses were used.¹⁶⁷ References indicate that this number could be increased up to ten.¹⁶⁸ The use of more than one horse depended on the load. The owner of the chariots was called ‘Rathaspati’.¹⁶⁹ The anas¹⁷⁰ (draft wagon) and Śakaṭa¹⁷¹ (cart) were the modes of commercial transport. Anaḍvāhaḥ (oxen) were commonly yoked to these carts.¹⁷² As far as road-making is concerned it is also described in the Vedic texts. Atharvaveda mentions well made cart roads on a higher level.¹⁷³ The highway between two villages was known as mahāpatha.¹⁷⁴ Roadways engineering is also mentioned in the Vedic texts. The word pathikṛt denoting pathmaker (the roadways engineer) frequently occurs in the Vedic literature.¹⁷⁵ The roads were so constructed that the cart could play on them without any obstruction -

**अनुक्षरा ऋजवः सन्तु पन्थानो येभिः सखायो यन्ति नो वरेयम्।
सं भगेन समर्यम्णा सं धाता सृजतु वर्चसा ॥¹⁷⁶**

So far as water transport is concerned we find frequent references in the Vedic texts.¹⁷⁷ Although land transport was the chief means of transport at that time yet water transport was also given due importance by the Aryans. A mantra in Ṛgveda indicates that Aryans had clear knowledge about the great depth of the sea. Similarly a mention of four seas in Ṛgveda¹⁷⁸ also throws light on ‘Aryans’ knowledge of sea. The word ‘nau’ is repeatedly mentioned in the Vedic literature. It indicates a big boat or ship for river crossing.¹⁷⁹ Aryans also manufactured big ship-like boats to cross ocean and sea. A big boat is described as large as sky (divasprthu)-

¹⁶⁷ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa-5.1.4.11 and Ṛgveda-10.33.5

¹⁶⁸ Ṛgveda-10.94.7

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 10.64.10

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 4.30.10

¹⁷¹ Chāndogya Upaniṣad-4.1.8

¹⁷² Ṛgveda-3.53.18

¹⁷³ Atharvaveda-14.1.63

¹⁷⁴ Chāndogya Upaniṣad-8.6.2

¹⁷⁵ Ṛgveda-2.23.6, 6.21.12, Atharvaveda-18.3.25-35

¹⁷⁶ Atharvaveda-14.1.34

¹⁷⁷ Ṛgveda-1.46.7, 10.44.6

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 9.33.6

¹⁷⁹ Atharvaveda-2.36.5 and Ṛgveda-1.46.7, 8.83.3

अरित्रं वां दिवस्पृथु तीर्थे सिन्धूनां रथः।
धिया युयुञ्ज इन्दवः ॥¹⁸⁰

The hundred-oared ship of Bhujyu (a trade leader) is mentioned in the R̥gveda-

अनारम्भणे तदवीरयेथामनास्थाने अग्रभणे समुद्रे।
यदधिना ऊहथर्भुज्युमस्तं शतारित्रां नावमातस्थिवांसम् ॥¹⁸¹

i.e. Ye men! In the ocean full of water and in the upper region where there is no means of support for hand, where none can stand, you should travel for success in your undertakings, by building ships and aerial cars in the way described above. Such cars when moved by the properly yoked Ashvins (fire and water or electricity and wind) brings success to the undertakings. There should be a hundred iron bars (i.e. apparatus) for supporting the cars on land, or water and in the air and keeping them steady and for taking the bearings. These apparatus should be fixed to the land conveyances, ships and aerial cars. These three kinds of cars should be constructed for making them steady. Such cars secure permanent and abiding enjoyments.

A sailor or boatman is named as 'Sambin' in the Atharvaveda.¹⁸² In Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa the word aritri is used for the oarmen and nāvajā for the sailors.¹⁸³ From these references it is apparent that there was maritime traffic in the Vedic India.

Today mostly people think that the aeroplanes are a most recent achievement of the modern scientific world. But the position is entirely different. References indicate that Aryans of Vedic India had good knowledge of aeronautics. In R̥gveda it is described that Varuṇa knows the routes of the birds.¹⁸⁴ In another mantra of R̥gveda¹⁸⁵ a chariot is described which moved to the three worlds, was no less than an aeroplane. Again in the R̥gveda some references occur which throw light on the chariots which move swiftly in the

¹⁸⁰ R̥gveda-1.46.8

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 1.116.5

¹⁸² Atharvaveda-9.2.6

¹⁸³ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa-2.3.3.5

¹⁸⁴ R̥gveda-1.25.7

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 1.34.12

sky.¹⁸⁶ Yajurveda mentions an aeroplane (vimāna) which flies between earth and sky.¹⁸⁷

In brief, it is to be said that transport played a very important role in Vedic economic life. People of Vedic times used to go to distant lands to earn profits on their goods. Internal and coastal trade routes were traced by the people.

10. TRADE AND COMMERCE

From the Vedas we know that during that period trade and commerce were the important sources of economy. Coins were probably unknown, but trade was carried on by barter and the cow was regarded as the standard of value.¹⁸⁸ There are reasons to believe that haggling was known but a bargain, once made, held good.¹⁸⁹ The exchange and storage of things are described in a mantra.¹⁹⁰ Slender information is available in the Vedas regarding trade and commerce. A mantra in Atharvaveda used the word ‘Vaṇij’ for the trader. It indicates that Indra guides in trade-

**इन्द्रमृहं वृणिजं चोदयामि सन् एतं पुरएता नो अस्तु।
नुदन्न रतिं परिपन्थिनं मृगं स ईशानो धनदा अस्तु मह्यम्॥**¹⁹¹

i.e. I stir up the trader Indra. Let him encourage the businessman. May he approach us and be our guide and leader. May he chastising ill-will, anti-business robber and having control over others, be giver of riches.

Trade is the mean of renown and prosperity. It has been considered necessary to go to distant places in connection with trade. Prayer has been made for regular increase in the capital or money invested in trade. Paṇa or Prapaṇa has been used for purchase of articles and Vikraya or Pratipaṇa for their sale. The purchased articles are sold with some profit, thus making trade profitable. This has been indicated in the mantra-

शुनं नो अस्तु प्रपणो विक्रयश्च प्रतिपणः फलिन्नं मा कृणोतु।¹⁹²

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 1.47.2, 3.43.6, 4.36.1

¹⁸⁷ Yajurveda-17.59

¹⁸⁸ Ṛgveda-4.24.10

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 4.24.9

¹⁹⁰ Yajurveda-3.50

¹⁹¹ Atharvaveda-3.15.1

¹⁹² Ibid, 3.15.4

The Atharvaveda employs the words 'Vasana' and 'Śulka' for price.¹⁹³

The Atharvaveda emphasizes the need for having two things for achieving success in trade. They are: i) Caritam: Conduct and behaviour. The purity of conduct and sincerity in behaviour make a man trustworthy. This helps him prosper in trade. ii) Utthitam: Rising up or diligence. Devoting oneself to one's work with firm determination is diligence. This determination and diligence bring in prosperity. According to another mantra, qualities called 'Upoha' and 'Samūha' are the means of prosperity.¹⁹⁴ Upoha means bringing close, which suggests bringing the items purchased from distant places. 'Samūha' means accumulation. Selling of useful goods brought from other places is highly profitable.

11. SOURCE OF INCOME FOR THE GOVERNMENT

For welfare of common people it was but necessary for the King to explore sources of income and so was done in Vedic period. Sixteenth part of one's income was charged as tax.¹⁹⁵ Assessment of taxes was done by the representatives of public only. The public used to be motivated to pay taxes by spreading the thought that prompt payment of tax would pave the way to heaven.¹⁹⁶ The public paid taxes willingly. The king accepted them for the nation's security.¹⁹⁷ As taxes were charged for the purpose of national security, even the kings' relatives had to pay them.¹⁹⁸ There were various sources of income of the state. The king imposed variety of taxes. These taxes, therefore, have been described as 'Bahudhā Virūpāḥ' i.e. various kinds of taxes. They were general taxes, special taxes, bearable as well as onerous etc.¹⁹⁹ As is evident from Atharvaveda, rivers were used for economic gains.²⁰⁰ Boats and the passengers aboard were possibly charged taxes. The Atharvaveda also mentions

¹⁹³ Ibid, 12.2.36

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 3.24.7

¹⁹⁵ Atharvaveda-3.29.1

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 3.29.3

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 3.29.7

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 11.1.6

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 3.4.7

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 1.15.3

ghee, milk, water etc. as means of income.²⁰¹ This shows that the milkmen had to pay taxes on the sale of their milk products. Income from rivers and canals or drains for irrigation purposes had to pay tax.

Taxes were used for variety of purposes, some of which find mention. *Avi-*It is used for the maintenance of the public, *Śitipād-*It was meant for protection from the invaders. *Svadhā-*It was for the self-governance of the state.²⁰² There was a tax for the security of *pañcajana*.²⁰³ Another tax was aimed at protecting the weak against the oppressions of the powerful.²⁰⁴ Taxes were also used for the purposes of fulfilling the people’s wishes, expanding kingdom, dominance and power, and for achieving the desired ends.²⁰⁵ Misuse of taxes has been strictly warned against. It would amount to the king’s revolt against his own self and his public if there is any misuse of taxes.²⁰⁶ In *Taittiriya Saṃhitā*²⁰⁷ and *Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa*²⁰⁸, the word *Samgrahitṛ* has used which according to *Sāyaṇa* means treasure of the King. Vedic scholars have interpreted it as tax collector or collector of revenue. The words ‘*bali*’ and ‘*bhāga*’ have been used for tax. The words ‘*kara*’, ‘*śulka*’ and ‘*rājasva*’ have also been used for tax in the Vedic literature. Although all these words have their own significance, yet they all were used in the sense of tax. *Atharvaveda* also says that the poor were not asked to pay the tax to the king.

12. PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Keeping in view the importance of wealth, Vedic seers had developed the concept of professional education in Vedic India. Medical, military and commercial education and the training of artists and artisans for sculpture, architecture, painting, smithy, carpentry etc. draw attention even in the modern era.

²⁰¹ *Ibid*,1.15.4

²⁰² *Ibid*, 3.29.1

²⁰³ *Ibid*, 3.29.4

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 3.29.3

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 3.29.2

²⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 3.29.8

²⁰⁷ *Taittiriya Saṃhitā*, 1.8.9.1

²⁰⁸ *Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa*, 1.710.6

Medical science is no doubt of hoary antiquity in India. The Vedic literature refers to the healing feats of Aśvins, who though originally human beings, were later deified by a grateful posterity. Medical education was usually imparted by the private teachers. Practical training in surgery and pharmacy and constant discussion of abstruse points among the students and teachers were some of the important features of the training.

During the Vedic period the military profession was a popular one. Soldiers were imparted military education and thus prepared to be excellently brave.²⁰⁹ Strict discipline was enforced in this kind of education. The teachers spoke in harsh and commanding voice and made the soldiers tough.²¹⁰ World-winning and invincible braves were prepared through military education.

During Vedic period, general attitude of society towards arts and crafts was very positive. They were held in high esteem. The training in fine and useful arts was given by the apprenticeship system under which the students agreed to work under his teacher for an agreed number of years. The training under the above apprenticeship system was fairly efficient, for it was both theoretical and practical and given in the workshop itself. It helped to raise the general level of skill and workmanship in several arts and crafts. Those who were expert in arts and crafts were called with certain specified titles. Taṣṭās were trained in making chariots and doing carvings on them.²¹¹ Tvaṣṭās were educated in making various beautiful wooden items with help of axe.²¹² Karmakārs were trained in working with iron and other metals. They purified metals by heating them through bellows.²¹³ Hiraṇyakāras were trained in preparing beautiful designed ornaments.²¹⁴ Now only some titles are mentioned with references. The titles are-Annapati²¹⁵, Paśupati²¹⁶, Aśvapa²¹⁷, Vanapa²¹⁸, Kulāla²¹⁹,

²⁰⁹ Atharvaveda, 19.13.11

²¹⁰ Ibid, 8.8.4

²¹¹ Ṛgveda-10.86.5 and Atharvaveda-20.35.4

²¹² Atharvaveda-12.3.33

²¹³ Ibid, 18.3.22

²¹⁴ Yajurveda-30.17

²¹⁵ Ibid, 16.18, 11.83

²¹⁶ Ibid, 16.17

²¹⁷ Ibid, 30.11

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Sthapati²²⁰, Peśita²²¹, Gaṇaka²²², Kaivarta²²³, and Āñjanikāri²²⁴ etc. All these indicate the development of professional education in Vedic India.

CONCLUSION

In brief, it can be said that wealth played a very significant role at individual as well as at national level during Vedic period. It is quite clear that the Vedic Āryans never ignored the prosperous material life. Abundance of wealth and food was recognized by them as the chief essentials for the happiness of family and society. The Vedic society was a complete society in all respects, in which people pursued various occupations and economic activities. Proper attention was paid to develop the economic resources available in the state. Economic policies were framed and adjusted according to social conditions, ethical values and spiritual views. Taking inspiration from Vedic tradition one could develop his or her material capability and that too in accordance with dhārmic values.

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²¹⁸ Ibid, 30.19

²¹⁹ Ibid, 30.7

²²⁰ Ibid, 16.25

²²¹ Ibid, 30.12

²²² Ibid, 30.20

²²³ Ibid, 30.16

²²⁴ Ibid, 30.14