Ancient History · GS - I

Underline the changes in the field of society and economy from the Rig Vedic to the later Vedic period.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2024	GS - I	Ancient History

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Pastoralism to agriculture, territorial expansion, iron technology, settled life, social stratification, Varna system, patriarchy, property rights, surplus production, trade, taxation, emergence of kingship

Model Answer

Introduction

The transition from the Rig Vedic to the Later Vedic period witnessed a gradual shift from a predominantly pastoral tribal society to an agrarian, territorial and socially stratified society.

Changes in Society

1. **Social stratification:** The relatively flexible social order of the Rig Vedic period became more rigid, with the Varna system gaining prominence.
2. **Position of women:** Women enjoyed comparatively greater social participation earlier; their position gradually declined in the Later Vedic period.
3. **Family and patriarchy:** Patriarchal institutions strengthened and lineage-based social organisation became more pronounced.
4. **Political organisation:** Tribal institutions gradually gave way to territorial kingdoms and stronger kingship.

Changes in Economy

1. **Pastoralism to agriculture:** Cattle remained important, but agriculture became the principal economic activity.
2. **Iron technology:** The use of iron, particularly in the Ganga-Yamuna region, facilitated forest clearance and agricultural expansion.
3. **Surplus production:** Agricultural surplus supported occupational specialisation, trade and emerging political institutions.
4. **Property and taxation:** Greater importance was attached to land and agricultural produce, while taxes and tributes became more systematic.

Conclusion

Thus, the period marked the transition from a relatively egalitarian pastoral economy to a settled agrarian society characterised by social hierarchy, territorial states and economic differentiation.

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