

India

Economy & Social Class



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Farming

- Muddy water, or silt, covered the **floodplains**, keeping the soil fertile.
- Grew barley, wheat, melons, and dates.
- They also grew cotton, which they used to make cloth for clothing. 
- Herded sheep, goats, and a type of cattle called zebus on nearby pastures, and caught fish in the Arabian Sea.
- Grew rice and other grains on the plains alongside the Ganges River.



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Metals and Minerals

- Flint was used to make blades and other tools.
- Copper and tin were mined and used to make saws, axes, and chisels.
- Forests provided wood for tool handles, as well as firewood.
- Used gemstones, such as lapis lazuli and turquoise, in jewelry they traded with other peoples.



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Trade

- Traders used pack animals, including two-humped camels, elephants, and carts pulled by bulls to carry goods overland.
- They traveled long distances over mountain routes through Afghanistan, Persia, and eastern China.



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Valuable Goods

- Exchanged grain, copper pots and pans, mirrors, elephant ivory, cotton cloth, lapis lazuli, shells, and ceramic jewelry for silver from Persia and Afghanistan, and gold and dried fish from Mesopotamia.



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Sea Trade

- Boats laden with surplus, or extra, crops and other goods sailed up the Persian Gulf toward Persia and Mesopotamia.



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Money

- Used a barter, or swapping, system, rather than money.
- Silver bar coins from Persia were first used in ancient India long after the Aryans were established. 
- The coins made it easier to trade because all items had a standard value.



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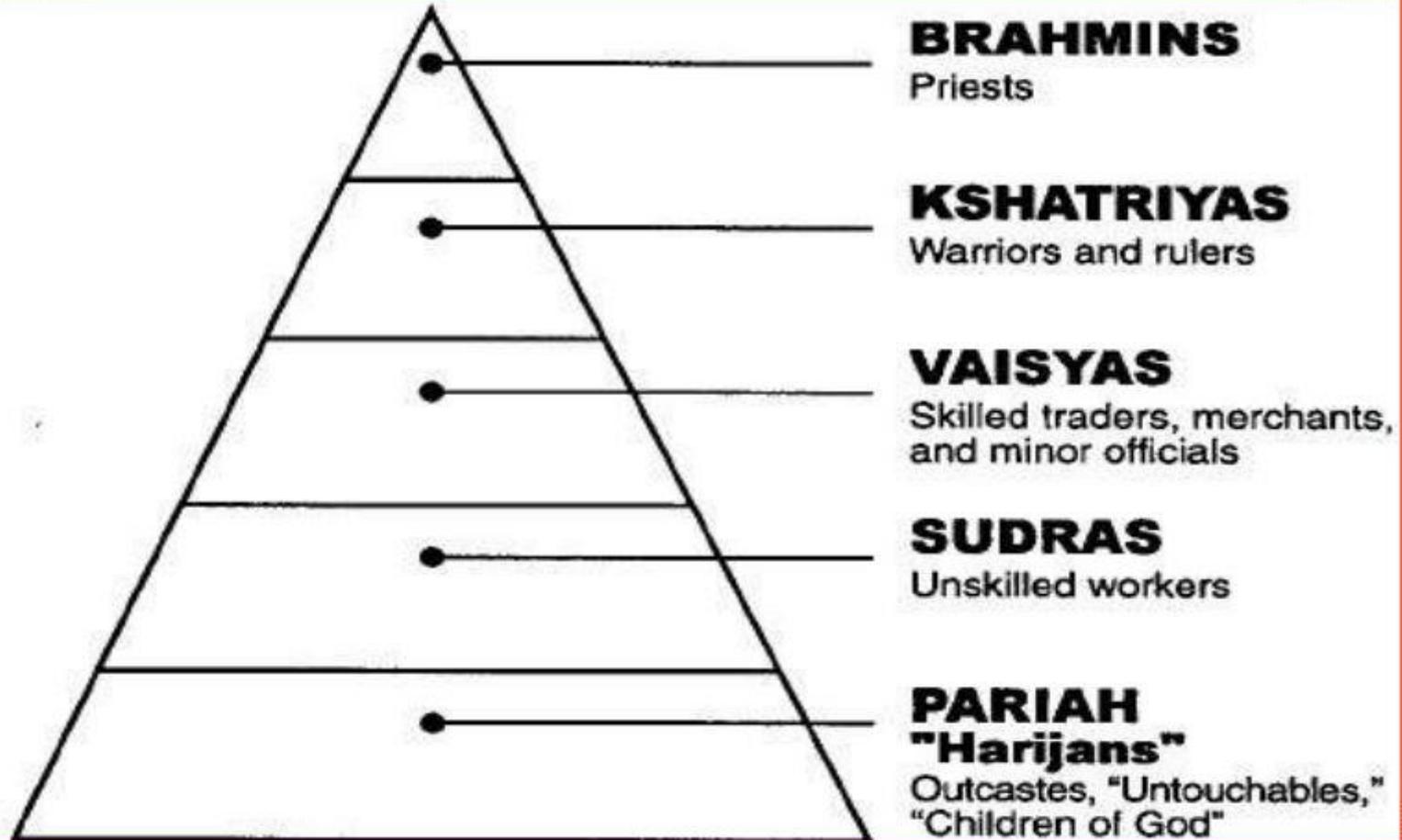


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The Different Castes



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Brahmins

- Members of the highest caste
- Priests and teachers of Sanskrit
- Performed religious duties and preached Dharma
- Only caste allowed to teach and attend school



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Kshatriya

- Ranked below the Brahmins
- Functioned as warriors or army leaders
- Part of the military and ruling elite



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Vaishyas

- Below the Kshatriya
- Traders, cattle farmers, minor officials, merchants and artisans
- Owned their own business or farm land
- There were many more people in this caste than the Kshatriyas or Brahmins



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Sudras

- Below the Vaishyas
- Servants and farmhands
- Did not own their own land and businesses
- Were employed by members of higher castes
- The most populous caste



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Harijans

- Known as “untouchables”, “pariahs”, “the people”
- Technically not even a caste, below all others
- Responsible for handling the dead, cleaning up human waste, and collecting garbage



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