

TOP 60

Part-5

HISTORY QUESTIONS FOR THE CBSE EXAM 2025-26"

KINSHIP CASTE AND CLAN

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chapter wise previous year paper

15. How is Mahabharata a dynamic text? Explain with examples. (3 Marks, 2023 Main)

OR

"Mahabharata is a dynamic text." Justify the statement. (3 Marks, 2024 Main)

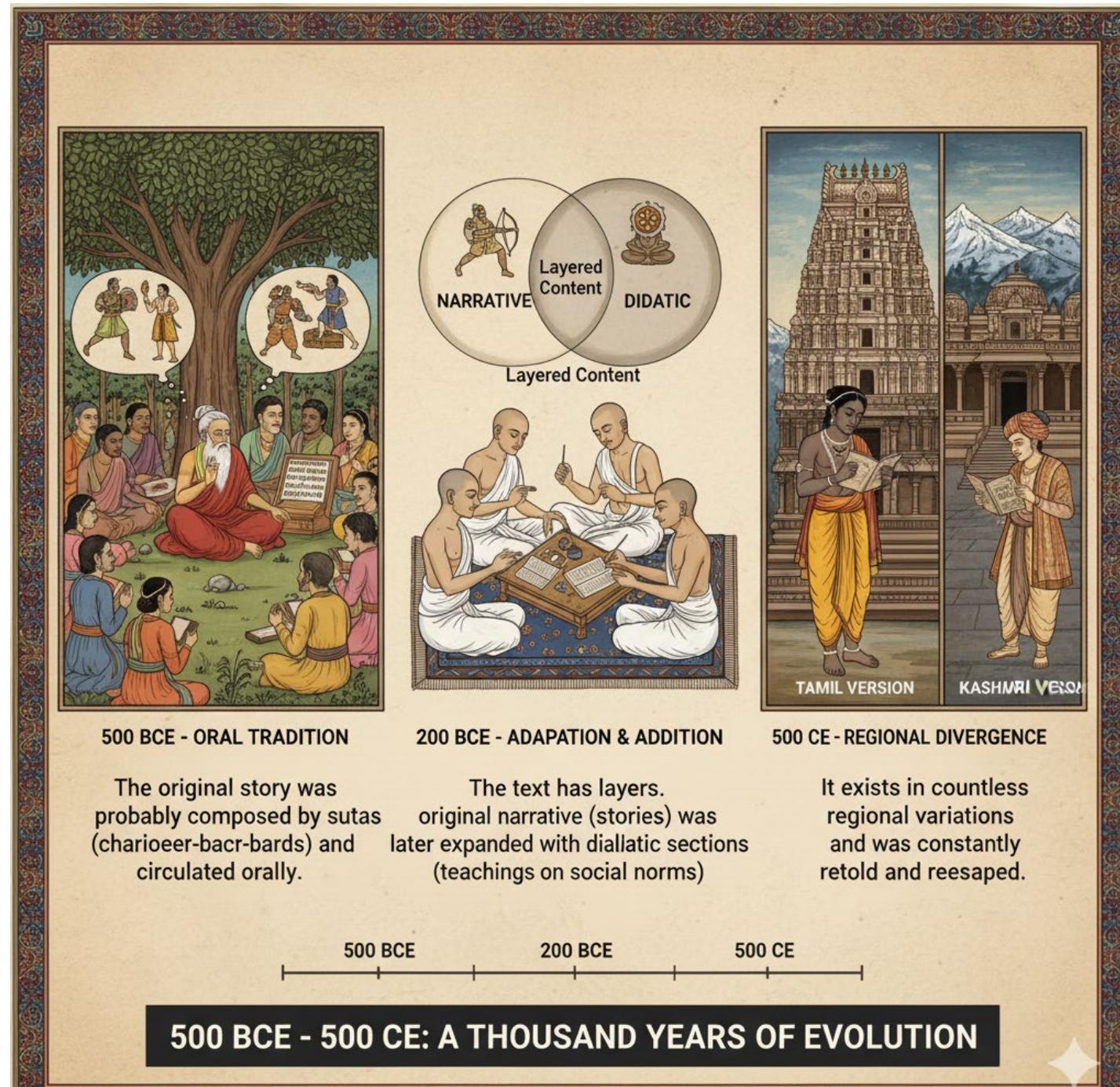
OR

Analyse the role of scholars in the task of preparing the critical edition of the Mahabharata. (3 Marks, 2024 Main - OR)

OR

(Explain Mahabharata as a Dynamic text. What was the role of V.S Sukthankar and his team in preparing critical edition of it.)

- **Long Evolution:** It was not written by one person but **grew over 1,000 years** (c. 500 BCE - 500 CE).
- **Layered Content:** The text has layers. The **original narrative (stories)** was later expanded with **didactic sections** (teachings on social norms), like the Bhagavad Gita.
- **Multiple Versions:** It exists in countless regional variations and was constantly retold and reshaped.
- **Cultural Adaptation:** Its stories were re-interpreted in other forms, such as sculpture, painting, and drama, to fit new social contexts.



The Critical Edition of the Mahabharata

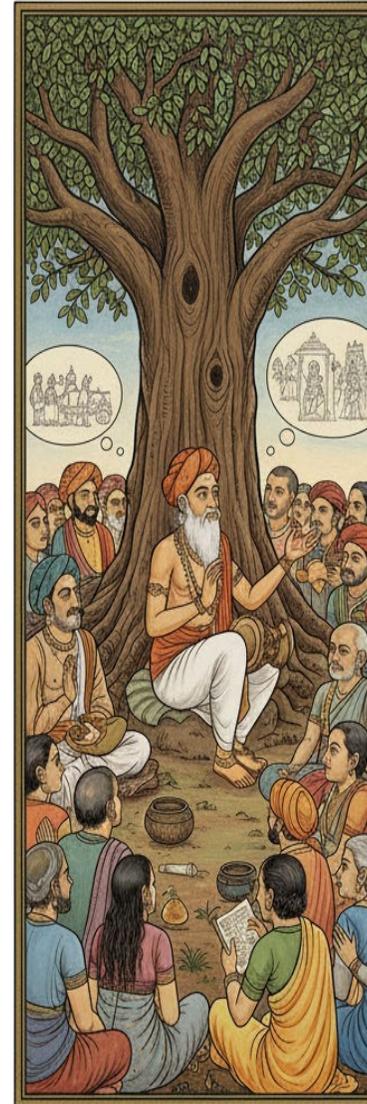
- Starting in 1919, a team led by V.S. Sukthankar undertook the massive 47-year task of creating a critical edition.
- **The Method:**
 - They **collected and compared** Sanskrit manuscripts from all over India.
 - They **identified common shlokas (verses)** and published these in the main text.
 - **Regional variations** and unique verses were listed separately **in footnotes and appendices**.



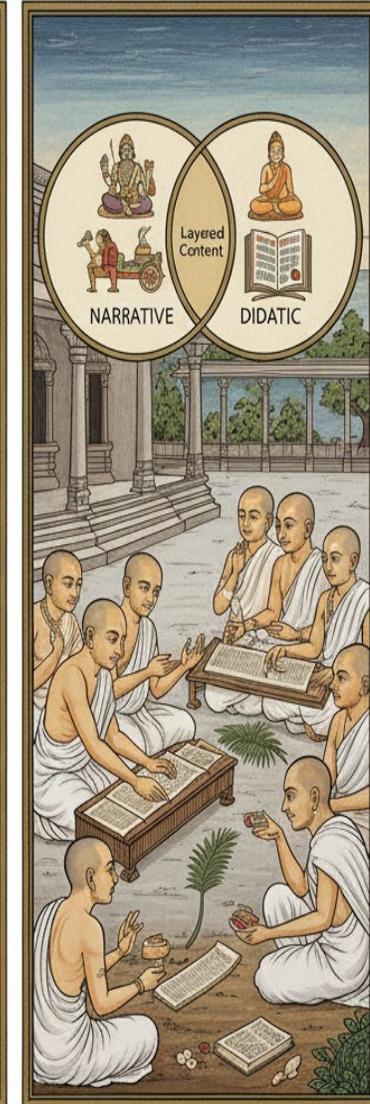
- **Key Findings from the Process:**

- The text contains two broad categories: **Narrative** (stories) and **Didactic** (prescriptions about social norms).
- The didactic sections were likely added *after* the original narrative.
- The original story was probably composed by *sutas* (charioteer-bards) and circulated orally.
- Brahmanas took over the story and began writing it down from the 5th century BCE onwards.

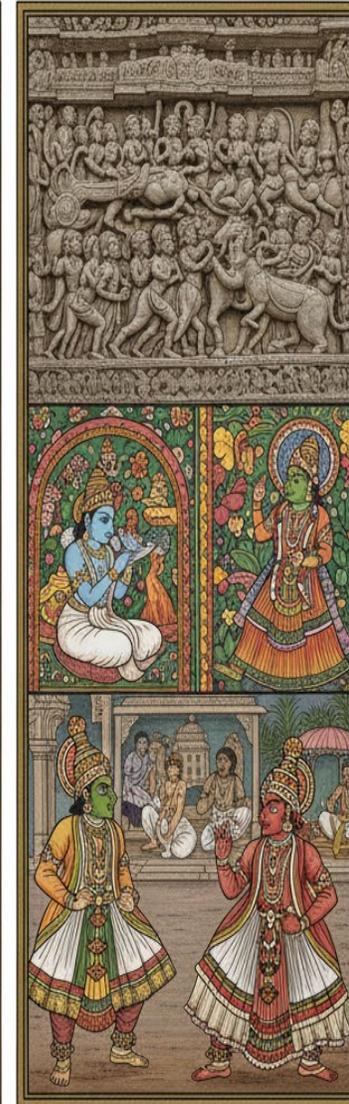
500 BCE - ORAL TRADITION



200 BCE - ADAPATION & ADDITION



800-1800 CE: CULTURAL ADAPTATION



RE-INTEREATEATION THROUGH
ART & PERFORMANCE

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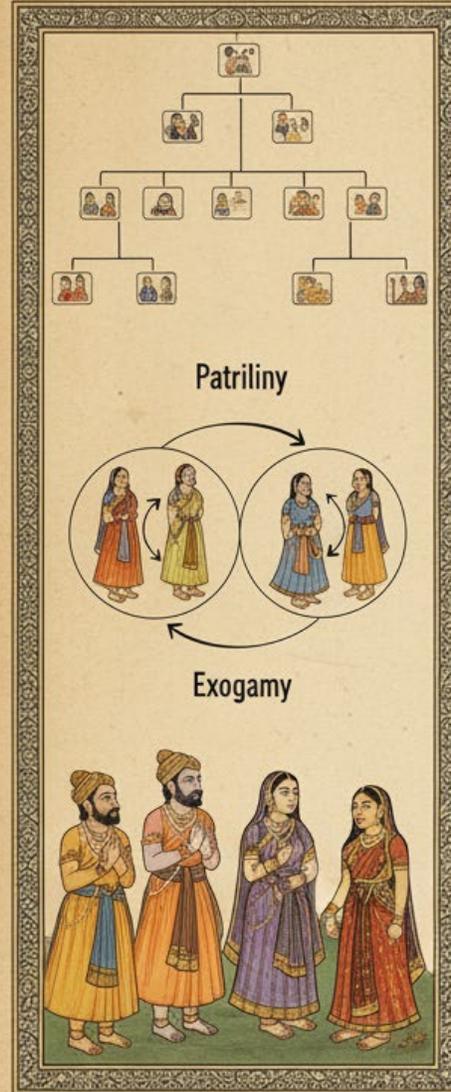
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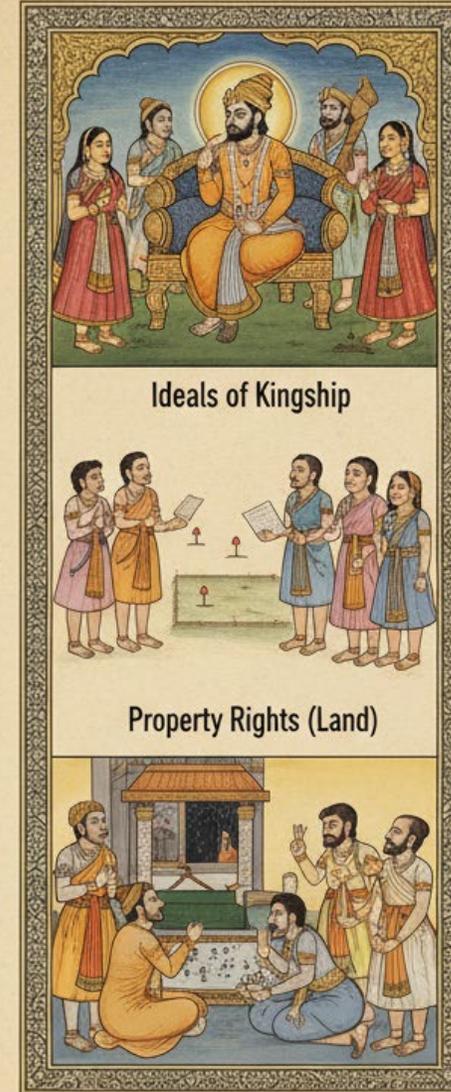
16. Assess the significance of the Mahabharata as a source for understanding ancient Indian society. (3 Marks, 2025 Supp)

The Mahabharata is a significant source for understanding ancient Indian society:

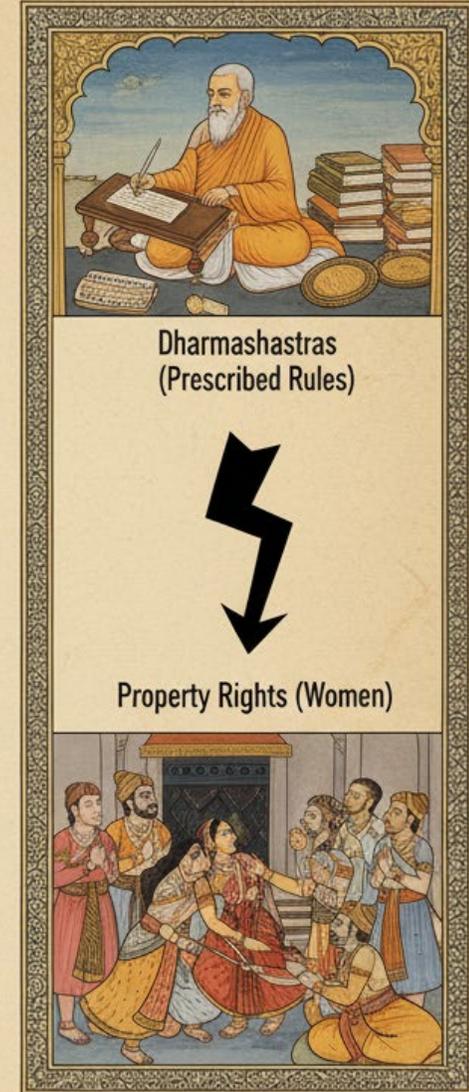
- It provides insights into social norms, including varna, kinship ties, and rules of marriage (e.g., patriliney, exogamy, and polyandry).
- It reflects the values and concerns of the period, such as ideals of kingship, dharma, and property rights (especially land and women).
- It shows the tension between prescribed social rules (Dharmashastras) and actual social practices.



THE MAHABHARATA:
SOCIAL NORMS & KINSHIP



THE MAHABHARATA:
VALUES & CONCERNS



THE MAHABHARATA:
THEORY VS. PRACTICE

Follow up Questions

16. "There were specific features of the familial relationship during the Mahabharata period." Explain the statement with examples. (8 Marks, 2025 Main)

The Mahabharata is a good source to study the social value of ancient times. Explain the statement with examples

KINSHIP, PATRILINY, AND FAMILY HIERARCHY

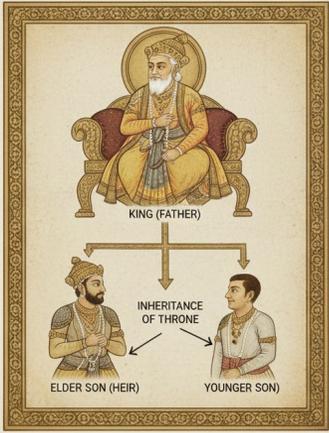
Kinship Ties: Fraternal Unity (The Pandavas)



• The epic over highlights the ideal of fraternal unity

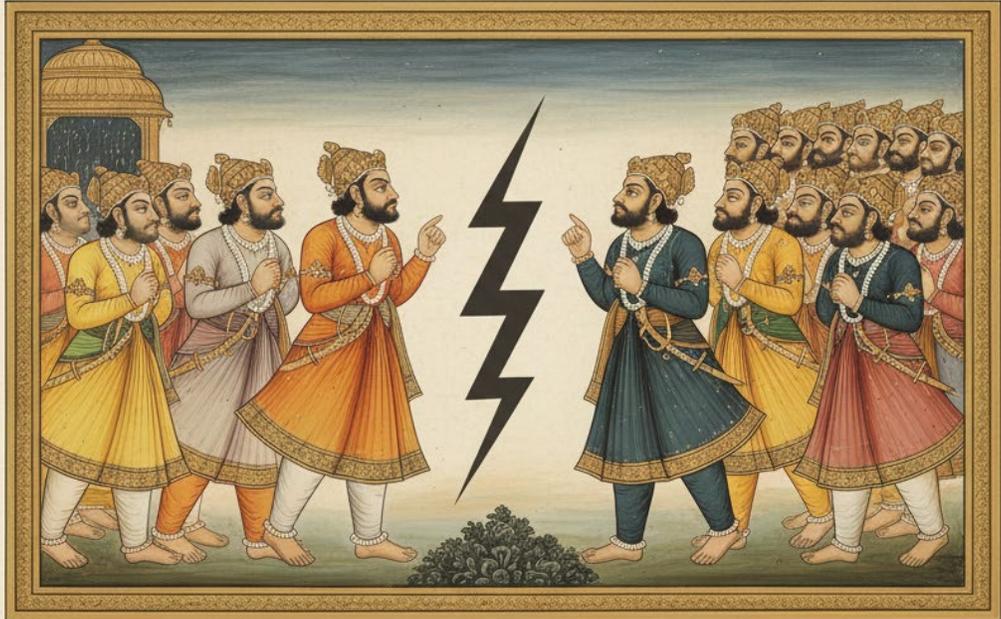
KINSHIP, PATRILINY, AND FAMILY HIERARCHY

Patriliney: Succession from Father to Son



• Conflict over patrilineal succession & special share to the elder son.

- The Mahabharata is a rich source for studying the social values of its period :
- **1. Kinship, Patriliney, and Family Hierarchy:**
 - **Patriliney:** The conflict is over patrilineal succession—the inheritance of the throne from father to son. Special share to elder son.
 - **Kinship Ties:** It highlights the complex nature of kinship.
 - Showing the ideal of **fraternal unity** (the Pandavas),
 - On the other side, it is primarily a story of **warring cousins**, showing how kinship could also be a source of intense conflict.



2. Social Hierarchy (Varna and Caste):

- The epic reinforces the link between **varna and occupation** as prescribed in the Dharmashastras (e.g., the **story of Eklavya**).
- It provides descriptions of the caste system and the interactions between different groups (e.g., the marriage of **Bhima and Hidimba**).

SOCIAL HIERACHY (VARNA AND CASTE)

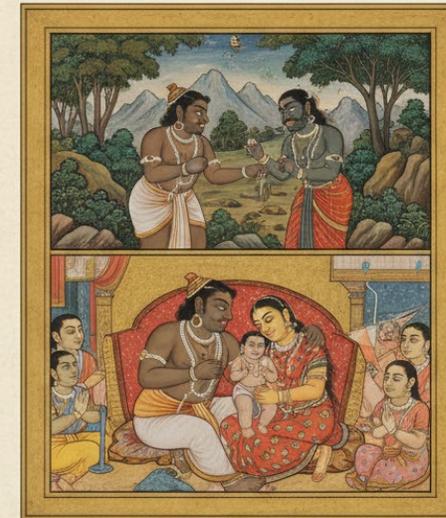
Varna and Occupation (Eklavya's Story)



- Reinforces the link between varna and occupation, as prescribed in Dharmashastras.

SOCIAL HIERACHY (VARNA AND CASTE)

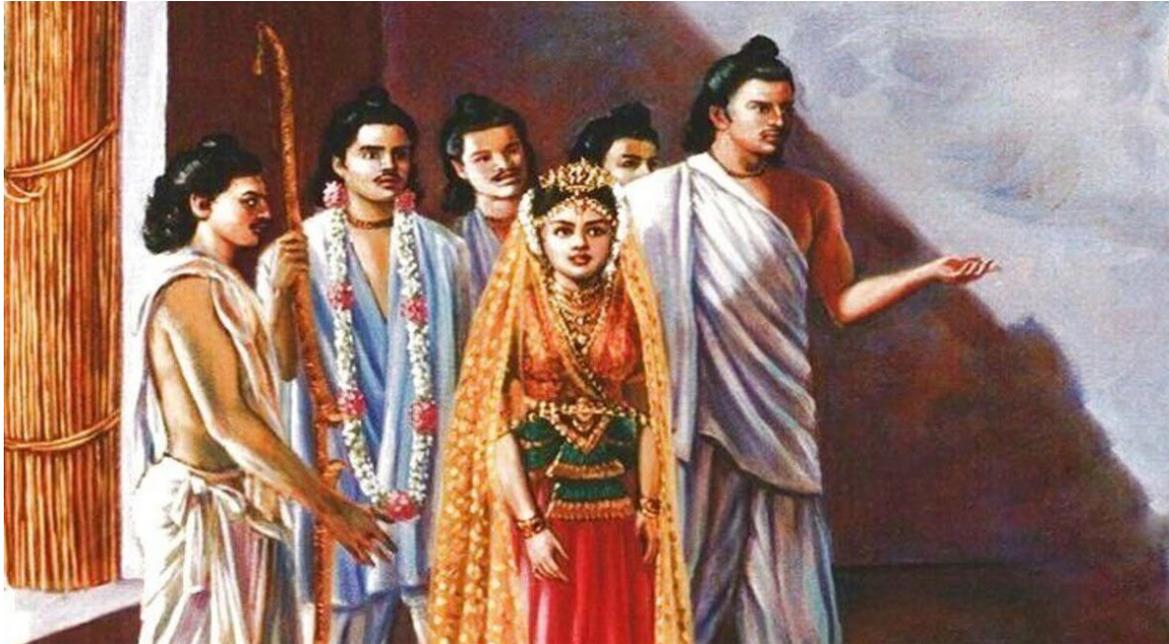
Caste System and Interactions (Bhima and Hidimba)



- Provides descriptions of the caste system and the interactions between different groups.
- Illustrates exceptions to social norms through marriages across social divides.

3. Gender and Marriage Norms:

- **Patriarchy:** The text clearly reflects a **patriarchal society, where men held authority.** (Eg. Yudhishtira stakes his wife)
- **Marriage Rules:** *Kanyadan* (the gift of a daughter) was considered a father's important religious duty.
- **Types of Marriages:** It describes various marriage practices. While patrilocal marriage was the ideal, some were exceptions, most notably the polyandry of Draupadi.



16. "There were specific features of the familial relationship during the Mahabharata period." Explain the statement with examples. (8 Marks, 2025 Main)

The Mahabharata is a good source to study the social value of ancient times. Explain the statement with examples

The Mahabharata is a rich source for studying the social values of its period, as it revolves around conflicts within a royal family.

1. Kinship, Patriliney, and Family Hierarchy:

- **Patriliney:** The conflict is over patrilineal succession—the inheritance of the throne from father to son. Special share to elder son.
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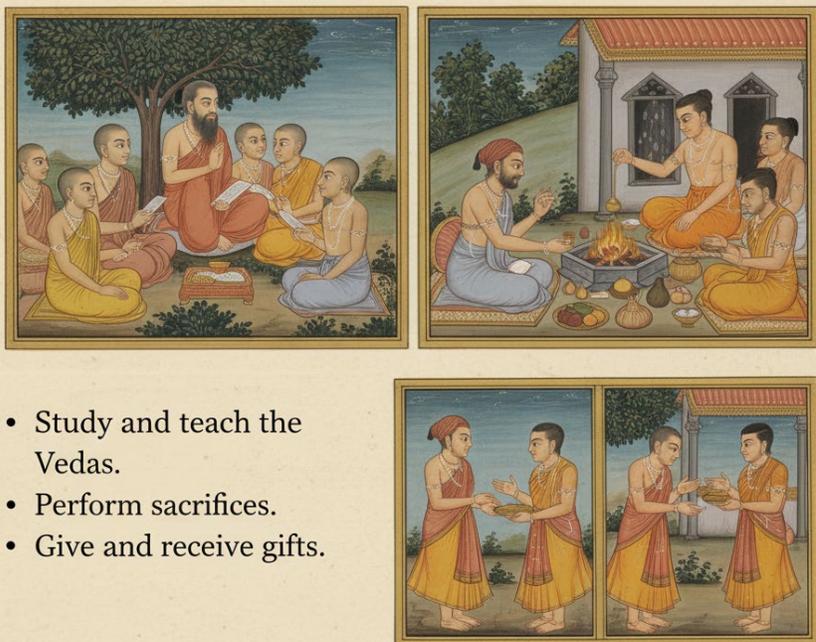
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Q.17 What were the occupational structure given in the Dharma sutras and Dharmashastras? How did the Bramhin ensure its implementation in society?

- i. The Dharmasutras and Dharmashastras contained **rules about the ideal “Occupations”** of the four categories or Varnas.
- ii. Brahmanas were supposed to study and teach the Vedas, perform sacrifices, give and receive gifts.
- iii. Kshatriyas were to engage in warfare, protect people and administer justice, study the Vedas.

**OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE GIVEN IN
DHARMASUTRAS & DHARMASHASTRAS**

Bramanas: Study, Teach, Perform Sacrifites



- Study and teach the Vedas.
- Perform sacrifices.
- Give and receive gifts.

<https://www.youtube.com/@TheSoSietalSense>

**OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE GIVEN IN
DHARMASUTRAS & DHARMASHASTRAS**

Kshatriyas: Warftare, Protection, Justice, Study



- Engage in warfare.
- Protect people and administer justice.
- Study the Vedas.

i. The Vaishyas, who were expected to engage in agriculture, pastoralism and trade.

ii. Shudras were assigned only one occupation – that of serving the three “higher” varnas.

OCCUATIONAL STRUCTURE GIVEN IN DHARMASUTRAS & DHARMASHASTRAS

Vaishyas: Agriculture, Pastoralism, Trade



- Engage in agriculture.
- Engage in pastoralism.
- Engage in trade.

and the origins of caste

- The Brahmanas evolved three strategies for enforcing these norms:
 - One was to assert that the Varna order was of divine origin.
 - Second, they advised kings to ensure that these norms were followed within their kingdoms.
 - Third, they attempted to persuade people that their status was determined by birth.



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Q.18. What were the terms of gotras?/ What were the rules of gotras?

Ans.

- I. Each gotra was named after a Vedic Seer and all those who belonged to the same gotra.
- II. Two rules about gotra were particularly very important. Women were expected to give up their father's gotra and adopt that of their husband's gotra after marriage.
- III. Marriage in the same gotra was not allowed.

