



CONTEMPORARY INDIA: COMPARISON BETWEEN POSTMODERN AND VEDIC AGE

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ABSTRACT

India, during Vedic Age was backdated in terms of religion, gender norms, cultural orientation. As time passed, people became progressive. Emphasis was placed on understanding abstractness which came into the life. Negotiations were made for involving people into the fields. This was shallow and narrow during the Vedic Age. Comparison clears the actual picture which prevailed during that time. Inequalities are still there in postmodern times, but are low in intensity.

Keywords: Contemporary, India, postmodern, Vedic

1. Introduction

The paper strives to sketch contemporary (Postmodern) India and the Vedic Age. This is through the means of comparison on transitions, which has come in Indian society, with the passage of time (Panda, 2025). Clarity is there in relating the facts, especially the historical contexts, so that the readers can relate easily.

2. Literature review

2.1. Philosophical worldviews

In Vedic Age, people's life was cosmic and spiritual. Philosophers explained the life through *rta* (cosmic order) and later *dharma*. *Sruti* (Vedas), sages, and oral tradition were the tradition followed for extracting knowledge. Human life was sacred in universe, which was governed through divine forces. When society progressed to postmodern, worldly matters were plural, fragmented, and skeptical especially for universal truths. Absolute truth was rejected, and multiple narratives coexist. Many fields emerged like science, technology, media, and personal experiences, which sketched the reality experienced by the people. Sunkad, (2025) argued that spiritual existence was often individualized and commodified in its actual forms.

2.2. Social Structure

Vedic age reflected organized structures, evident from *varna* system (Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra). Patriarchy was the main family form, showing commonality in joint families. Limitation was seen in social mobilities, especially during later Vedic period. Community and duty suppressed individual choice, freedom, liberty, and agency. On the contrary, postmodern India was egalitarian, as there was constitution governing provision of equal rights to the people. Still today, caste systems are there, however, mobility and resistance have become widespread. New trend is nuclear families, live-in relationships, and diverse identities. Banerji, (2024) stated that major shifts have been noticed in the emphasis

on individual choice, self-expression, and personal freedom, which was not there earlier.

2.3. Knowledge and Education

In Vedic age, there were gurukuls tending to oral education being provided to the children. They were asked to memorize the things taught. Focus was on sacred texts, rituals, philosophy, astronomy, grammar. Upper castes children were privileged in terms of receiving education. However, postmodern India witnesses digital, globalized, and institutionalized education, which every child is to receive, irrespective of their cultural orientation. Emphasis is on STEM, professional skills, critical thinking to make them smart. Knowledge is decentralized, mainly acquired through internet, social media, AI. Rajan, (2025) was of the view that still inequalities remain in the form of discriminations on the children from poor economic backgrounds.

2.4. Economy and livelihood

Vedic age people were involved in agrarian and pastoral economic activities. Wealth came from cattle, land, and ritual offerings. Trade was limited, although barter system was common. Hereditary was seen in terms of occupations, which flowed across generations. Much advanced stage is reflected in postmodern India, which is usually a capitalist, consumer-driven economy. There is a dominance of service sector, IT, startups, gig economies. There has been great influence of global trade, digital currency, and corporate culture. Vescovi, (2024) argued that career choice is made through skills and not birth (in principle).

2.5 Religion and Rituals

Vedic age exposed people to rituals, which were centered on religion. Evidences were yajñas and sacrifices. Priests were prime in these rituals. Gods were symbolized as natural forces

(Agni, Indra, Varuna). Religion was an inseparable part of daily life, governing the decisions and actions. As far as postmodern India is concerned, many consider religion as something private and symbolic. Media, politics and commerce blends the faith of people in religions. Spiritual movements have grown in presence along with concepts like atheism and secularism. Panda, (2025) cited that religious identity conglomerates with nationalism and politics.

2.6 Gender Roles

Vedic age considered relative freedom which women had towards education and debates. This access was restricted during the later Vedic age, declining their social status. Main reason was the emergence of strong patriarchal norms. In postmodern India, legal equality and feminist movements saw their presence in full swing. Women were involved strongly in the fields of politics, science, business, and arts. However, Sunkad, (2025) was of the view that patriarchal dominance is consistent in the form of violence, and wage gaps. Now, gender is fluid and socially constructed.

2.7. Political organization

Vedic age reflects the leadership of tribal monarchies and assemblies (sabha, samiti). King reigned with religious legitimacy. Democracy, in modern sense, was unknown to the people. However, postmodern India saw the emergence of world's largest democracy. Constitution, elections, judiciary, and civil rights were developed. Power was questioned, criticized, and negotiated constantly for getting equality. According to Banerji, (2024), media and public discourses played a central role in embracing this equality.

2.8. Self and Identity

Vedic Age sketched self through the functioning of dharma, karma, and moksha. Based on

these functionings, identity comes from actions, duty, family, and cosmic purpose. But in postmodern India, multiple identities is shaped from the shifting perceptions towards profession, gender, region, online persona. People are expected to be concerned on self-creation instead of acting on predetermined roles. Rajan, (2025) stated that politics and personal branding is considered to the agent for identity formation.

3. Methodology

Deductive approach forms best in this context for deducing the contemporary India from Vedic and postmodern contexts. Considering previous literature is effective for making deductions and inferences. Data is collected from secondary sources like books, journals, reports and websites, expanding the scope and arena of the paper. Analyzing the data through certain themes is effective for producing to be the point comparative study. As a result of this, understanding of the transitions in society is enhanced.

4. Conclusion

Based on the reviewed aspects, it can be concluded that Vedic Age was sacred, duty-bound, and cosmic in terms of civilization. On the other hand, Postmodern India is fragmented, pluralistic, and globalized in terms of social construction. Contemporary India constantly negotiates and changes from ancient traditions to skeptical innovations. As a result of this, a neither traditional nor modern culture is developed. The product which people are exposed is an unique hybrid culture, which governs everything.

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