

Roots of indian culture in sindhu saraswati civilisation



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A fresh study by a group of international scientists peesh confirms the dominant role of Saraswati river in sustaining the so-called Indus Valley Civilisation. [28] A new study titled, ' Fluvial landscapes of the Harappan civilisation', has concluded that the Indus Valley Civilisation died out because the monsoons which fed the rivers that supported the civilisation, migrated to the east. With the rivers drying out as a result, the civilisation collapsed some 4000 years ago. The study was conducted by a team of scientists from the US, the UK, India, Pakistan and Romania between 2003 and 2008. [29] While the new finding puts to rest, at least for the moment, other theories of the civilisation's demise, such as the shifting course of rivers due to tectonic changes or a fatal foreign invasion, it serves to strengthen the premise that the civilisation that we refer to as the Indus Valley Civilisation was largely located on the banks of and in the proximity of the Saraswati river.

More than 70 per cent of the sites that have been discovered to contain archaeological material dating to this civilisation's period are located on the banks of the now dried out Saraswati river. As experts have been repeatedly pointing out, nearly 2, 000 of the 3, 000 sites excavated so far are located outside the Indus belt that gives the civilisation its name. According to experts who have studied the map of all relevant underground channels that are intact to date and connected once upon a time with the river, the Saraswati was probably 1500 km long and 3-15 km wide. The latest study, whose findings were published recently in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, too is clear on the river's existence and its role in sustaining the ancient civilisation. The report said that the Saraswati was " root Himalayan-fed by a perennial monsoon-supported water course.

” It added that the rivers in the region (including Saraswati) were “ indeed sizeable and highly active. ”[30] There are 360 mature Harrappan sites in the Sarasvati basin, the Ghaghar Akra and its tributaries. This system certainly dried up and we find a drastic change in the settlement patterns between the mature Harappan and later Harrappan sites. Kalibangan a Harappan site in Rajasthan was suddenly abandoned in 1900 BCE. Scholars believe that the Sarasvati river system disappeared creating a domino effect on other settlements. [6] The Union Water Resources Ministry had then quoted in writing the conclusion of a study jointly conducted by scientists of Indian Space Research Organisation, Jodhpur, and the Rajasthan Government’s Ground Water Department, published in the Journal of Indian Society of Remote Sensing.

Besides other things, the authors had said that “ clear signals of palaeochannels on the satellite imagery in the form of a strong and powerful continuous drainage system in the North West region and occurrence of archaeological sites of pre-Harappan, Harappan and post-Harappan age, beyond doubt indicate the existence of a mighty palaeo-drainage system of Vedic Saraswati river in this region... The description and magnanimity of these channels also matches with the river Saraswati described in the Vedic literature. ”[30] Vedic CultureThe Vedic period (or Vedic age) was a period in history during which the Vedas, the oldest scriptures of Hinduism, were composed. The time span of the period is uncertain. Philological and linguistic evidence indicates that the Rigveda, the oldest of the Vedas, was composed roughly between 1700 and 1100 BCE, also referred to as the early Vedic period. [1] The end of the period is commonly estimated to have

occurred about 500 BCE, and 150 BCE has been suggested as a terminus ante quem for all Vedic Sanskrit literature.

[2]Transmission of texts in the Vedic period was by oral tradition alone,[3] and a literary tradition set in only in post-Vedic times. Despite the difficulties in dating the period, the Vedas can safely be assumed to be several thousands of years old. The associated culture, sometimes referred to as Vedic civilisation, was probably centred early on in the northern and northwestern parts of the Indian subcontinent, but has now spread and constitutes the basis of contemporary Indian culture. After the end of the Vedic period, the Mahajanapadas period in turn gave way to theMaurya Empire (from ca. 20 BCE), the golden age of classical Sanskrit literature. Culture Society Rig Vedic society was relatively egalitarian in the sense that a distinct hierarchy of socio-economic classes or castes was absent.

However, political hierarchy was determined by rank, where rajan stood at the top and dasi at the bottom. The wordsBrahamana and Kshatriya occur in various family books of the Rig Veda, but they are not associated with the term varna. The wordsVaishya and Shudra are absent. Verses of the Rig Veda, such as 3. 4-45, indicate the absence of strict social hierarchy and the existence of social mobility: O, Indra, fond of soma, would you make me the protector of people, or would you make me a king, would you make me a sage who has drunk soma, would you impart to me endless wealth. The Vedic household was patriarchal and patrilineal.

The institution of marriage was important and different types of marriages— monogamy, polygyny and polyandry are mentioned in the Rig Veda. Both

women sages and female gods were known to Vedic Aryans. However, hymns attributable to female sages are few and female gods were not as important as male ones. Women could choose their husbands and could remarry if their husbands died or disappeared.

[24] While the wife enjoyed a respectable position, she was subordinate to her husband. [23] People consumed milk, milk products, grains, fruits and vegetables. Meat eating is mentioned, however, cows are labelled aghnya (not to be killed). Clothes of cotton, wool and animal skin were worn. Soma and sura were popular drinks in the Rig Vedic society, of which soma was sanctified by religion.

Flute (vana), lute (vina), harp, cymbals, and drums were the musical instruments played and a heptatonic scale was used. Dancing, dramas, chariot racing, and gambling were other popular pastimes. The emergence of monarchical states in the later Vedic age, led to a distancing of the rajan from the people and the emergence of avarna hierarchy. The society was divided into four social groups— Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. The later Vedic texts fixed social boundaries, roles, status and ritual purity for each of the groups. The Shatapatha Brahmana associates the Brahmana with purity of parentage, good conduct, glory, teaching or protecting people; Kshatriya with strength, fame, ruling, and warfare; Vaishya with material prosperity and production-related activities such as cattle rearing and agriculture; Shudras with the service of the highervarnas.

The effects of Rajasuya sacrifice depended on the varna of the sacrificer.

Rajasuya endowed Brahmana with lustre, Kshatriya with valour, Vaishya with

procreative power and Shudra with stability. The hierarchy of the top three varnas is ambiguous in the later Vedic texts. Panchavamsha Brahmana and verse 13. 8.

3. 11 of the Shatapatha Brahmana place Kshatriya over Brahmana and Vaishya, whereas, verse 1. 1. 4. 12 places Brahmana and Vaishya over the Kshatriya and Shudra. The Purusha sukta visualized the four varnas as hierarchical, but inter-related parts of an organic whole.

[31] Despite the increasing social stratification in the later Vedic times, hymns like Rig Veda IX. 112, suggest some amount of social mobility: “ I am a reciter of hymns, my father a physician, and my mother grinds (corn) with stones. We desire to obtain wealth in various actions. Household became an important unit in the later Vedic age. The variety of households of the Rig Vedic era gave way to an idealized household which was headed by a grihapati. The relations between husband and wife, father and son were hierarchically organised and the women were relegated to subordinate and docile roles.

Polygyny was more common than polyandry and texts like Tattiriya Samhitaindicate taboos around menstruating women. Various professions women took to are mentioned in the later Vedic texts. Women tended to cattle, milked cows, carded wool; were weavers, dyers, and corn grinders. Women warriors such as Vishphala, who lost a leg in battle, are mentioned. Two female philosophers are mentioned in the Upanishads. [34] Patrick Olivelle, in his translation of the Upanishads, writes that “ the fact that these women are introduced without any attempt to justify or to explain how

women could be engaged in theological matters suggests the relatively high social and religious position of at least women of some social strata during this period.

“[35]