

Aryanisation of India: A Review

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Aryanisation of India: A Review submitted by me for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts at Jadavpur University is based upon my work carried out under the Supervision of Prof. Dr. Ashok Kumar Mahata and that neither this thesis nor any part of it has been submitted before for any degree or diploma anywhere or elsewhere.

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यतो कृष्णस्ततो धर्मो यतो धर्मस्ततो जयः॥

Preface

India is a land of cultures, celebrated for its unity amidst diversity. It offers a wide range of landscapes, each with its own distinct people and cultures. Every region of the country unveils new mysteries, presenting a rich tapestry of languages, cuisines, social structures, and traditions, creating a melting pot of cultures. On a broader scale, two prominent cultural distinctions emerge between northern and southern India. These differences arise from ethnological variations and the distinct external influences each region has experienced. Northern India, due to its land-based trade routes, has historically been influenced by Western and North Asian cultures, while southern India, through its maritime connections, developed ties with Southeast Asia. Additionally, these regions differ in their origins and cultural legacies. While this framework applies throughout India, the focus here is on the broader distinction between northern and southern Indians. Northern people trace their origins to the Ancient North Indians, primarily associated with the Aryans, whereas southern people descend from the Ancient South Indians, largely connected to the Dravidians.

Renowned scholars such as F. Max Müller, M. Wheeler, V.G. Childe, H.H. Risley, and others have argued that the Aryans came from outside India, dominating the indigenous population and establishing Aryan or Vedic culture. However, this view is challenged by scholars like B.B. Lal, M. Danino, N.S. Rajaram, K. Elst, D. Frawley, and others, who argue that the Aryans were indigenous to India and later spread Vedic culture abroad. Despite these debates, the Vedas suggest some conflicts and clashes between the Aryans and the Dāsas, along with other groups such as the Dasyu, Asuras, Rākṣasas, and Paṇis, all depicted as enemies of Indra, the Aryan god. These groups are generally considered pre-Aryan inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent who

were later subjugated and absorbed into Aryan society. They are often categorised into two groups: Pre-Aryans and Non-Aryans. The Pre-Aryans were the original inhabitants, mainly Mediterranean or Dravidian peoples, ancestors of the Ancient South Indians. The Non-Aryans, including groups such as the Asuras, Paṇis, Druhyus, and Yadus—often linked to Alpine ancestry—were culturally connected to the Aryans but had lost their Aryan status. However, at times, I have used the term ‘Non-Aryan’ instead of ‘Pre-Aryan’ in a broader sense to collectively refer to both. Over time, these groups were assimilated into Aryan society, contributing to the formation of modern Indian society.

This dissertation explores the assimilation of these Pre-Aryan and Non-Aryan groups into Aryan culture. It also examines how elements of their customs and rituals influenced Aryan life, as reflected in epics like the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*, where figures like Rāma and Kṛṣṇa adapted Vedic traditions and became worshipped as gods.

This thesis will provide valuable insights into how ancient nomadic tribes played a role in shaping modern Indian society and left their imprint on the DNA of every Indian.

Abbreviation

A. Br.- Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.

A.Ā.- Aitareya Āraṇyaka.

ABROI- Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona.

Aṅg. N. - Aṅguttara Nikāya.

Antag- Antagaḍa Dasāo.

Anu. P. – Anuśāsana Parva.

Aranya. K. – Aranya Kaṇḍa.

Aśv. Ś. Sū- Aśvalāyana Śrautasūtra.

AV – Atharvaveda.

Ādi. P.- Ādi Parva.

Āp. Dh. Sū. - Āpastamba Dharmasūtra.

Bāla. K.- Bāla Kaṇḍa.

Bau. Dh. Sū.- Baudhayana Dharmasūtra.

Bau. Ś. Sū.- Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra.

Bhāg. P. – Bhāgavat Purāṇa.

Bhiṣma. P. – Bhiṣma Parva.

Brahmāṇḍa. P.- Brahmaṇḍa Purāṇa.

Bṛh. U.- Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad.

Cānd. U. – Cāndogya Upaniṣad.

E.R.E.- Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.

G. Br. – Gopatha Brāhmaṇa.

Gau. Dh. Sū.- Gautama Dharmasūtra.

Hir. Ś. Sū.- Hiranyakeśi Śrautasūtra.

HOS- Harvard Oriental Series.

IHQ – Indian Historical Quarterly, Calcutta.
Jai. Br. – Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa.
Jai. Br.- Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa.
Jai. Mī. Sū. - Jaimini-Mīmāṃsā-Sūtra.
Jai. U. Br. – Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa.
JAOS – Journal of the American Oriental Society, Baltimore.
Jāt. – Jātaka.
JBBRAS- Journal of Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic Society (Bombay).
JBORS- Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society, Patna.
JBORS- Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society.
JBRS- Journal of the Bihar Research Society, Patna.
JESHO- Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, Leiden.
JRAS – Journal of Royal Asiatic Society, London.
Kālikā. P. – Kālikā Purāṇa.
Kāt. S. – Kāṭhaka Samhitā.
Kāt. Ś. Sū.- Kātyayana Śrautasūtra.
Kau. U.- Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad
Kau. Ā.- Kauṣītaki Āraṇyaka.
Lāt. Ś. Sū. – Lāṭyāyana Śrautasūtra.
M.S. – Manu Samhitā.
Mai. S. – Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā.
Majj. N.- Majjhima Nikāya.
Mārk. P. – Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa.
Mbh. – Mahābhārata.
ML- Magadhan Literature.
Ni.- Nirukta.

P. Br.- *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa.*
Pā.- *Pāṇinīya Aṣṭādhyayī.*
Pā. Śi.- *Pāṇinīya Śikṣā.*
Padma. P. – *Padma Purāṇa.*
Pār. G. Sū.- *Pāraskara Gr̥hyasūtra.*
PIHC- *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress.*
PSC- *Proceedings of the Indian Science Congress.*
Rām. - *Rāmāyaṇa.*
ṚV. – *Ṛgveda.*
Ś. Br. – *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.*
S.B.E.- *Sacred Book of the East.*
Samy. N.- *Samyutta Nikāya.*
Śāṅkh. Br. - *Śāṅkhāyaṇa Brāhmaṇa.*
Śāṅkh. G. Sū. - *Śāṅkhāyaṇa Gr̥hyasūtra.*
Śāṅkh. Ś. Sū.- *Śāṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra.*
Śānti. P. – *Śānti Parva.*
Sūya- *Sūyagaḍam.*
SV – *Samaveda.*
T. Ā.- *Taittiriya Āraṇyaka.*
T.Br.- *Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa.*
T.S. – *Taittiriya Saṃhitā.*
Tā. Br.- *Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa.*
Uttar. K.- *Uttara Kaṇḍa.*
V. Dh. Sū.- *Vasiṣṭa Dharmasūtra.*
Vāj. S. – *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā.*
Vayu. P.- *Vayu Purāṇa.*

Vin.- Vinaya Piṭaka.

Viṣṇu P. – Viṣṇu Purāṇa.

Viṣṇu. P. – Viṣṇu Purāṇa.

Yāj. S.- Yājñavalkya Saṃhitā.

YT. – Yogatantra.

Yuddha. K. – Yuddha Kaṇḍa.

ZA- Zend-Avesta.

ZDMG- Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft, Berlin.

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Introduction

In early Vedic India, rituals, customs and manners took a very important role to shape a premature society in a modified educated society. According to Manu, Vedas are the roots of customs and manners.¹ Vedas are the earliest written document of the world as well as Aryans. Vedas are the mirror of Aryan society and also the earliest historical written evidence of human society ever found in this earth. They are the encyclopaedias of Aryan thoughts that contain everything which a human being needs. Vedas are the bunch of those knowledge which are gathered by the ancestors of Aryans through a long time. This is why the Vedas are so respected by the Aryan peoples and are called the way of gaining the ultimate thoughts.²

Vedas have four major parts- Saṃhitās, Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads. But they also consist of Vedāṅgas which are very essential for revealing that Vedic knowledge. Every Veda has many schools as per their pioneers and every school has different type of teaching processes. They are called Śākhās. Saṃhitās mainly contain with prayers to the gods for materialistic prosperities. However, some Sūktas like *Nāsadiyasūkta*, *Hiraṇyagarbhasūkta*, *Jñānasūkta*, *Devīsūkta* etc. mainly reflect philosophical thoughts. In Āraṇyakas, we found mainly philosophical thoughts. They teach about the explanations of Vedic sacrifices and their symbolical and philosophical significances.³ These types of literatures are made for the foresters and they contain premature thoughts of Vedanta philosophy. According to Sāyaṇācārya, these literatures are called Āraṇyakas because they

¹M.S -2.6.

² प्रत्यक्षेणानुमित्या वा यस्तूपायो न बुध्यते ।

एनं विदन्ति वेदेन तस्माद्भेदस्य वेदता ॥- Sāyaṇācāryaḥ, Rgvedabhāṣyabhūmikā.

³Jan Gonda, *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol-1, p.-423.

were discussed in the forests only.⁴ In the words of Prof. A.A. Macdonell, these are called 'Forest treatises.'⁵ The last part of Veda is called Upaniṣad. The word Upaniṣad literally means sitting down near some person. But they taught about the nature and theory of the supreme soul or 'Brahman'. They are the fully developed parts of Brāhmaṇas and Āraṇyakas. They are also called as Vedānta because they are the end of the Veda or final goal of Veda.⁶ The mysteries of the Veda are hidden in these Upaniṣads.⁷ The additional texts which helps to understand and help to study the Vedas are known as Vedāṅgas. Vedāṅgas literally mean the limbs of the Vedas. They are six in number. Just like the limbs of the body, they perform various supportive and augmenting functions in the study, preservation and protection of the Vedas and the Vedic traditions. The six Vedāṅgas are Śikṣā, Canda, Vyākaraṇa, Nirukta, Jyotiṣa and Kalpa. Paṇīniya Śikṣā and Patañjali, both praises Vedāṅgas as essential for Brāhmaṇas before studying Vedas respectively-

छन्दः पादौ तु वेदस्य हस्तौ कल्पोऽथ पठ्यते ।

ज्योतिषामयनं चक्षुनिरुक्तं श्रोत्रमुच्यते ॥

शिक्षा घ्राणं तु वेदस्य मुखं व्याकरणं स्मृतम् ।

तस्मात्साङ्गमधीत्यैव ब्रह्मलोके महीयते' ॥⁸

Additionally, a Brāhmaṇa, or one aspiring to gain Vedic knowledge, must study and comprehend the Vedas with the aid of the Vedāṅgas, adhering to the tradition without questioning its authority.

⁴Taittirīyāraṇyakabhāṣya, 6.

⁵A. A. Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p.204.

⁶*Ibid.*, p.-205.

⁷ Śvetaśvetaropaniṣad-5-6, Maitrāyanyupaniṣad-6.29.

⁸ Pā.Śi.- 41-42.

‘ब्राह्मणेन निष्कारणो धर्मः षडङ्गो वेदोऽध्येयो ज्ञेयश्च’।⁹

These are the augments of Vedas developed in ancient times and have been connected with the study of the Vedas. The character of Vedāngas has roots in ancient times, and the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad mentions it as an integral part of the Brāhmaṇas layer of the Vedic texts.¹⁰ These auxiliary disciplines of study arise with the codification of the Vedas in Iron age India. It is unclear when the list of six Vedāngas was first conceptualised.¹¹

According to some historians, philologists and ethnologists, there was a group of nomadic people who had been migrating from Africa throughout the earth. And modern humans are the descendants of those people. Scientists had discovered the theory of migration, yet there is some obscure theory about the route of their migration. Here comes the questions, how had they diverged throughout the globe? Did all indigenous people from different continents have common ancestors, language, culture and rituals? These questions have provoked philologists, ethnologists and historians to seek out evidential answers. Hence, the theory of Aryans is created.

According to some modern researchers and philologists, Aryan was a group of people who had migrated to India from somewhere in the Middle East and had captured the lands and resources from the autochthons known as Non-Aryans.¹² In accordance with Veda, these aboriginal people were advanced as the nomadic Aryans.¹³ –“त्वं शतान्यव शम्बरस्य पुरो जघन्थाप्रतीनि दस्योः”।¹⁴ These

⁹ Mahābhāṣya, Paspasāhnikā.

¹⁰ F. Max Müller, *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*. p. 110.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 108-113.

¹² R.C. Majumdar (Ed.), *The Vedic Age*, Ch. 10, pp.205-207.

¹³ वि सूर्यो मध्ये अमुचद्रथं दिवो विद्दासाय प्रतिमानमार्यः –RV.10.138.3; 8.40.6; 6.43.1-2; 7.99.3.

¹⁴ RV. - 6.31.4.

aboriginals had wealth and an advanced military system. They had fortified their towns. However, they did not have physical strength akin to those invaders. Therefore, Aryans started to capture their lands, forts and cows. *R̥gveda* evidenced those wars which had been fought between invaders and autochthons. Finally, Aryans had captured most of northern India from them and highly influenced their culture. Some scholars report that they became slaves and absorbed into the new Aryan society as the last caste in the later R̥gvedic age.¹⁵

The term ‘Aryanisation’ is met with disapproval in some circles. Some suggest that it would be more appropriate to use ‘Indianisation of Aryan Culture’ instead. In truth, both perspectives have validity. Various tribes have brought their distinct cultures with them. Among them were the Aryans, Asuras (or Assyrians), Greeks, Scythians, Ābhirās, Gurjaras, Mughals, and, more recently, the English, who introduced Western culture, perhaps the most dynamic of all. These different groups have, at various times, left their mark on this land—shaping thoughts, emotions, tastes, and tendencies—through a process of absorption and careful blending of what is both enduring and humane. When a new civilisation comes into contact with an older one, it often creates a powerful impact, especially if the new civilisation is of a superior and more dynamic nature.

Sanskritisation, a term used in sociology, refers to the process by which castes or tribes lower in the caste hierarchy seek upward mobility by adopting the rituals and practices of the dominant or upper castes. This concept is similar to what is known in sociology as ‘passing’. The term was popularised by Indian sociologist M. N. Srinivas in the 1950s.¹⁶ Sanskritisation is particularly observed among mid-ranked members of caste-based social systems. Srinivas

¹⁵ N.K. Dutt, *The Aryanisation of India*, Ch. 5, p. 90.

¹⁶ S. Charsley. "Sanskritization: The career of an anthropological theory". *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, Vol. 32 (2), p.527.

defined it as a process by which a lower or middle Hindu caste, tribe, or other group changes its customs, rituals, ideologies, and lifestyles to resemble those of a higher caste, often followed by a claim to a higher social status within the caste hierarchy.¹⁷

Srinivas initially used the term ‘Brāhmaṇisation’ rather than ‘Sanskritisation’ to describe the process through which lower castes adopted the ways of life of the upper castes. He associated Sanskritisation with the imitation of Brāhmanical customs and behaviours by lower castes, assuming that Brāhmaṇas were the primary model for these groups. However, he later replaced the term ‘Brāhmaṇisation’ with ‘Sanskritisation’ for several reasons and redefined it as the process by which a ‘low’ Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology, and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently, ‘twice-born’ caste. Generally, such changes are followed by a claim to a higher position in the caste hierarchy than that traditionally conceded to the claimant caste by the local community.¹⁸

Srinivas had several reasons for revising his terminology. Firstly, he found that “Brāhmaṇisation is subsumed under the wider process of Sanskritisation”.¹⁹ However, he noted that the two processes could sometimes diverge. For instance, Sanskritisation often requires groups to give up certain practices, such as drinking alcohol or eating beef and pork, but in the Vedic period, Brāhmaṇas consumed soma (an alcoholic drink), ate beef, and performed blood sacrifices—practices that were later abandoned in the post-Vedic period. Therefore, using ‘Brāhmaṇisation’ would require specifying which particular Brāhmaṇa group served as the reference model. Additionally, as Brāhmaṇa customs have evolved over time, it would be necessary to identify

¹⁷ N.Jayapalan, *Indian Society and Social Institutions*. p. 428.

¹⁸ M.N. Srinivas, *Social Changes in Modern India*, p.6.

¹⁹ M.N. Srinivas, *Caste in modern India and Other essays*, p.42.

the specific historical period when using Brāhmaṇas as the standard for Sanskritisation. Secondly, the agents of Sanskritisation were not always Brāhmaṇas. In fact, lower castes were often prohibited from adopting Brāhmaṇa customs and rites, likely due to opposition from the Brāhmaṇas themselves. However, non-Brāhmaṇa groups also played a significant role in Sanskritisation. For example, the Lingayats of South India were a powerful force in promoting Sanskritisation among several low castes in Karnataka. Although the Lingayat movement was founded by a Brāhmaṇa, Basava, in the 12th century, it was anti-Brāhmanical in nature and drew followers from the lower castes. The Lingayats of Mysore even claimed equality with Brāhmaṇas, with some orthodox members refusing to accept food cooked or handled by Brāhmaṇas.²⁰

Srinivas draws on the works of anthropologists D. F. Pocock and Milton Singer to further support his argument regarding Sanskritisation. Pocock highlighted the existence of a Kṣatriya model of Sanskritisation in addition to the Brāhmanical model.²¹ Milton Singer, in turn, suggested that there are not just one or two models, but three, if not four.²² Srinivas quotes Singer, who explained that while local versions of Sanskritic Hinduism may use the four Varṇa labels—Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Śūdra—the actual meaning and prestige associated with these labels vary depending on the locality and need to be empirically investigated. In many regions, the kingly or martial lifestyle, represented by the Kṣatriya model, often holds a rank equal to or even higher than that of the Brāhmaṇa.

In a broader sense, Sanskritisation can be understood as the process through which local or regional cultures and religious practices—such as local

²⁰ *Ibid.* p.43.

²¹ M.N. Srinivas, *Social Changes in Modern India*, pp.7-8.

²² *Ibid.* p.8.

deities, rituals, and literary forms—become integrated with the great tradition of Sanskrit literature and Brāhmanical culture. This includes the orthodox religion of Aryan Brāhmaṇas, which accepts the Veda as revelation and adheres to ‘Varṇāśramadharmā’.²³ This process, sometimes called Brāhmanisation, refers to the historical merging of local religious traditions into the Brāhmanical fold, leading to the creation of the pan-Indian religion of Hinduism.²⁴

Srinivas’s theory of Sanskritisation challenges the British colonial view of the caste system as static and pan-Indian.²⁵ Instead, he showed that caste is a local, dynamic, and fluid system. This complexity arises partly from the challenge of translating the concept of ‘caste’, which corresponds to local terms like Jāti or Kula. While Varṇa refers to the four main caste groups (Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Śūdra), Jāti refers to the smaller subcastes or communities that exist within the caste system, each with its own specific lifestyle, hereditary membership, and practice of endogamy. Unlike social classes, which are open to individual mobility, caste mobility generally involves an entire community moving up or down the social hierarchy.

Dr. Pashupati Prasad Mahato introduces the term ‘Nirbakization’ as an alternative to ‘Sanskritization’ or ‘Brahminization.’ According to him, while Indian society has been stratified through the Jāti-Varṇa system, the lower strata of caste and tribal ethnic groups have historically been subjected to systematic cultural silencing by the social, religious, and political elites. This process has been driven by Brāhmanical ideology, colonial rule, Sanskritisation, modernisation, industrialisation, and state policies, resulting in cultural violence that has persisted since the era of cultural invasions.

²³ Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism*, p. 128.

²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 148.

²⁵ *Loc.cit.*

The marginalised and ethnic minority groups—primarily indigenous communities (Mūlvāsi) and oppressed castes (Dalits)—have seldom reaped the benefits of developmental and industrialisation initiatives. Instead, they have experienced chronic dispossession and forced migration, leading to extreme poverty, exploitation, oppression, and dehumanisation. Despite these adversities, these communities have demonstrated cultural resilience and intellectual excellence. However, the elites within these marginalised groups often find themselves psychologically, socially, and politically unable to resist the dominance of hegemonic nationalities, who exert influence through the state apparatus, media, and religious scriptures.

As a result, tribal and Dalit communities have suffered a diminution of their cultural agency, compelling them to conform to the linguistic, symbolic, and ritualistic frameworks of the dominant groups. This assimilation extends to religious practices, rituals, and even dietary habits, largely aligning with those of the Brāhmaṇa or twice-born communities. Mahato conceptualises this phenomenon as ‘Nirbakization’ or cultural silencing, a process that has received little scholarly attention in Indian social science discourse. While many studies focus on various aspects of social change, Mahato argues that the culture of silence, or Nirbakization, constitutes the other side of this dynamic, demanding deeper academic exploration.²⁶

Separately, the term ‘Aryanisation’ has a very different connotation in European history. In Nazi Germany, Aryanisation (German: *Arisierung*) referred to the systematic seizure of Jewish property and its transfer to non-Jews, along with the exclusion of Jews from economic life. This process began in 1933 and continued throughout the Nazi regime, culminating in the

²⁶ As quoted by Pashupati Prasad Mahato in his book *Sanskritization vs Nirbakization: A study of cultural resistance of the people of Junglemahal*, pp. 35-36.

Holocaust.²⁷ The term ‘Aryanisation’ in Nazi Germany was used to conceal the theft and dispossession of Jewish assets. It occurred in two phases: first, through legal manipulations to transfer property, and then through open confiscation. Both phases were backed by the legal and financial systems of the regime.²⁸

Content

Prof. R.D. Banerjee used the term ‘Hinduised’ instead of ‘Aryanisation’ to describe the cultural transformation, a concept discussed in works like *The Cambridge History of India* (Vol. I, Chapters 3-4), Childe’s *Aryans*, and *The Cambridge Ancient History* (Vol. II, Chapters 1-3). The word ‘Arya’ or ‘Ārya’, often interpreted as meaning ‘high’ or ‘respectable’, may have influenced the naming of the country, possibly implying ‘Highlands’. During the period reflected in the later Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇa texts, the Aryans expanded their territory eastward into the Ganges valley. By this time, conflicts with the Dāsas had become less frequent, indicating a shift in the Aryans’ focus as they continued their expansion.

In contrast, Aryanisation in India referred more to cultural influence and domination rather than forced conversion. While there were some instances of coercion in the early stages, the process in India was largely different. The Vedic texts even reference certain Ṛsis from lower castes who were able to ascend to the Brāhmaṇa community, such as Kavaṣa, Kaṇva, and Vyāsa, highlighting a more complex and fluid social transformation.

The *Ṛgveda* references several Non-Aryan groups, including the Dāsa, Dasyu, Rākṣasa, Asura, Paṇi, and Niṣāda. However, during the Aryanisation process, additional Non-Aryan groups emerged as a result of inter-caste

²⁷ <https://web.archive.org/web/20171201232842/https://www.emons-verlag.de/programm/arisierung-in-koeln>

²⁸ https://web.archive.org/web/20171202061909/https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/Publication_OP_2003-01.pdf

marriages and opposition to Aryan cultural norms. Notable examples include the Rathakāra, formed through mixed unions, and the Vrātya, who engaged in antagonistic activities against Aryan traditions. The Aryanisation of these tribes was a gradual and multifaceted process that took considerable time. An overview of some key processes involved will be provided here:

1. Through Enslavement: Dāsa and Dasyu

The *Sāmaveda* and *Ṛgveda* identify the Dāsa, Dasyu, Rākṣasa, Asura, and Paṇi as Non-Aryan tribes. Among these, the Dāsa, Paṇi, and Asura were noted for their wealth—Dāsa held ninety forts, Paṇi possessed treasures, and Asura had bountiful resources. However, extreme measures were prescribed primarily for the Dāsa and Dasyu, who were to be enslaved, and the Rākṣasa, who were to be destroyed.²⁹ Most Dāsa were enslaved by the Aryans, and the term ‘Dāsa’ subsequently came to denote a slave in the *Ṛgveda*.³⁰ Over time, the Dāsa, Dasyu, and Rākṣasa were incorporated into the Śūdra Varṇa, which likely originated from these non-wealthy, conquered, and hostile groups. The Śūdra was eventually integrated into Aryan society by the later Vedic period. However, in certain passages of Vedic literature, both the Śūdra and Dāsa are depicted as adversaries of the Aryan tribes.³¹ Prof. Ram Sharan Sharma posits that the term ‘Dāsa’ as a slave may originally have been used for those who allied with the Aryans during inter-tribal conflicts, rather than for Non-Aryans.³²

2. Through Inter-Tribal or Inter-Caste Marriage: Caṇḍāla and Rathakāra

Inter-tribal and inter-caste marriages led to the formation of groups such as the Caṇḍāla and Rathakāra. For instance, the Caṇḍāla emerged from a union

²⁹ Ralph T. H. Griffith (tr.), *The hymns of the Samaveda*. 9.2, 14.3, 5.2, 4.5, 1.10, 10.3.

³⁰ A.A. Macdonell & A.B. Keith, *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, Vol.-1, p.399.

³¹ Mai. S.-4.6.6.

³² R.S. Sharma, *Śudras in Ancient India*, p.27.

between a Brāhmaṇa mother and a Śūdra father and were classified as Śūdra Varṇa, deemed untouchable in Aryan society.³³ Rathakāra, descended from a Vaiśya father and Śūdra mother, were permitted to perform Vedic sacrifices³⁴ and occupied a social position between the Vaiśya and Śūdra.³⁵

3. Through Cooperation and Beneficial Relations

Once the Asura and Rākṣasa were thoroughly subdued and absorbed into Aryan society, the concept of 'Pañcamaṇava' appeared in later Vedic texts.³⁶ The *Nirukta* mentions 'Pañcajana'—Pitṛ, Gandharva, Deva, Asura, and Rākṣasa. On other hand it also represents Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, Śūdra and Niṣāda. The first book of *Ṛgveda* refers to the five Aryan tribes—Yadu, Turvaśa, Druhyu, Anu, and Pūru.³⁷ Notably, Yadu and Turvaśa are also identified as Dāsa kings in the *Ṛgveda*.³⁸ This suggests that these kings may have been integrated into Aryan society due to their support in inter-tribal conflicts.³⁹ The *Ṛgveda* describes Indra as the redeemer of the Dāsa to Aryan status.⁴⁰ Scholars like Prof. Macdonell and Keith also note that Dāsa kings, such as Divodāsa and Sudās, were supporters of Aryan culture.⁴¹

When the Aryans encountered certain Non-Aryan tribes that were helpful and cooperative, they quickly formed alliances with them, such as with the Niṣādas. These alliances were likely formed out of practical necessity, as the Aryans sought to consolidate their power and ensure their survival in new

³³ Kāt.Ś. Sū.-25.4.34; 12.4.4.

³⁴ *Ibid.*-1.1.9.

³⁵ A.A. Macdonell & A.B. Keith, *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, Vol.-2, p.204.

³⁶ AV.-3.21.5

³⁷ ṚV.-1.108.8

³⁸ *Ibid.*-10.62.10

³⁹ *Ibid.*-7.33.2-5; 83.8.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*- 6.22.10

⁴¹ *Op.cit.*, Vol.-1, p.401.

territories. By integrating cooperative tribes, they could strengthen their position and establish a more stable foothold in the region, blending coercion with collaboration in their interactions with the local populations.

4. Through the Deprivation of Anti-Aryan Activities: Andra, Puṇḍra, Pulinda, Brahmabandhu etc.

In the *Ṛgveda*, Indra is said to have deprived the Dasyu of their Aryan status.⁴² Prof. Sharma interprets this as suggesting that the Dasyu were once elevated to Aryan status before being stripped of it.⁴³ In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, Viśvāmitra curses his sons to produce descendants of lower castes.⁴⁴ Vedic literature also references Vrātya as Aryans who failed to adhere to Aryan rituals and customs, leading to their exclusion.⁴⁵ The Vrātya were later accepted into Aryan society through a special ritual known as 'Vrātyastoma'.⁴⁶

5. Through Specific Rituals: Vrātya

The *Kātyāyana Śrautasūtra* prescribes certain rituals for the Vrātya to become Aryan by undergoing purification.⁴⁷ The fourth Kaṇḍikā of the thirty-second chapter details the purification process required for Vrātya to attain Aryan status.

6. Through the Adoption of Non-Aryan Customs and Languages

Aryan culture, with its superior linguistic and expressive capabilities, influenced neighbouring tribes. As these tribes adopted the Aryan language and ideas, Aryan culture gradually extended across the eastern and southern regions.

⁴² *Op.cit.*-10.49.3

⁴³ *Op.cit.*, p.22.

⁴⁴ A.Br.-7.18

⁴⁵ Anirvaṇ, *Vedamīmāṃsā*, Vol.-1, p.-112.

⁴⁶ Lāt. Ś. Sū.-8.6; P. Br. - 17.1-4.

⁴⁷ Kāt. Ś. Sū.-22.4.30.

Although Pre-Aryan languages, customs, and social practices persisted to some extent in southern India, texts such as the *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra* indicate that Aryan laws and customs were incorporated into the local traditions of south Indian tribes.⁴⁸

These observations reflect the adaptability of Aryan culture in newly occupied regions and its integration with local practices and customs.

Literature Review

Research entails a meticulous examination of a subject with the aim of uncovering new facts or insights. Central to this process is the literature review, which constitutes a foundational element of any research thesis, providing direction and ensuring the research follows a well-established path. It is crucial for researchers to conduct a thorough review of existing literature before defining their research objectives.

Several key works have been consulted to gather pertinent information on the subject of Aryanisation and related topics:

1. *The Aryanisation of Ancient India* by Prof. Nripendra Kumar Dutt, published by the Author, Calcutta (now Kolkata) in 1925.

This book addresses the Aryan issues, including their invasions, the chronology of their arrival, the nature of Aryan colonisation, and the status of Non-Aryan tribes following the Aryan invasion. It also explores the subsequent developments among these tribes and kingdoms. The text is organised into seven chapters, starting with a discussion on the Aryan theory and the Central Asian theory. It progresses to cover the Aryan entry into India, Indo-Aryan invasions, and the expansion of the Indo-Aryans, particularly focusing on the Dasyus. The book then examines Aryan colonisation in regions such as Punjab,

⁴⁸ P. Mitra, *Life and Society in Vedic age*, P.27.

Madhyadesha, Eastern India, and the Deccan, and concludes with an analysis of the tribes and kingdoms mentioned in the *Rgveda* and their subsequent evolution. Dutt also investigates the Tribes and Kingdoms mentioned in the *Rgveda*, followed by an examination of the developments that occurred among these groups.

2. *The Vedic Age* (Vol. I) edited by R.C. Majumdar, published from Bharatiya Vidyabhawan, Mumbai in 2021.

This volume comprises a collection of research articles that delve into various aspects of the Vedic period, including the Aryan problem, Aryan settlements, and the language and literature of the Vedic age. It also addresses the concepts of Sanskritisation or Brāhmanisation of India. The book begins with an introductory section that provides essential geological, geographical, and biological context before moving on to the Vedic age. It includes a comprehensive overview of the Indo-Aryans, the political history of the period, and various aspects of language and literature, political and legal institutions, social and economic conditions, and religion and philosophy. The contributors to this volume include R. C. Majumdar, K. N. Dikshit, D. N. Wadia, G. P. Majumdar, B. K. Chatterjee, H. D. Sankalia, S. K. Chatterjee, A. D. Pushalker, B. K. Ghosh, V. M. Apte, and M. A. Mahendale.

These works collectively offer a comprehensive exploration of the Aryan colonisation process and its impact on the Indian subcontinent, providing essential information for understanding the historical and cultural developments of the Vedic age.

Research Gap

Existing literature on Aryanisation or the Aryan settlement in India offers valuable insights, but there is a significant lack of direct references to Vedic texts. While Prof. Nripendra Kumar Dutt's work touches on Vedic references

and D.R. Bhandarkar's lecture series, *Some Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture*, primarily discusses 'Vrātyastoma', neither source comprehensively cites specific mantras, rituals, or processes from Vedic texts associated with the Aryanisation process. Several articles from the Vedic Age address the Aryanisation of India, yet they often overlook Vedic references related to this phenomenon. Additionally, aspects concerning Pre-Aryan India and the Aryan homeland theory need refinement in light of Vedic texts. Multiple attempts have been made to identify the origins of the Aryans based on linguistic and archaeological data; however, important details remain unaddressed, such as the areas dominated by Pre-Aryan peoples, their interactions with the Aryans, and the transmission of culture to the Aryans, as well as their socio-cultural and economic status as described in Vedic literature. A comparative study between the Vedas and the Avesta, alongside archaeological evidence, is necessary to shed light on this topic. This research aims to fill these gaps by providing evidence from Vedic literature to clarify the Aryanisation process.

Importance

This research is significant for several reasons:

- 1. Advancing Vedic History Research:** It will contribute to a deeper understanding of Vedic history and the ethnological study of Vedic people.
- 2. Understanding Aryan Colonisation:** It will shed light on the history of Aryan colonisation across different regions of India and the impact on indigenous populations.
- 3. Resource for Antiquarians:** It will serve as an important source for antiquarians studying the historical and cultural contexts of ancient India.
- 4. Comprehensive Analysis:** The research will not only address Aryan settlement but also explore their expansion, cultural legacy, and colonial impact, providing insights into the evolution of Indian society and culture. The

relationship between Aryan and Non-Aryan social strata and the potential amalgamation of Aryan cultural identity will also be examined.

Objectives

The research aims to explore:

- 1. Origins and Settlement:** Theories suggesting that Aryan tribes originated outside the Indian subcontinent and their process of occupying and integrating with local populations.
- 2. Indigenous Peoples' Status:** How the conquered indigenous people acquired Aryan status, if they were absorbed into Aryan society, or were eliminated.
- 3. Subjugation Process:** A detailed examination of the methods and processes through which indigenous aboriginals were subjugated by the Aryans, with a focus on their cultural and social transformation.
- 4. Creation of Castes:** Insights into the creation of the lowest caste and the roles played by the conquered indigenous groups in this process.

This work will provide a comprehensive analysis of the Aryanisation process, drawing from Vedic texts and addressing previously unexplored aspects of this historical phenomenon.

Methodology

This research employs a qualitative approach to analyse quantitative data provided by various sources. The methodology involves an extensive study of Vedic and post-Vedic texts to construct an ethical theory regarding the Aryan and Non-Aryan tribes of India. The focus will be on understanding the cultural and lifestyle aspects of these tribes as described in the *Rgveda* and later Vedic texts.

1. Primary Sources: Vedic Texts: Some of the primary sources for this research include:

Ṛgveda Saṃhitā, Yajurveda Saṃhitā, Atharvaveda Saṃhitā, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, Aitareya Brāhmaṇa etc.

These texts provide foundational insights into the Aryan and Non-Aryan tribes, their cultural practices, and the processes of Aryanisation.

2. Secondary Sources: *Aryanisation of India* by Nipendranath Dutt, *Śudras in Ancient India* by R.S. Sharma, *A Cultural History of India* by A.L. Basham, *The Aryan Debate* by T.R. Trautmann etc.

These are secondary sources offer contextual information and interpretations that complement the primary texts and aid in understanding the broader historical and cultural implications.

The research will compare the culture of present-day indigenous tribes with that of ancient Indian tribes to identify continuities and changes over time.

Empirical data will be sought to understand the absorption and integration of indigenous tribes into the Aryan community over time. This will involve analysing historical records, archaeological findings, and anthropological studies to provide a comprehensive view of the Aryanisation process.

By integrating these methods, the research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the Aryanisation of India, the interactions between Aryan and Non-Aryan tribes, and the evolution of Indian society and culture.

In this thesis, single inverted commas have been used to highlight certain important terms. This usage follows two distinct patterns. First, when the two words *term* or *word* precedes a specific term, the term is enclosed in single inverted commas upon its first occurrence; thereafter, it appears without inverted commas. Second, when a term is introduced without these words *term*

and *word*, it is consistently enclosed in single inverted commas. Additionally, Sanskrit phrases are presented within single inverted commas, whereas commonly used Sanskrit words appear without them. The names of texts and reference books are italicised. The font size used for the main body is standard at fourteen point, with chapter titles in twenty-two point bold. Sub-topics are in fourteen point bold while main topics are in sixteen point bold. A numbered multi-level list is applied to organise topics and sub-topics. The full names of primary texts are provided; however, abbreviated forms are sometimes used throughout the body and citations. Each chapter concludes with a summary section, offering a brief analysis of the chapter's content. Footnotes are in English at eleven-point font, while Sanskrit footnotes are in twelve-point Kokila font. The dissertation, including footnotes, is written in Times New Roman, except for Sanskrit references in the body, which are presented in sixteen-point Kokila font. The thesis follows British English spelling conventions.

Hypotheses

Vedic and later Vedic texts contain comprehensive evidence that sheds light on the early Indian society and the process of cultural amalgamation. These texts provide crucial insights into the nature and mechanisms of Aryanisation, which shaped the foundation of modern Indian society.

Aryanisation was a gradual and multifaceted process that varied according to time and region. It was not merely a political colonisation but can be better understood as a cultural campaign. This process involved the integration and transformation of local customs and practices within the framework of Aryan culture.

While scholars such as Michael Witzel and M.N. Srinivas have described this process as Sanskritisation, this research posits that Aryanisation was more accurately a form of cultural colonisation. This cultural colonisation utilised

language and religion as primary tools to assimilate and dominate native populations.

An in-depth study of Vedic and later Vedic texts is expected to reveal the specific processes and stages of Aryanisation across different regions of India. These texts will help uncover the origins and cultural backgrounds of modern Indians, providing a clearer understanding of how Aryan political strategies and social systems were implemented.

The research will also elucidate the position and role of indigenous people within the Aryanised Indian society. It will explore how these groups were integrated, their status in the new societal structure, and their continuing influence or marginalisation in contemporary India.

By investigating these hypotheses, the research aims to offer a detailed and nuanced understanding of Aryanisation, its impact on Indian society, and the complex interplay between Aryan and indigenous cultures.

Chapterisation

This thesis is discussed in five chapters. They will briefly discuss below-

Chapter I: The Aryans - This chapter would be introductory information including the Aryan theory, their culture, religious belief, socio-economic position, social class division, home and ethnological alignment in India. This chapter will also try to compare the theories of Aryan origin and identity with references furnished in Vedas. Besides, I will also shed light on Pre-Aryan India and its indigenous people.

Chapter II: Non-Aryan India - In this chapter, we will discuss the Non-Aryan communities of India, their culture, lifestyle and socio-economic status.

Chapter III: Process of Aryanisation – The processes of Aryanisation will explain in this chapter. Besides, we will also discuss their political and cultural campaign towards eastern and southern India.

Chapter IV: Newly formed Society and Caste System – This one will be on the caste system. How it captured the culture of the aboriginal people and absorbed them into their caste hierarchy of the so-called newly formed society in the later Vedic and Puranic ages.

Conclusion

The past shapes the future, and without preserving the cultural heritage of previous generations, it is difficult to pass on the essence of civilisation to the future. Culture, society, history, and knowledge of a nation are foundational to its identity. Without these elements, a nation loses its sense of self. Therefore, it is essential for every individual to be aware of their nation's history, as it provides guidance toward building a brighter future. The ancient indigenous people represent the roots of a continent's history and are the creators of its identity.

In the Indian subcontinent, the earliest inhabitants were of Negroid origin, and their legacy continues to be part of today's Indian population. These early settlers laid the foundations of civilisation in India. Subsequent groups, such as the Mediterranean or Dravidian peoples and other anthropological groups, contributed to this development, with the Aryans or Nordic people further expanding this identity. In contemporary diverse society, individuals carry a mixture of these ancestral influences, making it important to recognise and value all components of our heritage. Understanding and appreciating our ancient roots, culture, and knowledge is crucial to shaping a stronger, more informed nation. This thesis aims to highlight the importance of acknowledging

the contributions of our ancestors and their lasting impact on our collective identity.

Chapter I

The Aryans

1.1. Aryan Theory

The Vedas refer to a group of people known as the Aryans, who are portrayed as the central figures in their religious practices. Brāhmanical interpretations of the Vedas and later literary works often translate this term as ‘respectable men’. However, the language of the Vedas indicates that it functions as a patronymic term, referring specifically to an Aryan people rather than serving merely as a qualifying or descriptive term. According to D.D. Johan Wilson, even in the *Ṛgveda*, the word ‘Ārya’ appears to be used in the sense of ‘high’ or ‘respectable’, though this might be a metaphorical application. The term ‘Ārya’ is also the root for the name of a country, suggesting a meaning akin to ‘highlands’ or ‘noble territory’.¹

While the term ‘Ārya’ is found in certain Indo-European languages, it is not prevalent in most. It is suggested that this word may not have an Indo-European origin but rather could be a Near Eastern loanword, possibly from Ugaritic, meaning ‘kinsman’ or ‘companion’. The term ‘Ārya’ appears in ancient literature from the eastern branch of the Indo-European language family, notably in both the *Ṛgveda* and the *Avesta*. King Darius of Persia even described himself as an Aryan. In the *Ṛgveda*, the term ‘Ārya’ refers to a cultural group, with the Aryans identified as speakers of both Indo-Aryan and Indo-Iranian languages.

In Sanskrit the word ‘Ārya’ derives from the root ‘Ṛ’ means ‘to go’ and ‘to obtain’. Zenaide A. Regozin says “Let us now take the Sanskrit root ‘Ar’, of which the general and original meaning is ‘plough’. We find it intact in Latin

¹ D.D. Johan Wilson, *India three thousand years ago*, p. 17.

and Italian ‘Arere’, in Slavic ‘Arati’- ‘to plough’ in Greek ‘Arotron’, Latin ‘Aratrum’, Tchekkh (so called Bohemian, a Slavic language) ‘Oradlo’- a plough, in English ‘Arable’, fit to be ploughed, in Greek ‘Aroura’, Latin ‘Arvum’- a ploughed field”. Author also asserts “They called themselves the people who plough in distinction from their sheep raising, steppe roaming, robber neighbours, the Tura. At the time at which we begin to know them, ‘Ārya’ meant ‘noble’, ‘exalted’, ‘venerable’; the name had become something almost sacred”.²

In the *Ṛgveda*, the worshippers of Indra are referred to as ‘Ārya’. This text also describes the conflicts between the Aryans and the Dāsas and Dasyus, without explicitly distinguishing between indigenous and foreign groups. The conflict is presented as a struggle between two civilisations, one adhering to the Vrātya tradition and the other violating it. Similar cultural and social conflicts are evident in both the Indian subcontinent and Iran. The Gāthā section of the Avesta describes a struggle in Iran between followers of Zarathushtra and those who opposed his teachings.

The Aryans are depicted as a distinct group in various hymns of the *Ṛgveda*, where skin colour serves as a marker of identity. Their adversaries are described as having black skin. The Aryans, referred to as ‘Mānuṣī Prajā’,³ worshipped Agni Vaiśvānara and are said to have occasionally set fire to the homes of black-skinned people. The god Soma⁴ is also alleged to have killed black-skinned⁵ Rākṣasas and is credited with slaying 50,000 Kṛṣṇas (blacks).

² Z. A. Ragonzin, *The Story of Vedic India as embodied Principally in the Rigveda*. pp.61-62.

³ ṚV-7.5.2-3. *Ṛg Veda Saṃhita* (abbrev. *ṚV*), with commentary by Sāyaṇa, 5 Vols, Vaidik Samshodhan Mandal, Poona, 1933-35. Tr. of the first six mandalas, H.H. Wilson, London, 1850-57. Tr. under the title, *Hymns of the Ṛg Veda* by Ralph T.H. Griffith, reprint, Motilal Banarasisdass, Delhi, 1986.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.41.1-2.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 9. 73.5.

He is even said to have removed the black skin of the Asura.⁶ These accounts clearly distinguish between the Aryans and their enemies based on skin colour.

H.W. Bailey, however, argues that not all references to the term 'Ārya' in the *Ṛgveda* can be interpreted in terms of race or caste. The term is derived from the root 'Ar', meaning 'to obtain'.⁷ In the *Avesta*, 'Ārya' refers to a person of noble birth, and this meaning is reflected in various instances in the *Ṛgveda*. According to the *Ṛgveda*, leaders of Vedic tribes referred to as 'Ārya' were often wealthy or of noble status.

In a tribal context, the term 'Ārya'⁸ might specifically refer to the Pūrus. In the *Ṛgveda*, Agni is said to have been created by the gods as a source of light for the Aryans,⁹ and in one hymn, it is stated that this light was made specifically for the Pūrus.¹⁰ Similarly, Agni is described as driving away the Dasyus and bringing forth light for the Aryans, and again, this is explicitly said to benefit the Pūrus. However, in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, Pūru is described as an Asura Rākṣasa.¹¹

S.G. Talageri contends that 'Ārya' does not always refer to the Pūrus. He argues that the *Ṛgveda* uses the term in this context simply because the composers of the hymns and their tribes were Pūru.

The linguistic evidence suggests that a significant number of Aryans entered India, though it appears that the warriors and priests among them might have been a small minority. This could be due to some level of intermingling

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.130.8.

⁷ H. W. Bailey, "Iranian Arya and Daha", in *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 1959, pp. 71-83.

⁸ ṚV-7.5.6.

⁹ ṚV-1.59.2

¹⁰ ṚV-1.59.6

¹¹ Ś.Br.-6.8.1.14.

with the hostile tribes they encountered. Over time, the majority of Aryans were likely relegated to the roles of commoners or semi-bonded labourers. During the Ṛgvedic era, economic and social divisions were still in their early phases. In a largely tribal, pastoral society, military leaders did not have a consistent or abundant supply of surplus grain or livestock to sustain themselves and their religious supporters. Their main source of income was through the occasional tribute or spoils of war taken from defeated groups, which they likely had to share with other members of the tribe.¹² The *Ṛgveda*¹³ uses the term ‘Bali’ primarily to describe the act of collecting or receiving surplus, usually in the context of offerings made to gods, but it could also refer to tributes paid to a ruler. It is likely that ‘Bali’ payments were voluntary, as there was no formal system of taxation or regular collectors,¹⁴ much like the ‘Balisādhaka’ seen in later Vedic times. Tribal members probably trusted their chief and offered gifts in return for successful leadership in battles, which would earn them a share of the war spoils. Only defeated enemy tribes may have been obligated to pay ‘Bali’ or tribute. At most, rulers and priests may have relied on female slaves for domestic tasks or tending to their livestock. The Ṛgvedic families worked their own lands, as there is no evidence of a common term for wages in Indo-European languages. The *Ṛgveda* does not mention agricultural slaves, wage labourers, or hired workers (Karmāra), although these were significant in post-Vedic agricultural practices.¹⁵ According to historian Ramsaran Sharma, farmers from the previous Harappan culture were likely employed as labourers in the new agricultural systems of Aryan society.¹⁶ There is no record of tribal chiefs granting land to their warriors or priests, possibly because land was

¹² R.S.Sharma, *JBRS*, Vol.38, pp.434-35; Vol. 39, pp. 418-19.

¹³ ṚV-1.70.9; 5.1.10; 8.100.9.

¹⁴ Zimmer’s view quoted in *Vedic Index*, Vol.2, p. 62.

¹⁵ For a detailed discussion of the Ṛg Vedic economy see R.S. Sharma, “Forms of Property in the Early Portions of the *Ṛg Veda*”, *Essays in Honour of Prof. S.C. Sarkar*, pp. 39-50.

¹⁶ R.S. Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, p.16.

viewed as communal property belonging to the tribe. The egalitarian nature of Ṛgvedic society is reflected in the expectation that everyone, regardless of gender, would work for the equal reward of a hundred cows.¹⁷

Ṛgvedic Aryan society, unlike earlier tribal communities, did not have clear class divisions, a key characteristic of this type of society.¹⁸ Although there were ranks, distinct social classes had not yet formed. Still, even in this early period, alongside the rising status of military leaders and priests, there were farmers and artisans who specialised in various skills. Common terms such as weaver, tanner, carpenter, and painter show their Indo-European roots.¹⁹ The existence of a shared Indo-European term for chariot suggests that chariot-makers were known to the Indo-Europeans.²⁰ However, while the *Ṛgveda* does not specifically.

In the *Atharvaveda*, chariot makers (Rathakāra) and metalworkers (Karmāra) are portrayed as holding prominent social roles.²¹ A newly crowned king is shown praying to a plant amulet or ‘Parṇā-maṇi’ to elevate his status among these skilled artisans, who are to become his allies.²² These craftsmen are distinguished from the kings, kingmakers, charioteers (Sūta), and troop leaders (Grāmaṇī),²³ who also form part of the king’s retinue and are meant to assist him.²⁴ Although the Aryans were mainly pastoral during the Vedic era,

¹⁷ ṚV. -6.2.31.

¹⁸ G. Landtman, *The Origin of the Inequality of Social Classes*, instances quoted on pp. 5-12. He also refers to the absence of classes among the Nāgas and Kookies of Eastern India (p.11).

¹⁹ Carl Darling, *A Dictionary of Selected Synonyms in the Principal Indo-European Languages*, for leather (carman) see p. 40, for weaving, p.408, for ‘takṣan’ pp.589-90, and for plaiting pp.621-622. Cf. Childe, *The Aryans* p. 86.

²⁰ G. Childe, *The Aryans*, pp.86 and 92.

²¹ ṚV. -4.35-6; 36.5; 6.32.1.

²² AV. 3.5.6.

²³ Presumably he was the head of the village both for civil purposes and military operations.

²⁴ AV.5.7.

they engaged in some farming as well.²⁵ They frequently mentioned their livestock—sheep, goats, cows, buffaloes, horses, camels, and humped oxen—in prayers and expressions of gratitude to both gods and humans.

In early times, a daughter was called a Duhitr, meaning milkmaid, while a Gopa or Gopāl, the cattle keeper, evolved into a general guardian figure, likely due to the importance of cattle ownership in society. Many terms linked to pastoral life acquired broader meanings in their language. It is evident they were more than mere nomads. They had villages (Grāma), cities (Purī), cattle pens (Goṣṭha), and many of the amenities, tools, and even vices common in settled societies. They were familiar with spinning and weaving skills they relied on for producing cloth. They were also aware of ironworking, practicing trades like blacksmithing, copper smithing, carpentry, and other crafts. They used axes to fell trees, including species such as *Aśwattha* (*Ficus religiosa*), *Palāśa* (*Butea frondosa*), and various types of *Acacia* species.²⁶ They also possessed tools to smooth and polish the wood of their chariots, and they fashioned iron rims for the wheels of their carts. Their warfare tools included coats of mail, clubs, bows, arrows, javelins, swords, and discs, and they sometimes marked their presence with the sound of a conch shell. For both domestic and religious purposes, they made vessels like cups, pitchers, and ladles, and they employed professional barbers. Skilled in handling precious metals and stones, they owned gold earrings, bowls, and necklaces. They had control over important livestock and used carts drawn by horses and oxen for transport,²⁷ as well as war chariots, though they did not have mounted riders or grooms like the ancient Egyptians.

²⁵ RV- 2.2.2; 2.34.8; 5.62.2, 8.88.1, 9.94.2.

²⁶ The Khadira, or Khair tree, the *Acacia* from which catechu is made, and the Śamī, *Acacia Sami*, are frequently mentioned. So are the Śālmālī, or *Bombax heptaphyllum*. The Kuśa, or Darbha, grass seems to have been much esteemed. It was used in sacrifices.

²⁷ ‘Ratha’, the Sanskrit for a chariot, is recognised in the Latin *rota* a wheel. A warrior is frequently called ‘Rathaestāo’, a stander on a chariot, in the Pārsī Zend writings.

The Ṛgvedic people often celebrated their association with horses, chariots, and wagons, reflecting their pride in their equestrian skills and their status as masters of horses and chariots. Titles and names for rulers, priests, and even gods were sometimes derived from their connection to horses. Although they captured elephants, it is debated whether they used them in warfare, as was common in southern India among indigenous groups.²⁸ They had knowledge of medicinal plants and prepared an intoxicating drink from the Somalata or moon plant (*Sarcostemma viminalis*), which was consumed by both gods and humans for its intoxicating and exhilarating effects. Clarified butter (Ghṛta) was highly esteemed, as was a fermented barley beverage,²⁹ indicating their familiarity with alcohol.

The Aryans tolerated the presence of alcohol vendors³⁰ and eunuchs within their society. They had ‘halls of justice’ for legal matters and ‘halls of sacrifice’ for religious ceremonies, although they did not practice idol worship, as no mention of shrines appears in their texts. They engaged in trade, discovering resources such as the silky wool of the Gāndhār sheep,³¹ which was absent from their own lands. Occasionally, their hymns reference the ocean, which they likely encountered by following the Indus River.³² Wealth-hungry groups are depicted as filling the waterways with sailboats on the move.³³ There is a suggestion of a shipwreck obstructing a sea voyage to a distant land.³⁴ They sent emissaries to nearby rulers. In Moses’ time, the Egyptians were likely well

²⁸ Among non-domestic animals the Vṛka, or wolf, and the Varāha, boar, and Simha, lion, are frequently mentioned.

²⁹ Yava, the Sanskrit for barley, is recognisable in the Greek ‘Yea’, as has been frequently noticed.

³⁰ The drinking of spirits, according to the modern system of the Hindus, is a ‘Mahāpātaka’, or great sin, equal to that of incest with a mother or the murder of a Brāhmana. Yet they do not support this view of matters by caste disciplines, except in rare cases.

³¹ ṚV-1.26.7.

³² *Ibid.*-1.71.7

³³ *Ibid.*-1.48.3; 1.56.2; 4.55.6

³⁴ *Ibid* - 1.116.3; 1.117.14; 1.119.4; 7.69.7.

acquainted with the great river that flowed through their land. According to D.D. Johan Wilson, the second chapter of Genesis refers to the Pi-Shon, also known as the Sindhu, as one of the rivers of paradise.³⁵ The R̥gvedic people overcame the Non-Aryans, despite the latter's seemingly advanced social structure, often attributed to the superior combat skills of the Aryans. Being pastoral and nomadic, the Aryans may not have fully recognised these social distinctions. It is likely that the native civilisation adapted the concept of a hierarchical order to serve their own purposes.

1.2. Home and ethnological alignment in India

Several theories exist regarding the origins and movements of the Aryans, each offering distinct perspectives on their historical trajectory. One widely known theory, the 'Aryan Invasion Theory' (AIT), posits that the Aryans originated from the Central Asian steppes or possibly from Europe and subsequently invaded the Indian subcontinent, particularly impacting the Indus Valley Civilisation. Another view, the 'Aryan Migration Theory' (AMT), suggests that the Aryans migrated from regions outside of India, driven by the search for more fertile land and better conditions for cattle, following the decline of the Indus Valley Civilisation. In contrast, the third theory, often referred to as the 'Out of India Theory' (OIT) or 'Indian Urheimat Theory', argues that the Aryans originated in India and later migrated outward, spreading Indo-European culture into Europe and the Middle East. Several scholars have provided extensive descriptions of the original homeland of the Aryans. Researchers like W. Schroeder, W. Brandenstein, and others argue that this region was a steppe area at the base of mountains, featuring open grasslands ideal for fast-moving horses, shrubs hiding wild animals like bears, riverine zones, and certain agricultural practices. The area experienced distinct

³⁵ D.D. Johan Wilson, *India three thousand years ago*. p.33.

seasons—winter, summer, and spring—making it suitable for horse grazing and horse-drawn chariot activities. Schroeder observed that such characteristics are found in the southern steppes of the Soviet Union. Gordon Childe, drawing on fossil studies from burial sites, also identified this region in the southern Soviet Union as the original Aryan homeland.

Maria Gimbutas pointed to evidence of Indo-European populations near the Don and Dnieper Rivers in southern Ukraine between 4500 BCE and 3500 BCE, and along the Volga River between 3500 BCE and 2500 BCE. Brandenstein located the Aryan homeland in the southern grasslands of the Ural Mountains, while R.P. Giles suggested it was in Hungary. Some Russian linguists, including T.V. Gamkrelidze and V.V. Ivanov, proposed the southern Caucasus, encompassing eastern Anatolia and northern Mesopotamia, as the birthplace of the Indo-European language group. Another scholar, Renfrew, suggested Central Asia as a potential location for the Aryan homeland.

Archaeologists and historians have categorised the early evolution and spread of Indo-European or Aryan culture into four distinct phases. J.P. Mallory addresses the first three phases, while the fourth phase is discussed in the writings of Parpola.

The first phase, known as the Sredny Stog Complex, was located in the Dnieper region of Ukraine in Central Asia, spanning from 4500 BCE to 3500 BCE. During this time, people lived in houses made of earth and soil. The second phase is called the Yamnaya Complex, dating from 3600 BCE to 2200 BCE. This cultural horizon stretched from the western Black Sea region to the eastern Volga-Ural area, reflecting an eastward expansion toward Asia.

The third phase is the Andronovo Culture, which arose around 2000 BCE and spread throughout Central Asia. This culture was characterised by large-scale cattle herding, extensive use of horses, cremation practices, pit-houses built from birch or other wood, and the presence of altars for sacrificial rituals.

A subset of this culture, the Sintashta Culture, was situated near the southern Urals, close to western Kazakhstan, around 1700 BCE. Evidence from this period shows the use of war chariots, spoked wheels, horse sacrifices, and the consumption of the intoxicating drink Soma.

The fourth phase, the Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex (circa 1900–1500 BCE), spanned southern Turkmenistan, northern Afghanistan, and parts of southern Uzbekistan. This phase is considered Pre-Indo-Aryan, with nomadic groups moving toward the borders of India, leading to the rise of the Gandhara Grave Culture and related cultural developments.

1.3. Indo-European Language Family and Proto-Indo Europeans

In the mid-19th century, the ‘Aryan Invasion Theory’ was supported by a new field called ‘Comparative Philology’, with Max Müller being one of its key advocates. Supporters of this migrations theory argued that the languages in the Indo-European family originated from a common ancestor, known as ‘Proto-Indo-European’ (PIE). According to Koenraad Elst,³⁶ the speakers of PIE lived in the Punjab region of northern India around the 6th millennium BCE. From there, they expanded into the areas of Bactria and Kamboja. One branch migrated to the Caspian Sea and Central Asia, while another moved to northwestern China, eventually giving rise to the Tocharian branch of the Indo-European language family.³⁷ During their time in Central Asia, they learned to domesticate and use horses. As the Indus Valley Civilisation grew in India, this group evolved into the Proto-Indo-Iranian language family. However, Elst’s views, along with those of Talageri, Lal, and Kazanas, faced opposition,

³⁶ Koenraad Elst. *Update on Aryan Invasion Debate*. 1999.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

particularly from scholars like Michael Witzel and Edwin Bryant, who often responded with personal attacks rather than logical counterarguments.³⁸

R. Hoernle proposed that the Vedic Aryans lived in Eastern Punjab, North Rajputana, and the western region of Uttar Pradesh. His theory of two separate Aryan migrations posits that one group settled in these areas, while a second group migrated to regions like Gujarat, Central India, South Bihar, and Bengal. This theory, which is further developed by Chanda, suggests two distinct waves of Aryan immigration into India.³⁹

However, Hoernle's theory—also supported by scholars such as Grierson, Dixon, Hutton, and others—posits that the Indo-Aryans from the outer regions arrived earlier, while the people inhabiting the central regions are the result of a more recent migratory wave. Mr. Chakladar not only supports this viewpoint but also argues that the early Vedic culture, as depicted in the *Samhitās*, reflects this pattern of migration. Later, it is asserted that the long-headed groups migrated southward and eastward, progressively assimilating the Vedic culture of the earlier settlers. They were responsible for composing the *Brāhmaṇa* texts, and under their influence, Vedic culture continued to develop and thrive.⁴⁰

Several scholars, like Bal Gaṅgādhara Tilak, Hermann Jacobi, Sri Aurobindo, and T.V.S. Iyengar, have explored the idea of the Aryan homeland by examining astronomical references found in the Vedas. They argue that the Ursa Major constellation (the Great Bear) is only visible directly overhead in regions near the poles. This suggests that the Vedic sages were located in latitudes south of the North Pole rather than at the pole itself. A particular Vedic

³⁸ Rajat Pal, *Āryadigante Sindhusabhyatā*, pp.30-31

³⁹ R. Hoernle, *The Oldest Indian Manuscripts and the Early Indo-Aryan Migration*. pp.37 ff.

⁴⁰ R.P. Chanda, *Indo-Aryan Races*, p.375.

verse (अमीय ऋक्षा निहिता स उच्चा नक्तं ददृशे कुह चिद्वेयुः) describes celestial observations that align with this idea.⁴¹

In addition, Vedic texts like *Rgveda* 1.72.7, 1.183.6, and 7.76.2 mention the word 'देवयानम्' (Devayānam), meaning 'the paths of the gods'. Some scholars interpret this term as hinting at the routes or migrations the Aryans followed, possibly leading them to the Indian subcontinent. This suggests that the Vedic people had a sophisticated understanding of the stars and may have used this knowledge to trace their migrations.

Prof. Iyengar notes a phenomenon referred to as the "false moon," which is said to be observable at the North Pole. The *Brāhmasūtra* commentaries describe a sighting of a double moon as a sign of illness, potentially indicating a relic of life at the North Pole.

The Aryans may have perceived the climatic conditions at the top of the Himalayas as reminiscent of their Arctic homeland and thus settled there in small numbers for the practice of austerities. However, the majority of the Aryan population resided in the plains and experienced the broader fate of the nation.

The recitation of the Vedic text from 'कृत्तिकानक्षत्रं भवत्यग्निर्देवता' demonstrates that the final arrangement of the Vedas to suit changing conditions was performed with the Sun in Krittikā at the Vernal Equinox, approximately 3600 years ago.⁴²

In studying the period from 2500 to 500 B.C., we utilise both archaeological and literary evidence. The literary sources are well-documented and include the corpus of Vedic literature. Archaeological evidence consists of various cultures, initially appearing disparate. The earliest of these include the

⁴¹ RV. 1.24.10.

⁴² T.V. Srinivasa Iyengar, *The History of the Aryans*, p.10.

Pre-Harappan cultures such as the Sothi culture⁴³ of the Sarasvatī Valley and the Chalcolithic village sites of Balochistan and Sindh. These cultures preceded the Harappan civilisation (c. 2300-1750 B.C.), which extended from southern Punjab and Sindh to the Narmada delta, largely following the coastal regions and eastward to the upper Gaṅgā-Yamunā Doab.⁴⁴

Evidence of post-Harappan cultures can be found in both the Indus and Ganges valleys. However, linking the Harappan culture directly to later Vedic society based on their shared agro-urban characteristics is disputed. The differences between them extend beyond cultural aspects to include geographical distinctions. The Harappan culture, which thrived in the Indus Valley and western India, was characterised by chalcolithic urbanisation and lacked iron technology. In contrast, the later Vedic society, which developed primarily in the Ganges Valley (with only a few minor Harappan sites in the upper Doāb), relied on iron technology for its gradual urbanisation. The two cultures have distinct technological systems. In Vedic civilisation, the fertility cult that played such a prominent part among the Harappans is missing. While the Vedic people usually burned their dead, the Harappans buried theirs. It is notable that no burials have been discovered in relation with the Painted Grey Ware civilisations, implying that they burned their dead. The Harappans are not connected to the horse that is so emblematic of Vedic life. An early script was utilised by the Harappa culture, although Vedic society only made passing references to writing. It will be extremely difficult to associate the Harappa culture with speakers of Indo-Aryan if the Harappan script is ultimately shown to be Proto-Dravidian.

⁴³ A.Ghosh, “The Indus Civilisation – Its Origin, Authors, Extent and Chronology” in V.N. Misra and N.S. Mate (Ed.), *Indian Pre-history*, 1964. An attempt has been made to try and identify the Sothi Culture with the Ṛgvedic people by A.D. Pusalker, “Pre-Harappan, Harappan and post-Harappan culture and the Āryan problem”, *The Quarterly Review of Historical Studies*, Vol.7, no.4, 1967-68, p.233 ff.

⁴⁴ T.V. Srinivasa Iyengar, *The History of the Aryans*, p.10.

The Gāndhāra Grave culture⁴⁵ (c. 1500–500 B.C.) in Northern Punjab used red and plain grey ceramics, which provide indications of iron and copper technologies in both the early and later stages, as well as strong links with Iran and Central Asia. With its distinctive black-and-red pottery painted in white and likely internalising some Harappan forms, the Banas culture of southern Rajasthan (c. 2000–1200 B.C., with possible extensions in the Ganges valley down to 800 B.C.) may have served as a bridge between the Harappan and post-Harappan cultures.⁴⁶ There is evidence of communication between the chalcolithic cultures of central India and the Narmada region and west Asia.

The earliest remnants in the upper Ganges valley date to the post-Harappan period (c. 1400–1200), and are associated with the civilisation represented by the Ochre Colour Pottery. This has occasionally been linked to the copper Hoard Culture,⁴⁷ which is located in the Gaṅgā-Yamunā Doab, Jharkhand, and West Bengal. Its writers may have been Muṅḍā speakers. There is evidence of the black-and-red pottery, sometimes painted white and resembling the Banas culture, at several sites in Bihar. This pottery is said to have formed the oldest level. In certain areas of Doab, it takes the place of ochre colour pottery and comes before the region's main culture. The latter is the Painted Grey Ware⁴⁸ (c.1100-400), an agrarian society at first, acquainted with iron technology and equine technology. Lastly, urbanisation in the Ganges valley is linked to the Northern Black Polished Ware civilisation (c. 500–100).

⁴⁵ A.H. Dani, 'Gandhara grave Culture', *Ancient Pakistan*, Vol. III, 1967.

⁴⁶ B.B. Lal, *Indian Archaeology – A Review*, 1959-60 (for the site Gilund); D.P. Agarwal, "C-14 Dates, Banas Culture and the Aryans", *Current Science*, 5 March, 1966, p.114 ff.; H.D. Sankalia, "New Light on the Indo-Iranian or Western Asiatic Relations between 1700-1200 B.C.". *Artibus Asiae*, XXVI, 1963; H.D. Sankalia, S.B. Deo, Z.D. Ansari, *Excavations at Ahar*, 1969.

⁴⁷ B.B. Lal, "Further Copper Hoards from the Gangetic Basin and a review of the problem", *Ancient India*, no.7, 1951, p.20 ff; S.P. Gupta, "Indian Copper Hoards", *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, 49, 1963, p.147 ff.

⁴⁸ B.B. Lal, "Excavations at Hastinapur", *Ancient India*, nos. 10 and 11, 1954-55, p.5 ff.; T.N. Roy, "Stratigraphical Position of the Painted Grey Ware in the Gangetic Valley", *Bharati*, no. 8, Vol.2, 1964-65, p. 64 ff.

As a result, the archaeological landscape displays a wide range of cultures, none of which can be specifically defined as Indo-European.⁴⁹ Additionally, the data does not support the common theory that says that a single dominant culture gradually absorbed the many distinct civilisations that existed in northern India and expanded throughout the region. Dani has interpreted additional evidence of the Gandhara Grave Culture as perhaps signifying the early Indo-Aryan migration associated with the Ṛgvedic literature. This may have then led to the development of the Painted Grey Ware civilisation, which is sometimes connected to the later Vedic literature, however there is currently no evidence of this connection in southern Punjab. This identification aligns with the geographical focal points and broadly conforms to the technological evidence presented in Vedic literature. Linguistic theories proposed by Hoernle and Grierson, which posit two distinct waves of migration and corresponding linguistic groups, support the argument that the initial wave settled in the Sapta Sindhu region. The second wave, circumventing the Indus Valley, likely established itself in the Banas Valley. From this location, subsequent migration occurred both along the northern slopes of the Vindhyas towards Bihar and into the Doāb. Notably, the latter migration followed a historically well-trodden route that connected the Doāb with the western coast. Comparing the material from West Asia and India, we find that there is inconsistent evidence of a dominant culture that originated in West Asia and spread to India. However, we do note some techniques that are similar between the two regions, such as the use of socketed axes and pottery from West Asia. This would imply that immigrants are likely bringing both the language and certain components of technology. Understanding the characteristics of the civilisation in question is crucial when comparing literary and archaeological data. The geographical centre of the *Ṛgveda* is the Sapta Sindhu, which roughly extends from the Kabul

⁴⁹ Dilip K. Chakrabarti, “The Āryan Hypothesis in Indian Archaeology”, *Indian Studies*, Vol.9, no. 4, July-Sept. 1968, p. 343 ff.

River to the Sarasvatī River.⁵⁰ The *Nadīsūkta* (*R̥gveda* 10.75), which is typically referenced to dispute the hypothesis of migration, originates from the tenth Maṇḍala of the *R̥gveda*, which is widely recognised as being later than other sects. R̥gvedic civilisation is a pre-urban society that used copper and probably iron technology.⁵¹ The uncertainty stems from the definition of the term ‘Ayas’. It could have initially signified copper, as it appears to in certain situations, but the phrases ‘Kṛṣṇa Ayas’ and ‘Śyāma Ayas’ qualified it later with the arrival of iron. When people started to associate ‘Tāmra’ with copper, ‘Ayas’ could have been set aside for iron. However, it has been maintained that ‘Ayas’ originally signified iron and that the oldest understanding of iron in India must be related with R̥gvedic people. It is transitioning from nomadic pastoralism based on livestock to an agricultural form with more permanent inhabitants. Barley seems to have been the primary meal. A strong feeling of tribal identity exists, and the patriarchal family is the fundamental social unit. Close linguistic ties with Iran are obvious. The key deities are Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Saviṭṛ, Soma, and Agni. Prof. B.B. Lal determined in his paper “The Sarasvatī: the Mother of Indian Civilisation” that the Sarasvatī of the *R̥gveda* is not the Helmand of Afghanistan, but the present-day Sarasvatī-Ghagger combination in India. The Harappan civilisation, also known as the Indus or Indus-Sarasvatī Civilisation, thrived in its basin. The Sarasvatī basin has roots dating back to the 5th millennium BCE (radiocarbon dates from Bhirrana), if not before. This strongly demonstrates that the Indus-Sarasvatī Civilisation was indigenous. Hydrological, archaeological, and radiocarbon dating findings indicate that the Sarasvatī dried up approximately 2000 BCE. The *R̥gveda* is believed to have been written before 2000 BCE, as the Sarasvatī was a powerful river at that period. Who knows how much earlier - 500 years, 1000 years, or more? According to *R̥gveda* 10.75.5-6,

⁵⁰ There are incidental references to migration in the *R̥gveda*, in verses such as 1.30.9; 1.36.18; 8.6.46; and they read clearly as for example, य आनयत्परावतः सूनीती तुर्वशं यदुम्। इन्द्रः स नो युवा सखा॥ (RV-6.45.1.).

⁵¹ L. Gopal, *Uttar Bharati*, Vol.4, no. 3, p.71 ff.; N.R. Banerjee, *the Iron Age in India*, p.158 ff.

the Vedic Aryans populated the region between the upper reaches of the Ganges-Yamunā on the east and the Indus on the west. Which archaeological culture thrived in this region and throughout the Ṛgvedic era, that is, prior to 2000 BCE? The only solution is Indus-Sarasvatī civilisation. Thus, the Indus-Sarasvatī Civilisation and the Vedas are two sides of the same coin. Since the Indus-Sarasvatī Civilisation was indigenous, it is obvious that the Vedic Aryans were also indigenous. This disproves the idea that they were immigrants or even invaders. Numerous instances demonstrate that ancient civilisation did not vanish but is still present in Indian culture and the Indian mind. There is a noticeable sense of cultural exclusion and alienation from the native population, who are often disliked and feared (e.g. the Dasyus and the Paṇis).⁵²

1.4. The Aryan Invasion or Migration Theory

Upon discovering the Indus Valley Civilisation for the first time in the 1920s, colonial archaeologists promptly recognised it as proof of a pre-Vedic society. They postulated that this culture had been completely destroyed by the arrival of Aryan invaders from the Northwest, who were believed to be the forerunners of Hindu India. The majority of orthodox historians have now rejected the ‘Aryan invasion theory’, or ‘AIT’, calling it an oversimplification, but they have stuck to a chronology that regards the Vedic civilisation as the Indus Valley Civilisation’s heir.

R.S. Sharma argues that if the Aryans had been few in number, they could have established themselves as a ruling minority over the conquered people, similar to how the Hittites did in Anatolia and the Kassites and Mitannis in Mesopotamia. However, in both Iran and India, the linguistic evidence points to large-scale migrations rather than the domination of a small group. The Ṛgvedic texts, in particular, contradict the idea of the Aryans imposing

⁵² Romila Thapar, *Ancient Indian Social History*, p. 191.

themselves as a minority in India.⁵³ Instead, these texts describe the movements and settlements of numerous Aryan tribes, suggesting a significant population influx.⁵⁴

The most widely accepted view is that the people displaced or subjugated by the Aryans were the creators of the Indus civilisation. This civilisation, which was a surprising discovery at the time, is believed to predate the Vedic period. There has been debate over whether there was a gap between the decline of the Indus civilisation and the arrival of the Aryans. However, the evidence from the Vedic texts strongly supports the idea that the two periods were connected. The texts frequently mention the destruction of cities, with the war-god Indra being referred to as 'Purandara', or 'destroyer of cities'. Agni, the fire-god, is also highlighted in this context, which aligns with the fact that many Indus cities show signs of being destroyed by fire. Given these repeated references, it seems almost certain that the Aryans were responsible for the destruction of the Indus cities.⁵⁵

T. Burrow also acknowledged that the Aryans originated from outside India. Although there is no written record of the Aryan invasion, and it has not yet been confirmed through archaeology, it is considered a well-established historical fact based on comparative philology. The practices of fire-worship and the Soma cult are shared traditions found in both India and Iran, further supporting this connection.

The Iranians preserved the memory of their ancestral homeland, which they referred to as 'Airyanām Vaējō' (or Ērān Vēj). This region remained inhabited by them until the time of the Turkish invasion. Iran shares many

⁵³ R.S. Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, p. 27.

⁵⁴ For Rgvedic tribes see *Vedic Age*, pp.245-48 and for later Vedic tribes, pp.252-62

⁵⁵ This statement may not apply to Mohenjo-Dāro in Sind, where strong evidence has been produced to show that the city decayed owing to frequent disastrous floods. Mohenjo-Dāro, however, was not in the main line of Aryan advanced.

similarities with India in terms of a class-based social structure that gave rise to the four-caste system there. It is inferred that, at the time these terms were borrowed, the original Aryans whose language they were acquired from must have been located no farther east than the Volga and the Urals, given the current distribution of the Finno-Ugrian languages and their likely former position.⁵⁶ The civilisation found in the *R̥gveda* was not created in India; rather, it was imported and preexisting outside of India in most cases.⁵⁷ As there is no distinct record of this movement to be found, it has been noted that the Aryan invasion of India appears to have occurred some substantial time before the production of Vedic hymns.⁵⁸ This civilisation, which was quite surprising when it was first found, was undoubtedly older than the Vedic period. However, there has been debate over whether the invading Aryans caused its demise or if a certain amount of time passed between the end of the Indus civilisation and the arrival of the Aryans. Given that the battle god Indra is referred to as ‘Purandara’, or ‘the destroyer of cities’, and that the Vedic scriptures themselves frequently mention the destruction of cities, the evidence clearly supports the former position. Naturally, Agni, the fire-god, is also invoked frequently in this role, given that fire seems to have destroyed many of the Indus towns. Considering these numerous allusions, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that Aryan was responsible for the fall of the Indus towns.⁵⁹ The Aryans of *R̥gveda* were not strictly nomadic. The Aryans must have been stationary since, although they did have cattle, goats, and other animals, they also engaged in agriculture, which is impossible for a completely nomadic lifestyle.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ A.L. Basam, *The Early Āryans: A cultural History of India*, p.22.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p.24.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*. p.25.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*. p.25.

⁶⁰ Ed. Thomas. R. Trautmann, *Aryan Debates*, p. xxxvii.

The idea that the Aryans migrated to India from outside was first proposed by Sir William Jones. He suggested that from a central point of origin, likely in Iran, one could trace straight lines to the different regions where the Indo-European languages spread, without any of the lines crossing. Later, Western scholars leaned towards Central Asia as the homeland of the Indo-European languages, though many other locations have been suggested over time. However, there is no definitive scholarly agreement on the exact location, except that it lies somewhere to the north or west of India. The nature of the evidence dictates this lack of accuracy. There is no reason to believe that we will ever unearth a written document in the now extinct Proto-Indo-European language, which is known only by inference from the daughter languages of Indo-European. It is hard to conclude that an unwritten language was spoken at an archaeological site based alone on the material remnants found there. It is intrinsically challenging to coordinate archaeological and linguistic data, and it can only be done with confidence in cases when the languages in question are expressed in texts that clearly refer to separate physical things. The usual view is unavoidably flawed because of this lack of accuracy.⁶¹

M. Wheeler related the evidence of a charred wall from Harappa to 'Purandara', the god praised for destroying Non-Aryan towns. As a result, the Industrial Cities are destroyed by the Aryan Invasion. He also provides a number of other Mohenjo-Dāro found proof.

1.4.1. Three main points of Aryan Invasion Theory or Aryan Migration Theory: Proponents of the Aryan Invasion Theory (AIT) or Aryan Migration Theory (AMT) typically base their arguments on three main points:

1. The Indus Valley people do not seem to have possessed horses: before 2000 BCE, when the Aryans arrived in India, there is no osteological evidence of

⁶¹ *Ibid*, pp. xxxviii-xxxix.

horse bones in the Indian subcontinent, and horses are not shown in Harappan seals or terracotta figurines.

2. Neither Harappa nor Mohenjo-Dāro show any evidence of fire altars, which suggests that the fire rituals central to Hinduism were likely introduced later by the Aryans. This leads to a reasonable conjecture that such practices were not part of the original culture of these ancient cities.

3. In many ways, the Indus Valley Civilisation was distinctly urban, challenging the common perception of India as an eternally agricultural society. It also defies the idea that the transition from a ritual-based to an urban society follows a natural progression. Evidence indicates that the Indus Valley people had a well-developed merchant class involved in extensive trade, further highlighting their advanced urban characteristics.⁶²

1.4.2. The Horse, Indus Valley Civilisation and Vedas: The first argument in favour of the Aryan Invasion or Migration Theory weakens with the discovery of horse bones at higher levels in Mohenjo-Dāro, and from the earliest Pre-Harappan levels at Rana Ghundai in northern Balochistan, where both horse and ass bones have been found. As Wheeler noted, it is quite likely that camels, horses, and asses were a common part of the Indus caravans.⁶³ Furthermore, if the horse was known in Elam as early as 3000 B.C., it is probable that it was also known to, if not used by, the people of the Indus Valley around 2500 B.C.,⁶⁴ given the connections between Elam and the Indus Valley civilisation. In addition to the proof of horse usage discovered at Lothal, remnants from Mohenjo-Dāro have been discovered.⁶⁵ From Mohenjo-Dāro, saddles for horses

⁶² B.D. Sharma, "Indus-Sarasvati Civilization: In Search of the Truth", *Vedic River Sarasvati and Hindu Civilization*, pp. 278-279.

⁶³ M. Wheeler, *The Indus Civilization*, p.65.

⁶⁴ E. Macay, *Further Excavation at Mohenjodaro*, Vol.1, pp. 289-90.

⁶⁵ A. Ghosh, *Indian Archeology – A Review*, 1959-60, Plate XV. E.

have also been discovered.⁶⁶ As a result, the inhabitants of the Indus Valley were familiar with and used horses.⁶⁷ According to Macay, the animal that resembled an urus or, more likely, the god that this animal represented may have been a sun deity.⁶⁸ According to Gadd, some of the Indian-influenced designs on Sumerian seals had astral meaning.⁶⁹

Non-Aryans and horses in the Vedas 1. In RV-4.28.5, Indra takes horses and cows from the Dasyus and gives them to his people. 2. RV- 1.83.4, Indra and his human friends Angiras are helping him discover the Pani's horses and cows. In is. 3. RV-10.108.7, Sarama requests cattle and horses from Paṇis and subsequently loots them. The issue arises: if the horse is the emblem of Aryan culture, how might Paṇis and Dasyus have more horses and cattle? Also, why the Aryans were so keen to capture Concerning them.

1.5. Contradictions about Aryan Migration Theory

According to G.R. Sharma in his *History to prehistory: archaeology of Gaṅgā valley and Vindhya*s, there are evidence of domesticated horses in the Son valley of the Gaṅgā basin dating back to 6570-5430 BCE. He denies that the horse originated in Bacteria in 1800 B.C.E. Hemfil and Christenson discovered no genetic evidence of human migration to the Indus Valley civilisation beyond 1800 BCE. Apparently, if no human migration occurred, there would be no anticipation of domesticated horse movement. Some migrations had transpired much later.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ A.D. Pusalker, *The Vedic Age*, p.194.

⁶⁷ A.D. Pusalker, "Horse in Protohistoric India", *Munshi Indological Felicitation Volume*, Bombay, 1963, p.237-41.

⁶⁸ E. Macay, *Further Excavation at Mohenjodaro*, Vol.1, p.339.

⁶⁹ C.J. Gadd, *Seals of Ancient Indian Style found at Ur*, pp.10-15.

⁷⁰ Rajat Pal, *Āryadigante Sindhusabhyatā*, p.246.

R.S. Sharma accepted the existence of horse near 5000 B.C.E. In *Rgveda*, 34 ribbed horses are mentioned.⁷¹ According to most of the scholars, it might be the Arabian 36 ribbed horse scientifically known as *Equus Caballus* Linn. However, it might be an ass from ‘Namadikas’ species because sometimes these animals are also mentioned as ‘Aśva’. Later the word ‘Gardava’ may be created to differentiate these animals from strong and faster animals i.e. horses as discussed by Bhagavan Singh in his *The Vedic Harappans*. Two different kinds of horses are mentioned in *Rgveda* also.⁷²

According to two researchers from Bangladesh, the English word ‘Ass’ is believed to be derived from the Sanskrit term ‘Aśva’. The progression is traced as Sanskrit ‘Aśva’ to Latin ‘Asinus’, then to Old English ‘Assa’, and finally to Modern English ‘Ass’. The *Rgveda* mentions two types of horses, providing evidence of their use.⁷³ For instance, one verse states that riding a slow-moving horse, a person conquers the hidden treasures of enemy.⁷⁴ Another verse calls upon Indra to come with a horse as fast as the wind to defeat a dry or barren force.⁷⁵

1.5.1. The Cemetery H culture: The idea that the Aryans who destroyed the Indus cities were represented by the Cemetery H culture at Harappa⁷⁶ has been challenged by B.B. Lal on three points:

1. Structurally, the Cemetery H culture is distinct from other Harappan cemeteries. This indicates that the Harappan culture was no longer present when the people associated with the Cemetery H culture arrived and settled at the site.

⁷¹ RV-1.62.18.

⁷² अविप्रे चिद्वयो दधदनाशुना चिदर्वता। इन्द्रो जेता हितं धनम्॥ (6.45.2); मुषाय सूर्यं कवे चक्रमीशान ओजसा। वह शुषाय वधं कुत्सं व्यासास्याशैः॥ (1.175.4)

⁷³ RV-6.45.2; 1.175.4.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* - 6.45.2.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* - 1.175.4.

⁷⁶ M. Wheeler, *The Dawn of Civilization*, ed. Stuart Piggott, p.249.

2. The physical traits of the individuals from Cemetery H align with those of the Proto-Australoid and Armenoid groups, not with the northern steppe populations, who are commonly linked to the Aryans.

3. The unique black-on-red pottery characteristic of Cemetery H has been found at only two other sites in the Bahawalpur region. This type of ware is absent in the Sarasvatī, Gaṅgā, and Yamunā valleys, where the Aryans are believed to have had a significant presence.⁷⁷

1.5.2. The Painted grey ware people: According to B.B. Lal, the people known as the Painted Grey Ware People were the Aryans, who ended the Indus Valley civilisation. The artisans who created this gear engaged in agriculture, cattle raising, and sporadic hunting while residing in mud or wattle-and-daub homes. A horse has special significance among them. Although iron also gained popularity, as evidenced by the iron-slugs found in the upper reaches of era II at Hastinapur, their tools and weapons were fashioned of copper.⁷⁸ It is quite improbable that the Aryans, even if they were to replace the Indus Valley Civilisation, could stay unchanged and homogeneous for over a millennium. Aside from this, neither Mohenjo-Dāro nor Harappan, the two most significant locations of the Indus Valley Civilisation, exhibit Painted Grey ceramics. Therefore, it is not definite that the Indus Valley towns were destroyed by the producers of Painted Grey ceramics. In actuality, the evidence that is now available indicates that these towns had already vanished by the time the Painted Grey ware appeared.⁷⁹ According to G. M. Bongard-Levin, there was a significant time gap between the fall of the Harappan Civilisation's major centres and the arrival of the people who represented the 'Painted Grey Ware

⁷⁷ B.B. Lal, "Protohistoric Investigation", *Ancient India* (Silver Jubilee Number, 1953), p.88; M.S. Vats, *Excavations at Harappa*, Vol.I, p.203 ff.

⁷⁸ B.B. Lal, "The Painted Grey Ware of the Upper Gangetic Basin", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1950), 89-102.

⁷⁹ Buddha Prakash, *R̥gveda and Indus Valley Civilization*, p.72.

Culture'. He maintains that internal factors, not the Vedic Aryan invasion, were the cause of the Harappan Civilisation's downfall.⁸⁰ It has been very convincingly claimed by D.D. Kosambi that the Pūrus or the Kurus should be connected to the Painted Grey Ware. The pottery in question confounds archaeologists, as labelling it as Aryan contradicts the fact that other undeniably Aryan sites yield no evidence of the Grey Painted Ware. The primary issue is remedied if the Grey Painted Ware is designated as Pūru pottery rather than just Aryan.⁸¹

1.5.3. The Creators of Copper Hoards in the Gangetic Basin: Heine-Geldern suggests that the copper hoards found in the Gangetic basin signify the advance of the Aryans. According to him, a migration from southwestern Iran or Transcaucasia reached India between 1200 and 1000 B.C., passing through the area southeast of the Caspian Sea, with traces identifiable at Tepe Hissar near Damghan and Turang Tepe near Asterabad. This migration originated from the same region where historians believe the majority of the Indo-Aryan people were located during the 15th to 14th centuries B.C. At this time, some of the more adventurous Aryan groups ventured south and southwest, ultimately gaining control over the Mitanni kingdom and parts of Syria. Therefore, it seems plausible to suggest that this migration represented Aryans moving from the Near East to India. They may have been displaced by a powerful ethnic movement, which began in the Balkans or lower Danube and led to the destruction of the Hittite Kingdom around 1200 B.C.⁸² However, this theory is questionable for several reasons. First and foremost, B.B. Lal has demonstrated that copper artifacts such as harpoons, antennae swords, shouldered axes, and

⁸⁰ V. Balabushevich, "Some Problem of History of India", *Papers presented by the U.S.S.R. Delegation to the XXVI International Congress of Orientalists*, 1963, p.3.

⁸¹ D.D. Kosambi, "The Autochthonous Element in the Mahābhārata", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 84, 1964, p.44.

⁸² Robert Heine-Geldern, "The Coming of the Aryans and the End of the Harappan Civilization", *Man*, Vol. 56, 1956, p.136-39.

anthropomorphic figures, discovered from Bahadarabad in Saharanpur district (U.P.) to Kallur in Andhra Pradesh, are distinct from similar items found in Eurasia.⁸³ Second, although Bosch-Gimpera⁸⁴ has reaffirmed the notion in recent years, Marija Gimbutas⁸⁵ has skilfully refuted the idea that the Aryans originated in the Balkans and the Danube basin and then expanded to the west and east.

Heine-Geldern's theory is challenged by carbon 14 determinations, which show that the Indus Valley Culture ended around 2000 B.C. at Lothal and 1700 B.C. at Mohenjo-Dāro.⁸⁶ However, Heine-Geldern believes that the migrations of the Aryans occurred in 1200 and 1000 B.C., long after the Indus Valley urban centres disappeared.

1.5.4. The Users of Ghul Ware: According to Fairservis, new pottery types that resemble Jhukar-style ware and are named Ghul Ware are thought to be the Aryan destroyers of the Indus Valley Civilisation. This pottery, which resembles Jhukar pottery, can be found at Dabar Kot, Moghul Kala, and Kaudain. The indications of a Jhukar settlement in Balochistan around Gomal crossing imply that the crossing was utilised by foreigners towards the end of the Palaeolithic era.⁸⁷ These goods provide excellent candidates to serve as indicators of the Aryan occupation era.

⁸³ B.B. Lal, "Further Copper Hoards from the Gangetic Basin and a Review of the Problem", *Ancient India*, No. 7, 1951, p.35.

⁸⁴ P. Bosch-Gimpera, *Les Indo-Europeens, problemes archeologiques*, French translation by R. Lautier, Paris, 1961.

⁸⁵ Marija Gimbutas, "The Indo-Europeans: Archaeological Problems", *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 65, No. 4, August 1963, pp.815-35.

⁸⁶ B.B. Lal, "A Picture emerges: An Assessment of the Carbon -14 Datings of the Proto-historic Cultures of the Indo-Pakistan Sub-Continent", *Ancient India*, Nos. 18-19, 1962-63, pp.208-221.

⁸⁷ Walter A. Fairservis, "The Chronology of the Harappan Civilization and the Aryan Invasion- A Recent Archaeological Research", *Man*, Vol. 56, 1956, 153-56.

1.5.5. The Migrations of Horse-Riding Nomads: Stuart Piggott attributes the fall of Indus cities to nomadic incursions. Perhaps they are the Aryans. The similarities between the copper tools, beads, and personal and portable items found in Jhukar, Shahi Tump, the last stage of Mohenjo-Dāro, Anau III, Hissar III, and other locations, according to him, are evidence of a very homogeneous semi-nomadic society. Accordingly, he views these sites as emblematic of a widespread eastward migration of humans during the initial stages of the second millennium B.C. It is now widely acknowledged that the nomadic lifestyle of Central Asia is much more recent than previously thought. The equestrian and warrior-based nomadism of the East European and Asiatic Steppes only emerged around 1000 B.C., roughly two thousand years after civilisations had already developed in the Near East and the Indus Valley. Therefore, it is overly speculative to suggest that nomadic horsemen swept out of the steppes into Iran and India, bringing an end to the Indus Valley Civilisation during the early part of the second millennium B.C.⁸⁸

1.5.6. Floods and Seismic Activity as Causes of the Indus Civilisation's Decline: The collapse of the Indus Civilisation was caused by floods and earth movements. The destruction of these cities, according to M.R. Sahni, was caused by floods.⁸⁹ In conclusion, Raikes says that this culture was destroyed because of the uplift and related earth movements.⁹⁰

1.5.7. Sindhu-Sarasvatī Civilisation: Around 2,600 sites of varying sizes, ranging from 0.05 to 15 hectares, have been discovered near the Sindhu-Sarasvatī basin (as noted by G.L. Possehl, *The Indus Age: The Beginnings*, 2000). Most of these sites are located along the banks of the Sarasvatī River,

⁸⁸ Buddha Prakash, *R̥gveda and Indus Valley Civilization*, p.81.

⁸⁹ M.R. Sahni, *Man in Evolution*, pp. 153-54.

⁹⁰ Robert L. Raikes, "The End of the Ancient Cities of the Indus", *American Anthropologist*, Vol.66, No.2, April, 1964, p. 296.

which is now known as the Ghaggra-Hakra River. Four of the six largest sites are near the Sarasvatī River in India: 1. Rakhigarhi (224 hectares), 2. Lakhmirwala (225 hectares), 3. Gurnikalan (144 hectares), and 4. Hasanpur (100 hectares). In Later Vedic literature, the Sarasvatī is frequently referred to as the purest river and is sometimes described as an underground stream. According to the *Padmapūrana*⁹¹ and *Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa*⁹², the Sarasvatī River becomes invisible near ‘Vinaśana,’ a location near Kurukshetra. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* also identifies this area as a sacred site. The *Baudhayana Śrautasūtra* indicates that the eastern side of this site, where the Sarasvatī becomes hidden, marks the beginning of Āryavarta.⁹³ Researchers Yashpal, B.B. Lal, and Gupta have attempted to locate the lost riverbeds of the Sarasvatī and Sutlej using LANDSAT satellite images. Yashpal suggested that the dried bed of the Ghaggar is the lost Sarasvatī and noted that the Sutlej and Yamunā were the two main tributaries of the Ghaggra-Hakra River. Possehl and Mitchel also mentioned that Arel Stein identified this dried riverbed as the lost Sarasvatī in 1942.⁹⁴

1.5.8. Plate tectonic theory: Researchers have also pointed to the collision of the Indian and Eurasian plates as a fundamental explanation for Sarasvatī’s invisibility. Numerous geological changes resulted from it, including several course modifications in the Yamunā and Sutlej, a significant earthquake in Dhola Vira, Hastinapur, and an increase in sea level between Gujarat and Dwarika. Raikes discovered similarities between the sand samples taken from Kalibangan and Yamunā. He said that the Yamunā was a significant tributary of the Sarasvatī that had long before passed through Kalibangan before turning

⁹¹ Padma P.-15.148; 18.127.

⁹² Tā.Br.-25.10.16.

⁹³ Bau.Ś.Sū.- 1.1.2.12.

⁹⁴ G.L. Possehl, *Indus Age: The beginnings*, 1999; Mitchell, *The Indus River: A study of the effects of Partition*, 1967.

east to meet the Ganges. The mineral makeup of the course, greyish sand soil in Kalibangan is strikingly comparable to that of the Yamunā riverbed today.⁹⁵ The Yamunā flowed in four distinct directions: westward, meeting Sarasvatī between 2500-1700 BCE; eastward, meeting Ganges between 1750-1100 BCE; westward, meeting Sindhu between 1100-500 BCE; and eastward, meeting Ganges between 500-100 BCE. About 800 BCE, Kalibangan began to deteriorate. Climate changes were also brought about by tectonic collisions. According to several studies, Rajasthan was a chilly, wet, and humid region up to 8000 B.C.E. This region began to cultivate crops around 3000 B.C.E. Up to 1700 BCE, there was a lot of rainfall in this area.⁹⁶

According to researchers at the Bhaba Atomic Research Centre, the Sarasvatī River had two enormous tributaries, the Yamunā and Sutlej, and was a flourishing river around 8500 years ago when glacial water began to emerge near Manasa Lake. However, Yamunā and Sutlej shifted their routes as a result of the above-mentioned geological changes, which made it dry. According to Brigent and Remond Alchin,⁹⁷ human habitation was fast growing around Ghaggra and swiftly declining near Hakra in the late Harappan age. Additionally, Thakuran notes that towns were shifting from the south-west to the northeast during the late Harappan era.

The differences between Vedic and Harappan archaeological artefacts are refuted by B.B. Lal in his book *The Earliest Civilisation of South Asia*. Nowadays, the majority of scholars are attempting to recognise the Indus Valley Civilisation as the Sindhu-Sarasvatī Civilisation. There have been discovered about 700 Harappan era sites, according to S.P. Gupta in his book *The Lost Sarasvatī and the Indus Civilisation*. In the vicinity of the Indus Basin, less than

⁹⁵ Robert L. Raikes, *Kalibangan: Death from natural causes*, 1968.

⁹⁶ P.K. Das, *The Monsoons*, 1998.

⁹⁷ Bridget and Raymond Allchin, *The Rise of Civilization in India and Pakistan*, pp. 316-320.

100 sites were discovered. Furthermore, according to him, the Sindhu-Sarasvatī Civilisation is a significant stage of Vedic civilisation. Numerous studies indicate that the Sarasvatī River dried up about 1800 B.C.E., and the Sultan Tej shifted its course to flow into Indus, causing several floods in this region. Certain sites along the Indus River may be destroyed by the floods.

1.5.9 Antithesis against AIT or AMT: According to AIT or AMT, Aryans arrived in India about 1500 BCE. Nonetheless, the Sarasvatī River is mentioned several times in Vedic and Puranic writings. Additionally, studies assert that the Sarasvatī River completely dried up around 1800 B.C.E. How, therefore, could a group of people who are migrating or have invaded this area call a river that dried up 300 years ago the “greatest river”? How could they have known a dried-up river was so great? And why did the sages build their hermitages and hallowed sanctuaries along the riverbank? Neither the AIT nor the AMT are supported by these questions. Numerous animal sacrifices like Kalibangan and sacrificial fire altars in the Harappan sites between Sarasvatī and Dṛṣḍvatī suggest that the Vedic Aryans may have lived at these locations. These data permit us to acknowledge that the Vedic Aryans and Harappans may have shared a river basin with neighbours, the Sindhu-Sarasvatī. Perhaps the Aryans settled on the bank of the Sarasvatī River, while the non-Vedic peoples settled on the banks of the Indus.⁹⁸

1.6. Cultivation and Farming

Several Indologists, like Childe and Winternitz, have cited Aryan civilisation as a pastoral way of setting themselves apart from the Harappan people. Nonetheless, the *R̥gveda* has a number of prayers on farming and horticulture.

⁹⁸ Rajat Pal, *Āryadigante Sindhusabhyatā*, p.192.

The *Rgveda* contains numerous references to agriculture and farming. For instance: In 1.23.15, the phrase ‘गोभिर्यवं न चकृषत्’ associates farming with barley cultivation. In 1.117.21, the Aśvins are invoked in the line ‘यवं वृकेणाश्विना वपन्तेषु दुहन्ता मनुषाय दत्ता’, which describes them sowing barley and benefiting mankind. In 1.176.2, ‘यवं न चर्कृषदृषा’, again speaks of the act of sowing barley. In 2.14.11, Indra is offered barley in ‘तमूर्दरं न पृणता यवेनेन्द्रं’. In 4.57.4 furnishes ‘शुनं कृषतु लाङ्गलम्’, highlighting the use of a plough in farming. In 5.53.13 refers to seeds and crops with the phrase ‘धान्यं बीजं वहध्वे’. In 8.20.19 ‘गाय गा इव चर्कृषत्’, the act of ploughing is compared to the movement of cows. In 8.22.6 also mentions sowing barley with the line ‘यवं वृकेण कर्षथः’. In 10.34.13 offers guidance to avoid gambling and focus on farming with ‘अक्षैर्मा दीव्यः कृषिमित् कृषस्व’. In 10.94.13, the sowing of seeds is mentioned as ‘वपन्तो वीजमिव धान्याकृतः’. In 10.117.7 speaks of a farmer using a plough to cultivate barley with ‘कृषन्नित्फाल आशितं कृणोति यवन्नध्वानमप’. Lastly, 10.146.6 refers to a prosperous agrarian community with ‘बहन्नामकृषीवलाम्’.

The term ‘कृष्टयः’ is explained by Sāyaṇa as meaning ‘people’ and may have derived from a term linked to farming. In the *Rgveda*, hymn 1.110 extensively discusses farming and the use of the plough (Lāṅgala). Sāyaṇa also interprets the word ‘अर्यः’ in 1.33.3 as coming from the root ‘ऋ’, meaning ‘to cultivate’ or ‘to farm’, connecting ‘अर्यः’ to farming and the Vaiśya occupation.

1.7. Cremation and Burials

While the Aryans predominantly practiced cremation, they also had a tradition of burial. R.S. Sharma, in *In Search of the Aryans*, presents various pieces of evidence from the *Rgveda* regarding the burial and cremation practices of the Vedic Aryans. Both the *Rgveda* and the *Atharvaveda* refer to an

underground dwelling for the deceased.⁹⁹ Additionally, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* describes the construction of a four-cornered monument or house for the dead for the Aryans, while rounded monument was prescribed for the Asuras.¹⁰⁰ Same book also states about the burials of the remains.¹⁰¹ Two types of graves are found in all Harappan sites. They are divided into two categories: Cemetery R-37 and Cemetery H. It is acknowledged that the R-37 sites represent the initial Harappan burial sites. To what extent those foreign invaders who were Aryans are thought to have established the Cemetery H sites. Parts of dead bodies can be found at these 2000–1400 BCE locations. Conversely, there is no indication of cremation in Harappan graves. To demonstrate that the Cemetery H sites are Vedic Aryan, only this piece of evidence is offered. M.S. Vats, in *Excavation at Harappa I*, reports discovering nearly 175 sites containing animal remains, which he interprets as post-cremation burials. He also identifies similar burials in regions near Balochistan, attributing them to the Middle or Late Harappan period. In contrast, J. Marshall, in *Mohenjo-Dāro and the Indus Civilisation* (Vol I), notes that several symbols associated with the Indus civilisation have been uncovered near those post-cremation burials from the Chalcolithic period in Balochistan. R.S. Sharma suggests that these Cemetery H burials provide archaeological evidence that supports the Aryan invasion theory. He presents two significant pieces of evidence from the *R̥gveda* to support his claim: ‘मो षु वरुण मृण्मयं राजन्वहं गमम् मृला सुक्षत्र मृतयः ।’¹⁰² ; ‘अजो भागस्तपसा तं तपस्व तं ते शोचिस्तपतु तं ते अर्चि ।’¹⁰³ Archaeological investigations have also revealed later Vedic civilisation, which is associated with the Painted Grey Ware (PGW) period, primarily located in the Gaṅgā-Yamunā Doab. Sites from this

⁹⁹ RV-7.89.1; AV-5.30.14

¹⁰⁰ Ś.Br.-13.8.1.1.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* -13.8.3.2.

¹⁰² RV -7.89.1.

¹⁰³ RV -10.16.4.

era are believed to have been occupied for approximately 100 to 300 years, with inhabitants likely living in wattle-and-daub houses.

This indicates that the later Vedic people maintained a settled lifestyle and were transitioning from a pastoral existence to an agrarian society. They were able to produce surplus food and grains, which supported a structured authority comprising kings and priests to protect and manage their community.

Regardless of its origin, cremation was used in conjunction with burial by the Vedic people. But it grew to be associated more with the Vedic Indians, and it is likely that the ancestors of Iran also practiced it. Most Pre-Aryan people, including the Harappans, buried their dead. Harappan Cemetery H (c. 2000–1400 BC) has partial burials, a custom thought to have originated with the invaders. It is evident from the *R̥gveda* that both cremation and burial were usual. Renou considers it hard to conclude if practices like as cremation, the gathering and interment of charred bones in a vessel, rituals related to impurity, funeral rites, etc., are Indo-European.¹⁰⁴ It is questionable if cremation predominated in the Indian subcontinent from pre-Vedic periods. According to John Marshall, it was typical throughout the affluent era of the Indus civilisation.¹⁰⁵ He also claims that there is very little evidence of how the corpses were disposed of in Mohenjo-Dāro.¹⁰⁶ He further states that there are 110 pieces of evidence regarding the disposal of the dead during the peak of the Indus civilisation.¹⁰⁷ These conflicting statements challenge Marshall's assertion that cremation was prevalent in the mature phase of the Indus civilisation. Vats reports having discovered 176 post-cremation burials at Harappa. Of these, 175 contained only animal bones, while a single burial pot

¹⁰⁴ Renou, *Vedic India*, pp. 118-19.

¹⁰⁵ John Marshall, *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, Vol. 1, Arthur Probsthain, London, 1931, p. 89.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

held some remains of an unburned human tibia.¹⁰⁸ Additionally, human bones found in graves in Balochistan¹⁰⁹ suggest that post-cremation burials also occurred in Harappa.

It is important to note that instances of post-cremation burials in Balochistan during the Chalcolithic phase are found only in areas that exhibit the characteristic pottery of the Indus culture.¹¹⁰ In regions like Sind and Punjab, post-cremation burial pots appear towards the end of the Indus civilisation, a trend that may also apply to Balochistan due to its proximity to the Indus region. Early Vedic texts mention the practice of burying bones after cremation.¹¹¹ The Śrautasūtras and the Gr̥hyasūtras outline procedures for collecting bones, while the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*¹¹² prescribes the burial of these bones and the construction of a ‘Śmaśāna’ (a tumulus) over them.

Comparisons indicate similarities in how kurgans were constructed in southern Russia, southern Ukraine, and the Volga region, a practice that predates the earliest Vedic texts. Both the *Ṛgveda* and the *Atharvaveda* indicate that animals were commonly cremated alongside human bodies. For instance, the funeral rites in the *Ṛgveda*¹¹³ specify that a goat was burned with the deceased, while the *Atharvaveda*¹¹⁴ mentions the cremation of a working ox with the dead person. Additionally, Homer refers to the sacrifice of sheep, cattle, horses, dogs,

¹⁰⁸ M.S. Vats, *Excavations at Harappa*, Vol.- 1, Government of India, New Delhi, 1940, pp. 254-71, table on p. 252.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 253, fn.

¹¹⁰ John Marshall, *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, Vol. 1, Arthur Probsthain, London, 1931, p. 90.

¹¹¹ RV-7. 89.1, in *Ṛgveda Samhita*, Vaidik Samshodhan Mandal, Poona, 1933-35; *Atharva Veda*, 5. 30.14, in *Atharvaveda Samhita*, tr. W.D. Whitney, Harvard Oriental Series, Harvard, 1905.

¹¹² Ś.Br., XIII. 8.1.4.

¹¹³ RV- 10. 16.4.

¹¹⁴ AV-12. 2. 48.

and even humans, with their carcasses being burned alongside the body of a chief.¹¹⁵

1.8. Rakhigarhi DNA Study has debunked the Aryan invasion theory

In the Indian state of Haryana, the village of Rakhigarhi is located 150 km northwest of Delhi in the Hissar District. During the second and third millennia BCE, a mature Harappan town was located there. Following the discovery of further mounds in January 2014, it surpassed Mohenjo-Dāro (300 Hectares) by about 50 hectares, making it the greatest site of the Indus Valley Civilisation. Rakhigarhi's approximate size has been estimated to be 550 hectares. In 2014, the discovery of radiocarbon dating, which estimated the settlements to have been around 4470 B.C.E., or roughly 6500 years ago. Thirty-three burials were found over the four-year excavation period, with six of them discovered during the 2014–2015 digging season. The necropolis, which dates to the Mature Harappan Period, which spanned from 2500 BC to 2000 BC, spreads across a 1-hectare area that has been farmed for a considerable amount of time by the current Rakhigarhi villagers. The DNA of the Rakhigarhi ladies is not an Aryan gene, or R1a1, according to Prof. Shinde and his colleagues at Deccan College. Experts in archaeology claim that the 4000-year-old 'I4411' woman's DNA shares similarities with the Irula tribes of southern India's Nil Mountains, who are essentially of Dravidian descent. The 'coffin burials' of Harappan R37 graves, which differ from the 'Urn burials' of cemetery H, are akin to the 2500-year-old burials at Rakhigarhi.¹¹⁶

V.S. Shinde, an archaeologist from the Deccan College Post Graduate and Research Institute in Pune, led a study that challenges the theory of mass

¹¹⁵ *The Iliad*, Tr. E.V. Rieu, Book XXIII, pp. 413-417.

¹¹⁶ Kai Friese. "An Inconvenient Truth", *India Today*, September 10, 2018.

migration into South Asia by Steppe pastoralists or ancient Iranian farmers. The ancient DNA evidence from Rakhigarhi does not support the idea that these groups significantly contributed to the ancestry of the Harappan population. While there are traces of Iranian lineage in the DNA, these genes are from 11,000 to 12,000 years ago, long before the rise of the Harappan civilisation. Since around 7000 BCE, there is no genetic evidence of South Asian populations mixing with Central Asian groups. Shinde further highlighted that indigenous people of South Asia were responsible for developing Vedic culture.¹¹⁷ The research indicates that Southeast Asian hunter-gatherers evolved into independent farming societies and were the founders of the Harappan civilisation.¹¹⁸ In a major challenge to the famous ‘Aryan Invasion’ thesis, an Indo-US team of experts presented scientific data from the Harappan era on Friday, arguing that such a large-scale migration from Central Asia to India did not occur. The study, published in *Cell*, one of the world’s top journals, not only refutes the Aryan migration idea, but also demonstrates that Southeast Asian hunter-gatherers evolved into farming communities of their own and were the founders of the Harappan civilisation.

The evidence comes from DNA analysis of a skeleton of a woman buried in Rakhigarhi around 4,000 to 5,000 years ago. Rakhigarhi, located near Hisar in Haryana, is the largest known site of the Indus Valley Civilisation. Researchers compared the DNA from this sample with those from 11 other skeletons from around the world, along with existing scientific data, to form a detailed understanding of the complex migration patterns in Asia several thousand years ago.

¹¹⁷ V. Shinde *et.al.*, “An Ancient Harappan Genome lacks Ancestry from Steppe Pastoralists or Indian Farmer”, *Cell*, 179, 2019, pp.- 729-735. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cell.2019.08.048>

¹¹⁸ Reported by Kalyan Ray, *New DNA study challenges Aryan invasion theory*, Deccan Herald, 7th September 2019.

V.S. Shinde, an archaeologist from the Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute in Pune and one of the lead authors of the study, explained that the DNA results completely reject the theory that Steppe pastoralists or ancient Iranian farmers contributed to the ancestry of the Harappan people. This evidence refutes the idea of large-scale human migration into South Asia during or before the Harappan period.

The DNA samples from Rakhigarhi do show traces of genes with Iranian lineage. However, these genes date back 11,000 to 12,000 years, long before the rise of the Harappan civilisation. From around 7000 BCE onward, there is no evidence of any mixing between South Asian and Central Asian genes, indicating a lack of genetic exchange between these populations during the period leading up to and including the Harappan era. “Research showed the Vedic culture was developed by indigenous people of South Asia,” Shinde asserted.

The knowledge of agriculture in the region was developed indigenously, as prehistoric hunter-gatherers learned to cultivate crops on their own. However, researchers noted that this does not discount the significance of later population movements in the spread of farming economies. Despite the findings, many scholars remain hesitant to completely dismiss the Aryan invasion theory, acknowledging that while the study presents new avenues for exploration, it does not fully resolve the longstanding debate.

“Rakhigarhi predates the Aryan period and is not directly relevant to it”, remarked a prominent historian, not involved in the study, who preferred to remain anonymous. The origins of Indo-European languages continue to pose a challenge to these new findings. “Our study debunked the Aryan invasion theory, but the issue of language remains unresolved”, said Neeraj Rai, a scientist at the Birbal Sahani Institute of Paleobotany in Lucknow and a co-author of the research. Rai also suggested that the study hints at an ‘Out of India

Theory' around 2500-3000 BCE, based on related research by the same team, published in *Science* journal.

The DNA of the woman from Rakhigarhi was found to match that of 11 ancient individuals from present-day Iran and Turkmenistan, at sites known to have exchanged goods with the Indus Valley Civilisation. These individuals shared a unique genetic mix, with ancestry linked to both Southeast Asian hunter-gatherers and an Iranian-related lineage specific to South Asia.

The Indus Valley Civilisation, which flourished from 2600 to 1900 BCE across northwestern South Asia, was among the world's first large-scale urban societies. However, many questions about this ancient civilisation remain unanswered.

Since 1947, numerous theories have emerged concerning the identity of the Aryans, often reconciled by suggesting multiple waves of new arrivals who left distinct traces of their material culture in northwestern India between 1500 and 500 BCE.¹¹⁹ While pinpointing the earliest remains from the R̥gvedic period is difficult, the Gāndhāra graves may mark the arrival of the earliest Aryans around 1800 BCE. Furthermore, the discovery of Painted Grey Ware (PGW) sites in eastern Punjab, Haryana, western Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and nearby parts of Pakistan—amounting to 315 sites—indicates the large-scale settlement of new populations between approximately 1000 and 500 BCE, particularly along the Upper Ganges and Sutlej basins, as well as in the Ghaggar valley.¹²⁰

More recent explorations have uncovered nearly 300 additional PGW sites along the Sarasvatī and Dṛṣadvatī rivers in Haryana, suggesting that the total number of such sites might exceed 500. These settlements appear to have been inhabited for two to three centuries.¹²¹ Additionally, two recent genetic studies,

¹¹⁹ B.B. Lal. 'Protohistoric Investigation', *Ancient India*, No. 9, 97.

¹²⁰ On the basis of Vibha Tripathi, *The Painted Grey Ware*, Appendix I.

¹²¹ R.S. Sharma. *Śūdras in Ancient India*. p.27-28.

including one published in *The American Journal of Human Genetics*, lend support to the Indo-Aryan migration theory.¹²² These studies suggest that about 1900 years ago, societal mating patterns in India changed dramatically, with people beginning to marry only within their own ethnic or socioeconomic groups. The funeral sacrifices at Sinstashta resembled sacrificial ceremonies from the *Rgveda*.

Some current DNA (L, J2, etc.) with western origins and, more recently, some DNA from the western rims of the Indus area (Shahr-I Soksita on the boundary between Eastern Iran and Afghanistan) indicate the near-eastern impact. The development of native agriculture in the eastern Gangetic plains, including mung beans and legumes, and later rice hybrids (along with the native water buffalo) (2500–2000 BCE), whose names are neither Indo-Aryans nor Dravidian nor Munda, contrasts sharply with this strong ‘Iranian’ influence on the Indus region. Rather, they originate from a vanished northern Indian substrate that Masica refers to as ‘Language X’. The fresh information on climate change that Gayatri Kathayat *et al.* discovered last year after extracting ice cores from Himalayan caves has made it possible to link dates of significant shifts in civilisation, the early Vedic period, etc. with changes in climate. Crucially, they mesh nicely with the textual information.¹²³ Crucially, the Vedic scriptures include no proof of the mature Indus civilisation with cities (2600–1900 BCE)—no cities, no evidence of international commerce, no seals, and no mention of any of the main Harappan faiths. There is absolutely no correlation or connection between the Vedic scriptures and the Harappan culture. One of the many arguments in favour of dating the Vedas beyond 1900 BCE. The amount of DNA data that is becoming available has completely changed our

¹²² Michael Balter, *American Journal of Human Genetics*, 8 Aug, 2013; David W. Anthonng, *The Horse the Wheel and Language*, p. 375.

¹²³ M. Witzel, “Early ‘Aryans’ and their neighbours outside and inside India”, p.2 ff.

understanding of the prehistory of the Americas, Europe, and Africa. Furthermore, for the Subcontinent of South Asia.

Several theories address the presence of Ancient North Indian (ANI) and Ancient South Indian (ASI) genes in India's population. North Indians predominantly have ANI genes, linked to Aryan ancestry, while South Indians mostly have ASI genes, associated with Dravidian ancestry. However, some findings contradict this pattern. A National Institutes of Health report shows that the Meghwals, a Scheduled Caste from Rajasthan, possess 60.3% ANI genes, indicating that caste did not strictly determine genetic mixing in northern India. In contrast, the Velamas, an upper-caste group from Andhra Pradesh, have 54.3% ANI genes. This suggests genetic amalgamation was more rigid in southern India. Current ancestry profiles of the average Indian reflect 12% Aryan, 36% First Indians, and 52% Indus Valley heritage, showing a lesser Aryan impact compared to Pre-Aryan groups.

1.9. Vedic References to Iranian Migration into India

The *Ṛgveda* and the *Avesta*, often considered sister texts, reflect the activities of the earliest Vedic and Avestan speakers in the Indo-Iranian subcontinent during the Middle to Late Bronze Ages. Several episodes connect these two traditions, with one prominent figure being Viṣṭāśpa, an important ally and patron of Zarathuṣṭra. Viṣṭāśpa appears in three progressively older contexts: first, as the father of Darius I in one of his inscriptions; second, in the Avestan texts; and third, in the first Maṇḍala of the *Ṛgveda*.

The third mention of Viṣṭāśpa involves the son of a merchant, who features in a trade-related context that helps approximate the period of both Viṣṭāśpa and the *Ṛgvedic* poet who opposed him. This poet, Kakṣivān, composed hymns to the gods for various chiefs, receiving valuable gifts in return. Meanwhile, his merchant father gained profits through trading surplus

goods. The family, seemingly displaced in the Sindh region, may have originally come from Viṣṭāśpa's homeland in southeastern Iran and likely traveled along the Makran Coast to reach the coastal regions of the lower Indus Valley.¹²⁴

Kakṣivān,¹²⁵ who expressed resentment toward Iṣṭāśva (or Viṣṭāśpa), accompanied his merchant father on a journey to the lower Indus Basin. There, he composed several 'Dānastūti' hymns in praise of a local Asura chief, Bhavya Svanaya, who ruled near the Indus River.¹²⁶ In return, the chief gifted him lavish rewards, including chariots, red Sindhian horses, gold, cattle, slaves, servants, and richly adorned maidens, which Kakṣivān promptly handed over to his father. This scenario, explored in greater detail elsewhere, reflects a time when marginal trade exchanges were still taking place on the Indo-Iranian subcontinent before large urban centers disappeared by the end of the third millennium B.C. Based on these events, the hymns likely date to the early second millennium B.C., though the connection with Viṣṭāśpa may suggest a timeline within the first half of the 18th century B.C.¹²⁷

1.10. Ancient Indians

The prehistoric and proto-historic culture of India is insufficient, claims Dr. A. N. Chandra. In order to ascertain the precise beginning of prehistoric Indian culture or human history, he also depends on the relic materials. According to him, the oldest stone tools that have been found may be traced back about 500,000 years, making them the sole tangible relics from such a far-off era. In order to explain the slow evolution of civilisations, he also identifies three primary physical phases: 1. the original condition, 2. the evolution process, and 3. the evolved phase. One must evaluate the initial condition based on the pre-

¹²⁴ R.N. Nandi, *R̥gveda and Its Historical Setting*, p. 37

¹²⁵ RV-1.122.9, 13-15.

¹²⁶ RV-1.126.1-2.

¹²⁷ R.N. Nandi, *R̥gveda and Its Historical Setting*, p. 38

Soan, early Soan, late Soan, or other comparable cultures discovered around the country. With a potential margin of error, the early stone tools discovered in the river Soan terraces seem to have been connected to around 400,000 years ago. Thus, this subcontinent has been shown to have a distinct record of human habitation during the Pleistocene, a fact that geologists have confirmed.¹²⁸

The process of human evolution remains largely unknown, and the exact timeline for the fully developed Indus Civilisation, particularly its Chalcolithic phase, is still indeterminate.¹²⁹ Herbert Risley categorised Indian society into seven groups based on their anthropological features: 1) Turko-Iranian, 2) Indo-Aryan, 3) Scytho-Dravidian, 4) Aryo-Dravidian, 5) Mongolo-Dravidian, 6) Mongoloid, and 7) Dravidian. He also ranked people as higher or lower born according to their nasal index. This type of classification helped embed the Aryan Invasion Theory in the minds of Western historians.

As Stephan Knapp noted, Western historians tend to view anything pre-Christian as heathen, barbaric, godless, or pagan, often tracing history back to Greece or Rome.¹³⁰ Their religious loyalties, Knapp argues, limit their intellectual perspective. However, modern genetic research challenges these traditional ethnological theories, showing that about 75% of people have diverse genetic makeups, and there is no significant genetic difference between individuals of different skin colors, such as black and white.

Contemporary genetic studies challenge the traditional ethnological assumptions of humankind. There is no genetic difference between persons with black and white skin tones, yet about 75% of people have distinct genes.

¹²⁸ D. N. Wadia, *Geology in India*.

¹²⁹ A. N. Chandra, *The Rig Vedic Culture and the Indus Valley Civilisation*, p. 16.

¹³⁰ S. Knapp, *Proof of Vedic culture's Global existence*, p. 272.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter delves into the origins, culture, and ethnological positioning of the Aryans in India, as well as the hostility toward Non-Aryan groups reflected in Vedic texts. Through a comparative analysis of the *Avesta* and the *Rgveda*, it explores the derivation and meaning of the term ‘Ārya,’ drawing on interpretations from historians like Herbert Walter Bailey. It also addresses the distinctions between Aryan and tribal communities, focusing on their cultural, technological, and economic developments. The views of scholars such as Wolfgang Schroeder, Wilhelm Brandenstein, Maria Gimbutas, and Gordon Childe are reviewed.

The chapter covers key theories, including the Aryan Migration Theory (AMT), Out of India Theory (OIT), and Aryan Invasion Theory (AIT), and examines the spread of Aryan culture as reflected in historical records. The analysis is further supported by comparing historical findings with references in Vedic literature. Recent DNA studies and new research on Aryan origin theories are also discussed. The chapter concludes by introducing indigenous Indian civilisations that existed prior to the rise of Aryan culture.

Chapter II

Non-Aryan India

2.1. Pre-Aryan and Non-Aryan Communities and their Introduction

According to the *Ṛgveda*, various indigenous communities and societies coexisted with the Ṛgvedic people. As the Ṛgvedic people interacted with these groups over time, the names of these communities gradually became more prominent in the texts. These pre-Vedic groups were sometimes identified by the regions they inhabited or their professions, though details about their lifestyles and occupations were often vague.

These groups have been broadly categorised based on their relationship with the Ṛgvedic people: some were antagonistic, some indifferent, and others possibly sympathetic. A few groups were openly hostile but significant enough to be mentioned in the Ṛgvedic texts. Others seemed neutral, as they were neither cooperative nor hostile towards the Ṛgvedic people. One group, however, stands out as more clearly defined:

2.1.1. The Dāsas and Dasyus: The Dāsas were presumably the only residents of various towns since they were affluent (*Ṛgveda*-8.40.6). (*Ṛgveda* -6.32.10) They owned enormous stretches of territory with no grazing land (6.47.20), and the forest was a haven for robbers from which the Dasyus lassoed unfortunate visitors (10.4.6). The Dāsas appeared to have control over water, which was perhaps the primary supply of drinking water that the Aryans desperately required, or they could have defended the dams that are crucial to agriculture (8.96.18). The Dāsas were influential, and the region that the Aryans entered into may have belonged to them. The Aryans were dismayed to discover themselves encircled by the Dāsas (10.22.8.). In *Sāmaveda*, a desire was expressed about

Dāsas, to take possession of them.¹ The Aryans regarded the Dāsas as sub-humans, hypocrites, devoid of virtue, adhering to distinct traditions, and refusing to conduct any ‘Vrata’.² This reflected in their ethnic and cultural differences. The Dasyus referenced here are almost certainly the same as the Daqyus mentioned in the Pārsī sacred texts and the Dahyas of the Behistun inscriptions, where the term is translated as ‘countries’ or ‘provinces’, likely signifying an external group, much like the Goim or Gentiles in Hebrew tradition. Though not entirely uncivilised, the Dasyus possessed cities and other structures indicative of at least a partial form of civilisation. However, the Aryans, having come from more temperate climates, ultimately proved stronger and overpowered them. Beyond the Dasyus, the Vedic Aryans encountered—or perhaps created—additional human enemies, some of whom may have been subsumed under the broader label of Dasyu, while others were assigned more specific names. Among these, the Rākṣasas were a particularly troublesome group, causing significant harm to the Aryans. Over time, their descendants reimagined the Rākṣasas as a mythical race of giants inhabiting the distant south. Another group, the Ugras, came to be viewed as the archetypal figures of cruelty and ferocity.³ The Piśācas, in later periods, were perceived as mischievous and playful demons. The Asuras, who were eventually demonised as evil spirits, were described in the Vedas in more concrete terms. For instance, one Vedic passage recounts how Indra, confronting the Asuras as they seized Dabhīti, burned their weapons in a sacred fire and enriched the Aryan prince with their cattle, horses, and chariots.⁴ The Dasyus were inherently hated as they

¹ SV-19.1.

² RV-2.20.7;10.22.8, 73.5.

³ According to the system of the mixed castes set forth in Manu (10.9), the ‘Ugra’ is fictionally sprung from a Kṣatriya male and a Śūdra woman.

⁴ Wilson’s *R̥gveda*, Vol. 2. pp. 245-246; F. Müller, Vol. 2. p.487. Asura, as afterwards noticed, means Lord. The giving of this name to a tribe is analogous to what we see in the case of Nāyaka, of a similar meaning (Dux,) applied to the aboriginal tribe of the Nāyakaḍās, east of Baroda.

were thought of as famine.⁵ The Aryans took delight in ransacking ninety-nine (or hundred?) Dāsa cities, demonstrating their military might and ability to sustain a sizable army (*R̥gveda*- 6.31.4, 6.43.1, 6.47.2, 7.99.5). The Aryans intended to exterminate them and wipe them off the face of the earth.⁶ This was undoubtedly overstated. Perhaps it was meant to be that these people would be subject to the Aryans. However, Dāsas proved to be formidable opponents. They were the most powerful foes the Aryans faced, and the actual fight was between them and the Dāsas.

Yadu and Turvaśa were the names of two Dāsas rulers.⁷ Among them were notable figures like as Navavastu, Namuci, Bṛhadratha, and Vaci, also known as Vati.⁸ The assertion of the Aryans claimed to be equal to the Dāsas, we might assume that the Dāsas were superior to the Aryans. The Aryans reacted by stripping the Dāsas of their name, Arya.⁹ Prof. R.S. Sharma distinguishes between the Dāsas and Dasyus, with the former mentioning sixty-one times and the latter eighty-four times in the *R̥gveda*. While the *R̥gvedic* Aryans were openly hostile to the Dasyus, they were less so towards the Dāsas. thus. According to him, the Dāsas may have been an advance guard of mixed Indo-Aryan peoples who migrated to India, and over time, they were grouped in with all other Pre-Aryan peoples, such as the Dasyus and Rākṣasas.¹⁰ Nevertheless, some sources do not seem to distinguish between the Dāsas and Dasyus.¹¹ They were identified as Dravidians and contrasted to Daha and Dahyu in Iran. The term ‘Dās,’ which evolved from ‘Dasyu,’ ultimately came to signify a bondman,

⁵ RV-1.117.21; Ni-6.26.2.

⁶ RV-2.20.7; 6.29.6, 45.24; 8.70.10-11, 76.11; 10.23.2.

⁷ *Ibid.*-10.62.10.

⁸ *Ibid.*-5.30.7-8; 6.47.21; 10.49.6.

⁹ *Ibid.*-10.138.3, 49.3.

¹⁰ R.S.Sharma, *Śudras in Ancient India*, pp.11, 16-17, 25-27 etc.

¹¹ A.A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p.157.

similar to the modern concept of a slave. While some of the names for the Dasyus and other adversaries of the Aryans mentioned in the Vedas seem to have Aryan origins, the presence of non-Sanskrit elements in Indian languages suggests that these names were likely influenced by migrations from the Scythian or Turanian groups. In Gujarat and nearby regions, prominent Turanian groups are still referred to as the ‘Kāli Prajā’, or dark populace, to differentiate them from those of lighter skin, who may or may not have some Aryan heritage.¹²

Who Were the Dāsas? They have been widely misidentified with the Dasyus. The omission of the word ‘Dāsa-hatyā’ (slaughter of the Dāsas), in contrast to ‘Dasyu-hatyā’ (slaughter of the Dāsas), the presence of Dāsas as auxiliary in the inter-tribal warfare of the Aryans, and the absence of their description as ‘Apa-vrata’, ‘Anyavrata’, etc., Dasyus, who appear to have had nothing in common with the Aryans,¹³ are starkly distinguished from the Dāsas by the three instances where they refer to Dāsa ‘Viśas’ (clans),¹⁴ and most importantly, by their association with the Iranian Dahae,¹⁵ a Scythian tribe.¹⁶

In ancient India, the word ‘Dāsa’ came from the root ‘das’, meaning ‘to treat violently.’ They were definitely a group of people in Vedic times, even if R.S. Sharma believes they were not a homogeneous ethnic stock.¹⁷

¹² John Wilson, *India Three Thousand Years Ago*. p.29.

¹³ It is suggested that the Dāsas and Aryans were on a social level, above the Dasyu-Bhils. Shafer, *Ethnography of Ancient India*, p.32.

¹⁴ RV-2.11.4, 4.28.4, and 6.25.2. B.N. Dutt thinks that the mention of Dāsa viś in RV 6.25.2, means that the Dāsa gets the vaiśya rank (*Studies in Indian Social Polity*, p. 334). But since the vaiśyas did not exist then as a social class ‘Viś’ can be better interpreted here as clan.

¹⁵ The Dahae may have been closely allied in race and language with the Iranians, but this is not very clearly proved. (6.1.357). Zimmer calls the Daoi or Daai of Herodotus, a Turanian tribe.

¹⁶ S.K. Chatterji, *Kirata-Jana-Kirti: The Mogloids: Their Contributions to the History and Culture of India*, p.9.

¹⁷ R.S. Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, p. 26.

2.1.2. Rākṣasas: Rākṣasas were referenced approximately twenty times, with a full chapter devoted to them.¹⁸ Thus, they were either equally or more despised than the Dāsas. The Rākṣasas resided on or beyond the mountains and were not allowed to come near the ‘Yajña’ (sacrifice) done by the Aryans.¹⁹ It seems that the Aryan were terrified of them and thought they were superior to common humans because they could even defeat the Aryan Lord Indra.²⁰ They harboured such deep animosity towards the Rākṣasa that they vented their desire to slay the Rākṣasas in a complete chapter. The Rākṣasas had been associated with diseases as both were equally dreaded and despised.²¹ Their large nails and frequent nudity made them physically unappealing.²² The Aryans described them as being jealous of other people, devoid of knowledge, inhuman, bold, flesh-eaters, and anti-stotram, or hymns.²³ It is important to note that in no other instance were women specifically targeted for retaliation, since the Aryans desired to entirely destroy them and burn their womenfolk.²⁴ Vṛtra was a Rākṣasas who seems to have opposed the Aryans for quite some time. The struggle between him and Indra appeared heavily not just in the *Ṛgveda* but also in subsequent literature.²⁵

2.1.3. Paṇis: The Paṇis were the third group the Aryans encountered, mentioned approximately thirteen times in the *Ṛgveda*, frequently in connection with cattle. They were accused of seizing and concealing Aryan cows,²⁶ with Indra

¹⁸ RV-10.87.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*-9.15.6; 10.61.9.

²⁰ *Ibid.*-7.1.19; 10.120.4.

²¹ *Ibid.*-9.85.1.

²² *Ibid.*-10.61.9; 87.12.

²³ *Ibid.*-7.194.1; 9.71.1; 10.22.7, 120.4, 87.2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*-6.18.10; 8.35.18; 9.86.48, 17.3, 49.5; 10.118.8.

²⁵ *Ibid.*-9.109.14; A.A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp.158-159.

²⁶ *Ibid.*-9.112.2; 1.32.11.

being invoked to recover them.²⁷ The Paṇis were believed to be wealthier than the Aryans, given the importance of cattle as a measure of wealth at the time. The Aryans criticised the Paṇis for their selfishness, greed, cunning, reluctance to give gifts, ignorance, envy in speech, and refusal to perform ‘Yajña’.²⁸ Despite these criticisms, the Paṇis were only occasionally associated with the Dasyus. Unlike the Dāsas and Rākṣasas, the Aryans did not exhibit the same intense hostility towards the Paṇis. In fact, it remains uncertain whether the Aryans were even interested in subjugating them. Their primary objective was to recover their stolen cattle.

Efforts have been made to identify the Paṇis by their occupation or geographic location. Commentators describe them as indigenous traders who travelled in caravans and displayed typical mercantile behaviour—cheating others, and being calculating and miserly.²⁹ The Paṇis were largely seen as cattle merchants,³⁰ and Indra was called upon to eliminate those who, like the Paṇis and Bekaṇātans, exhibited similar traits.³¹ The longstanding antagonism between the Aryans and the traders may explain the later social decline of this group.

The episode involving Saramā and the Paṇis indicates that they lived beyond a major river, leading some scholars to suggest that the Paṇis may have occupied the Bengal region. Another interpretation posits that they were indigenous to the Indus Valley and resisted the Aryan incursions for some time.³² Many Ṛgvedic verses express hostility towards the Paṇis. Muir interprets

²⁷ *Ibid.*-6.39.2; 10.67.6.

²⁸ *Ibid.*-6.51.14, 61.1; 7.6.3; A.A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp.157.

²⁹ A.A. Macdonell & A.B. Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.-1, p.471-472; Ni. -2.1.17.1, 5; 10-12.

³⁰ Ni.2.1.17.1.

³¹ ṚV-8.66.10.

³² D.D. Kosambi, *An Introduction to the study of History*, pp. 72.

them as misers or hoarders.³³ According to the authors of the *Vedic Index*, the term ‘Paṇi’ in the *Ṛgveda* refers to wealthy individuals who refuse to make offerings to the gods or give ‘Dakṣiṇā’ (gifts) to priests, making them objects of disdain to the composers of the *Samhitā*.³⁴

In one passage, they are referred to as *Bekanāṭas*, possibly meaning ‘usurers’, who were subdued by Indra.³⁵ The fact that the Paṇis were capable of making sacrifices and were entitled to *wergild* indicates that they were members of the Aryan community.³⁶ Hillebrandt identifies them with the Paṇis,³⁷ a group associated with the *Dahae*, a confederation of Scythian horsemen and warriors.³⁸ The authors of the *Vedic Index* suggest that the term ‘Paṇi’ is broad enough to encompass both indigenous peoples and hostile Aryan tribes.³⁹

The descriptions of the Paṇis as miserly and the condemnation of illiberal individuals may have been motivated by greedy priests seeking gifts, but more broadly, they seem to reflect the tendency among certain Aryans to accumulate wealth at the expense of their fellow tribesmen. These tribesmen would naturally expect a share of the wealth through sacrifices offered to Indra and other gods, which facilitated communal feasting.⁴⁰ The failure to regulate this wealth accumulation likely contributed to the rise of economic and social inequalities.

2.1.4. Asuras: The Asuras were the final group to pose a threat to the Aryans. The name appeared seven times in the *Ṛgveda*. The Suras were gods, and their

³³ *JRAS*, New Series, Vol. 2, pp.286-294.

³⁴ *Op.cit.*, Vol.1, p. 471.

³⁵ *ṚV*-8.66.10.

³⁶ A.A. Macdonell & A.B. Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.1, p. 472.

³⁷ *Loc.cit.*

³⁸ R. Ghirshman, *Iran*, p.243.

³⁹ *Op.cit.*, Vol.-1, p.472.

⁴⁰ *ṚV*-7.40.6.

antonym was the Asuras. The names of two Asuras, Suṣṇa and Pipru, were mentioned, with the latter being a magician.⁴¹ The Aryans desired to subjugate the Asuras, who were likewise affluent people.⁴² However, emotions of resentment or enmity were not clearly expressed. It appears that the Aryans had little or nothing to worry from them.⁴³ According to Ramsaran Sharma, the Dasyus and Rākṣasas are the Pre-Aryan peoples.

However, Alpine and Mediterranean are two racial components of what was once known as Dravidian, a term that anthropologists today widely reject as an ethnic label. Chakladar acknowledges the existence of the two older ethnic aspects of the so-called Dravidians, known as ‘Veddaic’ and ‘Muṇḍā’, in Bengal.⁴⁴ According to A.L. Basham, South Indians are descendants of the Paleo-Mediterranean, whereas Harappans come from the Mediterranean.⁴⁵ The available evidence indicates that the ancestors of these groups likely entered India from the northwest at a very early date, well before the arrival of the Aryans. However, some scholars argue that, based on early South Indian pottery and other artefacts, these groups may have arrived by sea from southern Arabia. It is believed that they once occupied a broad expanse of north-western and central India, possibly extending into the Gaṅgā plain. Any further assertions about their presence are speculative and lack solid conviction, though future archaeological discoveries might provide additional insights into this matter.

I propose that the Rākṣasas might have been a widespread cannibalistic civilisation, possibly related to the ancient Negritos or the ancestors of the

⁴¹ *Ibid.*-10.99.9, 138.3.

⁴² ṚV-8.97.1;10.53.4, 151.3, 157.4, 170.2.

⁴³ A.A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p.156.

⁴⁴ H.C. Chakladar, *Analysis of the Anthropometric data regarding the Brāhmaṇas and the Muchis of Bengal*, (Presidential Address, Anthropological Section. PSC. Vol. 23. pp.359-90)

⁴⁵ R. K. Mookherji, *Studies in India: History and Culture*, p. 23; A.L. Basham, *Cultural History of India*, p.6.

present-day Jarwa people, some of whom continue cannibalistic practices on India's northern Sentinel Island. Among the groups antagonistic to the Aryans are the Ajas, Yakṣas, Śigrus,⁴⁶ Kikaṭas,⁴⁷ and other peoples. There are references where the adversaries of the Aryans are specifically described as having black skin, such as in the passage where Indra is said to have punished those desiring religious rites by tearing off their black skin.⁴⁸ The Piśācas, on the other hand, were depicted as having a tawny complexion.⁴⁹

In Vedic literature, the terms Dāsas and Dasyus seem to denote groups that were subject to criticism and vilification for specific reasons, which we will explore further. Consequently, over time, these terms acquired negative connotations. It is within this context that we should examine the epithet 'black-skinned' used to describe the Dasyus.⁵⁰

2.1.5. Śiva: Śibis or Śivas seem to have been a very ancient people. They are probably alluded to for the first time in the *Ṛgveda*,⁵¹ where Śivas doubtless the same people as the Śibis, are grouped together with four minor tribes, viz. the Alīṅas, Pakhtas, Bhalānas and Viśāṅins, who were all defeated by the combined army of King Sudās.⁵² they also mentioned by the Greeks and Pāṇini.⁵³ Prof. Law inclined on the view of Greeks historians and Geographer as to the identity of *Ṛgvedic* Śivas with the Sibai or Siboi who dwelt between the Indus and the

⁴⁶ ṚV – 7.18.19.

⁴⁷ The Kikaṭas are denominated 'Nichas' or vile people, a form of expression much used since the Caste system has been established. ṚV-3.53.14.

⁴⁸ 'त्वचं कृष्णामरंधयत्' Müller's *Ṛg Veda*, Vol. 2, p.72.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p. 89. Wilson's *Ṛg Veda*, Vol. 2. p. 44. One worshipper in the Veda asks for himself a tawny-hued son.

⁵⁰ Buddha Prakash, *Ṛgveda and Indus Valley Civilization*, p.55.

⁵¹ ṚV-6.18.7.

⁵² The 'Battle of the Ten Kings' is sometimes interpreted as a struggle between the Aryans (under Sudās) and the pre-Aryans; in which case the Śivas or Śibis were not Aryans, however, probably Sumerians.

⁵³ Pā- 4.2.109.

(= Asiknī of the *Ṛgveda*; modern day Candrabhāgā or Chenab). In Accordance with the Greek historians Śibis or Sibai was an Indian tribe, who wore skins and descended from those who belonged to the expedition of Herakles, and had been left behind. They also carry a cudgel, and brand on the backs of their oxen the representation of a club.⁵⁴ This description of their dress and weapons describes them as distinctly different from the Aryan tribes. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*⁵⁵ mentions ‘Amitratapana’, a king of the Śivis and Śivapura or the town of the Śivas is mentioned by *Patañjali*,⁵⁶ as situated in the northern country. Śivapur is to be identical with Śibipura, mentioned in a Shorkot Inscription⁵⁷; and Dr. Vogel takes the mound of Shorkot to be the site of the city of Śivas. Another scholar points out that local tradition also connects shorkot with Śivas.⁵⁸ Thus, we may conclude that the Śivas or Śibis were a people inhabiting the Shorkot region in the Punjab, lying between Itāvātī and the Candrabhāgā . This people may be migrated southward to Rajasthan. The early references to a geographical location of the tribe other than in the Punjab are found in the *Jātakas* and in the *Mahābhārata*. The *Jātakas*⁵⁹ mention two cities, inhabited by Śivas, are Ariṭṭhapura or Ariṣṭapura (probably identical with Ptolemy’s Aristobothra in the north of the Punjab⁶⁰) and Jetuttara or Jettuttara (identified with Nāgari, a locality 11 north of Chitore)⁶¹. In accordance with numeral other sources, it is evidently unearthed that Śivas or Śibis had a habitat near Chitore in Rajasthan

⁵⁴ *Indica of Arrian*, Tr. Watson MacCrimdle, p.12; *Diodorus Siculus*, Eng. Tr. C. Bradford Welles, Vol.8, Book-XVII, Poem. No. 96.

⁵⁵ A. Br.-8.23.10.

⁵⁶ Mahābhāṣya-4.2.2.; A. A. Macdonell & A.B. Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.2, pp.381-382.

⁵⁷ H. Sastri (Ed.), *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol.-15, 1921, p.21.

⁵⁸ R.C. Majumdar, *Corpus of Ancient Gujarati Inscriptions*, p.669; Śivapura= Siaura= Shor. *Corpus of Ancient Sanskrit Records*, Vol.5, pp. 97-103.

⁵⁹ *Śivi Jātaka*, No.499; *Ummadantī Jātaka*, No.-527; *Vessantara Jātaka*, No.547.

⁶⁰ N.L. Dey, *Geographical Dictionary*, p.11.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.81.

and also probably maintained a democratic monarchic system.⁶² The Śivas or Śibis were intimately associated with the Uśīnara who are assigned by the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* to the Madhyadeśa or ‘middle country’, together with the Kurus, the Pāñcālas, and the Vatsas. *Mahā Unmag Jātaka* places aforementioned country between Videha and Pāñcāla. The *Ṛgvedānukramaṇī*⁶³ ascribes one hymn to Śivi Auśīnara, i.e. Śivi who descended from Uśīnara; while the *Mahābhārata*⁶⁴ refers to a king Uśīnara Śibi who ruled the kingdom of Śibis. It may therefore acceptable that the Uśīnara country was at once the home of the Śibis and Śivi was one of the five sons of King Uśīnara who found a city. His descendants were known to the Śivis.⁶⁵ In *Mahābhārata*, Śivas are grouped with the foreign tribes i.e. Śakas, Yavanas, Kirātas and Vasātis. The *Daśakumāracaritam* refers to a settlement of the Śivis on bank of Kaveri in the further south.⁶⁶ The Southern Śivis, according to Dr. H.C. Ray Chaudhuri,⁶⁷ are probably to be identified with the Chola ruling family.⁶⁸ The Śivi country of the south may be identical with Śivikā country of Varāhmihira in *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*.⁶⁹ The name Śivi is connected to the mythological Goddess Diti like the Kamboja.⁷⁰ According to *Mahābhārata*, Jayadratha was the king of Souvira, Śivi and Sindhu people.⁷¹

2.2. The Connotation of Dark Complexion

⁶² Alberuni’s *India*, Vol.1, p. 202; a number of coins inscribed with the legend of *Majhamikāya* ‘Sivijanapadasa’ have been discovered in the territory near Nāgari, - indicating that the Janapada or country of the Śivas was located in Madhyamikā, near Chitore of Rājasthan; Beal’s *Records of the Western World*, Vol.1, pp. xvi-cvii.

⁶³ ṚV-10.119.

⁶⁴ *Mbh.* Śānti. P.-29.39

⁶⁵ F. E. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, pp. 41 and 264.

⁶⁶ *Daśakumāracaritam*, Ch. 6.

⁶⁷ H.C. Ray Chaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India*, p. 205.

⁶⁸ Keilhorn, *List of Southern Inscriptions*, No. 685.

⁶⁹ *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*, 14.12.

⁷⁰ *Mbh.*- Ādi. P. 67.1-34.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* Vana P. 267.8.

Indra's enemies are described with terms such as 'dusky brood' (Kṛṣṇagarbhāḥ)⁷², 'swarthy' (Kṛṣṇa)⁷³, 'darksome creatures' (Kṛṣṇajāḥ)⁷⁴, 'dusky skin' (Tvacam Kṛṣṇām)⁷⁵, and 'originating from darkness' (Kṛṣṇayoṇiḥ)⁷⁶. These descriptions reflect a negative perception of their complexion.⁷⁷ In contrast, Indra's allies are characterised as 'fair-complexioned'.⁷⁸

It is proposed that this variation in complexion may signify racial differences. Buffon suggested that all human races descended from a single ancestral white form and diversified due to environmental influences.⁷⁹ Montagu and Castle have shown that in equatorial regions, increased skin pigmentation acts as a protective mechanism against harmful solar rays, thereby enhancing survival.⁸⁰ Consequently, even individuals with originally lighter skin may darken in hotter climates. Furthermore, the Persian term 'Hindu', originally denoting India and its people, has evolved to mean 'black', which likely explains why Iranians historically perceived the inhabitants of the Indian plains as having darker complexions. According to D.R. Bhandarkar, Dāsas may have belonged to the Iranian race.

This difference in colour has been taken to mean the difference in race. Buffon considers the human races as varieties derived from an original white form and developed under the influence of climate. Montagu and Castle have

⁷² RV-1.101.1

⁷³ *Ibid.*-4.16.13.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*-6.47.21.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*-1.130.8.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*-2.20.7.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*-2.12.4.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*-1.100.18

⁷⁹ Franz Bose, "Race", *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, Vol. 13, p. 26.

⁸⁰ Asley Montagu, *Man's Most Dangerous Myth*, (1945), pp.38-39; W.E. Castle, "Biological and Social Consequences of Race Crossing", *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, Vol.9 (1926), pp. 145-46.

shown that the greater deposit of pigment in the skin has a survival value by acting as a protection from the actinic rays of the sun in equatorial regions. Thus, in hot climates even white people are apt to get dark. This probably explains why the people of Indian plains are generally regarded as black by the Iranians, as is clear from the fact that the word ‘Hindu’ denoting India and the Indians, has come to mean ‘black’ in Persian. According to D.R. Bhandarkar, Dāsas may have belonged to the Iranian race.

In addition, in the social hierarchy, being black or white is equated with inferiority or supremacy. Nonetheless, some academics interpret the term *varna* differently. The authors of the *Vedic Index* arranged it by caste. It could be more accurate to translate it as ‘order and fraternity’. It most likely indicated a socio religious hierarchy.⁸¹ Hence, he deduces that the Dāsas and Dasyus ‘definitely could not have been of a dark complexion’,⁸² and proceeds to mention that Dāsas were Divodāsa and Sudās, the heroes of several Ṛgvedic hymns.

2.3. Physical Structure

In the *Ṛgveda*, Dasyus is referred to as ‘Anāsa’.⁸³ Macdonell and Keith note the term ‘Anāsa’ as follows: ‘The sense of this word is not absolutely certain’.⁸⁴ The pada text and Sāyaṇa both understand it to mean ‘without face’ (An-āsa), but the other translation with flat nosed aborigines of the Dravidian type, whose language still exists among the Brahuīs. Sāyaṇa splits the compound Anās into An-ās or without face. There is no reason to reject the ancient understanding of this term in favour of recent conjectures, based on the assumption that the Pre-Aryan population of India comprised of snub-nosed

⁸¹ D.R. Bhandarkar, *Some Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture*, p.5.

⁸² *Ibid.* p.4.

⁸³ ṚV- 5.29.10.

⁸⁴ A.A.Macdonell & A.B. Keith, *The Vedic Index Of Names and Subjects*, Vol. 1, p.347.

Dravidians. Anās, meaning faceless, is a word of censure, similar to Kṛṣṇayoniḥ, studied above.

The term ‘Mṛdhraṇvāc’, used to describe the Dasyus,⁸⁵ denotes a sense of hostility and contempt. It is plausible that the adversaries of Indra, characterised by this term, shared a similar linguistic heritage with the Iranians, suggesting an Indo-Iranian origin for their speech. Notably, in the context of the battle of the Paruṣṇi, the enemies of Sudās are depicted in the *R̥gveda* as ‘babblers’ or ‘of indistinct speech’ (Vadhṛvāc).⁸⁶ Additionally, Puru or Purukutsa, the leader of Sudās’s enemies, is described as Mṛdhraṇvāc, which Griffith translates as ‘scornful’.⁸⁷ In the *R̥gveda*, the Ten Kings are referred to as ‘unworshippers’ (Ayajyavaḥ).⁸⁸ If those invoking Indra and Varuṇa are labeled ‘unworshippers,’ this term should be understood as a pejorative similar to ‘babbler’ (Vadhṛvāc, Mṛdhraṇvāc). This suggests that the term ‘Mṛdhraṇvāc’ does not necessarily imply that the people it describes are Non-Aryan.

Furthermore, the opponents of Indra are also identified as Śiśnadeva, which translates to ‘phallus-worshipper’. Griffith interprets this term in the *R̥gveda* as ‘lewd’⁸⁹ and in another context as ‘lustful’.⁹⁰ It is clear that Śiśnadeva does not strictly denote a phallus-worshipper but rather refers to a person characterised by sensuality or lustfulness.⁹¹ In *R̥gveda* 10.99.3, the phrase ‘शतदुरस्य वेदः’ is interpreted by Sāyanācārya as ‘शतद्वारस्य शत्रुपुरस्य धनम्’ which suggests that these people resided in cities with a hundred or more gates, or

⁸⁵ RV - 5.29.10.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*-7.18.9.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*- 7.18.13.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*-7.83.7.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*-7.21.5.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*-10.99.3.

⁹¹ A.D. Pusalker, *The Vedic Age*, p.191.

alternatively, in well-fortified strongholds. This interpretation indicates that the term refers to inhabitants of highly fortified urban centers or significant strongholds.

Only the Indus Valley towns on the Indian subcontinent were well-planned and built ruins that could be assaulted by the Vedic Aryans. On the other hand, various phallus-like artefacts and Yonis were discovered in these cities. Literary and archaeological data suggest that the Indus valley people were the Śísnađevas. The *R̥gveda* furnishes two mantras in two separate mandalas concerning the conflict between Vedic Aryans and the Śísnađevas. According to philologists, 7.21.5 from the earlier section of the *R̥gveda* indicates fear of being vanquished by these Śísnađeva. Similarly, 10.99.3, which relates to the newer portion, claims that the towns of Śísnađevas were already demolished by the powerful Indra.

It takes time to subjugate the non-Vedic Śísnađevas, indicating that these two groups of people were nearby adversaries. Vedic Aryans did not arrive from outside and immediately capture these people. It was a year-long rivalry. This rivalry resembles the Deva-Asura conflicts in *Purāṇas*. A few Asuras are also ardent followers of Lord Śiva. It is not difficult to connect the Indus valley inhabitants with the Asura of *Purāṇas*. ‘Śivaliṅga’ is found in Harappa belonging to 1500 B.C.E. and a terracotta at Kalibangan.⁹²

2.4. Non-Aryan Society and Life-style

Different from the Aryan Vedic traditions, Non-Aryan civilisations are a wide range of native societies that thrived on the Indian subcontinent before to and concurrent with the rise of Vedic civilisation. These civilisations are

⁹² ‘Plate X [c] Lingam in situ in Trench Ai’ – by MS Vats, *Excavations at Harappa*, Vol.2, Calcutta, 1940.- Rajat Pal, *Āryadigante Sindhusabhyatā*, p.215.

distinguished from the Indo-Aryan viewpoint by their distinctive social structures, religious rituals, and cultural representations.

Non-Aryan inhabitants in ancient India comprised a wide range of ethnic and cultural groupings. The Dasyus, Dāsas, and other native groups mentioned in Vedic literature were among them. In Vedic literature, these people were often depicted as hostile or as deviating from the religious and cultural practices of the Aryans. These representations, meanwhile, are biased and fall short of capturing the complexity of these communities.

These Non-Aryan nations also evolved unique political, social, and religious structures that frequently ran counter to Aryan ideals. Non-Aryan societies practiced a wide range of activities, including worship of local deities, ceremonial aspects, and societal structures profoundly based in their own traditions and environs. In contrast, the Aryans were mostly pastoral and focused on sacrifice ceremonies and hymns.

The Dasyus were known to possess significant wealth, including jewels and gold, which likely incited the greed of the Aryans. Additionally, it is recorded that these indigenous people owned large herds of cattle.⁹³ Conversely, the Dasyus also held a high regard for the horses and chariots of the Aryans.⁹⁴ Notably, the Dasyus did not engage in sacrificial rites, as indicated by the numerous descriptors in the seventh book of the *R̥gveda*, such as ‘Akraṭūn’, ‘Aśraddhān’, and ‘Ayajñān’, which highlight their non-participation in sacrifices.⁹⁵ Indra is petitioned to differentiate between the sacrificial Aryans and the non-sacrificing Dasyus,⁹⁶ who are also referred to as ‘Ayajvānaḥ’.⁹⁷ The

⁹³ RV-3.53.14.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*-2.15.4.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*-7.6.3.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*-1.51.8.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*-1.33.4.

term ‘Anindra’, meaning ‘without Indra,’ appears in several contexts,⁹⁸ presumably referring to the Dasyus, Dāsas, and possibly some dissenting Aryans. According to Aryan perspective, the Dasyus were associated with the practice of black magic.⁹⁹

This particular idea stems from the *Atharvaveda*, where the Dasyus are described as terrifying spirits that frighten people away from offering sacrifices.¹⁰⁰ According to legend, the sage Aṅgiras used a magical amulet to overcome Dasyus’ castles.¹⁰¹ The malevolent reputation of the Dasyus in the *Atharvaveda* appears to be based on their battle record in the Rgvedic period. The god-blaspheming Dasyus are to be sacrificed as victims, according to the *Atharvaveda*.¹⁰² It is thought that the Dasyus are deceitful, do not practice Aryan observances, and are not human.¹⁰³

The distinction between the Aryan and Dasyu way of life was highlighted by comparing the Dasyus to the ‘Āryavrata’, which means law or ordinance.¹⁰⁴ This word may be associated with the term ‘Vrata’, which refers to tribal armies or groupings. The Dasyus are often known as ‘Avrata’¹⁰⁵ and ‘Anyavrata’.¹⁰⁶ There are two instances of the word ‘Apavrata’, which might refer to the Dasyus and dissident Aryans.¹⁰⁷ The Dāsas were more adaptable to the Aryan lifestyle compared to the Dasyus, as indicated by the lack of derogatory descriptors applied to them.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*-1.133.1; 5.2.3; 7.1.8.16; 10.27.6; 10.48.7.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*-4.16.9.

¹⁰⁰ AV-2.14.5.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* -10.6.20.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* -12.1.37

¹⁰³ RV-10.22.8.

¹⁰⁴ P.V. Kane, *JBBRAS*, New Series. Vol.29, p.12.

¹⁰⁵ RV-1.175.3; 9.41.2.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*-8.70.11; 10.22.8.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*-1.51.9; 5.4.6; 5.6.1-2.

In the latter part of the first millennium B.C., the Ganges Valley experienced gradual but significant Aryanisation. The river became a crucial route for transportation and trade, leading to the emergence of towns along its banks. Agrarian villages also tended to be situated closer to the river. Despite this, large expanses of dense forest remained, particularly in the hilly regions untouched by Aryan agricultural expansion. Aryan speakers, with their advanced technological and economic systems, were perceived as a sophisticated urban civilisation. Consequently, the forest-dwelling tribes, who continued to engage in food gathering and hunting, were viewed with disdain. Tribes deemed technologically inferior, such as the Śabara, Pulinda, Mutība, and Kirāta, were classified under the term ‘Mleccha’, a category that also included the Bedar, Daśārṇa, Mātaṅga, Pundra, Lambakārṇa, Ekapāda, Yakṣa, Kinnara, Kīkata, and Niṣāda. Some of these designations, such as Long-ears and single-footed, are mythical or celestial, while others are well-documented in both literature and inscriptions. The epic *Rāmāyaṇa* contrasts the advanced, agricultural Aryan culture of Ayodhyā with the hunting and food-gathering lifestyle of its adversaries, the Rākṣasa.¹⁰⁸ Many of these tribes lived on the periphery of Aryan culture and were often pushed into the hills as Aryan agrarian expansion progressed. Consequently, the term ‘Mleccha’ extended to encompass frontier tribes, including those as culturally advanced as the Yavanas and Kāmbojas.¹⁰⁹ Thus, Mleccha came to denote not only speakers of foreign languages and mixed-caste groups but also technologically inferior tribes and people living on the borders of Aryan territory.

Several allusions in post-Vedic literature show that the Pre-Aryans were devotees of Śiva. Durgā, the goddess of vegetation, was worshipped at the conclusion of winter when melting snows sent down floods and fertilised the

¹⁰⁸ D.R. Chanana, *Agriculture in the Rāmāyaṇa*, (New Delhi, 1964).

¹⁰⁹ Ni. – II.2; AV.-5.22.14; Cānd. Up. – 6.14.1.2.

ground. The first mythology concerning her devotion in post-Vedic literature is associated with the slaying of the buffalo-demon. In many cases, this primordial deity preserved her original shape after being praised by the Indo-Aryans. The images of Yogamāyā at Vindyachala, Kirīteśvarī in Murshidabad, and Kāmākhyā near Guwahati still have their original ancient figures.¹¹⁰

2.4.1. Funeral practices of Non-Aryans: In accordance with R.D. Banerjee,¹¹¹ many of the Pre-Aryan inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent were Dravidians, who once held a significant presence across the region before the rise of Aryan influence. The Dravidians developed a distinct civilisation and were adept in metalworking. Their burial practices involved interring the dead in clay sarcophagi or earthenware vessels, a tradition shared with ancient cultures in Crete, Rhodes, Troy, and Babylon. These ceramic pots, used for storing bodies or bones, have been found across the northern Mediterranean, Mesopotamia, Persia, Balochistan, Sindh, and Southern India. Upon encountering the Indo-Aryans, who practiced cremation, the Dravidians adapted by incorporating cremation into their rituals while retaining their ancient custom of storing a portion of the deceased's bones in an earthenware jar within a family vault. Alongside the deceased, items such as food, clothing, personal ornaments, and weapons were buried, reflecting the Dravidian practice of interring cherished possessions. In Balochistan and Sindh, Dravidian tombs predominantly contain copper and bronze artefacts, whereas graves south of the Godavari reveal the use of iron, along with bronze and copper decorations and vessels. Certain bronze vessels from the Dravidian period exhibit remarkable artistry, indicating a high level of metallurgical skill. The Dravidians were proficient in the use of gold and silver, crafting items such as golden crowns and armlets. Notable examples of these crowns have been unearthed in Dravidian Iron Age tombs at

¹¹⁰ R.D. Banerjee, *Prehistoric, Ancient and Hindu India*, p.36.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* p.10 ff.

Adittanallur in southern India. Additionally, terra-cotta sarcophagi discovered at locations such as Pallavaram, Perumbur in the Chingleput District, and Dadampatti in the Madura District, as well as similarly shaped sarcophagi from Brahmanabad and Mohenjo-Dāro in Sindh, and in regions near Baghdad and Babylonia, bear a resemblance to the terra-cotta chests (larnakes) found on the island of Crete. Herodotus documented that the Lycians of Asia Minor descended from the ancient Cretans and retained the name Termilai from Crete. Lycian inscriptions refer to themselves as Trimmili, aligning with the Greek form noted by Herodotus.¹¹² The similarities in burial practices—such as cist-burials and urn-burials—alongside matching pictograms and ideograms found in south-western Punjab and Upper Sindh with those of Crete, suggest that ancient Cretans may have brought these customs and scripts from south-eastern Europe.

The Dravidians were pioneers in the use of currency and in constructing irrigation dams across rivers, some of which still exist in Balochistan. Their advancements in pottery include the creation of fine, thin jars and vases comparable to egg-shell China, often decorated with multi-coloured paintings. Much of their pottery is wheel-turned and kiln-fired, with exquisite polychrome vases found in Balochistan and Sindh. The pottery unearthed in Dravidian graves in Southern India is unpainted. This pottery is very beautifully constructed and only comes in two colours- red and black. Some Austric tribes, such the Muṇḍas and Oraons of Chotanagpur, practiced burying the deceased in ceramic urns and jars. These jars have circular bottoms and resemble the jars unearthed in Sindh. Similarly, round-bottomed jars have been uncovered at Pegu, a Dravidian colony founded long before the birth of Christ.

Earthenware jars containing dead corpses or bones have been discovered along the northern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, including Mesopotamia,

¹¹² S.K. Chatterjee, *Modern Review*, 1924, pp.675-676.

Babylonia, Persia, Balochistan, Sindh, and Southern India. When they came into contact with the Indo-Aryans, who burned their dead rather than burying them, the Dravidians began to burn their dead as well, although they maintained their ancient habit of storing part of the bones in an earthenware jar and depositing it in the family vault.¹¹³

An unidentified round-headed race drove the Dravidians from the lush plains of northern India. Currently, these round-headed people form a demographic belt between the Dravidians in the south and the long-headed Aryans in the north. It is conjectured that these round-headed groups migrated from the Pamirs.¹¹⁴ Details about their customs, language, and lifestyle remain obscure, but it is likely that they assimilated the language, religion, and cultural practices of the more advanced Dravidians, blending into their society.¹¹⁵

2.5. Cities and Citadels

The people who lived in cities and citadels were the primary opponents of Indra, according to the *R̥gveda*. Indra's fury was directed almost exclusively at the Dāsas and Dasyus, who resided in fortified towns (Pura) and citadels (Niṇya).¹¹⁶ He, along with Agni, is credited with demolishing ninety of the Dāsas' forts in a single mighty act.¹¹⁷ The texts describe Indra as a fierce warrior who, armed with his thunderbolt, roamed the land, destroying the forts of the Dāsas.¹¹⁸ In one account, he demolished the hundred strongholds of the Dasyu Śambara¹¹⁹ to aid Divodāsa in battle. These forts, towns, or castles, often made

¹¹³ R.D. Banerjee, *Prehistoric, Ancient and Hindu India*, p.12.

¹¹⁴ Ramprasad Chandra, *Indo-Aryan Races*, Part-1, pp. 37-38.

¹¹⁵ R.D. Banerjee, *Prehistoric, Ancient and Hindu India*, pp.12-14.

¹¹⁶ *RV*-4.16.13.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*-3.12.6.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*-1.103.3.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*-6.31.4.

of stone (Aśmanmayī),¹²⁰ were formidable structures, fortified with ramparts, gates,¹²¹ and strong enough to endure sieges¹²² that could last up to a year.¹²³ They were considered indestructible,¹²⁴ likened to being made of metal.¹²⁵ After defeating the Dāsas, Indra is said to have taken the wealth stored within these strongholds.¹²⁶

While these forts and cities hold cosmic significance in the Vedic texts, they are also reflective of real-life settlements and towns that the hymn writers were likely familiar with. Interestingly, the cities of the Indus Valley Civilisation closely match the description of the Dasyus' towns in the Vedas. The use of burnt bricks in these cities may have given the impression of them being constructed from copper, possibly the intended meaning behind the term 'Ayas'.

The connection between the citadels of Non-Aryans and the people of the Indus Valley Civilisation is evident in the *R̥gveda*, where fortified structures, or 'Pura', are often associated with mountains. In *R̥gveda* 1.130.7, Indra is described as having destroyed ninety forts and brought down Śambara from the mountain, while in *R̥gveda* 8.4.19, he is praised for hurling Vṛtra down from the plains. These references clearly allude to towering citadels, similar to those found in the cities of the Indus Civilisation. Within these fortified citadels, the *R̥gveda* places the residence of Vṛtra, referred to as 'Niṇya', as well as his wealth and treasures. Although the specific structures inside the citadel at

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*-4.30.20.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*- 6.18.5.

¹²² *Ibid.*- 1.53.8; 1.33.12.

¹²³ *Ibid.*- 1.131.4.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*- 1.51.11.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*- 2.20.8.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*- 1.130.7; 6.20.7.

Harappa are not fully identifiable, the presence of an extensive covered baked-brick drain and a double-ringed well suggests that it was densely inhabited.¹²⁷

A few centuries later, the walled settlements would have appeared worn and dilapidated, as many had been abandoned. This state of decay aligns with the bardic phrase ‘dwellings of ancient times’ (Pratnasya okasa) and the locative ‘in the dwellings of ancient times’ (Pratneṣu dāmaṣu).¹²⁸ Some Harappan settlements may have still been partially habitable, attracting wandering bardic composers and their followers to settle there. The term "ancient settlements" frequently appears in bardic compositions, likely reflecting their presence in these decaying locations. One account mentions Rudra shining in all these ancient settlements (Pratneṣu dāmaṣu), where bards offered prayers in his honour. Another passage in the eighth Maṇḍala describes the Priyamedha-Āṅgirasas residing in these ancient, abandoned settlements.¹²⁹

The antiquity of the Priyamedhas, who are mentioned after Dadhichi and Āṅgiras but before Kaṇva, Atri, and Manu,¹³⁰ seems to align well with the timeline of the abandoned Harappan settlements in Sindh, Punjab, and Rajasthan. Evidence suggesting that the Priyamedhas were connected to this region comes from their references to the land of seven rivers flowing into the sea¹³¹—a geographical feature irrelevant to Afghanistan or eastern Iran. These descriptions likely persisted until the neglected Harappan structures gradually transformed into large mounds, a process that could have taken three to five centuries after the depopulation of these settlements began. However, for more precise insights, one must consult expert archaeologists. The city is referred to

¹²⁷ Buddha Prakash, *R̥gveda and The Indus Valley Civilization*, p.66.

¹²⁸ RV-8.13.20.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*-8.69.18.

¹³⁰ Mai.S.- 1.139.9.

¹³¹ RV-8.69.12.

by name as Hariyupiya in the *R̥gveda*,¹³² meaning ‘city of the golden sacrificial pillars’, a clear Sanskritisation of an older Pre-Aryan name, representing one of the many unexplored elements of India’s onomastic history. The text recounts how Indra shattered the remnants of the Varasikhas there, likening their defeat to the breaking of an earthen pot. He crushed their front line of 130 armoured Vṛcivat warriors, causing the rest to flee and securing victory for King Abhyavartin Cayamana. It remains uncertain whether this battle on the Yavyavatī River (modern Ravi) involved Aryans fighting Pre-Aryans or a conflict between two Aryan tribes. However, it seems more likely to have been against Pre-Aryans, as the Vṛcivats disappeared from the record afterward, while Abhyavartin Cayamana’s people continued to thrive in the area. The alignment between written tradition and archaeological findings further supports this interpretation.

This suggests there is a valid reason to investigate how Pre-Aryan agriculture and trade in the region were disrupted, reducing these cities to mere memories. It remains unclear if the Aryans reached Mohenjo-Dāro in the same way they did Harappa, but it is possible that the city of Narmini,¹³³ which was illuminated by the fire-god Agni, may have been burned down, as Ludwig suggests in his translation and analysis of the *R̥gveda*. This city could be Mohenjo-Dāro or perhaps another Indus city located south of Quetta, near Sibi. Notably, cities themselves are not a common feature in the *R̥gveda*, with only these two being mentioned. Centuries later, new cities arose, but they were organic expansions from villages, lacking the planned infrastructure, drainage, and regular layout of earlier settlements, and were located in entirely new areas.¹³⁴

¹³² *Ibid.*-6.27.5.

¹³³ *Ibid.*-1.149.3.

¹³⁴ D.D. Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, pp.72-73.

The *Ṛgveda* also refers to the seizure of wealth following the destruction of *Aśmanmayī* (stone) or *Āyasī* (metallic) Puras, which likely corresponds to granaries situated near walled citadels in Indus Valley cities. While these Puras may have had cosmic symbolism, possibly representing status or the cessation of creation, their conceptual basis seems to be rooted in real-world structures that the hymn writers observed in their environment. This implies that the citadels described in the *Ṛgveda* were not purely symbolic, but rather modelled on actual architectural features of the Indus Valley Civilisation.¹³⁵

2.5.1. Ancient Ruins of Pre-Aryan described in Vedic Texts: Connections with ruins and remains described in Vedic texts become evident through archaeological finds like the five skeletons discovered in the upper layers of the Harappa mound. These remains, found amid a thick layer of tumbled brick, ash, and broken pottery in an alleyway, suggest the victims died in a sudden calamity, as they were not buried according to the customary rites. Many towns and cities of the time seem to have met with fiery destruction, a theme echoed in the *Ṛgveda*,¹³⁶ where Agni, the fire god, is praised as a destroyer of towns. The *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*¹³⁷ also speaks of Agni Vaiśvanara as the force that drove citizens from these devastated towns.

The phrase ‘*Armake Vailasthāne*’ appears twice in the First Book of the *Ṛgveda*,¹³⁸ translating to ‘in the grim or imposing place of the dead’. This locative expression evokes the image of ancient ruined settlements filled with burials. The term ‘*Arma*’ or ‘*Armaka*’ used in the Vedic texts to describe a destroyed town has no clear origin in the Vedic language. However, it might be a Vedic synonym for the Dravidian word ‘*Ara-mana*’ or ‘*Armana*,’ meaning

¹³⁵ Buddha Prakash, *Ṛgveda and The Indus Valley Civilization*, p.69.

¹³⁶ RV-3.15.4, 4.26.3, 6.19.39, 7.5.3.

¹³⁷ T.Br.- 2.4.6.8.

¹³⁸ RV-1.133.3.

‘house of the king’ or ‘palace,’ used in a derogatory way. The *R̥gveda*¹³⁹ mentions two such Armakas—‘Vailasthāna’ and ‘Mahavailasthāna’—whose residents, seen as sorcerers, were condemned and targeted by Maghavan (Indra) for destruction. The term ‘Vailasthāna’ or ‘Mahavailasthāna’ likely refers to burial grounds, with its roots suggesting connections to the idea of separation or splitting. Derived from ‘Vila’ or ‘Bila’, meaning pit or hole, ‘Vailasthāna’ could be interpreted as ‘a place of cracks or separation.’ In Tamil, ‘Vil’ further supports this meaning, as it can signify the final separation of the dead from their living relatives, thus referring to a burial site. Notably, the term ‘Vailasthāna’ foreshadows the much later place name ‘Mohenjo-Dāro,’ which translates to ‘the Mound of the Dead’ given by those who encountered the skeletons and cemeteries while removing bricks from the site.¹⁴⁰ The decline of these urban centers, driven by conflicts over resource-rich walled settlements (Pura, Durgā, Vṛtra, and Vṛjana), likely caused widespread economic instability and the collapse of commercial systems. This contributed to the eventual downfall of the Harappan cities, aligning with the imagery of ruins and abandoned settlements described in the *R̥gveda*.¹⁴¹

In *R̥gveda* 1.133.1, the opponents are described as lying dead in the ‘Vailasthānaka’ ruins, which brings to mind the Mohenjo-Dāro slaughter. *Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa*¹⁴² refers to a lake north of ‘Sthūlarma’ near the Sarasvatī. The ‘Sthūla’ described in the *Mahāvagga*¹⁴³ marks the western limit of the Middle country. According to *Divyāvādāna*,¹⁴⁴ this location is known as ‘Sthūna’. It is clearly identical to ‘Sthanviśvara’ or Thanesar. This indicates that

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*-1.133.3.

¹⁴⁰ Ramendranath Nandi, *R̥gveda in its historical setting*, p.35.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* p.33.

¹⁴² Tā.Br.- 25.10.18

¹⁴³ *Mahāvagga* -8.12.12

¹⁴⁴ *Divyāvādāna*, p.22.

there was an earlier village in or near present Thanesar that was destroyed or burned. Strangely enough, from certain mounds in the Thanesar area, research experts from Kurukshetra University's Institute of Indic Studies have discovered some late Harappan pottery, including fragments of perforated jars. Systematic excavations are anticipated to provide valuable insights into the Harappan antiquity of this site. The *Lātyāyana Śrautasūtra*¹⁴⁵ refers to the ruins of 'Naitandhava' and 'Vyarna', located along the Sarasvatī river. Additionally, this text mentions a ruin near the source of the Dṛsadvatī river. The *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*¹⁴⁶ discusses another destroyed settlement, Indrakrośa. Pāṇini and the *Kāśikā* further reference several place names ending with '-arma', including Bhūtarma, Adhikarma, Sañjivarma, Madrārma, Aśmārma, Kajjalarma, Dattarma, Guptarma, Kukkuṭarma, Vāyasārma, Bṛhadarma, Kapiñjalārma, Mahārma, and Navārma.¹⁴⁷ To determine the identity of the forces responsible for the destruction of Harappan settlements, an analysis of Ṛgvedic data is necessary.

This combination of literary and archaeological data indicates a close relationship between Vedic descriptions of wrecked towns and the physical ruins of the Indus Valley Civilisation. Similar language phrases, such as 'Vailasthāna' and 'Mohenjo-Dāro' ('Mound of the Dead'), indicate a long history of burial traditions and changing ideas about death. These linkages suggest that Vedic depictions of ruins and city devastation are based on true historical occurrences, with ruins such as Mohenjo-Dāro acting as physical proof of these ancient narratives.

2.5.2. The Destruction of Dāsa Forts: In the Indus Valley Civilisation, many people lived in villages, yet the wrath of gods like Agni and Indra in the *Ṛgveda*

¹⁴⁵ Lāt.Ś.Sū.- 10.18.3

¹⁴⁶ Jai. Br.-3.238

¹⁴⁷ Pā- 6.2.90-91.

is focused solely on cities rather than rural areas. The antagonists, the Dasyus and Dāsas, are consistently associated with towns and cities (Puras) rather than the countryside. According to *R̥gveda*,¹⁴⁸ Indra is praised for slaying the Dasyus and destroying their iron forts. In 1.103.3, the poet describes how Indra, armed with his thunderbolt, shattered the forts of the Dāsas through his mighty power.

Further, in *R̥gveda* 3.12.6, the poet appeals to Indra and Agni by recalling how they brought down the ninety forts held by the Dāsas in a single act of great force. In 4.32.10, the composer highlights Indra’s heroic acts, specifically mentioning the destruction of Dāsa forts, achieved in a state of joyous favour. *R̥gveda*¹⁴⁹ provides a historical context, recalling how men of old witnessed Indra’s strength as he crushed ‘autumnal forts’ with overwhelming power.

The Dāsas, being city dwellers, had amassed significant wealth, which made them targets for Indra’s conquests. The poet emphasises Indra’s bravery in capturing the wealth stored by Suṣṇa when his strongholds were destroyed.¹⁵⁰ Indra is urged to tear apart the might of the Dāsas, just as he had done in the past, so that their accumulated wealth could be shared among the victorious.¹⁵¹ Thus, the destruction of the Dāsa forts served the purpose of seizing the vast fortunes stored within these cities.

2.6. People

The Vedas explore several Non-Aryan adversaries of the Aryans. Among these, the Paṇis, Asuras, Rakshas, Dāsas, and Dasyus are well-known and considered major opponents as generally mentioned at the beginning of the chapter.

¹⁴⁸ *RV*-2.20.8.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*-1.131.4

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*-4.30.13.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*-8.40.6.

Vedas mention several ‘Mantras’ describing the rich and greedy Paṇis.¹⁵² The Dāsas interact with another group known as Paṇis. In *R̥gveda*,¹⁵³ the Paṇis are referred to as Dasyus, who were foolish, faithless, rudely speaking niggards, without belief, sacrifice, or worship. Far, far away, Agni pursued those Dasyus, and, in the east, hath turned the godless westward. Though miserable, the Paṇis are extremely wealthy. Their primary occupation is usury. They are known as usurers (Bekanāṭa).¹⁵⁴ Yāska treats them as traders (Vaṇik).¹⁵⁵ They are not usually ridiculed and hatred. When they give presents and administer generously among the priests, they are openly praised. Their chief, Bṛbu, the Carpenter of Paṇis, is praised for being the most charitable (Sahasradātam).¹⁵⁶ According to *Śāṅkhyāyana Śrauta Sūtra*,¹⁵⁷ Bharadvāja received his generosity. However, he appears to be an anomaly, as the Paṇis are typically depicted as niggardly and hoarders. When they remove their hands and close their fists, they are harshly criticised as wolves.¹⁵⁸ They are also depicted as dictators and oppressors, withholding the waters and seizing the herds. In a mythological song, Indra sends Saramā to urge them to release the rivers and cows.¹⁵⁹

These Paṇis were identified with the Indus traders. The aforementioned sources demonstrate that the Dāsas or Dasyus, also known as Paṇis, stood in for the urban commercial classes. They practiced commerce and usury, and monopolised the country’s economic resources. Their dominance over water

¹⁵² *Ibid.*-7.6.3, 6.51.14, 10.108.2, 5.34.6-7, 6.45.31-33, 8.66.10, 7.6.3. AV.-6.2.6.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*- 7.6.3.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*-8.66.10.

¹⁵⁵ Ni. -6.26.

¹⁵⁶ RV-6.45.31-33.

¹⁵⁷ Śāṅkh. Ś. Sū. -16.11.11.

¹⁵⁸ RV-6.51.14.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*-10.108.2.

appears to symbolise their ownership of irrigation systems in the countryside, and their mastery of cows appears to stand for their lien on the cattle riches of rural populations. They spread a wide monetary net in the villages by establishing and managing waterworks, extending loans to individuals at high interest rates, and attaching their animals as collateral. In the cities, they also hired workers in a regular manner and controlled industrial production. According to the sources, the Dāsas or Dasyus, also known as Paṇis, represented commercial classes of the city. They practiced commerce and usury, and monopolised economic resources of the country. Their dominance over water appears to symbolise their ownership of irrigation systems in the countryside, and their mastery of cows appears to stand for their lien on the cattle riches of rural populations. They spread a wide monetary net in the villages by establishing and managing waterworks, extending loans to individuals at high interest rates, and attaching their animals as collateral. In the cities, they also hired workers in a regular manner and controlled industrial production.¹⁶⁰

According to the *Ṛgveda*, the adversaries of the Paṇis sought after cattle and fertile fields. In one mantra, a poet praises Indra, saying: ‘Desiring the cattle, he charged against the mountain, guided by divine law and accompanied by righteous allies. He shattered the unbreakable ridge of Vala. With powerful words, Indra conquered the Paṇis.’¹⁶¹ Indra is implored by another sage to grant wealth that, with might, overcomes foes in battle, much like heaven surpasses earth. Wealth that brings thousands and secures the corn-lands is requested, along with strength to vanquish enemies.¹⁶² Divodāsa, an early hero who leads the assault against the Paṇis, is given the title ‘Ṛṇa-cyuta’, meaning ‘canceller

¹⁶⁰ Buddhaprakash, *Ṛgveda and Indus Valley Civilization*, pp.86-87.

¹⁶¹ RV-6.39.2.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*-6.20.1.

of debts.’ It is said that fierce Divodāsa was bestowed upon Vadhryaśva as a gift when proper offerings were made, and the destruction of the miserly was accomplished through the blessings of Sarasvatī.¹⁶³ Haricharan Bandyopadhyay identifies Paṇis as a group of Vedic people who founded the Indus Valley civilisation and practiced Vedic sacrifice. They were traders and rivals to the Vedic gods. Those sacrifice altars may belong to these folks. Parśu, Mādhya, and Māyis were another tribe of Asuras that advanced their civilisation to the west of the Indus valley. Parśus were the progenitors of the Parsis and the nation named after them, Persia. These individuals were also the founders of the Finnish and Midiyan civilisations.¹⁶⁴

The second major Pre-Aryan group mentioned in the Vedas is the Asuras. The term Asura appears several times in the *Ṛgveda*. It is derived from the Sanskrit root ‘As’, meaning ‘to throw’. Sāyanācārya explains it as ‘असुरः असु क्षेपणे अस्यति शत्रुन् इत्यसुरः। असेरुन्’,¹⁶⁵ meaning ‘Asura’ refers to an ‘evil thrower’ or ‘enemy-destroyer’. Rudra was a prominent Asura, with others serving as his companions or devotees.¹⁶⁶ Indra and Viṣṇu destroyed the cities of Śambara and killed hundreds of thousands of Varci’s brave warriors.¹⁶⁷ After defeating these Asuras, Indra,¹⁶⁸ Agni,¹⁶⁹ and Sūrya¹⁷⁰ earned the titles ‘असुरहा’ and ‘असुरघ्नः’ (slayer of Asuras). In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and *Taittīriya Brāhmaṇa*, the Asuras are associated with night and darkness.¹⁷¹ In the later Vedic period, the

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*-6.61.1.

¹⁶⁴ Rajat Pal, *Āryadigante Sindhusabhyatā*, p.238-39.

¹⁶⁵ RV-1.35.7.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*-5.42.11

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*-7.99.5.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*-6.22.4.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*-7.13.1.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*-10.170.2.

¹⁷¹ Ś.Br.-2.4.2.5; T.Br.-1.59.2.

word ‘Asura’ came to be used in the sense of ‘evil’. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* refers to the Asuras as Rākṣasas, describing them as enemies of the Devas, both born from the same father, Kaśyapa. These Asuras were said to inhabit the lower valley of Mount Meru, with Parāvasu serving as the Hotṛ (priest).¹⁷² The text also mentions notable Asuras like Namuci, Svarvānu, and Kālakāṅga, suggesting that the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* may have been composed during the time of Asura dominance. Although the languages of the Asuras and Devas originated from the same root, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*¹⁷³ condemns the Asura language and advises against polluting the language of the Devas.

In the *Mahābhārata*,¹⁷⁴ the Asuras are referred to as ‘Pūrvadeva’, meaning ‘elders of the Devas’. This suggests that they may have been the first Aryans to arrive in India or possibly the Alpine Indo-Europeans. The expansion of the Nordic Indo-Europeans, or later Aryans, is believed to have forced the Asuras to leave the Indus-Sarasvatī Valley. The priests who worshipped the Asuras rejected the Vedic devotion to Indra. Some of these dissenters left Vedic society and migrated toward Persia, promoting the veneration of the Sun and the maintenance of the sacred fire associated with weaponry and iron production. They proclaimed the greatness of the Asuras (Asurāḥ Mahatāḥ). Ahura Mazda, the chief deity of Zoroastrianism, is credited with creating the *Zend Avesta*. This Asura culture extended its influence even further. Scholars have suggested that certain place names in the Middle East—such as Asia, Asia Minor, Assyria, and Syria—may trace their origins back to the Asuras, similar to names found in regions like Singhbhum’s Asurgarh and Bankura’s Ban-Asuria.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Ś.Br.-3.2.1.4.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*-3.2.1.24.

¹⁷⁴ Mbh, Śānti.P.-337.44.

¹⁷⁵ Rajat Pal, *Āryadigante Sindhusabhyatā*, p.148.

The third and fourth group are Dāsas and Dasyus. The Vedic foes of Indra, Dasyus and the dark-skinned Dāsas, raise a more severe concern which we must now address.¹⁷⁶ In the Avestan, the term ‘Dasyu’ appears as ‘Dainyu’, ‘Dakhyu’, and ‘Daqyu’. It also appears as ‘Dahyu’ in the inscriptions of the Achaemenian rulers.¹⁷⁷ This term is synonymous with the name of the Dahae tribe, according to Meyer and Hillebrandt, who describe them as ‘nearly akin to the Iranians in the Kirghiz-Turkman steppe, which extends from the Caspian Sea beyond the Jaxartes or Syr Darya’.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, it seems that the term ‘Dahyu’ or ‘Dasyu’ is of Iranian origin, referring to a country or a people, similar to how ‘Pārs’ denotes Persia and ‘Māda’ refers to Media. Other evidence makes it abundantly evident that the term ‘Dasyu’, or its derivative ‘Dāsa’, does not denote an ethnic group distinct from the so-called Aryans. The Veda refers to Agni as the grandson of Tvaṣṭṛ, and Indra as his son.¹⁷⁹ Vṛtra is also the son of Tvastr. Therefore, Indra and Vṛtra are brothers. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmana*,¹⁸⁰ Vṛtra is specifically referred to as a Dasyu. Indra is the brother of Vṛtra, both being the sons of Tvaṣṭṛ. Therefore, from this point of view, Indra Agni and Indra are admittedly Aryans. Hence, there is no ethnic difference between a Dasyu and an Aryan. Indra is accused of stripping the Dasyus of their ‘Ārya’ dignity.¹⁸¹ This demonstrates that the ‘Ārya’ and the Dāsa were not different ethnic groups. D.R. Bhandarkar and Hillebrandt claimed that Sudās and Divodāsa were Dāsas. According to Bhandarkar, Dāsas were the Ṛgvedic heroes Divodāsa and Sudās, who are claimed to have received assistance from the Vedic gods. Furthermore, Sudās was the grandson of Divodāsa Atithigva. Additionally, it appears that

¹⁷⁶ RV -1.51.5.

¹⁷⁷ Sukumar Sen, *Old Persian Inscriptions*, p.12.

¹⁷⁸ E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, Vol. 1, Section 425, p.525; Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, Vol. 1, pp.94-116.

¹⁷⁹ A.A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, pp.57 and 116.

¹⁸⁰ Ś.Br.- 1.6.3.13.

¹⁸¹ RV – 10.49.3.

Hillebrandt was correct to understand the name as the ‘heavenly Dāsa’ and to assume that he was a Dāsa himself.¹⁸²

2.7. Relationship between Pre-Aryan and Indus Valley Civilisations

Researchers have found several parallels between the Pre-Aryan civilisation mentioned in Vedic literature and the Indus Valley Civilisation. These discoveries point to a probable relationship or contact between the two cultures, including similarities in their social structures, religious rites, and material culture. These connections continue to spark debate regarding the nature of the link between these civilisations, implying cultural interchange or continuity.

2.7.1. Religious thoughts of Pre-Aryan people: Several terracotta little women sculptures were discovered at Mohenjo-Dāro, Harappa, Chanhu-Dāro, Balochistan, and other Indus valley sites, while the statues from the Indus Valley and Balochistan differed slightly in their structure and manufacturing technique. According to specialists such as M.S. Vats, Sir Mortimer Wheeler, R.C. Majumdar, J. Marshall, M.A. Stein, E.J.H. Mackey, and others, these statues represent ‘Śakti’.¹⁸³ the mother goddess. A seal discovered in Harappa, the place where nature first sprang from the womb of a goddess. In the *Ṛgveda*, there is a prayer dedicated to the goddess Aditi,¹⁸⁴ and an entire hymn focused on goddess worship, or ‘Śakti’ worship. D.D. Kosambi suggests that Ūṣa was the mother goddess of the Indus Valley civilisation, who was later humiliated by the Vedic god Indra.¹⁸⁵ The *Ṛgveda*¹⁸⁶ narrates how Indra abducted Ūṣa before destroying

¹⁸² D.R. Bhandarkar, *Some Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture*, p.4.

¹⁸³ Rajat Pal, *Āryadigante Sindhusabhyatā*, p.209.

¹⁸⁴ RV- 10.72.3-4.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*- 4.30.8-11; 2.15.6; 10.73.6; 10.138.5.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*-2.20.5.

the ancient stronghold of the Asura Aśna, implying a possible connection between Ūṣa and these Pre-Aryan peoples. Ūṣa may have served as their protector or chief deity. Another section of the *Ṛgveda* details Ūṣa's defeat, during which her chariot was shattered by Indra along the banks of the Vipāśā River. In the aftermath of this defeat, Ūṣa, gripped by fear, abandoned her chariot and fled.¹⁸⁷ This account suggests that Ūṣa could have been a mother goddess associated with nature and agriculture, worshipped by the non-Vedic people. Conversely, Aditi is described as the mother of the Devas,¹⁸⁸ positioning her in direct opposition to Ūṣa. Consequently, Indra had to banish both Ūṣa and her followers. The rivalry between Ūṣa and Aditi is also alluded to within the *Ṛgveda*.¹⁸⁹

R. Briffault, in his book *The Mothers*, shows that emphasis on the reproductive organs as symbols of productivity is evident, with special importance being placed on them in relation to fertility. Vats, Marshall, Wheeler, and Piggot discovered many 'Lingam' and 'Yonis' sculptures, indicating a religious element to the Indus Valley culture. Mother worship, yoga practices, symbol worship, and other subsequent religious activities sprang from these Harappan beliefs. According to Kosambi¹⁹⁰ and other researchers, they attempted to connect the tantrik sign with these Harappan symbols. This theological thinking may have influenced the Sāṅkhya doctrine of the Prakṛti-Puruṣa. In the adjacent Trench Ai, a stone lingam was discovered 5 feet 6 inches below the surface. Since then, two larger stone lingams have been found in Trenches III and IV of the mounds, both of which are smoother in texture. The

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*-4.30.9-11.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*-2.28.3, 2.30.2, 3.4.11, 4.18.4, 7.2.11, 7.20.5, 8.18.5, 10.72.8, 10.185.3; AV-3.8.2; 11.1.11.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*- 1.113.19- 'माता देवानामदिते आनीकम्'

¹⁹⁰ D.D. Kosambi. *An Introduction to the study of Indian History*. pp.42-45.

lingam from Trench Ai is 11 inches tall with a base diameter of 7 3/8 inches, and its surface is rough throughout.¹⁹¹

A few fire altars have been discovered in the Indian subcontinent, particularly before 1500-2000 BCE. There are three key reasons behind this- 1. Not everyone has the right to offer a sacrifice. 2. The Asura tribe performed merely a few Atharvavedic sacrifice ceremonies. 3. The initial stage of the sacrificial ritual does not require any form of fire altar.¹⁹²

The earliest mention of fire worship in India is found in the Vedic texts, which refer to three types of fires: 'Gārhapatya', 'Āhavaniya', and 'Dakṣiṇāgni'. The *Ṛgveda* specifically mentions the 'Gārhapatya'¹⁹³ fire and the three 'Savanas'.¹⁹⁴

Evidence of early domestic fire worship at Lothal comes from a house (Str. 12) dating to phase II a. In phase III, a fire altar made of burnt bricks was constructed in a public area. One such altar (96), previously described and located on Street 9, appears to have been used for communal fire worship. Whether this structure was used solely for offerings of milk to the fire, as in the Agnihotra, or for sacrifices, as in the Darśapurnamāsa, is unclear. However, in the absence of animal remains or other objects typically associated with animal sacrifices, it is assumed that the altar was meant for communal fire rituals.

Additionally, two fire altars with rectangular mud brick walls, dating to phase IV, were found along with two sturdy water pots in SRG 2, C17-18 (175). The hall containing altars in this house (Pl.X) might correspond to the 'Agnīśāla' mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*.¹⁹⁵ Another structure, a circular enclosure near

¹⁹¹ M.S. Vats, *Excavation at Harappa*, Vol.1, pp.51-52.

¹⁹² *ṚV.*-1.83.4.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*-1.15.12; 3.28.1.

¹⁹⁴ P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmasāstra*, Vol.2, p. 981.

¹⁹⁵ *AV*-9.3.7.

the same house (Pl. LIII A), was also likely used for ritual purposes.¹⁹⁶ According to R.S. Sharma, they might have functioned as community ovens, with fuel delivered directly from above. The enormous building may have been a fireplace; however, its exact use is unknown. The excavator attributes the first traces of a fire altar to Lothal II A.¹⁹⁷

Seven structures at Kalibangan have been labelled as ‘fire altars’ due to the lack of a more fitting term, although their forms are not clearly defined.¹⁹⁸ Interestingly, all these ‘altars’ are located adjacent to a scorched brick wall.¹⁹⁹ The ritual texts do not specify the exact locations for fire altars (Citi, Agnyādhāna), making the application of the term ‘fire altar’ to these structures somewhat questionable. Even the excavator, B.B. Lal, does not clearly express his opinion on their nature. Additionally, these constructions seem to have appeared toward the end of the Harappan settlement²⁰⁰ in Kalibangan around 1650 BC,²⁰¹ and their existence is believed to be connected to Vedic influences.²⁰² Regardless of their origin, the fire altars discovered at Lothal and Kalibangan are viewed with suspicion.²⁰³

2.7.2. Remains of Horse and Chariot Pre-Aryans: Michel Danino, in *The Horse and The Aryan Debate*, discusses horse remains found at Malaban, Lothal, and Harappa. B. B. Lal²⁰⁴ notes that bones and teeth of horses have been

¹⁹⁶ S.R. Rao, *Lothal: A Harappan Port town*, Part. 1, p. 217.

¹⁹⁷ R.S. Sharma, *Looking for the Aryans*, p.46.

¹⁹⁸ B.B. Lal, “Some reflections on the structural remains at Kalibangan”, in B.B. Lal and S.P. Gupta (eds), *Frontiers of the Indus Civilization*, Books and Books, New Delhi, 1984, p. 57.

¹⁹⁹ *Loc.cit.*

²⁰⁰ B.K. Thapar, “Synthesis of the multiple data as obtained from Kalibangan”, in D.P. Agrawal and A. Ghosh (Eds.) *Radiocarbon and Indian Archaeology*, 1973, p. 273.

²⁰¹ The uncalibrated radiocarbon date for the end of the Kalibangan settlement is 1665-110 BC.

²⁰² Bridget and Raymond Allchin, *The Rise of Civilization in India and Pakistan*, 1983, p. 303.

²⁰³ *An Encyclopaedia of Indian Archaeology*. Ed. A. Ghosh, 1989, Vol.1, p.188.

²⁰⁴ B.B. Lal, *The Earliest Civilization of South-Asia*, 1997.

discovered at sites like Kalibangan, Roopar, Malaban, and Lothal. M. Wheeler earlier connected horses to the Indus Valley, suggesting that ‘camel, horse, and ass were likely familiar features of the Indus caravan’.²⁰⁵ The Harappan subsistence patterns at Shikarpur in Gujarat have also been examined,²⁰⁶ with J. P. Joshi reporting the recovery of a significant number of horse bones (*Equus caballus* Linn.) from all three periods at Surkotda.²⁰⁷ R.S. Sharma and other researchers have questioned whether horses still exist near Surkotda. Sandor Bokonyi, a Hungarian archaeologist, verifies that these remain with horses. True horses (*Equus caballus* L.) were identified by the enamel pattern of the upper and lower cheek and teeth, as well as the size and shape of the incisors and phalanges (toe bones). The domestic character of the Surkotda horses is undeniable, given that no wild horses survived in India in post-Pleistocene period. This is further reinforced by an inner-maxilla fragment whose incisor tooth exhibits strong symptoms of crib biting, a poor habit found exclusively in domestic horses that are not heavily exploited in battle.²⁰⁸

According to Aryan Migration theories, the few horse-remains do not justify the connection between Harappan sites and Aryan culture.

According to Romila Thapar,²⁰⁹ the wheel and chariot arrived with the Aryans around 1500 BCE. According to M. Witzel,²¹⁰ the initial glimpse of (the invading Aryans) thriving chariots must have terrified the natives. Danino²¹¹ challenges the claim that Witzel is a reflection of racist notions from the

²⁰⁵ M. Wheeler, *The Indus Civilization*, p.92.

²⁰⁶ *Faunal Remains from Prehistoric Sites: Proceedings of the Workshop on Faunal Remains from Archaeological Sites*, P.K. Thomas and P.P. Joglekar. (Eds.) 1995.

²⁰⁷ Jagat Pati Joshi, *Excavations at Surkotda and exploration in Kutch*, 1990.

²⁰⁸ Sandor Bokonyi, 1993, in his report to Director General of ASI, quoted by B.B. Lal in *The Earliest Civilization of South Asia*, page-162.

²⁰⁹ Romila Thapar, *Cultural pasts*, 2000, p.1131.

²¹⁰ Michael Witzel, *Early Indian History: Linguistic and textual parameters*, 1995.

²¹¹ M. Danino, *The horse and the Aryan Debate*, 2006.

nineteenth century. The Harappans were unaware of the usage of spoked wheels. As a result, the Non-Aryans were easily defeated by the Aryans, who possessed quicker and stronger spoked wheeled horse-driven chariots. However, terracotta spoked wheels were discovered in Rakhigarhi and Banawali. L.S. Rao reports that the Harappan spoked wheels shook through the streets of Bhirrana, District Fatehabad, Haryana.²¹² In 2018, three chariots dating from 2000-1800 BCE were discovered in Sinauli, Uttar Pradesh. It provides another piece of evidence for Aryan Migration theorists to consider on Sindhu-Sarasvatī civilisation.²¹³

2.7.3. City and Villages: Some recent studies have discovered evidence of Aryan civilisation in Kalibangan and Kunal. According to B.B. Lal, Harappan and Vedic cultures both had urban and rural villages. The urban sites deny that the Indus Valley civilisation was Non-Aryan. *R̥gveda* mentions the term ‘Pura’ or city multiple times.²¹⁴ Indra has also been referred to as ‘Purandara’ on various occasions.

Griffith claims that the Iron Castle was referenced in *R̥gveda*.²¹⁵ However, it is debatable if iron was known to *R̥gvedic* people. Buddhaprakash Jain²¹⁶ emphasises that these towns were not composed of iron, but rather of over-burnt black bricks. Several towns dating from 3000-1700 B.C. were discovered near Swat Valley Ghalegay in Pakistan, and these may have been the homes of early Vedic people. Several sources describe many homes and palaces.²¹⁷

²¹² L.S. Rao, “The Harappan Spoked Wheels Rattled down the streets of Bhirrana” in *Puratattwa*, No. 36, 2005-06.

²¹³ Rajat Pal, *Āryadigante Sindhusabhyatā*, p.248-49.

²¹⁴ RV- 1.176.8, 4.16.13, 4.31.20.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*-10.101.8; 7.3.7; 7.15.14; 7.95.1.

²¹⁶ Buddhaprakash, *R̥gveda and Indus Valley Civilization*, p.66.

²¹⁷ RV-1.191.10; 5.62.6; 7.55.6; 7.88.5; 7.173.10.

2.7.4. Anthropological Evidences: Researcher such as D.K. Sen in his *Ancient India*, discovered significant information after analysing the twenty-six skeletons from the Mohenjo-Dāro site.

Groups	No. of Skeletons	Groups	No. of Skeletons
Proto-Australoid	3	Mongoloid	1
Mediterranean	6	Alpine	1
Unidentified	11		

Unidentified skeletons are not associated with the Dravidian group. However, seven of the other eleven skeletons are from the Mediterranean and Alpine groups, accounting for about 30% of the total number. If we include Proto-Australoid and Mongoloid in the Non-Aryan category, they account for over 15% of the bones. Near Harappa, Chanhu-Dāro and Lothal, four distinct types of skeletons were discovered: Mediterranean, Proto-Australoid, Mongoloid, and Alpine. After doing extensive research on the unidentified remains, D.K. Sen concludes in *Ancient India* that they are middle in height, had a wide nose, and a high skull, and were the founders of Harappan civilisation. However, the majority of historians criticised this notion. They might be working-class individuals or Non-Aryan Dāsas.²¹⁸ Asuras also recruited several Dāsas.

A.H. Dani²¹⁹ based on a study of Bernhard, claims that the majority of the twenty-five skulls discovered in the Gāndhār area are of Mediterranean people and its subtypes, while the others are comparable to Caucasian, Volga, and north-eastern Iranian people. Gāndhār is also classified as an adobe of Vedic Aryan between 2000-1500 B.C.E. However, the aforementioned anthropological data demonstrates no distinction between Harappans, Gāndhār

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*-2.12.8; 8.51.2.

²¹⁹ A.H. Dani & V.M. Masson, *History of civilisation of Central Asia*, p.417.

and Vedic people.²²⁰ Nevertheless, K.R.N. Kennedy and J.R. Lucas found significant similarities between the human remains of Harappa and Gāndhāra have been noted.

2.7.5. Irrigation System: The structured irrigation and agricultural system that the non-Vedic Indus Valley people possessed may be destroyed. D.D. Kosambi attributed the destruction of the Indus Valley civilisation to the Vedic people. In order to support his claim that Vedic Aryans destroyed river dams and disrupted the agricultural system, he also cited a number of Ṛgvedic mantras.²²¹ D.D. Kosambi, C. Benveniste, and L. Renou claim that the meaning of Vṛtra was ‘obstacle’, ‘barrage’, or ‘bloquage’.²²² Vṛtra is defined by M. Winternitz and A.A. MacDonnell as ‘obstructor’. In *Ṛgveda* 2.15.8: ‘रिणक् रोधांसि कृत्रिमाणि’ means ‘he removed artificial barriers’ which makes it clear. ‘रोधस्’ in elsewhere in *Ṛgveda*, as in later Sanskrit. Indra is praised for restoring to its natural course the river Vibālī, which had flooded land along its banks. In other words, in order to produce the silt deposit that would act as a fertiliser when the harrow was used, the Pre-Aryan system of agriculture relied on natural floods and flooding the areas along the banks of minor rivers via the use of seasonal dams (without typical brickwork).²²³ The western portions of the districts under study still include these prehistoric dams, which D.D. Kosambi compares to Gebr-band dams.²²⁴

²²⁰ Rajat Pal, *Āryadigante Sindhusabhyatā*, pp. 256-257.

²²¹ RV-4.19.4-8; 2.15.3,8; 5.32.2.

²²² D.D. Kosambi, *An Introduction to the study of Indian History*, pp.70-71.

²²³ RV. 5.32.2.

²²⁴ An irrigation system used involved bunding including the construction of a low earthen or stone wall, known as Kach or Gabarband. There are many Garbandhs in Sindh Kohistan, Kirthar area and Belochistan (Gedrosia). Gabarband means a ‘Zoroastrian Dam’ because Gabars are Zoroastrians or fire-worshippers. Gabarbands...are L-shaped, were used to slow down the flow of water in a stream, and to direct the flood waters and to allow the build up of alluvium behind the structures...The Gabarbands ensured the conservation of soil and created an agricultural field with alluvial soil. –

S. Kalyanraman, *Sarasvatī River*, Vol.3, pp.32-33.

2.7.6. Language: The south-western coast of India is home to Malayalam, which scholars consider a branch of Old Tamil, spoken from Cannanore to Cape Comorin. Similarly, Kodagu, the language of Coorg, is regarded by some as a dialect of Kannada. Brāhūī, located in Central Balochistan, represents the northernmost Dravidian language. Other northern Dravidian languages include those spoken by the Malers of Chotanagpur. These two tribes migrated northward during historical times, adopting Dravidian languages, customs, and ways of life.²²⁵

In regions south of the Narmada River, various indigenous tribes have adopted Dravidian languages, religions, and customs, with some subsequently migrating northward. Currently, the Bhils, Minas, and Mairs of Rajasthan speak dialects of Aryan languages.²²⁶ While the four primary Dravidian literary languages are widely recognised, they are not the only ones. For instance, several thousand tribal people in south-western Bengal and Jharkhand speak Malto, a Dravidian language. Significant Dravidian tribal languages in Central India include various dialects of Gondi. Interestingly, Brāhūī, a Dravidian language, is spoken in the Kelat region of the north-western subcontinent, yet its speakers do not exhibit Dravidian ethnic characteristics, making them difficult to distinguish from other local populations. In contrast to the literary Dravidian languages of South India, these tribal Dravidian languages preserve older linguistic forms. Notably, the oldest Dravidian literature, Tamil Sangam poetry from the early Christian centuries, is more modern in form compared to the contemporary variants of Brāhūī and Gondi.²²⁷

The Dravidian languages are characterised by a distinctive richness in retroflex sounds, which are significantly more prevalent in these languages

²²⁵ R.D. Banerjee, *Prehistoric, Ancient and Hindu India*, p.10.

²²⁶ *Ibid.* p.12.

²²⁷ A.L. Basham, *Studies in Indian history and Culture*. p.22.

compared to Indo-Aryan languages. It has been demonstrated by philologists that a considerable number of Sanskrit terms are direct borrowings from Dravidian sources.²²⁸ A.L. Basham has noted that, while it cannot be definitively established, it is suggested that the speakers of Harappan culture may have communicated in a Dravidian language.²²⁹

Significant discoveries have been made during recent excavations at Keezhadi village in Tamil Nadu (2017–2022). According to research conducted by the Tamil Archaeological Department, the Indus scripts are considered to be the oldest scripts in India, dating back approximately 4,500 years. It is posited that between the decline of the Indus script and the emergence of the Brāhmī script, a form of writing referred to as graffiti markings evolved from the Indus script prior to the introduction of Brāhmī.²³⁰ This assertion supports the theory regarding the Dravidian ancestry of the Indus Valley civilisation.

John R. Marr has argued that it is more plausible for the Brāhūī to be viewed as a remnant group rather than as a result of an unlikely migration from Dravidian-speaking regions located around 800 miles away, especially given their transition from a stable agricultural system to a challenging, nomadic pastoral lifestyle.²³¹

Current evidence suggests that it is unlikely Dravidian languages and their speakers have been present in India since the dawn of humanity or that they arrived as invaders, akin to the Indo-Aryans and their languages. The agglutinative structure of Dravidian languages has led to linguistic associations

²²⁸ *Loc.cit.*

²²⁹ A.L. Basham, *Studies in Indian history and Culture*. p.23.

²³⁰ Time Travel Editor, *Keezhadi Excavation in Tamil Nadu leads to a major discovery*, Times of India/times travel, 25 September 2019.

²³¹ John R. Marr. “The Early Dravidians”. *A Cultural History of India*. Ed. A.L. Basham. p.31.

with Basque and Caucasian languages. The theory proposed by Caldwell²³² and Rask, which posits that Dravidian is related to languages historically referred to as Scythian (now commonly known as Turkic and Finno-Ugrian), is regarded as the most widely accepted connection to foreign languages.

The languages spoken by various Stone Age societies in India remain largely unknown, and the coexistence of these languages with more advanced cultures presents additional challenges. The megalithic culture in South India has been recognised as offering intriguing archaeological connections to the tenuous notion of Dravidian links with the Mediterranean, although this connection is believed to date no earlier than 200 B.C.²³³ Potential links between the Sialk B tombs in Iran and Mediterranean and Caucasian megaliths at sites such as Brahmagiri have been observed by Gordon Childe, suggesting these connections may have been established via maritime routes.²³⁴

While assigning Dravidian speech to a specific racial type is considered speculative, it has been proposed that brachycephalic Armenoid types, with affinities to Armenia, Anatolia, and Iran, may have introduced the Dravidian language to India. Consequently, although plausible hypotheses based on linguistic, cultural, and anthropological research have been advanced, indicating that Dravidian languages may have originated outside of India, particularly in Western Asia, there is currently no concrete evidence to support the claim that Dravidian languages originated outside the subcontinent,²³⁵ apart

²³² R. Caldwell, *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South-Indian Family of Languages*, 3rd ed., pp. 61 ff.

²³³ S. Piggott, *Prehistoric India*, p.38.

²³⁴ V. Gordon Childe, "Megaliths" in *Ancient India*, No. 4 (1947-1948). The antiquity and importance of the sea link between southern peninsular India and the Middle East (and later, via the Middle East, with the Roman Empire) cannot be exaggerated.

²³⁵ Comparable, for example, with the close affinities with Vedic Sanskrit of Old Iranian, both linguistically and in subject-matter of hymns.

from the evidence presented by Brāhūī. ²³⁶ It is highly probable that during the same or a similar migration of South Indian people to the Northwest, a group settled in Balochistan and contributed their languages to the Brāhūīs. However, there is no certainty that these individuals resided there during the third or second millennium B.C. ²³⁷

T. Burrow and others were primarily focused on demonstrating the possibilities or probabilities of borrowing, particularly in the oldest Indo-Aryan texts. It is asserted by S.K. Chatterji that the subject in question represents a surviving fragment of a once widespread Dravidian tract that extended from Balochistan and Sindh through Rajasthan and Malwa into present-day Maratha country and the Dravidian regions of the south. Furthermore, this tract is believed to have extended north and northeast into the Punjab and the Ganges Valley, and possibly northwest through Afghanistan to Iran. It extended from Balochistan and Sind through Rajasthan and Malwa into the present-day Maratha country and the Dravidian lands of the south. ²³⁸ F. Southworth has undertaken a different approach in his work, aiming to demonstrate the various types of contact that can be inferred from the evidence of linguistic borrowing. ²³⁹ Alongside other types of evidence, it may eventually be feasible to reconstruct the social conditions and linguistic impacts of the earliest interactions between Dravidian and Indo-Aryan languages. According to Southworth, the Dravidian verb mentioned here is the standard and most frequently used term for ‘die’ across most Dravidian languages, appearing in all branches; thus, it is undoubtedly the term for ‘die’ in Proto-Dravidian.

²³⁶ John R. Marr. “The Early Dravidians”. *A Cultural History of India*. Ed. A.L. Basham. p.33.

²³⁷ Buddha Prakash, *Rgveda and The Indus Valley Civilization*, p.18.

²³⁸ S.K. Chatterji, “Race Movements and Prehistoric Culture”, *The Vedic Age*, p.157.

²³⁹ F. Southworth, *Linguistic Archaeology of South Asia*, p. 70 ff.

1. *śava*- ‘corpse’ (*Ṛgveda*) Ta. *cā*- ‘die’; Ko. *cav*- ‘corpse’.

Dravidian words likely influenced the semantic development of certain Indo-Aryan terms. According to Southworth, the following example could be one of the most important instances illustrating this interaction.

2. *tanū* – ‘body, person, self’ (*Ṛgveda*) Ta. *tāṇ/ taṇ* – ‘oneself’.
(also used as reflexive pronoun)

This example might be the result of an accidental resemblance, but it is worth noting that the Dravidian verb mentioned here is the common and most widely used word for ‘die’ across most Dravidian languages. It appears in all branches of the language family, making it undoubtedly the word for ‘die’ in Proto-Dravidian.²⁴⁰

3. *śava* – ‘corpse’ (*Ṛgveda*) Ta. *cā*- ‘die’; Ko. *cav*- ‘corpse’.

There could be a connection between the Indo-Aryan and Dravidian nouns in this case, though it is challenging to evaluate. It is also important to mention that both groups may have been familiar with this species before arriving on the Indian subcontinent.

4. *gardabha* – ‘ass’ (*Ṛgveda*) Ta. *kazutai* – ‘do’.

The examples below suggest the possibility of cross-cultural influences in the areas of religion and the paranormal.

5. *piśāca* – ‘demon’ (*Ṛgveda*) Ta. Pēy – ‘devil’, goblin, fiend;
[*piśāci* (*AV*)] madness, frenzy, etc.

²⁴⁰ F. Southworth, “Lexical Evidence for Early Contacts between Indo-Aryan and Dravidian”, *Indo-Aryan and Dravidian*, p.-197.

6. *māyā*- ‘supernatural power, skill’ (*Rgveda*); ‘illusion’ (*Ś.Br.*) Ta. *maya* – ‘mistake, misunderstand’; *mayakku*- ‘bewilder, confuse, fascinate, charm, etc.’.

The Dravidian Etymological Dictionary contains two additional items that may be related: Tamil *mata*- meaning ‘be furious, wanton, intoxicated, bewildered, etc.’) and Tamil *vayam* meaning ‘desire’; *vayā* referring to ‘desire, longings of pregnant women, etc.’. It is worth considering that the semantic evolution of the Indo-Aryan word may have been influenced by these Dravidian terms. The following item listed by Southworth could be the most significant example.

7. *tanū* – ‘body, person, self’ (RV) Ta. *tāṇ/ taṇ-* ‘oneself’ (also used as reflexive pronoun).

The word is deeply rooted in the Dravidian language family, appearing in nearly all its languages (including Brahui), and it also displays variation in the length of the stem vowels, a pattern seen in other pronouns as well.²⁴¹

2.8. Non-Aryan lifestyles as depicted in Vedas

When the Indo-Aryan priests realised they could neither conquer nor convert the *Māgadhas* and the *Andhras*, they began to adopt some of the Dravidian deities, rebranding them with Indo-Aryan names and incorporating them into their worship practices. Initially, these priests were viewed as outcasts; however, the inclusive nature of this worship fostered empathy among the Dravidian people, gradually integrating them into the Indo-Aryan religious framework.²⁴²

²⁴¹ Krishnamurti Bhadriraju. "Dravidian Personal Pronouns." *In Studies in Indian Linguistics*, 1968, pp. 189-205.

²⁴² R.D. Banerjee, *Prehistoric, Ancient and Hindu India*, p.32.

Historians such as Wheeler have referenced Rūgvedic hymns that describe the fall of fortified strongholds (Pura) and the antagonism of the Aryans towards the Dāsas or Dasyus, whom they associate with the Harappans. Nonetheless, they inconsistently dismissed references to the Vedic people as urban builders, farmers, and warriors involved in intertribal conflicts, contrasting them with the native non-Indo-European populations.²⁴³

2.9. Non-Aryan socio-economic status

The remnants of the Indus Valley Civilisation suggest that the immigrants encountered an economically wealthy and socially stratified population, with some degree of inequality likely arising from differences in wealth and occupation. Their spiritual lives were not entirely devoid of meaning.²⁴⁴ Therefore, it is not implausible that individuals who developed to such a high level of material culture were arranged in a well-defined social hierarchy. This theory is further supported by various kinds of housing.²⁴⁵ Archaeological discoveries of ‘seals’ from the Indus valley in Elam (Western Persia) and Sumer (lower Mesopotamia) have established trading ties with other centres of civilisation. Dravidians, or proto-Dravidians, constructed these cities. The limited human remains discovered so far suggest that during the late city period, individuals of the Mediterranean race were intermingling with ‘round-headed’ individuals from the Alpine race and possibly Proto-Mongols. According to T.P. Verma,²⁴⁶ while the terms Dāsas and Dasyus carry different meanings in later Sanskrit literature, they are often associated with the Aryas in the *R̥gveda*. It is stated that Indra should punish both groups equally. Western scholars who

²⁴³ Georg Feuerstein *et.al.* *In Search of the cradle of Civilization*, Ch. 6, p.102.

²⁴⁴ K. G. Goswami, *Prāgaitihāsik Mohenjodaro*, pp.141-42; D.D. Kosambi, *An Introduction to Study of Indian History*, p.55; S. Piggott, *Pre-historic India*, pp.168-70;

²⁴⁵ P. Mukherjee, *Beyond the Four Varṇas*, p.23.

²⁴⁶ T.P. Verma, “A New Aspect of Sarasvatī Civilization”. *Vedic river Sarasvati and Hindu Civilization*. p.188.

pioneered Vedic studies have portrayed them as black-skinned aborigines in contrast to the fair-complexioned Aryas. They are described as ‘Anāsa’ (possibly meaning noseless) and ‘Mṛḍhra-vāc’ (someone who speaks in a contemptuous or hostile manner). Sāyaṇa interprets ‘Mṛḍhra-vac’ as ‘of hostile speech’, while Geldner translates it as ‘of wrong speech’.²⁴⁷

Aryan and Dasyus may not have been very different linguistically, according to R.S. Sharma.²⁴⁸ I have also discovered several Dāsas and Dasyus names that the Aryans, like Śambara, recognised. How could Aryans recognise their names if they could not comprehend their speech? As a result, it may be assumed that both groups were acquainted or that both groups spoke the same language but with somewhat distinct accents. In *Ṛgveda*, there are several mantras place Aryans and Dāsas in a common file as enemies of Indra.²⁴⁹

If the phrase ‘Vṛṣāsipra’ is used to describe the Dāsas²⁵⁰ as ‘bull-lipped’ or having large projecting lips, and the word ‘Anāsa’ is used to describe the Dasyus as ‘noseless’ or having a flat nose, then it would seem that the adversaries of the Aryans were physiologically different. The term ‘Mṛḍhravāc’, which appears in the *Ṛgveda*²⁵¹ in a few distinct forms, provides some insight into the differences in speech patterns between the Aryans and their enemies. It qualifies Dasyus at two places²⁵² Sāyaṇa explains it as ‘of hostile speech’.²⁵³

The Dāsas and Dasyus are never explicitly called ‘Śiśnadeva’. Since the history of the Ilā dynasty spans a broader geographical area, it is relevant to reference Zimmer, Meyer, and Hillebrandt, as noted by the authors of the *Vedic*

²⁴⁷ RV-1.74.2, Geldner translates ‘Mṛḍhravācaḥ’ as ‘miss rendered’.

²⁴⁸ R.S. Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, p.16.

²⁴⁹ RV-6.33.3, 60.6; 10.83.1, 88.3, 102.3; AV-4.32.1, 20.36.10.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*-7.99.4.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*-1.174.2; 5.29.10, 32.8; 7.6.3, 18.13. etc.

²⁵² *Ibid.*-5.29.10; 7.6.3.

²⁵³ R.S. Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, p.15-16.

Index. They explain that ‘Dāsa’ originally meant ‘enemy’ in a general sense, later evolving in Iran to denote the Dahae of the Caspian steppes, and in India becoming a term for the indigenous people. Hillebrandt, on the other hand, argues that, since the Dāsas and Paṇis are mentioned together, they should be considered closely related tribes. He identifies the Paṇis with the Parnians and the Dāsas of the *Ṛgveda* with the Dahae. This interpretation, when viewed in the context of the *Ṛgvedic* dialogue between Saramā and the Paṇis, expands the geographical scope of these events, moving the setting to the north of the Caspian Sea. However, *Avesta* has mentioned a river Raṇhā, which is a counterpart of vedic river Rasā, is sometimes placed in Afghanistan. The expression ‘at the sources or on the waters’ of the Raṇhā or Rasā would therefore suggest, in both texts, a mountainous region, likely referring to areas such as the Pamir (upper Indus, Kohistan, Hunza, Waxān or Chitral), with its notable peaks like Mount Meru and the prominent Tirich Mir (standing at 7,708 meters). It could also refer to the Hindukush or Paropamisus mountain ranges. These high-altitude regions, which are difficult to access, were inhabited by unfamiliar or enigmatic peoples.²⁵⁴ It is worth noting that the Ṛṣis of this hymn belong to the ‘Asura group of Paṇis,’ which is unusual. Some scholars have questioned the idea of Asuras serving as Ṛṣis for a Vedic hymn.²⁵⁵ The geographical setting of the dialogue is believed to be in that region. The identification of the Dahae of the Caspian steppe as the *Ṛgvedic* Dāsas is supported by the reference to the ‘Sapta Purāḥ Śāradīyāḥ’ as ‘seven winter cities,’ which would be suitable for cold regions. These cities were fortified, with ramparts (referred to as Dehyaḥ’, meaning smeared or plastered).²⁵⁶ Archaeological findings seem to confirm these features as well. The Dasyus

²⁵⁴ M. Witzel, "The Home of the Aryans". A. Hinze & E. Tichs (Eds.). *Festschrift fuer Johanna Narten zum*, Vol.70. p.29.

²⁵⁵ See the article by Viśvanātha Vedalaṅkāra in *Vedavāṇī*, Vol. 9, 1-2, Nov.-Dec. 1960, pp. 92

²⁵⁶ RV-6.47.2.

were also known for their strong cities, referred to as ‘Āyasī’ (iron-like towns).²⁵⁷

Additionally, the Indus is specifically mentioned in the Veda as the river along whose banks some of the Vedic composers resided.²⁵⁸ In one verse, Bhāvya is mentioned as ‘living on the Sindhu’ (Indus). Bhāvya is described as an Asura who, in times of trouble, greatly valued the religious services of the poet Kakṣivān.²⁵⁹

2.10. Indus Valley civilisation and its traces in Vedic Literature

Fairservis correctly argues that while the Indus Valley Civilisation is deeply Indian in character, its foundational roots are undeniably linked to Iran.²⁶⁰ Regarding the ethnic makeup of the Indus Valley inhabitants, no formal burials have been discovered at Mohenjo-Dāro. However, based on the analysis of skulls from individuals killed in the city’s streets, the population was evidently diverse. Among these remains, three skulls have been identified as proto-Australoid, six as Mediterranean, one as Mongoloid, and four possibly of Alpine origin. The skeletal features from Cemetery H at Harappa also bear similarities to the proto-Australoids found in Mohenjo-Dāro.

As S. Piggott observes, the Alpine racial type discovered in the Indus Valley is consistent with those found at Sialk in Iran. Similarly, the features of the so-called ‘priest’ or ‘yogin’, characterised by a full beard and a shaved upper lip, resemble the statuettes from the Shiraz region in Fars, dating back to the Jamdat Nasr period (3200-2800 B.C.). Based on these findings, Bedrich Hrozný

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*-2.20.8

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*-1.126.2.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*-1.126.2.

²⁶⁰ W. A. Fairservis, “The Harappan Civilization-New Evidence and More Theory”. *American Museum Novitates*, No. 2055, November 17, 1961, p. 11.

believes the Indus Valley population comprised a mixture of Semitic and Indo-European peoples.²⁶¹

There is a hypothesis that the authors of the Indus Valley Civilisation were Dravidians. H. Heras attempted to interpret the script on Indus Valley seals as an ancient form of Tamil, suggesting a Dravidian linguistic connection.²⁶² Similarly, S. K. Chatterji argued that the Indus Valley Civilisation had a distinctly Dravidian character.²⁶³ He noted the presence of the Brahui people in Balochistan, who speak a Dravidian language, as evidence that they are a surviving fragment of a once widespread Dravidian population. This population is thought to have stretched from Balochistan and Sindh, through Rajasthan and Malwa, into the Maratha regions and southern India, possibly extending north into Punjab, the Ganges Valley, and even into Afghanistan and Iran.²⁶⁴

However, it is important to note that while the Brāhūīs speak a Dravidian language, they are ethnically of Turko-Iranian origin and are distinct from the Dravidian peoples of central and southern India.²⁶⁵

2.10.1. The Burial Customs: Although limited information is available about the burial customs of the Indus people, it is believed that they practiced a variety of burial methods, including complete burials, fractional burials, and post-cremation burials. At Harappa, a cemetery known as R 37 and some burials in area G have been discovered, with Cemetery H dating to a later period. However, at Mohenjo-Dāro, no organised burial sites have been found. Instead, large, wide-mouthed urns containing smaller vessels, animal bones, bird or fish remains, and various small objects like beads, bangles, and figurines, sometimes

²⁶¹ Buddhaprakash, *R̥gveda and Indus Valley Civilisation*, pp.16-17.

²⁶² H. Heras, *Studies in Proto-Indo-Mediterranean Culture*. (Bombay, 1953).

²⁶³ B.L. Atreya, S.K. Chatterji and A. Danielou, *Indian Culture*, p. 44.

²⁶⁴ S.K. Chatterjee, "Race Movements and Pre-historic Culture", *The Vedic Age*, p.155.

²⁶⁵ Buddhaprakash, *R̥gveda and Indus Valley Civilisation*, p.18.

mixed with charcoal ashes, have been unearthed from house floors or streets, indicating cremation practices. This mirrors the Vedic tradition, which also featured both burials and cremation.

In *R̥gveda* 10.16, a ritual is described in which a goat and a bovine animal are sacrificed. The goat is offered to Agni, while the kidney of the cow is given to Yama's dogs and placed in the hands of the deceased.²⁶⁶ M.S. Vats observes a connection between these rituals and artifacts from Cemetery H at Harappa, where a jar depicting a goat and an image of a dog attacking a bovine (either a bull or cow) were discovered. Additionally, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (13.8) mentions the practice of burying the dead in closed graves, and the *Cāndogya Upaniṣad* (8.8.5) references the custom of adorning the deceased. In the case of cremation, the bones were gathered on either the third or tenth day and placed in urns, which were then buried in pits located in areas where water did not converge. When burial was practiced, the mentioned objects accompanied the deceased to the 'house of clay', as referenced in *R̥gveda* 7.89.1. The term 'मृण्मयं गृहं' (Mṛṇmayam Gṛham) translates to 'house of clay', symbolising the burial site, while 'शोभनं गृहं' (Śobhanam Gṛham) can be interpreted as the 'beautiful house', which could symbolise the spiritual abode or afterlife destination.

2.11. Conclusion

The Indus Valley Culture, much like modern India, was a blend of various cultures and religious beliefs. Evidence such as fire altars, priests, depictions of a meditating Paśupati, mother goddesses, and even references to magicians suggests that the society was indeed diverse and multi-faceted. The skeletal remains from Mohenjo-Dāro further indicate that the population consisted of different ethnic groups.

²⁶⁶ A.B. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upaniṣads*, p.419.

In contrast, British Empire scholars arbitrarily equated the Vedic Dasyus with the Dravidians and portrayed the Aryans as conquerors who violently overran northern India during their migration from Central Asia, Iran, or possibly even Tibet. As a result, the Aryans were labelled as Indo-Europeans or Indo-Germans, and the *R̥gveda* was framed as more Indo-European than Hindus.²⁶⁷

The central question now is: What was the relationship between the Vedic peoples and the civilisation that thrived in the great cities along the Indus and Sarasvatī rivers and their tributaries? The early Indic civilisation, evident in towns such as Mohenjo-Dāro and Harappa, and even the much older settlement of Mehrgarh, was multiracial and multiethnic, much like the diverse populations living in India today. Skeletons discovered at these sites have been identified as belonging to various racial groups, including proto-Australoid, Mediterranean, Alpine, and Mongoloid types.²⁶⁸

2.11.1 Points in Support by IVS being Indigenous Indian or Vedic: The city of Brahmanabad was mentioned in 1856 when British engineers John and William Brunton, overseeing the construction of the East Indian Railway line between Karachi and Lahore, were informed about an ancient ruined city nearby, known as ‘Brahmanabad’. The presence of Brāhmaṇas in the name raises the question: could a non-Vedic tradition include Brāhmaṇas? Robert Davreau, in ‘Indus Valley’, in *Reader’s Digest World’s Last Mysteries*, suggests that this local tradition supports the idea that the Indus Valley Civilisation was, in fact, a Vedic civilisation, as it points to a continuity of Vedic elements like the Brāhmaṇa class.

Cultural continuity is evident in many crafts from the Harappan period, such as shell working, ceramics, and the production of agate and glazed steatite

²⁶⁷ Michel Danino & Sujata Nahar, *The Invasion that never was*, pp. 19-21.

²⁶⁸ Georg Feuerstein & et.al. *In Search of the Cradle of Civilization*, Ch.6, p.102.

beads, which were used in making necklaces, bangles, and other ornaments. These crafts have been present throughout all phases of Harappan sites and are still practiced in the Indian subcontinent today, as noted by Jonathan Mark Kenoyer in *Trade and Technology of the Indus Valley: New Insights from Harappan, Pakistan*. Additionally, some make-up and toiletry items found in Harappan contexts, such as a special type of comb, the use of collyrium, and a unique three-in-one toiletry tool, still have similar counterparts in modern-day India. Terracotta female figurines dating back to around 2800-2600 BCE were discovered, featuring red colour applied to the 'manga' (the line that partitions the hair). This practice continues to be observed in India today.

The Indus people domesticated a variety of animals, including cattle, bears, wild pigs, dogs, water buffaloes, elephants, monkeys, dromedaries, chickens, goats, cats, and sheep.

Some notable Indus seals feature Vedic symbols and designs, particularly the Bull and the Swastika.

A gold-streaked touchstone found at Banawali was likely used to assess the purity of gold, a technique that is still commonly used across India today.

If the Indus Valley Civilisation (IVS) were a Dravidian civilisation that was displaced southward by an invasion or migration of Aryans, the Dravidians would likely have established a similar civilisation in their new areas of settlement. However, no evidence of such a civilisation has been found.

According to Bhu Dev Sharma, the Sarasvatī is a significant river mentioned over sixty times in the Vedas. Although it is now a dry river, it once flowed from the Himalayas to the ocean, traversing the Rajasthan desert. Recent satellite

data, along with archaeological field studies, indicate that the Ṛgvedic Sarasvatī ceased to be a perennial river long before 3000 B.C.²⁶⁹

The Indus Valley cannot be classified as a Dravidian civilisation for several reasons. Firstly, there is no civilisation in the South that is comparable to that of the Indus Valley. Additionally, some burial practices among the Dravidians differ significantly from those of the Indus Valley inhabitants. In Dravidian culture, burial typically involved interring the dead, whereas in the Indus Valley, only the poorer segments of the population buried their deceased. The wealthier individuals generally opted for cremation, with their ashes placed in large wide-mouthed urns alongside smaller vessels, animal and bird bones, and various small items like beads, bangles, and figurines, sometimes mixed with charcoal ashes.

The *Atharvaveda* references a funeral practice involving the use of a tree trunk as a coffin.²⁷⁰ The phrase ‘may the tree not oppress them, nor the great Goddess Earth’ can be found in 18.2.25, likely referring to a coffin burial. Various forms of burial have been recognised in India since ancient times, as indicated in the *Atharvaveda* 5.30.14 (manu bhūmigṛhobhūvat) and 18.2.34, which mentions different types of burials:

ये निखाता ये परोप्ता ये दग्धा ये चोद्धिताः।

सर्वास्तानग्न आ वह पितृन्हविषेअत्तवे ॥ इति ।

The *Ṛgveda*²⁷¹ and *Atharvaveda*²⁷² mention a ‘house of earth’ (Bhūmigṛha) for burials. An example of this is Burial No. 29 at Kalibangan, where the body and pots were placed inside a sun-dried brick chamber,

²⁶⁹ B.D. Sharma, “Indus-Sarasvati Civilization: In Search of the Truth”, *Vedic River Sarasvati and Hindu Civilization*, pp.- 280-281.

²⁷⁰ P.V. Kane. *History of Dharmasastra*, Vol. 4, p.233.

²⁷¹ RV-7.89.1.

²⁷² AV-5.30.14.

illustrating the concept of Bhūmigr̥ha. Among Hindus, when it is not possible for the entire body to be cremated, the practice of Mukhāgni is followed. This involves igniting a fire in the mouth and subsequently disposing of the unburnt body by casting it into a river. This method results in burn marks on the teeth and certain areas of the mandible and maxilla. Burial No. 32 at Kalibangan is one such instance of this practice.

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*²⁷³ specifies that a cremation site should be a four-cornered mound oriented toward the southeast, with the ground sloping to the north, located away from the village in a serene area with pleasant surroundings, or on barren land. In the *History of Dharmasastra*, Kane notes that the site for cremation should be encircled by a cluster of trees. Additionally, it should preferably be on salty land, sloping to the north, or it may also be situated on level ground.²⁷⁴

The Harappans were very careful in selecting the location for their cemetery area. At Kalibangan, the cemetery is situated to the southwest of the habitation area, on the left bank of the Sarasvatī River, far from living quarters and the sacred site at KLB-3, where numerous fireplaces were found.²⁷⁵ This area is open, receiving direct sunlight, and slopes toward the north. Water from the river and wind from the northeast flow through the cemetery only after passing through the religious and residential zones. The soil in this region is arid, with a high salt content that appears as white patches on the ground.²⁷⁶

²⁷³ Ś.Br.-13.8.6-9.

²⁷⁴ A.K. Sharma, “Vedic Rites flourished on the banks of Sarasvati”, *Vedic River Sarasvati and Hindu Civilization*, p.241

²⁷⁵ B.B. Lal, “The Sarasvatī: The mother of Indian Civilization”. *Vedic River Saravati and Hindu civilization*. pp.115-116.

²⁷⁶ A.K. Sharma, “Vedic rites flourished on the bank of Sarasvati”. *Vedic River Saravati and Hindu civilization*. p.241.

A.L. Basham aptly points out that while historians have classified the civilisations of Mohenjo-Dāro and Harappa as Dravidian, practices such as ritual bathing, phallic worship, the worship of the Mother Goddess, and reverence for the sacred bull are not uniquely South Indian. Furthermore, he notes that there is no distinct Dravidian or Aryan race; these terms are primarily used in linguistic or cultural contexts.

P.R. Deshmukh²⁷⁷ believes that the three-headed deity identified with Viśvarūpa Tvāṣṭra on a seal represents the six-eyed god described in several verses of the *Ṛgveda*.²⁷⁸ It is worth noting that the two sons of Tvāṣṭra were Indra and Vṛtra. Following Indra's slaying of Viśvarūpa, he subsequently created Vṛtra, who possessed the qualities of Agni and Soma, embodying all knowledge, glory, nourishment, and prosperity. Thus, Basham's assertion highlights the complexities of attributing a singular cultural identity to the Indus Valley Civilisation, suggesting a broader context that transcends contemporary classifications.²⁷⁹

Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, the initial section provides an introduction to the Pre-Aryan communities of the Indian subcontinent, such as the Dāsas, Dāsyus, Paṇis, Rākṣasas, and Asuras, along with a brief description of their physical characteristics as depicted in Vedic texts. The racial composition, anthropological origins, and their connection to the Pre-Aryan Indus Valley Civilisation are explored. Both the *Ṛgveda* and *Atharvaveda* contain numerous mantras that offer detailed insights into the social and cultural life of these Non-Aryan peoples. Historians have categorised them into two broad groups: those

²⁷⁷ Buddhaprakash, *Ṛgveda and Indus Valley Civilization*, p.24.

²⁷⁸ RV-10.99.6; 10.8.8-9; 2.11.19; Ś.Br.1.6.3.1-71; 10.2.7; 10.18.5; 2.3.9; 3.55.19; 10.82.2; 10.81.1.

²⁷⁹ A. L. Basham, "Some Reflections on Dravidians and Aryans". *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* (Madras), Vol.2, 1963, pp.225-34.

with advanced technology and fortified settlements, and the forest-dwelling tribes. An attempt has also been made to identify the geographical regions of Dravidian civilisation in Pre-Aryan India. Several references from Vedic literature, along with archaeological evidence, suggest partial similarities between the cities of the Indus Valley Civilisation and Non-Aryan fortified citadels. This chapter further explores the culture, lifestyle, and socio-economic status of the Pre-Aryan communities, providing a comprehensive understanding of their significance in the broader historical context.

Chapter III

Process of Aryanisation

Evidence from physical anthropology, such as shorter stature and broader noses among Aryan settlers in the Gangetic plains compared to their counterparts in the Punjab, indicates a degree of admixture between the Aryan and Non-Aryan populations. This intermingling likely occurred as the Aryans spread across the plains and began integrating with the local peoples. This intermingling most likely happened when the Aryans expanded across the plains and blended with the indigenous populations. The amalgamation took a long period and involved certain ceremonial and natural procedures, as follows:

3.1. War and Slavery

Several mantras in the *R̥gveda* portray Dasyus and Dāsas as the primary enemies of the Aryans. There had been several conflicts fought between these two factions.¹ As a result, a portion of the earlier population had adopted the customs and culture of the latter. Couple of references will furnish later. In *R̥gveda* 8.51.9, the Dāsa and Ārya are both worshipping the Indra.

In one passage, Trasadasyu, son of Purukutsa, is portrayed as the commander of the ‘black complexioned’ men.² R.S. Sharma recognised this as an indicator of the Aryan hegemony over this Non-Aryan Dasyu.³ The term ‘Adevāḥ’ (*R̥gveda* 8.96.9) refers to a tribe or people named Asura. In *R̥gveda* 1.31.1, Dyaus—referred to as an Asura—acknowledges and submits to Indra. Furthermore, it appears that the phrase ‘Asuraḥ Adevāḥ’ or Godless Asuras in 8.96.9 refers to a particular tribe or group of people when the name Asura was employed. The allusion to Brihaspati, who is summoned in 2.30.4 to defeat the

¹ RV-4.30.18; 2.20.8, 1.103.3, 3.12.6, 4.32.10, 1.31.4.

² *Ibid* -8.19.36-37

³ R.S. Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, p.15.

troops of an Asura named Vṛkadvaras, lends credence to this interpretation. Similarly, in 10.138.3, Indra, along with Ṛjīśvan, is shown as overthrowing the strongholds of Pipru, a sorcerer known as an Asura. A further account in 7.99.5 describes how Indra and Viṣṇu slew several soldiers who belonged to an Asura by the name of Varcin. These instances show that the word Asura has been applied to a tribe or community and a supreme god in two different contexts. Cuneiform inscriptions⁴ support the theory that these Asuras were actually the Assyrians, who also called their supreme deity Assur and referred to their people by that name. These Asuras, or Assyrians, appear to have created kingdoms in India too. How can we explain Bṛhaspati killing the warriors of Asura Vṛkadvaras and Indra destroying the forts of Asura Pipru? Vṛkadvaras and Pipru were Asura rulers who ruled over some areas of India. Moreover, as I have already mentioned, Ṛgveda 8.85.9 refers to Asuras as ‘godless.’

The expression ‘Adevā Asurāḥ’ which translates to ‘the godless Asuras,’ evokes the memory of ‘Avratā Dasyavaḥ’ or ‘the riteless Dasyus,’ and suggests that the Asuras had religious differences with the Aryans in addition to their differences in race. According to *Ṛgveda* 10.124.5, Asuras had lost their magical powers, but 10.138.3 indicates that Indra, in cooperation with Ṛjīśvan, demolished the strong forts of Pipru, who retained magical ability. Śuṣma, Aśuṣa and Kuyava were surrendered by Indra.⁵ It is impossible to resist the conclusion that these Asuras were Assurs or Assyrians who settled down in the different areas of India and held kingdoms of their own and were attributed with magical abilities that comprised the core of the Chaldean culture.⁶ The Aryans defeated these kingdoms with the aid of the Vedic gods. Yet some deities are referred to be Asura. Were these Asuras, or the most powerful of deities? These Mantras may be found in both Maṇḍalas I and X, as well as older Maṇḍalas II,

⁴ D.R. Bhandarkar, *Aśoka*, p.225ff.

⁵ ṚV-2.19.6.

⁶ D.R. Bhandarkar, *Some Social aspect of ancient Indian literature*, p.34.

V, VII. VIII. It is extremely difficult to deny that the songs in issue were written by Asuras who had converted to the Aryan faith, especially in light of the fact that some of them exalt Agni and Indra. Aryan Ṛgvedic gods never spared any hostile clans of divergent beliefs and were specifically referred to as Asurahan. This explains why they are referred to as Asura in certain hymns and Asurahan in others. The latter was very definitely written by poets who opposed Asura in terms of race and faith. If this perspective is adopted, we must assume that the other hymns titled Asura were penned by poets who, while maybe descended from the Asura race, converted to the Aryan faith. During the post-Ṛgvedic era, the Aryans and Assyrians became more hostile. Even as early as the *Atharvaveda*, Asura meant solely ‘demon.’ In the Brāhmaṇas, Asuras are connected with darkness.⁷

In the *Ṛgveda*⁸, Rudra is depicted as a powerful Asura, and he was revered by other Asuras. Notably, Indra and Viṣṇu are credited with destroying the city of the Asura Śambara and defeating the countless warriors of Asura Varchi. Through their numerous victories in battles against the Asuras, deities such as Indra,⁹ Agni,¹⁰ and Sūrya¹¹ earned the titles ‘Asurahā’ or ‘Asuraghna’, which translate to ‘slayer of Asuras’. However, by the end of the Vedic period, the term Asura had evolved from referring to a powerful being to symbolising an evil or demonic entity.

In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, the Asuras are equated with Rākṣasas (demons) and are depicted as being hostile towards the gods, though it is also acknowledged that they, along with the gods, were the progeny of Prajāpati. The

⁷ *Loc.cit.*

⁸ RV- 5.42.11.

⁹ *Ibid* -6.22.4.

¹⁰ *Ibid* 7.13.1.

¹¹ *Ibid* -10.170.2.

Asuras are said to have originally lived in the northern regions near Mount Meru but retreated southward to the area around Lake Mānasa after being defeated by the gods. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*¹² criticises the Asura language and advises Brāhmaṇas to maintain the purity of the divine language, suggesting a divergence in linguistic practices between the gods and Asuras.

Even in Pāṇini's time,¹³ the Asura community existed, and they were identified as a warrior group that spoke the Mleccha language. Pāṇini includes their speech in the category of implied or derived terms. The *Mahābhārata*¹⁴ refers to the Asuras as 'Pūrvadevas', indicating their existence before and later had been replaced by the Devas, and the *Manusamhitā*¹⁵ also mentions the term 'Pūrvadevatā', confirming their antiquity. Yāska¹⁶ further notes that both the Suras (gods) and Asuras share a common origin as the offspring of Prajāpati.

The 'Pañcajanāḥ'¹⁷ of the *Ṛgveda* is likewise deserving of recognition. The Purus, Yadus, Turvaśus, Anus, and Drūhyus are among them. They mean, according to Yāska¹⁸, 'Gāndhārvas, manes, gods, demons, and other monstrosities.' Some academics argue that they comprised Niṣādas, whom Upamanyu claims to be the fifth Varṇa and the other four Varṇas. They are defined by Yāska as 'Pañcamaṇuṣya-Jātāni'. Śākaṭāyana, as attributed by the author of the *Bṛhaddevatā*, describes them as the four Varṇas and Niṣāda as the fifth. Without a doubt, there were five distinct peoples, each with unique characteristics of culture. As they moved eastward, separatists among them

¹² Ś.Br.- 3.2.1.24.

¹³ Pā-6.1.160

¹⁴ Mbh, Śānti.P.-337.44.

¹⁵ M.S.-3.192

¹⁶ Ni.-12.11.

¹⁷ Bṛhaddevatā-7.66, 69; 8.69.

¹⁸ Ni.-3.8.

added new names to the old ones, some of which were ethnic in nature but more frequently political.

The Dasyus weakened the Tr̥tsus, Sudas's original subjects, who were among the first to escape. All of these races moved onward and settled in diverse locations throughout the Gangetic Valley. Beyond Madhyadeśa, all the Vr̥atyas formed a huge outer circle. The Aryans were forced to abandon their homes in the west and become homeless in the east. King Sudās (pronounced Sudāḥ) defeated the Ten-Kings confederacy, making this the most well-known example. Sudās, a descendant of Pijavana, is also identified as Divodāsa's son. The ending Dāsa is interesting. In later Sanskrit, the word Divodāsa may be translated as 'servant of heaven', although initially Dāsa or Dasyu refers to a hostile Non-Aryan people. They possessed a distinct hue, black (Kṛṣṇa), which separated them from the Aryans. Their darker complexion contrasted with the lighter skin colour of the newcomers. After repeated conquest, the word Dāsa can refer to a slave or helot, a member of the Śūdra caste, a servant, or in the form Dasyu, a robber or brigand. Early Aryan monarch names ending in Dāsa indicate recombination between Aryans and Non-Aryans after 1500 B.C. Sudās was the chief of an Aryan tribe, as the Bhāratas indicate. The names of the opponents of Sudās are also revealed. Tribes and chiefs were referred to interchangeably for a long time, particularly by outsiders. The hostile names in this case number more than ten. Again, it seems certain that some of the ten were Aryans. Alina means 'bee' and Matsya means 'fish'; both names are plainly totemic. Nothing is known about the former, however Matsya tribesmen were historically established around contemporary Bharatpur, east of the R̥gvedic battleground. Another of the Ten opponents, Sigru, carries the name of the drumstick tree (*Moringa pterygosperma*, but some interpret it as 'horse-radish'). It is apparent that the early Aryans had no concept of racial purity because autochthonous adaptation was always feasible and done.

A Kuṣāna inscription at Mathurā mentions a Brāhmaṇa clan (gotra) with that name, although it does not appear in current clan lists. Such tribal names are clearly totemic. The opponents of Sudās include the name Bhṛgu, which is rather remarkable. Obviously, this is a tribe. The term is philologically connected to ‘Phrygian’. A chariot built by the Bhṛgus for Indra is recorded in another location with great regard. However, the sole term that has survived from ancient Sanskrit to the current day refers to one of the most prominent and influential exogamous Brāhmaṇa clan groupings. They arrived late in the Brāhmaṇa fold, though ascended quickly.

The Ten-Kings conflict resulted from their attempt to reroute the river Paruṣṇi. The five Vedic tribes (Yadu, Turvaśa, Druhyu, Anu, and Pūru) travelled over mountain passes (Khyber, Bolan, and Gomal), crossed rivers, and defeated the Dāsas by assaulting their fort. According to Michael Witzel, the Yadu, Turvaśa, Druhyu, and Anu appear to have moved earlier¹⁹ Some verses in the *Ṛgveda* commemorate their exploitation. In this setting, the Yadus and Turvaśas appear to have travelled as a pair, while Druhyus and Anus formed another group. The *Ṛgveda* was created after the Pūrus and Bharatas defeated the previous migrations and settled in Kurukṣetra. Kāṇvas favour the Yadu-Turvaśas, a stronger force than the Druhyu-Anu. The four tribes are associated with the Aśvins,²⁰ a Turvaśa gift of one hundred horses is celebrated,²¹ and Indra is seen as one of the Anus and Turvaśa.²² The Āṅgirasas also seem to recall their explosion. The texts of the Vāmadevas, Gṛtsamadas, and Bharadvājas describe how Indra transported Yadu and Turvaśa from far away,²³ across tight tunnels

¹⁹ Michael Witzel, “Ṛgvedic History: Poets, Chieftains and Politics”, *The Indo-Aryans of Ancient South Asia*, George Erdosy (Ed.), 1995, pp. 307-354.

²⁰ ṚV-8.10.5.

²¹ *Ibid* -8.4.19.

²² *Ibid* -8.4.1.

²³ *Ibid* -6.45.1.

and rivers.²⁴ Indra also ensured that they were suitable for consecration.²⁵ Contrarily, Turvaśu and Vṛcīvat were defeated and forced to surrender by Sṛñjaya and Abhyavartī, respectively, with the help of Indra. The Vṛcīvat, descendants of Varaśikha, were asuras residing near the Hariyupiya River.²⁶

Some of the victories over local inhabitants are remembered through various accounts, such as how Rjīśvan, son of Vidathin, defeated Pipru Mṛgaya by subduing fifty thousand enemies,²⁷ how Dabhīti overcame thirty thousand Dāsas,²⁸ and how Nami Sapyā killed the Dāsa Namuci.²⁹ Upon entering India, these groups settled in an order from west to east: Druhyu, Anu, Turvaśa, and Yadu.³⁰ Witzel suggests that the Druhyus likely settled in the Gāndhāra region, a reasonable assumption since the Anus, who were next in line, are linked to the banks of the river Pāruṣṇī (Ravi).³¹ The *Ṛgveda* does not explicitly indicate where the Turvaśas were located, but the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* associates them with the Pāñcāla region in central Uttar Pradesh.³² The Yadus are believed to have been farther east, possibly near the Yamunā River, as indicated by their identification with the Yākṣus in *Ṛgveda* 7.18.14. This aligns with the *Mahābhārata*, where the Yadus are also connected to the banks of the Yamunā.³³ The leader of this tribe could have been the Asura Kṛṣṇa, who engaged in a battle against Indra, accompanied by Bṛhaspati and the Marutas. Kṛṣṇa is

²⁴ *Ibid* -4.19.6; 4.30.17; 6.20.12.

²⁵ *Ibid* -4.30.17.

²⁶ *Ibid* -6.27.7.

²⁷ *Ibid* -4.16.13.

²⁸ *Ibid* -4.30.31.

²⁹ *Ibid* -6.20.6.

³⁰ *Ibid* -8.10.5.

³¹ Michael Witzel, “Ṛgvedic History: Poets, Chieftains and Polities”, in George Erdosy (Ed.), *The Indo-Aryans of Ancient South Asia*, 1995, p.328.

³² Ś.Br.-13.4.5.6.

³³ Witzel makes this assumption, and the geographical location seems to support it. But we must accept that there is no concrete evidence in support of this identification.

described as having dark skin, with a radiance likened to the brilliance of the sun. The scene of his presence is near the river Arṁsumatī, where he is also depicted as snorting or rumbling beneath the waters.³⁴

The next wave of migrants included the Bharatas and Pūrus, both of whom were initially tied to the Āyus.³⁵ Their entry into India was apparently led by Bharata Divodāsa and the Pūru chief Kutsa. The indigenous leader who seems to have mounted the greatest resistance to them was Śambara, who withstood their advance for nearly forty years before being defeated by Divodāsa.³⁶

The *Ṛgveda* provides a detailed account of the prolonged struggle between Divodāsa and Śambara, allowing historians to reconstruct the events of this conflict. H.D. Velankar describes Śambara, the son of Kulītara and a wealthy Dāsa chief, as possessing one hundred strong hill forts.³⁷ One of these, where Śambara resided, was filled with treasures. Indra pursued him from fort to fort for forty years before finally locating him in his hundredth fort and forcing him down from a high mountain peak. Though his head was severely injured, it was not completely crushed. Śambara managed to escape to the plains, where he allied with his friend Varcin. However, Divodāsa killed Varcin's followers, and later, both Śambara and Varcin were found hiding in a water-bounded cow station.³⁸ Divodāsa destroyed Śambara's forts, while Purukutsa decimated the autumnal forces of the Dāsas.³⁹

³⁴ ṚV-8.96.13-15.

³⁵ *Ibid.*-6.18.13.

³⁶ *Ibid.*-2.12.11.

³⁷ H.D. Velankar, "The Family Hymns in the Family Maṇḍalas", *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol.18, 1942, pp.9-10.

³⁸ ṚV-2.12.11, 2.14.6, 2.24.2; 4.26.3, 4.30.14, 4.30.15; 6.26.5, 6.47.2, 6.47.21-25; 7.18.20, 7.99.5.

³⁹ *Ibid.*-6.20.10.

The new wave of immigrants, including the Bharatas and Pūrus, were not warmly received by the earlier inhabitants. The Turvaśa chief Vayya and his son Turvīti, along with the Yadus, had already established themselves. The men of Āyus, led by figures like Kutsa and Atithtigva (who may have been Divodāsa’s father or identical to him), faced fierce resistance. They were defeated by the Turvaśa chief Turvayāna.⁴⁰ However, the resilience of the Āyus (Bharata-Pūru migrants) ultimately led them to emerge as a dominant force.⁴¹ The turning point came with the victory of the Bharata chief Sudās over an alliance of ten kings. This event solidified the Bharata-Pūrus as a power to be reckoned with. The books of Viśvamitra (priest of the Bharatas), Atri (Pro-Pūru), and Vasiṣṭha (himself an immigrant and the chief priest of Sudās) commemorate the triumph of the Bharata-Pūrus in the Ṛgvedic hymns.

Regarding the ‘Battle of the Ten Kings,’ the *Ṛgveda* does not provide a complete list of all the tribes that fought against Sudās. However, nine of the ten tribes can be identified: the Turvaśa chief, the Bhṛgus, the Druhyus, the Anus, and their five allies—the Pakthas, the Bhalanas, the Alinas, the Śivas, and the Viṣāṇins. Additionally, the term ‘matsya’ appears in *Ṛgveda* VII.18.6, but it is unclear whether it refers to fish or the Matsya tribe, or possibly both. Two Vaikarṇa tribes, along with the ancient Kavaśa and the Pūrus, are also mentioned. In *Ṛgveda* 7.33, Vasiṣṭha’s sacrificial victory over the priest of the chief Pāśadyumna is noted, though no direct conflict with the Yadus is referenced. However, given the historical association of the Yadus with the Turvaśas, it is likely that Vasiṣṭha continued to pray for the complete defeat of these two allied tribes.⁴²

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*-1.54.6; 2.13.12; 6.18.13.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*-10.49.5.

⁴² *Ibid.*-7.19.8.

The ten tribes that fought against Sudās in the ‘Battle of the Ten Kings’ likely consisted of the five major tribes—Yadu, Turvaśa, Druhyu, Anu, and Pūru—and five minor allies: the Pakthas, Bhalanas, Alinas, Śivas, and Viṣāṇins. The identity of the Matsyas as a tribe is doubtful, as the term could refer to either the Matsya tribe or simply to fishes. The Bhṛgus, who were priests in this confederacy, did not fight, though historian Kosambi speculates that they may have participated in battle and were defeated, leaving only the priestly Bhṛgus to survive.⁴³ Rahukar’s theory that the Turvaśa chief won over the Bhṛgus with wealth remains speculative.⁴⁴ Similarly, Kavaśa, an ancient figure, might have been involved.⁴⁵ Pāśadyumna,⁴⁶ possibly the leader of the confederation, is mentioned, but his tribal identity is unclear. Some have speculated that the two remaining minor tribes were the Vaikarṇas. C. Kunhan Raja⁴⁷ opposes this identification of the ten tribes, arguing that the Vedic chiefs would not have been described as ‘Ayajyu’ (non-worshippers) by Vasiṣṭha in *Ṛgveda* 7.83.6-7 if they were followers of the Vedic religion. He also suggests that Sudās fought against foreign invaders rather than other Vedic tribes. However, this theory is unconvincing, given the numerous examples of internal conflict among the Vedic tribes. The career of Sudās involved crossing rivers like the Vipāś, Śutudrī, Pāruṣṇī, and Yamunā, indicating a migration into North India, making a foreign invasion scenario unlikely. In fact, Śambara and Varcin, who were defeated by Sudās’s forces, could be described as foreign aggressors rather than the other way around.

⁴³ D.D. Kosambi, “Early Stages of the Caste System in North Northern India”, *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, New Series, Vol.22, 1950-1951, p.43.

⁴⁴ V.G. Rahurkar, *The Seers of Ṛgveda*, p.12

⁴⁵ The Kavaśas are a priestly family of the *Ṛgveda*. One of their ancestors had been drowned during the Battle of Ten Kings. Another composed Hymns 10.30-34. Their descendent, Tura Kāvaśeya, is a prominent priest in the later Vedic literature.

⁴⁶ *ṚV*-7.33.2.

⁴⁷ C. Kunhan Raja, “Dāśarājña”, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol.37, No.4, December 1961, pp.261-278.

The term ‘Ayajyu’ (Non-worshippers) requires a more nuanced interpretation. Although the opponents of Sudās followed Vedic practices, Vasiṣṭha believed they had deviated from the true spirit of worship, referring to them as ‘Ayajyu’ because their rituals were misled by incorrect guidance, possibly by Viśvāmitra. Despite following religious rituals, they lacked the true essence of Vedic sacrifice and worship. This explains why tribes like the Turvaśas, Druhyus, and Anus, who were clearly mentioned in the battle, were labelled as ‘Ayajyu’.

The alliance between the Yadu-Turvaśa and Druhyu-Anu was not new to the Bharatas, but what was new was the defection of their close ally, the Pūrus, to the opposing side. It is possible that Viśvāmitra, with the help of Bhārgava priests, united the Pūrus with the other tribes in the confederacy against Sudās.⁴⁸ This defection, along with the betrayal of his priest Viśvāmitra, created a significant challenge for Sudās, as he now faced a formidable coalition of five major and five minor tribes, supported by some of the most respected priestly families like the Kāṇvas, Āṅgirasas, Bhṛgus, and Kauśikas.

Sudās responded by turning to the immigrant Tṛtsu priests, led by Vasiṣṭha, for support, for patronage, and Viśvāmitra and the Pūrus were ousted⁴⁹ and in the end, he achieved complete victory over the Druhyu-Anus.⁵⁰ His triumph was followed by great rewards for Vasiṣṭha,⁵¹ and the subdued Ajas, Śigrus, and Yākṣus (likely the Yadus) brought tribute to Sudās’s sacrifice in honour of Indra.⁵² Unlike the Druhyus and Anus, the Yadus were not entirely defeated; they remained near the Yamunā. Similarly, the Turvaśas were not

⁴⁸ ṚV-1.7.9; 1.89.10; 1.100.12; 2.2.10; 5.32.11; 6.11.4; 6.61.12; 9.65.23.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*-7.8.4.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* -7.18.12-14.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* -7.18.22-23.

⁵² *Ibid.* -7.18.19.

completely vanquished, as evidenced by later texts. Vasiṣṭha continued to pray for complete victory over the Yadu-Turvaśas.⁵³

However, several scholars, such as A.D. Pusalker, suggest that Purukutsa was killed in the battle,⁵⁴ there is no definitive evidence for this claim. Instead, it seems that the Pūrus returned to their alliance with the Bharatas. This could explain why Vasiṣṭha and Nodhas⁵⁵ prayed for both Sudās and the Pūru leaders Pūrukutsa and Trasadasyu in later hymns. Consequently, while the Druhyus and Anus faded from prominence after the battle, the Yadus and Pūrus remained influential in later traditions. The Turvaśas were eventually defeated by another Bharata chief, Sṛñjaya Daivavāta.⁵⁶ Though Vasiṣṭha emerged as the primary priest for the Bharatas, the family of Viśvāmitra also reached a settlement, with later Bharata leaders Devaśravas and Devavāta composing hymns.⁵⁷

3.2. Political strategies

3.2.1. Intertribal and inter-caste marriage: During the early period of Aryan settlement in the Gangetic plains, questions of purity of blood began to arise, primarily due to the significant presence of the local Non-Aryan populations. The Brāhmaṇas, in particular, took the lead in promoting exclusivity from the Śūdras, driven by both their claims of class superiority and a concern for maintaining the purity of their Aryan blood. Over time, this concern led the Brāhmaṇas to become largely endogamous, though with some flexibility in marriages with Kṣatriyas, and to a lesser extent with Vaiśyas, who, due to their

⁵³ *Ibid.* -7.19.8

⁵⁴ A.D. Pusalker, “Aryan Settlements in India”, *The History and Culture of the Indian People: The Vedic Age*, R.C. Majumdar (Ed.), Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, 1996, p.249.

⁵⁵ ṚV-1.63.7.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* -6.27.7.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* -3.23.

interactions with different social groups, were perceived to have a less pure bloodline.

However, during this period, marriage restrictions were not as rigid as they would become later. Brāhmaṇas could marry women from any of the four Varṇas (classes), with the status of the children being determined by the father's rank. For instance, a Brāhmaṇa man marrying a Vaiśya woman was not only permissible but preferred over a Vaiśya man in marital disputes, as indicated by the *Atharvaveda*,⁵⁸ which suggests that a Vaiśya must step aside if a Brāhmaṇa claims the hand of a woman. Marrying a Śūdra woman, while not legally prohibited, was generally frowned upon, as shown by stories like that of Kavaṣa Ailuṣa, who had to prove his worthiness for re-admittance into Brāhmaṇa society.⁵⁹

The increasing social disapproval of such marriages can be seen in cases like that of Vatsa,⁶⁰ who had to prove his Brahmanical descent through a test of walking through fire. Such examples demonstrate that by this time, the opinion against intermarriage between Brāhmaṇas and Śūdras was solidifying, and the offspring of these unions faced difficulties in obtaining their father's status.⁶¹ Despite these restrictions, there were notable exceptions. For example, Satyakāma Jābala,⁶² born to an unmarried slave woman, was accepted as a Brāhmaṇa due to his character and intellect, suggesting that qualities like wisdom and moral conduct could, in rare cases, outweigh birth status.

Mixed marriages, particularly those between Brāhmaṇas and women from lower social groups, were not yet strictly codified into separate castes

⁵⁸ AV.-5.17.9

⁵⁹ A.Br.-2.19; Śāṅkh.Br.-12.1.3.

⁶⁰ P.Br.-14.6.6.

⁶¹ Vaj. S.-23.31; T.S.-7.4.19.

⁶² Cān. U.- 4.4.

during this period, as would happen later. The statement attributed to Parāśara,⁶³ noting that sages could confer the status of ‘Ṛṣi’ on their sons born from indiscriminate unions, further underscores the fluidity of caste status in early Vedic society. It suggests that strict caste divisions based on parentage were still in the process of being formalised. While there may have been reservations about accepting the offspring of Brāhmaṇa men and Śūdra women into the Brāhmaṇa caste, the children of Kṣatriya and Vaiśya mothers faced no such barriers and were readily accepted as Brāhmaṇas.⁶⁴

The *Mahābhārata* reflects this evolving social reality, declaring that the children of Brāhmaṇa men with Kṣatriya or Vaiśya women were considered Brāhmaṇas, while those born to Śūdra mothers were not and also emphasised that there are only four Varṇas (Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Śūdra) and that no fifth *Varṇa* exists.⁶⁵

In other situations, Non-Aryan magicians and Dravidian priests became Brāhmaṇas. Indo-Aryan Brāhmaṇas married aboriginal and Dravidian women, and their descendants were deemed pure Indo-Aryan. This process of integration highlights the complicated and fluid character of caste creation throughout this time, where social position was impacted not solely by birth but also by cultural and religious factors.⁶⁶

3.2.2. Co-operation and helpfulness: Some may argue that when the Aryans arrived in northern India, they encountered an already functioning society, although the full extent of its structure, aside from wealth and occupations, remains unknown. Alongside this, they came across various occupational and regional groups, as well as other unidentified peoples, with whom they engaged

⁶³ Mbh. Śānti.P.-296.

⁶⁴ N.K. Dutt, *Origin and growth of caste in India*, pp. 93-94.

⁶⁵ Mbh. Anu.P. Ch.47.

⁶⁶ R.D. Banerjee, *Prehistoric, Ancient and Hindu India*, p.38.

in conflict. For the Aryans, the social landscape was largely divided between the conquerors and those either already conquered or on the verge of conquest. As the balance of power shifted in their favour, the Aryans transitioned from being mere invaders to becoming settlers. At this point, they needed to establish relations with the local populations, whose cooperation was crucial for their survival. As they expanded their territory, the need to build a relationship with the natives grew, often achieved through a combination of coercion and appeasement.

In *Ṛgveda* 10.62.10, Yadu and Turva, two Dāsa kings, are commended for their accomplishments. Furthermore, in *Ṛgveda* 10.86.19 and 10.102.3, the terms Dāsa and Ārya are mentioned in a context suggesting that both groups held similar social standing. This also implies that the Dāsas had integrated into Aryan society and culture.

According to S.G. Talageri⁶⁷, the term ‘Ārya’ was never used to refer to non-Pūrus. For instance, despite the Tṛtsu kings Purukutsa and Trasadasyu receiving high praise, with Trasadasyu even being described as a ‘demi-god’⁶⁸ for providing critical assistance to the Pūrus⁶⁹, neither was ever referred to as an ārya. Likewise, none of the other non-Pūru patrons of the Ṛṣis mentioned in the eight Maṇḍala⁷⁰ were labelled as Ārya.

3.3. Internal conflict of Ṛgvedic Aryan society

In contrast to the established castes of later times, the two primary groups of the Aryans—the priests and the warriors—did not view themselves as branches of the same lineage. In the *Ṛgveda*, humanity is generally described as descending from Manu, the son of the sun-god Vivaśvat. Manus is referred to

⁶⁷ S.G. Talageri, *Aryas, Dāsas and Dasyus in the Ṛgveda*, p.6.

⁶⁸ ṚV-4.42.8, 9.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*-1.63.7; 4.38.1; 6.20.10; 7.19.3.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*.-8.1.31; 8.4.19; 8.5.37; 8.6.46,48; 8.19.32,36; 8.65.12.

as ‘father Manu’ and ‘our father’ by the Ṛṣis. Despite this clear recognition of Manu as the common ancestor of humanity, most ṛṣis claim a divine origin for their own clans. The Aṅgirasas are called ‘sons of heaven’⁷¹ or ‘sons of Agni’.⁷² Vasiṣṭha and Agastya are said to have been born from Mitra and Varuṇa.⁷³ The *Atharvaveda*⁷⁴ mentions that Atharvan was generated by Varuṇa, describing him as ‘a connection of the gods.’ The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*⁷⁵ refers to Bhṛgu as Vāruṇi, ‘son of Varuṇa.’ According to a legend in the *Bṛhaddevatā*,⁷⁶ Atri, along with Bhṛgu and Aṅgiras, was born from Prajāpati. This text also states that the son of Prajāpati was Marīci, and Marīci’s son was the sage Kaśyapa.⁷⁷ The only ṛṣi clans not claiming divine origins are the Viśvāmitras and the Kaṇvas, who were clearly originally part of the ‘Yajamāna’ class. The Viśvāmitras were likely a branch of the Bharata tribe within this group. In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,⁷⁸ Viśvamitra is addressed as ‘Rājaputra,’ ‘prince,’ and ‘Bārataṣabha,’ ‘bull of the Bharatas.’ In the *Ṛgveda*,⁷⁹ Nṛṣad is named as Kaṇva’s father, though the Purāṇas suggest Kaṇva was originally a Kṣatriya. Ajamīḍa, a descendant of Pūru, the eponymous ancestor of the Ṛgvedic Pūrus, is noted as the progenitor of Kaṇva, who then fathered Medhātithi, leading to the Brāhmaṇas of Kaṇva clan.⁸⁰ Certain passages in the *Atharvaveda*⁸¹ indicate a definite hostility towards the Kaṇvas. Among the ṛṣi clans, those claiming divine origins—such

⁷¹ *Ibid.*-4.2.15.

⁷² *Ibid.*-10.62.5.

⁷³ *Ibid.*-7.33.11-13.

⁷⁴ AV-5.11.11.

⁷⁵ A. Br-3.34.

⁷⁶ Bṛhaddevta-5.97-101.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*-5.143.

⁷⁸ A.Br.-8.17.6.7.

⁷⁹ ṚV-10.31.11.

⁸⁰ Viṣṇu. P.-4.19.10.

⁸¹ AV-2.25.

as the Aṅgirasas, Atharvans, Bṛḥgus, and Vasiṣṭhas—were considered the core Ṛṣis from whom the Vedic sacrificial cult originated. Other clans joined the sacerdotal class through adaptation. The *Ṛgveda* portrays the founders of these clans as key figures in the sacrificial traditions, worshipped as pitṛs or manes. For instance, the Aṅgirasas, Atharvans, and Bṛḥgus are called ‘the soma-loving fathers’ and ‘makers of the path’.⁸² Atharvan is described as extracting sacrificial fire by churning Puṣkara,⁸³ and Aṅgiras is noted for preparing offerings for Indra.⁸⁴ The *Yajurveda* also contains similar traditions about these Ṛṣis.

In the early Vedic period, a small number of Ṛṣi clans—specifically the Aṅgirasas, Atharvans, Bṛḥgus, and Vasiṣṭhas—were considered the original founders of the Vedic sacrificial tradition. Over time, other groups integrated themselves into this ritualistic framework and were incorporated into the emerging sacerdotal class, which eventually became known as the Brāhmanas.⁸⁵

The early Vedic period saw Aryans not only at war with Dāsa enemies but also with other Aryans. According to scholars like Macdonell and Keith, the term Aryan foes (Vṛtra) encompass conflicts both among Aryans and between Aryans and Dāsas. By the *Ṛgvedic* time, Aryan communities had evolved beyond mere conquest of aborigines. Later Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas reflect predominantly Aryan conflicts, likely due to the merging of Aryan and Dāsa communities.⁸⁶ In the *Ṛgveda*,⁸⁷ there is an account of two Aryan kings, Arṇa and Citraratha, who were slain by Indra for failing to worship him. The narrative

⁸² ṚV-10.14.6.

⁸³ *Ibid.*-6.16.13.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*-1.83.4.

⁸⁵ Ramaprasad Chanda, *The Indo-Aryan Races: A Study of the Origin of Indo-Aryan People and Institution*, p. 17-20.

⁸⁶ A.A. Macdonell & A.B. Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.1, p. 65.

⁸⁷ ṚV-4.30.18.

illustrates that not only Non-Aryans face punishment for their disregard toward Indra, but Aryans can also suffer consequences for similar neglect. Evidence suggests that in some instances, bards even collaborated with the Paṇis, a group associated with wealth, to enhance their material resources. For example, in the sixth Maṇḍala of the *Ṛgveda*,⁸⁸ it is noted that after the Aṅgirā bards completed their prayers to the gods, the chief of the Paṇis was rewarded with extraordinary riches. These passages underscore the significant role of the Paṇis in the worldview of the Aṅgirā bards, who often equated the term ‘Paṇi’ with wealth itself, as evidenced in phrases like ‘Paṇim Imahe’,⁸⁹ where the bards express their desire for such riches.⁹⁰

Furthermore, there appears to have been a physical distinction between two groups within the Brāhman class: those Brāhmanas who were Brāhmanas by lineage, and those who became Brāhmanas by adoption. The *Ṛgveda*⁹¹ describes the Vasiṣṭhas, representing the former group, as ‘Svityam,’ or ‘white,’ while Kaṇva, representing the latter group, is described as ‘Śvāva’ or ‘Kṛṣṇa,’ meaning ‘dark’.⁹² In the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*,⁹³ the Brāhmanas are similarly characterised by their white complexion. This tradition of distinguishing Brāhmanas by their lighter skin and, at times, yellow hair persisted well into later periods, as seen in the *Mahābhāṣya* of the grammarian Patañjali (circa 150 B.C.). Patañjali notes that while penance, knowledge of the Veda, and birth

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*-6.45.33.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*-8.45.14.

⁹⁰ Ramendra Nath Nandi, *The Ṛgveda: In its Historical Setting*, p.32

⁹¹ ṚV-7.33.1.

⁹² *Ibid.*-10.31.11.

⁹³ G.Br.-1.1.223.

confer Brāhman status, physical attributes such as fair complexion, pure conduct, and yellow or red hair are also markers of Brāhmanhood.⁹⁴

It is unreasonable to assume that the Aryans treated Dāsa captives differently from Aryan captives, as the hymns express intense animosity toward both. Therefore, it is unlikely that the Sūdras of the Vedic period was solely derived from the aborigines.⁹⁵

The Dāsas, sharing language and culture with the Ṛgvedic people, were often integrated into Aryan society, with Dāsa chiefs like Divodāsa and Balbūtha becoming allies. This suggests that the term Dāsa, meaning ‘slave,’ was not necessarily applied to Non-Aryan inhabitants but could refer to allied groups.

3.4. Deprived Aryans and their anti-Aryan activities

Regionally, Magadha was regarded with significant disdain. It was considered a region to be avoided (Agamya), and those who did visit were required to perform penance.⁹⁶ The region was condemned as being inhabited by outcasts, inferior Brāhmaṇas (Brahma-bandhu), and Non-Aryans, where Brāhmanisation made no progress. The aversion towards Magadha was so severe that it was associated with a particular type of fever, symbolising its detested status. Additionally, certain other groups were mentioned as living beyond the boundaries of ‘civilisation.’ The sage Viśvāmitra, in his anger, exiled

⁹⁴ ‘तपः श्रुतं च योनिश्च एतद् ब्राह्मणकारकम् ।

तपश्रुताभ्यां यो हीनो जाति ब्राह्मण एव सः ॥ Mahābhāṣya-2.2.6.

⁹⁵ Ramaprasad Chanda, *The Indo-Aryan Races: A Study of The Origin of Indo-Aryan People and Institutions*, p.3.

⁹⁶ Bau. Dh. Sū.-1.2.14-15.

his sons to the remote regions inhabited by people such as the Andhra, Puṇḍra, Pulinda, Mutība, and Śabara.⁹⁷

Notably, some adversaries of the Aryans were eventually elevated within the new composite society. For example, Indra is depicted as having converted the Dāsas to the Aryan way of life,⁹⁸ according to Sāyaṇa's interpretation. In another account, Indra is said to have stripped the Dasyus of their Aryan status.⁹⁹

3.5. Special rituals for deprived Aryans

The 'Vrātyastoma' was a significant social movement aimed at transforming the outlook of the eastern Vrātyas. Their nomadic lifestyle was not well-received by those who had embraced a more settled way of life with a defined religious structure. In response, the 'Vrātyastoma' system was introduced, enabling the mass conversion of the eastern Vrātyas. It was only after this conversion that they ceased to be Vrātyas and were allowed to integrate with others on equal terms. While some scholars believe the 'Vrātyastoma' was merely a form of re-admission into the existing social order, it is more widely regarded as a means of mass conversion. As political centralisation and territorial expansion became priorities during the later Vedic period, the 'Vrātyastoma' was seen as an important tool for bringing these wandering bands of Vrātyas under control. The conversion of the Vrātyas not only integrated them into the established social and religious framework, but also brought significant lands and resources into the hands of the later Vedic kings, contributing to the growth of royal power. Thus, the 'Vrātyastoma' played a crucial role in the political consolidation of the time.

⁹⁷ A.Br.-7.18, 33.6; A.B. Keith, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 307; N.K. Dutt, *Aryanisation of India*, p. 68.

⁹⁸ RV-6.22.1.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*-10.49.3.

The Vrātyas were a contentious subject in later literature, often depicted as hunters and beaters.¹⁰⁰ They seem to have vanished as a distinct group, likely due to the dominance of Aryan civilisation and the prescribed four 'Vrātyastomas' intended to facilitate their conversion to Aryanism. By the time of the *Manusmṛti*,¹⁰¹ they were known simply as 'Sāvitrīparibhrāṣṭa', the term Vrātya had evolved to denote individuals who had not undergone the thread ceremony, a rite performed among the three higher castes. Consequently, the designation of Vrātya expanded to include individuals among the Vaiśyas, Kṣatriyas, and Brāhmaṇas, as specified in the Dharmaśāstras. Thus, the term Vrātya acquired a significantly altered meaning.

The Dasyus, or Non-Aryans of Vedic India, were considered the true aboriginals and represented the fifth order of Vedic society, also referred to as the Niṣādas. Both the Niṣādas and the Vrātyas were permitted to perform sacrifices.¹⁰² Ethnically and culturally, the Dāsas were characterised by distinctive features. They were described as noseless, having peculiar physical attributes, and black. Culturally, the Dāsas were riteless (Akarman), indifferent to deities, non-sacrificing (Ayajvan), lawless (Avrata), adherents of foreign customs (Anyavrata), speaking unintelligibly, and engaging in phallus-worship.¹⁰³ The *Ṛgveda* describes the Pāṇis, Dāsas, and Dasyus as having 'hostile speech' (Mṛḍhravāc), suggesting the presence of a Pre-Aryan form of language. The Pāṇis are referred to as 'Grāthina',¹⁰⁴ a term that Hillebrandt interprets as indicating a form of continuous, incomprehensible speech. Originally, the Vrātyas appear to have been groups that spoke the same language

¹⁰⁰ Ni.-5.3.18.

¹⁰¹ M.S.-10.20-23

¹⁰² R.Shamshastry, *Evolution of Indian Polity*, P.151.

¹⁰³ Bharats called opposite camp persons of 'unintelligible speech'. Cf. A.P. Karmakar, *The Religion of India*- Vol.1, p.7. "The Bharata war gave a crushing blow to many of the Vrātya Royal families".

¹⁰⁴ ṚV- 7.6.3.

as the orthodox Aryans but did not adhere to their religious disciplines and customs. Sāyaṇa acknowledged the difference between glorified portrayal of the Vrātyas in the *Atharvaveda* and their unfavourable depiction in Brāhmanical texts. He suggested that the praise referred only to certain highly revered and holy Vrātyas, not the entire group.¹⁰⁵ Regions such as Avanti, Aṅga, Magadha, Surāṣṭra, Dakṣiṇapatha, Upāvṛkṣa, Sindhu, and Sauvira were inhabited by people of mixed origins.¹⁰⁶

The Ṛgvedic Aryans harboured significant animosity towards the Māgadhas and imposed a prohibition on the region due to their inability to assimilate the Māgadhas into their own way of life. The sage Sutantara, in his remarks, referred to the Vrātyas when he declared that those who had abandoned the worship of Agni were in a state of unhappiness.¹⁰⁷ Dr. S.C. Sarkar¹⁰⁸ identifies the Vrātyas as easterners and ‘Non-Ailas’ (Non-Aryans), and, following Winternitz, he suggests that the Vrātyas were neither itinerant ascetics nor Śaiva mendicants, but rather specific tribes living outside the bounds of Aryan fold. Thus, the term Vrātya is synonymous with Magadhan. The Vrātyas, or Magadhans, were traditionally assigned to Magadha or Prācyā, a region regarded as distinct from the Mānavas and Ailas.¹⁰⁹ The designation ‘Māgadhas’ explicitly refers to a tribe or Jana.¹¹⁰ The Māgadhas is identified with Vrātya.¹¹¹ In the *Atharvaveda*,¹¹² the term Māgadhas signifies a group antagonistic to the

¹⁰⁵ Kāt. Ś.Sū-22.4.1-28; Aśv. Ś.Sū -22.5.4-14; Pār. G.Sū-2.5.

¹⁰⁶ BDS-1.1.31.

¹⁰⁷ *JBORS*, Vol. 24, Part-3, pp.107-108.

¹⁰⁸ S.C. Sarkar, *Some aspects of social history*. p.52 ff. H.P. Śastrī regards the conclusion of Father Heras as ridiculous.

¹⁰⁹ S.C. Sarkar, *Op.cit.* pp. 41-46.

¹¹⁰ Bau. Dh. Sū-1.2.13; Bau. Ś. Sū-20.13; Aśv. Ś. Sū-22.6.18; Hir. Ś. Sū-17.6; ZDMG, Vol.56, p.553.

¹¹¹ AV-15.2.14.

¹¹² *Ibid.*-5.22.14.

Vedic Aryans. These Māgadhas were neither Brāhmaṇas nor Śūdras,¹¹³ and they were to be sacrificed in the Puruṣamedha rite to the deity Atikṛṣṭa (Loud noise).¹¹⁴ The relationship between the Māgadha and the Vrātya is notably close, with Māgadha being described as a friend (Mitra) of the Vrātya. This connection is further exemplified by Kauśitaki, who had a significant association with Magadha.¹¹⁵ According to the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*,¹¹⁶ Kauśitaki, the son of Śamasravaḥ, was a Gṛhapati of the Vrātya. Despite performing the ‘Vrātyastoma’ ritual, Kauśitaki faced a curse from Luśākapi, the son of Kharagala, which foretold his lack of prosperity. Śāyaṇa identifies Kauśitaki as the seer of one of the Śākhās of the *Ṛgveda*. Another notable Gṛhapati is Dyutāna, a devotee of the Marutas. It is posited by some scholars that the Upaniṣads and Purāṇas were either composed in the Vrātya region or were significantly influenced by Vrātya sources. This synthesis is believed to have occurred in Magadha. Furthermore, the *Atharvaveda* is thought to have originated in the Vrātya territory of Magadha, which includes references to malaria fever.

The recognition of the *Atharvaveda* as the fourth Veda came only after considerable contention.¹¹⁷ It is essential to note that the personalistic theory of creation is not unique to the *Atharvaveda* but is also found in Vedic, Brahmanic,

¹¹³ Vāj. S.-30.5.22.

¹¹⁴ *Loc.cit.*

¹¹⁵ Kau. Ā.-7.13.

¹¹⁶ P. Br.-17.4.3. and Commentary.

¹¹⁷ *Atharvaveda* is called after particular priest –

- a) Atharvanaṅgirāsaḥ- T.Br. 3.12.9,1. P.Br.-16.10.10; Ś.Br.-16.10.10.
- b) Bhrguaṅgirāsaḥ- Kauś.Sū-63.3; 94.2-4; 137.25; 139.6; G. Br. -1.1.39; 2.18; 3.1.2.4; AV-5.18.1-4;
- c) Kṛtraveda- Ś.Br. 14.8-14, 1-4; Brh. U.- V.18.1-4; Praśnoṇiṣad- 11.6.
- d) Brahmaveda- Śāṅkh G. Sū-1.16.3.

While Atharvana designates sacerdotal occupation, Aṅgirasa is the name of a family. In the *Ṛgveda*, the Aṅgirasas are referred as a group in their collectivity, living collective life of pre-class society.

and other ancient literature. Consequently, the ‘Vrātyadharmā’ is occasionally compared to ‘Brāhmaṇadharmā’, as noted in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*.¹¹⁸ The comprehensive portrayal of the Vrātya in the *Atharvaveda* reflects the prominent tradition associated with the popular deity Mahādeva. During the early Vedic period, the Śiśnadevas and Vāmadevas were marginalised by orthodox Aryans. However, the evolving Rudra cult led to the integration of Rudra and Śiva, signifying the ascendancy of the indigenous popular god over Aryan deities. This syncretism is further evidenced by the acceptance of Śivalingas, with the *Mahānārāyaṇopaniṣad* preserving traditions related to various lingas.¹¹⁹ The connection between Mahādeva and the Vrātya is significant, suggesting that the early Vrātya institution was a cohesive entity revered by the indigenous populations of India, who had their own distinct deity. The exaltation of the Ekavrātya (Iśāna, Mahādeva, and Rudra) can be interpreted as a form of extravagant commendation by those who faced considerable opposition from orthodox Aryan traditions. This is underscored by the satirical and ironic critiques of the Vrātyas and the subsequent efforts to discredit them in scholarly works up to the nineteenth century. It appears that the Vrātyas, after achieving dominance over their adversaries, commissioned the compilation of the fifteenth Kāṇḍa of the *Atharvaveda* by their representatives, primarily to celebrate their own order. The Purāṇas, such as the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*,¹²⁰ indicate that Vasiṣṭha held animosity towards the Vrātyas. The language of the *Atharvaveda* suggests that the Vrātya hymns were not compiled at the time the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* was composed, and the *Śāṅkhāyana Brāhmaṇa* is subsequently dated. The fifteenth Kāṇḍa of the

¹¹⁸ Jai.Br.- 2.222

¹¹⁹ Ūrdhvaliṅga; Hiranyaliṅga, Suvarṇaliṅga, Divyaliṅga, Bhavaliṅga, Śarvaliṅga, Javalaliṅga, Ātmaliṅga, Paramātmaliṅga, Śivaliṅga, *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā* indicates that Śiva worship began in the Vedic period.

¹²⁰ Brahmāṇḍa. P., Madhyabhāga-63.138 ff.

Atharvaveda, which is closer to classical Sanskrit, prominently features the glorification of the Vrātya.

Śiva had no role in the Vedic sacrifices initially.¹²¹ His inclusion into the Vedic pantheon caused significant upheaval, as symbolised by the ‘Dakṣa-yajña’. The various deities of the Non-Aryans were ultimately assimilated as different manifestations of Śiva.¹²² The upheaval caused by the ‘Dakṣa-yajña’ was inevitable, as the despised ‘Vrātya god’ could not be incorporated into the Vedic pantheon without resistance. The reference to a Vrātya visiting a sacrificial Brāhmaṇa as a guest suggests that the Vrātyas may have originally belonged to a non-sacrificing tradition.¹²³

The ‘Vrātyastoma’ ceremony, which involved numerous sacrificers, required the participation of the most knowledgeable, affluent, and influential individuals who acted as Gṛhapatis or patriarchs, with others following their lead. The Gṛhapati was obligated to pay a higher Dakṣinā (fees), and the ceremony was frequently performed. Upon purification, the Vrātyas were prohibited from retaining Vrātya possessions (Vrātyadhana), which had to be transferred to Māgadha Brāhmaṇas.¹²⁴ After completing the sacrificial rites of the ‘Vrātyastoma’, the Vrātyas were expected to abandon their Vrātya lifestyle¹²⁵ and relinquish their belongings to those who continued to adhere to Vrātya practices.¹²⁶

¹²¹ There is a reference to Śiva worship in Kauṭilya’s *Arthaśāstra*. Śiva worship in images probably developed near about the period.

¹²² T.S.-4.5.4.1.

¹²³ AV-15.12.- without the permission of the Vrātya, the Brāhmaṇas should not sacrifice. This indicates the Pre-Aryan characteristics of the Vrātya. The Aryans introduced the fire sacrifices, which did not exist before, in India.

¹²⁴ सर्व एव ब्राह्म्याः मगधदेश निवासी यः स ब्रह्मबन्धुभिर्जायते स मागधदेशीय ब्रह्मबन्धुः तस्मै दद्युः। अपरे तु मागधं गेयमाहुः। तत्रयोदेशीयः इषदसमाप्तौ देशीय इत्युच्यते तस्मैदोद्यः।

¹²⁵ Kāt.Ś.Sū.-22.4.24.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*-22.4.25, 22.4.26; P.Br.-17.1.16.

Kauśitaki and Dyautāna, the two notables Gṛhapatis of the Vrātya as previously mentioned, gained considerable prominence in their time. Kauśitaki was entrusted with the compilation of the Brāhmaṇas of the *Ṛgveda*, while Dyutāna is associated with the Dyauta-sāman, a central component of the ‘Vrātyastoma’ ceremony. The integration of new elements into society led to the establishment of domestic, social, and hygienic regulations, as reflected in the ‘Gṛhadharma’ and ‘Ācāra’ regulations of the Sūtra period.¹²⁷ Haraprasad Śāstri asserts that they (Bhṛgu-Aṅgiras) represent a heterogeneous group and are the purified Vrātyas who had only ‘Pravara’ but no ‘Gotra’.¹²⁸ The Aryans traced their lineage to the ‘Saptaṛṣi’ of the *Ṛgveda*¹²⁹ and Agastya, with these eight figures serving as the progenitors of the ‘Gotra’. Bhṛgu and Aṅgiras, however, were not associated with the ‘Gotra’. They compiled the *Atharvaveda* to serve their interests and venerated Ekavrātya.

Prof. Kośambi¹³⁰ argues that the differentiation of the Vrātyas from other groups occurred well after the Bhṛgu-Jamadagni lineage had become established and the Vedas were fully developed. The Vrātya tribe, which migrated eastward into regions lacking the advanced civilisation of the Indus Valley, did not require the Vedas. Their priesthood was less developed compared to that of the Vedic Aryans, and they maintained their own tribal organisation outside the Brāhmanical rituals. Patañjali¹³¹ clarifies that the Sūtras primarily address the reconciliation of Vrātya practices with Vedic rituals but do not describe the actual lifestyle of the Vrātya tribes.¹³² The Vrātya Gṛhapati

¹²⁷ Haraprasad Śāstri, *Vrātyas*, p.8.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* p.8.

¹²⁹ Jamadagni, Bharadvāja, Viśvamitra.

¹³⁰ D.D. Kośambi, “Origin of the Brāhmaṇa gotras”, *JBBRAS*, Vol.26, 1950, p.42.

¹³¹ Bhāṣya of Pā.-5.2.21.

¹³² *Cf. Der Vrātya*; We learn from the *Mahāparinibbanasutta* that the basic rules of the buddhist *Samgha* were derived from the Aryan tribal constitutions, specially of the Lichchavis called *Vrātyakṣatriya* by Manu (10.21).

functioned as both a social and religious leader, living a life of luxury supported by the community. Only individuals of high status, education, and wealth were recognised as chiefs or Gṛhapatis. Despite this, the majority of the Vrātya society, with the exception of the Rājanyas, were characterised by ignorance and superstition. It is evident that the itinerant Vrātyas preserved older tribal institutions into historical times.¹³³ The Vrātyas appear to have adopted agriculture, possibly as a result of their conversion. Outside of their agricultural activities, the Vrātyas are primarily noted for being pursued by the Māgadhas and the Pūmśchali (harlots).¹³⁴ The marriage customs of the Ṛgvedic Ṛṣis followed one set of rules, whereas those of the Vrātyas adhered to a different set. The ‘Vrātyastoma’ ceremony facilitated a social revolution, merging Aryan and indigenous customs. This integration proved effective, resulting in improved regulation of social, domestic, and political organisation. Primitive magical practices and mantra rituals of the Vrātyas were gradually supplanted by a new socio-religious framework accommodating both traditions. Thus, magic gave way to religion, and the simplistic ways of the primitive Vrātyas evolved into a structured social system dominated by the Brāhmaṇas. Manuals were created for this new context, often substituting traditional Aryan beliefs with indigenous ideas.¹³⁵

Oldenberg posits that Magadha was initially inhabited by early Aryan settlers who were pioneers preceding the main body of Aryans. Consequently, these early settlers were regarded with contempt by their later brethren.¹³⁶ The ‘Vrātrātyastomasūkta’ from the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* clearly reflects an awareness of originating from various races or groups. This idea seems to have persisted up to that time. The people referred to in the hymn were not the Dāsas

¹³³ *JBBRAS*, Vol.26, p.49.

¹³⁴ Radhakrishna Chowdhury, *Vrātyas in Ancient India*, p.121.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* p.119.

¹³⁶ H. Oldenberg, *Buddha: His life, His Doctrine, His Order*, p.10.

and were significantly different from the Ṛṭsu Bharatas, particularly in their lack of Brāhmanical cultural practices. Another commentator¹³⁷ suggests that the Vrātyas were the early Aryans who had migrated to Magadha, retaining their old ideals in opposition to the newer Aryan doctrines. If the term Vrātya is derived from Vrāta, meaning ‘horde,’ it is possible that Vrāta referred to groups or hordes of nomadic tribes.¹³⁸ In the *Yajurveda Samhitā*, Rudra is referred to as Vrātapati and Gaṇapati, which further supports this notion.¹³⁹

R.N. Dandekar contends that the Vedas are not solely reflective of Vedic Aryan life and thought but are also influenced by cultural contacts and racial fusion. In this context, it is essential to consider the impact of various Non-Aryan groups, including the Dāsas, Vrātyas, and Śūdras, on the Aryans, as well as the resulting inter-racial and intra-racial conflicts in ancient India.¹⁴⁰ Buddhaprakāśa’s observations¹⁴¹ are pertinent here. He notes that the Vrātya is depicted as a Vedic priest, while the Vṛṭra is characterised as the principal custodian of the Ṛks, Yajus, and Sāman, which were imparted to Indra in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. The Vrātya is described as belonging to an affluent and hedonistic aristocratic class, while the Vṛṭra is depicted as owning towns and fortresses and indulging in soma juice. The Vrātya was offered as a victim in a Puruṣamedha sacrifice,¹⁴² and the Vṛṭra was antagonistic to Indra, whose role was to defeat him. These similarities suggest that Vrātya and Vṛṭra were synonymous terms for the priestly class among Non-Aryan peoples, who

¹³⁷ Rahul Sānkṛtyāyana, *Darśana Digdarśana*. p.383

¹³⁸ ṚV-1.163.8; 3.26.2; 5.53.11- the troops of the *Marutas* are referred to by three different terms *Śardha*, *Vrāta* and *Gaṇa*; 9.14.2- an *allusion* to five tribes; 10.34.8.12; 10.57.5 (Jiva Vrāta; AV- 2.9.2; T.S. 1.8.10.2; Vāj.S-16.25; P.Br.-6.9.24; 17.1.5.12.) Vrāta is also taken to mean ‘holy works’ and if derived from that we may take *Vrātyas* to represent a horde of religious people. Also cf. Vāj.S.-29.46- cf. R.C. Mazumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, p.222 ff.

¹³⁹ Vāj.S-30.8; T.Br.-3.4.5.1.

¹⁴⁰ *PIHC* (1947), Bombay- Presidential speech of Dr. R.N. Dandekar, p.27.

¹⁴¹ *ABROI*.30.197. cf. *Dighanikāya* (PTS) I.89. about Buddhās description of the Brāhmaṇa.

¹⁴² Vāj.S.-30.8.

initially resisted the Aryans but later contributed to the development of the Brāhmanical order. This class eventually evolved into what is known as the Brāhmaṇas. Although one may question Buddhaparakāśa's conclusions, his hypotheses warrant serious consideration. There is also a view that Brahmanism predates the Aryan migration and its traces can be found not only in India but also in other regions of the ancient world.

3.6. Cultural Campaign towards Eastern and Southern India

In subsequent Vedic literature, a comparative analysis of the geographical references with those found in the *Ṛgveda* reveals a notable shift in the geographical horizon of the composers, gradually moving southeast. This shift is of significant importance. During the *Ṛgvedic* period, the Aryan territories located at the southeastern border have, in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,¹⁴³ been repositioned to the central region (the central establishment direction). The regions inhabited by various tribes mentioned in these texts include the Kuru, Pañcāla, Vāsa, and Uśīnara. The Kuru region corresponds to the area known as Kurukshetra. According to the boundaries defined in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*,¹⁴⁴ the present-day city bearing this name is surrounded by districts that correspond to the ancient Kurukshetra region. The rivers Sarasvatī (today's Sarasvatī) and Drṣadvatī (possibly today's Chautang) were well-known to the later Vedic sages. The name Yamunā frequently appears in Vedic literature,¹⁴⁵ whereas the Ganges is notably absent in the *Atharvaveda*, which is intriguing. However, it is mentioned in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.¹⁴⁶ The *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*¹⁴⁷ asserts that those who inhabit the region between the Gaṅgā and Yamunā are deserving

¹⁴³ A.Br.-8.14.3.

¹⁴⁴ T.Ā.-5.1.1.

¹⁴⁵ RV-5.52.17; 7.18.19; 10.75.5. AV-4.9.10.

¹⁴⁶ Ś.Br.-13.5.4.2.

¹⁴⁷ T.Ā.- 2.20.

of special respect. An alternative reading of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* indicates that the river Sadānīrā (which is best identified with the present-day Śāradā-Ghaghara) separated the regions of Kuru-Pañcāla from those of the Kosala and Videha.¹⁴⁸ This suggests that, at that time, this area became part of the sacred central region.

The last two tribes mentioned likely constituted the easternmost segment of the ‘accepted’ Aryan population. Subsequent references suggest that they resided in the northeastern part of Uttar Pradesh (Kosalas) and northern Bihar (Videhas). However, as previously mentioned that the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* is accurate and the Sadānīrā river did indeed separate these two tribes, it can be inferred that, in later Vedic times, they lived on both banks of the Śāradā-Ghaghara River in eastern Uttar Pradesh. This inference is supported by the marriage references between the Videhas and the Kāśīs (inhabitants of Kāśī or Benaras) described in the *Kauśītaki Upaniṣad*.¹⁴⁹ Indeed, the mention of Vāraṇāvātī (a variant of Vāraṇasī) in the *Atharvaveda*¹⁵⁰ corroborates this.

In discussing the western regions, the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* mentions a tributary of the Vitastā or Beas River, namely the Sudāman and the Yavyāvātī (Ravi).¹⁵¹ The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*¹⁵² refers to a region named Āmbaṣṭhya, derived from a royal name. The Āmbaṣṭhya s may have been the people against whom Alexander fought at the confluence of the Chenab and Indus Rivers. The *Atharvaveda* frequently mentions the Sindhus, alongside references to the ‘seven rivers’ (*Saptasindhu*).¹⁵³ However, in later texts, references to the Sindhu are exceedingly rare, and where it is mentioned, it often appears as if indicating

¹⁴⁸ Ś.Br.-1.4.1.14.

¹⁴⁹ Kau.U.- 4.1.

¹⁵⁰ AV-8.7.1.

¹⁵¹ P.Br.-22.18.1.

¹⁵² A.Br.-8.21.

¹⁵³ AV-4.6.2.

a distant region.¹⁵⁴ Even within the *Atharvaveda*,¹⁵⁵ there is significant animosity towards tribes such as the Gāndhārī (Gāndhāra, northwest Punjab), the Mujāvant (Hindu Kush region), and the Bahlīka (Balkh, northern Afghanistan), with prayers for sending them as offerings to dispel fevers and diseases. This is quite distinct from the Ṛgvedic context, as Afghanistan was well-known to the Ṛgvedic composers.¹⁵⁶ An explanation for this westward shift might be found in the newer Avestan texts. According to the *Vendīdād*,¹⁵⁷ sixteen ‘countries’ (*šōiθra*) were created by the deity for His favoured people. Among these, one is Bākhdi (now Balkh)¹⁵⁸ occupied by the Bahlīka of *Atharvaveda*,¹⁵⁹ while four places are named after rivers mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*: *Harōyu* (Sarayu), *Harahvaiti* (Sarasvatī), *Haptā Hendu* (*Saptasindhu*), and *Ragha* (Rāṣa). Additionally, another Avestan country, *Vaēkereta*, is likely associated with the Vāikara region mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*.¹⁶⁰ Except for *Haptā Hendu* (Punjab) and possibly *Vaēkereta* (Gāndhāra),¹⁶¹ the western banks of the Sindhu and other regions exhibit few traces of these tribes.

Based on this list, it can be concluded that during the period when the later Avestan texts were composed, the regions including Western Punjab were inhabited by people who followed Avestan practices. As the Indo-Iranian language gradually gave way to Eastern Iranian (which was spoken in regions now very close to the Indus Valley Civilisation), we can revisit the discussion on the later Avestan intrusion. Yaska (circa 400 BCE), had already noted that

¹⁵⁴ Bau.Dh.S.-1.2.14.

¹⁵⁵ AV- 5.22.5, 7, 9, 14.

¹⁵⁶ RV-1.126.7.

¹⁵⁷ ZA, Vendīdād, Farhad I, 1-21. See. Translation of *The Zend Avesta*, SBE, Vol.4, pp. 5-7.

¹⁵⁸ ZA, Vendīdād, Farhad I, 7.

¹⁵⁹ AV-5.22.5,7,9.

¹⁶⁰ RV-7.19.11.

¹⁶¹ Frantz Grenet, “An Archaeologist’s Approach to Avestan Geography”, *Curtis, Vesta Sarkhosh; Stewart, Sarah* (Ed.), *Birth of the Persian Empire*, Volume 1. I.B.Tauris. 2005.

the Kambojas (inhabitants of the Kabul region) spoke a language distinct from other Aryan languages (i.e., Indo-Iranian).¹⁶²

The singers of the *Ṛgveda* appear to have been largely settled in the region around the Sindhu (Indus) River and the land of the seven rivers, which is located in the northwestern part of undivided India, including Punjab. At this time, they were unfamiliar with the lotus, the Nyagrodha tree (Banyan), the tiger, and rice, as these were not native to the northwestern region of India. In contrast, the *Atharvaveda* hymns reflect a shift further east and south, where the tiger emerges as a significant symbol of power, and its skin becomes associated with royalty.¹⁶³

By the time of the Brāhmaṇas,¹⁶⁴ the focus had shifted to Brahmāvarta, or the land of the Kurus (Kurukṣetra), situated between the rivers Sarasvatī and Dṛṣadvatī, as well as to the territory of Pāñcāla, located between the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā (the Doab). This area gained prominence in the Vedic context. The story of Videgha Mādhava in the *Śātāpatha Brāhmaṇa*¹⁶⁵ clearly indicates the eastward expansion of the Vedic Indians. The fire that emerged from Videgha Mādhava's mouth began its journey from the Sarasvatī River in the west and moved towards the Sadānīrā River (modern Gandak) in the east. Prior to this event, the Brāhmaṇas had never crossed the Sadānīrā, but following this, they established settlements even beyond the river.¹⁶⁶ Sāyaṇa, in his commentary on the relevant passage from the *Śātāpatha Brāhmaṇa*, refers to a lexicon (Nighaṇṭu) to identify the river Sadānīrā as the Karatoyā.¹⁶⁷ Both the

¹⁶² Ni.-2.2.

¹⁶³ AV-4.8.4-7.

¹⁶⁴ Ś.Br.-9.3.1.8; A.Br.-3.44.3.

¹⁶⁵ Ś.Br.-1.4.1.10.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*-1.4.1.14-15.

¹⁶⁷ “तथा च निघण्टुः - करतोया सदानीरा बाहुदा सैतवाहिनी इति”- Sāyaṇabhāṣyam of *Śātāpathabrāhmaṇa*-1.4.1.17.

*Kālikāpurāṇa*¹⁶⁸ and *Yogatantra*¹⁶⁹ also mention the river Karatoyā as the western boundary of Kāmarūpa. Thus, the episode in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* is believed to suggest that Aryan culture had spread to Kāmarūpa, east of the Karatoyā, even before the Buddhist period.¹⁷⁰ However, Sāyaṇa¹⁷¹ himself explicitly states that the land east of the Sadānīrā, where Videgha Māthava settled, is the same as Videhadeśa. Julius Eggeling also identifies this river as the Gaṇḍakī.¹⁷²

The spread of Aryan culture in southern India is also reflected in literature and legends, particularly those centered around the sage Agastya, as mentioned in the epics and Purāṇas. These stories seem to preserve memories of this significant cultural shift.

In earlier times, the Vindhya Mountain range was considered the southern boundary of Aryan territory.¹⁷³ A later hymn from the *Ṛgveda* describes a person expelled from the Aryan community heading south (Dakṣiṇāpada),¹⁷⁴ suggesting that the south was seen as a distant region. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*¹⁷⁵ and *Śāṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra*¹⁷⁶ recount the tale of the sage Viśvāmitra, who cursed fifty of his sons for being envious of Sunahṣepa, leading them to live on the fringes of Āryāvarta. Their descendants were considered Dasyus, including tribes such as the Andhras, Puṇḍras, Śabarās, Pulindas, and Mūtibas.

¹⁶⁸ Kālikā. P.-78.7.

¹⁶⁹ YT-11.16-18.

¹⁷⁰ Dikshitar, “Aryanisation of East India (Assam)”, *IHQ*, Vol.21, (1945), pp.29-33; *HCPA*, p.9.

¹⁷¹ “सदानीरा नदी कोशलदेशस्य च विहेहस्य च मर्यादात्वेन दृश्यते” - Sāyaṇabhāṣyam of *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*-1.4.1.17.

¹⁷² J. Eggeling, *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* (SBE Series), Vol. 12, 2nd Edition, Introduction, p.104.

¹⁷³ Kau.U.-2.13.

¹⁷⁴ RV-10.61.8.

¹⁷⁵ A.Br.-7.18.

¹⁷⁶ Śāṅkh.Ś.Sū.-15.26.

These texts suggest that, while northern India had become fully Aryanised by this period, the south was still largely inhabited by indigenous, Non-Aryan people. The only notable Aryan kingdom in the south at that time was Vidarbha, ruled by King Bhīma.¹⁷⁷ It seems that some adventurous Aryans ventured into the southern regions, intermarried with local women, and produced mixed-heritage families, who were viewed with disdain by the northern Aryans. This social dynamic is reflected in the story of Viśvāmitra's sons.¹⁷⁸ Additionally, in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the characters Kaikeśī and Śūrpanakhā,¹⁷⁹ women from indigenous tribes like the Rākṣasas, express a desire to marry Aryan ascetics, indicating the attraction of Aryan culture for local tribeswomen.

The legends of the sage Agastya, who first burned the Rākṣasas in the north and then vanquished those who had fled to the south, along with his crossing of the Vindhya Mountain and settling in the southern region,¹⁸⁰ highlight the southward expansion of the Vedic Indians. This movement marked the beginning of the Aryan migration to the southern parts of the Indian subcontinent. Agastya is depicted as continually venturing deeper into the previously unexplored southern regions, spreading Brāhmanical influence among the southern people until he reached the ocean, which he is said to have consumed.¹⁸¹ This tradition is acknowledged by the Tamil people, who still refer to a mountain in the Tinnevely District, known as Agastier or Agastya's Hill in English, as the place where Agastya is believed to have withdrawn from the world after civilising the Dravidians.¹⁸² According to the Saṅgam tradition, Agastya was the first to establish Tamil grammar, known as *Agattiyam* or

¹⁷⁷ Jai. U. Br. – 2.440; Mbh. Vana.P.-50.5.

¹⁷⁸ K.A.N. Sastri, *A History of South India from Prehistoric Times to the Fall of Vijayanagar*, p.66.

¹⁷⁹ Rām, Araṇya. K. -17.24-28.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*-11.85-86.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, 11.37-42.

¹⁸² Caldwell's *Grammar of the Dravidian languages*, p.101 and 109.

Akattiyam, and *Tolkāppiyam*.¹⁸³ Additionally, Viśrava, the father of Rāvaṇa, was a sage (Ṛṣi) who also migrated to the south and married an indigenous Rākṣasī.¹⁸⁴ In fact, Ṛṣis frequently travelled long distances, particularly in South India, establishing settlements where they performed sacrificial rituals. This aligns with what we learn from the *Rāmāyaṇa*. South of the Vindhya mountains, there were numerous Brāhmaṇa hermits residing in the region of South India located between Mount Chitrakūṭa and the Pampā river,¹⁸⁵ a tributary of the Tuṅgabhadrā. The river Mandākinī (Godāvarī) also flowed through this area.

In ancient texts, two distinct categories of Non-Aryan peoples are identified as the Vānaras and the Rākṣasas. The Rākṣasas were known for disrupting sacrifices and troubling hermits, thus positioning themselves antagonistically toward the Brāhmanical establishment. Despite this, there is a narrative where Indrajit, son of Rāvaṇa, performs a Yajña following the Rākṣasa tradition in an attempt to defeat Lakṣmaṇa.¹⁸⁶ Conversely, the Vānaras, another indigenous group, are depicted as aligning with the Brāhmaṇas and adopting their religious practices. It is clear that the Rākṣasas and Vānaras represent certain aboriginal tribes. The term ‘Rākṣasa’ appears in the ‘Parśvadi-gaṇa’ of Pāṇini, where it is mentioned right after the Parśus and Asuras.¹⁸⁷ These texts clearly distinguish between these groups, highlighting the intricate relationships and interactions between Vedic and non-Vedic communities.

The Vedic expansion into new territories and their subsequent exposure to unfamiliar animals and grains suggest that the Vedic people originated outside of India. If they had been indigenous to the region, it would be expected

¹⁸³ K.N.S. Pillai, *Agastya in the Tamil land*, p.31; Kamil Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature, Handbook of Oriental Studies*. BRILL.1975. pp. 61–63 with footnotes.

¹⁸⁴ Rām, Uttar.K.-9.1-34.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, Araṇya.K.-6.17.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, Yuddha. K.-62.25-26.

¹⁸⁷ Gaṇpāṭha, No.-193.

that their hymns in the *R̥gveda* would include references to unique features of central, eastern, and southern India.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, historical evidence indicates that non-Brāhmaṇas were sometimes integrated into the Brāhmaṇa caste due to a shortage of Brāhmaṇas as the reformed Indo-Aryan religion gained prominence.¹⁸⁹ For instance, the grammarian Patañjali, writing in north-western Punjab in the early second century B.C., cites ‘eastern Bhāratas’ as an example of redundancy, noting that Bhāratas were only found in the East. This underscores the eastward movement of the Vedic people.¹⁹⁰

In the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*,¹⁹¹ a group of the Asura race is referred to as the Prācyā, who not only spoke a Non-Aryan (Mleccha) language but also had their own priests, or Brāhmaṇs. The term ‘Prācyā’ is also known to be another name for Magadha, located in southern Bihar. According to the Purāṇas¹⁹² and the *Mahābhārata*,¹⁹³ the regions of Aṅga, Vaṅga, Puṇḍra, Suhma, and Kaliṅga were named after the five sons of the Asura king Vali. This entire area in eastern India was collectively called Bāleyakshetra, and its priests were referred to as Bāleya Brāhmaṇs.¹⁹⁴ Even as late as the seventh century A.D., Bhāskaravarman, the king of Prāgjyotiśapura, claimed descent from the Asura king Narakāsura,¹⁹⁵ illustrating the lasting influence of these Non-Aryan elements.

However, there is no evidence in the R̥gvedic period of Asuras adopting the Aryan faith or worshipping Vedic deities. Over time, the Asuras were assimilated into the broader Indian population, with no surviving distinct

¹⁸⁸ M.A. Mehendale, “Indo-Aryans, Indo-Iranians, and Indo-Europeans”, *The Aryan Debate*, T.R. Trautmann (Ed.), p.61.

¹⁸⁹ E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. I, p.54.

¹⁹⁰ D.D. Kosambi, *The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India : A Historical Outline*, p.82.

¹⁹¹ *S.B.E.*, Vol. 49, pp.423-24; Vol.12, p.29.

¹⁹² Vayu. P.-99.27-34. Bhāg.P.-9.23.5.

¹⁹³ Mbh, Ādi.P.-104.53-54; Rām, Bāla.K.-23.14.

¹⁹⁴ *ABORI.*, Vol.12, p.114 ff.

¹⁹⁵ Nidhanpur Plate-5.7. cf. M.M. Sharma, *Inscriptions of Ancient Assam*, Introduction, p. 0.29.

identity even in surnames. The *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra*¹⁹⁶ preserves their legacy in the term ‘Āsurāyana’, a subgroup within the Kaśyapa gotra. Furthermore, certain customs associated with the Asuras, such as the Āsura mode of marriage, mentioned in the *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra*,¹⁹⁷ were maintained for a considerable period. The practice of purchasing a bride is mentioned even in the *Ṛgveda*.¹⁹⁸

The Asuras, such as Naraka and Bhagadatta, are prominent figures in epic literature. However, the portrayal of Asuras as demons or mythical beings in post-Vedic texts has deeply influenced our perception, leading us to regard them solely as fictional entities. Despite this widespread view, it is noteworthy that a Non-Aryan tribe¹⁹⁹ named the Asuras still exists in the Chotanagpur region of Bihar. This area corresponds to the ‘Prācyā’ territory mentioned in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, which was historically inhabited by the Asuras.²⁰⁰

3.7. Mutual commerce of Language

The spread of Aryan languages across much of India suggests a large-scale migration of their speakers. Despite the presence of numerous Proto-Munda and Dravidian words in Sanskrit from the Vedic period onward, the Pre-Aryan inhabitants of northern India were so overwhelmed by the new arrivals that they were unable to preserve their languages. As will be elaborated later, the Śūdras, along with the Vaiśyas, made up the majority of the population in northern India; however, there is no evidence to suggest that they spoke Non-Aryan languages. In fact, during the later Vedic period, the Śūdras are

¹⁹⁶ *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra* (Bibliotheca Indica Edition), W. Caland (Ed.), Vol. III, p. 450.

¹⁹⁷ Āp. Dh. S.-2.5.12.1.

¹⁹⁸ ṚV- 1.109.2.

¹⁹⁹ *JBORS.*, Vol. 3, pp. 567 ff.

²⁰⁰ B.R. Bhandarkar, *Some Aspect of Ancient Indian Culture*, p. 35.; *Vedic Index*, Vol.1, p. 46. (including footnotes).

documented as understanding Aryan speech, as indicated by the specific formulae used to address them during sacrificial rituals.²⁰¹ A relevant tradition from the *Mahābhārata* further emphasises this point: it states that the goddess Sarasvatī, embodying the Veda, was originally intended by Brahmā for all four Varnas, but the Śūdras, due to their greed and subsequent descent into ignorance, lost their right to the Veda and fell into a state of darkness.²⁰² Albrecht F. Weber²⁰³ interprets this passage to mean that in ancient times, the Śūdras spoke the Aryan language. It is not improbable that some indigenous tribes abandoned their native languages in favour of Aryan dialects, similar to how in modern times several tribal groups in Bihar have replaced their languages with Aryan dialects like Kurmālī and Sadānā. However, their numbers were likely small compared to those who continued to speak the Aryan languages. Even in the present day, when Aryan-speaking populations have far greater means to propagate their language and culture, they have not succeeded in displacing Non-Aryan languages, some of which have demonstrated the ability to grow robustly.²⁰⁴

Loanwords from the earliest period of Dravidian-Aryan contact have been classified into three groups: 1. likely borrowings from Dravidian into Indo-Aryan, 2. likely borrowings from Indo-Aryan into Dravidian, and 3. a set of words that are too similar across both families to be coincidental and seem to date back to an early period, though their exact origin—whether Dravidian, Indo-Aryan, or another source—remains uncertain. A key challenge in categorising these words is the tendency to place most of them in the third category, except for a small number with clear Indo-European or Dravidian roots. For the time being, I have relied on the guidance of specialists with more

²⁰¹ Ś.Br.-1.1.4.11-12.

²⁰² Mbh. Śānti.P.-181.15.

²⁰³ A. F. Weber, *Indische Studien*, Vol. 2, p.94 ff.

²⁰⁴ R.S.Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, p.29.

expertise in these materials than myself—though I have made exceptions in cases where these experts disagree.

3.7.1. Loan Words: The primary research on Dravidian loanwords in early Indo-Aryan languages largely relies on the work of Thomas Burrow, who, in his publications *Sanskrit and the Pre-Aryan Tribes and Languages* (1946) and *Dravidian Borrowings from Indo-Aryan* (1947), identified twenty-six words in the *R̥gveda* that he attributed to Dravidian origins. Benjamin W. Emeneau, in his *Dravidian Linguistics: A Historical and Comparative Study* (1956), supported several of Burrow’s claims. In contrast, Manfred Mayrhofer, in his *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages* (1963), disputed the Dravidian origin of eight of these words, while Hans Thieme, in *Indo-Aryan and Dravidian Languages: A Study of Linguistic Contact* (1970), challenged three of them, including one that Mayrhofer also questioned. Despite these critiques, Mayrhofer acknowledged that nine of the words could still potentially have Dravidian origins. After excluding the words that faced serious challenges and some that seemed less convincing, a total of nineteen cases remain where the Dravidian origin appears to be at least as plausible as any other explanation.²⁰⁵

Two category mentions some of these borrowing words has been furnished here- (A) Dravidian to Indo-Aryan; (B) Indo-Aryan to Dravidian.

1. Words relating to technology

A-1. <i>kunda-</i> ‘pot, hole, pit’	Ta. <i>kuntam</i> ‘cavity, pit’
A-2. <i>kuta-</i> ‘mallet, hammer’	Ta. <i>kottu-</i> ‘beat’; <i>kuttu-</i> ‘strike’
(cf. <i>kuttayati</i>)	
A-3. <i>danda-</i> ‘stick, club’	Mal. <i>tanta</i> ‘(fore)arm’
A-4. <i>ulukhala-</i> ‘mortar’	Ta. <i>ulakkai</i> ‘pestle’

²⁰⁵ F. Southworth, “Lexical Evidence for Early Contacts between Indo-Aryan and Dravidian”, *Indo-Aryan and Dravidian*, p.-194.

2. Words for flora and fauna

- A-5. *phala*- ‘fruit’ Ta. *pazu*- ‘ripen’ *paṣam* ‘ripe fruit’
A-6. *nada/nala*- ‘reed’ Ka. *nallu* ‘a reed’
A-7. *mayura*- ‘peacock’ Ta. *maññai*, *mayil* ‘peacock’

3. Body parts, bodily deformities

- A-8. *kulpha*- ‘ankle’ Ta. *kuḷampu* ‘hoof’
A-9. *ukha*- ‘part of thigh’ Ta. *ukkam* ‘waist’; *ukkalai* ‘hips’
A-10. *vra*- ‘finger’ Ta. *viral* ‘finger, toe’
Go. *wirinj*- ‘do’
A-11. *kdna*- ‘blind in one eye’ Ta. *kāṇ*- ‘see’; *kāṇ-a*- (neg. stem)
‘not seeing’ (cf. *kaṇ* ‘eye’)
A-12. *kuṇāru*- ‘having a crooked or withered arm’ Mal. *kuṇṭan*- ‘cripple’ (cf. Ta. *kōṇ* ‘crookedness’)

4. Features of nature

- A-13. *kulāya*- ‘nest’ Ta. *kūtu* ‘nest, etc’
A-14. *bila*- ‘hole, cave’ Ta. *viḷ*- ‘open out’; *viḷavu* ‘cleft, crack’
A-15. *piṇḍa*- ‘lump, clod’ Ka. *peṭṭe*; Tu. *heṇṭe* ‘clod’

5. Food

- A-16. *karambha*- ‘a mixture of meal with curds’ Ta. *kuzampu*- ‘be mixed, etc; or flour mixture, curry’

6. Other

- A-17. *kapi(ka)*- ‘bitter’ Ta. *katu*- ‘pain, sting, be pungent, etc.’; *katuku* ‘mustard’
A-18. *bala*- ‘strength’ Ta. *val* ‘strong, skillful’;
vallu- ‘be able’

Second category contains mainly Dravidian words borrowed from Indo-Aryan.

1. Words relating to technology

B-1. Ta. <i>accu</i> ‘axle’	<i>akṣa-</i> (RV)
B-2. Ta. <i>kancam</i> ‘bell-metal’ metal’ (Pat.)	<i>kaṃsa-</i> ‘metal cup’ (AV); ‘bell-
B-3. Ta. <i>kaṭṭai</i> ‘wood’	<i>kāṣṭha-</i> (Ś.Br.)
B-4. Ta. <i>kampaḷi</i> ‘blanket, covering’	<i>kambala(ka)-</i> (AV)
B-5. Ta. <i>ālai</i> ‘shed, etc’	<i>śālā-</i> (AV)
B-6. Ta. (c) <i>ūci</i> ‘needle’	<i>sūci-</i> (RV)
B-7. Ta. <i>āṇi</i> ‘nail’	<i>āṇi-</i> (RV)
B-8. Ta. <i>tōra</i> ‘boat’	<i>drōṇa-</i> ‘trough’ (RV)

2. Agricultural terms

B-9. Ta. <i>kāṇṭam</i> ‘stem, stalk’	<i>kāṇḍa-</i> (AV)
B-10. <i>cāmai</i> ‘millet’	<i>śyāmaka-</i> (VS)

3. Terms for fauna

B-11. Te. <i>gadda</i> ‘kite’	<i>grdhra-</i> ‘greedy, vulture’ (AV)
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4. Social structure

B-12. Ta. <i>turai</i> ‘chief’ ‘leader, chief)	<i>dhurya-</i> ‘foremost’ (AV); (later
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5. Other

B-13. Ta. <i>pakkam</i> ‘side’	<i>pakṣa-</i> ‘wing, side’ (RV)
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(* Ta.- Tamil; Te.- Telegu; Mal.- Malayalam; Ka.- Kannaḍa; Go.- Goṇḍī.)

These languages feature a prevalence of retroflex sounds, which are much more frequent in Dravidian languages than in Indo-Aryan ones. Linguists have

also demonstrated that numerous everyday words in Sanskrit have been derived from Dravidian sources.²⁰⁶

3.8. Acceptance of Non-Aryan customs

Initially, the Māgadhās and Andhras were considered outcastes, but over time, the Indo-Aryan priests, realising that they could neither conquer nor convert these groups, began to integrate aspects of Dravidian deities into their own religious practices. They adopted Dravidian gods, gave them Indo-Aryan names, and started worshipping them. This shared religious worship fostered a sense of connection between the two cultures, gradually drawing the Dravidians into the Indo-Aryan religious fold.²⁰⁷

Additionally, as the reformed Indo-Aryan religion gained prominence, non-Brāhmaṇas were occasionally accepted into the Brāhmaṇa caste, especially when there were not enough Brāhmaṇas available.²⁰⁸

In certain sections of Vedic literature, there is evidence that Non-Aryan individuals were able to join the Aryan community and even attain the status of Ṛṣi, such as Kaṇva. However, the humiliation faced by Ailūṣa Kavaṣa at the hands of fellow priests had a social aspect. This is highlighted in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, a text associated with the *Ṛgveda*,²⁰⁹ which likely coincided with the compilation of the bardic texts. In the *Aponaptriya* section of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,²¹⁰ Kavaṣa's low social standing appears to be the reason for his humiliation. He is denounced as the son of a slave woman, a cheat, and a non-Brāhmaṇa. There is significant distress and shock expressed at his presence, and as a result, he is barred not only from making Soma offerings but also from

²⁰⁶ U.N. Ghoshal, *Studies in India: History and Culture*. p.-22.

²⁰⁷ R.D. Banerjee, *Prehistoric, Ancient and Hindu India*, p.32.

²⁰⁸ E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. I, p.54.

²⁰⁹ RV-10.30.

²¹⁰ A.Br.-2.19.

living near the banks of the Sarasvatī River. Kavaṣa is ultimately exiled to a desert region, where he is left to suffer from thirst and die.

This passage from the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* highlights the developing notions of pure and impure regions, which were intended for the high-born and low-born classes, respectively. It suggests that Ailūṣa Kavaṣa, being of low birth and not a Brāhmaṇa, was not allowed to drink the water of the Sarasvatī River. This exclusion symbolised that he could no longer reside by the river and was instead relegated to a harsh, unwelcoming area, such as a desert. This reflects an early sign of societal divisions based on purity of lifestyle and living spaces, a concept that becomes a defining feature of later Brāhmanical traditions. In the *Śāṅkhāyana Brāhmaṇa*, which is also associated with the *Ṛgveda* but was written a couple of centuries after the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, the descendants of Kavaṣa are portrayed differently. Reflecting the changing attitudes of the time, the *Śāṅkhāyana Brāhmaṇa*²¹¹ recognises Kavaṣa as a legitimate priest and does not speak negatively about him. Meanwhile, in the *Aitareya Āraṇyaka*,²¹² the Kāvaṣeyas (descendants of Kavaṣa) are depicted as openly rejecting the study of the Vedas and the performance of sacrifices, considering these actions to be futile.²¹³

3.9. Remaining of non- Aryan customs and manners

In many instances, some of these primitive Dravidian goddesses retained their original forms even after being exalted by the Indo-Aryans. The images of Yogamāyā at Vindhyaçhala, Kirīteśvarī near Murshidabad, and Kāmākhyā near Gauhati still reflect their early, primitive shapes.²¹⁴ The bard provides subtle hints about the competing claims between different groups of priests. Although

²¹¹ Śāṅkh.Br.-12.1.3.

²¹² A. Ā.-3.2.6.

²¹³ Ramendra Nath Nandi, *The Ṛgveda: In its Historical Setting*, p.76-77.

²¹⁴ R.D. Banerjee, *Prehistoric, Ancient and Hindu India*, p.36.

such rivalries trace back to the Ṛgvedic era, the division of the Aryan society into specialised professional groups likely intensified ideas about high and low status within the Aryan social structure.

Bardic efforts to dominate priestly authority at political centers may have sometimes been influenced by ethnic factors. This is logical, as bardic composers came from diverse ethnic backgrounds, regardless of their physical traits, dialects, or lifestyles. As a result, there could be both fair-skinned and dark-skinned poets. Kaṇva, who is described as ‘Kṛṣṇa’ and ‘Śyābah’ (meaning ‘dark-skinned’) in several passages, seems to have faced ethnic discrimination. A passage from the Tenth Book of the *Ṛgveda*²¹⁵, which also refers to Kaṇva as ‘Śyābah’ and ‘Kṛṣṇa’, mentions that no other deity, except the fire god, became radiant and caused the sources of wealth to overflow for Kaṇva.²¹⁶

Furthermore, the early Tamil poetry retains evidence of the Dravidian resentment toward the Indo-Aryans.²¹⁷

3.10. Fusion of Races

The fusion of races was facilitated by changes in religious practices among the early Dravidian settlers and the Indo-Aryan invaders. As their religious forms evolved, it became easier for the different races to integrate. Dravidian deities were worshipped by both Indo-Aryans and Dravidians, though the rituals changed over time. The lower social classes retained their traditional forms of worship and priests, who eventually claimed Indo-Aryan origins and became low-caste Brāhmaṇas. Non-Aryan people began to assert descent from various Indo-Aryan castes, and over time, Non-Aryan magicians and Dravidian priests were absorbed into the Brāhmaṇa caste.

²¹⁵ RV-10.31.11.

²¹⁶ Ramendra Nath Nandi, *The Ṛgveda: In its Historical Setting*, p.73.

²¹⁷ R.D. Banerjee, *Prehistoric, Ancient and Hindu India*, p. 38.

Intermarriage also played a role in this fusion. Indo-Aryan Brāhmaṇas married aboriginal and Dravidian women, and their offspring were considered fully Indo-Aryan. Warriors from all backgrounds—aboriginals, pre-Dravidians, Dravidians, and Indo-Aryans—claimed Kshatriya status, while traders, artisans, and farmers, regardless of their racial origins, were classified as Vaiśyas. The Brāhmaṇas encouraged this racial integration and claims of Indo-Aryan ancestry, as it helped erase the original racial divisions. Over time, the Dravidians gradually forgot that they had a civilisation much older than that of the Indo-Aryan invaders and that their ancestors did not originally worship the primitive gods of the Aryans.²¹⁸

During the period represented by the later Vedic texts, the Aryans continued to expand their territory, with a significant shift in the cultural and political center moving eastwards. By the time of the Brāhmaṇas, the heart of Aryan civilisation had shifted to the lands of the Kurus and Pañcālas, roughly corresponding to modern-day Uttar Pradesh, while the earlier settlements in the Punjab became less prominent. The Aryan expansion continued eastward, and the most important states in this region were Kosala, Kāśī, and Videha.

The primary route of Aryan migration during this period seems to have followed the Ganges valley, mostly staying to the north of the river. It is probable that they initially avoided the dense forests surrounding the river, instead migrating along the foothills of the Himalayas. The majority of tribes and kingdoms mentioned in the texts were located to the north of the Ganges, with only a few mentioned to the south, such as the Cedis, Satvants, and the kingdom of Vidarbha.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.* p.37-38.

At this time, the Aryans were surrounded by various Non-Aryan tribes, including the Andhras, Puṇḍras, Mūtibas, Pulindas, and Śábaras, as listed in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*. The regions of Aṅga and Magadha appeared to have been only partially Aryanised, according to the sources.²¹⁹

The process of Aryanisation spread rapidly across various parts of India, but Brāhmanisation made limited progress in East India. It was only during the time of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* that the Aryans advanced east of the Sarasvatī River, led by Māthava, the Videgha, who is described as ‘carrying Agni Vaiśvānara in his mouth’, with Gotama Rāhugaṇa²²⁰ as his priest. They moved beyond the Sadānīra (or Great Gandak) and settled in the region known as Videgha (or North Bihar), which became Brāhmanised.

However, according to D.R. Bhandarkar, regions like Magadha (or South Bihar) and Puṇḍra and Vaṅga (West and East Bengal) were not fully Brāhmanised until the third century A.D.²²¹ In fact, they were certainly not Brāhmanised by around 400 B.C., as the *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra*²²² explicitly states that “he who has visited the (countries of the) ... Puṇḍras, Vaṅgas, Kaliṅgas, or Pranunas, shall offer a Punashtōma or Sarvapṛishṭhi”²²³ as a means of purification. In contrast, Magadha, Puṇḍra, and Vaṅga were integrated into the Aryan fold much earlier.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter serves as the central component of the thesis, offering a comprehensive response to the research question by integrating fragmented evidence of Aryanisation from Vedic literature. The analysed evidence is

²¹⁹ A.L. Basham, *A Cultural History of India*. P.27.

²²⁰ *Carmichael Lectures*, 1918, p.14 & *ABORI*, Vol.12, p.104.

²²¹ *ABORI*, Vol.12, p.110 ff.

²²² Bau.Dh.S.-1.1.2.14.

²²³ *ABORI*, Vol.12, p.109.

presented descriptively to demonstrate how the Aryans influenced and ultimately assimilated Non-Aryan groups into their cultural framework. Initially, the Aryans exercised cultural dominance over the Non-Aryans; however, as the Epic and Puranic periods progressed, a contrasting trend emerged, wherein Non-Aryan elements began to acquire considerable religious and cultural significance.

Chapter IV

Newly formed Society and Caste system

4.1. Introduction

Humans are social creatures. They are here to serve their community. Human life without civilisation is incredibly uncommon. From prehistoric periods to the present, humans have interacted with one another in communal settings. Families today live in groups, much like old cavemen did, and the largest version of that family is this human civilisation. Historically, people have started to live together to defend themselves from outside foes since the beginning. Looking back at earlier periods in human history, we can also observe that groups of people—or the entire human family—were formed to defend themselves from outside foes. In addition, mutual aid and matching were used to meet the three fundamental requirements of food, clothing, and housing. This is the primary driver behind the emergence of society. The conflict over rights and dominance began after clan structure emerged. The more riches and status accrue, the more extensive the clan. As a consequence, clans started fighting against each other. As a result, the occupying clan surely began to take the riches of the defeated clan.

War is a product of the seizure of power, not self-defence. The result of which is the establishment of the social system. The division of authority is the basis for caste origins. The powerful govern, while the comparatively powerless ordinary people are ruled. The idea of the king subject emerged. The vanquished people eventually had their liberties taken away and were reduced to slavery. Consequently, society became divided into rulers, followers, and slaves. They subsequently became famous subjects due to their marital relationships with these captives. Originally nomads, these people were eventually compelled to establish as their population, wealth, and area grew. They gave up hunting and

livestock husbandry in support of agriculture. Social organisation is created. Permanent settlements and farming techniques enhance their way of life. There are many demands as a consequence of modern lifestyles. To satisfy the different needs of the members, someone in control of the organisation divides the members based on their tasks—social inequality results when individuals are assigned specific tasks based on their bodily and mental capacities.

Furthermore, historians says that human societies began to operate very differently than in the past, around 12000 years ago. Many cultures developed methods for food production, depending less on hunting or gathering for sustenance. Humans started establishing farming communities around 10,000 BCE. This impacted society significantly and marked a significant shift from previous social structures; people began to live in denser, stronger communities, and not everyone was required to work full-time in food production. Specialisation within society was made feasible because there was no longer a requirement for all inhabitants to dedicate their entire time to food production. Eventually, surplus food — food that did not immediately benefit farming families — was given to society. The surplus food agricultural systems could generate allowed people to live in larger, more permanent villages. Villages were more fruitful both in terms of agriculture and the arts. Textiles, pottery, structures, tools, metalwork, sculptures, and paintings were all created by people and were closely related to the cultivation and the development of larger villages. Humans have been foraging for food for over a million years. However, within the last 2,000 years, farming has nearly completely supplanted foraging, leading to the fast expansion of agricultural communities throughout the globe. Foraging-based methods are extremely rare today. Due to the intensification process that farming sparked, more people could be supported on a given amount of territory because more calories could be generated per acre. The outcome was a sharp increase in the global population. The global

population grew from approximately 6 million in 10000 BCE to approximately 120 million in 1000 BCE.

Meanwhile, the growing communities had to adapt in new ways as well as organise human life in more complicated ways as populations increased. The evolution of the idea of possession is another important outcome of this new social system. Farmers, unlike nomadic hunter-gatherer groups, invested a great deal of time and energy into cultivating specific areas of land, and as a result, they grew emotionally attached to them. Strong leaders and moral codes emerged in response as disputes were prone to occur.

Throughout history, agriculture did not appear suddenly and everywhere; some societies did so more quickly or thoroughly than others, while others did not embrace it. Despite this variance, there is no doubt that cultivation altered the trajectory of human history. Although the agricultural revolution certainly played a part in the development of ever-more complex societies, there is much debate over why some agrarian societies ultimately developed into sophisticated cultures while others did not. In some cases, it seems that complex governmental systems contributed to expanding farming systems rather than being their outcome. Massive irrigation projects, conflict, trade, geography, and competition are a few other potential contributing factors that historians and anthropologists are still trying to identify. Each society became more complex as a consequence of its own distinct set of environmental, social, and political stimuli.

4.1.1. Larger social group formation: More extensive and denser communities started to appear in different parts of the globe, such as the Tigris-Euphrates, Nile, Indus, and Huang River basins. Large groups are considered complex societies or civilisations if they share various traits, such as a dense population, an agriculture-based economy, a social hierarchy, a division of labour and specialisation, a centrally organised government, monuments,

record-keeping and writing, and complex belief systems. These sophisticated civilisations, such as Uruk and Ur, formed cities or city-states.¹ These early cities were hubs of authority, commerce, culture, and invention. These first cities were nexuses of power, production, culture, and innovation. However, it was not easy to maintain these cities. In order to acquire energy in the form of firewood, construction materials like stone, and resources like food and water, significant and frequently irrevocable environmental manipulation was necessary. These cities were consequently highly susceptible to fluctuations in the weather and climatic conditions. For instance, a deluge could obliterate the entire supply of barley, and a drought could make water sources worryingly sparse. Disease, strife, and shortages were felt even more acutely in these cultures due to their high population densities. An epidemic of illness could emerge rapidly. As a result of these vulnerabilities, these societies devised strategies for anticipating shifts in their natural environments, such as food and water storage.

These small towns faced more difficulties as they expanded from small settlements to city-states with thousands of inhabitants. They needed to develop social organisations to deal with these hurdles more effectively.

4.1.2. Formation of governments and social classes: Civilisations conjure pictures of stone walls, monuments, and roadways, but they are more than sturdy physical structures. People initiated creating social infrastructures: economic, political, and religious organisations that established new social hierarchies to facilitate the organisation and administration of these large, dense communities. People performing specialised roles, such as licenced officials, farmers, artisans, dealers, and spiritual leaders, were found in these hierarchies.

¹ <https://www.britannica.com/place/ur>

Furthermore, cities also needed diplomats, armies, and centralised leaders due to increased trade and conflict with other cultures.

Most towns arose from villages; some evolved into city-states, self-governing urban centres and farming areas. Since some residents could opt out of food production due to the surplus food produced by the nearby towns, specialised jobs and related classes started appearing.

Leaders, who made up a new social class, were required to organise large groups of people to work together for the large-scale building of irrigation systems, monuments, and other projects and to allow cooperation between these many distinct classes. Although strong states, centralised systems of government, and command were the standard in the earliest cultures, political leadership could take many different forms.

4.1.3. Challenges of Ancient states and their social classes: A clan refers to a collection of 100-200 people split into 6-12 families. The intra-clan dispute was focused on resource management, labour division, authority, and exterior protection. By definition, this type of conflict is less violent than external conflict. The desire to reduce conflict while increasing resources and security for constituent families compelled them to consider novel forms of connection with other clans rather than suffering the ongoing cost of conflict.

Conflict erupted when these roving groups and communities began to overlap, as had been the long-term trend. Meanwhile, some communities could eventually organise themselves to secure patches of land where they could establish cultivation and other more stationary or less mobile living strategies, such as pastoralism and fishing, based on the region. Once more settled, groups emerged. They established more prominent communities with defences and more complicated social structures and tools like law, religion, counting mechanisms, writing, and social divisions to handle resources, food, and

housing. However, the defences seen in communities, as well as the ever-increasing centralised walled or hardened structures such as granaries, shrines, palaces, and pyramids, indicate that not only internal conflicts were growing. However, foreign conflicts with overlapping communities were also on the rise.

Mesoamerica, the Andes, Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley, the Yellow River, and the Yangtze River exhibited the same trend. These various ancient societies also had social divisions in —

1) Ancient Egyptian civilisation has seven social classes –

- a) **Pharaoh** – The King and ruler of the land.
- b) **Vizier** – The adviser of the Pharaoh.
- c) **High priest** – The enforcers of religion.
- d) **Priest, Doctor** – High-class workers.
- e) **Scribes**- The teachers of the civilisation.
- f) **Craftsmen**- the architects of the society
- g) **Slaves and Farmers**- The workers of the society.

2) Ancient Mesopotamian civilisation –

- a) **King** – The Ruler of the land
- b) **Middle Class**- The normal people who do not suffer.
- c) **Peasants**- The workers of the society.

3) Ancient Chinese civilisation –

- a) **The Emperor**- The High King.
- b) **Shi**- The Gentry Scholars.
- c) **Nong**- The Peasant Farmers.
- d) **Gong**- The Craftsmen.
- e) **Shang**- The Merchants.

The mediaeval European feudal society also demonstrates four socioeconomic classes–

- a) **Kings and Queens:** Kings and Queens were the most powerful rulers in Europe, and all nobles and knights were their vassals. They held all the land in the nation and created the laws - he or she granted rich lords and nobles an area of property called a fife.
- b) **Nobles or Lords:** Nobles were vassals of kings and queens. Many of them were also rulers of lesser-ranking nobles and knights. The nobility agreed to furnish the King with troops and horses for his army in exchange for land, and they also granted some property to trained soldiers or Knights.
- c) **Knights:** In return for territory, knights served and battled for noble lords and the monarch.
- d) **Peasants:** Since they did not own property, peasants were not a part of the feudal structure. However, many peasants laboured on noble or knightly estates. This set of individuals worked the soil to benefit nobility and knights, who protected them.

This system also includes some additional specifications. The land's inhabitants were also classified according to their significance. The sequence was as follows:

- a) **Pope/ Church-** A highly esteemed member of the Church.
- b) **Monarch-** The King or Queen who was the country's ruler and all it contained.
- c) **Nobles-** Someone who was or came from a wealthy household.
- d) **Knight/ Vassals-** A service for the King to go into battle.
- e) **Merchants/ Farmers/ Craftsmen-** Merchants were people involved in trade within foreign countries. Farmers provided food and crops for the land. Craftsmen were skilled in making or crafting particular objects.
- f) **Peasants and Serfs-** A service provided to the monarch for him to go into combat.

4.2. Class division in Early Vedic Society

Like any other ancient society, Vedic India had a class divide. In the Indian subcontinent, these social divisions were known as the Varṇa. The oldest conjecture regarding the genesis of the four Varṇas is to be found in the mythical tale of creation embodied in the *Puruṣasūkta* of the *Ṛgveda* -

ब्राह्मणोऽस्य मुखमासीद् बाहु राजन्यः कृतः।
ऊरू तदस्य यद्वैश्यः पद्भ्यां शूद्रोऽजायत॥²

This is considered an interpolation in the tenth book of that collection. However, it is replicated with minor alterations in later Vedic literature,³ as well as in the epic,⁴ Purāṇas⁵ and Dharmaśāstras⁶ traditions. It states that the Brāhmaṇa emanated from the mouth of the primaeval man, the Kṣatriya from his arms, the Vaiśya from his thighs and the Śūdra from his feet.⁷ Either it demonstrates that the Śūdras were thought to be of the same stock and thus belonged to the Aryan community, or it reflects an effort to identify a common mythological origin for the heterogeneous Brāhmanical society.

At a point in time, the *Puruṣasūkta* version may be ascribed to the end of the period of the *Atharvaveda*,⁸ where it appears in the most recent section, which could be as recent as 800 B.C.⁹ It appears to offer a philosophical rationale for the class divisions within the tribal culture. Division of work had advanced significantly even during the *Ṛgvedic* era. However, even though

² RV-10.90.12.

³ P. Br.-5.1.6-10; Vāj.S.-31.11; T.Ā.-3.12.5-6.

⁴ Mbh., Śhānti. P.-73.4-8.

⁵ Vāyu.P.-1.8.155-9; Mārka. P. - Ch.49; Viṣṇu.P.-1. Ch.6.

⁶ V. Dh. Sū.-4.2; Bau.Dh. Sū.-1.10.19.5-6; cf. Āp.Dh. Sū.-1.1.1.7; M.S.-1.31; Yāj.S.-3.126.

⁷ RV-10.90.12.

⁸ AV.-19.6.6.

⁹ *Atharvaveda Samhitā*. C.R. Lanmann (Ed.), W.D. Whitney (Tr.), *HOS*, Ch. 7, p.141; Ch.8, pp.895-898.

members of the same family held jobs as poets, doctors and grinders, no social distinction was involved. Tribes and groups eventually disintegrated into social classes as the Atharvavedic era came to an end; however, differences in function tended to transform into differences in ranks.

It appears that the Śūdra tribe, or parts of the Aryans engaged in servile labour, were granted the status of fourth Varṇas.¹⁰ Sociologists claim that a class transforms into a caste when it denies commensality and connubial with other classes. Indian classes are naturally exclusive social divisions that forbid intermarriage and practise endogamy. Each caste and sub-caste have its norms and laws to protect its identity. Foreign invasions and migrations were the factors that caused changes among privileged groups.

4.3. Social mobility in Aryan Social Structure and acceptance of Non-Aryans

The new Aryan aristocracy was introduced by the movement of the Aryan-speaking peoples, which began around 1500 B.C. The nobility of the region confronted issues as the Aryan civilisation gradually spread south of the Vindhyas. Migrations impacted status relationships because endogamy regulations needed to be changed to accommodate hypergamy. Less apparent factors contribute to social change and paint a more accurate picture of its root causes. In the past, two presumptions that most scholars unquestioningly adopted hindered analytical studies of early Indian society. First of all, it was believed that early Indian society remained more or less frozen throughout the time under review, recording only a slight social change. Secondly, a rigidly structured society founded on a hierarchy of rank was one of the critical components of the Varṇa concept, which was thought to be an accurate depiction of how society functioned. This concept was used to support this

¹⁰ R.S.Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, p.33.

claim. It has been proposed that the Varṇa idea may have always been primarily a theoretical paradigm and never an accurate depiction of society. Dharmaśāstras provide the majority of the material about the Varṇa idea, and the account in these documents is occasionally verified and is sometimes even contradicted by other sources.

In the notion of universal law, Varṇa was inextricably linked with the concept of Dharma. It was claimed that society was divided into four orders, and they subsequently introduced later a fifth order. The first four were the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra, of which the first three were regarded as Dvija or twice-born. The untouchables were eventually recognised as the fifth order. The four groups were miraculously formed and emerged from the great deity Prajāpati, according to the *Puruṣasūkta*.¹¹ The idea of Varṇa presupposes that social groups are arranged hierarchically, that rank is determined by birth, and that endogamy and ritual purity are governed by certain norms.¹² It unmistakably shows a strict social structure. Theoretically, there were only two simple ways to raise one's standing. One was by opting to separate from society and turn reclusive. The other involved ensuring rebirth in existence with a better social standing. Mobility was not entirely disregarded by this plan, however.

The Varṇa theory was founded on various factors, such as pollution extending to social hierarchies, clearly defined and recognised specialisation of labour and differentiation between ethnic and regional populations, so much for the Varṇa model. Here, perhaps limited horizontal mobility would be permitted to the elite but no upward mobility. Downward movement was not too difficult. The upward movement was much more challenging and inaccessible to the person. Upward mobility was not open to everyone and quite hard to achieve. Every group would be recruited strictly through birth. Since status must be

¹¹ RV-10.90.

¹² R. Thapar, *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretation*, pp.112-113.

assessed from two perspectives in the early Indian context—ritual status and actual status in terms of economic and political power—it must also be examined from both perspectives. The order of ritual rank is more critical in Brāhmanical writing, and this is what it explains. Ideas about contamination, which may have been prevalent during the Pre-Aryan era, are the source of ritualistic beliefs. Pollution was controlled by the implementation of two taboos: the one concerning the family in the context of marriage and the concern for dining with or removing food from only those ritually allowed. The prohibition against touching the ritually impure grew in significance over time. As long as endogamous and exogamous marital rules and norms of commensality were observed and retained, the social identity of these groups within a caste structure would be preserved, and acquiring ceremonial status would be required. Notably, these tribal names continued to be used with distinct identities up to the mediaeval period. Therefore, it is stated that a Brāhmaṇa who marries a Vaiśya lady has children who are referred to as the Ambaṣṭha tribe. Later Purāṇas mention the Ambaṣṭha tribe as having its origins in the Ānava Kṣatriyas, and the ethnic identity remains.¹³ The marriage of a Brāhmaṇa to a Śūdra lady produced a Niṣāda.¹⁴ This appears to have been an aboriginal tribe. Curiously, the Niṣāda and Śūdra tribes are mentioned as neighbours; this may help to explain why it was essential for a Śūdra to be one of the parents. Those tribes that were not assimilated were required to be granted a ritual position within the system, which is thus the theory of mixed castes was worked out. Seeing it as a series of vertical parallels with each Varṇa (pure or mixed) as an independent entity with a distinct sequence dependent on either an ethnic identity or a professional identity may be more insightful. Furthermore, this arrangement would include the Jāti identification. The four groups might have

¹³ M.S.-10.8; Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*.1922, p.109.

¹⁴ M.S.-10.18.

been considered sufficient when the theory of social organisation was first developed. As soon as they were considered insufficient, the concept of 'Varṇasaṃkara' was expanded upon and added to. Consequently, the initial allusions to the Rājanyas and the Kṣatriyas may not have been to such groups within each tribe but to an entire tribe referred to by either of these names. The titles appear to have been conferred to those groups in particular that had an oligarchic republican system in which a representative of each family participated in governance. With more people becoming acquainted with the Kṣatriya tribes, the word 'Kṣatriya' has replaced the phrase 'Rājanya'. After the four-fold category was approved, no attempt was undertaken to modify the fundamental framework, which had already received divine approval from the later Vedic era. New castes originating from professional associations, like the Kāyasthas, or tribe associations, like the Gonds, were regarded as mixed castes as they were descended from an amalgam of husbands and wives from the original four.

Each new caste must fit into the religious hierarchy; thus, there had to be an insistence on ritual rank. Ritual status was firm and fixed, irrespective of what the actual situation of a caste might be. Therefore, social mobility in Indian society did not always imply a shift in the actual status of a caste but was more frequently associated with attempts to elevate their ceremonial status or downplay their significance. The large number of instances provided by non-Dhamaśāstra, sources of occupations directly contradicting those legitimised by the Varṇa theorist, suggests that the listing of Varṇa occupations in the Dharmasāstra¹⁵ was largely theoretical (although in origin, it appears to have been descriptive of actual functioning). This contradiction enables one to suggest that in terms of actual status, there was mobility. The continuation of marital and familial customs and the inclusion of commercial connections as an

¹⁵ *Ibid.*-10.47-49.

essential component of this system are two factors that contribute to the survival of caste.

Ritual status gave the Brāhmaṇas a unique position. Due to the rudimentary purity of their religious role, the emphasis on enlistment by birth had to be more strictly complied with. It is stated that non-Brāhmaṇas have occasionally been recruited into the ranks of Brāhmaṇas, but these occurrences are uncommon and are always described as being highly unusual. However, some recruitment must have occurred to explain how Brāhmaṇas increased as Aryanisation expanded throughout the sub-continent. This was most likely accomplished either through hypergamy or by hiring priests from the local cult, the latter of which is socially equal to assimilating the local cult into the 'Great Tradition' of Hinduism. But the process is nowhere clearly indicated, perhaps for obvious reasons. However, hints of status gradation amongst the Brāhmaṇas do occur. Thus, we are told in Buddhist sources that the 'Udicca Brāhmaṇas' from the Kuru-Pañcāla area looked down upon the 'Satakalakkhana Brāhmaṇas' who were further east, from Magadha.¹⁶ The phrase 'Magadhadeśīya Brahma-bandhu' carries obvious contempt.¹⁷ This possibly occurred when Magadha was still outside of the sphere of influence of Aryan Brāhmanism, and as a result, its Brāhmaṇas maintained several Non-Aryan practices. It could be argued that each tribe or professional group has its priests to minister¹⁸ to its religious requirements and that as the tribe or group moved up the social scale and enhanced its religious position, the priests moved into and up the Brāhmaṇa hierarchy.¹⁹

The Purāṇas describe Kṣatriyas who perform Brāhmanical duties, probably referring to a previous era. The conflict centred on the struggle for

¹⁶ Jāt- 1.324; 2.83; 3.232.

¹⁷ A.Br.-7.27.

¹⁸ P. Br.-14.6.6; A. Br.-2.19.1.

¹⁹ Ś.Br.-5.3.2.2.

ritual prestige and the division of temporal and spiritual authority, and it was simpler to describe in a monarchical system. Unsurprisingly, a working arrangement was eventually developed within a royal framework. The Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya were maintained in separate ceremonial statuses. A compromise had to be made because it was obvious that aspirations for political power could not be rigidly restricted to the Kṣatriya caste. The concession seems to have been that a monarch of non-Kṣatriya ancestry had to apply for validation, be declared of Kṣatriya ancestry, and be granted a suitable genealogy. It also emphasises the difference between ritual status and actual status by allowing a person of non-Kṣatriya descent to be granted Kṣatriya status when he became a king. The superior ritual status of the Brāhmaṇa lay in the fact that he provided the validation. But this working arrangement took many centuries to evolve.

The ritual supremacy of Brāhmaṇa over the Kṣatriya was initially established in part by associating the monarch with the god. It is not easy to track the gradual transformation of the concept of monarchy from a secular function of guidance and defence to being divinely chosen and, ultimately, being created up of divine elements.²⁰ However, the idea of divinity was limited since the King was never a god-king or worshipped as a deity. The channels of divinity were the royal sacrifices – Rājasūya, Vājapeya, Aśvamedha etc. – for the performance of which the presence of the priest was essential.

Early sources suggest that the task of a Purohita was primarily religious, if not magical, in character.²¹ The Purohita becoming a monarchic check is another example of how the position of Purohita has become increasingly politicised.²² The Mantripāriṣad (ministerial council) and the Amātyas (ministers) may often have been Brāhmaṇas or members of the royal family. The

²⁰ ṚV. - 10.173; Ś.Br.-8.4.23; A.Br.-7.22; Bṛh.U.-1.4.11; M.S.-7.8.

²¹ A.Br.-7.24-26; Ś.Br.-4.1-5-6.4

²² Yāj.S.- 1.312; V. Dh. Sū.- ch.19.

qualifications demanded of a minister, such as a familiarity with the Dharmaśāstra and the Arthaśāstra works, would often have precluded all but the Brāhmaṇas. The King and the Brāhmaṇas were theoretically the upholders of law in its various manifestations.²³

An extensive range of castes and occupations could be included within the theoretical functions of the Vaiśya caste. The Manu describes the Vaiśyas as landowners, farmers, artisans, merchants, and traders. They also manage livestock and cultivate property.²⁴ Presumably, the references to cultivation are to relatively wealthy cultivators since the association of Vaiśyas with wealth is consistent.²⁵ One reason for the gradual decline of Vaiśyas was that, whereas the Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya classes were somewhat homogeneous units with more or less defined functions, the Vaiśyas were a unit only in name, consisting of a conglomeration of diverse classes with diverse functions and different rules and regulations guiding them in their respective guilds and corporations.

On the other hand, Śūdras also symbolised as Non-Aryan people in Brāhmaṇas. During the Ṛgvedic period, they primarily captured soldiers and thus, pure and simple slaves. However, in the Gangetic plains, it was frequently entire tribes that were subjected to servitude rather than just captured people who became Śūdras. Consequently, the term came to refer to all Non-Aryans. Instead of the Dāsa or Dasyu of the Ṛgvedic society,²⁶ the Śūdra is frequently contrasted with Aryans in later Vedic texts.²⁷ An Aryan and a Śūdra fought over a round white skin at the 'Mahāvratā' ritual of the winter solstice, which is mentioned down the Śūdra with the skin.²⁸ The greater intermix of blood that

²³ Gau. Dh. Sū. – Ch.8; V. Dh. Sū. - Ch. 19.

²⁴ M.S.-9.326-33.

²⁵ T.S.-5.

²⁶ ṚV-7.8.14; 8.4.4.

²⁷ AV-19.6.2; 4.20.4.

²⁸ A.B. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, p.67.

took place in the rank and file of the population, and the greater association of the Śūdras in those professions that had been the monopoly of the Vaiśyas in the Ṛgvedic period, naturally tended to lessen the distinction between the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras. The despised Dāsas with their ugliness, distinct creeds and languages, manners and customs, started to be more familiarly handled when they became domestic servants and were somewhat introduced into the habits and usages of their Aryan owners. Hence, according to the third chapter of *Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa*, the Śūdra had been allocated a responsibility to keep a watchful eye on the property during one of the most significant and revered rituals of the Aryans, the ‘Aśvamedha’ offering.²⁹ A passage from the *Taittiriya Saṃhitā* indicates that the Śūdra had acquired a recognised place in society, deserving of being prayed for regarding his welfare by a Brāhmaṇa sage, and was almost bracketed together with the Vaiśyas.³⁰ The way the priest addressed him suggests that Śūdras were permitted to participate in some rituals.³¹ A Śūdra is described as appearing at the ‘Pitṛmedha’ offering in the same text.³² According to the Cāndogya Upaniṣad, a Brāhmaṇa sage gives religious guidance to a Śūdra while taking wealthy gifts and his daughter from him.³³ The Jābala-Satyakāma story demonstrates how, even in the case of the Śūdras, personal factors can occasionally take precedence over caste-related concerns.³⁴ Whatsoever might be the degradation of the Vaiśya, he was still a member of the Aryan race, and in serious religious rituals, it was forbidden to consider him equivalent to the Śūdra. He was not to be granted the right of ‘Abhiṣeka’ (ritual drenching), and he was not to be allowed entry into the ‘Śālā’ or chamber of

²⁹ T. Br.-1.2.6.7

³⁰ T.S.-5.7.6.4.

³¹ Ś.Br.-1.1.4.11.

³² *Ibid.*-13.8.3.11.

³³ Cānd.U.-4.2.

³⁴ N.K.Dutt, *Origin and growth of caste in India*, pp.85-87.

offering. The right of initiation belonged to the Brāhmaṇa, Rājanya and Vaiśya but never to the Śūdra.³⁵ The Śūdra never had the privilege of ordination; it belonged to the Brāhmaṇa, Rājanya, and Vaiśya only. It categorically deemed him unfit for sacrifice (Ayajñīya) in both the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.³⁶ The *Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā* forbids the Śūdra from partaking of Soma at sacrifice. Simply because he originated from the feet of Prajāpati, the Śūdra is only permitted to wash the soles of people from upper castes during sacred rituals.³⁷ This is the protocol for an initiated member.³⁸ While the Brāhmaṇa is a class of the gods, the Śūdra is of the Asuras.³⁹ The Śūdra has no god and makes no sacrifices.⁴⁰ On some sacred and sombre events, contact with a Śūdra was associated with some form of ritual impurity.⁴¹ This attitude can be found in later writings in a more substantial version. In this regard, the *Harivaṃśa* (11.8.20-25) states that the Śūdras, created from non-existence, are destitute of rites. Therefore, they have no right to participate in purification rituals, nor do they possess divine knowledge. Eventually, the position of a Śūdra was usually that of a household servant and a menial labourer. They were regarded with some regard, along with disdain. They were never permitted to enjoy the rights and benefits of an Aryan freeman.⁴²

The Ṛgvedic society had significantly progressed from the prehistoric stage when one man could cultivate his land, create his fabric, make his earthen vessels and rudimentary weaponry, and maintain his flock. Rathakāra (a builder

³⁵ Ś.Br.-3.1.2.10.

³⁶ *Ibid.* - 3.1.1.10; P.Br.-6.1.11.

³⁷ T.S.-7.1.1.

³⁸ Ś.Br.-3.1.1.

³⁹ T.Br.-1.2.6.

⁴⁰ P.Br. - 6.1.11.

⁴¹ T.Br.-3.2.3.

⁴² N.K.Dutt, *Origin and growth of caste in India*, pp.88-89.

of chariots), Takṣan (a carpenter), Kulāla (a potter), Karmāra (a blacksmith), Vapta (a barber), Suravata (a vintner), and Carmaṇ (a leather-dress maker) are some of the occupational groups described in the Ṛgvedic era. The craftsman classes, which were subsequently regarded as Śūdras and more frequently as worse than Śūdras due to their mixed castes, were respected citizens of the state in the Ṛgvedic society and belonged to the community of Viś.⁴³ No occupation was demeaning to an Aryan freeman, even though the positions of a priest and a monarch offered their bearers the highest social status. The physicians, for instance, in later times formed a caste of their own, and a Brāhmaṇa professing the function of a physician would be degraded. But in *Ṛgveda*, we find Brāhmaṇas exercising the functions of a physician without dishonour.⁴⁴ A doctor had to be knowledgeable and well-versed in mantras for appeasing gods and chasing away demons in addition to the science of medicine because diseases were thought to be brought on by the wrath of gods or being possessed by demons. Similar to witch doctors in prehistoric cultures, physicians were typically Brāhmaṇas and held in high regard; as a result, many gods, including Asvins⁴⁵, Varuna⁴⁶, and Rudras⁴⁷, are commonly referred to as physicians. Different professions did not trigger any blemishes, even in Brāhmaṇa households, as indicated in a Mantra, where the Ṛṣis sings, “I am a poet, my father is a physician, my mother a grinder of corn. With our different views, seeking after gain, we run as after cattle.”⁴⁸

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.49.

⁴⁴ ṚV- 10.97.22.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.116.16.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.24.9.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.33.4-7.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.112.3

The Ṛbhus were supposed to have been skilful artisans exalted to divine honours.⁴⁹ Some of the descendants of the great sage Bhṛgu were expert chariot-makers.⁵⁰

The Niṣādas, Caṇḍālas and Paulakas are also mentioned as Non-Aryan mixed peoples. The earliest mention of them is to be found in the *Yajurveda*.⁵¹ Whatever may be said about their mixed origins in the Dharmasāstras, we can discern true specimens of savage races, who had been on a very low culture level, lived in a repulsively dirty manner, and followed the primitive professions of hunting and fishing when the conquering Aryans first met them. They also included as tribes and castes in later works.

4.4. Place of Non-Aryan people in new society

The concept of a hierarchical system was most likely borrowed from tribal culture to meet their needs. There were some professional and geographic groups and other unidentified folks with whom they interacted and battled. Consequently, the Aryans noticed the social arena as mainly divided between conquerors and those about to have already been demolished. As a result, the Aryans were now in a position to initiate the need for civil re-stratification so that a functional relationship with various groups could be created for the social order to operate. The element of ‘racial purity’ may also have played a role in the exclusion of some people, as they sought to maintain their superior position over the ‘dark-skinned’ and ‘snub-nosed’ people.⁵² Aryans arranged themselves into the first three categories, and possibly, the local gentry who was friendly to

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.161.1-5.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.39.14.

⁵¹ T.S-4.5.4.2.

⁵² P.Mukherjee, *Beyond the four Varṇas*, p. 23-24.

the Aryans also drafted them.⁵³ The Śūdra Varṇa, in all probability, owes its origin to the non-wealthy, conquered and hostile groups. Probably, that led to the conjecture that the former Dāsa or Dasyu or Rākṣasa of the *Ṛgveda* formed the Śūdra Varṇas.⁵⁴ The Varṇa category may have originated from the low status of this tribe vis-à-vis Aryan Society. The fact that the status of the Śūdras was low is indicated by their association with Niṣāḍa, the Ābhīra and the Malla, the first two being regarded as mixed castes and the third as Vrātya. The Vrātyas⁵⁵ continue to be a mystery. But regardless of their ethnicity, they were despised and regarded as inferior. The fact that the ‘Vrātyastoma’⁵⁶ is initially an initiation rite before and later shifted into an expiation ritual would support the idea that the Vrātya holds a less elevated status.

The *Puruṣasūkta* is generally cited as the theoretical foundation of the Varṇa system. Even though it appears to be a late addition, evidence from the hymn indicates that it is an interpolation. Of the four Varṇas named, only the Brāhmaṇas are referenced elsewhere in the *Ṛgveda*. The other three, Rājanya, Vaiśya and Śūdra, are stated for the first and only time in the *Ṛgveda* in this hymn. Even the word ‘Brāhmaṇa’, which referred to a priest, did not always imply one who guided the sacrifices. A Kṣatriya was allowed to officiate at his sacrament.⁵⁷ Evidentially, even if a proto-caste structure existed during the *Ṛgvedic* epoch, the theoretical origin of the Varṇa system is usually traced to the *Puruṣasūkta*. Yet it seems very obvious that this was believed to be a late addition, but the evidence of the hymn suggests that it is an interpolation. Of

⁵³ D.D. Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, p.96-98; S. Piggott, *Prehistoric India*, p.286-88.

⁵⁴ P. Mukherjee, *Beyond the Four Varṇa*, p. 24.

⁵⁵ Brāhmaṇas of Non-Aryan or mixed descent were probably referred to in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (7.27) and *Cāndogya Upaniṣad* (6.1.1) as ‘Brāhmaṇabandhu’. They are pointed as Magadhadesiya (of the country of Magadha) in Śrautasūtras of Kātyāyana (22.4.22) and Lātyāyana (8.6.28).

⁵⁶ It is enjoined there that after the ‘Vrātyastoma’, a sacrifice for the admission of a Vrātya into the Aryan community his belongings had to be given away to a ‘Brāhmabandhu’ of Magadha.

⁵⁷ RV-10.98; Ni.-2.10.

the four Varnas mentioned, only the Brāhmaṇas are referred to in other parts of the *Ṛgveda*. The other three, listed as Rājanya, Vaiśya and Śūdra, are noted for the only time in the *Ṛgveda* in this hymn. Even the term ‘Brāhmaṇa’, although it referred to a priest, did not necessarily mean one who guides the sacrifices. A Kṣatriya was permitted to officiate at his sacrifice. Evidentially, even if a proto-caste society existed during the Ṛgvedic period, the theoretical paradigm was not yet completely defined.

In the legend of the Kṛta age, the first of the four yugas, an idealised version of casteless society is envisioned.⁵⁸ The nomenclature used for castes is of particular importance. Brāhmaṇa and Vaiśya are more commonly used to refer to individuals with specific vocations - the special priesthood in one instance, commoners of the tribe devoted to cultivation and commerce in the other. However, the terms ‘Rājanya’ (and subsequently Kṣatriya) and Śūdra are either tribal names or terms that define a group of indigenous people. Both written and numismatic materials affirm the presence of the Rājanya clan well into the historical period.⁵⁹

Perhaps the professional term ‘Rājanya’, a member of the royal family or a nobility, is a broader interpretation of the initial term drawn from the clan with an oligarchic system. The association of the Śūdras with a tribe is asserted far more conclusively in various literary texts.⁶⁰ Whatever differences there were between the three classes, Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya, in the Ṛgvedic Society, they were nothing compared with those who distinguished ethnically and culturally the Aryans, white-skinned, good-featured, making sacrifices and worshipping gods like Agni, Indra, Varuna, etc. from the Dāsas or Dasyus, who were black-skinned (Kṛṣṇatvac), noseless or flat-nosed (anas), of unintelligible

⁵⁸ Viṣṇu. P.-1.3.

⁵⁹ Pā -4.2.53; *The Cambridge History of India*, Rapson (Ed.), p.528.

⁶⁰ Mbh. Bhiṣma. P.- 27.10; Mahābhāṣya- 1.2.3; 10.65; Viṣṇu. P. -2.3.16.

speech (Mṛdhra vac), not sacrificing (Ayajñan), worshipping no god (Adevayu), and following strange customs (Anyavrata).⁶¹

The Indo-Aryan communities in Punjab and those in the Gangetic areas as far as north Bihar were noticeably different. In contrast to Punjab, where Non-Aryan populations were eliminated, the conquest of the Gangetic areas involved overthrowing Non-Aryan societies, destroying their combat capacities, and enslaving their women and children. However, even in the latter, Aryan traits predominated. Pāñcāla, Vaṃsa, Cedi, Kosala, and Videha Aryan clans established themselves as overlords and assimilated the local people. However, the Indo-Aryan social structure experienced significant alterations during the absorption phase.

It may seem paradoxical to learn that the obstacle in their interaction grew as there was more communication between Aryans and Non-Aryans. We are unaware of any rules in the *R̥gveda* prohibiting intermarriage between an Aryan and a Dasyu, between a lord and a slave, because there was no threat of the purity of Aryan blood being impacted in the Punjab, where the Non-Aryan components were virtually eradicated. Considering the hate and disrespect the conquerors had for indigenous peoples, such intermarriages must have been uncommon. However, in the Gangetic areas, circumstances changed. Countless Non-Aryans remain in the nation today, serving as both servants and foes. If free interaction was not restrained, the danger of the conquered swamping the victors existed because there were still many Non-Aryans in the nation, both as captives and foes. The Indo-Aryan invaders had two options: completely wipe out the local population or aryanise them while taking precautions to avoid becoming barbarians in the process. They took the latter strategy and overcame their problem by creating a caste structure. In Punjab, there were already three groups in the Indo-Aryan society: the cleric, the monarch, the cultivator and the

⁶¹ RV-1.33.4; 1.174.2; 5.29.10; 7.6.3; 7.99.4; 8.70.2; 10.22.8. etc.

artisan. Later, a fifth class, the Niṣāda, which included the wild people of the hills and forests, was incorporated into these, forming the captives or Śūdras, the fourth class.⁶²

While there were still open intercourses between the first three groups, there was a barrier erected between the first three and fourth, let alone the fifth. In this way, Non-Aryans were granted a place in society and spared extinction, but they were warned not to pollute the purity of their ruler's bloodline.⁶³ Initially, a little quarter was provided to the soil's resisting inhabitants. But over time, a more lenient stance was taken, and many Dāsas were kidnapped as captives as opposed to being massacred. Slaves are frequently mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*. Since Dāsa came to be associated with slavery in subsequent writing, we can assume that the slaves were primarily taken from the Non-Aryans who were subjugated because the term 'Dāsa' came to be synonymous with slave in later literature. In the Vedic hymn literature, Dāsa initially indicated an enemy and secondly a slave; however, Dāsī, or the female counterpart of Dāsa, has always been understood to refer to a slave girl rather than a wife of an enemy. This shows that at first, captives were taken of women only, the males not being spared, and that at a later stage, male Dāsas were also acquired as slaves.⁶⁴

The *Puruṣasūkta*, which essentially recounts the formation of the world and its inhabitants, substitutes the name Śūdra for the Dāsa. The term 'Śūdra' does not appear anywhere else in the *Ṛgveda*. 'Śūdra' was a term used to refer to a slave in later times. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*⁶⁵ states, 'One like a Śūdra shall be born in thy line, the slave of another, who may be driven away or slain at will.' The term 'Śūdra' has no obvious explanation, and a fantastic derivation

⁶² A.B. Keith & A.A.McDonnell, *Vedic index*, Vol.1, pp.453-54.

⁶³ N.K.Dutt, *The Aryanisation Of India*, p.90.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁶⁵ A.Br.- 7.29

meaning is provided in later writing from the root ‘such’, as to grieve, and ‘dru’, to run.⁶⁶ The successors of the Aryan Śūdras may have continued to proliferate in the new, fertile Gangetic towns in later times, but starting in the Vedic period, a significant number of indigenous people of various stocks were gradually assimilated into the Śūdra Varṇas.⁶⁷ It was initially the name of a prominent Dāsa tribe that the Aryans had subjugated and reduced to servitude. By the time the *Puruṣasūkta* was composed, the Dāsa slaves of the Aryan invaders were known as ‘Śūdra’, hence the occurrence of the word therein instead of Dāsa.

The Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, and Vaiśyas constructed the entirety of the Aryan Society, and the Śūdras were allocated no specific duties other than serving as slaves for their owners. They did not have the obligations or privileges of their master, and they were undoubtedly not permitted to participate in the rituals and ceremonies of the Aryan flock. However, even though they were treated with contempt due to their race, religion, and enslavement, there is no evidence to suggest that they were considered ‘unclean’ or ‘impure’ and barred from interacting with their masters during the course of daily work. Apparently, the early Gṛhyasūtras constitute no explicit mention of the exclusion of the Śūdra from the ritual of initiation, the *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra* declares that he cannot be embraced to the Upanayana and Vedic education.⁶⁸ The presence of a Śūdra, especially a Caṇḍāla, is considered an adequate reason to suspend the recitation of the Veda.⁶⁹ Under such circumstances, Baudhāyana and Gautama opt to discontinue all education.⁷⁰ Additionally, the latter states that studies should not always be conducted in the

⁶⁶ Vayu. P.-8.165

⁶⁷ H. Oldenberg, *ZDMG*, Vol.51, p.286.

⁶⁸ Āp. Dh. Sū.-1.1.1.6.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*-1.3.9.9; Śāṅkh. G. Sū.-4.7.33.

⁷⁰ Bau. Dh. Sū.-1.11.21.15; Gau. Dh. Sū.-16.19.

town.⁷¹ Only Gautama asserts that a Śūdra should have his tongue amputated if he recites Vedic texts and have his body divided in two if he recalls them.⁷² This dreadful action may be regarded as an addition to the legal doctrine of Gautama because it appears to represent the extreme viewpoint of Manu.⁷³ Nonetheless, it is clear that even during this time, the notion of imparting Vedic instruction to a Śūdra was strongly opposed. That the Śūdras were the serving elite was only hinted at in documents from the later Vedic era. However, the Dharmaśāstras explicitly and vehemently stated that the responsibility of the Śūdra was to service the three higher Varṇas and thereby support his dependents during this time.⁷⁴ He was supposed to manage his own independent home, which he maintained through work in agriculture and artisanal pursuits. Gautama instructs us that the Śūdra could survive by mastering mechanical skills.⁷⁵

The Dāsas cannot be shown to have a low state of culture or a low standard of living that might cause a sense of abhorrence in the minds of the Aryans, as they are portrayed in the *Ṛgveda* in the darkest hue by their victorious foes. A Brāhmaṇa Ṛṣi is discovered to be associated with the generous Dāsa king Balbutha in the eighth chapter of the *Ṛgveda*.⁷⁶ Consequently, despite the animosity and disdain that existed between the Aryan lords and the Dāsa or Śūdra slaves, there was no touch-me-notism. There were no Dāsa or Śūdra freemen in the land that the Aryans conquered, and as a result, there was no set of regulations was required to direct the interactions between the two racial groups of males. The Aryans of the *Ṛgvedic* period, however, typically

⁷¹ Gau. Dh. Sū.-16.45.

⁷² *Op.cit.*-12.4-6.

⁷³ M.S.-8.270-272.

⁷⁴ Āp. Dh. Sū. -1.1.1-7; Gau. Dh. Sū.- 10.54-57.

⁷⁵ *Op.cit.*-10.60.

⁷⁶ ṚV- 8.46.32.

performing their own industrial art and husbandry work and rarely relying on slave labour for menial assistance.⁷⁷ There may have even been Aryan slaves who were either taken prisoner in battle, forfeited their freedom for failing to pay debts, or offered their services to prevent starvation. However, all of these stayed slaves for a limited time, and in any case, the lawful offspring of such an acquired slave became a freeman. Such must have been the customary practice of the s, as no instance of a Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya or Vaiśya slave being involved in menial labour or of such a person becoming a Śūdra as a result of his slavery is documented.

Another term used for Non-Aryan slave is 'Mleccha'. Kautilya states unequivocally that there is no crime for Mlecchas to sell or mortgage the life of their offspring. However, no Aryan shall ever be forced into slavery. An Arya will be the offspring of a guy who sold himself into servitude. Kautilya says unequivocally that it is not a crime for Mlecchas to trade or mortgage their progeny. But they will never be sold into servitude. The offspring of an individual who has sold himself into servitude will be.⁷⁸ A similar dictum is found in Manu, who states that a Brāhmaṇa who, due to his authority, compels initiated members of the twice-born castes to perform slave labour against their will out of avarice will be punished by the monarch six hundred panas.⁷⁹

4.5. Developments of mixed castes and untouchables

When describing the arrival, advancement, and settlement of the Ṛgvedic Aryans in Indi, I may state that the first few hundred years or so were a period of military action, territorial advancement, and survival for the Ṛgvedic society, when they welcomed support from the local population. Conquest was their

⁷⁷ N.K. Dutt, *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*, pp.-52-53.

⁷⁸ Arthaśāstra-3.12.

⁷⁹ M.S.-8.412.

primary goal in the early stages, followed by a plan for survival founded on collaboration with the indigenous tribes.

In the second stage, they concentrated on strengthening their status while also segmenting society into various classes, each with a particular set of duties. Even though they accepted several groups into their classes, they became strong enough to criticise several other groups.

The emergence of the untouchables as a distinct entity was seen in the following phase. Existing groups were occasionally included or excluded from the untouchables categorisation, and its reach was frequently expanded as well. Finally, after the Ṛgvedic society had adequately ingrained themselves into the social framework, the society strongly stratified, with the untouchables designing an array of residual groups.

The character of slavery, which first occurred in the Vedic periods, was altered in several ways during the post-Vedic period. Slavery in Vedic times was mostly restricted to women who worked as household servants. Oldenberg is right in inferring that the statement in question does not make any distinction between the Śūdra and the Dāsa.⁸⁰

The Brāhmaṇa was supposed to perform his religious obligations scrupulously among the three upper Varṇas. Therefore, according to Baudhāyana, a Brāhmaṇa who does not conduct the saṃdhyā in the morning and evening should be forced by the king to perform the duties of a Śūdra.⁸¹ If the Brāhmaṇa switched to a physical occupation, his reputation also declined. According to Baudhāyana, the Brāhmaṇas who manage cattle, live by trade and work as artists, performers, servants, or usurers should be treated like Śūdras.⁸²

⁸⁰ ZDMG, Vol.2, p.286. N. K. Dutt writes that in the Buddhist literature, the slaves are nowhere called by the name of śūdra (*op.cit.*, p.272). This case provides a clear implication to the contrary.

⁸¹ Bau. Dh. Sū.-2.4.7.15.

⁸² *Ibid.*-1.5.10.24; cf. V.Dh.Sū.-2.27.

Gautama goes a step further and claims that if a chooses a profession of Non-Aryan (i.e. a Śūdra), all of his rights and privileges are forfeited, and he is declined to his savage status.⁸³ Haradatta, commenting on this passage, believes that even a Brāhmaṇa who conducts the occupation of a Non-Aryan does not need to be served by a Śūdra. He surprisingly incorporates that a Śūdra who does labour must not be despised by those who practice Non-Aryan occupations. This disdain serves no purpose because the Śūdras enjoyed a better position in society. These laws imply that the higher Varṇas, particularly the Brāhmaṇas, felt disdain for manual labour, which reduced them to the status of Śūdras when they were forced to rely on their hands for survival.

The scenario had grown considerably more complicated by the second part of the first millennium B.C. The unavoidable blending of pre-existing local cultures during the development of culture caused issues for caste society theorists. It was impossible to assign a specific Varṇas rank to every socioeconomic group. It was necessary to grant the processes of Anuloma (where the father belongs to a higher caste than the mother) and Pratiloma (where the father belongs to a lower caste than the mother) and several new and inescapably mixed castes (Saṃkīrṇa Jāti) were allowed to the theory of social or class hierarchy.⁸⁴ They received the title ‘Śūdra’ instead. Many of them, including the Ambaṣṭha, Ugra and Niṣāda among the Anuloma⁸⁵ and the Śūta, Māgadha, Caṇḍāla, Āyogava and Pulkasa among the Pratiloma,⁸⁶ came to be referred to as Mleccha. According to the Dharmaśāstras,⁸⁷ there is a hierarchical system even among the ‘Saṃkīrṇa Jātis’. Professionally, they pursued

⁸³ Gau. Dh.Sū. - 10.67.

⁸⁴ M.S.-10.10-12; 16-17.

⁸⁵ Others included the Āndhras, Ābhīra, Pulinda, Khāsa, Magadha, Kirāta, Malla. Gau.Dh.Sū.- 4.4; Bau.Dh.Sū.-1.9.3; V.Dh.Sū.-18.9.

⁸⁶ Gau.Dh. Sū.4.15; Bau.Dh. Sū.-1.8.8; V.Dh.Sū.-18.1-6.

⁸⁷ M.S.-10.39.

professions considered by scholars to be correlated with impure tasks, such as washermen, fishers, potters, leather workers, iron-smiths, basket-makers, hunters, and scavengers. The fact that the ‘Samkīrṇa Jātis’ were not always considered to be of poor reputation is shown by the sources. The *Aitāreya Brāhmaṇa* mentions a Ambaṣṭha king.⁸⁸ One of the Ugras is described as an officer of the king in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, which indicates their financial well-being.⁸⁹ *Taittirīya* and *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* also speaks of ‘Marutta Āvikṣita’ as an Āyogava king who perform a ‘Mahāvratā’ sacrifice.⁹⁰ Similarly, the Sūta and the Māgadha were typically the bards and chroniclers, preserving the early Indian historical heritage.⁹¹ They were near to the monarch not only because of their occupation but we were informed that the attendance of the Sūta was required for one of the rites in a royal sacrifice.⁹² In contrast, the case of the Caṇḍālas, however, is unique because the spotlight is on impurity rather than cultural distinction. They were considered to be so polluting that they were forced to reside outside the hamlet or town.⁹³ R.S. Sharma hypothesises that they were once a native community speaking their own vernacular, the ‘Cāṇḍāla-bhāṣā’.⁹⁴ Categorising the Vrātya as a people as near-Mleccha is one of the most intriguing yet ambiguous instances. Vedic sources on the Vrātyas appear to be unsure of their precise situation.⁹⁵ Later judicial compositions employ the term ‘Vrātya’ to mean ‘degenerate’.⁹⁶ For example, when describing

⁸⁸ A.Br.-7.21; Ambaṣṭha tribe is frequently identified by modern scholars with Ambastanoi of Arrain and the Sambastoi of Diodorus. H.C. Raichaudhury, *Political History of Ancient India*, (Calcutta, 1952), p.255.

⁸⁹ T.Br.-3.8.5.

⁹⁰ Ś.Br.-13.5.4.6. cf. Śāṅkh.Ś.Sū. -16.9.14-16.

⁹¹ T.Br.-1.7.3.1; 3.4.1.

⁹² T.S.-1.8.9.1-2; The Sūta was one of the Ratnins at the rites of the *Vājapeya* sacrifice.

⁹³ Pā.-2.4.10.

⁹⁴ R.S.Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, p.125.

⁹⁵ P.Br.-17.1.9, 53.2. Āp.Dh. Sū.-22.5.4.

⁹⁶ M.S.-10.20; 2.39.

the Greeks, Manu refers to them as ‘degenerate Kṣatriyas’ or ‘Vrātya-Kṣatriya’ while also using the word ‘Vrātya’ to refer to those who have disobeyed their sacred duties. Even though Baudhāyana used the term ‘Vrātyas’ are synonymous with ‘Varṇasaṃkara’.⁹⁷ Vedic literature states that although the Vrātyas were not Brāhmanical in culture and spoke a distinct language, they were able to communicate in the language of the initiated, though with some trouble. Nonetheless, the Vrātyas were not regarded as Mleccha, and significant efforts were made to avoid this issue, one of which was the renowned ceremony of the ‘Vrātyastoma’, the rite by which the Vrātya was purified and welcomed into society.⁹⁸ Clearly, the Vrātyas were a strong group whose authority appears to have been sanctioned by religion and who were thus regarded with scarcely veiled reverence by the composers of the *Atharvaveda*⁹⁹ but with some condescension by the authors of the *Dharmaśāstras*.¹⁰⁰

The *Dharmaśāstras* do not agree about the number, names, classification and details of derivation of the so-called mixed castes. While according to Gautama their number is eleven (twelve, according to the view of some teachers mentioned by him), according to Baudhāyana it is fourteen. Vasiṣṭha mentions six mixed castes and Āpastamba only three. Gautama divides his mixed castes into five Anuloma and six Pratiloma (six and six according to the view of some teachers¹⁰¹); and Baudhāyana into four Anuloma, nine Pratiloma, and two doubly mixed castes: Vaina¹⁰², which is placed in both the latter categories; and Pāraśava¹⁰³ which is regarded as only another name of Niṣāda. Vasiṣṭha

⁹⁷ Bau. Dh. S.-1.17.15.

⁹⁸ AV.-15.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*-25.1.1.

¹⁰⁰ R.Thapar, *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*, p.143.

¹⁰¹ Not one and eight as is the view of some, as stated by Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. 2, pt.1, Ch. 2, p.57.

¹⁰² Bau.Dh. Sū.- 1.8.8; 1.9.12.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 2.2.30.

mentions only one Anuloma and five Pratiloma castes, while the three mixed castes of Āpastamba are not the product of miscegenation at all and are derived from sins in past lives.¹⁰⁴ The Anuloma castes of Gautama¹⁰⁵ are Ambaṣṭha, Ugra, Niṣāda, Dauṣmanta and Pārāśava; of Baudhāyana Ambaṣṭha¹⁰⁶, Niṣāda¹⁰⁷, Ugra¹⁰⁸ and Rathakāra¹⁰⁹; and of Vasiṣṭha Niṣāda¹¹⁰. The Anuloma castes according to the view of some teachers mentioned in Gautama¹¹¹ are Mūrdhāvasikta, Bhrjyakaṇṭha, Māhiṣya, Pārāśava, Yavaan and Karaṇa. On the other hand, the Pratiloma castes of Gautama¹¹² are Sūta, Māgadha, Āyogava, Kṛta, Vaidehaka and Caṇḍāla; of Baudhāyana¹¹³ Āyogava, Māgadha, Vaina, Pulkasa, Kukkuṭa, Vaidehaka, Caṇḍāla¹¹⁴ and Sūta¹¹⁵; of Vasiṣṭha Antyāvasāyin¹¹⁶, Vaina¹¹⁷, Caṇḍāla¹¹⁸, Pulkasa¹¹⁹ and Sūta¹²⁰. The two doubly mixed castes of Baudhāyana are Vaina¹²¹ and Śvapāka.¹²² The Pratiloma castes

¹⁰⁴ Āpastamba states that when a Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya or Vaiśya is guilty of the theft of gold, of the murder of a Brāhmaṇa, he undergoes torments in hell for some time and then is born as a *caṇḍāla*, *paulkasa* or *vaina*, respectively: Āp. Dh. Sū., 2.1.2.6.

¹⁰⁵ Gau. Dh. Sū.-4.14.

¹⁰⁶ Bau. Dh. Sū.-1.9.2.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.2.29.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.9.5.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.9.6.

¹¹⁰ V. Dh. Sū.-18.8.

¹¹¹ G. Bühler, *SBE*, Vol.2, pt. 1, p.198.

¹¹² Gau.Dh. Sū.-4.15.

¹¹³ Bau.Dh. Sū.-1.8.8.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, also 1.9.7.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, also 1.9.8.

¹¹⁶ V. Dh. Sū.-18.3.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.2.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.1.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.5.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.6.

¹²¹ Bau.Dh. Sū.-1.9.12.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 1.9.2.

mentioned by Gautama¹²³ as the view of some teachers are Sūta, Māgadha, Caṇḍāla, Dhīvara, Pulkasa and Vaideha. Of the mixed castes only the Caṇḍāla is common to all the law-books and is listed by Gautama, Baudhāyana and Vasiṣṭha, as a Pratiloma born of a Śūdra man and a Brāhmaṇa woman.¹²⁴ Among the Pratilomas also, marriage or connection with Śūdra male is viewed with singular concern, Gautama regarding the son of a Śūdra from a woman of unequal caste as a Patita.¹²⁵

The current state of the Indian caste system, in which the Śūdras and the untouchables have their indisputable place, has been the topic of countless elaborate discussions in the pages of Manu. The division of Indian humanity by Manu is not entirely obvious. He divides it into three main divisions, i.e. 1. Vaidikas may roughly have included a lot of Hindus and those that belonged to the Aryan fold and stock without belonging to the Hindu or Vedic religion; 2. The heterogeneous sects, including the Buddhist and the atheist; and 3. The Dasyus, who in our discussion may also include other distinct ethnic units like the Yavana, Śaka, Khasa and the like considered loosely by Manu as fallen Kṣatriyas. The Vaidikas he further divides into four sections. 1. The four Varṇas or castes; 2. Those beyond the four Varṇas; 3. The Vrātyas; 4. The fallen or outcastes.¹²⁶

If a man was born into one of the four classes or ‘Cāturvarṇya’, he was unquestionable of that caste. However, if he had parents from different castes or was of mixed parentage, Manu classified him as a hybrid or ‘Varṇasaṃkara’, and outside of the ‘Cāturvarṇya’. Manu further separated those who fell outside

¹²³ G. Bühler, *Op.cit.* p.198. Bühler, however, regards the four Sūtras (4.18-21) mentioning six Anuloma and six Pratiloma castes along with their derivation as “perhaps spurious”.

¹²⁴ V.N. Jha, “Varṇasaṃkara in the Dharma Sūtras: Theory and Practice”, *JESHO*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1970, p. 278.

¹²⁵ असमानायां तु शुद्रात्पतितवृत्तिः – Gau.Dh. Sū.-4.22.

¹²⁶ C. Tiwari. *Śūdras in Manu.* p.5.

the four castes into two classes: Anulomajas and Pratilomajas. Both of these adhered to mixed parentage, as defined by the code of Manu, rising out of the four castes. The Anulomajas were those who were born to parents who belonged to different castes — the mother belonged to a lower caste and the father to a higher one; for example, when a Brāhmaṇa begot a son on a Kṣatriya, Vaiśya or Śūdra mother, a Kṣatriya on a Vaiśya or Śūdra mother, a Vaiśya on a Śūdra mother. The Pratilomajas, on the contrary together, were people who were born into a family where the father belonged to a lower caste and the mother to a higher one; for instance, when a Śūdra mother bore a son to a Vaiśya, Kṣatriya or Brāhmaṇa, or a Vaiśya mother to a Kṣatriya or Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya mother to a Brāhmaṇa father. The third class is formed up of individuals who emerged as an outcome of mixed castes, the Antarprabhavas¹²⁷ or Antaras- under Gautama’s computation Ekāntaras and Dvāntaras – getting lower and lower in rank and social status as the children of the mixed castes go on propagating their race. Anulomajas and Pratilomajas should have been similar in social implications, but Manu also makes a distinction between them. He calls the Anulomajas ‘Varṇabāhya’ or mere ‘Bāhya’ and Pratilomajas ‘Hīnas’, the lowly or the base-born. Gautama also says that all Pratilomajas are dharmahīna,¹²⁸ ‘without virtue’, or, as Bühler¹²⁹ translates it, ‘outside the pale of the sacred law’. The Hīnas are lower in social status than the Bāhyas. The Hīnas, however, were themselves not strictly the Pratilomajas, for they have sometimes included even the Śūdras as the bāhyas themselves were not wholly the Anulomajas for they have sometimes made to include the fallen members of

¹²⁷ M.S.-1.2. According to Manu, the chief divisions are the Varṇas (the four castes) and the Antarprabhava (the mixed castes). Others were their Vikāras.

¹²⁸ Gau.Dh. Sū.- 4.25. The Mitākṣarā (on *Yājñavalkya*, 3.262) interprets it as meaning that they cannot have Upanayana and similar Saṃskāras on Dvijas performed for them, though they are entitled to perform Vratas and Prāyaścittas.

¹²⁹ G. Bühler, *Sacred Book of the East*, Vol.2, p. 199.

the four castes, the outcastes. The terms, therefore, are vague and generally specific and universally uniform types.

On the other hand, the marriage rules of the Dhārmāsūtras were dictated by considerations of Varṇa. Of the eight forms of marriage, which first appeared during this period, the Gāndharva (love marriage) and the Paiśāca (marriage by seduction which implied some sort of consent) were considered lawful for the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras. Baudhāyana claimed that the first was intended for the Vaiśyas and the second for the Śūdras.¹³⁰ He supports this opinion by arguing that the spouses of the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras cannot be controlled because of their focus on agriculture and service.¹³¹ This implies that women from the lower and higher Varṇas were employed to work and, as a result, became more reliant on men for their livelihood while also earning more respect in society. The stability of a marriage partnership was assessed in terms of 'Varṇa'. Vasiṣṭha believed that the greater the Varṇas, the more stage the marriage would be. Accordingly, if the husband departs the house, the wives of the Brāhmaṇa or the Kṣatriya Varṇa, who have children, must await five years, the wives of the Vaiśya Varṇa for four years, and the wives of the Śūdra Varṇa for three years. If she has no children, the waiting period will be shortened in the cases of the Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriya Varṇa, the Vaiśya, and the Śūdra by one year each,¹³² with the result that in such a situation, a wife of the Śūdra Varṇa will only have to wait for one year. As marriage connections were easily dissolved among women of the lower classes, this rule once more suggests their relative independence. But the husbands from the higher Varṇas did not regard the Śūdra women on an equal footing. Vasiṣṭha states that a black Śūdra wife can be

¹³⁰ Bau. Dh. Sū.-1.11.20.13

¹³¹ *Ibid.*-1.11.20.14-15. Bühler's translation that the Vaiśyas and Śūdras are not particular about their wives does not convey the meaning of the passage accurately (*SBE*, Vol. 14, p. 207).

¹³² V. Dh. Sū.-17.78.

espoused as a concubine for amorous purposes¹³³ but cannot be approved in a traditional marriage.¹³⁴ A passage from the same source permits and to marry wives from the Śūdra caste; however, Vasiṣṭha himself does not find it desirable¹³⁵ if the wedding is not attended by the recitation of the appropriate Vedic texts as it causes the decline of the family and the loss of paradise after death.¹³⁶ According to Āpastamba, it is not ideal for a Brāhmaṇa to live with a Śūdra woman or work for an individual of the black race.¹³⁷ Both Āpastamba and Baudhāyana provide purificatory rituals for those who have connections with a woman of the Śūdra Varṇa.¹³⁸ However, two passages in the *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra* are situated in the fourth Praśna, which, as previously mentioned, is a later addition. Therefore, such penances need not be truly considered as being applicable during this period. The view that the Śūdra wife should be avoided comes into conflict with an earlier rule of Vasiṣṭha, which says that a Brāhmaṇa can take three wives, a Kṣatriya two, and a Vaiśya and a Śūdra one each, in the order of their Varṇa.¹³⁹ This clearly allows the members of the first two Varṇas to enter into regular marriage relations with Śūdra women, and hence the idea that the Śūdra wife should be accepted only for the sake of pleasure may have been of later origin. The concept that Śūdra wives should only be accepted for the sake of pleasure may have been of later origin because it is obvious that the members of the first two Varṇas can engage in regular marriage relations with Śūdra women. Furthermore, only wealthy people could

¹³³ V. Dh. Sū.-18.18.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*-18.18; cf. Ghoshal, *IC*, 14.22.

¹³⁵ *Ibid* -1.25.-26.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*.-1.27. Among the ancient Teutons a free man who wedded a slave was himself reduced to slavery. G. Landtman, *The Origin of the Inequality of the Social Classes*, p. 282.

¹³⁷ Āp.Dh. Sū.-1.9.27.10-11.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*.-1.9.26.7; 27.11; Bau. Dh. Sū.-4.2.13, 6.5-6.

¹³⁹ V. Dh. Sū.-1.24. Baudhāyana (1.8.16.1-4) allows four wives to the Brāhmaṇa, three to the Kṣatriya, two to the Vaiśya and one to the Śūdra.

afford numerous wives. Thus, while the polygamy for the members of the higher Varṇas appears to be in accordance with their better economic circumstances, the monogamy of the Śūdra¹⁴⁰ is consistent with his dissatisfactory financial situation. Since it was acceptable to marry women from lower classes, the Dharmaśāstras demonstrated a strong aversion to relationships of the reverse type.¹⁴¹

According to Gautama, a son begotten by a Śūdra on a woman of unequal caste was regarded as a Patita.¹⁴² It is mostly to such marriages and connections that the early law books trace the origin of about a dozen mixed (Varṇasaṃkara) castes. Thus the issue begotten by a Śūdra on a woman of the Kṣatriya Varṇa is known as a 'Kṣattṛ', and the one begotten on a female of the Vaiśya caste as a Māgadha.¹⁴³ The son of a Śūdra by a Brāhmaṇa woman is branded as a Caṇḍāla.¹⁴⁴ According to Gautama, people begotten by the Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriya, the Vaiśya, and the Śūdra on a woman of the Śūdra caste are respectively known as Pāraśavas, Yavanas, Karaṇas and Śūdras.¹⁴⁵ The son of a Brāhmaṇa by a Śūdra woman is called a Niṣāda.¹⁴⁶ His issue by a woman of the Śūdra caste is known Pulkasa, and the son begotten by a Śūdra on a woman of the Niṣāda caste is known as a 'Kukkuṭaka'.¹⁴⁷ The issue of the union of a

¹⁴⁰ Both Vasiṣṭha and Baudhāyana prescribe only one wife for the Śūdra, although the former prescribes this for the Vaiśya also.

¹⁴¹ Generally, the Jātis of the age were endogamous; R. Fick, *Social Organisation in Northeast India*, p.51.

¹⁴² *Op.cit.*-1.4.22.

¹⁴³ Bau.Dh. Sū.-1.9.17.7.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*-1.9.17.7; V. Dh. Sū.-18.1.

¹⁴⁵ *Op.cit.*-4.21; cf. Bau.Dh.Sū.-2.2.3.30.

¹⁴⁶ Bau.Dh. Sū.-2.2.3.29; Gau. Dh. Sū.-4.16; V.Dh. Sū.-18.8.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*-1.9.17.13-14.

Kṣatriya and a Śūdra woman is known as an Ugra,¹⁴⁸ while that of a Vaiśya and a Śūdra is to be regarded as a Rathakāra.¹⁴⁹

According to the Dharmaśāstras, Anuloma (in regular order) and Pratiloma (inverted order) connections between members of the higher Varṇas and the Śūdra were regarded as the most prevalent source of the origin of the mixed castes, and the aforementioned caste list would demonstrate this. Many of these individuals were reduced to the status of untouchables. However, the majority of these mixed castes were merely backward ethnic groups that were admitted to the four basic and recognised Varṇas by giving them a wholly arbitrary genesis.¹⁵⁰ Nonetheless, such theories may have impacted new caste forms over time, as these have occurred even recently.¹⁵¹

The fifth Varṇas is occasionally mentioned in Vedic texts. According to Yaska, the Pañca is an acronym for the four Varṇas and a group of people known to Niṣāda, who was considered the fifth member of the four-Varṇa organised society.¹⁵² Manu, a later legist, shattered the notion of five Varṇas by claiming that there could only be four Varṇas in society, not five.¹⁵³ Later commentators, like Skandasvāmī (commenting on Ni. Chapter 3), Medhātithi (commenting on M.S. 10. 4, 8), etc., tended to concur that the fifth Varṇa contains the Niṣādas, who advocated for everyone outside the four Varṇas, including the ‘Mixed-Varṇas’, Pratiloma children, and others groups.

The Antya or Bāhya, also known as those living outside communities and cities, are called untouchables. According to the Pāli texts, some of the despised

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*-1.9.17.5.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*- 1.9.17.6.

¹⁵⁰ R. Fick, *Social Organisation in Northeast India*, p.9.

¹⁵¹ There are several tribes of this type in Chotanagpur, and some castes of this type in eastern Nepāl.

¹⁵² Ni. -2.1.2.17; 1.11.5.

¹⁵³ M.S.-10.4.

castes, particularly the Niṣadas and the Caṇḍālas, were treated as untouchables. Gautama condemns an antya as the vilest person (Pāpiṣṭhaḥ).¹⁵⁴ At another place, Gautama states that the Antyas should be given impure garments.¹⁵⁵ Vasiṣṭha distinguishes between the good Śūdras and the Antyayonis, who can appear as a witness only in their own cases.¹⁵⁶ In the *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra* the word ‘Antyaḥ’ is used concerning the Caṇḍālas and shows that he lived at the end of the village.¹⁵⁷ In the same text Bāhyas, among whom the recitation of the Veda is forbidden, are explained by Haradatta as the Ugras and the Niṣādas.¹⁵⁸ The Antāvasāyins are described by Vasiṣṭha as a caste begotten by a Śūdra on a Vaiśya woman.¹⁵⁹ A Brāhmaṇa father who resides with the Antāvasāyins or cohabits with one of their women is said to be rejected.¹⁶⁰ Typically, untouchables stayed at the edge of towns or villages or in separate settlements. Their segregation was not caused by any intentional removal plan from old settlements. It appears that the Brāhmaṇa caste system effectively reduced the entire population of tribal communities to the status of untouchables. Additionally, it claims that the untouchable mindset was not a component of the original Indo-Aryan institutions but rather something borrowed from the Dravidians, among whom untouchability still plays a significant role in the South in modern times.¹⁶¹ However, there is no proof that untouchability existed among the Dravidians in the South before their Brāhmaṇisation. Instead, compared to the two other authors of the Dharmasāstras from the north, Baudhāyana, a law-giver from the South, and

¹⁵⁴ *Op.cit.*- 4.28.

¹⁵⁵ *Op.cit.*- 14.42.

¹⁵⁶ V. Dh. Sū.-16.30.

¹⁵⁷ Āp. Dh. S. - 1.3.9.15.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*- 1.3.9.18.

¹⁵⁹ *Op.cit.*-18.3.

¹⁶⁰ Gau. Dh. S. - 20.1; *cf.* 23.32.

¹⁶¹ N.K. Dutt, *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*, pp. 106-7; *cf.* p. 31.

Āpastamba, who is occasionally connected with that region, maintain a less conservative attitude towards the Śūdras in terms of food and company. Additionally, it has been previously demonstrated how some trades and professions were denigrated by members of upper Varṇas who identified as s. Finally, the concept of untouchability has been linked to the purported impurity of a particular profession.¹⁶²

According to the laws of partition in the Dharmaśāstras, the patriarchal family had three to four generations, making it a very big family. In such a family, the concept of private or individual property would not be very significant. Just as the co-parceners shared landed property and general community resources, they also shared labour power for the exploitation of these resources. Every village had a labouring or servile populace known as the Śūdra, who were under the overall social control of the three upper Varṇas. As a result, we can clearly see the beginnings of a society built on Śūdra labour. The majority of the Śūdra populace appears to have worked in farming. The Vaiśyas, independent peasant proprietors who paid a portion of the product as taxes to the government, were responsible for agriculture in the Dharmaśāstras.¹⁶³ The Vaiśyas appear to have been the primary taxpayers in post-Vedic times, primarily as peasants and secondarily as traders. The fact is that the Śūdras were considered to be landless labourers because they were not required to pay any land revenue. The Śūdras, who make their living by washing others feet, are not subject to taxes, according to Āpastamba.¹⁶⁴ This would suggest that non-serving Śūdras might start paying taxes. However, the word

¹⁶² G.S. Ghurey, *Caste and Class*, p.159.

¹⁶³ Gau. Dh. Sū. - 10.47; cf. Āp. Dh. Sū. - 2.11.28.1 with the comm. of Haradatta.

¹⁶⁴ *Op.cit.*- 2.10.26.5.

‘Pādāvanektā’ does not appear in an older draft of this law book,¹⁶⁵ suggesting that it was incorporated later to justify the emotion of the Śūdras.

The early Pāli texts often mention the five despised castes of the Caṇḍāla, the Niṣāda, the Veṇa, the Rathakāra and the Pukkus.¹⁶⁶ They are described as having low families (Nicakula)¹⁶⁷ or inferior births (Hinajāti).¹⁶⁸ Several hated Jātis in Buddhist literatures correspond approximately to the untouchable classes in Brāhmanical society. The Buddhist and Jain texts state that the Caṇḍālas and the Pukkusas were excluded from the Śūdra Varṇa.¹⁶⁹ However, the Dharmaśāstras include them in the list of mixed castes, who are also meant to have Śūdra blood. According to Patanjali, Paṇini appears to have listed the Caṇḍāla and the mṛtapa (a person who watches corpses) among the Śūdras who resided outside of towns and villages and whose contact permanently defiled the bronze vases of the Brāhmaṇas.¹⁷⁰ Originally, the Caṇḍālas appear to have been an aboriginal race, as evidenced by their use of their native accent.¹⁷¹ They are referenced in Jain texts alongside various other tribes, including the Śābaras, the Daviḍas, the Kaliṅgas, the Gauḍas and the Gāndhāras.¹⁷² But gradually, the Caṇḍāla came to be looked upon as untouchables. Āpastamba holds that to touch and see a Caṇḍāla is sinful.¹⁷³ A similar provision occurs in the later work of Gautama, who provides that if a Caṇḍāla defiles the body, it can be purified by bathing dresses in clothes.¹⁷⁴ In the Pāli texts, the Caṇḍālas are clearly

¹⁶⁵ R.S.Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, p.102.

¹⁶⁶ Majj. N.-3.169-78; 2.152, 183-4.

¹⁶⁷ *Loc.cit.*

¹⁶⁸ Vin.-2.6; cf. Aṅg. N.-2.85; Samy. N.-1.93.

¹⁶⁹ Samy. N.-1.102.166; Sūya.-1.9.2-3; R. Fick, *Op.cit.*, pp.-20-30.

¹⁷⁰ Pā-2.4-10; Mahābhāṣya-1.475.

¹⁷¹ Jāt.-4.391-2.

¹⁷² *Sūyagaḍam (SBE Tr.)*, Ed. P.L. Vidya, 2.2.27.

¹⁷³ Āp. Dh. S.-2.1.2.8.

¹⁷⁴ Gau. Dh. S.-14.30.

depicted as untouchables. A later Jātaka describes the Caṇḍālas as the meanest men on earth.¹⁷⁵ Contact with the air that touched a Caṇḍāla's body was regarded as pollution.¹⁷⁶ The very sight of a Caṇḍāla foreboded evil.¹⁷⁷ When the Caṇḍāla were absorbed into Brāhmanical society, they did not completely abandon their previous way of life. Probably because they were hunters and fowlers, they were given the responsibility of removing deceased animals and people. They always appear to be involved in removing and cremating dead bodies.¹⁷⁸ The paṇas, also referred to as Caṇḍālas, performed this duty as well.¹⁷⁹ The Caṇḍālas were occasionally engaged in street sweeping.¹⁸⁰ The Caṇḍālas does not appear to be a person who executes offenders in the Dhārmāsūtras.

The Pulkasas or Pukkusas appear to have been an indigenous tribe that subsisted on hunting,¹⁸¹ but they were eventually assimilated into Brāhmanical society for certain duties like removing flowers from the temple and palace.¹⁸² The fact that they were permitted to enter the shrine grounds to remove flowers demonstrates that they were not thought of as being as depraved as the Caṇḍāla.

The Vaina was another indigenous group that made a living by hunting and labouring in bamboo.¹⁸³ The Dhārmāsūtras invent an origin for the Vainas as well. According to Baudhāyana a Vaina is the offspring of a vaidehaka father (born of a Vaiśya father and a Kṣatriya mother) and an ambaṣṭha mother (born

¹⁷⁵ Jāt.-4.397.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*-3.233.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*-4.376, 391.

¹⁷⁸ Rām. Bāla. K.-58.10; Comm. Of Jāt.-3.195.

¹⁷⁹ Antag.-65.

¹⁸⁰ Jāt. 4.390.

¹⁸¹ There is no indication of this in the Pāli texts, but Manu (10.49) and Viṣṇu (16.9) prescribe hunting as their occupation.

¹⁸² Jāt.-3.195; cf. R. Fick, *Op.cit.*, p.321.

¹⁸³ A.N. Bose, *Social and Rural Economy of Northern India*, Vol.2, pp.454-455.

of a Brāhmaṇa and a Vaiśya mother).¹⁸⁴ As a result, unlike the Caṇḍāla and the Pulkasa, the Vaina was not expected to have Śūdra blood. The Veṇa and the Takṣaka are identical, so it looks unusual that the latter, who had a high status in later Vedic society, was downgraded to the status of a hated group in Buddhist Society.¹⁸⁵

The Rathakāra is also regarded as a caste that is despised in Buddhist texts, but he maintains a high social status in Brāhmanical texts. The Gṛhyasūtras provide for his Upayanaya.¹⁸⁶ Rhys Davids contends that the Rathakāras were an aboriginal tribe.¹⁸⁷ However, this does not appear to be accurate because they were a component of the viś (i.e. the third class) during Vedic times. Yet, it is possible that some of the indigenous people were subsequently assimilated into the Rathakāras. The leatherworker (Cammakāra), despite having a lowly trade, is not included in the list of classes that are detested. Perhaps one of the reasons why the Rathakāra is regarded as a doomed group in Buddhist literature is Buddhist antipathy to war, for which the Rathakāra prepared vehicles. In any event, they did not suffer the same degree of degradation as the Caṇḍāla and the Pukkusa.¹⁸⁸ The presence of the 'Neṣādas' in the Buddhist schedule of hated castes is not that difficult to understand. This is consistent with their poor ranking in the Dharmasāstras. They were a tribe of Pre-Aryans who were characterised as having short statures, charred wood skin, blood-red eyes,¹⁸⁹ high cheeks, a low-topped nose and copper-coloured hair.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁴ Bau. Dh. Sū.- 1.9.17.12.

¹⁸⁵ R.S. Sharma, *Op.cit.*, p.129.

¹⁸⁶ Bhār. G. Sū.- 1.1; Bau.G. Sū.-2.5-6. cf. 2. 8.5; cf. Jai. Mī. Sū.-6.1.50.

¹⁸⁷ *Dialogues of the Buddha*.-1.100.

¹⁸⁸ *Op.cit.*, pp. 142-143.

¹⁸⁹ Mbh. Śhanti. P. - 59.102-103.

¹⁹⁰ N.K. Dutt, *Op.cit.* p.107.

The story of their strange origin from the body of Veṇa,¹⁹¹ the monarch who proved tyrannical to the priestly class, may suggest the opposition they gave to the process of Brāhmanisation. Even after assimilating into Brāhmanical society, the Niṣādas remained to be primarily hunters¹⁹² who lived in their village.¹⁹³ It is probable that some of the Niṣādas entered the priesthood order. The Niṣāda gotra recorded by the Gaṇapāṭha of Pāṇini,¹⁹⁴ though not listed in any of the normal gotra lists, would not be feasible unless some Brāhmaṇas were adopted from aboriginal priests or served the aborigines as a priest.¹⁹⁵ However, it is evident that the prestige that the Niṣādas attended in later Vedic society was diminished during this time.

The early Pāli texts¹⁹⁶ contain prescriptions that prohibited interaction with food. This may have been caused by the ancient Indo-European custom, which required that all clan members participate in the social meals served on special occasions,¹⁹⁷ continuing to have an impact for a while even after groups and clans had split up into Varṇas. When this happened, the higher classes only began to use pollution as a tool to maintain and enhance their socioeconomic privileges and other advantages.

However, no evidence suggests that they were targeted specifically at the Śūdras. Obviously, there were sections in society which were kept at a distance, perhaps segregated and considered much lower in status than the Śūdras. R.S.

¹⁹¹ Mbh. Śhanti. P.- 59.99-101. B. C. Law argues that these were Niṣadhas, and not Niṣādas (Tribes in Ancient India, p.100), but the Critical Edition of the Mbh. Clearly mentions Niṣādas.

¹⁹² Jāt. 2.200; 6.71 f., 170.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*-6.71f.

¹⁹⁴ Pā.-4.1.100.

¹⁹⁵ D.D. Kosambi, *JAOS*, Vol.75, p.44. This depends on the assumption that the Niṣāda gotra was a Brāhmanical gotra, which is doubtful.

¹⁹⁶ R. Fick, *Social Organisation in Northeast India*, p.47.

¹⁹⁷ E.Senart. *Caste in India*. pp. 182-3.

Sharma¹⁹⁸ rightly points out that their segregation does not seem to have been the result of any deliberate policy of expulsion from old Aryan settlements. It seems that the whole population of tribal villages was condemned to the position of untouchables by the Brāhmaṇas.

Thus, three categories of people combined to produce the phenomenon of the mixed castes- later the untouchables: 1) less assimilated backward aboriginals; 2) degraded artisans; and 3) groups which, through infringement of caste rules or otherwise (association with a region outside the pale of Brāhmaṇism, for example), had lost their Aryan status.¹⁹⁹ Theoretically, the castes were sub-divisions of the four Varṇas or orders, the result of miscegenation, but in fact they had an entirely different origin and were much more organic and spontaneous in their growth.²⁰⁰ The Dharmaśāstras represent the orthodox and ideal point of view and the ‘Varṇasaṃkara’ theory provides an example of the Brāhmaṇas’ capacity to create categories and carry things to their logical conclusion. The theory flourished on congenial soil. It helped to further the accommodation of the exterior groups into the Aryan order of society, promoted the formation of new castes and was adopted and expanded by future lawgivers like Manu.²⁰¹

Summary of the Chapter:

The chapter elucidates that Indian society is evaluated and profoundly shaped by the interaction between Aryan and Non-Aryan populations, particularly through the mechanisms of social stratification and caste formation. This chapter examines how Non-Aryan groups, particularly the Śūdras, were

¹⁹⁸ *Op.cit.*, Ch. 4, p. 130.

¹⁹⁹ V.N. Jha, “Varṇasaṃkara in the Dharma Sūtras: Theory and Practice”, *JESHO*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1970, p. 287.

²⁰⁰ A.L. Basham, *Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture*, pp. 8-9.

²⁰¹ R.S. Sharma, *Social Changes in Early Medieval India*, p.15.

integrated into the Aryan social structure, resulting in a rigid caste hierarchy. This social system evolved throughout time, resulting in the formation of complicated caste categories such as Anuloma (offspring of higher-caste dads and lower-caste mothers) and Pratiloma (offspring of lower-caste fathers and higher-caste mothers).

The chapter also looks at the notion of untouchability, which grew more prevalent in subsequent historical times. Initially, particular vocations and ethnic groups were marginalised inside the caste system, making them untouchables.

It also emphasises the intricacies brought about by professional jobs, marriages, and the growth of mixed castes, as well as the slow assimilation of indigenous communities into this caste structure. Furthermore, the chapter emphasises how caste divisions are legitimised and codified by religious and legal scriptures like the Dharmaśāstras. All in all, it shows how the blending of Aryan and Non-Aryan cultures led to the formation of a very hierarchical society in ancient India.

Conclusion

The term 'Ārya' originally referred to a specific race, and their religion was centered around the Manu cult. The influence and prestige of Aryan culture and civilisation were so powerful that any people who came into contact with them either adopted their religion or became deeply immersed in Aryan cultural practices. Vedic Sanskrit emerged as a dominant language associated with the Aryans. Those who resisted adopting Aryan rites and beliefs were labelled Dāsa or Dasyu, terms that were initially used for the Dahaea people of the Russian Steppes, but later came to denote those who practiced foreign religions.

When the Aryans settled in India, they used the same labels—Dāsa or Dasyu—for people with darker skin who did not convert to the Brahminical religion. However, this term was eventually replaced with Śūdra, which originally referred to a different Non-Aryan tribe. In this context, the Śūdras occupied a similar social position relative to the Aryans as the Dāsa or Dasyu did during the Ṛgvedic period. As Aryan culture spread quickly among Non-Aryan tribes, Vedic Sanskrit, which started as a way for the Aryans to express their culture, began to take over the local languages of these tribes. Over time, these local languages changed into what we now call Sanskritic languages, which are spoken across almost two-thirds of India today. This cultural and language influence also played a key role in shaping India's social system, especially through the concepts of Varṇa and Jāti.

The difference between Varṇa and Jāti, first pointed out by Senart in *Caste in India* and later supported by scholars like Hutton, Karve, Srinivas, and Dumont, is important to understand this social development. Varṇa refers to the broader, theoretical social classes described in religious texts, while Jāti refers to the more specific and local caste groups that emerged as Indian society became more complex. As Aryan society interacted with Non-Aryan tribes,

those who adopted Aryan religion and customs were absorbed into the Aryan social system, while those who didn't were called Dāsa or Dasyu—terms that later became Śūdra in the Indian context.

As these tribes were integrated and as intermarriage and different jobs emerged, many Jātis (caste groups) developed, complicating the simpler Varṇa system. Brahminical thinkers tried to explain this complexity through the idea of Varṇa mixing, which explained the rise of new caste groups within the traditional four Varṇas. However, despite their efforts to match the ideal social order with the reality of everyday life, the difference between Varṇa (theoretical class) and Jāti (actual caste groups) persisted, showing how culture, language, and society became more interconnected in ancient India. Today, the term 'caste' is primarily used to refer to Jāti (or jāta), whereas Varṇa is often translated with broader terms like 'class', 'category', 'order', or similar concepts. Nonetheless, some authors still translate Varṇa as 'caste', as seen in Max Weber's influential work *The Religion of India*. Similarly, in his study *Caste*¹ (pp. 23-24), Hocart uses 'caste' when referring to Varṇa instead of Jāti.²

The *Manusmṛti* presents the most developed theory regarding the intermingling of Varṇas, aiming to explain the emergence of numerous Jātis in Indian society. This key legal and religious text outlines how the mixing of the four primary Varṇas resulted in the creation of a multitude of castes. Successive generations of Brahminical scholars devised theories that sought to uphold the traditional social order while adapting to the increasing complexity and diversity within society. As professional roles diversified, intermarriage between different social groups became more common, and regional variations emerged, these scholars modified the traditional caste theory to accommodate

¹ A.M. Hocart, *Caste: A Comparative Study*, pp. 23-24.

² For further suggestions on how these terms might be translated, Trautmann's discussion in *JEHSO* (Vol.7, 1964, pp. 196-201) offers valuable perspectives.

these changes. Their goal was to align the original concept of Varṇa with the more intricate realities of Jāti in their time, while still adhering to the core ideas found in the Puruṣasūkta, a Vedic hymn that describes the cosmic origins of the four Varṇas.

Despite these ongoing adjustments to caste theory, a significant gap remained between the idealised notion of a rigid, hierarchical social order based on Varṇa and the realities of social dynamics in practice. The adaptations within the orthodox framework, while addressing certain aspects of societal transformation, could not fully account for the growing diversity of social roles, inter-caste interactions, and the emergence of new Jātis. The persistent tension between the theoretical Varṇa framework and the lived experience of Jāti throughout history raises doubts about whether these theoretical attempts were ever truly successful in bridging the divide between caste ideology and social reality.

Research Questions

Let us now summarise and reflect on the outcomes resulting from the interaction between Aryan and Non-Aryan cultures in India. This dissertation began by exploring the rituals and processes involved in Aryanisation. Through research, I have addressed all the questions posed in each respective chapter.

The first chapter focuses on answering the questions: Who are the Aryans? Where did they originate from? How did they establish cultural and social dominance in India, particularly over the Indus Valley and Pre-Aryan peoples?

The second chapter addresses questions concerning the Pre-Aryan populations: Who were they? Did they belong to the same ethnic group, or were they diverse peoples with distinct cultures? What is their connection to ancient Indian civilisation, particularly the Indus Valley? What was their socio-

economic condition? Where was their original homeland? How did Aryan culture permeate their lives, and what were the consequences of this cultural interaction?

In the third chapter, the processes of Aryanisation employed by the Vedic Aryans to assimilate the Pre-Aryan population into the Aryan fold is well examined.

Finally, the fourth chapter answers questions about the social developments that followed the amalgamation of Aryan and Pre-Aryan peoples: How were the Pre-Aryans treated after their assimilation into Vedic society? What was their status in the newly formed social order? And ultimately, how significant were they in the post-Aryanisation period?

Summary of the Dissertation

In conclusion, this dissertation will summarise its findings and the overall insights gained from the research.

The first chapter revolves around the question of Aryan culture and origins, with a particular focus on the Vedic Aryans. Most theorists have expressed their opinions and ideas on this issue. However, this is not solved, and fresh discoveries are being made. Several attempts are made to collect almost all of the hypotheses provided concerning the origin and racial alignment of the Aryans. This chapter also includes various cultural and social characteristics of the Aryan, or Vedic Aryan. Their lifestyle, agricultural system, religious beliefs, social stratification (including mixed castes), economic situation, commerce and marine connections, and so forth. Finally, attempts are also made to depict the then-Indian in which not only Aryans were settled, but Non-Aryans also had strongholds and major identities, as seen in the Vedas.

In second Chapter, the question regarding socio-culture status of the Non-Aryan or Pre-Aryan inhabitants of India. In this chapter, the initial section

provides an introduction to the Pre-Aryan communities of the Indian subcontinent, such as the Dāsas, Dās̥yus, Paṇis, Rākṣasas, and Asuras, along with a brief description of their physical characteristics as depicted in Vedic texts. The racial composition, anthropological origins, and their connection to the Pre-Aryan Indus Valley Civilisation are explored. Both the *Ṛgveda* and *Atharvaveda* contain numerous mantras that offer detailed insights into the social and cultural life of these Non-Aryan peoples. Historians have categorised them into two broad groups: those with advanced technology and fortified settlements, and the forest-dwelling tribes. An attempt has also been made to identify the geographical regions of Dravidian civilisation in Pre-Aryan India. Several references from Vedic literature, along with archaeological evidence, suggest partial similarities between the cities of the Indus Valley Civilisation and Non-Aryan fortified citadels. This chapter further explores the culture, lifestyle, and socio-economic status of the Pre-Aryan communities, providing a comprehensive understanding of their significance in the broader historical context.

The third chapter forms the core of the thesis, providing a detailed answer to the research question by weaving together fragmented information on Aryanisation from Vedic literature. These pieces of evidence have been analysed and presented descriptively to illustrate how the Aryans influenced and eventually assimilated Non-Aryan groups into their cultural fold. As previously stated, Aryans initially exerted cultural dominance over the Non-Aryans, but over time, particularly during the Epic-Puranic periods, a contradictory trend emerged in which Non-Aryan elements gained significant religious and cultural importance.

Figures such as Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, Vyāsa, and Kaṇva, who are depicted with dark complexions (previously associated with the Non-Aryan ‘Dāsavarṇa’ or ‘complexion of the Dāsas’), became central to the religious and cultural

narratives of the time. This indicates that the pure-blooded, fair-complexioned Aryans intermingled with the so-called Non-Aryans. This raises critical questions: How did this admixture occur? Did it happen naturally, or was it strategically orchestrated to integrate Non-Aryans into Aryan culture, thus facilitating Aryan dominance over the newly occupied lands and peoples?

This chapter delves into the processes of Aryanisation, exploring key factors such as the concept of Pañcājana, conflicts with hostile tribes, political strategies, cultural integration, linguistic exchange, and propitiatory rites. These were employed as tools by the Aryans to assert cultural hegemony over Non-Aryan groups and incorporate them into the Aryan fold.

In the fourth chapter traces the evolution of society from prehistoric times to the formation of a structured, stratified society. It begins with hunter-gatherer forest-dwellers gradually transitioning into settled social groups, which later expanded into larger, more advanced communities. As smaller groups faced challenges, they organised into larger societies, leading to the development of towns, governance, and more complex social structures.

The rise of social stratification is a key focus here, as leaders created social classes based on occupational specialisation. The chapter also explores the social challenges that emerged with the rise of these class divisions in contemporary society.

The discussion then shifts to Vedic society, examining how social stratification gradually permeated indigenous cultures and incorporated them into a rigid caste hierarchy. This process of absorption led to the creation of mixed castes and untouchables, particularly during the later Vedic and Puranic periods. The chapter analyses how these dynamics transformed the social landscape, affecting the aboriginal populations and the structure of the newly formed society.

Findings

1. In *Nadisūkta* (*R̥gveda* 10.75), poet praises the rivers of India, especially the river Sindhu. The poet Sindhuksit belongs to the family of Ṛṣi Aṅgiras and son of Priyamedha. Aṅgiras is well known as a pioneer of Agni worship or Yajña cult in India.³ Kakṣivān also made Sacrifices for a Asura king near the bank of Sindhu. Paṇis were also known to him.⁴ Both of them were from the Āṅgiras family and mentioned Sindhu and the basin inhabited by the Asura who did Vedic sacrifices. If both of them settled near Sindhu then, I might inference that Paṇis⁵ and Asuras⁶ also have their traces near the Sindhu-Sarasvatī basin.

2. It is also found that Kṛṣṇa,⁷ Kuyava, Ayu,⁸ Vṛtra,⁹ Svanaya¹⁰ are related with rivers. These Asuras or Non-Aryan people are described as the inhabitant of river basin and were wiped away by Indra. These descriptions conclude that the Pre-Aryan people had their settlement¹¹ near the fertile river basin and when Aryans tried to capture these fertile land¹² and water, they gave latter a great resistance and got the designation ‘Asuras’ or ‘Dāsa’ either ‘Dasyus’. This inference also strengthens with the reference of the ninety-nine or hundred ancient iron forts of Śambara and Aśna.¹³ This capturing attitude of the Indra,

³ RV-1.71.2-3.

⁴ *Ibid.*-1.124.10.

⁵ *Ibid.*-6.61.1.

⁶ *Ibid.*-6.61.3.

⁷ *Ibid.*-1.130.8; 8.96.13-16.

⁸ *Ibid.*-1.104.3-4.

⁹ *Ibid.*-1.32.1-10.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*-1.126.3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*-2.20.8; 6.27.6; 6.61.1; 6.61.3.

¹² *Ibid.*-1.127.6.

¹³ *Ibid.*-1.30.7; 2.14.6; 2.19.6; 6.31.4; 2.20.5.

rather, of the Aryan were also clear from RV 1.132.3-4, where Indra is praised as the seeker and snatcher of water and cows from the vowless.

3. Any conclusion regarding the origin of Aryan and their ethnological alignment has not presented, yet, some references are mentioned in first and second chapter, which push me to be biased with outer Indian origin.¹⁴ However, Afghanistan was a part of that great Indian subcontinental culture in later time. They might have from the north-western bank of Indus¹⁵ or north-eastern Afghanistan¹⁶ or from eastern Iran. It is quite clear that the Vedic Aryan were more or less irritated with the hot climate and they want autumn and winter, a boon not likely to have been desired by the natives of a warm climate.¹⁷ Several references were placed in Vedas that they counted their years by indicating 'Hīma' or winter, indicating a country in which the cold season was peculiarly marked.¹⁸ According to Vendidad of *Avesta*¹⁹, 'Airyanem Vaejah', the first land which was created by the Ahura Mazda, had ten months of winter, two months of summer which was a work of Daevas. Vendidad also expresses that Yima arranged the migration of people to the more hospitable southern regions to avoid the hardships of winter and alleviate population pressure.²⁰ This place is identified with the Khwaewzm.²¹ From the analysis of these evidences, it can be inferred that the homeland of Vedic Aryans was situated between the Hindukush and the Amu Darya basin (also known as Oxus Civilisation or Bactria Marginea Archaeological Complex). Asko Parpola also states in his

¹⁴ *Ibid.*-2.20.5-8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*-2.15.6.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*-2.12.3.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*-1.64.14; 2.33.2; 5.54.15; 6.48.8; AV-2.28.4; 12.2.28; T.S.-1.6.6.3; V.S.-2.27.

¹⁸ H.H.Wilson, *R̥gvedasanhita*, Vol.1, (Introduction), p. xl.

¹⁹ ZA. *Vendidad*, James Darmesteter (Tr.), Fargad-1-3.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ W. Vogelsang. "The sixteen lands of Videvdat - Airyanem Vaejah and the homeland of the Iranians". *Persica*. p. 58.

book *The Problem of the Aryans and the Som: The textual linguistic and archaeological evidence that the animosity between the Dāsas and Aryan had originated here. According to researcher, Soma cult also originated from this place.*²² This place also has been accepted as ‘Airyanem Vaejah’ by some scholar. They likely left this area due to religious conflicts with the Early Iranians and later composed the Vedas after crossing the Hindukush. It seems plausible that the Vedas were composed in the Sapta-Sindhu region or the Sindhu-Sarasvatī River basin. Another, reference also found in RV 6.27.5, which denotes that Indra slays the son of Varasikha, an asura, on the eastern bank of the river Hariyupiya²³ and the other troops of the Vṛcīvat fled away towards west of the river. Hence, this evidence infers that the Aryan were settled on the eastern part of Hariyupriya and tried to expand their territory to the west.²⁴ The both upper-mentioned references pose contradictory view about the migration root of the Aryans. In conclusion, it appears that the Vedic Aryans crossed the Ravi River in Punjab after defeating the Non-Aryan inhabitants, forcing them to relocate towards the southern basin. Subsequently, these Non-Aryan groups faced further attacks from the northeastern side.

4. Recent research indicates that the Sarasvatī River dried up around 1800 B.C., while the date for Aryan migration is commonly placed around 1500 B.C. This raises a question: how could the Aryans have praised the Sarasvatī as ‘Naditame,’ or the greatest river, if it had dried up 300 years before their supposed arrival in India? This discrepancy leads to two possible conclusions:

²² R. S. Sharma, *Looking for the Aryans*, p.51.

²³ According to Sāyaṇa, this might be a river or a city. Some historians also identified it with the Harappa.

²⁴ R. Pischel & K.F. Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, Vol. 2, p.218. see also the footnote of *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, p.196.

I. The first is that the Aryans arrived in India before 1800 B.C., during the period between the Mature and Late Harappan phases, and before the Cemetery H Culture.²⁵

II. The second possibility is that the Sarasvatī River was never located in present-day India. Instead, it might have been outside modern Indian territory, where the *Ṛgveda* was composed and Aryan culture developed. This would significantly alter our understanding of the Vedic cultural landscape.

5. According to Asko Parpola, Some of the Dāsa proper names, in particular Balbūtha Tarukṣa (ṚV 8.46.32), Bṛsaya (ṚV 1.93.4; 6.61.3), Bṛbu (ṚV 6.45.31 and 33), and Sṛbinda (ṚV 8.32.2), seem to come from the original, Pre-Aryan language of the Bactria Margina Archaeological Complex where the admixture of the Pre-Aryan and Indo-Aryan language happened.²⁶ These names were familiar to the Aryans, yet they referred to the Pre-Aryans as ‘mr̥ḍhr̥āc,’ or speechless. However, the Aryans clearly identified and repeatedly mentioned these names, supporting Parpola’s view. From this, one might conclude that the Pre-Aryan people of India were either known to the Aryans before their arrival in India or there was some degree of linguistic similarity between the two groups.

6. When Mortimer Wheeler exposed the mighty walls of Harappa in 1946, he identified the fortified Indus cities with the forts of the Dāsas broken up by Indra and the Aryan kings, according to the *Ṛgveda*.²⁷ However, as Wilhelm Rau (1976) pointed out in his examination of the *Ṛgvedic* descriptions, the Dāsa forts are described as having many concentric and circular walls—which do not match the layout of the Indus cities. In 1988, Parpola spotted an archaeological

²⁵ B.B. Lal, “The Sarasvatī: The Mother of Indian Civilization”, *Vedic River Sarasvatī and Hindu Civilisation*. p.105.

²⁶ A. Parpola, *The Roots of Hinduism: The Early Aryans and The Indus valley Civilization*, p. 105.

²⁷ M. Wheeler. *Harappa 1946: The Defenses and Cemetery R 37*. Oxford: University Press. 1947.

counterpart to this description of the Dāsa forts in the so-called ‘temple-fort’ of the BMAC in Dashly-3.²⁸ These archaeological findings clearly indicate that the forts mentioned in the Vedas were distinct from those of the Indus Valley Civilisation, suggesting that the Aryans were not responsible for the decline of that civilisation. Additionally, the previous two points support the notion that the composition of the Vedas and the conflict between Aryans and Non-Aryans began in the region near the Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex, prior to the Aryans’ entry into India.

7. Vedic literature evidences that most of the Asura settlements was near the west bank of lower basin of Indus River whereas most of the Aryan settlements were at the north eastern bank of the Sarasvatī River which might prove that both of these two people were neighbours. However, the Asuras was described several times as the easterner, and they belonged to the east and south. Another reference about Śautramani²⁹ sacrifice and the epithet Pūrvadeva once belonged to the Asura who lost this status for being audacious though both are sprung from Prajāpati.³⁰ In *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,³¹ Namuci is gotten a boon from Indra and hence cheated him with the ‘Sura’ which indicates that Namuci, a Asura, praised Indra to get boons and looted ‘Soma’ by giving him ‘Sura’ which indicates a commencement of cultural was stated at the time of *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. Another reference³² in the same book states that Tvaṣṭa, who was an antagonist to Indra, was stated a Soma sacrifice which was eventually eliminated by Indra. This legend also supports that Asuras also knew the significance and science of sacrifices. I can conclude that the Asuras also once

²⁸ A. Parpola, *The Roots of Hinduism: The Early Aryans and The Indus valley Civilization*, p. 97.

²⁹ Ś.Br.-13.9.3.7.

³⁰ *Ibid.*-3.5.4.2.

³¹ *Ibid.*-13.7.3.1.

³² *Ibid.*-13.7.1.1.

connected with the Aryan culture, however, with the time they might have left or changed the culture in different way.

S.K. Chatterji in his work “Race Movements and Pre-historic Culture” assumed similar viewpoint about the Alpines and the Nordic ethnic group. Both were evolved around central Asian steppes and probably speaking the Aryan language.³³ This Alpines were settles mostly in Gujarat, Bengal and Western Coast of Southern peninsula which strengthens view of *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* about their locality previously mentioned.

8. Not only the strength and war technique of the Aryans had caused a crashing defeat for the Non-Aryan. However, there are several policies, which had been taken based on the time and region, cause the domination over the huge Non-Aryan population though later the Non-Aryan believe system and culture moulded Aryan life style and create a new mixed cultural society. I have discussed these policies in third chapter of my work with textual references. One of them is ‘Vrātyastoma’ which is well celebrated in *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* and *Atharvaveda*. In this particular ritual, the ‘Gṛpati’, who is the coordinator of the ‘Vrātyastoma’, was accepted as Ṛṣi or higher Brāhmaṇas³⁴ and the dependants received the ‘Ṣoḍaṣastoma’.³⁵ The ‘Ṣoḍaṣastoma’ employed in each of the four ‘Vrātyastomas’³⁶:- 1. First of which is meant for all the Vrātyas; 2. The Second one for those who are ‘Abhiśapta’ (wicked and lead a Vrātya life); 3. For those who are youngsters; 4. For very old persons. According to A. Banerjeesāstry, these four types are prescribed for four kinds of Vrātyas. The first one meant readmission for the degraded; Second order was not a rite for readmission but a special rite by which the easterners were admitted into the

³³ S.K. Chaterjee, “Race Movements and Prehistoric Culture”, *Vedic Age*, p. 143 ff.

³⁴ Jai. Br.-2.26.

³⁵ P. Br-12.1.4.

³⁶ Kāt.Ś.Sū- 22.4.

fold of orthodox Brāhmanism; Third meant readmission for such persons who stayed with the Vrātyas and were completely denationalised. The fourth one meant readmission of the old.³⁷ *Pāraskara Gr̥hyasūtra* also prescribed ‘Adhāna’, a Aryan ritual before performing sacrifices, to perform the ‘Vratastoma’

9. In the Vedas, especially in *Ṛgveda*, several instances are furnished which pose that the ‘Ārya’ or Aryan and the ‘Dāsa’ or Non-Aryan were from the same stock or group who became antagonists due following different customs and lifetimes. Both them once worshipping Indra and upgraded or degraded from the status by not performing Vedic culture. Additionally, the word ‘Dāsa’ or ‘Dasyu’ or later ‘Śūdra’ was a status received for not following Aryan way of life rather than a specific people.³⁸ Several mantras mention Vṛṭra and Śambara³⁹ with several epithet such as Dāsa, Dasyu, Asura etc. which strengthen this point.

10. In Later Vedic Society, texts advocates that the Śūdras was appointed in some sort of work during the sacrificial ritual, however, according to Geldner this term were used to denotes servant not the Non-Aryan tribal people. In Brāhmaṇas,⁴⁰ the Śūdra, mostly evolved from Non-Aryan or Pre-Aryan people, were granted to perform ‘Pitṛmedha’ and some other sacrifices. Jābala Satyakāma and Aitareya Mahidāsa also made places into Brāhmana Class and get permitted to read Vedas and Upaniṣdas. Another references about the same thing found in *Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa*.⁴¹ Rathakāra, a mix origin, had the right to be ‘Āhitāgni’ or to perform sacrifices. On contrast, Brāhmaṇas who also performed the role of Physician would not be honoured. Mix originated people were

³⁷ A. Banerjeesāstry, *Asura India*, p.71,

³⁸ “The term asura, Dasyu and Dāsa are the very least not mutually exclusive.”- W.E. Hale, *Asura in Early Vedic Religion*, p.159.

³⁹ ṚV-5.30.8-9.

⁴⁰ T.Br.-1.2.6.50.

⁴¹ Tā.Br.-14.6.6.

identified with their professions. Several professions were specified as per the purity of blood of these people. This social stratification still belongs mostly in southern part of India including some region of Northern India.

Limitations

In Vedic literature, numerous legends and names are linked to later epic poetry, including figures such as Agastya, Vasiṣṭha, Viśvamitra, Yajñavalkya, Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, Bharadvāja, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and Vaicitravīrya. These names, found in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata*, and Purāṇas, suggest a connection to Vedic characters. For instance, Droṇa in the *Mahābhārata* is known as the son of Bharadvāja, while the Ikṣvāku king Rāma from Madhyadeśa was a disciple of Viśvamitra. Additionally, Kṛṣṇa, depicted as a black-skinned king, served as a leader of the Aryan Kuru-Pāñcāla kings in the Sapta-Sindhu region.

In the *Ṛgveda* (1.130.8 and 8.96.13-16), there is a description of a conflict between the mighty Indra and the Asura Kṛṣṇa, characterised as black-skinned and shining like the sun beneath the water, who was swiftly moving. Indra ultimately defeated him, along with Bṛhaspati and the Maruts. A similar conflict is also recounted in the *Śrīmadbhāgavatam*, Canto 10, Chapters 24 and 25. In both texts, Kṛṣṇa appears as an antagonist of Indra, although they portray different individuals as the hero or victor.

From this, one might infer that the legends of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* are not mere fabrications but have connections to the Vedas. While the Vedas, associated with pure-blooded Aryans, portray Indra as the greatest deity, the later Purāṇas and epics may reflect localised influences on these heroes.

It makes me believe that the dates of the composition of the Vedas and the epics do not differ significantly. It has also been suggested that the Aryans originated from the northwestern part of the Hindu Kush or the eastern regions

of Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC). It is likely that they began composing the Vedas after their arrival in the Indian subcontinent, with the Vedic composers being adventurous and nomadic sages, making it challenging to pinpoint the exact location where the Vedas were first composed. Further research is needed in this area, and a comparative study could provide insights to resolve these puzzles.

These puzzles cannot be fully addressed solely through a comparison of the two texts, as the work is confined to the Vedic texts, and the dissertation must also be condensed. An effort has been made to present a comprehensive view of ancient Indian culture, society, and developments in this dissertation; however, its limitations remain, leaving avenues open for future research by subsequent scholars.

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