Introduction:

Since time immemorial, India has stirred the human imagination. Her ties with the world are keen and powerful. Various names and reasons can be acquired for the same, like trade, politics, religion or social causes, etc. The history regarding is not much known or is so deeply forgotten that these relations are almost unbelievable and are mere fairytales, while they were being elaborated by the historians. As in the middle-ages the narrow-minded social beliefs ruled the Indian society, nobody was allowed to travel across the seas. If anyone tried it, the penalty was severe. Even in the years of colonial rule the self-confidence was totally lost and Indians were made to believe that they cannot be having any enriched civilisation ages before.

According to great philosopher Hegel, India was rich in natural wealth, natural resources and especially it was a treasury of knowledge and wisdom.\(^1\) At the same time, India’s geographical centre position in the Indian Ocean was matched by her spiritual stature. Hence there was a competition amongst the countries to experience this wealth of India. Therefore many businessmen, historians, religious travellers and diplomats visited India. Thus she was never aloof from the world, but exchanged various types of relations with rest of the nations and cultures.

In India meet the opposites, the abstract and the all-too elemental. The mathematical symbol of the zero was gifted by Indian mathematicians, which turned out revolutionary. At the same time it provided food for the people’s nostalgic yearnings with its legends and fairytales.

For a long time the people of the West regarded India as an entity serving generations of the Indologists as the inspiration source. These Indologists were co-operating each other in their research. India became the goal of scientific pilgrimage for them.

The traces of Indian culture and civilization have been found in every part of the world. The ancient Indians carried their civilized culture, wherever they went. Though they never used any force to acquire new followers for their culture, their civilized culture and noble behaviour attracted many followers. Another speciality of this culture is that it allows everyone to follow his/her own culture, religious beliefs and rituals instead of forcing Indian culture on them. They believed in co-operation and tolerance.

Thus, if you examine closely the theory of the good secular Muslim/Christian/ Marxist, versus the bad/dangerous/fundamentalist Hindu, you are bound to come-up against several deep contradictions. Firstly, historically, Hindus have been the least fundamentalist people in the world: Never trying to impose their creed upon others by the sword, like Christianity or Islam, or even by the non-violent means of preaching, like Buddhism. Hinduism has also proved over the ages is infinite tolerance towards other religions giving refuge to all persecuted minorities in the world whether Parsis, Syrien, Christians, Jews or Tibetans today.²

Famous french journalist ‘Francois Gautier’ of ‘Asian Age’ has expressed his opinions in this manner, while explaining he specialities of Indian culture and religion.

**Historical traces of Indian culture in the world :³**

The architectural remains in the world narrate the history. Same is the case of Lothal in Saurashtra, Gujarat. Lothal was a rich, well planned port since 2450 B. C., approximately at the same scale as Harappa or Mohenjodaro.

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The trade between Egypt, Mesopotemia, Persia, etc. was carried through its docks. It had a long pier, i.e. 734 ft. long and 126 ft. broad. The ships carrying 60 to 75 tonnes of goods visited this port. 90 to 100 ft. long ships used to stand in its pier. Sopara and Bharuch were the other main ports on the western coast of India. In ‘Periplus’ and in ‘Jatai-stories’ one can read about these business relations of India with foreign countries. In Sanchi a carved picture of a ship can be seen or in Ajanta-caves decorated paintings of ships can be seen, eg. a fighter boat, elephants and horses carrying ships etc. Hence the historians could assume that the art of building and developing large ships and travel across the seas was very much known to Indians since ancient times.  

These brave Indian travellers took their culture with them and infected the countries they visited with their noble culture. Indians had colonies in Egypt and Greece. They sold precious stones, silk, cotton clothes, rice, spices, pepper, cardamom and carved pots etc. Traders got gold as the currency back to homeland, India. One finds Indian wood and wooden building material in ancient Greek and Roman buildings. Roman ladies loved Indian silk clothing. Thus roman emperors had put heavy and strict duties for importing Indian goods, especially on Indian silk.  

These Indian merchants took their philosophy, literature, art, astrology, medicines and styles of construction with them. The carved stupas and stones in Sanskrit from Indonesia, Cambodia, Indo-China, Bornia, Iran, Irak, Soviet Union and Siberia narrate the history of bravery of these Indians. One finds Śiva,Viṣṇu and Buddha temples in these countries. The cultural heritage and life-style of the people in these countries is a reflection of India. The Indian traditional rituals, pūjas, beliefs about good and bad deeds and daily life has clear Indian traces.  

There are two reliable sources to acquire knowledge of the past according to

5 ibid, pp. 108-119.
the historians. One of them is physical evidences, which are scattered all over the world. Important in them are the stūpas or the stone works, that are written mainly in Sanskrit and the architectural remains of ancient constructions. Secondly the Chinese travellers and historians. They have collected the information for the future generations. They have taken tremendous efforts for preserving, writing and publishing the ancient knowledge of India.

Hindu emperors ruled Cambodia for almost 1400 years. Hence whatever was developed in India went to Cambodia. Science, literature, art and at the same the theory of rebirth are believed in there even today.

For the purpose of spreading the Buddhism in the world emperor Ashok has organised a religious meet in 240 B.C. These Buddhist monks got then the help of Indian businessmen and navigators who have settled Indian colonies in various countries years before.

Ancient culture of Mexico is known as ‘maya-culture’. ‘Maya’ people were good artists and architects. The historians have found well planned old colonies in Mexico. These maya people believed in and worshipped the God Sun. The lifestyle of today’s Mexicans is comparable with Indians. Many religious beliefs and rituals are same as Indians. Original Americans (ancient Americans) believed in God Sun. The ancient people of Peru known as ‘Inka’ have worshipped God Fire or Agni, which is practised in modern times also. From the birth till the death many rituals are performed in Peru or in Inka society as do the Indians. They perform various Yagnyas in this twenty-first century also.\(^6\)

Indians visited Somalia, Kenya and Tanzania. Indians introduced them sugar. Many western philosophers are of the opinion that the name of river Nile is derived from Sanskrit.

The relations between Afghanistan and India and its evidences are numerous. As also in the region near Caspian sea in Russia the historians have found well planned and constructed colony, which they are comparing with Harappa,

\(^6\) Op cit, pp. 96-107.
Mohinjodaro and Lothal. In the region near Baikal lake ancient Buddhist architectural remains are found. If one visits these Vihāras, one gets a special ‘Prasāda’ made from honey, ghee and curds. There are 33 Vihāras in the surroundings. The people in this area worship since ancient times, God Agni and Indra and the Ganges water carries the same importance, as in any Indian house, in the religious rituals even today.⁷

Though Indians and Indian culture had never confrontation with the established culture, one finds ‘Indian’ element present in many ancient cultures. For example in Japan Indian element can be observed in all walks of life, in paintings, literature, ideas about God, religious beliefs, etc. One can read Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata, stories from Pañcatantra and Hitopadeśa in Japanese.

The recognition of Indian culture is varied amongst various societies of the world. It is known as the Vedic culture, Hindu culture, as oriental culture or as original culture. The historical glance on this culture allows to believe that this culture has its origin in the Vedas. At the same this culture has a path designed for many ancient cultures of the world. This culture strongly believes in the Yajñas. Co-operation, co-existence, tolerance, helpfulness, thankfulness, sacrifice, total - surrender, to follow various duties honestly eg. duties towards oneself, towards society, towards mankind are the characteristics of the Yajñas. It develops all these qualities in its practicians and in the human life. The ancient thinkers of India believed that God Agni is the symbol of the Sun on this earth. Thus they have worshipped God Agni. The original religious literature of Indians - Ṛgveda describes God Agni through prayers. The very first Ṛc of Ṛgveda is devoted to Lord Agni and the same the last Ṛc depicts a prayer for the well being of the society, mankind and the world.

Aims and Objectives:

At the end of the 18th century the first translations of classical Indian literature received enthusiastic welcome in Germany. In the 1823 A. W. Schelgel published the translation of ‘Bhagwad Gītā’. After him there is long tradition of Indologists. Some names one never forgets are like E. F. K. Rosenmüller, Hermann Brockhaus, Theodor Benfey, Franz Kielhorn. One can not forget the enormous work of Paul Deussen, who translated the Upaniṣadas in German. This marked the beginning of Indology studies in Germany. Then followed the translations of Ṛgveda and Sāyaṇabhāṣya by F. Max Müller. The eternal knowledge preserved in India was introduced to the whole world by the translations of Ṛgveda. It was a tough job which Max Müller undertook with the help of Oxford University. Various German Universities are keeping themselves busy with their studies of Indology and offering many courses for Indian languages, literature, art, culture, etc. The students are encouraged to develop their ‘India’ knowledge by offering scholarships for field trips. DAAD (Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst) has taken a keep initiative in this. Göttingen University is one of the first Universities to collaborate with Pune University for such student’s training programme. Pro. Thomas Oberlies has taken efforts in this project as he is interested in studies of Yajñas, especially in Somayāga. There are many more Indologists, Scientists and Scholars, who are undertaking researches about the Fire-Worship (Yajñas) as ordained by the Vedas. They go on performing regularly morning and evening sacrifices (Agnihotra - as it is called in the Vedas). They are monitoring its effects on human body, plants, animals and at the same time on atmosphere. The aim of this scrutiny is to study all these aspects critically. The main and important objective of this study is to find out the relevance of all these in the practical life of today’s modern man.
Methods :

Germans are better known for their articulateness and scholarly approach. Hence it is important to study, their approach and viewpoint about this ancient knowledge and their findings if any. As also it is important to note, whether they have taken colonial or post colonial approach or whether they hold a totally different view. It is also important to observe, whether it is orientalist approach.

Stress would be on the relevance of these studies in twenty-first century I.T. revolution that we are in today and the practical life of every one. The relevant methods of analysis with this approach are used for the studies.

For a literary study the main important method is of survey. Using this method survey of a vast literature has been taken. Specially scholars and scientists, who are working in this field and the regular Yajña performers were interviewed and given a set of questions regarding for how long they practice Yajña and their experiences. For finding out certain facts regarding Soma-sacrifice the Somayāga that took place from 06 to 11 March 2009 at Muhamadwadi, Pune, was visited and photographs were taken. To gather first hand information the Adharyu - Shri B. Shrinivas Sattri - of the same was interviewed.

Hypothesis :

In this twenty-first century it is important to study Indology with various new angles and aspects. German scholars studying ‘India-element’ with new approaches in the 18th century laid foundations of scientific study of Indology. Their works are pioneering in this field. Max Müller with his volumes of the RV has given a new dimension to the RV study. He explained the valuableness and immortality of the knowledge of the RV to the Western scientists’ world.

Today in the IT era new generation of German Indologists has come forward
to set again a completely new dimension to the study of the RV and Yajña
 culture. They are dealing with all modern techniques and yardsticks to find out
the relevance of Yajña in daily life of common man. They have found out that
solution to all sorts of pollution problems lies in the daily practice of Yajña. For
proving their views they have undertaken different experiments in the field of
chemistry, physics, biology, agriculture, psychology, etc. These experiments
are carried out in different countries of the world, including India.

1.5 : Conclusions :

According to the scientific observations of the various experiments, it can be
said that the knowledge imparted in the Vedas is useful and important for
everyone, in whichever corner of the world one may be born and live. As it
was assumed earlier by certain scholars, the Vedas are not just hymns
addressed to God, nor it has only a mystic approach or value. They have
been described as working manuals of the universe. And they have very
much relevance in every day life of common man in this IT era. In fact many
in Germany, Latin America, Europe, USA, Poland and many other nations are
working on these lines and surprisingly they have come across many positive
results, which tell us that the Vedas are nothing but eternal knowledge.