CHAPTER I
CHAPTER I

EXPLORING INDIA'S PAST AND DISCOVERING THE DRAVIDIAN

Etymology of the word Dravidian:

Anthropologists, Ethnographers and Pre-Historians are of the unanimous opinion that India is an Ethnological Museum. This ethnological museum is the dwelling house of many races such as Proto-Australoids, Polynesians, Mongoloids, Negritos, Melanesians and the Austro-Asiatics. Besides these, India had become the home of the Dravidians and the Aryans. While the Aryans were called Indo-Europeans or Indo-Aryans, the Dravidians were identified as Scythio-Dravidians, Aryo-Dravidians and the Mongolo-Dravidians. These Dravidians were one of the major races of India, which once upon a time spread all over India. Traces of the Dravidian influence and impact could be found in the North-West, North-East, Central India and Southern India, in particular. Their impact was felt in the languages of India, particularly Munda (Mon-Khmer), Sanskrit, Mahratti and other early breeds. Recent anthropological and ethnological researches confirm that the Dravidian was pre-Aryan in many ways.

The word Dravidian was given wide publicity by Bishop Dr. Robert Caldwell (hereafter merely as Caldwell) in his Magnum opus, A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages (1856). However, as said earlier, Caldwell was not the first to invent the word; he himself admits that the word was in vogue centuries back in India. The term Dravidian, although a terminology

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1 See Kalpana Rajaram, Gandhi, Nehru, Tagore and other Eminent Personalities of India, New Delhi 2000, p.183.
4 Some scholars argue that the word ‘Dravida’ has come out of the Sanskrit root Dru, which means to drive. They are therefore of the opinion that the term Dravidian denotes ‘to drive out,’ perhaps ‘driven out from the North to the South’.
of controversy among native and foreign scholars about its exact origin, is a compact ideology borrowed and used by the European Dravidologists in the 19th century from early Indian history and literature and was popularised by Caldwell. It has been used in variant forms such as Damila, Dramila, Dimili, Dramida, Dravidi Dravida, and Dravidian in the early North Indian and Deccani literature, inscriptions and grammatical works. When the European Indologists and Dravidologists discovered the antiquity of India, they distinguished and differentiated two racial and linguistic groups, dominating the life of the Indian sub-Continent. They called them the Aryan (mainly of North India) and the Dravidian (mainly of South India).

Roots of the word Dravida or Dravidian:

The term Dravida or Dravidian with its racial, linguistic and regional connotation is found embedded in the ancient classics like Mahabharata, Manusmrti and the works of Parasara, Varakamihira, Kumarila Bhatta Bilhana and many other ancient writers. The Mahabharata uses the term Dravida to indicate one of the Kshatriya castes, which lived in South India. In the 2nd century B.C. the Hathigumbha inscription of king Kharavela (176-163 B.C.) of the Cheti dynasty, makes mention of a South Indian Military Confederacy called the Dramila Sanghata. Bhagavathapurana is very clear in referring to manu, founder of Surya Vamsa dynasty, as Dravida Rajeswara. It is said in olden days, as said in Manusmrti, that Bharatavarsha was divided into two major divisions, i.e. Pancha Dravida and Pancha Gouda. In fact, while Pancha Dravida indicated South India, Pancha Gouda indicated North India.

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9 Bandula Ramasamy Naidoo, Selections from the Records of South Arcot District, Madras, 1908, pp.7-8.
The Pancha Dravida country was divided into the following:

(i) From Kanyakumari to Tirupati called Chicacole (that is the first Dravidam);

(ii) Andhradesa (the second Dravidam);

(iii) From Mysore to Golkonda called Kannada (the third Dravidam);

(iv) From Golconda to the Western Coastal area including Maharashtra (the fourth Dravidam); and

(v) From Sindhu-nadu to Narmada called Gurjara (the fifth Dravidam).

Generally, these regions are collectively called the Dakshinapatha. Even in Kautilya’s Arthasastra, Dakshinapatha is referred to mean the land South of the Vindhya-Satpura ranges, from were gold and pearls had gone to the north from very ancient days. The Parasurama tradition, which is popular in the South, particularly in Kerala, Maharashtra, South Karnataka, and in the north, particularly in Kamarupa (Assam), tells us that Parasurama’s father Jamadagni, a seer, had his hermitage in the region around the Vindhyas, from where Parasurama is said to have started his Brahmanization of the South and East India. From this it becomes obvious that the land South of the Vindhya-Satpura ranges was regionally separate from Aryavartha.

Another very strong supporting evidence is provided by the scripts of India. From very early days India had many scripts. Subsequently, the Buddhist and the Jaina literatures mention the names of several scripts prevalent in this country in the pre-Christian era. The Jaina Suttas refer to the names of eighteen scripts of which

10 The Northern region is collectively known as Aryavartha and was divided into five (Pancha Gouda): (i) From Srinagar, west of Naimisaranya to Badrikakshrama on the foot of the Himalaya hills is Shoolah Goudam (first Goudam). (ii) To the east of the Ayodhya and Kasi is Kanyakubhya (second Goudam). (iii) From Delhi or Astanapura and Champals to the West is Sarasvatam (third Goudam); (iv) From Mithila and Bengal is Utkala (fourth Goudam). (v) From Jagannadom to Uttara Desham (fifth Goudam). The two broad geographical units, consisting of ten sub-divisions were collectively called Bharatarvarsha (International Journal of Dravidian Linguistics, vol.xxvii, 1998, p.2). The ancient territorinal demarcation would prove that Dravida was half the total extent of the then existing Inida, South of the Vindhyas.

11 M. Raghava Iyengar, Collected Essays, Madras, 1938, p.96

the seventeenth is Damila\textsuperscript{13} It is said to mean the Dravidian script. The bigger list in the Buddhist work Lalitavistara contains some sixty four names of scripts, in which the twelfth script is Dramila-lipi\textsuperscript{14}, meaning the script of the South or Dravidadesa. The word Dramila is used in the Natyasastra (c.200 AD) to refer to the people and the language of the South.\textsuperscript{15}

More remarkably, some of the Graeco-Roman travellers, navigators and geographers speak of the glory of ancient Dravida and its people. Pliny (23-79 AD) in his writings mentions a land called Darthe. It is said to mean Dakshina or Dravida. He notes another name Drobina. It is said that it may be a variant of Dravidanadu. Periplus Maris Erythraea, (50-85AD) the author of which is anonymous, speaks of a land called Timirika. It may be Tamilaha (m).Ptolemy (119-161 AD), the famous Geographer, uses the term Limirike refer to Tamilaha(m) and uses another word Drilobilidai, which may denote the Dravidians.\textsuperscript{16}

More than that, in the fourth century A.D., Vajra Nandikuravar, a famous Jaina monk of Madurai, is said to have founded a Jaina Sangha (470 AD), called the Dravida Sangha.\textsuperscript{17} It was the meeting place of the Jaina monks of the Dravidadesa.

Moreover, Huien Tsang (629-645 AD), the Chinese Prince of Pilgrims mentions Dhipolid and Kan-chi -polo as references to the Dravidadesa and Kanchipuram respectively. He is said to have paid a visit to Kanchipuram during the reign of Narasimhavarma Pallava. Huien Tsang gives detailed information about Dravidanadu.\textsuperscript{18}

Further, the term Dravida was used in Sanskrit literature in the 7th century A.D. by Kumarila Bhatta. He mentions the Andhra-Dravida Bhasha in the context


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{15} Mammoohan Ghosh (ed.), The Natyasastra, Calcutta, 1967, pp i-iv.


of a language of the South.\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Saundaryalahari}, a commentary on \textit{Brahmasutra}, attributed to Sankara, the great Vedantist (8\textsuperscript{th} century AD), refers to St.Sambandar as the \textit{Dravida Sishu},\textsuperscript{20} meaning \textit{Child of the Dravida} (country).

Besides, during the 9\textsuperscript{th} century A.D., one of the Udayendram Copper-Plates of king Nandivarma Pallava alias \textit{Tellaru Erinda Nanthippottaraiyan} identifies the Tamils as \textit{Dramilar}, which definitely means the \textit{Dravidiants}.\textsuperscript{21}

In addition, Bilhana (1070 AD), the famous court poet of Vikramaditya, wrote the famous \textit{Vikramankadavacarita}, a eulogy or panegyric. He mentions the word \textit{Dravidasenai} (military of the Dravida) in this work to denote the Chola army and \textit{Tramila} as the people of South India\textsuperscript{22} (Tamils of \textit{Tamilaha(m)}).

The references cited above in a chronological sequence establish the fact that the word was not of the recent origin but very deeply rooted in North Indian, the Graeco-Roman, Chinese and Deccani antiquity. However, the term was not used uniformly to indicate the specific language group, people and region, but used in variant forms in consonance with the native dialect and phonetics. Then it received a spelling and sound as \textit{Limirike} or \textit{Timirike} or \textit{Timirika} or \textit{Damilika} or \textit{Darthe} and \textit{Dilopid} from the Graeco – Roman geographers and a different tone and spelling from the Chinese pilgrim, the North Indian and Deccani poets and writers. It shows that the term did not have a universally accepted spelling and sound. It varied according to the native place, linguistic tradition and grammatical diction of the user. But, although the centuries, one thing is obvious that the meaning attributed to these variant forms such as \textit{Dravida} or \textit{Tamil} (the language), \textit{Dravidian} (the people) and \textit{Dravidadesa} (the land) is definitely of the linguistic, ethnic and territorial senses respectively.


\textsuperscript{21} Quoted by Cherar, “\textit{Dravida Inathin Etramum Thotramum}” (TI.), Tinkal Idazh. No. 1, Anna Arivalayam, (n.d.) p.25.

Moreover, linguistically, it was used in two contexts, i.e. (i) restricted in the sense of Tamil—a micro view, and (ii) extended to mean all Dravidian languages—a macro vision.\textsuperscript{23}

It becomes obvious from the above study that the term Dravida or Dravidian and its meaning referring to a land, language and people was of ancient origin. But, until the end of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, the gateways to wisdom of the source of the Dravidian language were closed to the world of scholarship, due either to a kind of fear and hate of the elite sections or its rulers were enamoured of the Sanskrit language, its speakers and its culture, or its scholars (Tamil scholars) paid scant attention to their language, when compared to the scholars of North India. The Tamil scholastic world perhaps speaks more than what it does. Even when the Sanskrit chauvinists knocked at the doors of Tamil Nadu and tried to undo its remains, they, in fact, did not rise above their petty prejudices in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century to protect their language. When North India was driving out the caste inhibitions, South India, particularly Tamil Nadu, was engaged in caste conflicts and communal conflagrations. This is best illustrated by the Valangai-Idangai caste conflicts in various parts of Tamil Nadu,\textsuperscript{24} particularly in South Arcot District. When they were deeply involved in caste prejudices and fights, how could they find time to protect their language and literature from the fanatics? It was under such a situation that some European Missionaries dedicated their whole lives for the sake of redeeming the past of Tamil Nadu, its language and literature.

In this context arises the question: Who are the Dravidians? Even today researches are done to get an answer to this question. Till we get the correct answer, we may probably define that the Dravidians are those who speak the Dravidian languages. The Dravidian is a family of languages spoken by more than 19,7,303,000 (One, Nine Seven, Three Zero Three, Zero Zero Zero) people, primarily in Southern India\textsuperscript{25} There are seven major Dravidian languages spoken in India. They are Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, Gondi, Kuwi, Kurukh and Tulu.

\textsuperscript{23} R.C. Hiremath, op.cit; p.4


Besides, there are a number of immature languages too. Among these some are merely spoken languages lacking a dialect of their own. Some have fallen out of use. Kuwi may be cited as an instance of fallen language. Among the matured Dravidian language group, Tamil is the oldest, having a literature of more than two thousand years old. Tamil has undergone a change as follows:\(^{26}\)

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\text{Tamil} \rightarrow \text{Damila} \rightarrow \text{Dramizha} \rightarrow \text{Dramila} \rightarrow \text{Dramida} \rightarrow \text{Dravida}.
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Some linguists are of the opinion that the word Tamil was derived from the root word Dravidam, which in course of time, got corrupted into Dramilam, Damilam and Tamil. But, Caldwell derives it from the root word Dravida. In fact, the derivation must have been the other way. Tamili (otherwise called Tamil-Brahmi to distinguish it from Asokan-Brahmi), the popular script of early Tamilaham from c. 4th century B.C. to c. 3rd century A.D., has some peculiar letters and sound forms, which are absent in the Asokan–Brahmi.\(^{27}\) One such a letter peculiar to Tamili (the script) and Tamil (the language) is ‘\(\varpi\)’ (zha), which is totally absent in the northern variety. The fact is that this letter could not be properly pronounced by North Indians. They used to pronounce it as \(\varpi\) = the script as Tamili (\(\varpi\)) and the language as Tamil. (\(\varpi\))\(^{28}\) Similarly, the first letter of the word Tamil or Tamil i.e. T was corrupted into D, thereby the words Tamili and Tamil got corrupted into Damili and Damil. In course of time, the variants of these words such as Damila, Dramila, Dramida, Dravida have come to be used in inscriptions and literatures.\(^{29}\) At last, the last term Dravida (Dravidi, for the script) has come to stay in North India. This is strengthened by the latest findings of Tamili or Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions and their interpretations\(^{30}\) by well-known scholars like

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\(^{29}\) T.N. Subramaniam op.cit., pp.1581-1582.

A careful study of the etymology of the word **Dravida** leads us to the conclusion that the term ‘**Dravida**’ was used in Sanskrit first to denote the South Indian Brahmins and later the South Indian people in general. The word **Dravidian** in fact indicates a linguistic rather than a racial group of Indian people. The Sanskrit word **Dravida** means Southern and the Dravidian languages are broadly the languages of Southern India. Caldwell first used the word **Dravidian** in modern times to denote south Indian people. It is now used to denote the race which was dominant in India before the advent of the Aryans.

It is thus learnt from an etymological study of the term **Dravida** that in the olden days there was a vaguely defined region of South India known in the North as **Dravida**, probably a corruption of the word **Tamil**. This word was applied by the nineteenth century philologist Caldwell to a group of languages spoken mainly in the Indian peninsula. Sir Herbert Risley, the ethnologist (1890) borrowed the term and applied it to a certain ethnic type, which he found in many parts of India, but in highest concentration in the peninsula. Later scholars used this term to indicate a group of people both linguistically and racially. To quote an apt statement of John R.Marr, “The word that has come down to us ‘**Dravidian**’ has had a very long history as a referential term for the Southern portion of India... Sanskrit sources have **Dravidi** and **Damili** and later **Dramida** and **Dravida**, the immediate sources of our **Dravidian**. It seems likely that all these words are to be connected ultimately

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31 It has now been shown that there are more than thirty languages in the Dravidian family. On the basis of generic relationship, geographical distribution and shared innovations, the **Dravidian languages** are normally brought under three major groups, namely the south Dravidian, the central Dravidian, and the north Dravidian. Languages like Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Tulu, Kodaya, Badaga, Toda, Kota and Irula come under the south Dravidian category; Telugu, Kuvi, Kolami, Naiki, Parji, Gadaba etc., come under the central Dravidian, whereas Kurukh, Malto, Brahui etc., come under the north Dravidian. G. John Samuel, **Dravida Molikalin Oppavyu**, (Tl.), Chennai, 1975, pp.23-24.

32 Some philologists maintain that it is derived from Tamil and others have followed Caldwell’s theory that Tamil is derived from **Dravida**.

Dravidian Race:

As said earlier, India has been a home of diverse races, languages, cultures and regions. Sir Herbert Risley has divided the races of India into seven divisions or types. The first is the Dravidian type. It is chiefly found in the Southern peninsula. He says, “their stature is short or below mean; the complexion very dark, approaching block, hair plentiful with an occasional tendency to curl; eyes dark; head long; nose very broad, sometimes depressed at the root, but not so as to make the face appear flat”. Risley’s theory is based on the assumption that the Dravidians were the earliest inhabitants of India.

Both foreign and Indian scholars have in their extensive studies proved, beyond doubt, that there were no such races as Dravidians and Aryans and both of them are linguistic groups of one or more of the three Negroid, Europoid and Mangoloid racial stocks. The Negroid race divides into three smaller races called Australoid, Veddas and African Negroes.

Among other things, the physical features of the people living in the Southern part of India could be attributed to the Negro-Australoid racial mix-up, whereas the people living in Northern part of India with different physical features of Europo-Mangoloid racial mix-up, or Caucasian race. While the four languages-speaking population, namely, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam, are treated broadly as belonging to Dravidian linguistic group, the immigrants of Europo-Mangoloid or Caucasian race in Northern India was called by the nomenclature Aryan by the

35 The other six types are: (i) the Indo-Aryan type, (ii) the Turko – Iranian type, (iii) Scythio – Dravidian type, (iv) the Aryo – Dravidian type, (v) the Mongoloid – type, and (vi) the Mongol – Dravidian type. Smt R. Agarwal, Indian Society, Indore. 1994, pp. 9-10.
37 The only people who can be classified as Aryans are the ancient Iranians and the ancient Indo-Aryans, who referred to themselves as Aryans and the regions in which they lived as the ‘Land of the Aryans’. The actual word Aryan comes from the root word ari, which in the Vedic period meant ‘foreigner’ or ‘stranger’ while aryas meant ‘connected with newcomers’ or ‘favorably disposed towards newcomers’ and later a man of noble decent’. K. Antonova et.al., A History of India, pt.I, Moscow, 1979, p.31.
common language they spoke and by their immigrant status. Hence these nomenclatures Dravidian and Aryan are not racial but linguistic.

However, according to recent findings of anthropologists three elements viz., pre-Dravidian Dravidian and Aryan can be traced in South - India. The first type constitutes the jungle and hill folk with short stature and dark complexion, with wild and matted hair and flat noses. The second type constitutes the typical non-Brahman communities with slightly browner or darker complexion, and shorter stature. The third type constitutes the Brahmanical communities, comparatively fair in complexion, tall in stature, long-nosed and small-lipped. As per the latest findings, at the beginning of Neolithic Age, the Negrito race had practically disappeared. Then the Munda (Mon Khmer) people occupied the habitable parts of the country. The Dravidians said to be a part of the Mediterranean races, migrated to Dravida about 8th or 9th millenium B.C. They drove the Mundas (Mon Khmer) to the hills and woods and occupied the country.38 That is the powerful newcomers swayed over the earlier settlers occupied their settlements and continued to live on the conquered regions.

The Dravidian Question:

At this juncture, the origin and appearance of the Dravidians in India are still moot questions among anthropologists, ethnologists and historians. They are trying to find out when, from where and how did the Dravidians come to India, if they were immigrants. Their original home is also a matter of controversy. This has made some scholars to assign them an indigenous origin and a foreign origin as well. Meanwhile, some modern scholars, however, on a comparative study of the available evidences postulate that the Dravidians were foreigners, who migrated to India about the 8th or 9th millenium B.C.39

Home of the Dravidians: Various Theories:

Even after a century of research, the question about the home of the Dravidians remains unresolved. Anthropologists and ethnologists like Havelock Ellis

38 Smt. R. Agarwal, op.cit., pp.5-16.
39 N. Subramanian, op.cit(1990), p.24. These comparative evidences are archaeological, anthropological, ethnographical, vegetative and physiographic in nature.
Herbert Risley, Edgar Thurston, Hutton; sociologists like Ghurye, M.N. Srinivas, L.Krishna Iyer; linguists like Lahovari; economic historians like Gilbert Slater and others have tried to solve this riddle decades back. Still the problem continues to pester the scholastic world. From the beginning of the 19th century, modern scholarship has begun to investigate into the structure and parentage of the Dravidian family of languages. In the early decades of the 19th century, William Carey, a Missionary from Bengal, noted that the language of South India should be differentiated from the Aryan language of the North. His opinion was further supported by the opinions of the great linguists of those days like Max Muller, Havelock Ellis and Stevenson. The epoch-making anthropo-linguistic work of Caldwell, proved beyond doubt about the existence of a separate language family in India. Thus he laid the foundation for a new era of linguistic scholarship in India, with particular reference to the Dravidian group. He not only proved that these languages belong to a distinct genetic group, but also showed the structure and characteristic features of this family of languages. Despite the fact that the twentieth century scholarship has modified many of the conclusions arrived at by Caldwell, his monumental work still proves to be an indispensable companion to a modern scholar because of the wealth of information it contains.

Since then these languages have attracted the attention of many multi-linguists, who made penetrating enquiries into the origin and antecedents of this linguistic and ethnic group. Their first question was whether the Dravidians autochthons or immigrants to India? If that be so, when did they appear on Indian soil? In the last century, many wild conjectures have been made. But today with the advancement of ethno-archaeological, historico-anthropological and linguistic- etymological techniques, scholars of various countries have made very effective works on these issues and found out satisfactory answers to these questions. In this context, the archaeological and pre-historic explorations, excavations and interpretations of findings in India and outside India have come to their rescue. In this regard, the Indus Valley Civilization offers a most plausible solution to this vexed question.

41 Bishop Dr.Robert Caldwell. op.cit., pp.1-7.
The Indus Valley excavations and interpretations of artefacts and other remains by a host of scholars right from Fr. Henri Heras\textsuperscript{42} to very recent scholars like Asko Parpola\textsuperscript{43} together with many other excavations conducted in different areas of West Asia, Egypt and other Negro-African regions by the bands of English, German and French anthropo-archaeologists, during the first half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, have widened the horizon of modern scholarship and directed our thinking about the people of pre-historic times in an altogether new line. However, of all the theories advanced about the home of the Dravidians, six become more pronounced than the others. They are: (i) Central Asian theory, (ii) Mongolian theory, (iii) Mesopotamian theory (iv) Egyptian theory, (v) Lemurian theory, the (vi) Mediterranean theory. Of these, the Lemurian and the Mediterranean as the home of the Dravidians stand very prominent. In this context, A.L. Basham considers the proto-Australoids as indigenous and the palaeo-Mediterranean as the foreign.\textsuperscript{44} An examination is made here to invalidate the unimpressive theories and to validate the most promising one in an order.

(i) Central Asian Theory:

As and when the racial studies of India began, a few scholars including Caldwell came forward with the Scythian or Turanian origin of the Dravidians. Caldwell assigned Central Asia as the original home of the Dravidians. His arguments are based on the resemblances between the Dravidian and the Scythian group of languages (Finnish, Turkish, Mongolian and Tungasian families). He saw close affinity between the Dravidian and the Indo-European also, but regarded the connection of Dravidian with the Scythian group more significant. He also laid emphasis on the resemblance between the Brahui spoken in Baluchistan and the Dravidian to prove their immigration from Central Asia through the passes of the


north-west. He also regarded the Brahuis as one of the Dravidian tribes, which migrated to India long back.

In fact, Caldwell was not aware of the problem of affiliation of these languages. He has discussed in some length the possible relationship of the Dravidian languages with what he termed Scythian tongues were the numerous languages once spoken in the Middle-Eastern region. This idea first expressed by a Danish scholar Ruskway was elaborated by Caldwell in considerable detail. The translation of the inscriptions discovered at Behistun in Western Media in the language of the Scythians has thrown some light on the connection of the Dravidian languages with the Scythian group.

To strengthen his idea Caldwell had cited instances like the presence of retroflexes, stop consonants as voice less in the initial Position and as voiced in the medial position of a word, genitive forms ending in na and nina, dative suffixes ikki/ikka, accusative forms ending in un/in, use of relative participles, etc., No doubt, this led him to conclude that the Dravidians were from Central Asia.

The progress of philology since Caldwell’s time disproves his assumption. Later linguists do not even recognise the existence of the Scythian group of languages. The resemblance which Caldwell pointed out between Scythian and Dravidian could be traced to Indo-European. Ethnology is also against the presumptions of Caldwell. The Dravidians are dolicho-cephalic and not brachy-cephalic like the Turanians. Moreover, the Turanians were a barbaric race without any scuples. This most rude culture and race could not be held to be the progenitors of a race which produced one of the most copious, refined and polished languages of the world and literature not less noble than that in Greek, Latin or Sanskrit. As to the Brahui evidence, the Brahuis are, ethnologically, different from the Dravidians. The linguistic affinities might be due to mutual inter-course between them and the

46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
Dravidians. Thus the theory of the Turanian origin of the Dravidians stands discredited.

(i) Mongolian Theory:

V. Kanakasabhai believed that the Dravidians migrated into India from Tibetan highlands through the Himalayan Passes in Tibet and Nepal. He identified them with the Yakshas of Sanskrit literature and held that they settled in the whole of Bengal. In addition, some of the customs and conventions with special reference to their daily life like fishing and eating fish and religious believes and rituals, particularly in that of Kali worship, and emotional characteristics of the Bengalis are similar to the Dravidian Tamils. They are said to have gone to South India and to Ceylon from the port of Tamralipti, thus getting the name Tamils. The Marar and Tirayar tribes are held by him to be the originators of the Pandya and the Chola people respectively. Moreover, it is held that the people of Nepal and Malabar have the same notions as to female chastity. In addition, it is said, there is a great similarity in the architecture and arts of these countries. Further, the letter 1 (zha), peculiar to the Tamil language is found in the Tibetan.

His theory is based mostly on the similarity in the style of construction of temples and the conception of female chastity. In fact, Kanakasabhai’s theory lacked anthropological and ethnological support. But, the dissimilarity in the physical features of the Mongolians and the Dravidians help scholars dismiss this theory. Sir Herbert Risley observes, “It is extremely improbable that a large body of a very black and conspicuously long headed type should have come from the one region of the earth which is peopled exclusively, by races with broad heads and yellow complexion”. The analogies of Tamralipti, Marar and Tirayar to the Pandya and the Chola are only fanciful. The identification of Yakshas with Dravidians is nothing but a surmise. The artistic and architectural resemblances between Malabar

50 Ibid.
and Nepal can be traced to a time when the whole of the country was under Dravidian culture.\textsuperscript{51}

\textbf{(ii) Mesopotamian Theory:}

Meanwhile, some scholars attribute a Semitic origin to the Dravidians. This theory is based mostly on anthropological similarities, both races being dolichocephalic. The prevalence of the marriage of the children of brother and sister, and the worship of women are also points common to the two races. Col. Holditch holds that the Dravidians originally occupied some region near Mesopotamia and that from there they migrated to India through the Makran Coast. They remained there till a Mongolian race of Britis overpowered them, preserved the Dravidian language through the women but lost Dravidian characteristics. From there they followed along the sea coast into South India. But in the Neolithic age, they had not gone upto Mysore and Coorg; they went so far only with the advent of the metals.\textsuperscript{52} But these and other resemblances can as well be used to prove the Mediterranean origin of the Dravidians.\textsuperscript{53}

\textbf{(iii) Egyptian Theory:}

Prof. Elliot Smith has advanced the theory that the Dravidians belonged to the Egyptian race. He says, \textit{The bringers of the new culture} (i.e. seafarers from the West, who, as he believes, from the third millennium and especially in the period about 800 B.C. carried the \textit{heliolithic} culture, mainly evolved in Egypt, but with elements gathered elsewhere, far and wide along the coasts of the old world and the new) mingle their blood with the aboriginal pre-Dravidian population, and the result was the Dravidians.\textsuperscript{54}

The Professor Elliot thinks that this culture was spread by mariners going from Egypt to different places. Indian influence affected the farther East which, in its turn, had some effect on the Pacific littoral of America. Apart from the very recent date

\textsuperscript{51} R.K. Majumdar and A.N. Srivastava, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.24-25.

\textsuperscript{52} Prakash Cander, \textit{Encyclopaedia of Indian History}, vol. 1. New Delhi, 1999, pp. 34-35.

given for the spread of his influence, it is doubtful if the migration of a few mariners could affect the customs of indigenous people as deeply and minutely as the evidence indicates. Moreover, the professor’s theory is based on certain practices such as snake worship, matriarchy, worship of female Goddesses and dedication of young girls to temples found common between the two. The supporters of the Lemurian theory argue against this theory that these practices might have gone from South India to Egypt. The Professor during his last days supported the Lemurian theory and did not argue in favour of the Egyptian theory.

(V) Lemurian Theory:

Some Tamil scholars of sound knowledge advance the Lemurian theory of the origin of the Dravidians. In fact, this is an indigenous theory assigning an indigenous origin the Dravidians. This is the Lemurian theory of early deluges. This theory was developed after the 9th or 10th century A.D. by these scholars. Here Lemur refers to the Slender Loris, an animal seen in abundance in this land. They have held that the original home of the Tamils was not confined to the Southern portion of the Indian Peninsula, but that it lay extending over a vast mass of land stretching to the south, east and west of Kanyakumari (Cape Comorin). That has been variously called Lemuria or Kumarikkandam, or Navamperunthivu in the Gondwana land. This vast stretch was lost to the deluge and the Dravidians moved northwards.

55 Prakash Cander, op.cit., p.35.
56 R.K. Majumdar and A.N. Srivastva, op.cit., p.26
57 Indian and foreign linguists who have done studies on human origin and its habitation with reference to various languages hold the view that there lived a contiguous linguistic race from the southern most part of Tamil Country called Lemuria or the Kumarikkandam, which also included Ceylon of today, was deluged. This theory narrates the story of the north-word migration of Dravidian – speaking population. Alexander-Kondratove has recently made a reappraisal of this theory. (“Riddle of the Lost Lemuria” in K.P.Aravanan (ed.) op.cit., pp.94-102). Very recently K. Sadasivan has reiterated this theory in his “Himalayas in Early Tamil Literature”, in N.R. Ray (ed.), The Himalayan Frontier in Historical perspective, Calcutta, 1986. pp.8-9.
58 Primitive, tailless, tree-dwelling nocturnal primate of South Asian and East Indies forests (Tevanku in Tamil). They have soft-thick fur and big eyes, feed primarily on insects. Length:8-16 inches; species Slender Loris tardigradus. (The Hamlyn illustrated Encyclopaedia, London, 1988, p.356.)
The earliest reference to this view occurs in Nakkirar's Commentary to the Irayanar Akapporul. Nakkirar advanced for the first time the view concerning the existence of three Tamil Sangams in the past, at Then Madurai (Thon Madurai), Kavatapuram and the present Madurai, postulating the location of the earlier seats of the Tamil Sangam beyond Kanyakumari. Nakkirar had mingled facts with fiction, matter with myths and legends and dates with exaggerations. But this date is not, by dependable canons of historical and literary criticism, assignable to a period earlier than the 9th century A.D.

The mythical and legendary figures appearing in the list of poets, the undreamably long period assigned to the existence of the Sangams, an unverifiable number of the Sangam patrons, the Pandya kings, and the poets who participated in the Academy, and the reappearance of some divine figures and poets in the Sangams do irreparable damage to the faint historical memory about the Sangams. The Commentators of the Tamil Classics like Adiyarkkunallar and Nachchinarkinayar developed this view far more elaborately and spoke of the various principalities of ancient Tamilaham which are said to have existed in regions far to the South of Kanyakumari. These Commentators are assignable to the period approximately ranging from the 12th to the 14th century A.D. Critics are of the opinion that certain legends coupled with stray references to deluges in the past, have been skillfully woven into a full-fledged theory.

However, several European ethnologists and geologists, including Sir John Evans, Sir John Holderness, Prof. Haeckel, Prof. Elliot Smith and Scott Elliot, from the point of view of geological changes that have taken place in the extreme South, support this theory.

In addition, Ilango Atikal in his Cilappadikaram makes mention of a deluge as follows:

60 K.K. Pillai, op.cit, p.42.
When translated into English, the lines run:

“The cruel Ocean engulfed the river Pahruli and a row of hills including the mountain Kumari”.

As similar deluge is mentioned in The Bible too. From these it is surmised that in time immemorial a vast expanse of land in the extreme South was engulfed by the furious Ocean. It is said that in this submerged region the Pandyas had their seat of Tamil Academy. The Pandya king who is said to have conducted the festival of the three seats was Nilantharuthiruvan Pandyan, who was the great patron of the Tamil Academy. Again, the Pandya king Mudatthirumaran is said to have shifted his capital from Kavatapuram to the present Madurai after the great deluge. Moreover, geologists and oceanographers are of the opinion that Australia, Africa and South America formed part of the Gondwanaland. They got separated from the main land because of the deluge and became separate land masses in course of time. A deep geological inquiry into this may lend support to the separation of these continents and islands from the main continent of Lemuria or Kumarikkandam. There is no conclusive evidence to prove such a hypothesis though literary evidences indicate the existence of such a continent submerged by the Ocean.

Reverting to our main theme of Kumarikkandam, the ancient Tamil tradition refers to that the land south of the Vindhya mountains was an island mentioned in Tamil works such as Paditrupatthu, Citappadikaram, Manimekhalai and some hymns of Saint Appar. The references are given below:

ʻதமிழகம் வெள்ளாடம் விளைந்தாது”
(For the prosperity of Tamilaham hedged round by the billowy sea).

- Paditrupatthu.55

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61 Citappadikaram, Canto 11, II.20-21
64 Paditrupatthu – 11 Padikam.
This is land Jambu Dvīpa (island of the Rose apple) is referred to as Ėmuriya by western scholars.

But, it is unsound to contend that this is an exclusively imaginative creation of Tamil scholars. It has also received an indirect support from certain scientists. Many European scholars including geologists, ethnologists and anthropologists, have formulated certain ideas supported by scientific data which provided the basic foundation for the Lemurian theory. In fact, in the middle of the 19th century, Philip Sclater, an English zoologist, first employed the term Ėmuriya to the submerged continent. The monkey-like animals, Ėmuri, as they were called, which abounded in that region in the misty past, provided the genesis of the name Ėmuriya. Several other scholars including Sir Walter Raleigh, Professor Haeckel, Sir. John Evans and Sir J.W. Holderness also supported the Lemurian theory. Though there are minor

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66 Cilappadikaram. iii, 1. 37.
67 Manimekhalai. xvii, 1. 62.
68 Ibid. xi, 1. 107.
69 St. Appar. Tevaram, 11-62.
70 K.P. Aravanan, op.cit., p.97.
variations in their views about the exact extent of the continent, they are in agreement with the fundamentals.71

The exponents of the Lemurian theory postulate the existence in the bygone ages of a huge mass of territory connecting South Iondia with Ceylon, Malaya, Indonesia and the distant Australia on the one hand, and Madagascar and South Africa on the other. They are inclined to hold that Lemuria was the original home of the human race.72

Scott Elliot speaks of the five deluges of the sea which occurred at various times transforming the contour of the earth’s surface. The last flood is believed to have devoured Lemuria. He holds that the first flood occurred over 10,000 centuries ago and that others followed at various stages.73

In addition, geographical evidence is advanced indicating the affinity in the nature of land surface of Burma, China, the Indonesian islands, the Vindhya hills, South Africa and South Australia in support of the theory of floods and the theory of the Lemurian Continent. Though some doubts have been cast on these postulates, one thing seems to be certain, that in very ancient times the Himalayas and North India beyond the Vindhyas were submerged under the sea. Fossilised-skeletons of aquatic animals have been discovered in the Himalayas, which suggests that this mountain range must have been under the sea.74

Besides, a Hindu myth has some reflections on this event. According to it, the land in the South got elevated as God Siva (bridegroom) and his consort Parvati (bride) had gone to the Himalayas to conduct their marriage ceremony. Due to the heavy weight of the God and the Goddess, the Himalayas went underground and the Peninsular India got elevated. In order to steady the sub-continent, God Siva sent his

72 Ibid.
74 K.K. Pillay, op.cit., (1975), p.44.
disciple sage Agastya to the South. The sage did what he was asked to perform, thereby the sub-continent became balanced and steady.75

According to certain upholders of the Lemurian theory, ancient Tamilaham, over 15,000 years ago, lay stretching over Kumarikkandam. During that epoch the Pandyan king was ruling the land with Madurai (Then Madurai or Thon Madurai) (as it was later called) as the original capital. This Kumariikkandam was marked off from the region now known as South India by the Pahruli river on the North and the Kumari river on the South.76

But, even assuming that there lay a stretch of land extending beyond Kanyakumari, it can, by no means, be held that the Tamils were the earliest inhabitants of this region. The Lemurian theory relates to a far distant past, as seen earlier, and there is no basis for connecting it with the origin of the Tamils. Making a slight change in the Lemurian theory, some scholars of the South, including P.T.Srinivasa Iyengar, think that the Tamils migrated from the South to the Mediterranean region.77 They argue that there is no mention anywhere in Tamil literature of the Tamils having come from a region outside India. On the other hand, the references which occur in the early and medieval literature indicate that the Tamils had occupied South India as well as the configure regions which lay beyond Kanyakumari in ancient times.78 This view also supports the Lemurian theory. Another well-known Tamil scholar Guna also tells us that, “The linguistic anthropology, which of late developing, also compels us to conclude that South India or rather the Lemurian Continent was the birth place of human civilization”.79

In recent times, some advanced studies have been done on the Lemurian theory. The authority of the modified theory is a Russian scholar Alexander

76 K.K. Pillay op.cit., p.47.
78 Ibid., p.15.
79 S. Guna, Asiatic Mode: A Socio-Cultural Perspective, Delhi, 1984, p.103.
Kondratov. According to him, the Dravidians, Australians and Africans, whose common racial stock must have existed in the Lemurian region, would have moved to the north, west and east of the globe respectively.80 This theory finds support in the writings of K.P. Aravanān81 He thinks that both the African and the Dravidian races would have evolved from a single and common race. Perhaps it had happened in the Gondwanal. But that land had been submerged in the Indian Ocean. The submersion of the land has been recorded in Dravidian literature, particularly in the classical Tamil literature. Some folk-legends from Africa also confirm this. The scientific world has also proved this land submersion. Prior to the present position of the Indian Ocean, some missing land bridge was there. It linked the African and the Indian sub-continent. In the presence of the ancient Tamils the sea would have collapsed the land bridge. As a consequence the people would have vacated their location and moved north ward and settled in Madurai. This incident has been recorded in Tamil literature. He further says, “The same language and some other similarities are not common to all human races, but common only to Africans, Dravidians and aboriginal of Australia”.82

The above mentioned observation and findings seem to be enough to suggest that the Lemurian Continent was the original home of the Dravidians. According to this, the Tamil tradition states that the ancestors of the Tamils lived at a very early time far out in the Southern sea, where, perhaps, the first Tamil Sangam flourished. The mention of Kav(p)adapuram in the Ramayana and the Arthasastra adds support to the idea of the second Sangam existing in the South of Kanyakumari followed by the third Sangam in the present Madurai. In due course, the Dravidians seem to have spread over the whole of South India, large parts of North India, and even to the ‘Brahui in Baluchistan’.83

The investigations made by the European scholars lend support to the Lemurian theory of the origin of the Dravidians. While Sclater put forward the

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82 Ibid.
theory of the Lost Lemuria or Kumarikkandam, Sir Walter Raleigh postulated a theory that this region was a cradle of mankind. Adding further strength, John Evans made a special reference to South India in his Presidential Address to the British Association in 1897 as the original home of mankind. To add further credence to this idea Prof. Sundaram Pillai, observed that the scientific historian of India ought to begin his study with the basin of the Krishna, of the Cauvery, of the Vaigai rather than with the Gangetic plain. Prof. Pillai’s observation awakened the South Indian Tamil scholars and later it gave a strong impetus to the Lemurian theory.

However, Sir R.E. Mortimer Wheeler and A.L. Basham, who revised Vincent A. Smith’s Oxford History of India have explained that Sundaram Pillai’s advice cannot be followed in practice because the material available for the study of early Dravidian institution are not yet sufficiently explored. It is not the fault of the historians, but of the successive governments, anthropologists, archaeologists and oceanographers. Strong objections have been raised against this theory. First of all, this theory lacks material evidence in support of it. Some unsystematic oceanographic investigations conducted by some investigators to collect some material evidence in the Ocean had not borne fruit. Even that animal Slender Loris, found abundantly in those far off days, is now lost to us. The story of the existence of the three Sangams is said to be a later day fabrication, which in fact, does not stand the test of time. There is unbelievable exaggeration in the chronology of the three Sangams, which appears to be more fictitious than factual. It is a myth to think of gods and divine beings making their presence in the Sangams and continuing to remain there for an unthinkable period of time and participating in the successive Sangams. Even the term Sangam is of later origin, with particular reference to Tamil literature i.e. only after the spread of the Buddhists.

(vi) Mediterranean Theory:

Several scholar investigators, both European and Indian, have held that the

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85 N. Subrahmanian, Tamilian Historiography, Madurai, 1988, p.128.
Tamils of the Dravidian stock were later immigrants to India, probably from Eastern-Mediterranean via Mesopotamia and Baluchistan. This theory is advanced on the basis of anthropological, climatic, vegetative similarities, linguistic unity and cultural affinity between the two. The similarities found in the language of the two regions and the prevalence of common practices such as the worship of Mother-Goddess, snake worship and matriarchy lend credence to this view.\textsuperscript{87} Sunit Kumar Chatterjee, the internationally acknowledged authority on linguistic anthropology, has advanced this theory of the Mediterranean origin of the Dravids.\textsuperscript{88} An authority on ‘Race Movements and pre-historic Culture’, he observes, “there is evidence, both indirect and direct, that in Central India, in North India and in Western India, Dravidian was at one time fairly wide-spread. In Baluchistan we have the block of the Brahui speech, which is Dravidian, and it is quite conceivable that the Brahui area is just a surviving fragment of a very wide-spread Dravidian tract which extended from Baluchistan and Sind through Rajputana and Malava into the present day Maratha country and the Dravidian lands of the South”.\textsuperscript{89} Such similarities are today traced among the people of North-East—Karnapura, though there are clear indications of Mongoloid and Mon Khmer (Munda) elements in them. He, however, thought that the Dravids came very early from the Mediterranean regions.\textsuperscript{90}

Supporting this theory, Gilbert Slater believes that a branch of the Mediterranean race passed through Mesopotamia and Baluchistan to India, long before the dawn of the Sumerian civilization and evolved the Dravidian race and culture.\textsuperscript{91} He observed that the main racial elements of the Dravidian population are mostly similar to that of the Mediterranean race. His observation is that the resemblances in the shape of skull, colour and texture of hair, colour of eyes, in features and build are striking. The most obvious and well-marked difference is in colour of skin, which in the Dravids is on the average, much darker, ranging from a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{87}Prakash Cander, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.36-38.
\item \textsuperscript{88}K. Anbazhagan, \textit{op.cit.}, p.7.
\item \textsuperscript{89}R.C. Majumdar, (ed.), \textit{Vedic Age, (History and Culture of the Indian People)}, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1982, p.57.
\item \textsuperscript{90}Quoted by K.K.Pillai, \textit{op.cit.}, (1980). p.9-10.
\item \textsuperscript{91}Gilbert Slater, \textit{op.cit.}, p.5.
\end{itemize}
fairness equal to that of the average Italian or Spanish complexion nearly to a Negro black. There is also a wider range in texture of hair, high degrees of fuzziness and of smoothness being approached and a rather larger proportion of faces with thick lips and broad noses than among typical Mediterranean folk. 92

Moreover, he says that the Dravidians must have come to India long before 800 or 900 or even 1000 B.C. 93 This period suggested here is still later to the advent of the Aryans to India, which being generally accepted as B.C.1500. Recent C4 dating of the Indus seals and other artifacts by the Russio-Finnish team and the scientists of the Tata institute of Fundamental Research (Bombay) takes the Harappan Culture certainly before the advent of the Aryans, i.e., before B.C. 1500, perhaps to B.C.3000. The Dravidians of the Mediterranean region could not have even immigrated to the Indus Valley region just before the Harappan Culture was to have started. It could have taken thousands of years for the Dravidians of the Mediterranean region to reach the Indus Valley passing through Sumeria, Elam, Iran, Afghanistan, etc. Even at the minimum dating level, at least three centuries could have taken for this Dravidians of this Mediterranean region to reach India, raise settlements and develop a typical culture of their own. Again, he says, “Between four and five thousand years ago Dravidian India received the seeds of many sorts of culture by sea from Egypt, or from Mesopotamia, or more probably from both and received them into fertile soil”. 94 Then he came to the conclusion that (i) there was in India at the time of the Aryan invasion a Dravidian civilization of a more elaborate and developed character that the civilization, if civilization it can be called of the Aryans; (ii) that in so far as this Dravidian civilization was derived from outside sources its origin is to be traced to Egypt and Mesopotamia, linked up with India by sea commerce; (iii) that the first step towards the linking up of India with Egypt was accomplished when the Egyptians navigated the Red Sea, and reached the land of Punt. The Dravidians themselves were early navigators. 95

92 Ibid., pp.5-7.
93 Ibid., p.9.
94 Ibid., p.49.
95 Ibid. pp.5-7.
Since research is a continuous process, new findings invalidate or modify or wholly validate and accept the earlier findings. In such a process, scholars in the first half of the last century tried to link the ancient Dravidians with the Mediterranean races of the Neolithic era. Professors K.A. Nilakanta Sastri and Sunit Kumar Chatterje, the two great authorities on South Indian history and Indian linguistics respectively, have demonstrated the identity of the Dravidian race with the Mediterranean races based on anthropological and linguistic evidences.

Anthropologists have shown many similarities between the human skeletons unearthed in Dravidian India and the Western regions of Neolithic times. Most of the skeletons found in Mohenjo-daro were very much like those of the Megalithic civilizations of the Mediterranean regions. Meanwhile, some anthropometric features have led certain scholars to find some connection between the early people of the Mediterranean region of western Asia and the Dravidians of South India. Further, some linguistic resemblances also support this hypothesis. The Lycians of Asia Minor described themselves in their inscriptions as Trimmlai, a name which seems to have affinity with Dramila or Tamil.

Moreover, climatologists advance the view that Southern India and the Mediterranean region enjoy the same climate. These regions come above the Equatorial line and within the tropic of Capricorn. There is also a view that these regions in South India and the Mediterranean produce the same Vegetables. These climatic and vegetative similarities are also in support of this theory.

In addition, several ancient place names in Afghanistan, Iran and Mesopotamia confirm to Dravidian patterns. Snake worship, which is common in South India, appears to have prevailed in early Persepolis. The organization of the temple and of the methods of worship in Sumeria are found to be surprisingly similar to those in South India. The resemblance of the Brahui language, spoken in a part of Baluchistan, with Tamil is said to indicate the possible route adopted by the Dravidians in their trek from Western Asia to India. Moreover, the striking similarity

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of the Adichchanallur finds near Tirunelveli and the relics unearthed at Cyprus and Palestine, support the hypothesis of affinity between the Dravidians and the people of Western Asia.  

In fact, it has been shown by authoritative linguists that the Dravidians were occupying North and North-West India when the Aryans entered India. Prof. Burrow of Oxford has traced twenty Dravidian words in the *Rig Veda*. This has been corroborated by the findings of other scholars like Kuiper and Manfred Meyrhofer.  

In this connection, a startling hypothesis advanced by Lahovary deserves to be mentioned. From an elaborate study of languages, he concludes that there is affinity between the languages of the Basque and of the Dravidians. He also shows that the languages of Western Asia like the Sumerian, Elamite and Cappadocia are all dialects of the same family. From the study of the linguistic affinities, Lahovary hazards the conclusion that the civilizations which flourished once in the region beginning from Iberia in Spain down to India were all connected with each other in respect of religious rites and customs. However, there seems to be a great plausibility for the view that the Sumerians, Mesopotamians and others of Western Asia had many things in common with the Dravidians. The Dravidians, who are believed to have come from Western Asia, were probably the authors of the Indus Valley Civilization. At the later stage, a section of the Dravidians moved down to the South and became the ancestors of the Tamils.  

In the mean time, Adichchanallur presents perhaps the most unique urn burial site in pre-historic India. It reveals how, inside as well as in the proximity of the urns, iron implements, bronze ornaments and utensils as well as gold diadems and mouthpieces have been unearthed. Some funeral furnishings similar to those discovered in Adichchanallur have been found in Palestine, Gaza and Cyprus and it is held that they

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99 Ibid., p.52.
100 Ibid.
102 The view of Fr. Heras that the language of the Harappans was Dravidian (or) more precisely 'old Tamil'.

suggest the cultural association of Adichchanallur with the Eastern Mediterranean as early as 12th century B.C. 103

The idea of a temple which is a very important Dravidian social institution i.e. a tower like structure for enshrining a deity reminds us of the ziggurat of the Sumerians. The practice of the endowing religious centres with slaves of both sexes which was prevalent in Sumeria is reflected in the institutions of devadasis in South India. There is a growing feeling among some scholars that Murugan worship was itself derived from the West Asian religious traditions though this still remains a matter of controversy. But, scholars who consider the matter in its entirety are convinced of the need to accept external homeland for the Dravidians to locate it in West Asia. 104

It is believed that the Tamils had their original home in the Mediterranean regions. Owing to the mounting pressure and aggression of the Greeks, they left their original home and took shelter in India in three successive batches. At first, they settled in the fertile Indus Valley. On account of the floods, some of them came to South India. It is believed that these Mediterranean people really built up the Dravidian civilization of the South. Their kinsmen settled down in the Indus Valley built up the Harappan Culture.105

The Mediterraneans were highly advanced in the arts of peace as well as in war. Fighting with weapons of iron, they overpowered the aboriginal and reduced them to slavery. They also imposed their language on the vanquished population. As they were pastmasters in trade, commerce and industry, they maintained commercial contact with Rome, Egypt, Palestine, etc. Kings and warriors formed the apex of their society. They built large temples for worship. In course of time, they began to worship the local deities, birds, animals and trees of the earlier inhabitants. Adult


marriage was popular in their society and cross-cousin marriage were common. In short, they laid the foundation of the South Indian culture.¹⁰⁶

In the 1920s to 1960s, Fr. Heras emphasised that the language of the Harappans was Dravidian or more precisely old Tamil. He has developed the proto-Dravidian theory of the Indus language. According to him the Sumerians, Mesopotamians and others of Western Asia had many things in common with the Dravidians. He observed that they mixed with the Australoid and Negroid races of South-East Asia and the Far East. He further says, “It is out of a fusion of these different stocks that the Dravidian Tamils of historical times seem to have emerged”.¹⁰⁷

Since historical research is based on evidences, scholars have to derive their conclusions on the basis of the interpretations of evidences. In the absence of reliable evidences only, they could make use of oral traditions such as folklores, myths and legends. In the study of races all these sources are to be made use of in a balanced way. In such an effort, anthropological, archaeological, geological and ethnological findings come to the rescue of the historians. Here in this study of locating the original home of the Dravidians these branches of studies have lent their support in solving the riddle. If we consider the nature of the theories discussed above, the Lemurian and the Mediterranean theories stand prominent and pre-eminent. However, while the former is built on conjectures, the latter is built on some what strong evidences. At this stage, the theory of the Mediterranean origin of the Dravidians and their occupation of North India (Indus Valley region) through Sumeria, Elam, Iran, Baluchistan and Afghanistan seems more plausible.

**Indus Valley Civilization: Its Dravidian Characteristics:**

At present, these is an increasing tendency among some archaeologists, pre-historians, palaeographers, historians and linguists under pressure from a lobby to discredit the pre-Aryan and non-Aryan theory of the Indus Valley, and more


specifically, to dismiss the Dravidian origin of the Indus Valley or Harappan Culture.

To-day, the world of history has a large number of books, written by some protagonists to identify the Aryans with the Indo-Aryans, rather than the Indo-Europeans, and to locate them with the Indus-Saraswati rivers. However, these protagonists have failed to find out the very close affinity or close relationship between the Dravidians and the Indus Valley or Harappan Culture. These identical similarities or, more precisely, relationship between the makers of the Indus Valley Civilization and its characteristic features are discernible in the socio-anthropological, religio-cultural, commercial and politico-economic aspects of the people, as has been evident from the innumerable evidences or remains that we have today. The theory that Aryans were aboriginal or autochthons to India and were the makers of the Indus Valley Civilization is a travesty of facts. Except a few subjective historians, many historians of India and of the western world have accepted the Dravidian origin of the Indus Valley Civilization. This part of the study proposes to establish the theory of the Dravidian origin of the Indus Valley Civilization.

Sir John Marshall, the first Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India, of the time of Lord Curzon, and one who was intimately connected with the excavations at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, was the first to suggest the Dravidian affiliation of the Indus Culture. His views are mostly accepted by the later experts. Indeed, the Harappan Culture has Dravidian characteristics in social, linguistic religious and economic fields. A study is made here to examine the validity of this theory.

City Life:

The Mohenjo-daro or Mound of the Dead and Harappa excavations have revealed the existence of a well-organized urban civilization in India before the advent of the Aryans. It has been admitted that when Aryans came to India they were like semi-nomads whereas Dravidians had, at that time, developed a settled life. They lived in cities with fortifications and had many amenities of advanced city life like


public baths, drainages, etc. Special attention had been given to women to maintain privacy in bathing, by erecting private halls for them. Almost thousand mature Harappan settlements are known in the Indus Valley and its environs. Among these five were fully developed cities, each of which covered more than 200 acres. These five cities are Mohenjo-daro, Gunwariwale, Harappa, Larewal and Rahhishapur. These cities were the best planned of the area with thorough fares and excellent sewage system. As cattle breeders, the Aryans could not have a settled pattern of life. They lived in huts called Sala and gostha or gotra, from them the Aryans had developed their dwelling houses. This Sala (thatch) was a ‘straw and bamboo house’. The Dravidian Tamils of South India seem to have inherited the pattern of city life from their Harappan ancestors.

Social System:

While the Aryans felt proud of their patriarchal society, the Dravidans, according to many anthropologists and ethnologists, inherited the matriarchal system, in which high honour has been given to the mother, in whose line property descended. In a matriarchal family the authority is vested in the women head of the family, whose males being subordinates. She is the owner of property and ruler of the family. The chief characteristics of matriarchal family are the following:

(i) Descent is reckoned through the mother, not the father, because maternity is a fact while paternity is only an opinion. This is the matrilineal system.

(ii) Marriage relations are transient. The husband is sometimes merely a casual visitor.

(iii) The children are brought up in the home of the wife’s relatives. Descent is not only matriarchal but also matrilocal.

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11 For a detailed study of this aspect see S.C. Sarkar, Some Aspects of the Earliest Social History of India (Pre-Buddhist India), Patna, 1985, pp.5-7.


(iv) The authority in the family rests in the hands of the wife or in some representative of the wife’s kin.

(v) Property is transferred through the mother and only females succeeded to it. This socio-anthropological fact could be based on some strong evidences.\textsuperscript{114}

Most of the Indus seals are having female symbols. It confirms that the Indus people gave importance to mother or mother Goddess or mother Goddess worship and that matriarchal system prevailed among them. Meanwhile, the Aryan family system was patriarchal. Under the patriarchal system the male head of the family only possessed the right to property and administered them. All other persons living in the family are subordinates to the male head. In short, in the family father is the protector and ruler, enjoying full authority over the family. He was a polygamist and a patriarch.\textsuperscript{115}

\textbf{Language and Script of the Indus People:}

In fact, Fr. H. Heras, the Spanish monk in India, was the first to make the systematic and consistent attempt to decipher the script and read the language of the Indus Valley. After much cross checking he derived the conclusion that the Harappan language was a kind of ancient Tamil, which he called proto-Dravidian or early Tamil. Even the very recent attempts of various scholars to decipher the script do not go very much beyond what Fr. Heras had announced in the 1950s. While many other scripts run from left to right, the Indus script is said to run normally from right to left, and this is said to be the best established fact.\textsuperscript{116} Their script has been identified as pictographic or logosyllabic, comprising word-signs. Each word-sign is standing for a particular word or an object. This is derived from a comparative study of seals.

So far two thousand seals with inscriptions have been unearthed, and, in addition to this, inscriptions have also been found on pottery and objects fashioned in

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\textsuperscript{115} Vidya Bhushan op. cit., p.262.
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metal. For several decades now scholars have been trying to decipher this writing. Early in 1969 a team of Finnish scientists claimed to have deciphered the language of the Indus Valley Civilization. Asko Parpola, one of the leading Finnish representatives on the team, held that the beginners of the Indus Culture were Dravidians.\footnote{John R. Marr, “The Early Dravidian” in A.L. Basham (ed.), op.cit., pp.31-32.}

In January 1970 a group of Russian scientists headed by Yu.Knorozov announced that the language of the Indus Valley inscriptions is identifiable with the Dravidian.\footnote{K.K. Pillay, op.cit., (1975), p.77.} More recently, Iravatham Mahadevan, a Nehru Fellow, has taken up the study and deciphering of the Indus script. After making a comparative study of the word-signs and symbols on the seals and other objects, he claims to have deciphered the script and categorically states that it is Dravidian, pre-eminently related to old Tamil.\footnote{Iravatham Mahadevan, “What do we know about the Indus Script? Neti neti (not this nor that)”, Journal of the Institute of Asain Studies, Vol.VII, September 1989, pp. 1-38.} However, he was not able to make out and interpret the entire body of inscriptions, because the script is pictographic and is liable to be read at places differently from what he has done. It would seem that a language could be read into these inscriptions. In fact, the time is not yet come when the identification of all the signs in the inscriptions can be indubitably established. In the present state of our knowledge what can be said is that there is a great probability that the Indus Valley people were proto-Dravidians and proto-Tamils.\footnote{But, today there is a systematic attempt to undo what is said to be Dravidian by the protagonists of Aryan lineage. These advocates of the Aryan in the Harappan culture - read something different into the inscriptions found on the seals. Works like Hindu Equilibrium and Aryans in the Indus Valley are the best instances of such travesty.}

Religion of the Harappans:

Religion of the Harappans gives more scope for postulating a theory of Dravidian origin. Early archaeologists like Sir.R.E.Mortimer Wheeler, who were not religious scholars and had little knowledge of the Hindu religion, said that its religion was different from that of the Vedic fire worship. This was based on the examination of a number of seals and symbols found in the ruins. Today, many archaeological
remains have come out from the innumerable cities. These findings tend to support the religion of the Harappans as a form of early Dravidian Saivism.\textsuperscript{121}

Saivism, the worship of Lord Siva, as a Rishi or Muni, warrants the presence of Nandi, the Vahan of Lord Siva. In the seals of the Indus Valley, the symbols of Bulls (humped bulls) are depicted. The Bull (Erudu in Tamil), an animal is meant for advancement of agriculture and propagation of the fertility cult. Besides these, the figure of the Pasupati (Lord of animals), surrounded with animals had also been found, which suggests the strongest roots of Dravidian Saivism.

The Indus Valley excavations have brought out a number of figures of Munis (religious priests) The image of a seated Muni with crossed legs and half-closed eyes, with closely-cut hair, short beard is a unique example. These Munis or priests are learned persons with sound knowledge in astronomy and astrology. B.R.Ambedkar considers these Rishis as Dravidamunis.\textsuperscript{122} These priests of Dravidamunis or Rishis are pictured in the Indus seal or scriptures as Erudu.

Besides these, the Indus Valley excavations have yielded a large number of terra-cotta figurines depicting women. These figurines of which their private parts are shown prominently, point to a fertility cult, perhaps the cult of the Mother Goddess. Mother Goddess worship seems to have played a prominent role in the religious life of the Indus Valley people. One of the unique figures is a tree sprouting from the naval of the Mother Goddess, an instance of the fertility cult. Mother Goddess was the titulary deity in every village and she was known with various names such as Amma, Mata (matru) Amba Kor ravai, Kali, Karali,\textsuperscript{123} etc. The Sakti or Mother is the Supreme Creator of this material world. The Supreme Mother Uma or ma (Sakti) and her counterpart Siva or Sambhu (Jiva) are Dravidian deities. In a matriarchal society alone, the mother was held in high esteem and she was worshipped for her fertility and power of procreation.

\textsuperscript{121} David Frawley, The Myth of the Aryan Invasion of India, New Delhi, 1994, p.32.
\textsuperscript{122} T.H.P. Chantharassery, Ambedkar on Indian History, New Delhi, 2000, pp.16-17.
\textsuperscript{123} S.P. Sharma, History of Ancient India, New Delhi 1996, p.35.
In addition, temple worship, which was not an essential part of Vedic religion, was a necessary part of Dravidian worship. The Tamils of the Sangam age called their God as Ko (King). They erected in his honour a temple, which they called koil, (God's house). They conceived their God after the ever present king and offered him all rituals and festivals. Temples were called Kovil or Koil, in which the devadasi system was also prevalent. There is a moot question among pre-historians: Whether the Indus Valley had a temple-like structure or not? The excavation of a structure at Mohenjo-daro has variously been interpreted. While some archaeologists consider it as a temporal structure, i.e. a palace, Stuart Piggot was the first to identify it as a temple structure. Had it been a temple structure, it could have had the devadasi system within its precincts. However, this conclusion is not final.

The dedication of girls to the idol of Sivalinga clearly describes a phallic rite, in which the maiden became the bride of Siva, represented by the phallus. The Indus people were aware of the fertility cult and the role of the sun and moon as Father and Mother in it. They seem to have given expression to the tantric cult by a successful fusion of the male and the female organs, the Phallus (linga) and the yoni. These are indicative of the existence of the devadasi system in pre-historic India. In all probability, it said that the tantric worship was of Dravidian origin. Even today, in the South Indian temples, the presiding deity is shown as a linga i.e., the linga and yoni. This form of worship was unknown to the Aryans, who were worshippers of Agni, Indra, Soma and Vayu.

There is a view that the Dravidian practice of the devadasi system was prevalent among the Indus people. Recent studies relate the system with some of the Indus Valley findings. The bronze image of a dancing girl unearthed from Mohenjo-daro in the words of Sir Mortimer Wheeler is one of the most remarkable of

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124 K. Sadasivan, Devadasi System in Medieval Tamil Nadu, Trivandrum, 1993, p.16.
127 Ibid.
the authenticated Indus figurines. The girl standing in a provocative posture is charming. V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar suggests that the girl probably represents the ‘progenitor of the institution of the dancing-girls’ who were dedicated to the several temples even in modern India. Moti Chandra takes her to represent a sacred prostitute carrying out the duties within the precincts of the temple of some Mother Goddess. Besides this, many nude figurines, very beautifully depicted, generally bronze, excavated from the Indus Valley may represent other dancing-girls. Though evidences show that the devadasi system was widely prevalent in ancient India, it is not clear when the system originated in Tamil Nadu. Still certain scholars give it a pure Tamilian origin. S.K. Mukerji thinks that it was a Tamilian custom. Some others argue that it was perhaps as old as the temple in South India.

Besides, the famous Great Bath of Mohenjo-daro by the use of bitumen and a system of supplying and drawing away water suggests its sacredness. This tank seems to have been used for ritual bathing. The Great Bath perhaps anticipated the present day sacred ponds in temples in South India. It has been suggested by certain scholars that prior to the puja performance every person used to take bath of purification in the Great Bath and so it was considered to be a ritual tank. In the fertility cult, water has a major role to play as life emanates from water only.

Moreover, scholars point out that the puja ceremonies along with flowers, leaves, fruits and water are of Dravidian origin. Aryans were accustomed to the Homa rites or sacrificial fire. According to Mark Collins the Sanskrit word puja was of Dravidian origin, where pu stands for flower and sei meaning offering. If

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130 Ibid., p.17.
131 Anna Aivalayam Thingal Idazh, (Tl.), No.3, (e.d), p. 20.
132 It is interesting to note the reminiscences of the fertility cult among the Dravidian Tamils even today. On auspicious days, women carry pots full of sprouted seedlings called Mulappari (sprouted seedlings) either on their heads or on their hands, signifying the onset of spring season for beginning farming or agriculture. In Madurai and in many other places in Tamil Nadu, this practice is followed with meticulous care every year to indicate the onset of the spring season.
Homa was a *pasu-karma* or a religious service involving the slaughter of animals, puja is a flower ritual or flower service.\(^{133}\)

The urban life, the Pahallic cult, Mother Goddess worship, devadasi system, Dravida Muni, flower worship, sacred bath, the sacred bull and the fertility cult add further strength to the theory of the Dravidian origin of the Indus people. Many of these rituals, beliefs and practices were absorbed into the Aryan religion and a synthetic religion had been created in course of time.

Though some Aryan protagonists argue that the religion of the Harappans was not of Dravidian origin, in fact, the religion of these people, in many ways, is similar to that of the present day Dravidian South. The cult-objects unearthed from Mohenjo-daro, Harappa and other places go to prove the prevalence of a religion which was more Dravidian than Aryan.

**Harappan Trade and Commerce:**

In addition, the Indus Valley trade and commerce is another potent area for further research. The Indus people are said to have established their colonies in the Sumerian, Elamite, Mesopotamian, Tilman, Afghanistan and Assirian regions. The discovery of Indus seal in Lower Mesopotamia reveals that they had established trade and commercial contacts with the Mesopotamians. In addition, the place-names of the above mentioned regions bear ample Dravidian affinity. Places such as Ur, Yertur and Nippur in Mesopotamia appear to have been the Dravidian colonies of the Indus people. K.K. Pillay observes, “These ancient place-names in Mesopotamia, Iran, and Afghanistan confirm to Dravidian pattern, perhaps the result of the trade contacts of the Indus people”.\(^{134}\) Further, the Lycians of Asia Minor described themselves in their inscriptions as Trimmlai, a name which seems to have affinity with Dramila or Tamil. Snake worship which is common in South India appears to have prevailed in early Persepolis. The organization of the temple and of the methods of worship in Sumeria are found to be surprisingly similar to these in

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\(^{133}\) According to Charpentier, the word *puja* has been derived from a Dravidian root called *puru* or *pusu*, which means to smear* with a paste of turmeric and sandal wood. Quoted by Prakash Cander, *op.cit.*, p.40.

\(^{134}\) K.K.Pillai *op.cit.*, (1975), pp.51-52.
South India. These are certainly in support of the impact of the trade contacts of the Dravidian Indus people with the Mesopotamian, Sumerian and Elamite regions.

The Indus people seem to have imported copper, pearls, ivory goat wool, cotton, cornelian, timber, peacocks etc., from other parts of India. A little quantity of pearl was produced near Bombay. A major portion of these pearls appears to have gone to North India from the extreme South. Similarly ivory perhaps reached the Indus Valley from the South, particularly from Western Coast (Malabar) or Eastern Coast (Kalinga).

Further, we have clear evidence of the export of peacock feather and timber (teak) from the South to king Solomon’s court. Evidence for this is available in the Hebrew literature. Similarly, the Indus people also imported them from the South; they got from the extreme South. What were not available with them. This perhaps led to a vast network of internal trade with those regions which provided these necessaries of life.

Sea-voyage was known to them as it is very clear from the discovery of clay models of boats and seals bearing the picture of boats from Mohanjo-daro, Lothal and Harappa. The excavations at Lothal under the leadership of S.R. Rao brought to light the remains of a dockyard and of a canal which connects the Lothal centre with the Arabian sea. Lothal was a port town through which its Westerly trade was conducted. Several Coastal cities of this culture on the Arabian sea prove the existence of a vast network sea trade. The Sumerian records refer to commercial centers like Tilman, Meluha and Makkhan. Scholars have identified Tilman as Bahrain in the Persian Gulf and Meluha with Indus. Trade appears to have been mainly based on barter. It is beyond doubt that the art of navigation of the Harappans was highly

135 John W. Mc Crindle, Ancient India as described in Classical Literature, New Delhi, 1979, p.144.
137 Ibid.
developed as seen from Lothal excavations. They built durable ships at dockyards like Lothal. In the meantime, to the Brahmins, perhaps of the Aryan race, crossing the sea was a sin. "The prohibition of voyages related only to Vedic Brahmins and not to the other communities or events to heterodox Brahmins pursuing other secular occupations." This adds further support to the view that the Aryans were not a sea-faring people and did not develop trade contacts with the Sumerian and the Mesopotamian regions. In the Historic period of even before that the Tamils of Southern India continued to maintain this commercial contact with West Asian countries. Alexandria, Aden and even some places in Egypt provide us with supporting evidence to the interest of the Tamils in sea-faring activities.

On the basis of fresh evidences coming from various centres of the old world, the archaeologists have postulated that the urban civilization of Mohenjo-daro and Harrappa belonged to the Dravidians, who were later over run by the nomadic Aryans. The Dravidian-speaking population, which is supposed to have come from the Mediterranean region and spread throughout India, was pushed into the Southern part of India by the invading Aryans, who brought their heritage of Vedic traditions and, in course of time, the Sanskrit language. This conclusion is supported not only by linguistic data from the Dravidian languages but also by archaeological evidences from the excavations of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, as well as by a recent study of the place-names of Northern India which has proved, beyond doubt, that a large number of place-names of North India are of Dravidian origin. B.L. Samy, an I.A.S. officer, in the government service of India, has taken pains to prove that the place-name Harappa itself is of Tamil origin. According to him the word Ahappa in Tamil refers to a fortified town and thinks that this term, Harappa would have emerged from to Tamil term.

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139 K. Antonova et al., History of India, Moscow, 1979, p.24.
140 Tolkappiyam, Porul: 11; Nachchinarkkiniyar Commentary.
143 For a detailed discussion of the matter, see N. Venkatesan (ed.). Sanga Noolaivum Samiyum (TI.), Chennai, 1999, pp.94-104. However, this conclusion has further to be investigated.
An objective analysis of the available evidences indicates that the Indus Valley Civilization was non-Aryan and pre-Aryan in character. The bull, the tiger and the elephant often depicted in seals were known to them and it is now said that there is evidence of their knowledge of the horse too. The Vedic Aryans were more familiar with the horse and the cow, but it is said that they had no knowledge of the tiger. The view that the Aryans alone brought the cow and horse to India can not stand the test of time. It is wrong to presume that the Indus Valley people had no idea of cow, but they were more familiar with bulls. This is contrary to truth. Where there is bull there ought to be cow too. The significant fact to be remembered in this connection is that the terracotta toys recovered from the site show figures of bulls (as a sacred animal) sheep, rams and deer, which, at a later time, were the sacrificial animals of the Vedic Aryans.

The foregoing study of the material remains of the Indus Valley Civilization particularly its urban character, matriarchal social life, religious worship and trade activities, in comparison with the prevailing traditions among the Dravidians of South India, tend to offer a Dravidian origin to its culture.

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144 The prevalence of bulls is indirectly indicative of the existence of cows. Bulls could not be procreated without cows. Therefore their knowledge of cows is a foregone matter.