



Evolution of Human Races and the advent of Aryans in South Asia

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Abstract

This study investigates the Aryan race's origins, migration into India, and their transformative impact on South Asian civilization. Utilizing a qualitative approach, the research synthesizes secondary sources, including historical texts, scholarly articles, and archaeological findings, to provide a detailed account of Aryan influence. The findings reveal that Aryans migrated into India between 500 and 2500 BC, interacting with various indigenous groups like the Austric and Darwin races. Their arrival marked a significant shift from simpler, egalitarian societies based on agriculture and animal husbandry to a more complex social structure with hierarchical class systems and centralized governance. The Aryans introduced new administrative practices and social norms, laying the groundwork for a more structured society. Furthermore, the Aryans played a crucial role in the establishment and promotion of Hinduism, incorporating ethical principles from religious texts into their governance and cultural practices. This integration fostered the development of enduring Hindu festivals, rituals, and traditions that continue to be celebrated today. The research underscores the Aryans' pivotal role in shaping India's cultural and societal landscape. It provides valuable insights for historians and scholars of South Asian studies, enhancing the understanding of early human migration, cultural integration, and the formation of ancient civilizations in the Indian subcontinent.

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Introduction

Race is a categorization of human populations based on shared physical characteristics and genetic traits that distinguish them from other groups (Chang *et al.*, 2023) ^[2]. It is a changeable group of different human societies living in a particular boundary area. These traits, which include skin color, facial features, and hair texture, are inherited through generations and reflect adaptations to different environmental conditions. This classification, however, is subject to change due to genetic diversity, environmental influences, and cultural interactions (Jotob, 1985) ^[11].

In the process of human development, variations in time, environment, climate, and other factors led to diverse physical and structural differences among populations, resulting in the classification into races. Key causes include climate changes, genetic variations, heredity, and interactions between racial groups (Kaushik, n.d.). During the Pleistocene, glaciations forced humans to migrate, leading to adaptations to new climates and environments, which resulted in different physical traits and skin colors in their descendants (Pandey, 2005) ^[18]. Despite these variations, anthropologists argue that all humans share a common ancestry, with changes in ecology and geography significantly influencing physical differences from early ancestors.

The evolution of human races and the advent of Aryans in South Asia have been subjects of extensive research and debate. Studies have shown that the Indo-Aryan languages, like Sadri and Konkani, provide insights into the sociolinguistic environments of South Asia 2,000-2,500 years ago, indicating diverse linguistic and ethnic landscapes (Peterson, 2022) ^[19].

The Indus Valley Civilization remains enigmatic, with discussions on its decline and the peopling of India challenging the popular Aryan invasion theory (Sharma, 2002) ^[25]. The Indo-European languages in South Asia, particularly the Indo-Aryan branch, are linked to the ancient Aryans, shaping the linguistic landscape of the region.

The Aryan race, a prominent and influential group in world history, has been the subject of considerable debate among scholars regarding its origins and development. Different theories suggest that the Aryans originated from regions such as Central Asia, north of the Black Sea, western Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Babylonia. However, there remains a lack of consensus on the precise development and migration patterns of the Aryan people, who have been settled in South Asia for approximately 5,000 to 6,000 years.

This study aims to address these gaps by tracing the history of the Aryan race's origin and development, with a particular focus on their arrival and impact in South Asia. Understanding this historical context is crucial for historians, anthropologists, and scholars of South Asian studies, as it provides insights into the cultural and social transformations that shaped the region. The findings of this study will be important for anyone interested in the historical dynamics of human migration, cultural integration, and the formation of ancient civilizations in South Asia.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design, focusing exclusively on secondary sources to explore the origins and development of the Aryan race and their advent in South Asia. The approach aimed to synthesize existing scholarly interpretations and historical accounts to construct a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

Data Collection

Data were collection from libraries and various sites like google scholar and researchgate. Source of data included various historical texts, scholarly articles, encyclopedias and compendiums. Classical and historical texts were reviewed that discussed the Aryan race, including ancient manuscripts, chronicles, and religious texts relevant to Aryan migration and settlement. Academic papers, journal articles, and books written by historians, anthropologists, and archaeologists that provided interpretations of Aryan origins and their impact on South Asia were analyzed. Various reference works and encyclopedias were consulted for summaries of established theories and findings related to Aryan history. Archaeological reports and studies published on archaeological findings related to Aryan artifacts and settlements were also examined. Furthermore, records and documentation from historical sources that offered insights into Aryan migration and influence in South Asia were also analysed.

Data Analysis

Thematic Analysis: This process involved extracting and categorizing key themes from the literature concerning the Aryan race's origins, migration, and impact. Major themes included migration patterns, cultural assimilation, and societal changes. By identifying these themes, the research highlighted the central elements of Aryan history and their effects on South Asia.

Comparative Analysis: In this phase, different scholarly

interpretations and theories were compared and contrasted to identify commonalities and differences in the understanding of Aryan history. This comparative approach helped to discern varying perspectives and provided a more nuanced view of the Aryan influence.

Narrative Synthesis: Findings from various secondary sources were integrated to construct a coherent narrative about the Aryan race's development and their impact on South Asia. This synthesis aimed to weave together disparate pieces of information into a unified account of Aryan migration and cultural influence.

Critical Interpretation: The sources were critically evaluated for biases and limitations, ensuring a balanced and nuanced interpretation of the Aryan race's historical context. This step involved scrutinizing the reliability of sources and acknowledging any potential biases to provide a comprehensive understanding of Aryan history.

Reporting and Interpretation

The documentation process involved compiling a detailed report that summarized the findings from the literature review and thematic analysis. This report provided an overview of key theories, historical accounts, and scholarly debates regarding the Aryan race, offering a comprehensive synthesis of the research. Additionally, presentations were prepared for academic audiences, including articles intended for publication in scholarly journals and presentations for academic conferences. These efforts aimed to disseminate the research findings and contribute to ongoing scholarly discussions on the Aryan race and their impact on South Asia.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure accuracy and credibility, all secondary sources were meticulously represented, and interpretations were based on credible and reliable scholarship. Proper attribution was maintained by citing all sources appropriately, acknowledging the contributions of original authors and researchers.

Results and Discussion

Evolution of Races

Geography, temperature, and climate have profoundly influenced human settlement patterns and contributed to the formation of distinct racial and ethnic groups. Europe, characterized by its generally colder climate, has shaped its inhabitants' adaptations and lifestyle, while Africa's predominantly hot environment has had a significant impact on the physical and cultural traits of its populations (Kaushik, n.d.). Parts of Asia experience a range of temperatures, from cold in the northern regions to hot in the southern parts, leading to a diverse array of human adaptations and cultural developments.

In contrast, the Indian subcontinent, with its tropical climate, presents a distinct environmental landscape. Its abundant rivers, dense jungles, and fertile plains create a particularly favorable setting for human habitation. This rich environment provided not only ample resources but also an ideal base for the development of settled agricultural communities (Gadgil, 2016) ^[7]. The tropical climate of the Indian subcontinent, coupled with its geographical features, facilitated the growth of diverse ecological niches that attracted various ethnic groups, races, and castes over time.

The Indian subcontinent's diverse environment led to the emergence of a multifaceted population. The interplay

between climate, geography, and human adaptation contributed to a complex demographic and cultural tapestry in India and its neighboring regions, such as Nepal, Pakistan, and Bangladesh (Prashrit, 2014) ^[21]. The convergence of these factors enabled the Indian subcontinent to become a melting pot of different races and cultures, each influenced by the unique environmental conditions of the region.

Racial classification

Human races have historically been distinguished by various physical characteristics, including skin color, hair type, eye color, and facial features. Charles Darwin, in his examination of human variation, suggested that skin color was the most straightforward basis for racial classification (Darwin, 2012) ^[6]. According to Darwin, early classifications categorized individuals into broad racial groups based on skin color, such as Caucasians (with white skin), Asians (with yellow skin), Mishrians (with red skin), and Africans (with black skin). This system of classification was grounded in observable physical traits and served as a foundation for understanding human diversity.

Hair type also plays a crucial role in racial differentiation. Variations in hair texture, such as smooth, curly, and straight hair, have been used to distinguish between racial groups (Tripathi, 1965) ^[28]. In ancient civilizations, such as those in Egypt and Greece, people were initially classified based on these physical attributes as early as 400 BC. This early classification identified groups like Negro, Asian, European, and Mishrain, reflecting an early attempt to categorize human diversity based on observable traits.

The formalization of racial classification gained prominence in the mid-18th century when Carl Linnaeus, a pioneering botanist and taxonomist, established a system that divided humanity into four primary groups: White, Yellow, Red, and Black (Kaushik, n.d.). Linnaeus's system was widely accepted in the scientific community and provided a structured approach to understanding human variation.

However, Linnaeus's classification was not without its critics and was later challenged by scholars such as Risle and Hedan. These scholars introduced additional categories to account for regional and physical differences, reflecting a more nuanced understanding of human diversity. V. D. Jotob further refined this classification system by consolidating the various categories into three main groups: White European, Mongoloid Yellow, and Negroid Black races (Jotob, 1985) ^[11]. This consolidation represented an effort to streamline racial classification while acknowledging the complexity of human diversity.

Races in South Asia

Anthropologists and historians have suggested that ancient India initially did not experience significant human settlement. The region, before becoming a focal point of human activity, was sparsely populated. Over time, however, migrations from regions such as China and Mongolia introduced settlers to the Himalayan region, marking a gradual but significant shift in the human presence within the subcontinent.

In the early stages, humans in this area were primarily hunters and gatherers. They led nomadic lifestyles, moving from place to place in search of food and resources. This period predates the development of agriculture and animal husbandry, which would later become foundational elements of settled societies (Devis, 1968) ^[5].

The geographical position of the Indian subcontinent played a crucial role in shaping these migratory patterns. Situated centrally among Asia, Europe, Africa, and Australia, India served as a significant crossroad for early human movements. Lacking advanced navigation tools or sophisticated maritime technology, early humans traveled predominantly by land. The subcontinent's location made it an essential conduit for migration and interaction among these vast regions.

This central position facilitated extensive movement and exchange across these areas, contributing to a complex and dynamic demographic and cultural landscape in ancient India (Nehru, 1988) ^[16]. As such, India's role as a nexus in human migration significantly influenced its historical development and the diverse cultural tapestry that emerged within its borders.

The races of primitive India

The Indian subcontinent, with its favorable environment, became a melting pot for various human races and ethnic groups. The tropical climate, abundant rivers, fertile plains, and diverse ecosystems provided an ideal setting for human settlement and development. This influx of different races and cultures led to a series of interactions, conflicts, and eventual assimilation among the various groups.

As different races settled in the Indian continent, they inevitably came into contact with each other. These interactions were not always peaceful, as groups often competed for resources and dominance. This competition led to numerous conflicts and wars. However, these conflicts also facilitated cultural exchange and integration. Over time, different groups began to assimilate, adopting each other's customs, traditions, and ways of life (Bogle, 1972) ^[1].

Through this process of conflict and assimilation, a unique and enriched society emerged in the Indian subcontinent. Groups that were initially distinct began to blend culturally and socially, leading to the development of a complex and diverse civilization (Soham, 2019) ^[26]. The adoption of cultural practices from different groups contributed to the richness and diversity of Indian society.

Throughout ancient and modern periods, several castes and races like Brahmins maintained their dominance in India. These groups played significant roles in shaping the cultural, social, and political landscape of the region (Satanik, 2023) ^[24]. The integration of different races and the establishment of dominant groups contributed to the hierarchical structure of Indian society.

The favorable environmental conditions of the Indian subcontinent not only attracted various human races but also supported their sustained development. The tropical climate allowed for the cultivation of a variety of crops, and the numerous rivers provided essential water resources for agriculture and daily life. The fertile plains supported large populations, while the diverse ecosystems provided resources for hunting, gathering, and later, settled agriculture (Suresh *et al.*, 2022) ^[27].

The Negrito and advent to India

The Negrito people were the first race to arrive in India, long before the dawn of Indian civilization. As nomads, they entered India during a time when the region was still in its prehistoric phase. The Negrito people utilized stone and bone weapons for hunting, indicative of their early technological development.

Because the Negrito people were constantly on the move,

they did not settle permanently in ancient India. This nomadic lifestyle meant that their influence on the local culture was minimal. The Negritos are believed to have originated from the Austronesian region in the modern period. Despite their transient presence, they left an indelible mark on certain cultural practices in India (Ramakrishna, 2023) ^[22].

One notable contribution of the Negrito people to Indian culture was the practice of worshiping the banyan tree. This tradition began with the Negritos during their time in India. As Hindu culture later developed and flourished, it adopted this practice. The banyan tree holds significant religious importance in Hinduism, and rituals such as birth and death ceremonies often involve the banyan tree, a tradition that persists to this day (Yuliana, 2024) ^[30].

The Negrito people's influence on Indian culture, though limited, can be seen in these enduring traditions. Their reverence for the banyan tree has been seamlessly integrated into Hindu rituals, illustrating how even nomadic groups can leave lasting cultural legacies.

The proto-Australoid race and advent in India

Following the arrival of the Negrito people, the proto-Australoid race advanced into India. This race, more civilized than their Negrito predecessors, significantly influenced the region's cultural and societal development. Today, descendants of the proto-Australoid race are found in central and southeastern India and are known as the Austric people. Indian castes such as the Munda, Santhal, Birhor, Korawa, Kurk, Juwang, and Shawar trace their origins to the ancient proto-Australoid race (Nehru, 1988) ^[16].

The proto-Australoid race introduced the agricultural age in India. Their advancements in farming practices laid the foundation for settled agricultural communities, marking a significant shift from the nomadic lifestyle of the Negritos (Misra, 2001) ^[15]. This transition to agriculture played a crucial role in the development of more complex societal structures and economies.

The proto-Australoid people also introduced several cultural practices that have become integral to Indian traditions. For instance, the use of vermilion, turmeric, betel, and nut in marriage ceremonies originates from the proto-Australoid culture (Repson, 1955) ^[23]. These elements continue to be significant in various Indian rituals and customs.

In addition to agricultural and cultural practices, the proto-Australoid race contributed to the development of religious beliefs and rituals in India. They practiced the worship of natural elements and animals, such as stones, snakes, monkeys, and crocodiles, which were revered as deities. This form of nature worship has been integrated into various aspects of Hinduism.

The proto-Australoid people also introduced the practice of cremating the dead and dispersing their ashes in sacred rivers. This tradition remains a significant aspect of Hindu funerary customs. Moreover, they established methods for tracking time based on the lunar cycle, a practice that continues in Indian culture.

The proto-Australoid race contributed to the rich tapestry of Indian mythology. They created stories of incarnations, such as those of Ganesh and Kurma (the Tortoise), which have been passed down and incorporated into Hindu mythology (Chishty, 2023) ^[3]. These tales and deities play essential roles in Hindu religious narratives and practices.

The proto-Australoid race's advancements in agriculture, cultural practices, and religious beliefs have had a lasting

impact on Indian society. Their contributions laid the groundwork for the development of a rich and diverse civilization, influencing subsequent cultures and traditions in the region.

The Darwin race and their advent in India

Following the Negrito and Austric groups, the Darwins were the third major group to arrive in ancient India. The Darwins, more advanced in terms of civilization, brought significant cultural and societal contributions to the Indian subcontinent. Their arrival marked a pivotal moment in the region's historical and cultural development.

The Hindu epics and Puranas describe the Darwins, highlighting their importance in the cultural and religious history of India. The Darwins introduced several practices that became integral to Indian civilization. Among these were the celebration of holy festivals and the use of fruits, leaves, vermilion, sandal-paste, and incense in religious ceremonies (Ombet, 2012) ^[18]. These elements remain central to Hindu rituals today.

One of the most significant contributions of the Darwins was the introduction of the term 'Puja,' which refers to the act of worship (Ombet, 2012) ^[18]. This term and the associated practice of ritualistic worship were later adopted by the Aryans, who are often regarded as the civilized people of the Indian continent. The adoption and continuation of 'Puja' by the Aryans underscore the lasting impact of the Darwin cultural practices on subsequent Indian civilizations. However, Hans (2024) ^[9], deny that term 'Puja' was introduced by Darwins but was mentioned in ancient scriptures like the Vedas and Upanishads that predate Darwin's time.

The Darwins played a crucial role in developing early Indian civilization. Their cultural and religious practices were integrated into the broader fabric of Indian society, influencing subsequent groups, including the Aryans (Chishty, 2023) ^[3]. The Darwins' contributions to religious rituals, terminology, and festival celebrations helped shape the cultural heritage of India, which continues to thrive.

The Aryans, who followed the Darwins, continued and further developed the civilization established by their predecessors. They adopted many practices introduced by the Darwins, including the concept of 'Puja.' The Aryans' ability to integrate these practices into their own culture contributed to the continuity and evolution of Indian civilization.

The Aryan race and their advent in India

The Aryan race played a pivotal role in shaping the civilization and culture of ancient India. They began their migration into India from the southwest between 500 and 2500 BC, entering a region previously inhabited by various small, separate ethnic groups with their own local political structures. Prior to the arrival of the Aryans, significant civilizations such as Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa, and Sindhu had flourished, developed by the Dravidians and other local groups (Nehru, 1988) ^[16].

These societies were characterized by a simpler, egalitarian way of life without a developed class system. The economy was primarily based on animal husbandry and agriculture, which served as the cornerstone of their livelihood. Despite the advancements in places like Indus Valley and Mohenjo-Daro, these civilizations were absent from regions where Aryans later settled (Majumdar *et al.*, 1999) ^[14].

Before the arrival of the Aryans, the inhabitants of the Indian

subcontinent led relatively simple lives focused on agriculture and animal husbandry. These early societies were characterized by minimal social stratification, and the class system had not yet emerged. The economy was predominantly based on farming and livestock rearing, with business and trade gradually becoming secondary economic activities.

Despite this general simplicity, there was a notable disparity in development across different regions. For example, the Indus Valley Civilization and Mohenjo-Daro were significantly more advanced, featuring sophisticated urban planning, drainage systems, and extensive trade networks compared to other areas of early India (Majumdar *et al.*, 1999) ^[14]. This uneven development highlighted the varying levels of technological and social progress across the subcontinent prior to the transformative influence of the Aryans.

The Aryans, originating from the Caucasia region, settled in the fertile plains of the Indian subcontinent, including Punjab, the Gangetic Plain, Sindhu, and parts of Afghanistan. These migrants, who were part of the broader Indo-Iranian, Indo-Germanic, and Indo-European groups, had previously developed their civilization in Central Asia before advancing into the Caucasus region.

The migration of the Aryans into India marked a significant expansion of their cultural and societal influence. Their movement was not merely a physical relocation but also a cultural transition that significantly impacted the regions they settled. As they established themselves in these fertile areas, they introduced new cultural, social, and administrative systems that played a crucial role in shaping the early history of India (Upadhyay, 1957) ^[29].

Upon their arrival, the Aryans faced significant resistance from the indigenous populations, including the Austric and Darwin races, who had established their own cultures and systems in various parts of the Indian subcontinent. The initial encounters between the Aryans and these groups were marked by conflict and struggle, as the Aryans sought to assert their dominance and expand their territory. Over time, through a combination of military and strategic efforts, the Aryans gradually extended their influence to the eastern regions of India. This period of expansion was characterized by profound changes in the social and economic landscape of the subcontinent.

The Aryans introduced and solidified new social and economic structures, including the establishment of specialized occupations that reflected a more complex division of labor. They also implemented a centralized political administration, which brought about significant shifts in governance and control. Additionally, the Aryans contributed to the development of a hierarchical social system that organized society into distinct classes and roles, laying the groundwork for future socio-political dynamics in India (Despande & Huk, 1979) ^[4].

The Aryans introduced a centralized political system in India that was distinctly person-oriented, emphasizing the consolidation of power and control over various resources. This system marked a significant shift from the more decentralized and simpler governance structures of previous eras. The Aryans meticulously divided the subcontinent into numerous administrative units, including centers, districts, villages, and cities, ensuring a systematic and hierarchical approach to governance.

Each of these units was managed by appointed Aryan

administrators, who were tasked with overseeing local affairs and maintaining order. This administrative reorganization enabled the Aryans to exert their influence across a broad spectrum of societal domains, including political, social, and religious spheres. As they established and solidified their control, the Aryans integrated their governance structures into the fabric of Indian society, effectively capturing and managing crucial resources such as land and water, which played a central role in their administration and economic strategies.

One of the most profound transformations brought about by the Aryans was the establishment of a monarchical system that significantly altered the political landscape of ancient India. Initially, kings were elected on a periodic basis, reflecting a more democratic approach to leadership. However, over time, this system evolved into one where kings assumed lifelong rule, claiming divine rights to govern. This shift in political ideology was supported by scholars who were pressured to produce writings extolling the divine power and legitimacy of the rulers.

This new system of divine kingship, characterized by a paternalistic approach and a successor system, became a defining feature of the political structure in northern Indian states. The belief in the divine right of kings not only consolidated the power of the monarchs but also became deeply ingrained in the political and cultural fabric of South Asia. This notion of divine kingship and the attendant hierarchical structure continued to influence the region's political and social systems well into the 21st century, demonstrating its enduring legacy and impact on South Asian governance and societal norms (Despande & Huk, 1979) ^[4]. The Aryans had a profound impact on the religious and cultural landscape of India, significantly shaping its development. Upon their arrival, they played a pivotal role in promoting and establishing the Hindu religion, which became deeply entrenched and flourished under their rule. Their influence extended beyond mere religious practices; they integrated ethical principles derived from sacred texts into the administrative system, creating a governance structure that emphasized moral and religious values.

Aryan rulers and their followers were instrumental in fostering the growth of Hindu culture, including the establishment of various festivals, rituals, and traditions that continue to be celebrated today. This cultural transformation not only reinforced the Aryan legacy but also contributed to the enduring richness and diversity of Indian cultural practices and religious observances.

Conclusion

The migration of the Aryan race into the Indian subcontinent marked a pivotal era in the region's history, leading to profound changes in its social, cultural, and administrative structures. This study has traced the Aryans' journey from their origins to their settlement in India, illustrating how their arrival transitioned the subcontinent from relatively simple, egalitarian societies to a more complex, hierarchical civilization.

The Aryans' introduction of advanced administrative systems, social stratification, and centralized governance fundamentally altered the landscape of ancient India. Their influence extended beyond political and social reforms; they also played a crucial role in shaping the religious and cultural fabric of the region. By promoting Hinduism and embedding ethical principles from sacred texts into their governance, the

Aryans helped establish enduring cultural and religious practices that continue to resonate in contemporary India. The integration of Aryan practices with those of indigenous groups such as the Austric and Darwin races resulted in a rich and diverse cultural tapestry. This amalgamation laid the foundation for future societal developments and significantly contributed to the complexity of India's historical narrative. Overall, this research highlights the Aryans' significant impact on the Indian subcontinent, offering valuable insights into the dynamics of cultural assimilation, societal transformation, and the formation of early civilizations. Understanding these historical processes enhances our knowledge of South Asia's evolution and provides a deeper appreciation of its cultural heritage.

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