

## ANCIENT INDIAN CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE ENVIRONMENT: A HISTORICAL SCRUTINY

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### ABSTRACT

*Mankind has always tried to comprehend different natural occurrences and environmental features which surround them as free gifts of nature be it mountains, rivers, rainfall and vegetation. Since ancient times, these gifts of nature allowed human beings to expand their activities and develop from being primitive hunter-gatherers to pastoral nomads and then to settled agriculturists. However, the seers and thinkers of the ancient times understood the fact that while gifts of nature could be found and used aplenty, attempts to exploit nature beyond the boundaries of stability would lead to the nature's wrath. Thus, the idea of utilizing nature with due consideration to maintaining its integrity, along with other inhabitants of the environment, was the ancient Indian perception of sustainable living which was rooted in environmental consciousness.*

**KEYWORDS:** Ancient India, Environment, Paryavarana, Panchbhutas, Conservation, Vedas, Upanishad, Kautilya's Arthashastra, Ashokan Edicts, Prayag Prashasti, Hathigumpha Inscription, Kalidasa.

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