

ANCIENT INDIAN CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE ENVIRONMENT: A HISTORICAL SCRUTINY

Dr. Archana Verma*

*Associate Professor,
Department of History,
Hindu College, University of Delhi,
Delhi, INDIA

With Inputs from Student Researchers,
Interdisciplinary Innovation Project Antarleen Sinha,
Anusha Nagar, Vibhuti Pathak, Muskan Abbasi, Sayandeep Das,
Email id: arbverma@yahoo.co.in

DOI: 10.5958/2278-4853.2022.00077.5

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.

REFERENCES

- Basham, A. L., *The Wonder That Was India*, Calcutta, Rupa & Co., 1981 (1954).
- Bhandarkar, D.R., *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings*, Vol. 3, (Revised), New Delhi, Archaeological Survey of India, 1981.
- Bloomfield, Maurice, *Hymns of the Atharvaveda*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1973.
- Brihadaranyaka Upanishad: 6th Adhyaya/4th Brahmamana, <https://www.infoplease.com/primary-sources/philosophy-religion/the-upanishads/fourth-brahmana-3>
- Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. 'Vikramorvashi', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 3 August 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Vikramorvashi>

- Chand, Devi, *The Atharvaveda: Sanskrit Text with English Translation*, New Delhi, MunshiramManoharlal, 1995.
- Dave, Mehul P., 'Conservation of Environmental Ethics in Ancient India from Unsustainable to Sustainable Development', *International Journal of Current Research in Life Sciences*, Vol.7, No. 04, April 2018, pp. 1690-1695.
- Doniger, Wendy, et al., 'Hinduism', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 26 January 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hinduism>
- Duquette, Jonathan, 'An Ancient Indian Perspective on the Environment', 26 November 2020, <https://www.iglobalnews.com/iwellness/ispirituality/an-ancient-indian-perspective-on-the-environment>
- Geetha, S., 'Fa Hien's Views on India', <https://www.historydiscussion.net/history-of-india/fa-hiens-views-on-india-indian-history/6515>
- Gerow, Edwin, 'Kalidasa', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15 December 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Kalidasa>
- Gopal, Madan and Gautam, K. S., (eds), *India Through the Ages*, Delhi, Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1990.
- Hume, Robert E., *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, London, Oxford University Press, 1921.
- Jena, N., *Ecology and Atharvaveda*, New Delhi, Bhartiya Kala Prakashan, 2002.
- Kumar, Anil, 'Environment Consciousness versus Ancient History', *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, Vol. 6, Issue 1, March 2018, pp. 327-332.
- Madhavananda, Swami, *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, Calcutta, Advaita Ashrama, 1934.
- Pandey, Archana, 'Society and Environment in Ancient India (Study of Hydrology)', *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, Vol.5, Issue 2, February 2016, pp. 26-31.
- Pathak, S. K., (ed), *Buddhism and Ecology*, New Delhi, Om Publication, 2001.
- Patra, Benudhar, 'Environment in Early India: A Historical Perspective', *Environment: Traditional and Scientific Research*, Vol.1, Issue 1, January-June, 2016, pp. 39-56.
- Prasad, J. S. R. A., 'Concepts of Environment and Nature in Ancient India', *E-QUAL News*, Vol. 2, Issue 5, September 2015, pp. 4-8.
- Rajak, Siddharth, 'Ancient Indian Vision: Concept of Environment', *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, Vol. 6, Issue 6, June 2019, pp. 134-140.
- Rangarajan, L., *The Arthashastra*, New Delhi, Penguin Books, 1990.
- Roy, Ashim and Roy, Alpana, 'Environmental Conservation in Ancient India', *International Journal of Sanskrit Research*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 2017, pp. 139-142.

- Saraswati, Sivananda, *The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad: Sanskrit Text, English Translation and Commentary*, Shivanandanagar, U.P., Divine Life Society, 1985.
- Sengupta, Anirban, 'Consciousness about Environment in Ancient India', 2015, <https://www.ayk.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/SENGUPTA-Anirban-CONSCIOUSNESS-ABOUT-ENVIRONMENT-IN-ANCIENT-INDIA.pdf>
- Sharma, Kamla N., 'Environment in Ancient India', in Selin H. (eds), *Encyclopaedia of the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine in Non-Western Cultures*, Springer, Dordrecht, 2016, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7747-7_10320
- Tanwar, Renu, 'Environmental Conservation in ancient India', *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, Vol. 21, Issue 9, September 2016, pp. 01-04.