

UNIT 2

EVOLUTION OF SCRIPT AND LANGUAGES IN INDIA

Harappan script

- The Indus script was in existence not later than at the most about 1500 B.C.
- The earliest undisputed examples of the Brahmin script are only from the days of Asoka, around 300 B.C.
- One might take the origin of the Brahmin script still farther, to the beginnings of the Indo-Genetic, Iron Age civilization, in the middle of the first millennia B.C.,
- Since Asoka does not claim to have invented the Brahmin script, it is not unlikely that the Brahmin script was known before his times, and perhaps used by the merchants commercially as the All chins have suggested in their recent book.
- The absence of such inscriptions by Chandragupta, the illustrious grandfather of Ashoka could be explained by saying that stone inscriptions were not in the Indian tradition and they came to us along with the Persian tradition.
- The Indus script, also known as the Harappan script, is a corpus of symbols produced by the Indus Valley Civilisation.

Brahmin Scripts

- **Brahmin script** is one of the **oldest writing systems**, having been used in the Indian subcontinent and Central Asia during the **final centuries BCE** and the **early centuries CE**.
- Some believe that Brahmin was derived from the modern **Semitic script**, while others believe it was an Indus script.
- The **Brahmin is the ancestor** of all surviving **Indic scripts** in South East Asia. In India writing developed during the time of the **Indus Valley Civilization**.
- Brahmin script is credited with giving rise to several modern scripts found in **South and Southeast Asia**.

Relationship between Harappan and Brahmin Scripts

- Several scholars have said that there is a relationship between the two that the Indus script survived and slowly became linear and ultimately lead to the Brahmin script.
- I do not at all believe in this theory. The Indus script was in existence not later than at the most about 1500 B.C.
- The earliest undisputed examples of the Brahmin script are only from the days of Ashoka, around 300 B.C. One might take the origin of the Brahmin script still farther, to the beginnings of the Indo-Genetic,
- Iron Age civilization, in the middle of the first millennia B.C., since Ashoka does not claim to have invented the Brahmi script, it is not unlikely that the Brahmi script was known before his times, and perhaps used by the merchants commercially as the All chins have suggested in their recent book.

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- The absence of such inscriptions by Chandragupta, the illustrious grandfather of Ashoka could be explained by saying that stone inscriptions were not in the Indian tradition and they came to us along with the Persian tradition.
- This is not unlikely, but even so there is at least a gap of 1,000 years before the introduction of the Brahmi script and the complete collapse of the Indus script.

The Vedas

- The Vedas are a large body of religious texts originating in ancient India. Composed in Vedic Sanskrit, the texts constitute the oldest layer of Sanskrit literature and the oldest scriptures of Hinduism.
- The Upanishads are late Vedic Sanskrit texts of religious teachings and ideas still revered in Hinduism.
- There are four types of Vedas – Rig-Veda, Samaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda. One of the best sources of Ancient Indian History is Vedic literature. Vedas have formed the Indian scripture.
- The ideas and practices of Vedic religion are codified by the Vedas and they also form the basis of classical Hinduism.
- According to tradition, Vyasa is the compiler of the Vedas, who arranged the four kinds of mantras into four Samhitas (Collections).
- The Rig-Veda is the largest of the four Vedas, and many of its verses appear in the other Vedas.
- It is an ancient Vedic Sanskrit text, and part of the scriptures of Hinduism. One of the four Vedas, it is a liturgical text which consists of 1,875 verses. All but 75 verses have been taken from the Rig-Veda.
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- Indra (/ˈɪndrə/; Sanskrit: इंद्र) is the king of the devas (god-like deities) and Svarga (heaven) in Hindu mythology.

The Upanishads

- The Upanishads are late Vedic and post-Vedic Sanskrit texts that "document the transition from the archaic ritualism of the Veda into new religious ideas
- Prajñānam Brahma" - "Consciousness is Brahman" (Aitareya Upanishad) "Aham brahmāsmi" - "I am Brahman" (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad) "Tat tvam as" - "That Thou art" (Chandogya Upanishad) "Ayamātmā brahma" - "This Atman is Brahman" (Mandukya Upanishad).
- The Upanishads present a vision of an interconnected universe with a single, unifying principle behind the apparent diversity in the cosmos, any articulation of which is called Brahman.
- Within this context, the Upanishads teach that Brahman resides in the atman, the unchanging core of the human individual.
- The Taittiriya Upanishad says that Brahman is this ineffable truth; Brahman is also truth (satya), knowledge (jnana), infinity (ananta), consciousness (chit), and bliss (Amanda). Other Upanishads describe Brahman as the hidden, inner controller of the human soul.

There are between 180-200 Upanishads but the best known are the 13 which are embedded in the four Vedas known as:

- Rig Veda

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- Sama Veda
- Yajur Veda
- Atharva Veda

The 13 Upanishads are:

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad
- Chandogya Upanishad
- Taaittiriya Upanishad
- Aitareya Upanishad
- Kausitaki Upanishad
- Kena Upanishad
- Katha Upanishad
- Isha Upanishad
- Svetasvatara Upanishad
- Mundaka Upanishad
- Prashna Upanishad
- Maitri Upanishad
- Mandukya Upanishad

The Upanishads deal with ritual observance and the individual's place in the universe and, in doing so, develop the fundamental concepts of the Supreme Over Soul (**God**) known as Brahman (who both created and is the universe) and that of the *Atman*, the individual's higher self, whose goal in life is union with Brahman.

The Ramayana

- An international team of researchers consisting of geneticists, anthropologists, archaeologists and historians have found that Ramayana, written 10,000 years ago, is a chronicle of events and characters recorded by Sage Valmiki and not a work of fiction.
- Good deeds are the means to reach a higher plane and likewise bad deeds lead to destruction and doom — is the ultimate message that the Ramayana teaches, said Sri R.
- The oldest version is generally recognized to be the Sanskrit version attributed to the sage Narada, the Mula Ramayana.
- Narada passed on the knowledge to Valmiki, who authored Valmiki Ramayana, the present oldest available version of Ramayana.
- Rama is an incarnation of Vishnu, God of Protection. Vishnu is one of a trinity of the three most important Hindu gods – Brahma the creator, Vishnu the protector, and Shiva the destroyer.
- Vishnu has had nine incarnations on earth as different beings.
- In its extant form, Valmiki Ramayana is an epic poem of some 24,000 verses, divided into seven kandas (Bālakāṇḍa, Ayodhyakāṇḍa, Aranyakāṇḍa, Kiṣkindakāṇḍa, Sundarākāṇḍa, Yuddhakāṇḍa, Uttarakāṇḍa), and about 500 sargas (chapters).
- Puranic historians have dated the Vedas, based on internal astronomical evidence, to 7,000 BCE (9,000 years ago), the events of the Ramayana to 5,000 BCE (7,000 years ago) and the Mahabharata war at Kurukshetra to 3,000 BCE (5,000 years ago).
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The Mahabharata

- Appearing in its present form about 400 ce, the Mahabharata consists of a mass of mythological and didactic material arranged around a central heroic narrative that tells of the struggle for sovereignty between two groups of cousins, the Kauravas (sons of Dhritarashtra, the descendant of Kuru) and the Pandavas.
- The historicity of the Kurukshetra War is unclear. Many historians estimate the date of the Kurukshetra war to Iron Age India of the 10th century BCE.
- The setting of the epic has a historical precedent in Iron Age (Vedic) India, where the Kuru kingdom was the centre of political power during roughly 1200 to 800 BCE.
- The struggle culminates leading to the Great battle of Kurukshetra, and the Pandavas are ultimately victorious.
- The Mahabharata itself ends with the death of Krishna, and the subsequent end of his dynasty, and ascent of the Pandavas brothers to Heaven. Ved Vyasa wrote the epic poem called the Mahabharata.
- It is one of the two main Sanskrit epics in Hinduism and ancient India, the other being the Ramayana.
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The Puranas

- Vyasa, the narrator of the Mahabharata, is hagiographically credited as the compiler of the Puranas.
- Puranas - All 18 Maha Puranas(English): Vishnu, Naradiya, Padma, Garuda, Varaha, Bhagavata, Matsya, Kurma, Linga, Shiva, Skanda, Agni, Brahmanda, Brahmavaivarta, Markandeya, Bhavishya, Vamana, Brahma Kindle Edition.
- The Correct Answer is "Matsya Purana". The Matsya Purana is the oldest and better preserved in the Puranic genre of Sanskrit literature in Hinduism. It is one of the eighteen major Puranas (Mahapurana).
- The text is a Vaishnavism text named after the half-human and half-fish avatar of Vishnu. The earliest Puranas, composed perhaps between 350 and 750 ce, are the Brahmanda, Devi, Kurma, Markandeya, Matsya, Vamana, Varaha, Vayu, and Vishnu.
- The next earliest, composed between 750 and 1000, are the Agni, Bhagavata, Bhavishya, Brahma, Brahmavaivarta, Devibhagavata, Garuda, Linga, Padma, Shiva, and Skanda. The Matsya Purana (IAST: Matsya Purāṇa) is one of the eighteen major Puranas (Mahapurana), and among the oldest and better preserved in the Puranic genre of Sanskrit literature in Hinduism.
- The youngest layer of the text in the Agni Purana may be from the 17th century.
- The Agni Purana is a medieval era encyclopedia that covers a diverse range of topics, and its "382 or 383 chapters actually deal with anything and everything", remark scholars such as Moriz Winternitz and Ludo Rocher.

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The Buddhists and Jain Literature in Pali

- The religious books of the Jains and the Buddhist refer to historical persons or incidents.
- The earliest Buddhist works were in Pali, which was spoken in Magadha and South Bihar.
- It can be divided into the canonical and the non-canonical.
- Jain works of literature were written in Prakrit language and Buddhist literatures were written in Pali language. Buddha's religious ideas and words are collected in Sutra Pitaka.
- It is called the Encyclopedia of Buddhism.
- Jain literature on the other hand is classified into two major categories Agam and Non-agamas sutras. Agam literature consists of many texts, which are the sacred books of the Jain religion.
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- The earliest systematic and most complete collection of early Buddhist sacred literature is the Pali Tipitaka ("Three Baskets"; Sanskrit: Tripitaka).
- The oldest Jain literature is in Shauraseni and the Jain Prakrit (the Jain Agamas, Agama-Tulya, the Siddhanta texts, etc.). It is widely studied since it is the sacred language of Theravada Buddhism as well as the language of the Pali Canon or Tipitaka.
- It was originally written in Brahmi script. Pali is an old Indian classical language in which Gautam Buddha proclaimed his faith and the Buddhist texts were written and preserved.
- According to the Chronicles, the Pāli scriptures were first written down during the reign of the Sinhalese King Abhaya (89-77 BCE).
- It is assumed (reasonably) that language was Pali and it was written in the Sinhala script of Sri Lanka.
- Lord Buddha delivered his discourses in Pali, and as a result, early Buddhist literature was written in Pali. Pali canon, also known as Tripitaka in Sanskrit, is the main book of Buddhism.
- For all the Buddhist scriptures this traditional term is used. The three pitakas of Buddhism are Abhidhamma Pitaka, Sutta Pitaka and Vinaya Pitaka.

Prakrit and Sanskrit Languages In India

- Prakrits were considered the regional spoken (informal) languages of people, and Sanskrit was considered the standardized (formal) language used for literary, official and religious purposes across Indian kingdoms of the subcontinent.
- Prakrit was the regional language of the Middle Indo-Aryans, which was considered earlier than Classical Sanskrit.
- 'Sanskrit' means 'refined speech,' while 'Prakrit' means 'original, natural, ordinary.'
- Sanskrit is richer in tradition, culture, and literature compared to Prakrit. Prakrit language is the oldest known language used in the inscriptions.
- It is a middle Indo-Aryan language. Conclusion. Sanskrit was the foundation of later Indian languages and literature.
- Pali and Prakrit were the first languages to emerge from Sanskrit.
- Pali was used for the dissemination of Buddhist ideas,
- whereas Prakrit was used for the dissemination of Jain doctrines Sanskrit was first spoken and written in Syria, not India
- In fact, as Scroll recently reminded us, the form of Sanskrit found in the Rig Veda was found in Northern Syria. Prakrit languages, (from Sanskrit: prākṛta, "arising from the

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source, occurring in the source”) Middle Indo-Aryan languages known from inscriptions, literary works, and grammarians' descriptions. Prakrit languages are related to Sanskrit but differ from and are contrasted with it in several ways.

Kautilya's Arthashastra

The title, Arthashastra, which means “the Science of Material Gain” or “Science of Polity”, does not leave any doubts about its ends. According to Kautilya, the ruler should use any means to attain his goal and his actions required no moral sanction.

Characteristic features of Kautilya's Arthashastra

- Indicates strong tendency towards materialistic view of human ends.
- Doctrine of seven constituents of state- organic theory of the state.
- Authority and functions of the temporal ruler discussed in details.
- Centrality of danda as means to protect people and save dharma.
- Arthashastra incorporate both the civil law and criminal law. Kautilya attributed a lot of importance to 'dharma'. According to him, 'the ultimate source of all law is dharma'. He enticed in the name of 'dharma' to the sense of honour and duty and to human dignity, to moral responsibility and to enlightened loyalty.
- They state “Arthashastra advises never to forget the two pillars of the art of governance: Nyay, the justice and Dharma, the ethics”.
- Kautilya mentioned four Upayas - Sama, Dana or Dama, Danda and Bheda as ways to reach a solution in state politics to avoid conflicts and war situations (Arthashastra)
- The seven prakritis are constitutive of the state – swamin, the ruler; amatya, the ministers; janapada, territory and population; durga, fort/capital city; kosa: treasury; danda, coercive power of the state and mitra, ally.
- Kautilya proposes several principles of taxation, such as fairness, which includes a safety net, stability of tax structure, collecting taxes only when they are due, that is, only after the harvest, maximization of the difference between revenue and expenditure and fiscal federalism.
- According to him, if there is no dharma, there is no society. He believed that ethical values pave the way to heaven as well as to prosperity on the earth, that is, have an intrinsic value as well as an instrumental value.
- In Chanakya's ground-breaking Arthashastra, Chanakya lists the seven pillars of an organization. "The king, the minister, the country, the fortified city, the Treasury, the army, and the Ally are the constituent elements of the state.

Telugu, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam literature

- The four Dravadan languages Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam developed their own literature.
- Tamil being the oldest of these languages began writing earlier and produced the sangam literature - the oldest literature in Tamil The Vijayanagara period was the golden age of Telugu literature.
- Nachana Somanatha, a court poet of Bukka I, produced a poetical work titled Uttaraharivamsam.
- Krishnadevaraya (1509-1529), the greatest of the Vijayanagara emperors, was a poet of great merit.
- His work Amukta Malyada is regarded as an excellent prabandha in Telugu literature. Eight Telugu literary luminaries, popularly known as ashtadiggajas adorned his court.

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- Among them, Allasani Peddana, the author of Manucharitram, was the greatest. He was known as Andhra kavitaipitamaha.
 - The other seven poets of the group were Nandi Timmana, the author of Parijathapaharanam,
 - Madayagari Mallana, Dhurjati, Ayyalaraju Ramabhadra Kavi, Pingali Surana, Ramaraja Bhushana and Tenali Ramakrishna.
 - Dhurjati, a devotee of Shiva, composed two poetical works of great merit known as Kalahasteswara Mahatmayam and Kalahasteswara Satakam,
 - Pingali Surana composed two works Raghavapandaviyam and Kalapurandayam. In the former, he attempted a literary feat telling the story of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata simultaneously.
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- Tenali Ramakrishna, the court jester, was an interesting figure of the Krishnadevaraya's court.
 - His practical jokes on high-placed men of the time are recounted with pleasure even today.
 - Ramakrishna was the author of Panduranga Mahatmayam which was considered one of the greatest poetical works of Telugu literature.
 - Ramarajabhushana was the author of Vasucharitram. He was also known as Bhattumurti.
 - His other works include Narasabhapaliyam and Harishchandra Nalopakhyanam.

Kannada Literature

- Apart from Telugu, Vijayanagara rulers extended their patronage to Kannada and Sanskrit writers as well.
- Many Jain scholars contributed to the growth of Kannada literature. Madhava wrote Dharmanathapurana on the fifteenth tirthankara.
- Another Jain scholar, Uritta Vilasa, wrote Dharma Pariksha. The Sanskrit works of the period include Yadavabhyudayam by Vedanatha Desika and Parasara Smriti Vyakhya of Madhavacharya.
- Kannada language developed fully after the tenth century AD. The earliest known literary work in Kannada is Kavirajamang written by the Rashtrakuta King, Nripatunga Amoghavarsha I.
- Pampa, known as the father of Kannada wrote his great poetic works Adi Purana and Vikramarjiva Vijaya in the tenth century AD. Pampa lived in the court of Chalukya Arikesari. In his poetic skill, beauty of description, delineation of character and development of rasa, Pampa is unrivalled.
- Ponna and Ranna were two other poets who lived during the reign of Rashtrakuta Krishna III.
- Ponna wrote an epic named Shanti Purana and Ranna wrote Ajitanatha Purana. Together Pampa, Ponna and Ranna earned the title ratnatraya (the three gems). In the thirteenth century new feats were achieved in Kannada literature.

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- Harishvara wrote Harishchandra Kavya and Somanatha Charita whereas Bandhuvarma wrote Harivamshabhyudaya and Jiva Sambodhana.

Malayalam Literature

- Malayalam is spoken in Kerala and the adjoining areas. The language of Malayalam emerged around the eleventh century AD.
- By fifteenth century Malayalam was recognised as an independent language. Bhasa Kautilya, a commentary on Arthashastra and Kokasandisan are two great works.
- Rama Panikkar and Ramanuj an Ezhuthachan are well known authors of Malayalam literature.
- Though it developed much later compared to other South Indian languages, Malayalam has made a mark as a powerful medium of expression.
- Now a large number of journals, newspapers and magazines are published in Malayalam. When people read and write in their own language, they enjoy it more.
- This is because language is a part of their culture. It is so well inter woven in their social life that they can express and feel their emotions as well in their own language.
- This must also be the case with you and your language also.
- Tamil or Sangam Literature Tamil as a written language was known since the beginning of the Christian era.
- It is, therefore, no wonder that considerable Sangama literature was produced in the early four centuries of the Christian era, although it was finally compiled by 600 AD.
- Poets who in these assemblies were patronised by kings and chieftains produced the Sangama literature over a period of three to four centuries.
- Poets, bards and writers, authors came from various parts of South India to Madurai.
- Such assemblies were called “Sangamas”, and the literature produced in these assemblies was called “Sangama literature”.
- The contributions of Tamil saints like Thiruvalluvar who wrote ‘Kural’ which has been translated into many languages are noteworthy. The Sangama literature is a collection of long and short poems composed by various poets in praise of numerous heroes and heroines.
- They are secular in nature and of a very high quality.
- Three such sangams were held.
- The poems collected in the first sangam have been lost. In the second Sangam about 2000 poems have been collected. There are about 30,000 lines of poetry, which are arranged in eight anthologies called Ettuttokoi.
- There are two main groups – the Patinenkil Kanakku (the eighteen lower collections) and Pattupattu (the ten songs).

HINDI, URDU AND PERSIAN LANGUAGE

- Is the Urdu language the same as Hindi? The Urdu language is closely related to Hindi.

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- They share the same Indo-Aryan base, are similar in phonology and grammar, and are mutually intelligible.
- However, they are from different sources: Urdu is from Arabic and Persian, and Hindi is from Sanskrit.
- Even in its vernacular form, Hindustani contains the most Persian influence of all the Indo-Aryan languages, and many Persian words are used commonly in speech by those identifying as "Hindi" and "Urdu" speakers alike.
- Persian and Urdu are distinct languages. Persian is classified as an Iranian language, whereas Urdu is an Indo-Aryan language.
- They fall under the larger grouping of the Indo-Iranian languages, and hence share some linguistic features due to common descent.
- Indisputably more similar to Hindi, as it is the same language as Urdu after all.
- Hindi and Urdu are classified as a single Hindustani language with differing formal varieties, but the everyday spoken language is the same.
- Urdu is not older than hindi. As hindi is the native language of hindustan, whereas urdu was developed by different language like persian, arabic, pashto etc. It came into existence in early mughal era.
- Hindi has its origin in 9th Century, whereas Urdu came later only in 12th Century. Northwestern states speaks mostly Hindustani and some register of Standard Hindi, whereas northern India which also has more population still speaks Standard Hindi.
- Standard Hindi derives much of its formal and technical vocabulary from Sanskrit while standard Urdu derives much of its formal and technical vocabulary from Persian and Arabic.
- Yes! Hindi and Persian are both Indo-Iranian languages. Granted that they may have diverged from each other quite a bit, but many grammatical features are similar.