

## Agricultural Heritage.

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## \*CHANGES IN AGRICULTURE IN ANCIENT ERA.

- CW  
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- nature of settlement
  - " " technology

1) Factors determining nature of agriculture:

- Settlement type (nomadic/ settled lifestyle)
- Level of technology (stones/ instruments)

2) Neolithic Era marks the beginning of settled Agricultural practices.

3) In case of India the earliest sites where agriculture started was in the fertile crescent during 9000-6000 BCE (currently, Baluchistan). This era is known as the Neolithic/ Early food producing Era. During this time they focused on domesticating wheat and cattle.

## Eras

### 1) Early Harappan Era (6000 BCE)

- Most imp. site: Mohenjodaro
- chief crops: Peas, Sesame, Cotton.
- cattle : water buffaloes

### 2) Late Harappan Era (2500 BCE)

- Beginning of urban centres
- major region of agri. was Ghaggar - Florence River, and its tributaries.

### 3) Vedic Period

- A specific community known as Suthriyars were engaged in agriculture.
- Vaishyas were most imp. community.

### 4) Buddhist Period

- Farmers acted as rural proprietors whereby they could both produce & market their agricultural produce.
- No concept of landlordship but a land owner couldn't sell/mortgage his land without permission of village council.
- Importance was given to irrigation.

### 5) Mauryan Period

- Landlordship started emerging.
- Rich land owning families were known as → 'Gahapathi'
- Animal husbandry and cattle rearing provided additional income to state treasury.

## ⑥ Gupta Period

Cultivators were known as Krishahala or kirazets and they had a low social life.

## ⑦ Sangam Era

- The farmers' status were mainly determined by size of land holding and animal population.
- main site - Madurai and adjoining areas.
- Landowner - Superior Vellars
- Ploughing community - inferior vellars
- Farmers (another name) - Uzhavar

### Kautilya's views on Agriculture

- Discusses the same in 'Arthashastra'.
- Groups agriculture, cattle breeding and trade as a science  
→ Vartha
- Head of agriculture → Sita dhakashya
- State king needs to focus on four key aspects of agriculture:
  - Supply of seeds
  - Provision of Irrigation
  - Purchase of machineries
  - Marketing & safe storage
- Kautilya argued that agriculture is important for generating revenue for the state. Therefore, it is essential that the state or the king should take care of human resource & physical resources for increasing agricultural productivity.

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### a) Management of Human Resource

The superintendent of agri. should be a person who should be knowledgeable in agriculture and horticulture. He needs to be supported by directors of agri., civil servants and technical persons. He interestingly suggested that slaves & prisoners can be used for sowing seeds.

### b) Adoption of good agricultural practices

Timely sowing is very imp. for high yield, especially rainfall sowing. For Kautilya a rainfall of 16 dranas (640mm) is sufficient for rice. Most importantly, Kautilya believed that one third of the rainfall should occur during the opening and closing months of rainy season (July, August, Oct, Dec) and the rest two-third should be in the middle.

For controlling crop failure Kautilya suggested some methods, some of them are as follows:-

i) Seeds need to be exposed to mist and heat for 7 nights.

ii) " " " " soaked in water to activate fungal mycelia

iii) " " " "

c) Cropping Patterns that different crops should be sown

Kautilya suggested at different times of the sowing season

#### Middle

Pulses

#### End

• Linseed

• Mustard

• Barley

• Wheat

• Safflower

#### Beginning

• Sali (Transplanted rice)

• Virlu (Direct sown)

• Til (Sesame seeds)

• Millet

Certain crops need to be used for being sown in river banks, like- sugarcane, grapes, watermelon, pumpkin and long pepper.