

LECTURE 4 - SOME HISTORICAL MILESTONES

Some things that have remained constant:

- River basins

India was named after Indus river since everyone came from that direction of the river. India was named so without even being aware of the Indus civilizations.

Hominids came to India along the coast of Africa and Arabia. Others came through Afghanistan (Hindu Kush mountains).

Each river basin sustained life and was self contained. It was easier to move along the river than through mountains or ocean. River basins were historical units divided by mountains and forests.

Nagarjuna was a Buddhist philosopher based at Krishna (which is why the dam is called Nagarjuna Sarovar dam).

Any large state that emerged had its anchor in the Ganges plain. (Hindi Uchat land).

mountains provided a barrier to state formation by preventing invasions and climate problems.

The Ganges valley was a thick forest that later sustained stable agriculture, manufacturing, trade, cities and states. Fire could help burn down these forests. Later fire was used to turn natural ferrous materials into iron tools like axe to cut the forest. God Agni was sacrificed.

The Indus and Ganges (Indo-Gangetic plains) defined much of Indian history.

Vindhyas and Narmada remain the separation between north and south.

Wheat and rice were grown along the Ganges.

Everything was made of wood, so there are no archaeological remains of Gupta and Mauryas. In drier places (like the Nile), everything was built of stone. When the forest got over in 8th or 9th century, everything was built with stones. Hence, now,

the mountain map to the forest
Empires in Deccan plateau were
not as long sustaining as the
Ganges and Indus plains.

Forest provided food, clothes,
home.

Interactions between river, field,
forests and mountains defined
India's past.

There was a conflict between
forest and field (agriculture).
Both animals and plants were
domesticated near a home and
they started moving away from
the forest.

There is also a complementarity
between forest and field (but
that's less dominant than the
conflict).

The field has been winning over
the forest for a long time.

Rivers have been life sustaining
and uniting. but they also
have divided empires and
been life threatening.

Humans migrated out of Great
Rift Valley in Kenya.

ancestral North Indian came by
Khyber pass. South Indian

came through coastal. Almost every population in India has been said to have a mixed DNA (except for a tribe in Nagas and one other)

There were also Tibeto-Burmese and Austroasiatic.

Nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ of Hindu and Muslim Kashmiris are ancestral South Indian.

Oppressors were worried that people under them would move and leave away. In 19th century, it reached a threshold where people could not just leave ~~at~~ due to population.

There was a constant dialectic between movement and stability.

The state of the Yanges changed with the coming of the British as they came through sea routes. Until then almost no Indian had developed movement through sea routes (except for the Cholas who had strong influence on South East Asia like Indonesia and Cambodia).

Rivers were similar and developed similar civilisations - other

Delhi is the only survivor
from pre-British times among
the 4 major cities (Chennai,
Mumbai, Calcutta)
economy comes from coastal
zones, Deccan Plateau.

[Gambudheer (Mount Meru)^{united world} map
given in the slides to the left
of inverted India]