



Sapta Sindhu, Vedic Culture and Indian Knowledge Systems

* Dr. Gireesh Gourav

**Rohan Sharma

*Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Sapta Sindhu Parisar Dehra (HP) 177101.

** Research Scholar, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Sapta Sindhu Parisar Dehra (HP) 177101.

Abstract

As per sociologists, a society can be defined as a group of people who have interactions within a common territory, and share a similar culture. Every society has its own unique culture, habits, tradition, beliefs, value system, etc. India is a vast country with a huge population. It is also known as the Subcontinent because it has ocean, sea, mountains, plateau, plains, hill, desert etc. Indian society is a perfect example of diversity in almost every dimension of social life. Whether it is religion, language, economic, regional, class, or caste. There is difference everywhere yet we stand united as an integrated nation. This diversity is found from the first civilization (**Indus Civilization**) to the present one.

Indus Valley Civilization spread over a vast expanse of India - stretching to the banks of the now "lost" Saraswati river or the Ghaggar-Hakra river, this land is glorified as Sapta Sindhu. Sapta Sindhu is the term which gave birth to the word "Hindu". The Civilization of Sapta Sindhu was referred to as Hapta-Hindu by Persians and other outsiders. The people of this region and culture, the Sapta-Sandhavas were referred to as Hapta-Haindavas by Persians and other outsiders. All these terms are found in Zend Avesta of Zoroastrians. Thus, the very concept and identity of India or Bharat originated from the land of seven legendary rivers and expands with the same. In all of its context, Sapta Sindhu has been the homeland of Sapta Saindhavas (Bhaariyas). This has been the Punya-Bhoomi (revered land) of them. This has been the Pitrubhoomi and Matrubhoomi for them.

The Aryans initially lived in the region known as the 'Sapta-Sindhu Or 'Land of Seven rivers', the area of seven rivers which included Sindhu (Indus), Vitasta (Jhelum), Askini (Chenab), Parushni (Ravi), Vipash (Beas), Shutudri (Sutlej) and the Saraswati. The Aryans settled on the banks of rivers Indus (Sindhu) and Saraswati (lost river) composed many hymns in honor of the gods and goddesses they worshiped. These were compiled in four Vedas:- Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda. The word

Veda means sacred spiritual knowledge. These Vedas were considered infallible as they imparted the highest spiritual Knowledge. Initially, the Vedas were transmitted orally. Since our knowledge of the early Aryans is based on these Vedas, The culture of this period is referred to as the Vedic Culture. Sapta Sindhu is an important part of Ancient India Knowledge Systems because the world's oldest university takshila dates back to the 5th or 6th century BCE in which students came from as far as China, Arabia, Babylonia and Greece is the precious gift of the Sapta Sindhu. It was an important Vedic and Buddhist learning center. The teachings of Krishna in the great war of kurukshetra which is still relevant today was ensued here. This paper is an attempt to trace and know about the Contribution of Sacred Sapta Sindhu land in the India Knowledge systems.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge systems, Sapta Sindhu, Vedic Culture, Culture.

Introduction:-

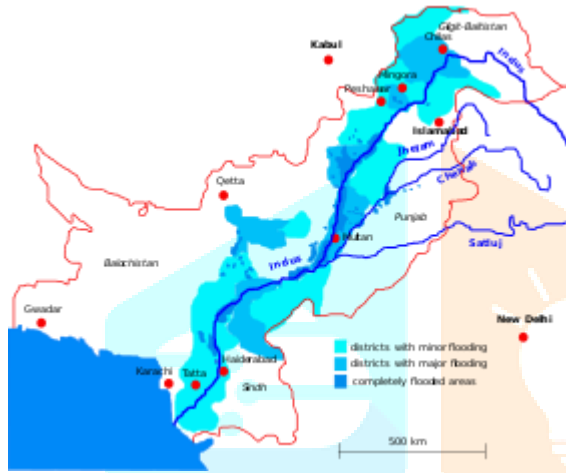
Indian society is known for its heritage of social norms, ethical values, traditional customs, belief systems, political systems, artifacts and technologies. Indian culture is the combination of several cultures, and has been influenced by a history that is several millennia old, beginning with the Indus Valley Civilization, Vedic Civilization and early cultures. Many elements of Indian Culture , such as Indian religions, mathematics, philosophy, cuisine, languages, dance, music and movies have had a profound impact across the Indosphere, Greater India and the World. Sapta Sindhu and Himalaya are the foundation of Hinduism that has lasting impacts on Indian Philosophy. Hinduism itself formed from various distinct folk religions, which merged during the Vedic period and following periods. Indian - Origin religions Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, are all based on the concepts of dharma and Karma, the philosophy of non-violence, is an important aspect of native Indian faiths whose most well known proponent was Mahatma Gandhi. Throughout the history of India, Indian culture was heavily influenced by Dharmic religions. Religion plays a central and definitive role in the life of many of its people. Hinduism embraces many religious ideas. For this reason, it's sometimes referred to as a "way of life" or a "family of religions" as opposed to a single, organized religion. Hindus strive to achieve dharma, which is a code of living that emphasizes good conduct and morality. Hindus revere all living creatures and consider the cow a sacred animal. Hindus value many sacred writings as opposed to one holy book. Hinduism has no one founder but is instead a fusion of various beliefs. The word Hindu is derived from the Sanskrit word Sindhu which is the local name for the Indus River that flows through the north-western part of the Indian Subcontinent and its tributaries further knowns as Sapta Sindhu (land of seven rivers including Sindhu river). The word Hindu or Indu was used by Greeks to denote the country and people living beyond the Indus river. Megasthenes 'Indica' epitomizes the name for India and Indians around the 4th Century B.C.E. The Arabic term al-Hind or "the Indus", referred to the land of the people who live across the river Indus. By the 13th century, the word Hindustan began to be used as a popular alternative name for India, meaning the "land of the Indus". Towards the end of the 18th century, the European merchants and colonists referred collectively to the followers of the Dharmic religions in Hindustan-which geographically referred to most parts of the northern Indian Subcontinent-as Hindus .The word Hinduism was soon adopted by the Hindus themselves, as a term that encompassed their national, social and cultural identity. The word Hindu is believed to not appear in the Hindu scriptures, viz, Vedas, Upanishads, and Puranas. The Hindus are believers of and accept the authority of the said scriptures, hence, they are more accurately identified as Sanatanis. The Sapta Sindhu region has been an

advanced one throughout the history of Humans. It is clear from the ruins of cities such as Mohenjo-daro and Harappa (to name only the two most famous) that a highly advanced civilization was already well developed in the Sapta Sindhu region by c.3000 BCE, having grown from Neolithic period settlements dating to before 7000 BCE.

Sapta Sindhu is considered to be the initial abode of Aryans. According to the beliefs, this was the starting place of creation and the original country of Aryans. This Sapta Sindhu has a greater significance in the development of Indian culture and its contribution in the India knowledge System and Traditions.

Conceptual Clarification of Sapta Sindhu Region:-

The number of **seven** hold a important significance in Sanatan Dharma and particularly in Indian society such as **seven worlds in the universe, seven rivers (Sapta Sindhu), seven sages(Saptarishi), seven swaras in music, seven days in week, seven colors in rainbow, seven strings in veena, seven promises** given by husband-wife each other in marriage. The number seven has greatly symbolic associations in religion, mythology, superstition and philosophy. In this proposed paper, focus will be on the Sapta Sindhu region which is one of the important cultural centers of the world.



Sapta Sindhu means seven sacred rivers consist of Sindhu(Indus) river and its tributaries named as Jhelum(sanskrit name: vitasta), Chenab (Sanskrit: Askini), Ravi (Sanskrit

name: Purushini), Beas (Sanskrit name: Vipasha), Sutlej(Sutudri) and saraswati (sanskrit name: Sarsuti). The roots of Sapta Sindhu can be traced from the Rigveda, an ancient vedic sanskrit text and **zend Avesta** collection of religious texts of **Zoroastrianism** in which It is known as “ **Hapta Hindu**”.

Today Sapta Sindhu Region politically divided into many states such as undivided Punjab (Present eastern and Western Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh and Gilgit-Baltistan, Sindh Pradesh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

Rivers of Sapta Sindhu Region :-

Sindhu River:- Sindhu river which is also known as Indus river is one of the largest river basins in the world. The Sindhu River, also commonly referred to as the Indus River, is a major waterway in South Asia. One of the longest rivers in the world, the Sindhu has a total length of over 2,000 miles and runs south from the Kailash Mountain in Tibet all the way to the Arabian Sea in Karachi, Pakistan. It is the longest river in Pakistan, also passing through northwestern India, in addition to the Tibetan region of China and Pakistan.The Sindhu is a large part of the river system of the Punjab, which means "land of five rivers." Those five rivers—the Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej—eventually flow into the Indus.The Indus Valley is located on the fertile floodplains along the river. This region was home to the ancient Indus Valley Civilization, which was one of the oldest known civilizations. Indus Valley Civilization boasted houses with wells and bathrooms, underground drainage systems, a fully developed writing system, impressive architecture, and a well-planned urban center. Two major cities, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, have been excavated and explored. Remains include elegant jewelry, weights, and other items. Around 1500 BCE, invasions by the Aryans began to erode what was left of the Indus Valley

Civilization. The Aryan people settled in their place, and their language and culture have helped to shape the language and culture of today's India and Pakistan. Hindu religious practices may also have their roots in Aryan beliefs. Today, the Sindhu River serves as a key water supply to Pakistan and is central to the country's economy. In addition to drinking water, the river enables and sustains the country's agriculture.

Fish from the river provide a major source of food to communities along the river's banks. The Sindhu River is also used as a major transportation route for commerce.

Jhelum River:-

The Jhelum River flows from the Indian union territory of Jammu and Kashmir into Pakistani Punjab, passing through the Pakistani-administered territory of Azad Kashmir. It is the westernmost of the Punjab region's five rivers, and it flows through the Kashmir Valley. It is a Chenab River tributary with a total length of about 725 kilometers. The Jhelum originates at Vernag, in western Jammu and Kashmir union territory, in the Indian-administered portion of the Kashmir region, from a deep spring. The river flows north westward from the Pir Panjal Range's northern slope through the Vale of Kashmir to Srinagar's Wular Lake, which regulates its flow. The Jhelum emerges from the lake and flows westward, cutting through the Pir Panjal in a gorge that is 7,000 feet (2,100 meters) deep and has almost perpendicular sides.

Chenab:-

The Chenab originates from near the BaraLacha Pass in the Lahaul-Spiti part of the Zaskar Range. Two small streams on opposite sides of the pass, namely Chandra and Bhaga, form its headwaters at an altitude of 4,900 m. The united stream Chandrabhaga flows in the north-west direction through the Pangi valley, parallel to the Pir Panjal range. Near Kistwar, it cuts a deep gorge. It enters the plain area near Akhnoor in Jammu and Kashmir. From here it flows through the plains of Pakistani Punjab to reach Panchnad where it joins the Satluj after receiving the waters of Jhelum and Ravi rivers.

Ravi:-

Ravi, also known as Irawati to ancient Indians, rises on the northern face of Rohtang Pass in Himachal Pradesh and flows as two channels, Budhil and Tantgari, at an elevation of 4,423 msl and 4,418 msl, respectively, through the junction formed by the BaraBang- Dhauladhar range of the Himalayas.

It flows through Himachal Pradesh, primarily through the Chamba district, where it receives numerous tributaries. The river enters Punjab near Pathankot's Shahpur town, forms an international border while passing through Punjab's Gurdaspur and Amritsar districts, and finally exits Indian territory at Goina/Kakamari village, about 80 kilometers from Lahore. It is one of the few rivers with safe drinking water.

Beas:-

Veda Vyasa, the author of Indian epic Mahabharata, is the eponym of the river Beas; he is said to have created it from its source lake, the Beas Kund. Before Veda Vyasa, the Bipasa river was known as Saraswati. Rishi Vashishta, the great grandfather of Vyasa tried to jump into this river from an overlooking hillock, to sacrifice his soul. He tied himself with several cords to drown himself. However, the river altered form to become a sandbed, saving him. And in this course, the cords got broken, so Vashishta named the river Vipasa, which means cord-breaker. On account of this incident, the great Rishi opted to settle near the river, and made it a residence for some years. Thereby, it became known as Vashisht (after Vashishta).

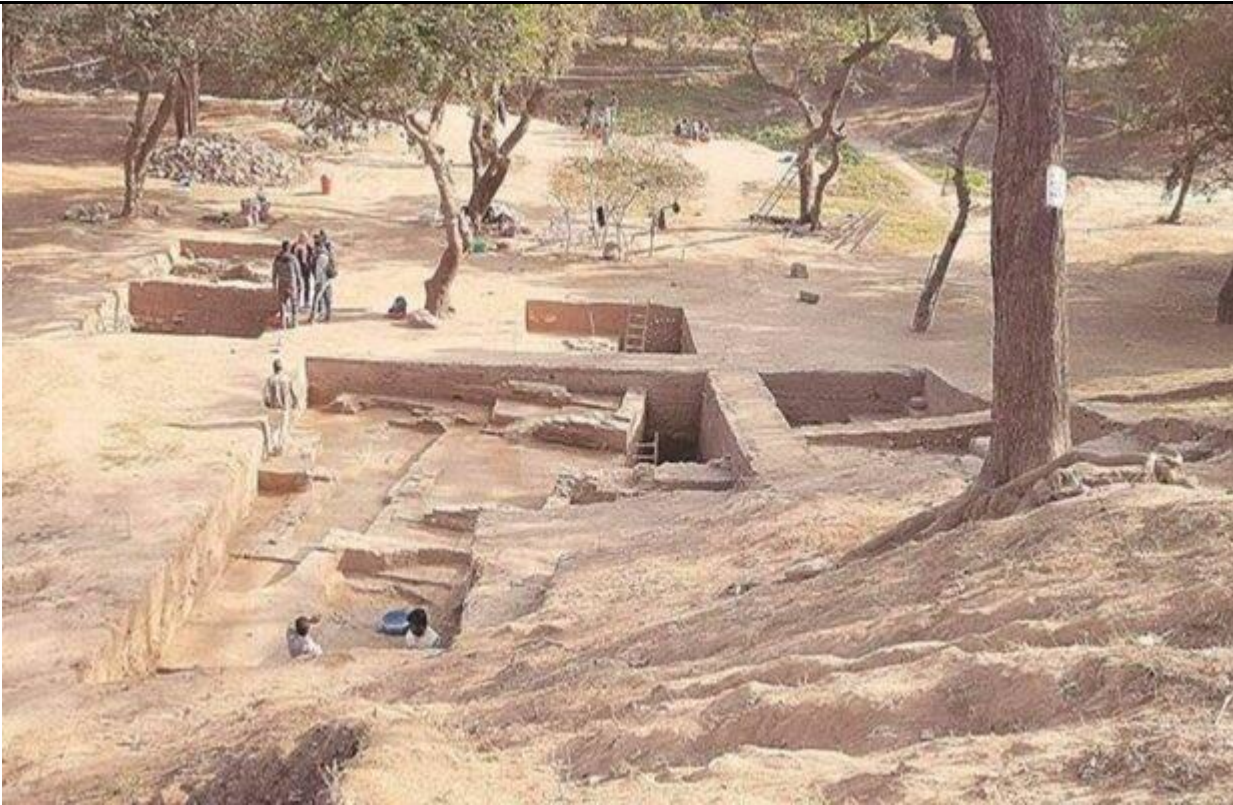
We can find Vashishta Brahmarishi Temple in this village. Ancient Greeks called it *Hyphasis*. In modern times it's also been called Bias or Bejah.

Satluj:-

Satluj is an ancient river, one of the tributaries of the Indus River and one of the five rivers that give the state of Punjab its name. Satluj enters India near Shipki La Pass from where it traverses through the many Himalayan valleys before it merges with Beas River in Punjab that in turn merges with Chenab in Pakistan before landing into Indus. Many big and small rivulets merge into Satluj at every step. Traveling in the valleys of Kinnaur along the Satluj River you can see numerous nameless small streams carrying the waters from the freshly melted glaciers to Satluj. In fact the ancient name of river Satadru comes from these million streams that make the Satluj. Satluj is tumultuous and ferocious in monsoon months. It is in a rage and if you look at it for sometime it can easily scare you. Many medium-sized boulders flow like a small ball in Satluj. The roar of water as it runs at the base of mighty mountains is all you hear within some distance of the river. It is the speed and force of the flow of Satluj that makes it perfect for the hydropower projects and no wonder India's oldest power plant was built on Satluj at Bhakra Nangal. Karcham Wangtoo Hydroelectric Project near the villages of Karcham and Wangtoo stands out in the valley as the only major man made unit surrounded by nature.

Saraswati:-

The Saraswati is a major Rig Vedic river mentioned in the Rig Veda and other Vedic texts. It is part of the **Sapta Sindhu** rivers mentioned in the Rig Veda. The other rivers are Sindhu (Indus), Sutudri (Satluj), Vitasta (Jhelum), Vipasa (Beas), Askini (Chenab) and Parushni (Ravi). The texts describe the Saraswati as a mighty and powerful river. The Rig Veda says the Saraswati flows between the Satluj in the west and the Yamuna in the east, and as flowing into the *samudra*. Later Vedic texts and also the Mahabharata mention that the river dried up in a desert. Many modern scholars have identified the Saraswati of Rigvedic times with the Ghaggar-Hakra river system in northwestern India and eastern Pakistan. According to experts, the Saraswati originated from the Har-ki-Dun glacier in Garhwal in Uttarakhand. It is believed that the river was 1500 km long, 5 m deep and 3 - 15 km wide. The Saraswati flowed between 6000 and 4000 BCE after which it dried up due to tectonic shifts of the earth.



Archeologists have unearthed a 1600-year-old site in Haryana's Sandhai village in Yamunanagar district that had linked with human settlements that grew around the legendary Saraswati river.

Sapta Sindhu, Pre-Vedic tribes, Vedic Tribes and Tradition of India Society:-

Dasas:- Dasa has several meanings, servant or slave, devotee or worker and primarily means someone dedicated to the welfare of another. Dasas mentioned in the Rig Veda as enemies of the Aryans were robbers, bandits, dacoits and outcast Aryans. As the enemies of the gods they are demonic forces of chaos - the Asuras of the Purāṇ as. They were the raiders who attacked their settlements and villages and stole their crops and cattle. There are many hymns calling upon Indra to help in their defeat and to protect against their depredations and to recover the stolen cattle and even add to their herds by confiscating the cattle of the Dasyus. Shivalik Hills are believed to have been inhabited by the Dasas. Due to constant efforts of Rishi Vishwamitra and Vashishta Dasas were accepted into the Aryan fold.

Kinners:- "Kim+ Nara" means "what kind of strange person they are". "According to Bhagwat Purana" Kinner traces their origin from the shadow of Lord Brahma. Look of kinnaur is that of a half man and half horse means people with Ashwamukha. Rig Vedas have no mention or reference to kinners. According to a legend Praduman, son of lord Krishna was the earliest King of kinner. It is believed that Vir Bhadra, the six times CM of Himachal is the 131st descendant of this dynasty. Kalidas has mentioned them in his book 'Kumarasambhava'. Even today this tradition-loving community has preserved its pristine heritage. The renowned poet Kalidasa, who belonged to Ujjain, has described Kinners in many of his works. In his famous Meghdoot, he has mentioned the singing Kinners who adorned the Kuber's royal court at Alkapuri. Describing the Kinners as worshippers of Lord Shiva and music lovers, he has portrayed them as aides and subjects of Kuber's kingdom. The Kinners have been described as delicate beauties with a melodious voice. They adorned themselves with flowers and wild fruits and their love tales also find a

mention in the ancient folklore. The learned writer Rahul Sanskritayan in his famous book Kinner Desh was written about the natives of Kinnaur. He wrote that this community resided on the Tibet border, towards the south west of Kailash Mansarovar. In the Ramayana, Kinners are described as natives of the area around the Shitoda river. Many other ancient texts describe them as dwellers of the Himalayan mountains like Himvaan and Mahaneel. With the passage of time, the Kinner tribes confined themselves to the inner Himalayan regions between the Sutlej and its tributaries. Epics like Markandey Puran describe Kinners as Shaivites residing in the exuberant Himalayan environs. Many other texts describe them as musicians in Lord Shiva's court. In fact the abode of Kinners – Kinnaur – located in the Kinner Kailash Mountain is considered to be the abode of Lord Shiva.

Kiratas:- The Bhairvi classic, "Kiratarjuniya" is woven around the historical battle that took place between the kiratas king and Arjuna. Later on Kiratas came to be known as "Mavanas" or "Mavies" In the region across the Jamuna and the Satluj. The kiratas' powerful king was Shambar who fought against the Aryan King "Divodasa" They lived in towns and built forts. They are referred to in the Mahabharata together with the Yaunas or Yavanas, Kambojas, Gandharas, and Barbaras, who all dwelt in the northern region or Uttarapatha; while the Ramayana mentions them along with the Mlecchas, or 'barbarians', another non-Aryan tribe. Historical reference suggests that the Kiratas were outside the Aryan fold. It has been said that the Kiratas along with the Hunas, Andhras, Pulindas, Pulkasas, Abhiras, Suhmas, Yavanas, Khasas, and other impure tribes had purified themselves by offering their allegiance to Lord Krishna. The Kiratas are mentioned in the Vishnu Purana in a long list of Indian peoples and countries, where they also seem to have been located in the northern region.

Kiratas are mentioned in the Yajur Veda and in Atharva Veda. In Manu's Dharmashastra Kiratas are mentioned as degraded Kshatriyas. The Hindu mythology gives an indication of the Kiratas' geographical position.

In the epic Mahabharata, Bhima, the Pandava meets the Kiratas to the east of Videha, where his son Ghatotkacha is born. The people who lived in the Himalayas, especially the eastern Himalayas, were called Kiratas. Kiratas are also referred to as gold-like or yellow. History reveals that the Kiratas were located in the Uttarapatha.

Nagas:-

They were worshippers of Nagas (Serpents). Their famous kings were Vasuki, Kali and Takshaka. In Hindu mythology there are 8 nagas (serpents)- Shesh, Takshaka, Vasuki, Vajra, Danshan, Kar, kotik, Kemkali, Sankhu and Kali. Famous shrines of Nagas : "Nagchala" near Mandi town, "Rewalsar Lake" and "Kamru Naga". Mansa Devi is said to be the goddess of snakes. There is in Kashmir a ruined historical temple, "Aba-Van " which in the past had been visited by a great number of snake worshippers.

In kangra some places such as "Shibu-ka-Than" (Nurpur), "Saloh" (Palampur) and Tripal (Kangra) where naga shrines known for curing snake bite are situated. In Chamba at Bharmour, there is a temple of "Kelang Naga " near the village kugti.

Khasas:- The ancient "khasdesh" was their homeland, situated between the north western provinces and Nepal. In 'Brihat samhita" of Varahmihira, the khasas were mentioned with kuluta, tanganas and kashniras. Today they are distributed in Shimla, Sirmaur, parts of Kullu and Kinnaur. In kinnaur they call themselves khashiyas. Khasas got supremacy over Dasas and kinnars. They gave the name to kashgar and Kashmir. Khasas have khoond (warrior groups). Mainly two types of khoond of the community form the basis of subgroups these are "Shatha " (kaurva group) and Pasha (pandava group). Thoda (Martial bow and arrow game) is their common interest and they arrange this sport in an open courtyard or ground from time to time. Ancestral property is divided among all the sons. But eldest and in some cases, the youngest son gets the additional share. This is called "Jethong" for the eldest brother and "Kani-Shiong" for the youngest brother. They organized themselves in families and villages and elected "Mavi" or "Mavana" meaning strong person among them.

Pishachas:- Pishachas are flesh-eating demons in Buddhist and Hindu mythology. Legend describes them as the sons of either Krodha (figuratively "Anger") or as Dakṣa's daughter Piśāca. They have been described to have bulging veins and protruding, red eyes. They are believed to have their own languages, known as Paiśāci. According to one legend, they are sons of Kashyapa and Krodhavasa, one of the daughters of Prajapati Daksha. The Nilamat Puran of the 7th century mentions the valley of Kashmir being inhabited by two tribes: the Nagas and the Pisachas. Piśācas like darkness and traditionally are depicted as haunting cremation grounds along with other monsters like bhutas and vetālas. Piśācas supposedly possess the paranormal ability to shapeshift and assume any forms at will, and may also become invisible. They also feed on human energy. Sometimes, they possess human beings and alter their thoughts, and the victims are afflicted with a variety of maladies and abnormalities like insanity. Certain mantras are supposed to cure such afflicted persons and drive away the Piśāca which may be possessing that particular human being. In order to keep the Piśāca away, they are given their share of offerings during certain religious functions and festivals. The origin of Piśāca is unknown, although it may be the personification of the will-o'-the-wisp. Pāṇini, in his Aṣṭādhyāyī, described the Piśāca as a "warrior clan". In the ancient literature, the Dardic people in the north of Kashmir were referred to as Piśāca and Dardic languages were called Paiśāci. They are said to have been descendants of Prajāpati Kaśyapa.

Yakshas:- The yakshas are a class of spirit beings or semi divine beings who are mentioned in Hindu, Buddhist and Jain literature as inhabitants of the subterranean earth and protectors of treasures. Historically, a tribe of yakshas, known for their wealth and valor, seemed to have ruled some region in the foothills of the Himalayas, which was probably visited by the Pandavas during their sojourns into the north. Their female counterparts, known as the yakshinis are known for their beauty and charm.

While the male yakshas are depicted in Hindu art and architecture as portly and deformed, the yakshas or yakshinis are depicted as women of great charm and beauty. We find references to the yakshas and yakshinis in the epics, the Puranas and in the works of Kalidasa. They describe two types of yakshas, benevolent and malevolent. The Yakshas are described in Hindu literature as the brothers of demonic beings (rakshasas), who live further down below the earth in the subterranean planes.

They are mentioned in both the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and in several Puranas. In some folk traditions of India, the yakshas are also worshiped as local deities.

Vedic Tribes:-

The Bharatas were an early Vedic tribe that existed in the latter half of the second millennium B.C.E. The earliest mentioned location of the Bharatas was on the first Sarasvati River in southern Afghanistan. Under the tribal king Divodāsa, the Bharatas moved through the Hindu Kush mountains and defeated Śambara. Divodāsa's descendant, Sudās, won the Battle of the Ten Kings against a Puru-led coalition, which set the scene for the initial compilation of hymns of the Rigveda. After the battle, the Bharatas and other Puru clans would eventually form the Kuru Kingdom, which was the first attested state in Indian history.

Sapta Sindhu, Takshashila University and Indian Knowledge Tradition:-



India has a long and venerable history in the field of higher education. In ancient times, the country was known to have been home to the oldest formal universities in the world. The world's first University was established in Takshila or Taxila or Takshashila (now in Pakistan) in 700BC. This center of learning was situated about 50 km west of Rawalpindi in Pakistan. It was an important Vedic/Hindu and Buddhist center of learning but wasn't as well organized as the University of Nalanda. The Vayu Purana traces the start of Takshila to Taksha, son of Bharata and is also mentioned in Mahabharata,

citing Dhaumya as one of the Acharyas. There are several mentions of this University in the Buddhist Jataka Tales. Chinese travelers like Fa Hian (Faxian) and Huiyen Tsang (XuanZang) also speak of Takshila in their writings. More than 10,500 students from all over the world studied here. The campus accommodated students who came from as far as Babylonia, Greece, Arabia and China and offered over sixty different courses in various fields such as science, mathematics, medicine, politics, warfare, astrology, astronomy, music, religion, and philosophy. Generally, a student entered Takshashila at the age of sixteen. Students would come to Takshila and take up education in their chosen subject with their teacher directly. Entrance exam to Takshila was very difficult and only 3 out of every 10 students passed the admission test. Panini, the famous Sanskrit grammarian, Kautilya (Chanakya) and Charaka, the famous physician of ancient India, and Chandragupta Maurya were the products of this university. It gained its importance again during the reign of Kanishka. It was probably the earliest of the ancient seats of higher education. Takshashila is perhaps best known because of its association with Chanakya. The famous treatise Arthashastra (Sanskrit for The knowledge of Economics) by Chanakya, is said to have been composed in Takshashila itself. During the 800 years that Takshila was operational, it attained great fame. The University consisted of 300 lecture halls with stone benches for sitting, laboratories, Observatory called the Ambudharaavlehi for astronomical research Massive Library called Dharma Gunj or Mountain of Knowledge, consisting of 3 buildings: Ratna Sagar, Ratnodavi and Ratnayanjak. It is believed that Chanakya composed the Arthashastra at this place. Both Buddhist and Hindu theologies were taught here.

Sharda Peeth as a Ancient Learning in the Sapta Sindhu Region:-



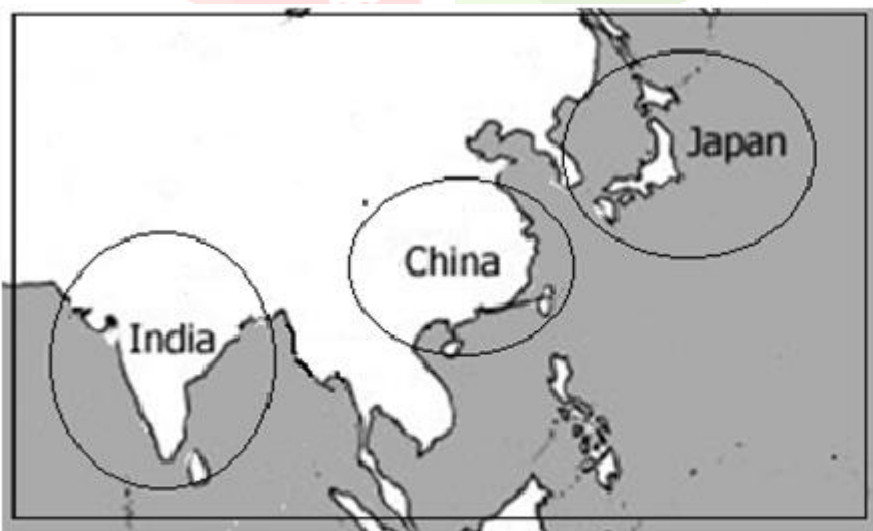
Sharada Peeth is a ruined Hindu temple and ancient center of learning located in Pakistan administered Kashmir. Between the 6th and 12th centuries CE, it was among the most prominent temple universities in the Indian subcontinent. Known in particular for its library, stories recount scholars traveling long distances to access its texts. It played a key role in the development and popularization of the Sharada script in North India, causing the script to be named after it, and Kashmir to acquire the moniker "*Sharada Desh*", meaning "country of Sharada". Sharada Peeth is referred to by various historians,

detailing its mythological status and prominence in ancient India. Its historical development is traced through references made to it by various historical sources. Although the Sharada script did not originate in Kashmir, it was used extensively in Sharada Peeth, and acquired its name from the institution. This has fed the popular belief that the script was developed in Kashmir. Some historians have suggested that Sharada Peeth was never a center of learning, on the basis that in present-day, there are no sizable ruins from a supposed educational site. In response, it has been said that Sharda is prone to earthquakes, and debris from a collapsed abandoned university are likely to have been used by townspeople for other constructions.

Culture Relationship of Sapta Sindhu and East Asia:-

East Asia is the easternmost part of Asia, characterized both geographically and ethnographically. China, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, and Taiwan are modern East Asian states. India is a "**spiritual neighbor**" of East Asian countries because of a center of pilgrimage. Historically, the Sapta Sindhu region has interacted through the vehicle of Buddhism that has developed, nurtured, and promoted spiritual connection to east asia.

Sapta Sindhu and India-Japan Cultural Relationship:-



India and Japan have long cultural and civilizational ties. The cultural ties go back to the 6th century when Buddhism spread to Japan through China and Korea. Buddhism had been introduced to Japan in 538 AD by a Korean king. In 752 AD, Bodhisena, an Indian monk performed consecration or eye-opening of a statue of the Buddha Sakyamuni at the Todaiji Temple in Nara.

Sapta Sindhu and India-China Relationship:-



Cultural and economic relations between China and India date back to ancient times. The Silk Road not only served as a major trade route between India and China, but is also credited for facilitating the spread of Buddhism from India to East Asia. The **Silk Road** or **Silk Route** was an ancient network of trade routes that were central to cultural interaction through regions of the Asian continent connecting the West and East from China to the Mediterranean Sea. The Silk Road derives its name from the

lucrative trade in Chinese silk carried out along its length, beginning during the Han dynasty (207 BCE – 220 CE). The Central Asian sections of the trade routes were expanded around 114 BCE by the Han dynasty, largely through the missions and explorations of the Chinese imperial envoy, Zhang Qian. Trade on the Silk Road was a significant factor in the development of the civilizations of China, the Indian subcontinent, Persia, Europe, the Horn of Africa and Arabia, opening long-distance, political and economic relations between the civilizations. Though silk was certainly the major trade item from China, many other goods were traded, and religions, syncretic philosophies, and various technologies, as well as diseases, also traveled along the Silk Routes. In addition to economic trade, the Silk Road served as a means of carrying out cultural trade among the civilizations along its network.

Sapta Sindhu and India-Mongolia Relationship:-

Some Indian & Mongolian historians have conjectured about migration of some tribes from Kangra kingdom to Mongolian territory 4300 years ago. Mangaldev, son of the King headed the migrants and majority of them returned to India after staying there for about 2000 years though there is no historical evidence yet to prove this. In 1924, the Prime Minister of Mongolia Mr. A. Amar mentioned in his book – “Short History of Mongolia” that Mongolian forefathers came from the backside of Himalayan Mountains. Another interesting thing often quoted, is about ‘Ganga Nuur’ lake which accordingly to many Mongolians derived its name after ‘Ganga River’ in India from where some Mongolian Lamas brought water and poured into the lake in Sukhbaatar Province and naming it so. As for our strongest cultural bond, Buddhism appears to have traversed to Mongolian steppes through Tibet and Himalayan region. During the Hunnu State of the 3rd century BC and later during the period of Great Mongol Empire Buddhist monks, several traders from India visited Mongolia. In 552 BC, a Lama Narendrayash from the State of Udayana (Northern India) with some others visited Nirun state. Since to most Mongols, India is the land of Buddha, Lamas and students from Mongolia used to travel to Nalanda, once the largest residential University in India, to study Buddhism. India and Mongolia are ancient lands of the ancient people of Asia. The historic and cultural collaboration between India and Mongolia is most fascinating and unique and is as old as the history of the spread of Indian culture and ideas into Central Asia and Siberia.

Sapta Sindhu, Padmasambhava and Mahayana Buddhism:-

Guru Padmasambhava was known in Tibet as one of the founding fathers of Tibetan Buddhism, who appeared in Tibet in 749 A.D, and spent 54 years there. Other two founders were Acharya Shanta Rakshita and prevalent King Thisong Deotsen. Padmasambhava's birth in this world was mixed with myth and legend. The Buddha Shakyamuni's prophecy about the emanation of Padmasambhava in this world was found recorded in various Sutra and Tantra Texts. Following is one of the records maintained in a Sutra called- "Myang-hDas-mDo".

It is said that from the Western Blissful Paradise, Buddha Amitabha had committed to take birth in the incarnate form of Padmasambhava for the welfare of sentient beings in the Jambu Dwipa ,the spiritual country of Buddha Shakyamuni. The lord Amitabha chooses his birth-place in 'Dhanakosa Lake ' in ancient Urgen Country, which is spiritually believed to be a sacrosanct place of Vidhya-dhara, cardinal cemetery of eight great cemeteries and also regarded a center of Ten Abodes of Heruka Deities.

Guru Padmasambhava after completing his spiritual mission in Tibet selected four major hidden lands and four minor hidden lands around Tibet. During his quest for hidden lands around Tibet, paid a visit to this land along with his twenty five disciples.

Padmasambhava also established the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet, at Samye (present-day Lhoka). According to legend, after various unsuccessful attempts by Santaraksita to build the monastery, he suggested to Trisong Detsen, the 38th emperor of Tibet, that the tantric master Padmasambhava be invited to build the monastery.

Sapta Sindhu, Adi-shankaracharya and Advaita Philosophy:-

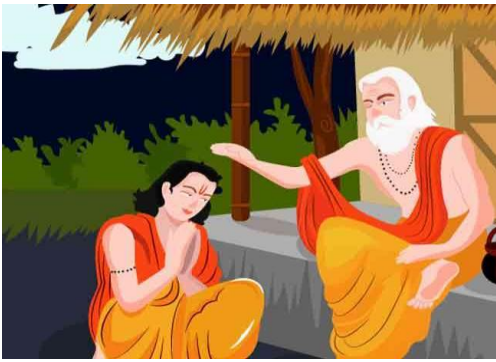


Shankaracharya visited Kashmir with the intention of advancing Vedantic knowledge. That time Kashmiris were culturally and spiritually much advanced and believed strongly in the greatness of both Shiva and Shakti. Adi Shankaracharya - gained further depth in spiritualism and mysticism in Kashmir. Kashmiri Pandits highly appreciative of knowledge, awarded a degree of the Sharda Peetha, the highest honor conferred on any dignitary of knowledge when Shankaracharya visited Sharda, a famous temple, Shrine of Goddess Saraswati and a famous university of learning.

It is believed that Adi Shankaracharya entered the Sharda temple from its Southern gate and had a debate with the Scholars of that Area/Temple. Advaita Vedanta refers to the non-dualistic school of Hindu philosophy, which is derived mostly from the Upanishads and elaborated in detail by eminent scholars like Gaudapada and Sri Adishankaracharya. Dvaita means duality, and Advaita means nonduality. In simple terms,

Advaita means absence of the duality between subject and object. In our wakeful consciousness we experience duality, but in deep sleep only nonduality.

Sapta Sindhu and Guru- Shishya Parampara :-



Sapta Sindhu is also known for its Guru-Shishya Tradition. The Guru-Shishya tradition or parampara denotes a succession of teachers and disciples in Indian- origin religions such as Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism and Buddhism (including Tibetan and Zen Traditions)

“Gu” means dark and “Ru” means light. So, “Guru” can be roughly translated as darkness to light, or possibly one who leads from darkness to light. The Guru is a teacher who guides the Shishya’s (student’s) life or a spiritual mentor who leads the shishya from

blindness or ignorance to bliss, wisdom, and enlightenment.

The Guru-Shishya parampara has been an inevitable part of education in ancient Indian culture. This involved the tradition of a living and learning relationship between the Guru and the Student (Shishya), signifying the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual bonding between them. This strong bond between the Guru and the Shishya enables the Guru to become a mentor who leads the Shishya from ignorance to wisdom, and enlightenment. Guru-Shishya proximity thus is not only a part of our social order, but also a milestone in the life of a human being in society.

The revival of this spirit and its practice in the field of education at all levels is the urgent need of the hour.

Conclusion:-

Sapta Sindhu and Its Contribution to Indian Knowledge Tradition:-

Culture of Sapt Sindhu is often considered a fusion of various cultures. Throughout Indian history we find its civilization has been heavily influenced by foreign cultures and customs. The influence of foreign culture initially affected **Indian philosophy, literature, art and architecture**. The transformation was in slow pace in those days. Kings, Merchants and travelers played an important role in carrying the cultures from one place to the other. This dynamic **culture of Sapta Sindhu** is a result of the rich contributions of all these diverse cultural groups over a long period of time.

Sapta-Sindhu has always been a great learning center. All these cultural elements of the Sapta Sindhu region have contributed in their sincere and dedicated struggle to find unity for the heterogeneous society. Culture of Sapta Sindhu appreciated the multi-racial, multi-religious and multilingual pattern of Indian Society. It directed towards the creation of a healthy social order free from dissensions, discords and conflicts. Sapta Sindhu is popularly known for its culture and one of the oldest in world history, dating from ancient antiquity to the modern era. The scope, history, complexity and density of the culture are vast because it consists the whole provinces of Pakistan and Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh from Indian side. Some of the major areas of the Sapta Sindhu which are traditionally rich include : Philosophy, Poetry, artistry, music, architecture, traditions and values. Some important cities of the Sapta Sindhu have more significant for the people of this region such as Jammu (known as City of Temples), Kurukshetra(important hindu pilgrimage center and also land of Bhagwat Geeta), Amritsar (most sacred pilgrim spots, for sikhs), Kangra(home to the katoch dynasty as one of the

oldest surviving royal dynasties in the world)etc.The land and culture of sapta sindhu is so vast that it has not been explored yet. People of this region are heterogeneous comprising different tribes, clans, communities and are known to celebrate each and every tradition of their culture, have strong beliefs on black magic and other superstitions.However recently due to increase of literacy, people have become somewhat rational but have kept their culture and tradition alive.In Villages people usually live in small communities, they live in peace and harmony with each other.They take active part in the happiness/obstacles of each other and give a great deal of respect to their culture, norms and run their lives according to their set traditions.

Therefore, Sapta Sindhu is known as the **Cultural Cradle** of Asia.

References:-

- Fried, Morton H. (1975). *The Notion of Tribe*. Cummings Publishing Company. ISBN 0-8465-1548-2.
- James, Paul (2006). *Globalism, Nationalism, Tribalism: Bringing Theory Back In*. London: Sage Publications.
- Bose, A.R. 1969. Tribal Situation in India, Man in India, Vol.49, No.3, pp-217-224.
- Bose, N.K. 1971. The Tribal Life in India, New Delhi: National Book Trust.
- Bottomore, T.B. 1964. Sociology, New Delhi: Blackie & Son (India) Ltd.
- Chandra, Romesh. 1987. Questfor Environmental Adaptation in a Highland Society: Case of Kinnauras, Man in India, Vol- 64 No- 3.
- Charak, Sukhdev Singh. 1978. History and Culture ofHimalayan States, New Delhi: Lights and Life.
- Chaudhury. S.K. 2004. Tribal Idenditv, Delhi: Rawat Publications.
- Chaudhury. Sukant.K and Patnaik, S.M. (cds) 2008. Indian Tribals and the Mainstream, New Delhi: Rawat Publications.
- Coser. A. & Rosenberg (Ed). 1976. Sociological theory, New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Desai, I.P. 1955. Caste and Joint Family; Sociological Bulletin Vol.-IV No. 2.
- Dube, S.C. 1985. Village India, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Duetser. 1939. Kunawar, (reprint) 1996. Shimla: Himachal Academy of Arts, Culture and Language.
- Ghurye, G.S. 1958. The Schedule Tribe; Bombay: Popular Book Depot.
- Hasan, A. 1992. Tribal Development in India, Lucknow: Print House.
- Hussain, N. 1991. Tribal India Today, New Delhi: Hamam Publications.
- Kuper, Adam. 1978. Anthropologist and Anthropology: - The British School 1922-72, London: Penguin.
- Leach, E.R. 1954. Political System ofHighland Burma, London: Bell & Co
- Majumdar, D.N.& Madan, T.N. 2000. An Introduction to Social Anthropology, Delhi: Mayoor Paperbacks, Shahdara.
- Majumdar, D.N. 1960. Himalayan Polyandry, Bombay: Asia Publishing House.