

Atharvavedic Culture: The Earliest Culture of Indian Sub-continent

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The real picture of the initial stage of Indian culture exists in ancient classics the great Veda's. Out of ample study and research even till now the historical truth of Vedic period has not been revealed on account of which, there were many intricacies, still exist not only about the initial stage of Indian culture but other cultures of the world. The research analyses about the concept of Indian History and Culture is even now revolving around the concept of history established by Maxmullar¹ like scholars. Their work is a major guiding force in this area of research. Significant to the view of the study of Vedic Culture among all four Vedas, excluding to Rig-Veda other three has been excepted of Post-Vedic Period (not more than 1000 BC)². Excluding the three Vedas (Rik, Yajus, Saman) the study and research of the Atharva Veda, accepted as fourth Veda³. There is possibility of revelation of such aspects of Indian history which may be called important in the view of the history of Vedic period. So the studies of Atharva Vedic culture revealed new direction not only to the Vedic history but gave new vision to the different aspects of Indo-Iranian and Indo-European Aryan family culture. The geographical environment and other facts described in Atharva-Veda pertains it especially to the eastern zone (Koshal-Magadh) of India.

In the eastern region of the Vindhya-Ganges valley there are many evidences of very ancient human settlement. V.S. Pathak correlates with the dwell pertaining Kush (Kan Prithivyam shete) to Tokharian Villatic word (Ku-sai) during his analysis of tradition of the name of locations of eastern regional Kush, Koshal, Kushawati, Kushsthal, Kushinagar, Kaushambi and the name of individuals Kush, Kushi, Kaushik, Kushadhvaj, Kushamb, Kushashva and invites the attention towards the meaning of Gu-Go-Ku in Iranian sublanguages along with Indo-European Go-Gous-Ku tradition and finally concludes by saying that there was relation in between eastern and middle Asia even since the very ancient time⁴. The linguistic evidence of Ikshvaku and Bharat also established the cultural stream of this area before hand of Rigveda⁵. Though it is challenging to say against the fixed concept⁶ of the arrival of the Aryans and their spread towards the east from Sapta Sandhya area, but new researches and evidence support firmly this fact that a typical Aryan Culture was in existence in this eastern region before the Sapta Sandhya area⁷. This culture was a particular of rice producers in Vindhya Ganges region, which has been named Brihi culture by historians⁸. This particular culture was related with Atharvaveda.⁹ The different task and talk events along with magic depict its specialty.¹⁰ These evidences of rural life are also called pre-historic.¹¹ Although Atharvaveda may be after Rig-Veda according to compilation but maximum contents of Atharvaveda seem to be pre-Rig-Vedic according to the cited fact, a group of historians accept the Atharvaveda older than Rig-veda.¹² The Atharvaveda also said as Bhrigvangiras and Ahrvangiras the word Atharvan which are related with Atharvaveda was very ancient. The fire priest tradition which is in Atharvaveda, is pre-Rig-Vedic.¹³ The above given fact attract our attention towards Atharva and Angiras who proves the founder of fire worships in this country.¹⁴ There are many evidences in Rig-Veda which prove the above cited facts. One of the mantra in Rig-Veda¹⁵ says, "Atharva got the entity of dewine powers by yagya", in another mantra of Rig-Veda¹⁶ it is said, "Atharva fire of an expands the way by yagya".

We get the same description about Angira in Rigveda¹⁷, "O' Agni you have adorned the determination of Devas by being excessive of Angira (fire)." In other verse of Rigveda¹⁸ says, "O! Agni you are the only first Angira Rishi." The word Ather of Atharvan means fire. This term is cognate of the word Arthra, Atar and Artra. There are so many evidences of the word Athar in Avesta which its use in Rigveda is rare.¹⁹ On the basis of this fact V.S. Pathak hold the view that "before the codification of Avesta and Rig-Veda a tradition of fire worshiping priest Athrvan = Arthrvan was present.²⁰ It means in the time of pre-Rig-Vedic period the fire worshiper, Arthrvan, Athravan had been originated. The Angiras associated to Athravan was also very ancient. It is accepted that he is older than Athrvan. Angiras has been described even in Greek and Latin literature.²¹ The early Greek word Aggelas, which recognized in latter days as Angles; is cognate of Sanskrit word Angira. The original form of these Agni priest Angiras may be observe in very ancient period of Indo-European culture.²²

Bhrigu was also associated with Atharvaveda. Atharvaveda has been called by the name Bhrigvangiras also. There is a term found in 'Gopath Brahman'²³. The joint family of Bhrigu and Angiras has been called by the name of Bhrigvangiras or Atharvangiras.²⁴

The Atharvangiras found in Atharvavedic Skumbh Sutra.²⁵ In the Gopath Brahman²⁶ and Kaushik Sutra²⁷ it is called Bhrigvangiro Veda.

On the light of above facts we can hold the opinion that Atharvaveda was expressed as the religious literature of joint Atharva-Bhrigvangira family. This Veda is called Brahma-Veda because related to knowledge of Brahma (Brahma-Vidya)²⁸. The Atharvaveda pertaining to Brahma-Vidya came into light in the eastern rice producing region. By the excavation of different sites and analysis of archaeological evidences of Vindhya-Gangetic region. G. R. Sharma has established relation of Atharvavedic Brahmodan with Brihi (Rice) Culture.²⁹ There are ample references of odan (Rice) in Atharvaveda many verses (mantra) of Atharvaveda's has been offered to Brahmodan.³⁰ The residue of cultivated and uncultivated Brihi (Rice) has been found on Neolithic Strata (7 to 3 thousand B.C.) from the archaeological excavation of Vindhya and Gangetic valley's main center's like Adva, Sone, Chirand, Sohagaura, Narhan and recently in Lahura-deva³¹.

The linguistic evidence of Brihi verify it very ancient. The Brihi of Sanskrit, oryza of Latin, Arisa of Greek, Iso of Italian, Ris of French, Boro of Marathi and Boro of Hindi are synonyms. Many kind of Brihi has been described in Taittiriya Samhita.³² In Satapatha Brahmana³³ both cultivated and uncultivated rice have been mentioned. Ample references of Brihi in Atharvaveda verify the fact that the lives of Aryans were closely associated with Brihi. It was indispensable even for the King³⁴ to worship and visit the fortune making Brihi. It is told in Atharvaveda³⁵ that odana prevails around the universe as the Virat (great god). Undoubtedly odana was one of the important delicious edible of the eastern Indian Brihi producing region, even now odana (rice) is one of the most important edible of this region. For the purpose of use and production also Bloomfield³⁶ considers the odana as an inseparable part of Aryan life culture and he accepts it's as the very ancient tradition of the place.

In the light of above facts I undoubtedly observe that there was existed an Aryan culture in the region of Eastern India (Vindhya Gangetic Valley) before the Sapta Sindhu area. The Geographical region of Atharvaveda was extended from Munjwat mountain of Himalayan track to Ang-Magadha (currently State of Bihar). This Brihi producing region, proved very fertile in emergence of many philosophical and religious Rishi tradition. The Vratya, Atharvan, Angiras tradition of Atharvaveda and Sramana, Yoga, Six-Philosophical School and tantra tradition were also arisen in this region. The possibility of the extension of the Jain and the Buddha tradition in sixth century B.C. took place from the same Brihi (Rice) culture region.

The evidences received from Atharvaveda, associated Indo-European and Indo-Iranian family to early Indian culture. The study of Atharvavedic culture revealed many facts regarding the human culture. Atharvavedic people were resided here in the very early age. The archaeological evidences prove it upto 7000 B.C. Therefore, I conclude that Atharvavedic culture was existed as earliest culture of Indian sub-continent.

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