

Beyond Kings And Empires: Exploring Everyday Lives In Ancient India

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Abstract

The conventional narratives of historical inquiry have shifted from kings and empires to the complex everyday life of ancient India. In order to understand the subtleties of everyday routines, home dynamics, economic systems, religious practices, and cultural manifestations that built the civilization, this investigation digs into the everyday lives of people and families. The research seeks to provide a more thorough knowledge of the social, cultural, and dynamic factors at work in ancient Indian communities by refocusing emphasis on the experiences of ordinary people. Every chapter explores a certain topic, such as marketplaces, customs, everyday life, religion outside of temples, handicrafts, educational institutions, social classes, and holidays. By using a comprehensive approach, the study hopes to bring back the voices of the marginalized and unsung contributions, giving rise to a more complex understanding of the complex character of ancient Indian society.

Keywords: *Everyday Lives, Ancient India, Cultural dynamics, No Royal prospective.*

1. Introduction

While the narratives of countries and empires often take center stage, the intricate fabric of ordinary lives, which are the fundamental basis of a civilization, is frequently obscured by these narratives. While we are embarking on a trip through the corridors of time, we are making an effort to change our attention from the towering edifices of monarchs and the grandeur of empires to the core of society, which is the everyday lives of individuals in ancient India.

For a long time, history tales have been preoccupied with the exploits of rulers and the rise and fall of empires. As a result, the subtle aspects of everyday life have been pushed to the background [1]. We find the pulse of a civilization, however, in the fabric of daily life, in the hustling and bustling marketplaces, in the quiet corners of families, in the echoes of the workshops of artists, and in the whispers of religious activities that occur outside the walls of temples.

The purpose of this investigation is to go beyond the traditional confines of historical discourse, going beyond the realm of royal courts and imperial conquests. The revelation that in order to properly appreciate the core of ancient India, we must accept the lifestyles that were lived by its ordinary dwellers is something that draws us to the realization. The complex tapestry of culture, society, and dynamics that characterized ancient India may be found in the routines of everyday life, the transactions in marketplaces, the different religious rituals, and the personal details of families. These are the threads that are sewn together to produce the rich tapestry. Our mission is not only an intellectual endeavour; rather, it is a trip to discover the tales of

individuals who are often obscured by the larger narratives of power and control. We want to give a more thorough knowledge of the forces that built the civilization from the bottom up, and we plan to do this by immersing ourselves in the ebb and flow of the everyday [2]. While we are embarking on our journey to investigate the routine activities of ancient Indians, we are looking forward to the unveiling of the complex mosaic that serves as the foundation of the civilization. The presence of the lost voices, the silent contributions, and the unsung heroes whose existence, despite the fact that it is often concealed, holds the key to unlocking the genuine spirit of ancient India is being called for to be discovered the forgotten voices.

1.1.Daily Routines and Household Dynamics

In the book "Daily Routines and Household Dynamics," the author undertakes an intriguing investigation into the everyday lives of people and families. The story delves into the fabric of everyday life and reveals the complexities of the routines of ordinary people. It sheds light on the home obligations of these individuals as well as the subtle dynamics that molded families. heir domestic responsibilities and the subtle dynamics that shaped households [3]. From unravelling the tapestry of marriage customs to examining familial hierarchies, this chapter paints a vivid picture of the roles played by men and women in the ebb and flow of daily life, offering a nuanced understanding of the social fabric that defined ancient. This chapter creates a vivid picture of the roles played by men and women in the ebb and flow of everyday life, presenting a nuanced knowledge of the social fabric that formed ancient Indian civilization. From unravelling the tapestry of marriage rituals to studying family hierarchies, this chapter paints a vivid picture of the roles that men and women played in the ebb and flow of daily life.



Figure 1: Indian Ancient time

1.2. Markets and Trade Networks Focusing on economic aspects

Trade in Ancient India

In the book "Daily Routines and Household Dynamics," the author undertakes an intriguing investigation into the everyday lives of people and families. The story delves into the fabric of everyday life and reveals the complexities of the routines of ordinary people [4]. It sheds light on the home obligations of these individuals as well as the subtle dynamics that molded families. heir domestic responsibilities and the subtle dynamics that shaped households. From unravelling the tapestry of marriage customs to examining familial hierarchies, this chapter paints a vivid picture of the roles played by men and women in the ebb and flow of daily life, offering a nuanced understanding of the social fabric that defined ancientIt is impossible to deny the influence that business and trade have on the expansion of a country. Both the geographical location and the atmosphere of a nation are often factors that have an impact on the growth and development of the business sector in that country. Since the Himalayas are located to the north and the oceans are located to the south, India possesses a distinct edge. The growth of commerce to many regions of the globe has been made easier by the availability of maritime routes around the world. During ancient times, India was the leading exporter of a variety of goods, including silk, cotton, sugar, and precious stones. The renowned spice route was used to trade India's famous spices with the West, which resulted in the West's desire for these spices.

This merchandise was exchanged for gold and silver from a number of different countries. Nevertheless, the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the West had a huge influence on the commerce that took place in India [5]. Throughout its history, India's economy has been significantly influenced by trade and commerce. The results of archaeological excavations indicate that the expansion of India's economy was profoundly influenced by both land and maritime trading practices. India was once the most important commercial center in the world, with towns like as Harappa and Mohenjo Daro serving as trade centers. Trade contacts between ancient India and other civilizations, such as Mesopotamia, were robust. These interactions included the exchange of goods such as gold, silver, terracotta pots, precious stones, pearls, and other items [6].

India's dominance in international trade and business may be attributed to a number of causes, including the following:

- It was well known that the Hindus, in particular, were famed for their financial acumen, ingenuity, resilience, and honesty. The Indian business world was known for these qualities.
- The exceptional quality of Indian items earned them a well-deserved reputation. Because of their one-of-a-kind qualities, Indian goods become appealing to merchants all over the globe.
- The Native American society has a natural talent for shipbuilding, in addition to a profound comprehension of the sea routes, winds, and navigation patterns. They were able to engage in commerce with distant regions as a result of this.



Figure 2: trade in ancient time

1.3. Religious Practices Beyond Temples

Spirituality, in its most fundamental form, is intricately intertwined with the everyday activities of life [7]. Moving beyond the grandiosity of formal temple rites, this chapter shows a dazzling panorama of personal and varied religious activities that formed an intrinsic part of the average person's life.

The limitations of houses were the setting for the unfolding of a complex tapestry of rituals, which tightly connected people and families to their spiritual foundations [8]. These home rituals, which were often passed down from generation to generation, were not just routines; rather, they were threads that carefully weaved a feeling of continuity and belonging into the fabric of daily life.

The investigation goes farther into the domain of folk beliefs, which is where ancient Indians followed rituals that were founded in local traditions and oral histories. These customs were practiced in the privacy of their homes and communities. These beliefs, which were often marked by a strong connection to nature and the cycles of life, provided layers of complexity to the spiritual landscape that extended beyond the confines of official religious organizations. It demonstrates how ancient Indian communities were not constrained by fixed limits but rather welcomed a dynamic flow of spiritual ideas because of the lack of limitations. This syncretism, which was visible in daily actions, helped to cultivate a feeling of unity amid variety, so forming a distinctive cultural and religious identity that went beyond the bounds of particular temples or religious teachings. Having a more comprehensive grasp of the ancient Indian communities that were discovered. In this place, spirituality was not restricted to the confines of holy buildings; rather, it penetrated every aspect of everyday life, affecting relationships, molding ideals, and establishing a deep connection between humans and the divine. The cultural and religious landscape of ancient India thrived not just inside the somber halls of temples but also in the heart of households and communities, therefore producing a spiritual tapestry that expressed the actual essence of the culture and religion of the time.

2. Literature review

Brand, M. (2022) [9] The idea that religion is never simply present was investigated. Mattias Brand demonstrates in his book, *Religion and the Everyday Life of Manichaeans in Kellis*, the locations and times at which regular Egyptian families and individuals followed a Manichaean way of life that was prevalent in Egypt. The papyri from the fourth century provide a dynamic vision of daily religious activity, complete with all of the paradoxes, hazy borders, and constraints of everyday life. This is in contrast to the portrayal of this ancient religion as a well-structured and totalizing society. Following these microhistorical ideas, this book explains how family life, gift-giving, funeral rites, community meetings, and book writing are tied to our broader academic disputes concerning the shift in religious beliefs that occurred in late antiquity.

Boesche, R. (2003) [10] The Indian monarch Chandragupta Maurya, who ruled from around 317 to 293 B.C.E. and was the first person to combine the Indian subcontinent under an empire, had Kautilya as his major adviser. Chandragupta Maurya established the civilization of India. Kautilya, who lived about the year 300 B.C.E., was the author of the *Arthashastra*, which was a political science that was expressly created to train a wise king on how to govern successfully. In this work, Kautilya offers wide-ranging and truly fascinating discussions on war and diplomacy, including his wish to have his king become a world conqueror, his analysis of which kingdoms are natural allies and which are inevitable enemies, his willingness to make treaties he knew he would break, his doctrine of silent war or a war of assassination against an unsuspecting king, his approval of secret agents who killed enemy leaders and sowed discord among them, his view of women as weapons of war, his use of religion and superstition to bolster his troops and demoralize enemy soldiers, the spread of disinformation, and his humane treatment of conquered soldiers and subjects.

K. D. Menon (2011) [11], explored the relationship between gender and nationalist ideology within the context of Hindu right-wing parties in India, giving an insightful examination into the subject matter. The research conducted by Menon offers a comprehensive analysis of the many ways in which women find themselves actively engaging in the construction and preservation of nationalist discourses in their day-to-day lives. The book not only challenges conventional narratives that often ignore the agency of women in political and social movements, but it also sheds light on the profound dynamics of everyday nationalism by delving into the experiences of women linked with the Hindu right. This is accomplished by delving into the experiences of women who are affiliated with the Hindu right. Writing about the experiences of women who are involved with the Hindu right is one way to attain this goal. The book written by Menon provides a substantial addition to the corpus of literature on gender studies, nationalism, and the socio-political environment of modern India. This contribution is made possible via the thorough research and fascinating tales that are included in the book. Readers are presented with a viewpoint that is thought-provoking on the role that women play in forming and perpetuating nationalist ideals in their day-to-day experiences. This perspective is provided to them by the author.

Eric L. Santner (2007) [12], I have begun a research that is both thought-provoking and takes place at the intersection of psychoanalysis and religion. Santner engages with the works of

Freud and Rosenzweig in order to have a better understanding of the complexities that are often encountered in everyday life. In his narrative, he explores the underlying connections that exist between psychological and theological components, and he does it by weaving a tale. In this book, which is a ground-breaking contribution to the body of literature, insightful insights on the way in which individuals navigate the everyday aspects of life are provided. These concepts are seen through the lenses of psychoanalysis and religion. The reader is provided with a thorough and thought-provoking grasp of the intricate interaction that exists between the psychological and theological worlds in the fabric of everyday life by Santner. This is accomplished via his academic competence and his technique, which pulls from a range of disciplines.

3. Education and Knowledge

3.1.The Vedic system

The Vedas are the earliest form of Indian literature, and they served as the foundation for the culture and philosophy of ancient India. It was the Vedas, Vedangas, and Upanishads that served as the foundation for this Vedic educational system. The Vedas, which consist of four different books—the Rigveda, the Samaveda, the Yajurveda, and the Atharvaveda—are the building blocks upon which Indian civilization is built.

A Gurukul was the place where these Vedas were learned. Because of their residential aspect, Gurukuls were places where students lived with their respective professors or Gurus. Upanayana was the name of the initiation ritual that was used to determine who was allowed to enroll in Gurukuls. Daily lessons consisted of the Guru or instructor reciting Vedas, and the pupils were responsible for learning and memorizing them. During that time period, pupils depended only on their memories since there was no written record of knowledge [13].

Parishads, which are academies, and Sammelans, which are conferences, were the two other types of institutions that existed in addition to Gurukuls. There is a reference to a school known as Panchala Parishad that can be found in the Upanishad literary works. These academies served as educational institutions of a higher level.

In addition to this form of traditional training, there was also a different style of institution that was designed to encourage more sophisticated research and study. The name for this practice was Brahman-sangha.

3.2.Education of women

It was not common practice to educate women in the same fields as males. Subjects such as housekeeping, dancing, music, and cuisine were among those that they studied. There were Vedas and Vedangas that were taught to women, but they were only allowed to learn the "necessary" ones or the ones that were needed to perform rites [14]. Historically, women were the ones who led upanayana rituals. Sadyodwahas, or women who had completed their education up to the time of their marriage, and Brahmavadinis, or women who had never married and had maintained their education throughout their whole lives, were the two types of educated women. In addition to Lopamudra, Ghosha, Gargi, Indrani, and Apala, there are also a number of other notable female intellectuals [15].

4. Prominent educational centres

1. Nalanda

One of the most prominent educational institutions of its day, Nalanda was situated in the state of Bihar. In addition to being a center for Buddhist study, Nalanda was also well-known for its mathematical and medical achievements. As stated by Hsuan Tsang, a Chinese traveler, the process of gaining entry into Nalanda was quite challenging. In point of fact, only twenty percent of the students who attempted the admission exam would be successful and, as a result, be chosen.

2. Vikramshila

This institution had around 144 permanent academics and taught a variety of subjects, including philosophy, logic, tantra Shastra, and karamkanda. The graduates and postgraduates are the recipients of degrees that were bestowed by the monarch. In 1208 AD, the Khiljis were responsible for the destruction of this institution.

3. Taxila

During the ancient period of India, Taxila was recognized as one of the most important educational centers. Taxila, which was well-known for its Buddhist education, drew a large number of students throughout its period. It is believed that the great scholar Chanakya wrote the Arthashastra when he was located in this particular geographical location.

5 CONCLUSION

Changing the historical perspective from rulers and empires to ordinary living has revealed a profound insight of ancient Indian culture. The research emphasizes how regular lives shape culture, society, and dynamics. Ancient Indian communities are shown via chapters on daily routines, economic structures, religious practices, handicrafts, education systems, social hierarchies, and festive events. The everyday becomes remarkable when family relationships, economic trades, spiritual beliefs, and cultural manifestations are intertwined. This holistic approach highlights ordinary people's different experiences and opposes historical narratives that ignore them. As we step back from the exploration, we see that ancient India's legacy is not only in the annals of kings and empires but also in households, markets, artisans' workshops, and vibrant celebrations that filled the year. The ordinary lives of ancient Indians, previously ignored, became the civilization's pulse. This study invites readers to uncover, appreciate, and preserve ancient India's rich tapestry of daily life and its lasting effect on history.

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