

Roja Muthiah Research Library Trust
and
Indus Research Centre Lecture Series

Lecture from M.N. Vahia

on

**India's Prehistory: New evidence from Archaeology, Astronomy,
Genetics, Geneology and Linguistics [31.07.2007]**

President's Address

Prof. V.C. Kulandaiswamy

I am really happy to participate in this pleasant function. When I was the Vice Chancellor, Anna University, we developed some guidelines for the conduct of seminars and conferences. We have said that in the case of lecturers by specialists the president must only conduct the proceedings and should not speak. It's a guideline that I value and propose to follow on this occasion.

In the recent decades there has been increasing interest in the study of ancient civilizations that have not been explored adequately. Extensive studies have been made on Greek civilization, Egyptian civilization and the civilization of Babylonia and Mesopotamia. It may not be said that adequate justice has been done in the case of India.

It has been conceded by scholars that Indian civilization is a confluence of two great rivers namely, Sanskritic and Dravidian. While reasonable explorations have been done about the Sanskritic component, the Dravidian component has not received enough attention. Dr. Vincent Smith a famous historian has said as follows:

“Early Indian history, as a whole, cannot be viewed in true perspective until the non – Aryan institutions of the south received adequate treatment. Hitherto, most historians of ancient India have written as if the south did not exist.”

Again Dr. Kamil Zvelebil says as follows:

“Dravidian is in general **Terra Incognita** to linguistics scholar’s, Typologists and seekers for **universals** may know a handful of its general characteristics but after one or two sentences. It is easily ignored.”

The declaration of Tamil as one of the two classical languages of India will provide an opportunity for a more intensive study of the contribution of the Dravidian civilization to Indian Culture and Heritage. Such a study would include a more detailed study of the Ancient Mohenjendaro and Harappa civilization. Against this background I must whole heartedly congratulate Thiru Iravadham Mahadevan for having pioneered the establishment of the Indus Research Centre. It will certainly provide enough opportunities for the study of India’s pre history. The learner lecture by Prof. M.N. Vahia this evening is one in the series.

We used to dismiss our Puranas and Itihisas as mere stories woven by the imagination of great poets. Now from the book of Prof. Vahia and his team I find that when it comes to pre history these books may become a source of information for speculation and prediction in the study of pre history. It may possibly provide an interesting, exciting and rewarding experience for investigators. I have great pleasure in requesting Prof. Vahia to address the audience.