

---

## Dravidian costumes and household articles

*Dr.A.Sagayadoss,*

Director

Council of Agri Geo Environmental Research  
Bengaluru

---

### Abstract

This paper focuses on the ancient Dravidians, their costumers, arts, crafts, language and culture. The author mainly infers references from Indus valley Harappa, epigraphic findings and other geographical discussions for his research.

**Key words:** Dravidian costumes, Metals, Ornaments, culture

---

**Introduction:** The Indus Valley writing was in Tamil a Dravidian language. The Dravidians originated in Africa, and were associated with the C-Group culture if Nubia.<sup>19</sup>The Dravidians were Proto Saharan People <sup>20</sup>. The ProtoSaharans were the ancestors of the Dravidian, Elamite and Sumerian people.<sup>20,21</sup> The Dravidians had their own tradition of writing<sup>1</sup>. It would appear that they introduced writing to the Indus Valley<sup>2-6</sup> and later punch-marked coins. This is supported by the discovery of writing in South India<sup>2</sup> dating back to before 600 BC.

This paper focuses on the Ancient Dravidian costumes, arts, crafts, language and culture. Srinivasan et al.<sup>1</sup> argue that the Indus Valley writing was a syllabic multilingual writing system. Although this is their opinion, it appears that the writing system used in the Indus Valley was also employed in South India and that the language of the Indus Valley script was Tamil<sup>2-4</sup>

**Discussion :** The epigraphic finding and others make it clear that the history of writing in India must be re-written. The epigraphic evidence from South India indicates that the Indian writing has a continuous history spanning from the Indus Valley times down to South Indian pottery and later Tamil writing.<sup>2</sup>

The Tamil culture is remarkable on many counts, not least because Tamil is the oldest of India's modern languages it has been cited as "perhaps the only example of an ancient classical tongue which has survived for more than 2,500 years with its basic structure intact". In addition to Tamil Nadu, where it is the State language, Tamil is also spoken by an estimated four million people who live in Sri Lanka, Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, parts of East and South Africa, Guyana, and islands in the Indian Ocean, the South Pacific and the Caribbean.<sup>22</sup>

The Ancient Dravidian's were the direct ancestors of the Tamils, Malayalees, Telugus, Canarese, and other tribes now occupying the greater part of South India. The fact is that several Dravidian dialects such as Brahui, Villi, and Santal are found stranded in the midst of other tongues in Baluchistan, Rajaputana and Central India.<sup>23</sup>The use of gold, silver, platinum, glass, wood etc. in jewellery, other fibers, cotton, wool, etc. in dresses and daily use materials in cooking, warfare and other costumes for celebrations are typical for Dravidians.<sup>22</sup>

The usual dress of both men and women consisted of two pieces of cloth; one the upper garment and the other lower garment, the latter resembling modern dhoti. Beads were worn by men and women alike who had long hair. Women loved jewellery and wore bangles, bracelets, necklaces, fillets, girdles, anklets, ear-rings and finger-rings. These ornaments were made of gold, silver, copper, bronze and precious stones and semi-precious stones like carnelian, steatite, agate, chalcedony, jasper, materials and cases for keeping them which were made of ivory, metal, pottery and stone prove that the ladies at Mohenjo-Daro knew very well the art of cosmetics and even used collyrium, face paints and lipsticks. These were special toilet tables designed for women.<sup>24</sup>

Various household articles made of pottery, stone shell, ivory and metal, have been found at Mohenjo-Daro. Pottery consisted of bowls, saucers, dishes, goblets, storage jar; chairs, bedsteads, stools, lamps of copper, shell and pottery; a pottery candlestick indicating the use of candle; spindles and spindle whirl; needles and combs, axes, saws, sickles, knives,

fish-hooks, chisels made of bronze and copper were used by the Indus People. Children's toys included, among other things, little clay carts, the earliest representatives of wheeled vehicles; Marbles, balls and dice were used for games.<sup>24</sup>

Fishing was a regular occupation and hunting and bull fighting were other pastimes. Bullock carts were the chief means of conveyance. A charming copper-model of a cart found at Harappa, looks like an "ekka" of the present day with a canopy. There were numerous specimens of weapons of war which included axes, spear heads, daggers, bows, arrows, made of copper, bronze and maces. The Indus people had devised a saw with undulating teeth which was unknown among other peoples of antiquity.<sup>24</sup>

### Conclusion:

Different costumes were used for Gods, animals, human beings, house hold materials, royal buildings, kings and queens costume, etc. by ancient Dravidians. So there is an urgent need of research to investigate, amalgamate the costumes and fashion coupled with spirituality and culture practiced by ancient Dravidians.

### Bibliography

- Aravanan, K. P., *Dravidians and Africans*, Tamil Kottam, Madras, 1979.
- Aravanan, K. P., *J. Tamil Stud.*, 1976, 10, 23–27.
- Aravanan, K. P., *J. Tamil Stud.*, 1980, 14, 20–45.
- Lal, B. B., *Ancient India*, 1954–1955, 10, 5.
- Lal, B. B., *Ancient India*, 1960, 16, 3.
- Lal, B. B., *The only Asian expedition in threatened Nubia: Work by an Indian Mission at Afyeh and Tumas. The Illustrated Times*, 20 April 1963.
- Sailendra Nath Sen, "Ancient Indian History and Civilization", Second Edition, 1999, New Age International (P) Ltd. ISBN: 81-224-1198-3.
- Sergent, B., *Genèse de L'Inde*, Paris, Payot, 1992.
- Sessa Iyengar, T.R., *Dravidian India*, Asian Educational Publishers, ISBN: 81-206-0135-1; First Published – 1925.
- Srinivasan, S., Joseph, J. V. M. and Harikumar, P., *Curr. Sci.*, 2012, 103, 147– 157.

- Unesco Courier, *A window open on the world*, MARCH, 1984, 37th YEAR, 40 pages.
- Upadhyaya, P. and Upadhyaya, S. P., *Bull. L'IFAN*, 1976, t36 Ser B1, 127– 157.
- Upadhyaya, P. and Upadhyaya, S. P., *Bull. L'IFAN*, 1979, t39 Ser B1, 100– 132.
- Winters, C. A., In *Proceedings of the Sixth International Society for Asian Studies Conference*, 1984, Asian Research Service, Hong Kong, 1985, pp. 1413–1425.
- Winters, C., 2007; <http://www.scribd.com/doc/2565099/Unofficial-History-of-Tamil-Writing>
- Winters, C., 2008; <http://www.krepublishers.com/02-Journals/IJHG/IJHG-08-0-000-000-2008-Web/IJHG-08-4-317-368-2008-Abst-PDF/IJHG-08-4-325-08-362-Winder-C/IJHG-08-4-325-08-362-Winder-C-Tt.pdf>
- Winters, C., *BioEssays*, 2007, 27, 497– 498.
- Winters, C., *Curr. Res. J. Biol. Sci.*, 2010, 2, 229– 231.
- Winters, C., *Int. J. Genet. Mol. Biol.*, 2010, 2, 030–033.
- Winters, C., *J. Tamil Stud.*, 1984, 25, 50–64.
- Winters, C., *J. Tamil Stud.*, 1994, 41, 1– 21.
- Winters, C., *J. Tamil Stud.*, 1995, 42, 1– 23.
- Winters, C., *J. Tamil Stud.*, 1995, 43–44, 59–130.
- Winters, C., *Tamil Civilization*, 1985, 3, 1–9.