Overcoming the Aryan-Dravidian Divide

What is the issue?

The Governor of Tamil Nadu has been criticised by some for expressing his views on the Aryan-Dravidian divide.

What is the Governor's view?

- Speaking at a function to mark the 216th year of Vellore Sepoy Mutiny, Tamil Nadu Governor made remarks on Aryan-Dravidian differences being geographical and not racial,
- He said that it was a false history created by the British as part of their divide-and-rule policy, that Dravidian is a race.
- Earlier, M.S. Golwalkar viewed the Aryan-Dravidian distinction as a territorial denomination and attempted to position Aryans as natives of the Indian subcontinent in the 'Out of India Theory' which was debunked now.

How is the view different from others?

- **C.N. Annadurai**- The former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C.N. Annadurai held that Aryans and Dravidians continue to remain racially different people in his book, Arya Mayai (Aryan Illusion).
- **P.T. Srinivasa Iyengar**- The eminent historian, P.T. Srinivasa Iyengar maintained that cultural differences existed between the Vedic and non-Vedic people.
- **Ellis**- He introduced the notion of a Dravidian family and the tendency to link languages to nations grew.
- **Robert Caldwell**- He wrote the first comparative grammar of the Dravidian languages (1856) and argued that the term sometimes referred ambiguously to South Indian people and their languages.

What about the view of the colonial masters?

- It was works of missionaries like Caldwell and G.U. Pope that British authorities exploited for political needs.
- The Governor Mountstuart Elphinstone looked at the non-Brahmins during his 1868 address and said, "You are of pure Dravidian race".
- The Cambridge historian, David Washbrook, identified the roots of Dravidian politics in the novel types of government and politics which developed under the British in the early years of the present century.
- The important leaders of the non-Brahmin movement were influenced either by colonial inheritance or narrow interests.
- In the conditions, in which sub-regional varnas were so amorphous, the politics of caste confrontation were rare and circumscribed.

What does the archaeological evidences say about Aryans?

- The existence of a pre-Aryan populace has been fortified by archaeological evidence collected from the discovery of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro in the early 1920s.
- It was further substantiated by the ongoing Keezhadi excavations in Tamil Nadu.
- With modern day advancements and high-throughput genomic sequencing, it is understandable that the Indian subcontinent was populated through waves of migration.
- In 2018, the paper titled 'The Genomic Formation of South and Central Asia' confirmed that Aryan migration into the subcontinent between 2000 BCE and 1000 BCE.
- Another scientific work established that the Harappans of the Indus Valley Civilisation created an agricultural revolution in the subcontinent and narrowed the period of Aryan migration to 2000 BCE and 1500 BCE.

References

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