An Overview of Saiva Hindu Philosophies

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An Overview of Saiva Hindu Philosophies

• History
• Pre Vedic
  – Upanishads
  – Nyaya, Shankhya etc
  – Geeta
• Medieval
  – Sankara’s Vedanta
  – Ramanuja’s Vishishtatvaita
  – Madhwa’s Dhwaita
• Modern
  – Saiva Siddhanta
  – Swami Vivekananda
History of Saiva Hindu Religion

Ancient

- Indus Valley Civilization (2500 BC - 1500 BC)
  - Harappa
  - Mohenjodero

- Vedas
  - Pre-historic
  - Written in around 1000 BC in Sanskrit
  - Contain Upanishads, which started the philosophical tradition of mankind as we know
History of Saiva Hindu Religion
Ancient

- **Tholkappiam** (Tamil) 1500 BC
  - Describe the life style of people lived 3500 years ago
  - Has philosophical connotations
  - Mentions Siva (Cheyon), Sakthi (Kotravai) and Maayon (Vishnu) worship

- **Thirukkural**
  - 2100 years old
  - Deeply religious but mentions no specific name for God
  - Authoritative work of secular ethics
History of Saiva Hindu Religion

Medieval

• All Saiva Hindu religious texts written only in Sanskrit
• Buddhism & Jainism used local languages for religious worship
• Saiva Hindu traditions got splintered as Ganapthyayam, Saaktaism, Vaishnavam etc.
• Vedic orthodoxy lost ground to radical Buddhist and Jainist teachings
• Adi Sankara, the most intelligent of Acharyas unified Hinduism (750-800 AD) and defeated Buddhists in many encounters
History of Saiva Hindu Religion

Medieval

But, Buddhism and Jainism were pervasive throughout Indian sub-continent

Bhakti movement & Hindu renaissance

• Hindu religious worship started in people’s languages

• Sambhandar, Appar, Sundarar. Manickavachakar and Alwars brought back the glory of Saiva Hindu traditions in Tamil speaking areas

• Basava Lingappa (Kannada), Nama Deva (Gujarati), Tulsidass (Hindi) and many others did the same in other parts of Indian sub-continent

• Jainism and Buddhism were practically eliminated from most of the Indian sub-continent (Buddhism is still the dominant religion in Sri Lanka)
Judaism, Christianity and Islam entered South India through trade 1500 years ago.

Hindu kings become politically and militarily weak - 700 years ago.

Muslim invaders captured Delhi and Islam started to spread in north, east and western India.

Cast divisions among Hindus and support from the rulers helped Islam to spread rapidly.
Christianity got a fillip when British came to India
Those who were converted to Christianity got free education and better jobs
Rampant casteism in Hindu society and devoted service of the Christian missionaries helped Christianity to spread.
Swami Vivekananda brought self confidence among Hindus
History of Saiva Hindu Religion
Pre-Vedic

- Tholkappiam (Tamil)
  - Defines what is Mantra
  - God and Soul’s inter-relationship
  - Has philosophical connotations but not a full fledged philosophical work
  - Mentions Siva, Sakti and Vishnu worship
History of Saiva Hindu Religion

Vedic Upanishads

- The first philosophy of mankind Brihad-Aranyaka & Chandokya Upanishads
- Uddalaka (800 BC), the first philosopher
- Yagjnavalkia (800 BC) student of Uddalaka
- Uddalaka, Yagjnavalkia & Janaka lived well before Heraclitus (500 BC) and Socrates (470-399 BC)
Saiva Hindu Philosophies
- Deals with intimate interior (spiritual) human experience
- Says the whole Universe is made up of ‘one thing’ (Brahman)
- Concerned about the suffering of human and tries to find answers for all root causes causing these sufferings

Western Philosophies
- Deals with ethical and political issues of their times
- Rolls around the city-state relationship
History of Saiva Hindu Philosophies - Agamas

• 28 Saiva Agamas
• Each Agama has four divisions
  – Chariyai (Service)
  – Kiriyai (Duty and devotion)
  – Yogam (Deep meditation)
  – Gnanam (Knowledge)
• All temples are based on the Agama’s design
• Primary reference for all schools of Saivites philosophies
History of Saiva Hindu Philosophies - Five Vedic Dharshans

- **Saankhya (500 AD)**
- **Yoga**
- **Vaichediga**
- **Nyaya**
- **Mimamsa**

- Saankhya means complete knowledge
  - first one to propose 24 Tatvas based on which this world is created
  - Saiva Siddhanta and Ramanuja’s Vedanta accepts this part of the Tatvas
- These philosophies have no following, but extensive literatures are available
- All accept Vedas and treat Upanishad as the primary scripture
- Each one of these is a major philosophical school
History of Saiva Hindu Philosophies - Five Vedic Dharshans

- Vaichediga
- Nyaya
- Mimamsa

- Vaichediga and Nyaya schools have extensive atomic theories
- Talks about different atoms like fire atom, water atom, air atom etc
- Considers atoms are indivisible.
- Jains and Greek philosophers also talk about atoms, but they say there is only one type of atom.
History of Saiva Hindu Philosophies - Three Vedantas

- **Sankara’s Vedanta**
  - Monism, only the Brahman is real, souls and universe are illusions and not real

- **Ramanuja’s Vedanta (Vishishtat’vaita)**
  - God (Vishnu), souls and universe are all real

- **Madhwa’s Vedanta (Dh’waita)**
  - Brahman and Soul are distinct and always remain distinct
History of Saiva Hindu Philosophies – Saiva Siddhantha

- Based on Saiva Agamas
- Accept Upanishads (and hence Vedas)
- All 14 texts are in Tamil (1200 - 1400 AD)
- Accepts **Pathi** (The supreme God), **Pasu** (Atma or Soul) and **Pasam** (bondages) are Sat (real)
- Pati (Supreme God) is embodied by pure knowledge and made up of a different substance than that of matter and souls
- Souls and matter (the Universe) are totally controlled by Pathi but not originates from within Thyself.
History of Saiva Hindu Philosophies - Modern

- Vallalar, Ramana Maharishi, Arumuga Naavalar, Yoga Swami and many others
- Swami Vivekananda
  - Bhakti yoga
  - Karma yoga
  - Raja yoga
  - Gnana yoga