

SPACE ACTIVITY AND SOCIETY (E5)
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ASTRONOMY AND ANCIENT INDIA

Abstract

Astronomy played a very important role in ancient India. The earliest developments in Indian Astronomy were interwoven with religion. The most significant contribution of astronomy to Indian religion was the development of solar and lunar calendars. The Indian mythology also often romanticized celestial bodies with mythical heroes and demons.

However, with the advent of great Astronomers such as Aryabhata, Brahmagupta, Varahamitra, Baskara etc during 400-700AD, India saw a new era in Astronomy, which by now had developed into a separate area of study, independent of religion. Several important discoveries were made and some of the works are said to have had profound impact on middle-eastern sciences.

The contributions made by Ancient India towards astronomy, both as a religion as well as a secular science, and their impact on the society today, will be discussed in this paper