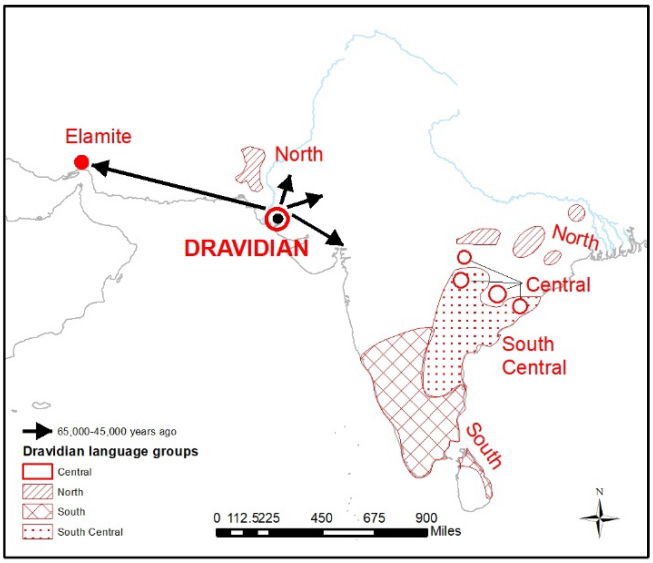
5.Elamo-Dravidian

Homeland. This phylum includes the languages descended from those of migrants who first moved along the Indian Ocean littoral, settling the region of the Persian Gulf, Indus Valley, and South Asia. The Dravidian languages are now spoken mostly in South India. The Elamite languages, once spoken at the mouth of the Persian Gulf and known only through their written form, are here assumed to have been parallel to Dravidian. Combining these elements, I place the homeland of Elamo-Dravidian near the mouth of the Indus.

Indo-Iranian and Indo-Aryan languages, brought by settlers from the north in the late Holocene, overlaid much of the territory of Dravidian and Elamite languages. It is hypothesized that Dravidian languages once extended to a much larger territory and included subgroups that did not survive, but there is currently no coherent evidence to support this argument. As a result, the map presents a present-day distribution of Dravidian languages.



Concise Spreadsheet: top four levels

Elamo-Dravidian			
	Dravidian		
		North Dravidian	
			Brahui
			Kurukh-Malto
		Central Dravidian	
			Kolami
			Ollari
		South-Central Dravidian	
			Gondi-Kul
			Telugu-Chanchu
		South Dravidian	
			Tamil-Kannada
			Koraga
	Elamite		

Full Spreadsheet: see "5.Elamo-Dravidian," listing Elamo-Dravidian languages by groups and subgroups.

Pleistocene Changes.

65,000–45,000 years ago. It is assumed that Elamo-Dravidian languages or the ancestral stock of Elamo-Dravidian languages reached South Asia by 60,000 years ago and then spread throughout the region, including settlers speaking Elamite languages in the Persian Gulf and speakers of Dravidian languages in the Indus Valley and in most of what is today India.

45,000–21,000 years ago. One may speculate that speakers of this group of languages may have migrated northeast to the temperate zone to the north, roughly 45,000 years ago, perhaps giving rise to Kartvelian or North Caucasian languages.

Holocene Changes.

21,000–12,000 years ago. For North India and Iran, little can be known about languages in this era, as Elamo-Dravidian languages were largely overlaid by later-arriving Indo-Aryan and Indo-Iranian languages.

12,000–6000 years ago.

6000 years ago–1000 CE. Indo-Iranian and Indo-Aryan languages, brought by migrants from the north, increasingly overlaid and replaced the Elamite and Dravidian languages. There are a few remnant Dravidian languages in today's North India and Pakistan, but it appears that the whole of Elamite and substantial sections of Dravidian languages disappeared as Indo-Aryan and Indo-Iranian languages advanced, especially from 5000 to 2000 years ago. Sumerian language, known from texts written more than 5000 years ago, has shown no relationship to other languages. If any relationship were to be discovered, one would first expect it to be within Elamo-Dravidian.

Commentary and Debates. Some proponents of Hindu nationalist outlook claim that Indo-Aryan languages were always in South Asia. This is unlikely, given that Indo-Aryan languages are a subgroup of Eurasiatic, which arose in northeast Asia.

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