

'2,600 civilisational sites on banks of Saraswati'

*Says US professor Nalini in a talk on 'Archaeological proofs in Lothal' at IITGN**

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Dr Nalini Rao from Soka University of America, USA talked about presence of 2,600 civilisational sites along the 'mythical Saraswati' while delivering a talk on Monday at the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar. The subject of Saraswati is a highly debated one and has the potential to trigger fresh debate. Notwithstanding the possibilities, she shared her pondering with the audience and said, "Time has come to look beyond Indus and other civilisations."

Alok Kumar Kanungo, professor, archaeology, IITGN said, "As per theories, Saraswati is a mythical river, one that never existed. However, with advancements in technology, archaeologists started to explore the dried-up Saraswati through satellite and 2,600 contemporary sites were spotted alongside the banks of the river. This is much higher in number and more widespread vis-à-vis the Indus valley civiliza-

tion. Also, the word Saraswati has been used in Rig Veda for 33 times. Thus Saraswati is synonymous with civilisations that grew and prospered alongside with it. We must accept the facts and findings."

Rao is the daughter of noted Harappan scholar S N Rao.

The talk also examined recent researches by archaeologists, philologists, anthropologists and historians, and existing theories on the nature of the interrelation between the two most ancient prehistoric cultures of the South Asian subcontinent the Indus (Sindhu) or Harappan civilisation and the Vedic civilisation.

Lothal is one of those ancient sites that contains scientific evidence towards consensual and conclusive interdisciplinary understanding on the pluralistic culture and shared identity of the two riverine cultures between

3000 and 1500 BCE.

Talking about the enigma of Saraswati Civilisation and the archaeological evidences at Lothal, she said, "The Indus civilisation has been perceived as non-indigenous to India and perceptions about the Aryan invasion theory persists. We are the inheritors of the civilisation and time has come to give back."

