The Nile River and Its Importance to Ancient Egypt

Introduction

The existence of the Nile River system in Ancient Egyptian times largely affected the people of the nation. The Egyptians civilisation commenced with small huts around the Nile River. These small villages became settlements. This only happened because of the presence of the Nile. As the civilisation enlarged, the Ancient Egyptian dependency with the Nile grew. It became a focus for religious practices and their idea in the afterlife. These are a few of the key ways that the Nile River was a major part of Egyptian culture.

The River Nile

The Nile River is one of the world’s most magnificent water features in the world. The Nile rises from the central African highlands and it flows down for 6,400 kilometres until it arrives at the Nile Delta on the edge of the Mediterranean Sea. The Nile is the longest river in the world. Scientists say that the River Nile has changed shape over many thousands of years. The river is separated into three main parts called the ‘Blue Nile’, the ‘White Nile’ and the ‘Arbara’. These rivers connect within Aswan and Khartoum, in an area called Nubia. The Nile Delta is roughly 200m x 400 m wide. The Delta spans for some 5312.5 kilometres and is surrounded by lagoons, wet lands, lakes and sand dunes. The most dominant feature in the Nile Delta is the sandy clay mounds reach an average of 6-7m above the ground. The Nile cannon are about 600km km long. Southern Egypt is called Upper Egypt because the River is upstream. Lower Egypt therefore is downstream. The River divides Egypt into two provinces, Eastern and Western deserts.

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In about 3000 BC, settlements started to appear in small groups in and around the Nile River valley. People also built settlements near the fertile area of the Nile River. Settlements were also found in Northern Africa at this period because the surrounding desert was lacking the necessities for permanent settlements. The Nile River provided the necessary water supplies for settlement, without the Nile River, Ancient Egypt would have never existed.

The Nile River provided things that were vital to the growth of the Egyptian civilisation. The Ancient Egyptians needed water so as other people do, to support life. The water also attracted many thirsty animals including buffalos and camels. Water was also necessary in the production needs of the agriculture. Agriculture was a major commodity in the Egyptian economy.

Along with water, the Nile River provided transportation for Egyptians such as the Kingdom of Kush. The Nile also provided essential transportation to the future united Egypt. For these reasons the Nile became a very important asset to the formation of Ancient Egypt.
Apart from the transportation the Nile provided, the Nile River flooded every year. This flood was very helpful to farmers. The flood would come about every June to July. The summer rains on the eastern coast of Africa led to the flood. Fertile land was left behind when the water receded leaving the wet soil full of nutrients, without the water the Nile supplied, it would be impossible to farm in the not barren deserts of Egypt.

The Nile River also supplied materials for basic trades including bricks for constructing homes and temples. Mud was made into bricks. The river gave the Ancient Egyptians food like fish.

The Nile River also affected Ancient Egyptian religion and beliefs. The Ancient Egyptians even created a god for the Nile. Its name was Osiris. We can see that the Nile was very important to Egyptian society in many ways that they made the Nile a base for their religion.

The afterlife was in many ways decided by the Nile River. The Ancient knew that the sun rose from the east. That symbolized life to the Ancient Egyptians. West symbolized for death. This is why the Ancient Egyptians had their graves on the west coast of the Nile River.

**Conclusion**

This clearly indicates that the Nile River and valley system was a key icon to Egyptian society, especially their religious beliefs. The river provided the essential items of daily life. The Nile River therefore played a huge role in the existence of Egypt.