



SNS COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY



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DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

ESSENCE OF INDIAN
TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

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Stages of State Formation in Ancient India

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- A yellow gear-shaped icon with a blue center containing a figure. The gear has various symbols on its teeth, including a book, a lamp, and a lightning bolt.
1. Six main stages in the history of ancient Indian polity can be identified.
 2. The earliest stage was that of tribal military democracy in which tribal assemblies, which had some place for women were mainly pre-occupied with war. The age of Rig Veda was primarily a period of assemblies.
 3. The second stage saw the break-up of the tribal polity under the stress of constant conflicts between the rajanyakshatriya and the ordinary businessman called the vis. The chiefs were helped by the priesthood called the brahmins. This stage saw the beginning of taxes and classes or varnas which came to be firmly established in the third stage.



4. The third stage was marked by the formation of the full-fledged state. There arose large territorial monarchies of Kosala and Magadha and tribal oligarchies in North-Western India and at the foot of the Himalayas. For the first time large standing armies and organized machinery were used for the collection of land revenue

5. The fourth or the Maurya phase saw bureaucratic centralization based on the expanding economic activities of the state. The state with the help of its bureaucracy controlled various aspects of the life of its subjects.

6. The fifth stage was marked by the process of decentralized administration in which towns, feudatories and military elements came to the forefront in both the Deccan and North India. This was partly neutralised by the emphasis on the divinity of the king.

Kingship in ancient India:-

1. The king was the most important figure in the body politic.
2. In the Saptanga theory of the state, developed by Kautilya the king has been described as the head or the most important organ of the state.
3. The king's functions involved the protection not only of his kingdom against external aggression, but also of life, property and traditional custom against internal foes.



4. He protected the purity of class and caste by ensuring that those who challenged the system were excommunicated.

5. He protected the family system by punishing adultery and ensuring the fair inheritance of family property. He protected widows and orphans by making them his wards.

6. He protected the rich against the poor by suppressing robbery, and he protected the poor against the rich by punishing extortion and oppression.

7. Religion was protected by liberal grants to learned brahmins and temples and frequently to heterodox sects also



8. The ideal set before the king was one of energetic beneficence.

9. The Arthashastra puts forward the kingly duty in simple and forceful language, setting an ideal which few ancient civilizations can boast of.

10. The ideal before the king in ancient India was that of being a chakravarti meaning a king who ruled over the united vast territory of the Indian subcontinent.

11. With the Mauryas this possibility was substantially realised, and was incorporated into the Buddhist tradition and blended with later Vedic imperialist ideas, then taken over by orthodox Hinduism.

12. The concept of the universal emperor was also known to the Jainas, and in the epics numerous kings of legend, such as Yudhisthira and Rama, are said to have been digvijayins or conquerors of all the four quarters.

13. The universal emperor was a divinely ordained figure with a special place in the cosmic scheme, and as such was exalted to semi-divine status