



# SNS COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY



**Coimbatore-35**  
**An Autonomous Institution**

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Affiliated to Anna University, Chennai

## DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

ESSENCE OF INDIAN  
TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

**M.POORNIMA DEVI,AP/AIML**



## Ashrama or the stages of life according to Indian philosophy



1. The ashrama in Hinduism is one of four age-based life stages discussed in Indian texts of the ancient and medieval eras.

2. The average life span of an individual is considered to be 100 years and it is divided into four stages each stage having a time span of 25 years. These four ashramas are:

### **A. Brahmacharyashrama or the Stage of Studentship :**

1. This is the first stage of life. It is meant for acquiring knowledge, developing discipline and moulding character.
2. This stage starts with the ceremony called upanayanama or investiture with the sacred thread.
3. Now the person became a brahmacharina, leading a celibate and austere life as a student at the home of his teacher



## **B. Grihasthashrama or the Stage of Householder :**

1. This stage starts at marriage when the student has completed his studentship and is ready to take up the duties and responsibilities of household life.
2. In this stage the individual gets married, earns money and begets children.
3. The individual pursues wealth (artha) and pleasure (kama) within the limits of the moral law (dharma).

## **C. Vanaprasthasharma or the Stage of Retirement from Active Life :**

1. After discharging all the duties and obligations as a householder, the individual enters into the Vanaprastha stage.
2. It consists of the third quarter of person's life.
3. In this phase, after retiring from active life, the individual dedicates himself to a life of spiritual contemplation.
4. He leaves his home and goes to the forest to become a hermit

## **D. Sanyasashrama or the Stage of Renunciation :**

1. This is the last stage of life
2. Now the individual leaves his hermitage and becomes a homeless wanderer (sanyasin) with all his earthly ties broken.
3. The sanyasin aspires and acts to attain liberation only.





## MARRIAGE IN ANCIENT INDIA



1. Marriage or vivaha was a very important samskara in ancient India.

2. Marriage in ancient India had three main purposes :

- i. Promotion of religion by performance of household sacrifices.
- ii. Progency or the happy after life of father and his ancestors and continuation of family line or kula.
- iii. Rati or sexual pleasure.

3. Manu and other law givers have mentioned about eight forms of marriage :



i. Brahma Vivaha : This is considered to be the purest form of marriage. In this form of marriage the father offers his daughter who is decked with ornaments and richly dressed as a gift to a man of good character and high learning.

ii. Daiva Vivaha : In the daiva form of marriage the father offers her daughter as a dakshina (sacrificial fee) to a young priest who officiates the yajña which is arranged by him.

iii. Arsa Vivaha : In arsa vivaha father of the bride gives his daughter to the bridegroom after receiving a cow and a bull or two pairs of these animals from the bridegroom.

Prajapatya Vivaha : In this type of marriage, the father offers the girl to the bridegroom. But neither does he offer any dowry nor does he demand bride-price.



V. Asura Vivaha : This is a form of marriage by purchase in which the bridegroom has to give money to the father or kinsman of the bride.

vi. Gandharva Vivaha : This was a marriage by consent of the boy and the girl. Mutual love and consent of the bride and bridegroom was the only condition required to bring about the union.

vii. Rakshasa Vivaha : This was marriage by capture in which the girl was forcibly abducted from her home.

viii. Paishacha Vivaha : The abduction of a maiden while she is asleep and in intoxication is called paishacha vivaha



## **Understanding gender as a social category:-**

1. Gender studies was very much part of ancient India.
2. The unique feature was the acknowledgement of the third sex: one that is neither male nor female.
3. Charaka in his medical treatise speaks of 'tritiya prakriti' or the third naturally occurring gender.
4. In the Mahabhasya composed in Sanskrit 2,300 years ago, everything is seen in physical tangible terms: male is one who has hair all over body, woman is one with breasts and long hair, and one who is neither the 'napumsaka'.
5. In Buddhist literature, greater importance is given to behaviour, rather than to biological markings.
6. In Jain scripture, we see a far more refined understanding of gender and sexuality. One recognises that the body can be male (purusha), female (stri) or queer (napunsaka).





7. Further, there is a classification based on the object of attraction: male, female or queer. This can be seen in all three types of genders.

8. There is separation of physical body (dravya-purusha) from the psychological body (bhava-purusha).

9. There is also reference to active (padisevati) and passive (padisevavati) homosexual acts in Buddhist literature.

10. All these ideas emerged between 5th century BCE and 5th century CE, and were explored in the following centuries.

11. Ancient Indian gender studies were designed to appreciate the diversity of nature, as well as to identify those who could become monks, outgrow sexual desire and liberate themselves from all karma



## **The representation of women in historical traditions & Challenges faced by Women:-**



1. Indian tradition has generally respected womanhood.
2. Of the several factors that justify the greatness of India's ancient culture, one of the greatest is the honoured place ascribed to women.
3. In ancient India women in many places occupied an equal position to men. Many Hindu religious books like the Vedas; Ramayana, etc., have mentioned the names of several women who were great scholars, poets and philosophers of the time



4. According to ancient Hindu scriptures, a man without his wife can not participate in any essential religious rites. Wives are thus befittingly called ‘Ardhangini’.

5. However, in the medieval period, the status of women went down considerable. Women were considered to be inferior to men.

6. Customs of purdah, Sati, child marriage, restrictions on widow marriage, and the prevalence of joint family systems have been the factors responsible for the injustice done towards women

## Four-class classification:-

1. The four-class classification is found in Abu'l Fazl, A'in-i-Akbari.

2. According to Abu'l Fazl the people of the world may be divided into following

four classes :

**A. Warriors** : Warriors who in the political body have the nature of fire. Their flames; directed by understanding, consume the straw and rubbish of rebellion and strife, but kindle also the lamp of rest in this world of disturbances.

**B. Artificers and merchants** : Artificers and merchants, who hold the place of air.

From their labours and travels, God's gifts become universal, and the breeze of contentment nourishes the rose-tree of life.





**C.The learned :** The learned, such as the philosopher, the physician, the arithmetician, the geometrician, the astronomer, who resemble water. From their pen and their wisdom, a river rises in the drought of the world, and the garden of the creation receives from their irrigating powers, a peculiar freshness.

**D. Husbandmen and labourers :** Husbandmen and labourers, who may be compared to earth. By their exertions, the staple of life is brought to perfection, and strength and happiness flow from their work.

3. It is obligatory for a king to put each of these in its proper place, and by uniting personal ability with due respect for others, to cause the world to flourish