



SNS COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
An Autonomous Institution
Coimbatore-35



Accredited by NBA – AICTE and Accredited by NAAC – UGC with 'A+' Grade
Approved by AICTE, New Delhi & Affiliated to Anna University, Chennai

DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS & COMMUNICATION ENGINEERING

III YEAR/ VI SEMESTER

19HST105 ESSENCE OF INDIAN TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

UNIT I ANCIENT INDIA & STATE POLITY
Council of Ministers



COUNCIL OF MINISTERS



- Ministers or council of advisors have been regarded by ancient Indian political thinkers as a very vital organ of the body politic.
- The *Mahābhārata* observes at one place that the king is as vitally dependent upon ministers as animals are upon clouds, brahmins on the Vedas and women upon their husbands.
- *Manusmriti* points out that even a simple thing appears as difficult if one is to do it single handed; why then attempt to run the complex machinery of the administration without the assistance of ministers.
- The size of this *mantriparishad* or council of ministers varied, and the authorities suggested figures ranging from seven to thirty-seven.
- It seems that the body was divided into two parts *mantrina* and *mantriparishad*.
- ***Mantriparishad*** was the large body resembling a modern council of ministers. It consisted of all the ministers.
- ***Mantrina*** was a smaller body or a core organisation within the *mantriparishad* largely resembling the **modern cabinet**.



- It included the few most important ministers like the *purohita* (priest), *senāpati* (supreme commander of army) and *yuvarāja* (the crown prince).
- R.C. Majumdar has compared the Mauryan council of ministers with the Privy Council of Britain and viewed it as a political body which formulated the policies of government.
- In the words of R.C. Majumdar, “It is interesting to notice how the executive machinery in the Indian constitution develops on parallel lines with that of England. As the great National Council of the English gave rise to the Permanent Council which subsequently dwindled into the Privy Council out of which the king selected his confidential ministers and formed the cabinet,
- So the *samiti* of the Vedic period gave place to the *mantriparisad* out of which the king selected a few to form a close cabinet.”
- On the other hand A.L. Basham maintains that "the council was not a cabinet in the modern sense, but an advisory body, with few corporate functions.”
- The council's purpose was primarily to advise the king, and not to govern, but it was no mere rubber stamping body.
- For all authorities stress that councilors should speak freely and openly and that the king should give full consideration to their advice.
- In fact, the council often exerted great powers. It might transact business in the king's absence, and the Ashokan inscriptions show that it might take minor decisions without consulting him.



THANK YOU