# SNS COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY, COIMBATORE –35
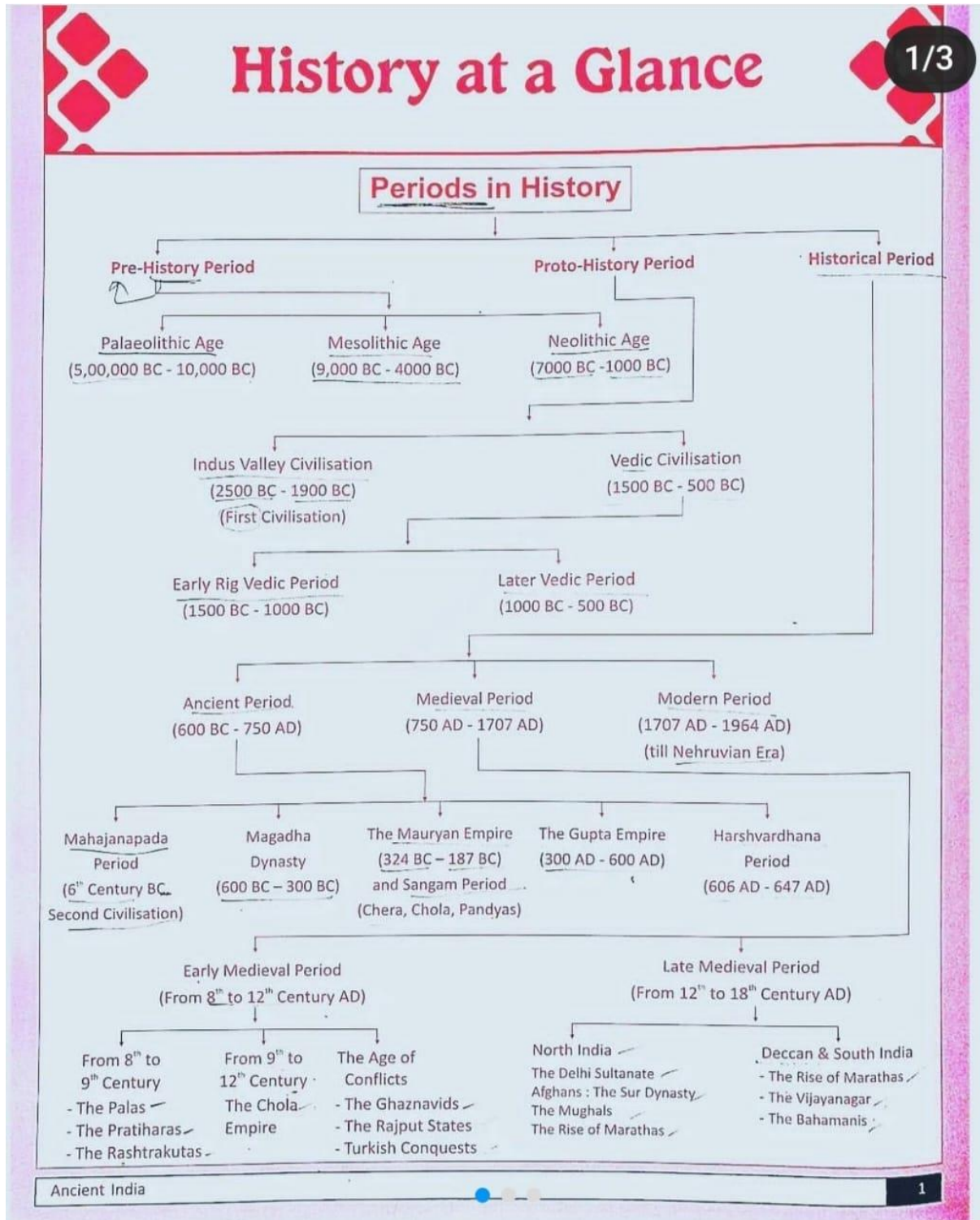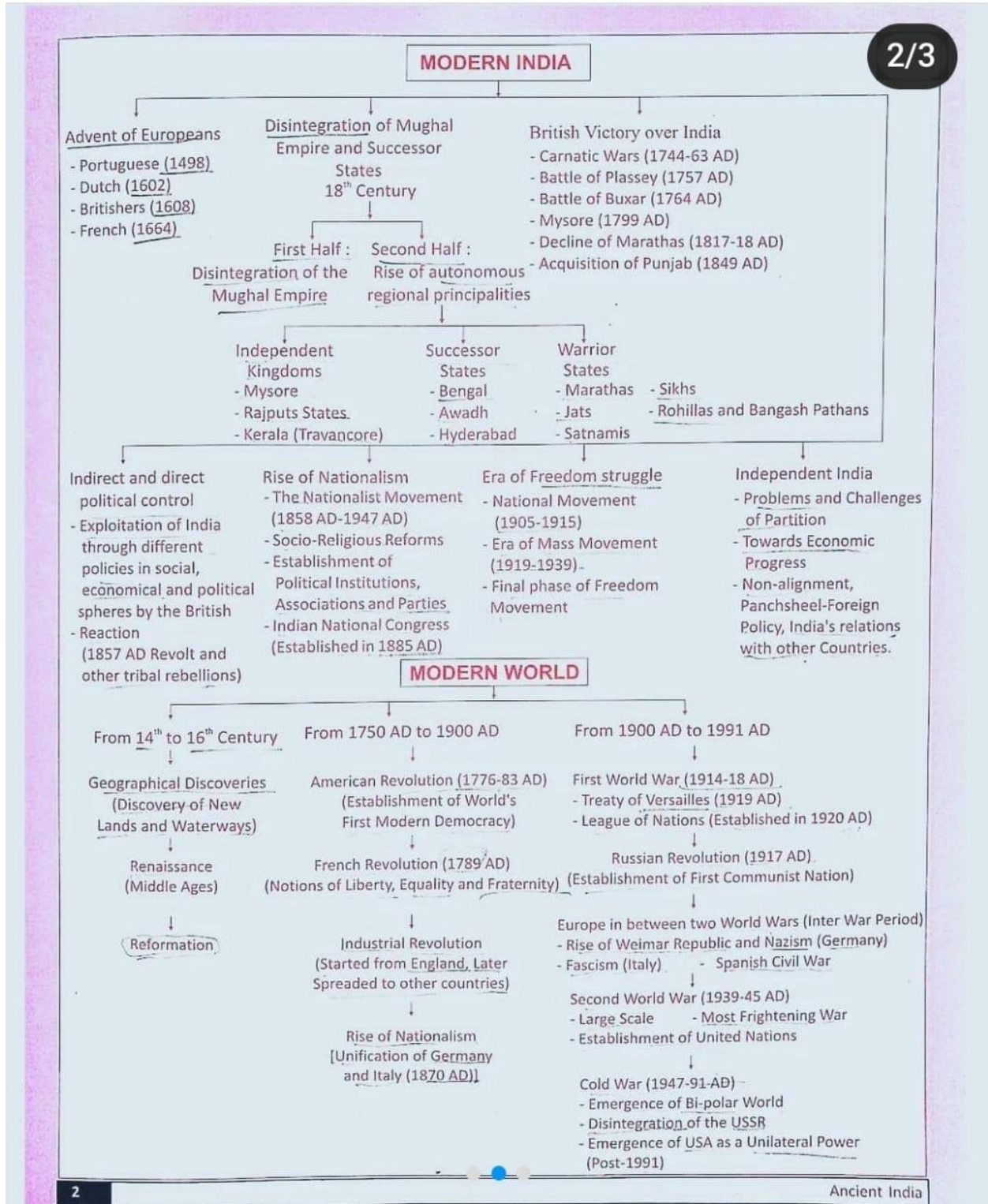
# (An Autonomous Institution)

## 19HST105 - ESSENCE OF INDIAN TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

### UNIT I          ANCIENT INDIA & STATE POLITY

State in Ancient India: Evolutionary Theory, Force Theory, Mystical Theory Contract Theory, Stages of State Formation in Ancient India, Kingship , Council of Ministers Administration Political Ideals in Ancient India Conditions' of the Welfare of Societies, The Seven Limbs of the State, Society in Ancient India, Purusārtha, Varnāshrama System, Āshrama or the Stages of Life, Marriage.

Introduction – Overview

## History at a Glance (1/3)

### Periods in History

- **Pre-History Period**
  - Palaeolithic Age (5,00,000 BC - 10,000 BC)
  - Mesolithic Age (9,000 BC - 4000 BC)
- **Proto-History Period**
  - Neolithic Age (7000 BC - 1000 BC)
    - Indus Valley Civilisation (2500 BC - 1900 BC) (First Civilisation)
    - Vedic Civilisation (1500 BC - 500 BC)
      - Early Rig Vedic Period (1500 BC - 1000 BC)
      - Later Vedic Period (1000 BC - 500 BC)
- **Historical Period**
  - Ancient Period (600 BC - 750 AD)
  - Medieval Period (750 AD - 1707 AD)
  - Modern Period (1707 AD - 1964 AD) (till Nehruvian Era)

**Ancient Period:**
- Mahajanapada Period (6th Century BC, Second Civilisation)
- Magadha Dynasty (600 BC – 300 BC)
- The Mauryan Empire (324 BC – 187 BC) and Sangam Period (Chera, Chola, Pandyas)
- The Gupta Empire (300 AD - 600 AD)
- Harshvardhana Period (606 AD - 647 AD)

**Early Medieval Period** (From 8th to 12th Century AD)
- From 8th to 9th Century
  - The Palas
  - The Pratiharas
  - The Rashtrakutas
- From 9th to 12th Century
  - The Chola Empire
- The Age of Conflicts
  - The Ghaznavids
  - The Rajput States
  - Turkish Conquests

**Late Medieval Period** (From 12th to 18th Century AD)
- North India
  - The Delhi Sultanate
  - Afghans : The Sur Dynasty
  - The Mughals
  - The Rise of Marathas
- Deccan & South India
  - The Rise of Marathas
  - The Vijayanagar
  - The Bahamanis

Ancient India                                                    1

**MODERN INDIA**                                    2/3

**Advent of Europeans**
- Portuguese (1498)
- Dutch (1602)
- Britishers (1608)
- French (1664)

**Disintegration of Mughal Empire and Successor States 18th Century**

First Half :
Disintegration of the Mughal Empire

Second Half :
Rise of autonomous regional principalities

**British Victory over India**
- Carnatic Wars (1744-63 AD)
- Battle of Plassey (1757 AD)
- Battle of Buxar (1764 AD)
- Mysore (1799 AD)
- Decline of Marathas (1817-18 AD)
- Acquisition of Punjab (1849 AD)

Independent Kingdoms
- Mysore
- Rajputs States
- Kerala (Travancore)

Successor States
- Bengal
- Awadh
- Hyderabad

Warrior States
- Marathas
- Jats
- Satnamis
- Sikhs
- Rohillas and Bangash Pathans

**Indirect and direct political control**
- Exploitation of India through different policies in social, economical and political spheres by the British
- Reaction (1857 AD Revolt and other tribal rebellions)

**Rise of Nationalism**
- The Nationalist Movement (1858 AD-1947 AD)
- Socio-Religious Reforms
- Establishment of Political Institutions, Associations and Parties
- Indian National Congress (Established in 1885 AD)

**Era of Freedom struggle**
- National Movement (1905-1915)
- Era of Mass Movement (1919-1939)
- Final phase of Freedom Movement

**Independent India**
- Problems and Challenges of Partition
- Towards Economic Progress
- Non-alignment, Panchsheel-Foreign Policy, India's relations with other Countries.

**MODERN WORLD**

From 14th to 16th Century

From 1750 AD to 1900 AD

From 1900 AD to 1991 AD

Geographical Discoveries (Discovery of New Lands and Waterways)

American Revolution (1776-83 AD) (Establishment of World's First Modern Democracy)

First World War (1914-18 AD)
- Treaty of Versailles (1919 AD)
- League of Nations (Established in 1920 AD)

Renaissance (Middle Ages)

French Revolution (1789 AD) (Notions of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity)

Russian Revolution (1917 AD) (Establishment of First Communist Nation)

Reformation

Industrial Revolution (Started from England, Later Spreaded to other countries)

Europe in between two World Wars (Inter War Period)
- Rise of Weimar Republic and Nazism (Germany)
- Fascism (Italy)     - Spanish Civil War

Second World War (1939-45 AD)
- Large Scale     - Most Frightening War
- Establishment of United Nations

Rise of Nationalism [Unification of Germany and Italy (1870 AD)]

Cold War (1947-91 AD)
- Emergence of Bi-polar World
- Disintegration of the USSR
- Emergence of USA as a Unilateral Power (Post-1991)

2

Ancient India

## State in Ancient India:

When a large number of human beings live together, there is need for some rules and regulations.

So since early days, there is a realization in India that there has to be a **'Society'** governed by some commonly **agreed rules and regulations**.

However, such a 'society' is only loosely regulated it is **governed by customs and practices, not by laws.**

Therefore, some more rigorous organization is needed, a system called **'State'** in political thought, **a political system with a legal sanction and foundation, a system ruled by law.**

**A 'State'or Rajya,** has several dimensions - the duties/ rights of the ruled and the rulers.

**'Society' or Samāja,** has its own components, the different communities, and functional units called **varnas or castes.**

In ancient India, a **society** has its structural units such as family, marriage, customs and practices such as inheritance, rituals of marriage and mourning, and finally a framework of individual and social life.

for example the **asrama vyavasthā** laid down in the **Hindu society** as an **ideal organization of an individual's life**.

**State** has been the **key concept in political science** since the period of grand thinkers like **Plato and Aristotle**.

One of the most important topics in political science has been **the origin and evolution of the state.**

In ancient India also thinkers like **Bhisma, Narada, Brihaspati, Kautilya, Kamandaka** have looked at the problem.

On the basis of the writings of these thinkers we can detect **four important theories** regarding the origin of the state in ancient India, namely

**a) Evolutionary Theory**

**b) Force Theory**

**c) Mystical Theory**

**d) Contract Theory**

# Theory of Evolutionary Origin

**Evolutionary Theory:**

This is the **oldest theory** of the origin of the state in India and has been mentioned in the **Atharva Veda..**

The tenth hymn of the eighth chapter of the Atharva Veda gives a picture of the evolutionary origin of the state.

According to this theory the state is the result of evolutionary progress and it didn't originate at a fixed time.

Based on Atharva Veda several stages of the evolution of the state can be traced. The hymns of the Atharva Veda state that the earliest phase of human life was the stage of **Vairājya or stateless state.** It was a state of complete anarchy. But with the emergence of agriculture, stable life became possible.

To fulfil the needs of agriculture, the family emerged and the head of the family became the first wielder of authority.

Further, the need of co-operation in the different realms of society led to the emergence of **sabhā and samiti.**

**Sabha** was **the organization of elderly people** and **samiti** was the **general assembly of common people.** With the emergence of sabhā and samiti organized political life began which finally culminated in the emergence of the state.

## Force Theory

Though ancient **Indian political thinkers did not propound force theory in a systematic way, force** was considered to be an **important factor** in the evolution of the state in India.

**Earliest Aryan clans** fought among themselves for pet animals (specially for the cow), pastureland, settlements and sources of drinking water. Only a strong and able warrior could lead the clan in such wars.

So, he was given **special status** and the members of **clan started obeying** him. This tendency continued in the days of peace also and subsequently the **leader became king.**

Citing examples from the Vedas (Rig Veda and Sāma Veda) and the Brahmanas (Aitareya, Shatapatha) John Spellman also opines that the king in ancient India was primarily a military leader.

But it should be clearly mentioned that **none of the political commentators** give a systematic and well knitted explanation of the role of force in the emergence of the state in ancient India.

# Theory of Mystical Origin

Mystical Theory - This was the **most popular** theory of origin of the state in ancient India.

Kingship was given divine sanction and the king was considered not to be the representative of God but himself a God who contained the powers of important Gods like **Indra, Varuna and Agni.**

**It appears first in the epics and the law books of Manu.**

The king was exalted far above **ordinary mortals, through the magical powers of the great royal sacrifices.**

The **magical power** which pervaded the king at his consecration (Rājasūya) was restored and strengthened in the course of his reign by further rites, such as the ceremonial rejuvenation of the Vājapeya and the horse-sacrifice (Asvamedha) which not only ministered to his ambition and arrogance but also ensured the prosperity and fertility of the kingdom.

# Contract Theory

Contract theory is the **most extensively** discussed theory of the origin of the state in ancient India.

The reference to contract theory can be seen in the **Buddhist texts** like Dīgha Nikāya and Mahāvastu and brahmanical texts like Shānti Parva and Arthashāstra of Kautilya.

It is said that there was a time when people were perfect and lived in a state of **happiness and tranquility.** This perfect state lasted for ages, but at last the pristine purity declined.

Many differences have appeared like **distinctions of colour**.

In a word, heavenly life degenerated into earthly life.

Now **shelter, food and drink** were required.

People gradually entered into a **series of agreements** among themselves and set up the **institutions of the family and private property.** But this gave rise to a new set of problems like **theft and other forms of unsocial conduct.**

Therefore, people assembled and agreed to choose as **chief a person** who was the **best favoured, the most attractive and the most capable.**

In return they agreed to contribute to him a **portion of their paddy.**

The individual, who was thus elected, came to hold in **serial order three titles:**

a) Mahāsammata

b) Khattiya and

c) Rājā

According to the text the first title means one chosen by the **whole people,** the second title means the **lord of the fields**, the third title means one **who charms the people by means of dharma.**

## Stages of State Formation in Ancient India:

Six main stages in the history of ancient Indian polity can be identified.

**1. The Earliest (First) Stage:** It 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**.

**2. The Second Stage:** It saw the break-up of the tribal polity under the stress of constant conflicts between the **Rajanya kshatriya** 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.

**3. The Third Stage:** It 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 we hear of large standing armies and organized machinery for the collection of land revenue.

**4. The Fourth Stage/The Maurya phase:** It 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..

**5. The Fifth Stage:** It 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 neutralized by the emphasis on the divinity of the king.

**6. The Last Stage:** It is identical with the Gupta period, may be called the period of proto-feudal polity. Land grants now played an important part in the formation of the political structure and those made by the Gupta feudatories conferred fiscal and administrative privileges on priestly beneficiaries.

## Brahma and the origins of caste



**Brahmins**
priests & teachers

**Kshatriyas**
warriors & rulers

**Vaishyas**
farmers, traders & merchants

**Shudras**
labourers

**Dalits (outcastes)**
Street sweepers, latrine cleaners

BRAHMA
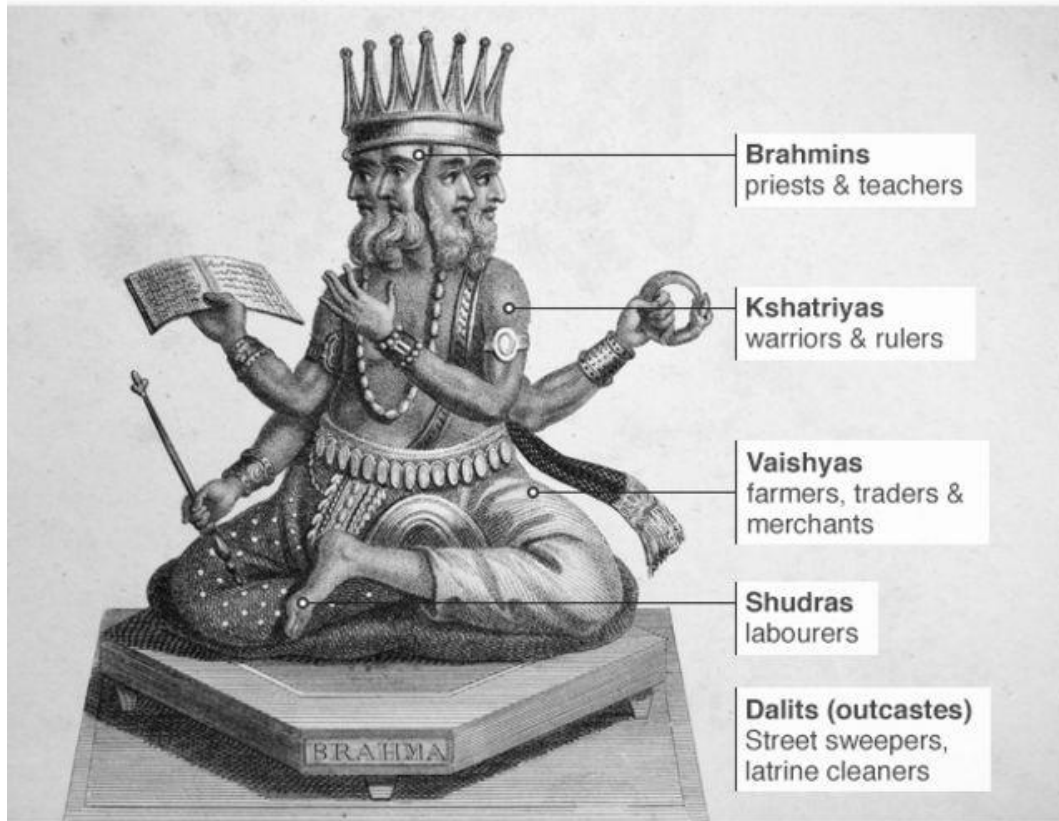
Source: Alamy

BBC

## KINGSHIP

The king was the most important figure in the body politic.

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.

The king performed multi-dimensional functions. 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. He protected the purity of class and caste by ensuring that those who challenged the system were excommunicated.

• 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.

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

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

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

• Ashoka was not the only king of India to proclaim that all men were his children, or to take pride in his ceaseless activity for the welfare of his subjects.

• The Arthashastra, despite its advocacy of every dishonest expedient for the acquisition and maintenance of power, puts forward the kingly duty in simple and forceful language, setting an ideal which few ancient civilizations can boast of. Comparing the king and the ascetic it says:

"In the happiness of his subjects lies the king's happiness,

In the welfare of his subjects, his welfare.

The king's good is not that which pleases him,

But that which pleases his subjects."

Elsewhere the Arthashastra suggests a time-table for the king's day, which allows him only four and a half hours sleep and three hours for eating and recreation, the rest of the day being spent in state affairs of one kind or another.

• No doubt such a program was rarely kept in practice, but it at least shows the ideal at which the king was expected to aim.

In all sources the king is told that he must be prompt in the administration of justice and always accessible to his people.

The swarms of guards, ushers, and other officials who surrounded the king's person must often have demanded bribes, and otherwise have obstructed the access of the subject to his sovereign.

• But the best of Indian kings at all times have made the public audience, or darbār, an important instrument of government.

• 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 sub-continent extending from Kashmir to Kanyakumari.

• 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. Just as Buddha appears from time to time in the cosmic cycle, heralded by auspicious omens and endowed with favorable signs, to lead all living beings along the road to enlightenment, so do universal emperors appear to conquer all Jambūdiva (India) and rule prosperously and righteously.

• 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.

• According to Altekar the position, powers and privileges of the king have varied from age to age. During the prehistoric period, the king was only the senior-most member in the council of peers, when he often owed his position to an election, either real or formal, when there was a popular council (samiti) to actively supervise his administration, his position was often insecure and powers were limited.

•

After 500 B.C.E. the office of king was elevated to new heights. During this period the king became the effective head of the executive administration and there was no popular assembly like samiti to check him. He controlled both the treasury and the military forces, though commander-in-chief and treasurer were under him.

Ministers were selected by the king and held office at his pleasure. The king presided over the council of ministers and its decisions had to receive royal assent.

## 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 Mahabharata 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.

## ADMINISTRATION

Bureaucracy developed as a well organized, hierarchical, cadre-based administrative system.

• Arthashastra of Kautilya the establishment of a large and complex bureaucracy was a remarkable feature of the Mauryan government.

• It mentions 18 tirthas who are probably called mahāmātras or high functionaries.

• Although the term mahāmātra is used only on a few occasions in the Arthashastra, its real counterpart being Amatya it is familiar enough in Ashokan inscriptions.

In addition to the 18 trithas Kautilya provides in some detail accounts of 27 superintendents (adhyaksas) concerned mostly with economic functions and some military duties though social functions are not ignored.

• Although Megasthenes and Ashokan inscriptions have nothing to say on rules of recruitment, Kautilya lays down certain qualifications for the cadre of high officers known as Amatyas, the emphasis being on noble birth.

• The Mauryas developed a well organized bureaucracy. With the help of this centralized bureaucratic structure not only did the government regulate the economic life of the country, but it also took an important part in it.

• All mines including pearl beds, fisheries and salt pans, were owned by the state, and were either worked directly with the labour of criminals or serfs, or let out to entrepreneurs, from whom the king claimed a percentage of their output as royalty.

## POLITICAL IDEALS IN ANCIENT INDIA

Political ideals like liberty, justice, fraternity and nationalism are a product of the modern age.

• If viewed strictly from the lens of the contemporary period, we can't find any systematic expression of these ideals, in ancient India. But seen from a different perspective, ancient Indians did have these ideals in a undeveloped form.

• Showing the importance of freedom the Vedas state that independence is necessary for mankind and those who are not independent are worse than dead.

• In varnashrma institution too, an independent living has been kept in mind.

• A man lived independently during Grihasthaashrama and when he was likely to be dependent on the offspring coming of age, there is the provision of the older people resorting to Vanprastha and then to Sanyasa, again living freely in the solitude of hills and dales rather than living as dependent on their children.

• For disposal of justice the Mauryan state had a system of judiciary.

•

Dharmasthiya was the civil court and kantakashodhana was organised to deal with a large number of economic crimes.

• The Rāmāyana extols this country as a karmabhūmi, the land of pious acts.

This shows the belongingness of people to land and their fellow beings.

The early seeds of nationalism can be traced in this instance.

• Similarly, the ideal of ancient Indian thinkers was vasudhaivakutumbakam (treating the whole world like a family.) This was the concept of universal brotherhood or fraternity.

Conclusion: From the days of Plato and Aristotle, European thought has turned its attention to such questions as the origin of the state, the ideal form of government, and the basis of law, and the politics has long been looked on as a branch of

philosophy. From the above discussion, it is clear that ancient India also thought about such questions, but she had no schools of political philosophy in the Western sense.

## Society in Ancient India

☐ Society in ancient India had several distinguishing features.

☐ It was arranged in the form of four varnas.

☐ The life of individual was divided into four stages or āshramas.

☐ There were rules regarding marriage, family etc.

☐ The purpose of life was to attain four goals called purusārthas.

We will see all these aspects in short to understand the social condition of ancient India.

Purusārtha

☐ The concept of purusārthas is the fundamental principle of Indian social ethics.
☐ The word purusārtha means "attainments" or "life purposes".

☐ The aim of every person is to attain the four noble ends or purusārtha.

☐ These four purusārthas are — dharma, artha, kāma and moksha.

### A.        Dharma

☐ Dharma or the principle of righteousness is considered to be the supreme of the purusārthas.

☐ Dharma in Indian tradition is different from the Western concept of religion.
☐ The word religion has been derived from the latin root religare which means "to connect".

☐ In this sense religion is a set of principles which connects human beings with God or which connects the this worldly and the that worldly.

☐ Therefore, religion essentially has some notion of God or some other supernatural entity. ☐ It is a particular way of worshipping.

☐ it is the essential foundation of something or of things in general, and thus signifies 'truth'.

☐ it is that which is right, virtuous, meritorious, and accordingly 'ethical'.

☐ It is that which is required, precepted, or permitted through religious authority, and thus legal.

CONCLUSION:

☐ Therefore, dharma in ancient India was a code of conduct for members of the society.

☐ In the words of Kane, "the word dharma passed through several transitions of meaning and ultimately its most prominent significance came to be the privileges, duties and obligations of man of the castes, as a person in a particular stage of life".

☐ We find various forms of dharma in the sense of duty in ancient India like-

1. Sāmānya Dharma— Some general rules which are universal in nature like truth, non-violence and non- stealing.
2. Rāj Dharma— Duties of the king.
3. Stree Dharma— Duties of woman.
4. Dāmpatya Dharma— Duties of husband and wife.
5. Varna Dharma— Duties of varnas.
6. Āshrama Dharma— Duties in the different stages of life.
7. Āpad Dharma— Duties during the crisis period.

## B. Artha

☐ Artha is the second purusārtha.

☐ The term artha refers to worldly prosperity or wealth.

☐ It includes all the material means of life.

☐ Kautilya maintains that wealth is the basis of human requirements and that social well-being depends ultimately on material prosperity.

☐ Indian thinkers had recognised the pursuit of wealth as a legitimate human aspiration. But artha must be acquired by right means.

## C. Kāma

☐ Kāma means worldly pleasures or sensual pleasures.

☐ It refers to some of the innate desires and urges in human beings.

☐ In the narrow sense kāma means sexual pleasure but in the wider sense it involves sexual, emotional and aesthetic life all together.

## D. Moksha

☐ It is the ultimate purusārtha.

☐ Moksha means salvation or liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

☐ It is the summum bonum (Ultimate goal according to which values established in an ethical system ) of human Existence Varnāshrama System

 Various texts talk of varnāshrmadharma or the dharma of different classes and dharma in the different stages of life.

 In ancient India there was a common dharma for all members of society which must be followed by all equally.

 But at the same time there were different codes of conduct for different classes or varnas called varna- dharma.

 Similarly, it was desired to follow different dharma at the different stages or āshrama of life called āshrama-dharma.

## 1. VARNAS

 First reference of varna is seen in the Rig Veda. The tenth chapter of Rig-Veda called Purusasūkta mentions the organic theory of the origin of varnas according to which varnas originated from the different organs of the Prajāpati or the creator.

 Manu62 also mentions that God created various varnas from his various organs.

 He created Brahmins from his mouth, kshatriyas from his arms, vaishyas from his thighs and shudras from his legs.

 Though logically this explanation cannot be accepted but this clearly points out the varying significance of various varnas.

 A much significant feature of this varna system was that the top three varnas—brahmins, kshatriyas and vaishyas were described as dvija or twice born.

 Their first birth was natural birth. But they were considered to be born again at the time of the pious yajñopavīta samskāra when they were invested with the sacred thread and included into the Aryan society as its full fledged member.

 Brahmins

 Brahmins were at the top of varna hierarchy.

 They were believed to possess great spiritual powers. Thus they had a divine existence.

 In law, they claimed great privileges.

 Normally brahmins were exempt from execution, torture and corporal (physical) punishment.

 The main functions prescribed for brahmins were learning, teaching and priesthood.


 Kshatriya

 The second class was the ruling class described as kshatriya or rājanya.

 Kshatriyas represented heroism, courage and strength. They constituted the warrior class.

 The duty of kshatriyas was protection which had both internal and external aspects.

 External protection meant to protect the society from external invasion where as internal protection meant governance in peace and protection from anarchy.

 Kshatriyas had the right to possess arms.


 Vaishyas

 Vaishyas represented the trading and commercial class.

 Though they were entitled to the services of the priesthood and to the ceremony of yajñopavīta, they were third in the social hierarchy.

 According to Manu63 the main task of the vaishya was to keep and maintain cattle. But it seems that later on vaishyas became economically a very important class of society.

 The ideal vaishya possessed the expert knowledge of jewels, metals, cloth, threads, spices, perfumes etc.

 In this sense vaishyas were the ancient Indian businessmen.

 In Brahmanic literature, vaishyas are given few rights and humble status but Buddhist and Jaina literature mention many wealthy merchants living a luxurious life.

 Shudras

 Shudras were at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

 They pursued the task of serving the other three varnas. They were not twice born.

 They were deprived of various rights.

 They were in fact second class citizens, on the fringes of Aryan society.

 Shudras were of two types— 'not excluded' or anirvāsita and 'excluded' or nirvāsita. The distinction was made on the basis of the customs of the shudra group and the profession followed by the members of the group. Anirvāsita shudras were the part of Indian varna system where as nirvāsita shudras were quite outside the pale of Hindu society and virtually indistinguishable from the level of people known as untouchables.

 Manu65 prescribes the same punishment for killing a shudra by a brahmin as for killing a cat or dog.

☐ Untouchables

☐ A large number of people were deprived of all human rights. Having any contact with them might lead to the fall from grace by a normal Hindu.

☐ They were untouchables. Sometimes they are regarded as the excluded shudras whereas sometimes they are called the 'fifth class' (pancham varna).

☐ Probably, they were the initial tribes who were defeated by the Aryans.

☐ Most important of these groups was the Chāndāla.

☐ They were not allowed to live in the Aryan towns or villages.

☐ Their chief means of livelihood were the carrying and cremation of corpses and execution of criminals who were awarded the death penalty.

☐ According to the law books of ancient India, Chāndālas should be dressed in the garments of the corpses they cremated, should eat his food from broken vessels and should wear only those ornaments which were made of iron.

☐ Later on the four varnas were divided into various subcategories called Caste.

## 2. ASHRAMA OR THE STAGES OF LIFE

☐ The Ashrama system denotes the Hindu scheme of life according to which different stages in the life of an individual are well ordered.

☐ 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 āshramas are:

1.     **Brahmacharyāshrama or the Stage of Studentship —**

☐ This is the first stage of life.

☐ It is meant for acquiring knowledge, developing discipline and moulding character.

☐ This stage starts with the ceremony called upanayanama or investiture with the sacred thread. Now the person became a brahmachārina, leading a celibate (unmarried life) and strict life as a student at the home of his teacher.

2.     **Grihasthāshrama or The Stage of Householder —**

☐ 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.

☐ In this stage the individual gets married, earns money and begets children. The individual pursues wealth (artha) and pleasure (kāma) within the limits of the moral law (dharma).

**3.          Vānaprasthāsharma or The Stage of Retirement from Active Life—**

☐ After discharging all the duties and obligations as a householder, the individual enters into the Vānaprastha stage.

☐ It consists of the third quarter of person's life.

☐ In this phase, after retiring from active life, the individual dedicates himself to a life of spiritual contemplation.

☐ He leaves his home and goes to the forest to become a hermit.

4. Sanyāsāshrama or The Stage of Renunciation or Wandering Mystic—

☐ This is the last stage of life.

☐ Now the individual leaves his hermitage and becomes a homeless wanderer (sanyāsin) with all his earthly ties broken.

☐ The sanyāsin aspires and acts to attain liberation only.

## Marriage

Marriage or vivāha was a very important samskāra in ancient India.

Marriage in ancient India had three mainpurposes:

1. Promotion of religion by performance of household sacrifices.

2. Progeny or the happy after life of father and his ancestors and continuation of family line or kula.

3. Rati or sexual pleasure.

**Manu66 and other law givers have mentioned about eight forms of marriage:**

1.      Brahma Vivāha:

☐ This is considered to be the purest form of marriage.

☐ In this form of marriage the father of the bride offers his daughter to a man of character and learning.

☐ The daughter who is decked with ornaments and richly dressed is given as a gift to a man of good character and high learning.

2.      Daiva Vivāha:

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

3.          Ārsa Vivāha:

☐ In ārsa vivāha 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.

4.          Prajāpatya Vivāha:

☐ 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.

5.          Asura Vivāha:

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

6.          Gandharva Vivāha:

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.

7.          Rākshasa Vivāha:

This was marriage by capture in which the girl was forcibly abducted from her home, crying and weeping and her kinsmen have been stained and their houses broken.

8.          Paishācha Vivāha:

Paishācha form of marriage is one in which the man seduces by force a girl who is sleeping or intoxicated or mentally disordered.

Out of these eight forms of marriage the first four have been described as prashasta or approved or desirablemarriage whereas the rest of the four forms have been considered to be aprashasta or disapproved or undesirablemarriages.

There were many conditions attached with marriage.

 One important condition was that the bride should be a virgin and the importance of this rule lies in the fact that it renders the remarriage of widows difficult.

 In the Rig Veda there is some indication that a woman might re-marry if her husband had disappeared and could not be found or heard of.

 Atharva Veda mentions that a woman married twice may be united in the next world with her second, not her first, husband. But generally it was not hailed.