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
State in Ancient India: Evolutionary Theory, Force Theory, Mystical Theory, Contract Theory

STATE

State defined...

- A State is a set of institutions that possess the authority.
- A physical area
- Control over a definite territory.
- Rule over the People.
- State includes
  a. Armed forces,
  b. Civil service or bureaucracy,
  c. Courts and police etc.
  d. Definite revenue system

Background: Condition before State

- Paleolithic period
- Gradual development
- Settlement started with growth of population
- Initially Society was without the king

FEATURES OF STATE

- Population
- Territory
- Power within its territorial boundaries.
- Government:
- An Institutions maintain law and order
- Social order
- Public service
- Public safety

According to Kautilya: State include

1. Swamin (King),
2. Amatya (Ministers),
3. Janapad (The people and territory),
4. Durga (The Fort),
5. Kosha, (strong treasury)
6. Danda (Strong army)
7. Mitra (The ally).

SOURCES

1. **The Vedas:** concepts of King, Kingship, etc., Kingship and their duties towards the subjects.

2. **The Mahabharata:** Shanti Parva provide information of political and administrative system.

3. **The Arthashastra:** Kautilya highlights issues like taxation, diplomacy, war strategies etc.

4. **Works of Thinkers:** Smrithis, Kamandakeya Neethisaara, Sukraneetisara and the like.

5. **Buddhist Text:** Aachrangsutra, Digghanikaya and Jataka Stories

6. **Jain texts**

7. **Inscriptions:** .

8. **Accounts of Foreign Travellers:** Megesthanes, Fahien, Huang Tsang etc.

9. **Coins and sealing**

10. **Other Sources:**

1. Brihaspati Sutra

2. Neeti Vakya Niritha of Somadeva

3. Rajaneethi Ratnakara

4. Veeramrityodaya

5. Rajaneethi Mayukha

6. Puranas

- Ancient India Political Science was known As

1. *Rajadharma* (Duties of the King)
2. *Rajyashastra* (Science of the State)
3. *Dandniti* (Code of Punishments)
4. *Nitishastra* (Code of Ethics)
5. *Arthashashtra* (Book of Policies)

THEORIES ABOUT ORIGIN OF STATE

- No concrete evidence is available
- On the basis of the textual reference we can detect four important theories

a) Divine Theory
b) Force Theory
c) Evolutionary Theory
d) Contract Theory

Divine Theory

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

- In this theory ....

It is believed that Kings was chosen by Gods to rule the state

Divine Theory

- Earliest reference in Rigveda (VII,64,1.2)
- Kautilya: Kings comparable with Gods
- Kautilya: King Possesses power of Indra & Yam
- Ramayan: King is greater than Yam, Kuber, Indra & Varun
- Mahabharat (S.P): King is God amongst human
- Mahabharat (S.P): Vishnu created *a* son rule upon humans

Theory of Divine Origin

- Kingship was given divine sanction
- King was considered the representative of God.
- King suppose to contained the powers of important Gods like *Indra, Varuna* and *Agni*.
- This theory strongly appears first in the epics and then Manusmruti.
- The king was evidently become as a God himself.
- Kings referred to their divine status in their titles.
- Kushan titles
- The Chola kings worshipped as God in the temples.

- The theory of divine origin of state in ancient India has been widely criticised.

- Buddhist text not approved this theory

FORCE THEORY

- Force was considered to be an important factor in the evolution of the state in India.

- State emerged from conquests of other families or tribe.

- Earliest clans fought among themselves for cow, pasture land, settlements and other sources.

- Only a strong and able warrior could lead the clan in such wars.

FORCE THEORY

- Winner was given special status and the members of clan started obeying him.
- This tendency continued and subsequently the leader became king.
- John Spellman: King in ancient India was primarily a military leader (*Vedas* and the *Brahmanas*).
- However

No systematic explanation of the role of force theory in the emergence of the state in ancient India.

Most discussed theory

Story behind Contract Theory

- **Aeitrey Brahman:**
- Once upon a time, there was a war between gods and demons.
- The Gods suffered defeat and they deliberated to arrive at the conclusion that they needed a *raja* to lead them back to victory.
- They proceeded to appoint **Soma (Indra)**, and defeated demons.
- Qualities of Indra: Brave, Great Warrior

CONTRACT THEORY

Contract Theory : Digh Nikay

- There was a time when people were living happily.
- Subsequently rottenness begun
- Soon heavenly life degenerated.
- 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, for there appeared 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.

Contract Theory

- **Digh Nikay**: The individual, who was thus elected, came to hold in serial order three titles:
- a) *Mahāsammata* : *Chosen by whole people*
- b) *Khattiya*: *Lord of the fields*
- c) *Raja: King*

- People paid a part of their produce to the king.
- **Baudhayana**: king should protect the people in return for one sixth of the produce.

Contract Theory

According to Mahabharata: Shantiparva: First

- The people first lived in an idyllic society with peace and harmony.
- However, degeneration set in subsequently and a state of anarchy resulted where *mastya-nyaya* came to prevail.
- To get out of this situation, the people made a collective compact denying violent temper, speech and conduct, theft or robbing of others' wealth and wives,
- And resolving to socially cast off those who violated these norms.
- They lived by it for some time, but faced with frequent violates.
- God approached to Brahma. Brahma then nominated Manu to be the first King.
- He also stipulated *dandaniti*, the principles of governance.
- Thus the first King as well as laws of the government in this theory are of divine origin.

EVOLUTIONARY THEORY

Evolutionary Theory

1. State evolved from family unit
2. Head of the family was chief
3. Families grew into large extended units or tribe
4. Heads of the family served as a government

Evolutionary Theory

- This is the oldest theory of the origin of the state in India (*Atharva Veda*)
- According to this theory the state is the result of evolutionary progress and it didn't originate at a fixed time.
- *Atharva Veda:* The earliest phase of human life was the stage of *Vairajya* or stateless state.
- It was a state of complete anarchy.
- Subsequently, with the emergence of agriculture, stable life became possible.
- To fulfil the needs of agricultural society the family emerged and the head of the family became the first wielder of authority.
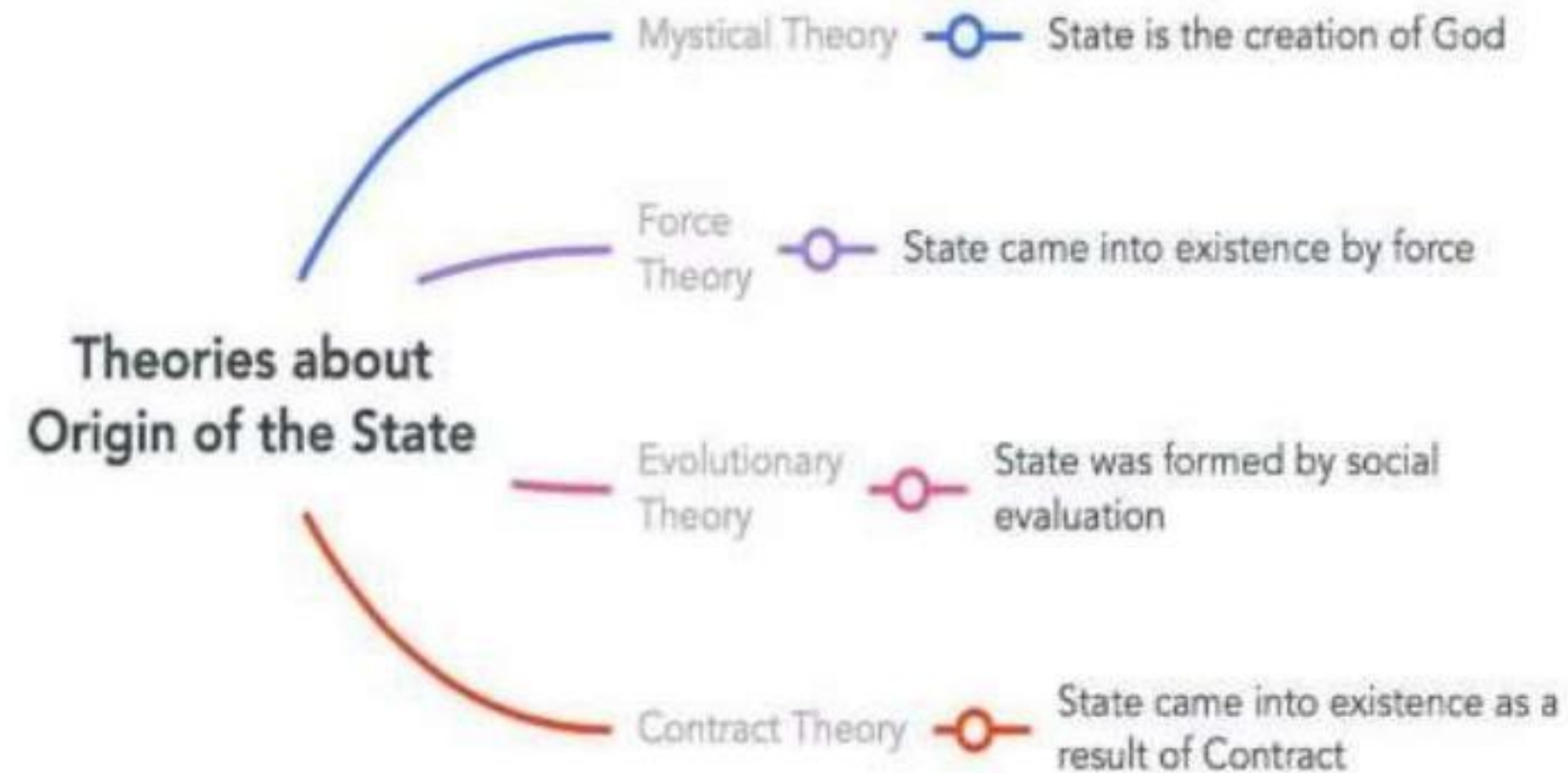
EVOLUTIONARY THEORY

Evolutionary Theory

- **Altekar:** With other Indo-Aryan communities, the state also evolved in India in ancient times out of the institution of the joint family.

- **R. Shamasastry** also favours the evolutionary theory but in his opinion the earliest form of family in ancient India was matriarchal which after the invasion of Aryans became patriarchal.

- **R. S. Sharma** focuses on the role of family, varna and property in the evolution of the state

- **Bhandarkar** has quoted five passages from *Shānti Parva* which suggest that the kingly office arose to protect the weak against the strong.

CONCLUSION

- Various theories postulates regarding origin of state

- Amongst contract and evolution theory is much discussed

- No one propound the Force theory in ancient India.

- Divine theory is referred in many text and supported by political thinkers

THANK YOU