

# INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

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## Unit-I

Ancient Thinkers- Thiruvalluvar-Kautilya- Arthasasthra- Kalhana –  
Rajatarangini

### Objectives

- To Understand the moral, social, and political principles laid down in the *Thirukkural*.
- To understand the scope and significance of the *Arthashastra* in ancient Indian political thought

### SOURCES OF ANCIENT INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

Ancient Indian political thought is known as Rajya Shastra, Rajadharma, Dandaneethi, Nitishastra, etc. Saletore states that "the history of ancient Indian political thought is the story of great minds that evolved political institutions and guided Hindu society for nearly three millennium. Its significance lies also in the fact that it deals with a vast country which has had a civilization that goes back to at least 5000 years from now and which witnessed the rise and fall of many kingdoms and empires in the course of its long and eventful history." Ancient Indian political thought can be conveniently traced in the background of the ancient customs, conventions and political practices and institutions apart from philosophical traditions. The source material is limited. However, ancient monuments, religious works, epics in addition to the

philosophical practices throw light on the study of ancient Indian political philosophy and institutions. Some of the prominent sources of information are

**The Vedas:**

The beginning of the Indian political thought are traceable to the earliest and the most ancient works known to mankind such as the Vedas. In Vedas and Brahmanas, there were references to the theory and practice of Government. There are references to government and kingship in all the first three Vedas. We find in the Vedas about the monarchy and the bounden duties of the monarch towards his people. We find the controversial institutions like sabha and samithi, having their roots in the Vedic period. Sathapatha Brahmana enunciates the divine theory of kingship. King at that time was known as 'Prajapathi'. Itreya Brahmana briefly explains the concept of social contract theory. It maintains that State is a collection of villages. In Vedas the word Kshatrasri' represents 'sovereignty'. In the Samhitas of Yajurveda, there are numerous passages about different political institutions. There is a lot of intermingling of theology and polity.

**The Mahabharatha:**

After vedic literature, the most detailed exposition of the science of ancient Indian polity is to be found in the epic Mahabharatha. The whole statecraft, diplomacy, war ethics and strategies, State relations,

etc. can be understood by referring to the Mahabharatha. The 'Sabhaparva' of Mahabharatha projects an image of ideal administration. The duties of the King and the government have been discussed at many places. The 'Shanthiparva' of Mahabharatha has given a fair idea of Ancient Indian Polity. The Mahabharatha not only throws floodlight on the contemporary political philosophy but also the political institutions. The Mahabharatha has been aptly called the 'Dharma Shashtra', 'Neethi Shashtra' and Vedanta'.

#### **The Arthashastra:**

Kautilya's Arthashastra is one of the most important books on Indian polity. It deals with different aspects of the working of the State such as Kingship, civil administration, law, foreign policy, war and peace, welfare, etc. It is mainly concerned with the practical problems of government. It belongs to the fourth century B.C. It is considered as "a manual of the administrators." It is an excellent handbook on economics for King as it provides information about taxation and administration.

### **THIRUVALLUVAR**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Thirukkural occupies a very significant place in Indian political thoughts. This was written in Tamil by Thiruvalluvar. He was a sage. This work was called Tamil Marai or Tamil Veda. This was composed

in short, sweet couplets Thirukkural consists of 1330 couplets. It is few each in the 133 chapter. Thirukkural is divided into three books Book 1 : Aram or Dharma Book 2 : Porul and Artha Book 3 : Inpam or Kama In the three books, Porutpal deals directly with the king and this state in Arasiyal and Angariyal in the course of 57 chapters. Thirukkural is one of the ancient Tamil works, which devotes exclusive attention to the discussion of polity.

### **LIFE OF THIRUVALLUVAR**

Thiruvalluvar commonly known as valluvar is a Tamil poet and philosopher whose contribution to Tamil literature is the Thirukural. It is believed that he was born either in Thirumayali (Mylapore) Chennai in Tamilnadu or in Thirunainar kurinji village in Kanyakumari district of Tamilnadu. Thiruvalluvar had lived sometime between 4th century BC and 1st century BC Thiruvalluvar is well known as the author of Thirukural, a collection and couplets on Ethics, Politics and Economic matters and love. The text is considered an exceptional and widely cherished work of Tamil literature. Almost no authentic information available about Valluvar. His life and likely background for variously by inferred from his literature work by different biographies. Various Claims have been made regarding Valluvars family background and occupation in the Colonial era literature all inspired from the selective

section of his treat hagiographies published since the colonial era started in Tamilnadu.

### **IMPORTANCE OF THIRUVALLUVAR**

The Other name for Thiruvalluvar is Dievapulavar, Poyyir pulavar, Nanmuganar, Perunavalalar. Thirukural has been Divided into 3 sections namely Arathupal, Porupal and Inbathupal consisting of totally 1330 kural with 133 adigaram, one Adigaram contains 10 kural. It is one among the pathinen keel kanakku nool. Thirukural contains everything nothing is left. Thirukural has been translated into 100 languages. The other name of Thirukural is muppall, Deivanool, Poiyyamozhi and etc.

### **PORUTPAL**

The second book devoted to a discussion of Artha, which is relevance to politics. The morally - oriented king is fully eulogised. There is reference to the six elements of a kingdom. The king is expected to be kind, just and impartial. Miserliness, pride and sensuality are regarded as the great evils of the monarch. Dharma and artha are considered equal. Thiruvalluvar is Aram means discipline. Basis of the life of human beings is Aram. Politics and society is not much differentiated, and Aram links both together. Thirukkural stresses both Aram (Dharma) and Porul (Meaning).

The concept of Aram is easily rendered into the word Dharma without the latter's religious connotation. Order is the better word. Thiruvalluvar attempted to indicate that order is the basis for the development of human civilisation, and wherever order is reflected in the thought, word and deed of human beings, there is bound to be progress and peace. Thirukkural lays down the principles of order in external as well as internal conduct of man. But fortunately or unfortunately, while Arthasastra and Dharmasastras serve more as a guide books for the ruler, but Thirukkural does not do so. 57 chapters look at polity, from the point of view of ruler. The king is given advice. Rest portion of the Thirukkural is addressed to the people. So some writers say that thirukkural is devoted to the discussion of civil society. Aram of valluvar is not the same as Manu Dharma. According to Thiruvalluvar Aram finds expression in the household and is socio-political in connotation rather than religious. It is totally independent of Varna. Ashrawa, sacrifices and rituals. Valluvar considers love be the positive and sustaining force of life and the basis for all constructive and productive activities. Valluvar treats the family as the basic unit of the state.

### **THE STATE**

The state described by Valluvar consists of King at the centre. Already we have seen that family is the basic concept of society. His



state is the family writ large and the authority of king over the subjects is not unlike the parental authority. Freedom is defined by Valluvar as conduct within the frame of Aram and can be secured by one's discharge of moral duties kural lays down that one must do to the best of his ability and knowledge, always strive to do the righteous theory towards others. This may be described as voluntary performance of self-imposed duties. The Thiruvalluvar's society is not stratified into Varnas. It does not stress Asramas. It wished to strengthen the basic unit the family. Kural deplores a householder who renounces the world and seeks sanyasa. Kural judges all men not by their wealth or birth but by their conduct. In the Indian context it is radical thinking and the ideal polity which kural envisages revolves around a self-sustaining, self-helping organic community.

### **KINGSHIP AND JUSTICE**

Thirukkural envisages an ideal monarchy. Thiruvalluvar says "He is a lion among monarchs who owns these things army, people, wealth, counsel, friends and forts'. This comes very close to the saptanga theory of state. Among the seven constituents, king is also one. King is responsible for the governance of the country is expected to possess certain qualification. King must be a man of knowledge. King should acquire knowledge by reading the number of scholarly books. He should possess all the good qualities like wisdom, diligence, honesty.

And apart from all there self-discipline is essential for the ruler. The king must know how to develop the resources of his kingdom, how to enrich the treasury, how to preserve his wealth and how to spend it wordly. The king must be a man of firmliness, but must avoid harshness. He must protect the subjects like a god. The king should know the resources that are available in the country. Exploit the resources in full. There must be the maximum usages. There must be equitable distributions of produced goods. The rule of the king must relieve the people from excessive starvation, irremediable epidemics and destructive toes We have already seen that the king should have very good knowledge. It needs for the king “to speak in are assembly without fullness of knowledge is like playing chess without squares”. It is his fully not to fear what must be feared and wisdom to fear what must be feared. Kural lays emphasis upon the self-discipline of the ruler. Follow the king must be the principle followed. If the king corrects his own fault, the people will also correct their fault. The king should always cultivate the friendship the wise and should not have friendship with evil doers.

Coming to the duties of the king, the most important duty is to protect the people of the country. The main duty of a king is to know quickly all that happens at all time. To know about the happening the king should develop a sound espionage system. The spies are appointed

to watch and report to the king about the happenings in the state. Thiruvalluvar attaches great importance to the institution of spies. Valluvar says “The spy service and authoritative books on state craft should be deemed as the two eyes of the king.”

The king must pay attention to the personnel employed. The concept of the principle of the right man for the right job. “which the king does not regard all alike but regards each according to his merit many dwell happily on that account”. The king must avoid neglecting the regular duties. He should have in mind the purpose and goal of the State. Kural advises the king to aim to high-level ideals. Even when the king meets failures he must laugh and overcome them. People constitute one of the important elements of the state. In monarchy also the total power rests with the people. The king should always act according to the wishes of the people. The king should always act very friendly towards the people.

## **MINISTRY**

Thiruvalluvar discusses in detail about the ministry. Valluvar says “A minister is one who is wise in the choice of means and reason and skilled in the execution of rare enterprises”. Ministry is a very important element in the state. Ministers play a very important role in advising the king in carrying out his duties. On the basis of availability of resources, and analysing the situation the ministry helps the king. Apart from this

methods used to execute the policies of the king must be taken care by the ministers. When the king faces difficulties, ministers help the king to overcome the difficulties. Decisions are taken by the king with the advice of the ministers, and also helps to implement the decisions taken, without delay. The works taken by the king should not be left incomplete, if it is left incomplete it may create tension in the mind of the people which may lead to agitation. Ministers should have thorough knowledge of law so that they can do the work in a right and true manner. Valluvar says “Far better are seventy crores of enemies for a king than a minister at his side who intends his ruin” A minister must be competent so that he can be an asset to that state and its victory. The successful discharging of duties of ministers lies in the eloquence of his speech, systematic, logical and meaningful presentation of facts, Ministers must have the capacity to influence and convince the king, in a polished manner. Ends and means is very much emphasized by Valluvar. Kural says the purity of means is very much essential in both good and bad situations. There must be firmness of purpose. These too can be showed only by the ministers.

### **DIPLOMACY**

According to Valluvar ambassadors are indispensable kural describes the qualifications essential for an ambassador. It says “A loving native, high birth and manners that captivate princes”, which are

essential qualifications for an ambassador”. A thorough knowledge of politics is very much essential for the ambassador. He must be an effective speaker. Valluvar says, he is the ambassador who fearlessly seeks his sovereigns good though it should cost him life.

### **FORTRESS**

There is a separate section in Thiruvalluvar on forts. Forts are to be strong, impregnable and of good height and thickness. All objects needed for war and means of defence is kept inside the fort. This fortress is essential to those who attack of course for defence also it is very much essential. A fortress must own a fort of waters, an open space, a hill and forest nearby. It is built in such a way that it cannot be easily stormed. Everything needed for life in case of emergency is stored inside the fort. Army and its heroism is very much essential for the protection of Fortress. Army should be incapable of being corrupted. They must always offer united resistance. The army should know how to stand the enemy’s onset.

### **ALLIES**

Analysing the importance of allies in international sphere kural considers the friendship is the most difficult one to acquire according to Valluvar there is no better defence against one’s foes than friendship. Thirukkural says “Friendship is that which prevents war leading to ruin, persuades entry into ways that are right and shares the suffering in the

time of adversity. 31 The king must identify his enemies both within and without the state. The king must maintain proper relations between himself and his subjects, there by themselves do not constitute any advantage for him. Kural explains welfare state and describes the king as welfare king, the king with his affection and sound judgement, conquers evil and maintains peace and progress.

### **Kautilya: Theory of State**

Legend has it that Kautilya was a teacher in the famous ancient Indian university at Takshshila. He helped one of his students Chandragupta in dislodging the Nandas, the ruling dynasty of Magadha, and establishing the Maurya dynasty. The text of the Arthashastra is attributed to this teacher, who is also known as Chanakya and Vishnugupta.

A new English translation of the Arthashastra has recently become available. L. N. Rangarajan's translation follows in the trail of R. Shamasastri's and R. P. Kangle's. Shamasastri had discovered the text from a pandit in Tanjore in 1904, translated it into English first and published it in 1915. Kangle later critically edited and numbered the sutras, translated them, added his commentary, and published the outcome in three volumes between 1960 and 1965. Rangarajan has attempted a new translation and reorganized the chapters in the original text into what he considers a more reader-friendly version. He goes on to say that

‘presently available translations suffer from archaic expressions, voluminous footnotes, incomprehensible literalness, muddling of the text with tedious facts, difficulty in understanding a topic scattered in different places, divergence of opinion and personal prejudices or predilections’.

The subjects dealt with prominently are: constituent elements of the state, major departments of the government, taxation system, armed forces and network of spies and the theory of rajamandala and foreign policy. A series of interpretative inferences can be made here. The first would be about the structure of the text itself. As the Arthashastra itself candidly admits, the text generally attributed to Kautilya is not the first in the tradition of the arthashastra, as distinguished from the tradition of dharmashastra. However, only the Kautilyan text has survived and was discovered early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, even in the case of the Kautilyan version, there are two different points of view as to whether it was ‘created’ or ‘compiled’ as a file by a series of scholars at different or the same point of time.

The dating of the Arthasashtra is the subject of a great deal of controversy. The range of possible dates places the text at times in the Mauryan and at others in the Gupta period. According to Romila Thapar, the text was originally written by Kautilya, the minister of Chandragupta Maurya (322–298 BC) but it was commented and added on to by various

later writers until about the third or fourth century AD. T. R. Trautmann seeks to establish through the syntax and grammatical structures used in different chapters of the text that they must have been authored by different people and/or in different periods. Kangle, who does not reject this argument out of hand, concedes that 'composition of a text has different connotations in ancient India, with the persistent tradition of oral transmission, from what it means in modern times'. **The Social Structure**

We could make some inferences about the structure of the society, economy, and the state that are consistent with the factual details provided in the text. The structure of the society that emerges is one based on the varnashrama system. The varna system refers to the four orders into which society was ideally divided, and the ashrama system refers to the four phases of a life-cycle viz. brahamcharya (the celibate learner), grihasthya (the householder), vanaspratha (the anchorite), and sanyasa (the renouncer). The society was divided into four varnas: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishya, and Sudras. There were two kinds of Brahmins or the priestly class: srotriya and Brahmins in general. The special function of the Brahmins was the performance of ceremonial and sacred rituals. They, especially the srotriyas, enjoyed special privilege in social relations, property ownership, and laws. The srotriyas ranked next only to the temple establishment, hermits, and heretic ascetics. Purohita, the royal chaplain and adviser, enjoyed a position secondary to the royal family but



exercised a good deal of influence on the king. In settling virgin territories, srotriyas were given tax-free land which could be transformed into hereditary property. Debt to a srotriya was treated second only to sovereign debt. Brahmins could bear arms as well but they were not supposed to be overtly martial in temperament and war. Kshatriyas were regarded as the 'protectors of the land'. Nobility of birth and royal lineage were considered matters of overriding importance. Only a male heir could succeed a king, though the rule of primogeniture was not a settled convention. Kshatriyas were valued as the best recruits to the army as compared to other varnas.

Vaishyas as a varna are seldom mentioned in the text. But traders and merchants were an important and mobile segment of the society. Brahmins and Kshatriyas were apparently more equal than others, for Vaishyas are singled out in the text in the context of differential punishment. But they were also wealthy, for they feature in the section on laws of inheritance as well. They were apparently so ubiquitous that secret agents often disguised as traders. Sudras were agriculturalists, artisans, craftsmen, and actors and entertainers. A Sudra was also an Aryan and could never be taken as a slave. They, like the Vaishyas, formed a large section of society and usually lived in uninhabited areas. Both Vaishyas and Sudras were also recruited in large numbers in the army. However, Kshatriyas were highly regarded as the best soldiers.

Women were supposed to be always subject to patriarchal control by father, husband, or son. Non-Aryans were outside the pale of the four varnas. Their numerical strength is not clear though they were apparently not immune from slavery. The most frequently mentioned non-Aryans are called chandals who were probably 'untouchable' in their relation to an Aryan woman. Historians of ancient India are unanimous in their assessment that unlike the ancient Greek society, slavery was almost nonexistent in ancient India. This is borne out by the Arthashastra, which refers to Vrishalas and Pashandas who were non-Aryan ascetics belonging to the Sramana (non-brahmanical) sects.

The Arthashastra also refers to the 'unsubdued jungle tribes who live in their own territory, and who are more numerous, brave, fight in day light and, with their ability to seize and destroy countries, behave like kings. Rangarajan's surmise is: 'on the whole, tribal chieftains seem to have been independent of the kings so long as they did not harass the country and came to king's help when called upon to do so'. The jungle tribes were obviously outside the pale of the varna system at the time of the Arthashastra.

Occupations and professions listed in the Arthashastra are numerous and it mentions over 120 of these. They were mainly from agriculture, fisheries, animal husbandry, manufacturing based on arts and

crafts, food products and vending, forestry, white-collar workers, defence services, textiles, jewelry, etc.

The Kautilyan text also refers to foreigners (baharikas, agantuh, agantukah), although Rangarajan adds that some of 'these terms may refer to strangers to the locality rather than true foreigners'. The text also has three references to ports and ferries (2.28) and sea-faring vessels. Foreign traders could visit these only if they were frequent visitors or vouchsafed by local merchants.

Movements within the country, especially into the countryside and new settlements were regulated by passports and immigration rules. The entry into the fortified city was rigorously controlled by regulator officers and secret agents.

### **The Economy**

The structure of the economy as revealed in the text appears to be considerably developed with regard to terms of ownership of property and division of labour. The institution of private property existed and so did state-ownership. This flies in the face of the Orientalist theories such as, for example, the Asiatic mode of production a la Karl Marx and oriental despotism a la Karl Wittfogel. Both these theories are premised on the absence of the institution of private property and royal absolutism.

The state claimed ownership of common resources such as water and all residual, abandoned or disputed but unsettled private claims to

property. Birds, fishes, vegetables on waterworks, irrespective of whether built by the state or private parties belonged to the state. The state also appropriated all treasure troves in the excess of 100, 000 panas (the unit of money, from Sanskrit panas) and  $5/6^{\text{th}}$  of smaller troves.

The king is advised to maintain a diversified economy efficiently and profitably. Silver coins of one, half quarter, and one-eighth pana and copper coins of one mashaka, half a mashaka, one kakani and half a kakani were in circulation. Land, livestock, mining and fishing were all both in state and private ownership. Virgin land tracts were state-owned but arable land was cultivated both by the state and the private parties. However, state monopolies existed in gold, silver and gems, liquors, gambling. The state and local and foreign merchants were involved in trade and commerce. Multiple sources of revenue are indicated in the text: from the durgam (fortified towns), from the rashtram (the countryside), from khani (mines), setu (irrigation work), from ayamukham (accounting), from warehouses, saving from expenditure, from ayudhiyam (supply of soldiers in lieu of tax barter, confiscation) and so on. The rates of tariff schedules are also given in the text.

One gets the impression from the text that the economy was predominantly agrarian. The crown lands (sita) were either cultivated directly under the administration of chief superintendent of crown land or let out to share croppers at the rate of  $1/4^{\text{th}}$  or  $1/5^{\text{th}}$  of the harvest going to

the tiller if they invested only on labour and one-half if they contributed all inputs. Private cultivators were under obligation not to keep their land fallow and pay land revenue at the rate of 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the produce. Animal husbandry was the second most important activity, and trade was 'the third pillar of economic activity'.

### **The Saptang Theory of State**

The pre-Kautilyan theory of state in ancient India closely resembled the early states in great many tribal or lineage-based societies where the role of the state was proposed to uphold the varnashram laws, i.e., laws of society given by customs and traditions. It is similar in some sense to the early laissez fair state in mercantile economies of Europe in the early stages of commercial and industrial revolution, where a minimalist state only facilitated commerce and contract rather than actively intervened in the economy. Kautilya's Arthashastra made a significant break with this tradition by stipulating that the state could make its own laws and that in case of conflict between the laws of the dharmashastras and the dharmanaya of the state, the latter would prevail.

True to the arthashastra tradition, the Arthashastra does not concern itself so much with the social customs and laws as with secular economic activity and the structure of the state and government. As the saptang (seven-organ) theory of state suggests, the state was a corporate entity comprising (1) swami (king), (2) amatya (ministers and other high

officials); (3) janpada/rashtra (territory and the population inhabiting these), (4) durga (fortified town and cities), (5) kosa (treasury), (6) danda (forces), and (7) mitra (allies). This is in the order of the seven constituents of the state presented in the Arthashastra. They are supposed to be organically interdependent and interlinked according to Kautilya. The argument we find here is that earlier authorities cited by Kautilya opined that a calamity befalling a constituent higher in the order is more detrimental to the state than the lower one, but Kautilya shrewdly disagrees and ends up arguing that each element is equally important and indispensable. But, he admits reminiscent of ancient Greek teleologists and modern functionalists, ‘that partial calamity of one element is more likely to be functionally substituted by more healthy elements than a simultaneously debilitating calamity affecting more than one part of the state.’ But ‘lastly, a calamity which threatens to destroy all other elements shall be considered as the most serious, irrespective of what position the element affected occupies in the list of priorities’.

### **Departments of Government**

Agriculture appears to be the most important economic activity of the time, and yet other economic activities were also considerably developed. In verse 2.12.37 the Arthashastra says: ‘The source of the financial strength of the state is the mining [and metallurgical] industry; the state exercises power because of its treasury. With increased wealth

and a powerful army more territory can be acquired thereby further increasing the wealth of the state'. The Kautilyan state demonstrated a considerably high degree of functional specialization and structural differentiation. It mentions 34 different departments of government, their respective adhyakshas (heads) and their qualifications and duties are as follows:

1. Samahartri/Samnidhatri—Chief Controller of Accounts

2. Akshapatalamadhyaksha/Nagavanadhyaksha—Chief Elephant Forester

3. Koshadhyaksha—Chief Superintendent of Treasury

4. Akaradhyaksha—Chief Controller of Mining and Metallurgy

5. Lohadhyaksha—Chief Superintendent of Metals

6. Lakshanadhyaksha—Chief Superintendent of Mint

7. Khanadhyaksha—Chief Superintendent of Mines

8. Lavanadhyaksha—Chief Salt Commissioner

9. Suvarnadhyaksha—Chief Superintendent of Precious Metals and Jewellery

10. Kostagaradhyaksha—Chief Superintendent of Warehouses

11. Panyadhyaksha—Chief Controller of State Trading

12. Kupyadhyaksha—Chief Superintendent of Forest Produce

13. Ayudhgharadhyaksha—Chief of Ordinance

14. Pauthavadhyaksha—Chief Controller of Weight and Measures

15. Manadhyaksha— Chief Surveyor and Time Keeper
16. Sulkadhyaksha—Chief Controller of Custom and Octroi
17. Sutradhyaksha—Chief Textile Commissioner
18. Sitadhyaksha—Chief Superintendent Crown Lands
19. Suradhyaksha—Chief Controller of Alcoholic Beverages
20. Sunadhyaksha—Chief Protector of Animals and Controller of

Animal Slaughter

21. Ganikadhyaksha—Chief Controller of Entertainment
22. Navadhyaksha—Chief of Shipping
23. Pattanadhyaksha—Chief Controller of Ports and Harbours
24. Go-adhyaksha—Chief Superintendent of Crown Herds
25. Ashwadhyaksha—Chief Commander of Cavalry
26. Hastyadhyaksha—Chief Commander of Elephant Corps
27. Rathadhyaksha—Chief Commander of Chariot Corps
28. Pattadhyaksha—Chief Commander of Infantry
29. Mudradhyaksha—Chief Passport Officer
30. Vivit Adhyaksha—Chief Controller of Pasture Lands
31. Dhyutadhyaksha—Chief Controller of Gambling

Superintendent

32. Samsthadhyaksha—Chief Controller of Private Trade
33. Bandanagradyaksha—Chief Superintendent of Jails
34. Devtadhyaksha—Chief Superintendent of Temples



These were the top echelons of the ministerial or administrative hierarchies of the central state. The distinction between the two categories, ministers and officials, is not very clear in the text, nor is the division between the central and provincial administration self-evident. The only vertical administrative hierarchies clearly mentioned appear to be those for the village and city/town level, including fortified cities. The administrative structure outlined above is by and large horizontal; the vertical chain of command and responsibilities is mostly left unarticulated. Only in few instances do the readers get a glimpse of explicit or implied hierarchical control, supervision, and coordination. However Rangarajan (1992: 308) makes bold to assert: ‘There were at least two grades of ministers and head of the departments, apart from the councilors who need not have had direct administrative responsibilities. ... Kautilya says that one who fails all four tests (dharma, artha, karma and fear) shall be sent to difficult posts such as forests, mines or factories. Hence the salary of the head of the department could have been anywhere between 1000 to 12,000 panas per annum, with or without perquisites’. Romila Thapar reads into the Kautilyan text the reference to ministers as well as council of ministers (‘mantrino-mantriparishadamcha’).

It goes without saying that the monarch himself occupied the apex of ministerial and/or bureaucratic hierarchy. But it would have been an incredible task of supervision and coordination of policy making and

coordination for one sitting at the hub of such a huge and sprawling state structure. It is the simultaneous presences of the institution of private property along with royal ownership, some implied autonomy of the janapada/rashtra from the state, and the differentiation between the state and the kingship within it that clearly demarcates the political system of the Arthashastra, on the one hand, from Marx's theory of the 'Asiatic mode of production' and Karl Wittfogels 'oriental despotism', on the other.

Nevertheless, it must be conceded that, besides the huge bureaucratic apparatus, the Kautilyan blueprint of the state also outlines large armed forces and espionage. This is probably inevitable for a structure envisaged for the victor. As per their understanding of the evolution of state in ancient India, historians visualize the lines of development such as from gopati (owner of livestock) to bhupati (owner of land), from janapada to mahajanapada, ganasanghas ('republics') to the monarchies. In the opinion of Burton Stein, 'these so called 'republics' are far better viewed as social 'communities as states''. 'In some reckonings, they existed from about 800 CE to the time of Kautilya's Arthashastra, conventionally ascribed to the fourth century CE. As clan-based polities, 'republics' have been identified from Pali sources to early Buddhism and from Jaina texts. Other source such as the Mahabharata, the Arthashastra, and Panini's 'Asthtadhyayi, add to this evidence and

also shift the ground of investigation from northwestern to northeastern India during the sixth to fourth centuries CE'. As already hinted above, the Arthashastra appears to be the most crucial text mirroring the above transition. Even though it could be used as a manual of statecraft by any king, it was primarily meant for the vijigsu (the one desirous of conquering the entire Indian subcontinent). Such a king was described in later Buddhist texts as the chakravarti. The early Indian lexicographical source Amarakosha (a text apparently post-dating the Arthashastra to perhaps sometime around the Gupta period) defines the chakravarti as follows:

*Raja tu pranatosheshasamantah syadadhiswarah.*

*Chakravarti sarvabhaumo nriponyo mandaleshwarah (8.2).*

*(The Chakravarti king owns all the lands and is the master of the mandala.)*

### **A Centralized State?**

What is the extent of political centralization evident in the Arthashastra? Some may argue that centralization was greatly enhanced by giving considerable powers to the monarch and the officials. Centralization of state power is implied also in the very fact that the Kautilyan text departed from the society-focused dharmashastra tradition to join the state-focused arthashastra tradition emphasizing raja dharma (discussed in the following section). The same statist bias is reflected in

the conquest-motivated and anti-‘republican’ temper of the rajamandala, the large extent of state-monopoly in some cultural and economic activities and regulatory role of state in the rest of the economy, the state-directed settlement of virgin tracts of land and immigration rules, and a huge network of spies. At the same time, however, lack of a tight centralization in the state may be argued on the basis of the limits of human ability on the part of the monarch to work such a bureaucratic apparatus, the fairly elementary and commonsensical nature of some of the exhortations, the rather pre-capitalist monetization and pre-modern technological development, and the lack of articulation of horizontal and vertical organizational control in the bureaucratic structure having multiple levels.

An analysis of Rangarajan’s English translation of the Arthashastra, commentaries on the political thought of Kautilya, and the historiography of the Mauryan state suggest that arguably three different interpretations have been made and are possible. These are textualist, nationalist, and Marxist. In the literature previously available, textual scholars or Indologists either downplay the centralist interpretation, or vigorously refute it. Kangle refers to H. Jacobis’s comparison of Kautilya with Bismarck, but refutes it citing A. Hillebrandt by arguing that ‘the comparison was unfair’ as one was a teacher and the other a statesman;

besides, 'the whole spiritual atmosphere in which the two moved was different'.

One could still make a comparison at the level of ideas, history, and politics, but being Indologists and ideographs Kangle and his company obviously do not believe in such abstract comparative exercise. But, then, Kangle slips into a more detailed treatment of the comparison between Kautilya and Machiavelli. Citing approvingly W. Ruben's comparison between the two, Kangle concurs that 'the standpoint of both is that of 'realpolitik'', yet both the political thinkers add that the ruler must be simultaneously 'self-restrained and active' (that is, not fatalistic).

Heesterman makes the most unequivocal and sustained argument against the centralist/bureaucratic interpretation of the Arthashastra. He argues that the objective of the text may well have been to break the mould of tribal political organizations and give them a bureaucratic form and purpose, but it has not really succeeded in this enterprise. To quote Heesterman:

*Thus a second book deals at considerable length with a long list of administrative departments but significantly leaves out the important point of how these departments tie in with each other and with the whole of the administrative machinery. Specifically, the text leaves its student in the dark about who is responsible to whom. Delegation, chains of command, and reporting are*

*conspicuous by their absence. It is even possible to be in doubt as to whether the important official called samahartr[i] is a provincial 'collector' or the chief administrative officer of the state as a whole in the manner of a medieval Indian divan.*

The second major strand in Heesterman's argument is that the procedure and the occasion of the auditing of accounts presented by the mahamatras and its approval, by penalty-enforced unanimity, without the presence of the monarch smacks of a social and religious moment than a bureaucratically and rationally meaningful process subject to royal veto. The mahamatras are thus shown to be co sharers of authority with the king who is 'no more than a primus inter pares'.

Historian R. S. Sharma takes up cudgels with Heesterman but the latter's argument is not without chinks:

*When Kautilya provides for several heads of a department, he is not really concerned with ensuring equality of peers, which is a feature more of the kin-based society, but with preventing them from being detrimental to the state. Kautilya faces a dilemma. On the one hand, he wants the work to be done, for which he provides that departmental heads should not quarrel. On the other, he wants that these heads should not act in concert, as they may grab the income from the undertaking.*

The nationalist interpretation of the Arthashastra appeared keen to show to the colonial masters that the ancient Indian/Hindu text was enough to disprove the contention that India lacked a tradition of political thought. They were also inclined to highlight any textual or historical evidence of popular democratic, republican, and federal political ideas, institution, and values in the antiquities.

V. R. R. Dikshitar was at pains to argue, not always very convincingly, that the Mauryan state was 'federal', 'not unitary', 'roughly a composite of federal states', although he conceded that it was 'an intricate task to set forth the substantial relations which existed between the imperial government and each of the provinces or states now united in the empire as its member'. He approvingly cited S. K. Aiyangars's view that

*Empires in India under the Hindus attempted to be no more than kingdoms, of a small compass comparatively, which gathered together under the aegis of the leading state, which went by the name of imperial state for the time being, other kingdoms constituting merely an expanding mandala in political dependence. The administration that had to be carried on by the imperial state was a comparatively simple one, as by a well-established principle of devolution, most of the actual*

*administration was carried on by local bodies for comparatively small states ....*

We may clarify here that the devolutionary interpretation of Aiyangar (a parallel, for example, would be the Mughal subas) appears to be more persuasive than the federal one offered by Dikshitar, (something like the states in the USA).

The Marxist interpretation is, frankly speaking, more historiographical than textual and nationalist. Their interpretation is swayed by two additional factors: archeological, and the historiography of European feudalism. Being primarily historians, they are compelled by their craft to study a text in the context of, or in combination with, archeological effects: while this is methodologically more sophisticated, it tends to rob the text of its autonomy and its timelessness. Besides, the historiography of European feudalism prompts them to discover a parallel of the Roman Empire in India in the Mauryan state in Magadha. Just as the decline of the centralized competence of the later Roman Empire led to the subsequent rise of feudalism, similarly, the feudal historiography of Indian history needs a centralized Mauryan state whose decline caused feudal fragmentation and compartmentalization of state sovereignty from the emperor to the Brahmans and samantas.

R. S. Sharma and Romila Thapar theorize that the Vedic political organizations were pre-state social formations, and proto-states or states



in Indian history first materialized in the post-Vedic period when the primary egalitarian ethos of the tribal society in the mid-Ganga valley gave way to the class-stratified society in which monarchy and aristocratic oligarchy and coercion were needed for the perpetuation of inequalities of property. First the Nandas and subsequently the Mauryas in Magadha founded the first large-scale states. Sharma finds emphatic passages in the Arthashastra that prescribe ‘the unquestioned loyalty of the officials to the head of the state’, primacy of a ‘royal decree based on the customs of the people (dharmaanyaya)’ over the ‘shastra (the brahmanical law book)’ whenever the two come into conflict, appointment of candidates as amatya who are discovered by conducting secret tests (unknown to them) owing ‘primary allegiance to the king, even in violation of prevalent religious practices laid down by the brahmanical religion, which [e.g.] does not permit the teaching of the Veda to one who is not entitled to the performance of the Vedic sacrifice (yajya)’, and ‘the state control of even brahmanical institutions’.

Romila Thapar also interprets that the Arthashastra ‘endorsed a highly centralized system where the king’s control over the entire exercise remained taut’. However, she argues that it would not have been humanly possible to exercise control over such a vast and diverse territory, economy, and population as that of the Mauryan Empire. Accordingly, she speculates that there must have been ‘three variants in the

administrative pattern': (a) a centralized one in the 'metropolitan hub' (b) a devolutionary one in 'core areas' of 'strategic importance and of agrarian and commercial potential', and (c) a decentralized one in 'the peripheral areas. R. S. Sharma concedes that it is not clear whether the over 30 superintendents of Book II of the Arthashastra worked in 'the hinterland of the capital or in a wider area', but does not find a wider administrative network improbable if the text is put in the context of nearly 500 excavated sites showing shreds of Northern Black Burnished Ware (NBPW) at Mauryan levels and nearly 30 sites showing NBPW as well as punch-marked coins carrying similar symbols giving 'clear indications of supralocal provenance'. These archeological effects 'presuppose constant contact between the various town settlements' 'in the middle Gangetic plains and its periphery'.

### **The Theory of Rajamandala**

Kautilya formulated a detailed theory of foreign policy and interstate relations based on the maxim that a friend's friend is likely to be a friend and an enemy's friend an enemy. He laid down six basic principles of foreign policy, viz,

1. pursuit of resources by the vijigsu (the one desirous of conquest) for campaigns of victory
2. elimination of enemies
3. cultivation of allies and providing help to them

4. prudence rather than foolhardy valour

5. preference of peace to war

6. justice in victory as well as in defeat

The circle of states keeps expanding to include the 'middle kingdoms' of enemies until the distant states that may turn indifferent (udasina) to goings on in the circle relevant to the victor at the centre of the rajamandala.

We have already noted the novelty of the Arthashastra in treating statecraft as one that sought to recognize the state as the source of positive law, independent of social custom and tradition, and with a basis of authority and legitimacy that went beyond an ethnic or orthodox sectarian communalism. The theory of rajamandala, sketched out as a Weberian ideal type rather than as a historical case study of a particular state, draws attention to its other robust originality in the Indian tradition. It differs from the earlier brahmanical writings and texts dealing with social contract theories of origin of states. It aims rather at laying down the function and structure of an inter-state subsystem of the cultural and civilizational zone of the ancient Indian subcontinent, now called the South Asia. In the sound historical judgment of Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund:

*In ancient Indian history, the period which corresponds most closely to Kautilya's description is that of the mahajanapadas*

*before Magadha attained supremacy. Thus it seems more likely that Kautilya related in normative terms what he had come to know about this earlier period than that his account actually reflected the Mauryan empire during Chandragupta's reign.*

The word 'foreign policy' thus used by Rangarajan in the context of the rajamandala theory is not exactly apt for a fluid inter-state subsystem within the larger inter-state system—going beyond the range of the Indian subcontinent. At the center of this political network was the political system ruled by the vijigsu (the victor or rather one desirous of victory). It was most probably positioned as the state with pretensions of political sovereignty. Relations with the kings who formed the concentric wider circles were based on the major premise that the immediate neighbour, more likely than not, may have reasons or pretensions of being the enemy (ari) of the victor while the neighbour of the neighbour could be a friendly king (mitra). Exceptions to this rule are admitted all along as a minor premise. Thus a middle king (madhyama) in any of these circles could turn out to be an ally or an enemy and intervene on the side of the victor by supporting him or decide to be neutral (udasina) or an enemy (ari). The policy of the victor should, of course, be to turn as many of the kings as possible into allies or take neutral positions.

Logically, I may add here, there could be a king/state in the non-internationalized or non-globalised world of that period, who/which could

be totally disinterested or unaware of the kingpin of the rajamandala of the Indian subcontinent. The objective of the victor would or should be propelled by the motive of the prosperity (artha) of the ruler, and the king ruled within the teleology of the text. The closest concept to the Greek teleology in the Arthashastra, to my mind, could be said to be the purushartha of the king as well as his subjects. The term purushartha in the ancient Indian texts means the four-fold purpose of life, society and state comprising dharma (law), artha (material well-being), kama (desire) and moksha (salvation). In the Arthashastra, however, the last element seems not to be emphasized.

The victor of the centre of the rajamandala could use the domestic resources of his state and its allies in pursuit of his conquest. Using the seven factors of power, 'the qualities of the king, then that of his ministers, his provinces, his city, his treasury, his army and last but not the least, his allies'.

I am inclined to agree with the centrist interpretation of the text. V. R. Dikshitar finds in the Sanskrit text of the Arthashastra that besides the primary rajamandala of the conqueror, in the circle of the adversary kings (i.e., 'the madhyama king's circle of states and udasina king's circle of states') besides the seven elements of sovereignty, every competitive state possessed two additional emergent factors out of the seven-fold combination: consummation (sidhi) and the transcendental power (shakti).

Dikshitar goes on to state ‘that monarch who is possessed of these elements and the means above mentioned becomes the overlord of not only his mandala but of the whole of the mahamandla through further exertion of his power (shakti)’.

The strategy of the victory is contingent on four factors: (a) relative power equation among the victors, (b) objective or empirical deviations from the ideal policy prescribed, (c) classification of the motivations of the actors involved, and (d) the unanticipated and unpredictable or chance factors. The power in such a fluid structural and motivational context is not a constant quality. To quote from the text: ‘One should neither submit spinelessly nor sacrifice oneself in a foolhardy valour. It is better to adopt such policies as would enable one to survive and live to fight another day’.

There is a parallel between the theories of saptang state and rajamandala of Kautilya in the modern neo-realist or structural-realist theory of international relations formulated by Kenneth N. Waltz. Waltz earlier postulated three levels of international politics, namely, the level where state behaviour is explained in terms of action and psychological motivations of individual functionaries of state, the level where international relations are shown to be a function of the domestic regime of state, and the level where international anarchy bereft of a sovereign

power makes inter-state relations to be caused and conditioned by the structure of world politics, whether multipolar, bipolar, or unipolar.

The history of political ideas regarding states in ancient India also shows a similar line of evolution: the ideal kings Rama and Yudhishtir in the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata culminate into the theory of saptang state and rajamandala in Arthashastra.

The continuing relevance of Kautilyan models is underlined by my comparison between Kautilya and Waltz above. This is further underlined by texts like the Kamandaka Nitisar, separated almost by a millennium from the Arthashastra and discovered probably in East Asia. It draws heavily on the previous text and in the opinion of Kulke and Rothermund : ‘The relevance of the Arthashastra for medieval Indian polity is that the coexistence of various smaller rivaling kingdoms was much more typical for most periods of Indian history than the rather exceptional phase when one great empire completely dominated the political scene’. Read with Dikshitar (1932), the theory of rajamandala may have a universal applicability.

### **Conclusion**

A glance at the wider corpus of the textual tradition of ancient India from the evolutionary perspective would suggest an interesting line of development that seems to be along these lines: We see the philosophical and social visions of Vedic, Jain, and Buddhist thought

ranging from monism to dualism to pluralism, on the one side, and concern with the theoretical and practical problems of the political community that gradually transited from tribal republican and confederal states to monarchical bureaucratic states of the Nandas and Mauryas of Magadha, on the other. Subsequently, after its decline there emerge the states of later and ancient and early medieval Indian history, first characterized by Marxist historians of India as feudal, a view more generally accepted later. To which phase of this evolutionary— I hesitate to use the word historical here—narrative could the Kautilyan Arthashastra have belonged? The most probable phase would appear to be the period of the replacement of the Magadhan state of the Nandas by the Magadhan state of the Mauryas. We lack clinching literary, historical and/or archaeological evidence for this inference. Yet as a student of political ideas and institutions, I find it more consistent with the legend, literature and historical interpretation now prevalent. It could not have belonged to an earlier period when Vedic and post-Vedic poetic and metaphysical speculations were profound but political ideas and institutions were singularly simpler, localized, and less clearly demarcated from social formations and organizations. Like the ‘frontier’ in American and Canadian history, there have also and always been frontiers of the Himalayas and the aranyas (forests) of mind and space in Indian life, letters, and imagination. The Arthashastra could not have belonged to a



period later than that suggested by the great political transition from the Nandas to the Mauryas too. The Arthashastra sits uncomfortably with the temper and texts of the post-Mauryan phase, when the forms of states, with the possible exception of the Gupta state, were less bureaucratically centralized. The weakened central states then took frequent recourse to land grants to Brahmins (presumably for ideological domination) and samantas (feudal lords), a practice not unknown earlier, but very limited and infrequent. This resulted in fragmentation of sovereignty to feudal classes and communities, especially in peripheral areas. This continued through the early and later medieval Indian history and in an attenuated and regionally limited way even during the British Raj.

A frontal attack on feudal institutions and mentality had to await the social reform movements of the elite and the subaltern classes and communities at the turn of the 19th century, and post-independence land reforms and the 'silent revolution' of the political rise of the lower classes, dalits and the tribal communities through electoral politics and public policies of the state in India.

As for the centralist versus decentralist debate over the Arthashastra, the protagonists of the former point of view can be said to be, speaking metaphorically, silently subscribing to the subsuming of Kautilya to the Kshatriya's possessive motif, and the latter to the brahmanical renunciatory motif. I find it more persuasive to agree with

those who argue that rather than being an incumbent prime minister, Kautilya may have been a king maker in the Gandhi–JP tradition of politics of renunciation in democratic India, and Sonia Gandhi emulating the same in federal India today. The freedom with which the Arthashastra offers advice to all kinds of kings, strong and weak, lend it an authority or legitimization that is wider and detached from any purohit and the prime minister in office, the two functionaries that are stipulated by the Sanskrit text to be present by the sides of the monarch at the time of consultation with any minister. None of the Pali royal edicts of Ashokan rock and pillar inscriptions mention these superordinates, apparently next only to the king. But do not pay too much heed to that. Authority and legitimation in the brahmanical tradition is more ideological than coercive any way.

Finally, while the general consensus among scholars has been that the theory of rajamandala is situated in the Indian subcontinent, yet a wider applicability of the model beyond this region may not be far-fetched. Dikshitar in fact finds theoretical evidence for it right in the text. In the present age of democratization, federalization and globalization, the theory of rajamandala has the potential of being transplanted into what may be called ‘vayaparamandala’, both regional and global.

### **Manu: Social Laws**

Manu, the author of Manusmriti, is the first teacher, according to legends, to reveal the essence of humanity to mankind and was the first

legislator to prescribe norms of social life and practices, later incorporated in various Dharmashastras and Samhitas, premised on a moral view of history. Manusmriti is a pivotal text, which was presumably compiled, especially the passages on the caste system, only during the early centuries CE. It encompasses pragmatic visualization as well as idealization of life or how life should be lived. It is primarily concerned with dharma, which includes but also transcends the Western concepts of religion, duty, law, right, justice, practice and principle.

It gives us a bird's eye view of the prevalent religious and temporal practices of the time. It is also worth mentioning here that the text in question is probably the work of not one person, rather of several authors. Yet, we attribute it to someone named Manu, and call it Manu's Laws, quite different from say Gautama's Laws or Yajnavalkya's Laws. Manu is often regarded as the mythological ancestor of the human race, the Indian version of Adam.

The interpretation of Manusmriti or its English equivalent the Laws of Manu is fraught with enormous difficulties because of the fitting shlokas in which the entire text is composed. Today, these writings together are attributed to Manu and consist of 2685 verses. It covers the entire gamut of human life, from social obligations and duties of the various varnas and individuals in different stages of life to Hindu philosophy. A cursory glance of the text reveals the richness and

diversities of the social, political, economic, religious, ethical and aesthetic dimensions of life. It is a microcosm of the Hindu and Indic civilization of the time.

The title of the work poses a problem for the readers, because the text is known by two different names, Manusmriti and Manavdharmashastra. The title Manusmriti does not have the term dharma. Moreover, smriti is in contrast with shruti, which means 'revelation'. The term shastra connotes laws as well as teachings, treatises or text. In fact, the book may be regarded as a synthesis of philosophy, religion and law focusing on a very wide yet complex worldview.

Western scholars have examined the text from different perspectives. Manu's was among the first of all Sanskrit works to be translated into various European languages. Sir William Jones was the first to translate the text into English, and this was subsequently translated into various European languages like German, French, Portuguese and Russian. J. Duncan M. Derrett calls the book 'India's greatest achievement in the field of jurisprudence'. Nietzsche was full of praise for Manu's writings and used it as a stick with which to beat Christianity, which he characterizes as 'the victory of Chandala values ...'

The Laws of Manu were composed by members of a particular social class or varna known as Brahmins or priests. There is an impression that the text was created by priests for their exclusive use. It must be

remembered that the term priest at that time was used in a wider connotative sense. A priest was held to be the 'paradigmatic human being', a complete and perfect example of mankind, a kind of ideal. The text is a depiction of our complex cosmic system, embedded in a conceptual structure that encompasses the universe as a whole. In the process the text reflects the thoughts and ideas of ancient India.

Manu also dwelt at length on the nature of social life or the relations between the four social classes or varnas, viz., priests (Brahmins), rulers and warriors (Kshatriyas), commoners (Vaishyas) and servants (Shudras).

It should also be understood that many of the ideas expressed in the Manusmriti were not original and had already been articulated in the Vedic texts. Manu captured the existing social practices and prevalent ideas and codified them in the text. This depiction of the natural and social order was preserved in later Indian thought. In the Vedas, the culinary metaphor has been used to illustrate the natural and social world. Nature in the Vedas was regarded as a hierarchically ordered set of mandalas (circles), and the social world, no less than the natural one, is one of the rulers and the ruled, consumers and the consumed, exploiters and the exploited, the strong and the weak. The text declares that 'those that do not move are the food of those that move'. Eating and killing were regarded as two sides of the same coin. The Hindu metaphor of the Law

of Fishes, the Matsyanyaya, whereby the bigger fish eat the smaller ones in an anarchic universe, is a continuation of Vedic assumptions. Manu only reiterated Vedic presuppositions. Meat was regarded as the best kind of food. This had a deeper significance as it suggested that the stronger naturally dominates and engulfs the timid and has a higher place in the social chain. Vegetarianism and non-violence came only later, as revisionist ideas postulating a critique of the older vision of the natural order of things. Buddhism and Jainism challenged these fundamental assumptions of the Vedas.

The text of Manu is pivotal in the priestly response to the crisis confronting traditional Aryan culture. It is indeed a valuable historical document that successfully synthesized and created a cultural paradigm. The text can, in this context, be seen as a complement to the Bhagavad Gita and to the great epics, the Mahabharata and Ramayana, whose objectives were similar. It attempted to extend its reach to all people as well as situations— the king as well as the ritual priest, the untouchable as well as the priest, the householder as well as the sanyasi, and women as well as men.

### **Rajdharma**

The seventh chapter of Manusmriti dwells at length on various aspects of rajdharma or statecraft. The concept of rajdharma has always been one of fundamental importance and has provoked much deliberation

and discussion in the Dharmashastras. Who should be a king? How is he to be educated? What is the type of education to be imparted to a king? How can a king be elected? What are his duties in his personal life? What should be his duty in public life? How is the preservation and integration of the social order to be achieved? These were some of the core questions it sought to address. Besides these, a number of other things form part of the rajdharma of the ancient Indic polity. Though all aspects of statecraft had been debated upon earlier, Manu was the first to systematize the science of government and administration.

Manu was an ardent supporter of the 'divine right theory' of the origin of state, which considered the state to be a creation of God. K. P. Jayaswal holds the view that the theory of the divinity of the king was advanced by Manusmriti to support the Brahmin empire of Puryamitra, and to counteract the Buddhist theory of the origin of the state by contract. God, as the creator of the entire cosmic order, is responsible for the welfare of the people as well as the harmonious functioning of the whole order. With this idea in mind, he created the institution of kingship and the king was His representative on earth. This has been elaborated even in the Vedas and Upanishads. Manusmriti also subscribes to the idea that king is a creation of God.

Since the king was the most important unit of the entire state administration, Manu emphasizes the intellectual and moral qualifications

of the ruler or the king. He is asked to follow the advice of the Brahmins who are learned in Vedas, and are in a position to control their senses. The Arthashastra too extols the virtues of a king's self-control so that he can control his subjects better.

Manu's king was an ideal man, well educated, scholarly, efficient and a person of high morals and intellect. He was not a slave to his sexual desires and instincts and, at the same time, free from anger and greed. He treated all his subjects equally. Manu compares the personality of this ideal king to the ocean, deep and turbulent from within, hiding both pearl and filth, but calm on the surface. Manu also prescribes certain virtues a king had to possess. The king had to be free from corruption but true to dharma, artha, kama and moksha, the four pillars of satvik life. Since he is the chief executive of the state, he should also possess qualities like sama, dama, danda and bheda. He also had to be modest, polite, courteous, and firm and determined.

The terms Arthashastra and dandaniti are applied to the science of government from two different perspectives. Kamasutra defines the Arthashastra as education, lands, gold, cattle, domestic utensils and the augmenting of what is acquired. Where it concerns the government of the people and punishment of offenders, it is called dandaniti. Almost all authorities conform to the opinion that a state or rajya is constituted of



seven elements (prakriti). It is therefore called the concept of Saptanga Rajya, or seven-element state. These seven prakritis are:

1. Swami (ruler or sovereign)
2. Amatya (minister)
3. Janapada or rashtra (the territory of the state and its people)
4. Durga (fort, fortified city or capital)
5. Kosa (accumulated wealth in the ruler's treasury),
6. Danda (army) and
7. Mitra (friends or allies of the rajya).

The word prakriti has wide-ranging connotations and could mean elements, attributes or constituents of a state. The Sukranitisara compares the saptanga rajya with the human body, i.e., it reflects the organic theory of the origin of state. The king is the head, the ministers its eyes, its allies the ears, the mouth signifies the treasury, the army its mind and, lastly, the capital and rastra as its hands and feet. All the seven prakritis are complementary to others and if even one is defective, the state cannot function well. It is also indicative of the fact that Manu, like the author of the Mahabharata, believed in the existence of an organic unity among the various elements of the rajya, where all elements work harmoniously towards one ideal or goal. Manu has further tried to emphasize the unity of the seven elements although they are different in their individual

character. Rajya is viewed as the kingdom not only in popular parlance but also in smritis and works on polity like Manu's.

Manu's king is an ardent supporter of the divinity principle and he also believes in Matyasanyaya and the application of the danda, the danda being the coercive power or authority of the ruler or the power of punishment. The basis of punishment, according to Manu, is dharmasutra. He says:

*'Dandasasti Praja Sarba*

*Danda abavirakhyati,*

*Danda Suptesu Jagarti*

*Dandam Dharma Bidurbudha'*

Manu further elaborates that the punishment meted out should be in proportion to the severity of the crime committed. Manu and Kautilya share similar views on the coercive authority or danda of the king. Manu develops this thought further on the lines of the old arthashastra thinkers. Manu further states that the Lord created danda for the sake of king and kingdom, and then made his own son the protector of all creatures and dharma or law. Danda not only rules over people but also protects them. The whole world is kept in order by the fear of danda. The king who is truthful, wise, virtuous, efficient and impartial is justified to use danda. On the other hand, the king who is corrupt and deceitful is destroyed by the same danda which he inflicts. He is destroyed along with his relatives

and kingdom. The whole world stands in awe of one who is ready to apply danda. No individual, be he the father, the mother, friend, or domestic priest, is exempt from the king's danda, should they fail to carry out their duties.

The function of the danda is to ensure individual security of person and property as well as stability of the social order. This concept of danda is in complete harmony with the doctrine of divine creation and endowment of the temporal ruler. Danda is at times also identified with dharma or law, indicating that one is the essential means for fulfilling the other. Manu also lays down the principle of the king's unlimited jurisdiction on all offenders and criminals irrespective of their social or political status. This is in conformity with the Arthashastra principle of danda and its application. He further states that God made punishment or danda to enable the king to discharge his duties effectively. He has also cautioned that power or force should be used judiciously after ensuring that the punishment is given only to those who are actually found guilty, with the intention of correcting them and at the same time serving as a warning to others.

Chapter Seven of Manusmriti also deals with the duties a king is supposed to perform. It lists eight types of duties for the king. These duties are concerned with income, expenditure, maintenance of the conduct of the personnel, building of roads and forts (durga), building ties

with allies etc. The king must treat all subjects equally and be free from any kind of apathy towards any section of the people, except the guilty. The king should always take the counsel of learned individuals. One of his most important duties is to defend the rajya. It was also his duty to support and look after the helpless, aged, disabled, pregnant women, widows, orphans and those suffering from diseases and calamities.

Manu reiterates the Arthashastra doctrine of the four political expedients of conciliation, bribery, discussion and force. He considers all of them to be important, but is of the opinion that force should be used only as the last alternative. Manu also deals at length with the organization of the government. Manusmriti provides for the formation of a council of ministers in the organization of government to aid and advise the king in the proper functioning of the administration. The text absolutely forbids arbitrary and despotic rule of the king. He made provision for the appointment of high officials or ministers called sachiva to look after each department separately. The number of the ministers varied between eight and ten according to the importance of the portfolios held. These ministers had to be learned, efficient and well acquainted with the various problems they might encounter. They also had to be learned in the Vedas and be loyal to the Rajan or the king. The ministers belonged to two categories. The first were those who held the post hereditarily and the

second were those who were appointed for their intelligence and efficiency.

Manusmriti also laid down five principles for the appointment of the council of ministers. These were the principles of tradition, ability or qualification, examination, fulfilment of objectives and lastly the test of courage or bravery. It also stipulated a division of power and distribution of functions among the ministers on the basis of efficiency and merit. Manu also makes it clear that the king should always discharge his duties in consultation with the ministers, both collectively and individually. According to Manu, a wise king must always follow the opinion of the adhikarins or ministers with portfolios, the precedents and his subjects. He must never follow his own opinion. When the sovereign becomes independent (of his council), he runs the risk of ruin. In time, he loses the state and his subjects.

Manu's also looks into the matter of local government and the army, which is the means of controlling the subjects as well as the boundaries of the kingdom or state. His format for local administration consists of a number of officials at various levels in charge of single and larger units of villages with a minister of the king to regularly scrutinize their work. The primary unit of local administration is the village with a headman. The successively higher levels of local government were formed by groups of ten, twenty, hundred and a thousand villages. He also

insisted on a superintendent of all affairs with an army of spies to assist him in 'exploring the behaviour of the people'. Local government as a whole should be placed under a minister at the headquarters. A company of soldiers must be stationed in the midst of two, three, five or hundreds of villages for the protection of the kingdom.

### **Principles of Government**

Manu also talks about the principles and policies of the government, which can be classified under two heads:

1. Public security
2. Interstate relations

### **Public security**

Under the policy of public security, the king was required to detect two classes of thieves with the help of the spies. The first class of thieves called 'open thieves' were those who took bribes and lived by fraudulent sale of commodities. This class included gamblers, fortune tellers, cheats, rouses, and officials and physicians guilty of improper conduct. The second class of thieves was called the 'secret thieves'. They include burglars, robbers, dacoits and so forth. Manu also mentions methods and techniques to be employed by the king for the detection and punishment of both these classes of culprits. The king was to decide about the offence or crime committed by them, and mete out punishment accordingly. Different punishments were prescribed for different kinds of crimes that

included dishonest behavior of tradesmen like goldsmiths, etc. Manu also was of the opinion that royal officers and vassals who do not discharge their duties honestly and remain indifferent at the time of the crime being committed should also be punished. Members of the public who do not resist when a village was plundered, or a dyke damaged or a highway robbery committed were also to be punished for their actions or inactions. Confiscation of the property of the rich indulging in crime or dishonesty, imposing a heavy fine on ministers and judges were also permissible and were to be used by the king to punish the erring.

Finance was important even in that era and Manu knew that no government could work without finance. He supported the idea of taxation to be imposed by the king. He listed seven different kinds of taxes, viz., (i) land revenue, (ii) fees, (iii) fines, (iv) taxes for the use of water in a river and plying of boats, (v) taxes on animals, (vi) taxes on artisans and various other professions and, lastly, (vii) sales tax.

### **Interstate relations**

Manu also showed that the delicate art of diplomacy required six elements or gunas. These were:

1. Sandhi: treaty or peace or alliance
2. Vighraha: war
3. Asane: neutrality

4. Yana: making preparation for attack without actually declaring war

5. Samsraya: seeking the protection of another

6. Dvaidhibhava: making peace with one, and waging war against another

Manu favoured a king agreeing to make peace when he was sure of superiority in future and of his loss at the present. He prescribed that the king shall wage war only when he knew that he was strong enough to defeat the enemy and that his own army was well disposed towards him. The king, said Manu, shall not engage in war when he is weak in chariots and troops. He shall divide his forces when his enemy is stronger and take refuge with a rich and powerful king when he is easily assailable by the enemy's forces. Finally, while determining his war policy, the king shall take into consideration the future as well as the immediate present, along with the positive and negative aspects of all past actions before coming to any final decision. Manu also advised his king that to follow Kshatriya dharma is to obtain victory in war and not to retreat from battle. Manu has prescribed detailed rules for strategies for kings facing an attack. The king should march during the season favourable for the army and should provide necessary weapons to the troops for the occasion. Under exceptional circumstances the king may march if he is sure of his victory or if the enemy is in distress.



After the battle, came the next stage of signing treaties. Manu talks of three objectives of treaties. The first was the acquisition of an ally or mitra, second came money or hiranya and, lastly, acquiring land or bhumi. He observes that the king prospers not so much by the acquisition of money and land, as by acquiring a royal ally, who, though weak at the present, may turn into a powerful one in the future. The king is even advised by Manu to abandon without hesitation even rich and fertile lands if it is in conflict with his personal safety and security.

Manu and Kautilya have divergent views on the subject of diplomacy. Manu does not believe in expansionism or territorial annexation while the latter advocates it. He also interprets the six gunas or principles of diplomacy differently. Manu stresses more on the balance of power, because he believes the strength of a king cannot be demonstrated only by waging war. His approach to diplomacy is more ethical in nature than political.

### **Manu and Varnashrama and Statecraft**

In his social conceptualization, Manu has prescribed the rules each individual had to follow from birth to death. In this regard, he has laid down his concept of varnashrama in detail, where he divides the whole society into four varnas viz., Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. The duties of all these varnas are different yet complementary to each other. Manu has acknowledged the principles of integration of all social

units for the purpose of universal welfare related to the cosmic cycle, where a man's rights were granted automatically if he performed the duties accordingly. Rights and duties are therefore made complementary in nature. Manu's also dwells on karma, and he believes that man's birth is decided according to his performances in his past life. Manu explains his concept of social order in terms of the laws of dharma and karma. In his opinion, social order can be maintained only if all the four varnas perform their respective duties suitably and in a harmonious manner. According to him, one who performs his duties in the right manner attains heavenly state and all his desires are fulfilled in his lifetime.

Manu pigeonholes various occupational varnas under the umbrella called shudras. The caste system that emerged gradually in Indian society is the result of a long social evolution extending over centuries. Manu wanted to incorporate the sometimes conflicting rights of various groups of people within the framework of the varnashrama. He tried to create a pluralistic society by offering special hereditary occupations and cultural freedom to the detribalized castes. Manu also mentions various tribes like the Nishadas, Ambasthas, etc. and prescribes the occupations they could take up. He included even the foreign tribes and those living in the border regions like Kambojas, Yavanas, Sakas, Pallavas, Kiratas, into the category of shudras and they were regarded as twice-born.

Manu gives a great deal of importance to customs, which he considered essential for the maintenance of social life. These customs were based on the religious principles or dhamasutra and were binding on all individuals. Social organization formed the basis of polity and Manu gives it due attention.

Manusmriti also deals at length with various aspects of statecraft including the rules and principles relating to various branches of royal revenue, its administration and expenditure. The dharmasutras justify the taxes levied by the king because he is charged with the duty of protecting his subjects. According to U. N. Ghosal, the concept of protection is deep-rooted and as Manu says, 'A king who affords no protection yet receives the sixth part of the produce as taxes [brings] upon himself all the foulness of his whole people'. Chapter Seven of the text deals with the methods and principles of taxation comprehensively. The king could not levy taxes nor change the rates at his pleasure as the rates of taxes were fixed. In fact, Kautilya in the Arthashastra has covered in more detail the sources of land revenue, inequality and injustice. But the admirers of Manu, on the other hand, argue that those are mostly interpolations and must have been made by misogynists. The same argument is cited in the case of his hatred against shudras. According to these critics, Manu had a broader vision of life, where men all over the world naturally fall into one

or the other of these four varnas, according to their inner and outer characteristics.

In fact, Manu tried to create a social order out of diverse and conflicting elements which was needed for the society of his time. Manusmriti should be examined from this larger perspective.

Due importance is given to women's problems in Manusmriti. Manu examines the inheritance and property rights of women. He uses the term *stridhan* which in fact refers to special kinds of property given to a woman on certain occasions in different stages of her life. But the term *stridhan* underwent significant change in subsequent periods. Besides these, there is also a discussion on the economic position of widows. A widow had the right to retain her ornaments. Manu also prescribes a lot of dos and don'ts for widows. He also refers to the *Niyoga* system. When Manu is compared with Kautilya, the latter has more liberal views on widows. There are many passages in Manusmriti in which it is stated that women should be honoured and their rights shall be maintained. But again these are verses that reflect a despairing attitude towards the Shudra women and persons belonging to the lower ranks of social hierarchy. Perhaps this is the reason why many historians who examined the book not in its proper perspective branded Manu as a reactionary law-giver who advocated a social system that was based on oppression.

## **Legal Tenets of Manu**

Manusmriti in due course became a source of modern legal literature and procedure for European and Indian legal practitioners who were required to know the fundamental contents of Dharmashastras in general and Manusmriti in particular. Several notable works on Hindu law have drawn heavily from Manusmriti beginning with Thomas Strage's Hindu law published in the 1830s. Other books include Gibelin's Study on the Civil Laws of the Hindus in 1846, Wilson's Glossary in 1855, which till date is indispensable for students of the Indian legal system and in many of the works of scholars like E. B. Cowell (1870–72), G. C. Sarkar (1891), and Priyanath Sen (1918) the code of Manu has been used.

One criticism often levelled against Manu is his mixing of law with religion. Manu claimed that his laws have divine origin but this can be seen as more of a sign of the era he lived in and there is nothing fundamentally wrong about it. In fact, most ancient people regarded their laws as having divine origin. In ancient Egypt, law was attributed to the Gods. Both laws of Manusmriti and the Code of Hammurabi claimed to be based on divine inspiration. Yahweh is said to have dictated the Old Testament's Ten Commandments to Moses. Further, all the laws found in the Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers were said to be a direct revelation of God to Moses.

The code of Manu also talks about established practices that encompassed observance of caste, domestic rituals, funeral rites, oblation to men and to God, and religious and philosophical discussions on the subject of secular laws. Manu always emphasized a way of life in accordance with the philosophy and spirit of the Vedas, and he interpreted it in his own fashion. His emphasis on the religious and philosophical aspects of life and his discourses are all part of the cultural tradition of the subcontinent. A comprehensive study of the ancient laws anywhere in the world will make it clear that no distinction was made by society between faith, beliefs, rituals, customs, morality or ethics, on the one hand, and the different clauses and provisions of the so-called positive laws, on the other. For Manu the whole of the Vedas were a source of dharma or law. Even Blackstone (18<sup>th</sup> century) considered law to be divine revelation, but it came down to earth through the human agency.

Manu was the first who classified law under eighteen heads and called it Vyavaharapada. The sections were as follows:

1. Non-payment of debts (rndana)
2. Deposit and pledge (niksepa)
3. Sale without ownership (sambhuya-sannuthana)
4. Concerns among partners (sambhuya-sannuthana)
5. Resumption of gifts (dattasyanapakrma)
6. Non-payment of wages (vetanadana)

7. Non-execution of agreements (samviduyati-karma)
8. Reversion of sale and purchase (krayavikraya-nusaye)
9. Dispute between owner and his servants (swamipalavivida)
10. Dispute regarding boundaries (simavivada)
11. Assault (vakparusya)
12. Defamation (dandaparusya)
13. Theft (steya)
14. Robbery and violence (sahasa)
15. Adultery (strisangrahana)
16. Duties of man and wife (stripumdharma)
17. Separation of man and wife (stripumdharma)
18. Gambling and betting (dyertasamahvaya)

Manu adds that this classification is for convenience and does not encompass all types of disputes but only those which are most important. He puts greater emphasis on the concept of justice and equity and held that he who violates justice is always despicable. The king is the dispenser of justice and the original court as well as the appellate tribunal is combined in him. The king presides over the courts and in this he is assisted by Brahmins and experienced councilors. Cases are to be decided in accordance with the principles of local usages and the institution of the sacred law.

In case the king is unable to dispense justice himself due to whatsoever reason, he should appoint a learned Brahmin with three sabhyas (assessors) to decide the cases. Once the defendant denies the charges, the complainant should call for witnesses or other evidence, and in case of conflict in witnesses' statements, the king shall accept as true, evidence of the majority. If there are no witnesses, the judge should follow the policy of investigation. Manu's ideas of evidence is further systematized by Yajnavalkya, who lists three kinds of proofs: documents, witnesses and possessions.

Manu's idea of justice also encompasses the concept of social justice of today. He called it the social purpose of justice, where the king must protect the rights of those who were unable to do so themselves. He adds that it was the king's duty to safeguard the inheritance and other forms of property of a minor until the latter returns from his teacher's house or attains adulthood. He also had to take care of barren women, people who have no sons, orphans, wives and widows and women suffering from various diseases.

Manu's ideas on varnashrama are reflected in his criminal laws particularly those relating to morality and personal hygiene. He prescribes different punishments for identical offences based on the caste of the criminal and the victim, and as a general rule Brahmins are exempted from capital punishment. Manu has elaborated on the various aspects of



law. He is also of the opinion that only under special circumstances, like self-defence and similar situations, can law be taken in one's own hand. Besides capital punishment, he also prescribed other forms of punishment, but all punishments are to be awarded and executed after careful consideration. The king is the final authority to settle all disputes. Thus Manusmriti is the first treatise to give a regular elucidation of the legal system that was followed in the Dhamasastras and it provides a basis for legal interpretation, with the assistance of learned Brahmins and experienced councilors. It also provided a basis for modern legal interpretation both in India and abroad, mainly in Europe. Kautilya also deals with many common aspects of statecraft and law in his Arthasastra but he differs from Manu in several key aspects. They are at odds over handing out capital punishment to Brahmins who have committed treason. Kautilya also shows more compassion towards shudras and women compared to Manu. But it also needs to be stressed that Manu's Brahmin is the embodiment of idealisation of Man, the symbol of the best and highest virtues which man could acquire. Kautilya's Brahmin on the other hand, though a superior, knowledgeable human being, fails to reach that exalted height of perfection as visualised by Manu. The two thinkers differ with regard to the role and status of a Brahmin.

It becomes clearly evident from this discussion that the primary concern of the author of Manusmriti was to spell out the infrastructure of

an all-embracing society, which in course of time became synonymous with Hinduism and the Hindu way of life. In Manu's age, this vast subcontinent consisted of numerous ethnic and linguistic communities with varying degrees of perceptions and values of life. Manu could foresee that this cultural and social diversity needed to be kept as one organic entity. Manusmriti deals with practically all the aspects of life— political, economic, legal, social, etc. It is a monumental work of epic proportions, an omnibus which continues to be relevant till date. Manu endeavours to use law and politics as agents of continuity, for transforming human life to achieve normatively defined goals. It is the moral embodiment of the vision of that great thinker of ancient India who preached pragmatism as well as idealism. This is perhaps the most remarkable feature of the text which has provided a touch of universality, tempered by particularities that transcend the frontiers of time.

### **Kalhana**

In the year 1825, Harold Hayman Wilson, member of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal and translator of works of Sanskrit literature, such as Kalidasa's *Meghaduta* and the *Visnu Purana*, sat down to translate parts of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, the 12<sup>th</sup> century 'Hindu History of Cashmir [Kashmir]', as he called it. Wilson famously observed about the *Rajatarangini* that it was 'the only Sanskrit composition yet discovered, to which the title of History, can with any propriety be

applied'. This scholarly assessment of Kalhana's masterpiece stuck and remained virtually unchallenged for the next two hundred years.

Read closely, however, this adulation for the text's historical qualities was in fact indictment of the rest of Indian literary culture and civilisation for its lack thereof. Just a few years before him, James Mill, the British Imperialist historian, in his notorious *The History of British India* (1817), had launched a diatribe against 'backward' Indian literary and cultural traditions for not matching up to their Graeco-Roman or Judaeo-Christian counterparts, which were famous for their historical traditions. The result was a downgrading and delegitimising of indigenous Indian narratives of, and approaches to, their own past.

Comments such as those of Mill and Wilson can be understood as both illustrative of and foundational in the then-emerging misconception and propaganda that Indian civilisation, and particularly Sanskrit traditions, were singularly lacking in historical sense or consciousness, a misplaced notion that has nonetheless enjoyed great currency ever since. This 'lack', in turn, was believed to be on account of other stereotypes that were developing about India as the British colonial regime established itself in the early 19th century, namely, a greater proclivity of Indians to spiritual over material interests on the one hand, and a basic changelessness and stasis of Indian society itself, on

the other. These together were deemed responsible for the apparent dearth of historical literature in India, especially as compared to the abundance of scriptures, mythologies, and aesthetic works produced.

Against this entrenched bias, recent scholarship (Thapar 2014; Kaul 2018a, b) not only has demonstrated that ancient Indians certainly knew how to write history, but has documented the range of evidence available of early Indian societies displaying a distinct regard for time and time-keeping and preserving and chronicling events for posterity.

Moreover, some scholars have also questioned the positivist Eurocentric basis on which the modern discipline of history has come to exclude traditional Indian modes of narrating the past like myth and didacticism. They have proposed instead that early Indian historical traditions spanned a wide variety from the highly precise and factual, like the information inscribed and preserved in public epigraphs, to the ethical and didactic, like the literary representations of human history as a laboratory of social and political morality and a call to action (Kaul 2018). It is against this background that Kalhana's 12<sup>th</sup> century masterpiece will be discussed in this Unit as an example of both these trends in early Indian historiography.

## THE RAJATARANGINI

The *Rajatarangini* (literally, *River of Kings*) is an epic poem (*mahakavya/prabandha*) composed in the classical language, Sanskrit, in 1148-50 CE in Kashmir. It was composed by a Kashmiri Pandit, named Kalhana. He is said to have been the son of a former minister by the name of Champaka in the court of a Kashmiri king, Harsha (r. 1089-1101 CE). Kalhana himself, however, does not seem to have worked for any king. Running into nearly 8000 verses that are unequally distributed among eight books or sections, the *Rajatarangini* is an account of the royal dynasties that ruled the kingdom of Kashmir from its putative origins to the poet's own time. In other words, it narrates nearly two millennia of the ancient and early medieval history of the Kashmir Valley.

## KALHANA'S METHODS

One of the outstanding features of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* is that it is self- reflexive. It begins with a prolegomena clearly stating its purpose (*prayojana*), its method, and its vision or philosophy of history. To begin with, it tells us that it was certainly not the first such work of Kashmiri history to have been written. Indeed, the *Rajatarangini* based itself on consultation and emendation of at least eleven similar Sanskrit texts composed before itself. Though only one of these older texts (*Nilamata Purana*, 8<sup>th</sup> century CE) has survived and only the author of another (Kshemendra 11th century CE) is historically well known, this

indicates a long and well-established premodern tradition of writing history.

Moreover, in shaping its contents and message, the *Rajatarangini* also draws extensively on other, pan-Indian Sanskrit literature like *shastra* (prescriptive treatises on statecraft and law), *niti* (political and moral parables), and *itihasa* (narratives on the past), even as the basic fact of chronicling dynasties king by king is in the *vamshavali* (genealogy) tradition. Indeed the *Rajatarangini* may be seen to migrate among these genres and *kavya* (highly aesthetic poetry and prose), making it a composite text. All of this suggests a strong intertextuality at work in this Kashmiri epic which seems to have brought together a number of Sanskrit literary and philosophical traditions rather than departed from them or been an exception among them. This is important to note given that the dominant scholarship on the *Rajatarangini* has controversially believed it to be unique among all Sanskrit literature. More on this is given below in the Section on historiographical assessment.

Another aspect of interest is that the poet Kalhana claims to have consulted rock and copperplate inscriptions (*shasana*), that recorded royal land grants and had evidently survived from ancient times. This is an interesting palimpsest of sources, giving insight into the materials that went into the making of the text that is today itself

considered a source-material of history. Kalhana used these epigraphs to record the large number of donations made by kings, queens, ministers and generals to religious institutions of different affiliations, like Buddhist, Shaiva (worshippers of Shiva), Vaishnava (worshippers of Vishnu), and Saura (solar worship).

Regarding the philosophy of history-writing, Kalhana states that ‘shedding both attachment and aversion, the voice of the poet should be unwavering when recounting matters of the past’ (*Rajatarangini* I.7). Modern scholars have read this as a statement recognising impartiality or objectivity as a virtue in a historian. It is worth noting however that Kalhana presents this as a poetic virtue and it may refer to the state of equipoise (*vairagya*, represented in poetry as the *shanta rasa* or the aesthetic of quiescence) that Sanskrit poetic theory (*alamkarashastra*) of the times recommended to poets composing certain kinds of works.

#### **THE RAJATARANGINI’S CONTENTS IN OUTLINE**

Significantly, Kalhana gives a continuous chronology for the region, using traditional Indian calendars or eras, such as *kaliyuga* and *shaka samvat*, to assign dates to the ascension and end of the reign of every king or queen of every dynasty that ruled early Kashmir. These dynasties included the Gonandiyas (5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century CE), the Karkotas (7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century CE), the Utpalas (9<sup>th</sup> century CE) and the Loharas (10<sup>th</sup> century-12<sup>th</sup> century CE). Some of the important rulers of Kashmir

whom we know about because of the *Rajatarangini* are the Mauryan king Ashoka (4<sup>th</sup> century BCE), who also presided over an empire that spanned nearly the entire Indian subcontinent, the Kushana king Kanishka (2<sup>nd</sup> century CE) and the Huna kings Toramana and Mihirakula (6<sup>th</sup> century CE) all of whom also ruled over, and would seem to have integrated Kashmir into, transregional Indian kingdoms. Hordes of gold, silver, copper and alloyed coins found in the Valley attest to the presence of these rulers in Kashmir.

The *Rajatarangini* also documents some more local but nonetheless powerful Kashmiri kings chief among whom was Lalitaditya Muktapida (8<sup>th</sup> century CE) who reportedly undertook extensive conquests and raids, reaching into eastern India on the one hand, and central and western Asia (Sinkiang, Iran), on the other. We also hear of King Avantivarman (9<sup>th</sup> century CE), famous for undertaking effective measures to control floods in the Valley, and Didda (10<sup>th</sup> century CE), one of the few strong female rulers we get in the ancient world.

Kalhana recounts in detail a host of primarily political events that occurred during these regimes, and the policies, deeds and struggles of successive rulers and courtiers. He does not merely describe these; he seeks to explore the general and individual causes thereof and provide a



range of plausible historical explanations for these. In doing so, Kalhana claims, as we have seen, to be detached in his evaluation.

In fact, however, contrary to his stated dispassion, Kalhana's style indicates a deep personal involvement when narrating the good or evil deeds of Kashmiri kings and queens. We say this because the *Rajatarangini* is a highly judgmental piece of work and constantly moralises the events and actions it describes. This takes the form of praise and adulation for righteousness and denunciation and contempt for wrongdoing, the latter expressed even in obscene or scatological terms at places, something that is highly unusual in Sanskrit poetry. Espousing ethics was clearly a defining part of the *Rajatarangini's* textual and historical agenda.

The *Rajatarangini* is not a tale of only the elites, however. It also dwells centrally on the condition of the subjects under just and benevolent as well as tyrannical and exploitative kings, who alternated in Kashmir's long history. Indeed in this work, people's welfare (*prajanupalanam*) is a frequent refrain and an important crucible for evaluating the rule of any king.

## Unit-II

Medieval Thinkers- Ziyauddin Barani- Ideal Polity- Abul Fazal-  
Views on Governance and Administration

### Objectives

- To study the historical and political ideas of Ziyauddin Barani.
- To understand Abul Fazl's role in shaping the historical and cultural narrative of the Mughal Empire

### Zia-Ul-Barani

#### INTRODUCTION

Zia-Ul-Barani (1283–1359) was the most important political thinker of the Delhi Sultanate, particularly, during the reigns of Alauddin Khalji, Muhammad bin Tughlaq and Firoz Shah Tughlaq. The attention given to Baranī is, in part, also due to the fact that he chronicled the reigns of eight sultans of Delhi, beginning with *Ghiyās al-Dīn Balban* (1266–87) and ending with *Fīrūz Shāh* (1351–88). In addition, he was an influential courtier under Muḥammad bin Tughluq (1324– 51), the ruler he served as an emissary and as a court advisor for 17 years.

His ideas have been considered significant in understanding medieval polity and other strands of thinking that existed in that period of history. He represented and championed the idea of

*political expediency* in Islamic history which he conveyed to the ruler by way of his *nasihats* (advices). He has often been criticized as a fundamentalist and a bigot for his emphasis on following the *Shariat* (laws of the Quran and the Prophet's tradition) (Advice II) and his views on the Hindus (Advice XI.2), as compared to relatively liberal thinkers like Abul Fazl. This itself is an irony because in the earlier days he was mocked upon by the Ulemas and others for not following the Quranic principles and for calling himself an Indian rather than a Turk. However, later in life, when he adopted a politically hard line for governance, he was dismissed from the court at the age of 68 (1351 AD) and lived in penury on the outskirts of Delhi. For all these things together, Barani remains to be an enigmatic and an important political thinker of Medieval India.

**Early Life:** Barani was extensively educated. He was conversant with both Arabic & Persian and was trained in Muslim theology. He had studied history comprehensively. He was close to the mystic saint Nizamuddin Auliya and to Amir Khusrau. Later, he spent 17 years with Muhammad Bin Tughlaq with whom he learnt the art of governance and statecraft, particularly how monarchy functions. Hence, his political theory is basically a reflection of what he saw firsthand from his proximity to the political power and that is why he was in such good know of how the internal contradictions exist in

issues of governance.

### **Major Works**

1. Fatawa-i-Jahandari (Edicts of World Rule), written in 1357, written as *nasihat* (advices) for the Muslim kings, is a classic work on statecraft which can be compared with Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and Machiavelli's *Prince*. In *Fatawa-i-Jahandari*, he advised the Sultans and the Kings, through the mouth of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, his ideal ruler, as to how an effective system of government could be established by implementing the Islamic *Shari'ah*. This work acts as a mirror for the ruler. Through fictitious character and their discussions, it is explained to a ruler how to best resolve problems. Another interesting feature of Barni's writing style is that he is speaking through a number of characters, but the ideas conveyed by these characters are very much the ideas of Barni himself.

This work is mainly an opinion on government. It has neither a preface nor an epilogue and no name of any sultan is mentioned. Some historians like Md Habib have opined that it was composed after *Tareekh –e Firozshahi*.

2. *Tarikh-i-Feroze Shahi* -is a dependable source of history from the later times of Ghasiuddin Balban to the early years of Feroze Shah Tughluq to whom the book is dedicated. It was meant to please Feroz Shah Tughlaq and regain his lost royal patronage. But it wasn't simply

meant to that end but also contained other important ideas regarding his political thinking. This way, it contains some sources of his political thought. Along with the historical accounts of the period, Barani discusses the Muslim political problems including implementation of Islamic laws in the newly established Muslim State in India.

### **CORE POLITICAL IDEAS**

The Advocacy and Defense of Historiography as a Field of Knowledge

Zia-Ul-Barani and his views on the knowledge of history are very important. Predating their contributions, Baranī's writings represent the only discussion on the subject in Islamic literature of South Asia from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. As with many historians of his time and earlier, Baranī shared a high view of history. In the introduction to the *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, Baranī writes, "I have not profited from the benefits of any system of knowledge or study, besides Qur'ānic exegesis (*tafsīr*), ḥadīth, law (*fiqh*), and the way of the shaykhs (*ṭarīqati mushā'ikh*), as I have in the knowledge of history (*'ilm-i tārikh*)." Baranī noted seven qualities of history that make it worthy of dedication. On the basis of these qualities, he builds his foundation for the knowledge of history. At that time it was popular amongst historians to list the qualities of history in a prefatory matter.

What did Baranī consider the proper place for history among various fields of knowledge? In the introduction to the *Tārīkh-i Fīrūzshāhī*, Baranī expresses his views on four related historiographical topics that reveal his opinion on this question: (a) The relationship of the Qur'ān to Islamic historiography; (b) The role of Muḥammad as an historical exemplar of religious and worldly rule; (c) The knowledge of history (*'ilm-i tārīkh*) as a discipline of scholarship

(d) The history of Islamic historiography. Barani attempted to answer the basic questions, that why should Muslims study history and for what purpose? According to Baranī, these are the seven major qualities of studying history which are as following: 1. History was first and foremost beneficial because it is the means of profiting from what he refers to as the possessors of insight, principally the prophets and sultans whose deeds are recorded in the heavenly books (*kutub-i samāwī*). He argues that the ultimate example of the usefulness of history is found in the Qur'ān. He defines the Qur'ān as a historical text, which played a central role in the development of Islamic historiography.

2. Along with the knowledge of the Qur'ān, Baranī also sees the knowledge of history as sharing certain traits with the knowledge of ḥadīth. It has long been noted that the knowledge of ḥadīth played a major role in the development of historiography. Baranī argues that

this relationship exists primarily on the level of method. He refers to the process by which ḥadīth scholars criticise or praise the narrators of the circumstances of transmission of the sayings and deeds of the Prophet, thus establishing their validity.

3. The third quality that Baranī lists is that the knowledge of history contributes to the abundance of reason, discernment, personal opinion and putting things in order. According to Baranī, through the knowledge of history one gains personal experience through the experience of others. By understanding the misfortunes of others, one develops vigilance.

4. For Baranī, history also plays an important advisory role for Muslim rulers. Baranī asserts that the fourth quality of history is that it provides hope to sultans and kings so that they are fortified against the accidents of time. He insists that the path of today's generation of leaders is lit by those who have gone before and who applied a remedy to the maladies of the government.

5. Related with the Fourth Quality is the next one. Fifth quality is that for those who know history and the record of the prophets and their encountering misfortune, and their escaping calamity, history becomes a source of acceptance (riḏā) and patience (ṣabr). He concludes this section saying that the believers in Islam do not lose heart in the face of misfortune

6. For the sixth benefit Baranī focuses more specifically on the instruction history provides for rulers and governance. In this way, history assumes an essential function as advice literature and is not merely a record of past events. Historians were frequently employed within courts to supply advice to the ruling powers, as was the case with Baranī.

7. The final quality of history is that the knowledge of history is based on truth (ṣidq), a discussion that leads into religious polemics. Baranī conceives of history writing as a trust for which there are divine rewards and punishments. He claims that ‘whatever the historian writes falsely will, on the Day of Judgment, be the cause of his most severe punishment (sakhtarīn ‘azāb)’.

### **The idea of Political Expediency and Realism**

In order to do justice to Barani’s thought it will be appropriate to contextualize his political thinking. As with anywhere else in the world, political thinking develops in response to the challenges that a particular society is grappling with, which as much applies to Barani. Delhi Sultanate symbolized a rule which was governed by a faith which was new to India. It was essentially an urban centric rule with hardly any reach in the country side. Although Islam had come to India in the 8th century in the coastal areas in South, but Islam becoming the faith of the ruling class, i.e. the hallmark of the



Sultanate period, was a new development. It was the first time that the ruling nobility had a different faith from the ruled majority. The class composition of the ruling class was also in transition. Nobility was not hereditary. It was transferable, particularly, until the time of Firoz Shah Tughlaq. Therefore, it was a period of transition and turmoil. So, the political expediency and realism that Barani demonstrates in his work were the need of the hour of that time. Historian Muzaffar Alam has opined that the peasant revolt of 1330 in the Doab led by the Hindu elites also symbolizes a turbulent moment in the Sultanate period. All these experiences must have gone into the mind of Barani when he was writing his political ideas. Therefore, how to secure the future of the state and how to make the foundation of the Sultanate regime more sturdy became the desideratum when he was talking about the ideal polity and a good sultan and hence, made political expediency the main aim of all his statecraft. Hence, despite the reputation for being conservative and a bigot, Barani remains an enigmatic and a unique thinker. The two major thoughts that stand out in his thought are the idea of justice and the idea of moderation .But these ideas find their justification from the core idea of Political Expediency. Although he was against reason and science, unlike Abul Fazal, but it was political expediency which emerged as the hallmark of his political thinking. So much so that he shows a lot of flexibility

in the religious teaching and related precepts. He advises the ruler to make adjustment and allows moderation for dealing with the challenges of those times. Because of this kind of realism that he demonstrates in his writings on statecraft they are compared with the Arthshastra of Kautilya because of his focus on realism and on political expediency.

Zawabit/ State Laws (Advice XIV): The Ideal Polity Barani categorized laws into two kinds, the Shariat and the Zawabit. While the Shariat meant the teachings and practices of the Prophet and of the Caliphs, the Zawabit were the state laws formulated by the monarch in consultation with the nobility in the changed circumstances to cater to the new requirements which the Shariat was unable to fulfill. It was ideal for the king, nobility and the personnel of administration to follow the Shariat, both in personal domain and in public policies. The state laws, however, were also to be formulated in case of the inability to follow/apply the Shariat. But, he cautioned simultaneously that the lawmakers must take into account the practices of the past and contemporary socio-political conditions while formulating the laws. The Zawabit, he said, must be in the spirit of the Shariat and numerated four conditions (Advice XIV) for its formulation as guidelines, which are as follows:

- First, the Zawabit should not negate the Shariat;

- Secondly, it must increase the loyalty and hope among the nobles and common people towards the Sultan;
- Thirdly, its source and inspiration should be the Shariat and the pious Caliphs;
- Fourthly, if at all it had to negate the Shariat out of exigencies, it must follow charities and compensation in lieu of that negation.

Thus, what he envisaged in the *Zawabit* was an ideal law which could cater to the needs of the state without offending any section of the nobility in particular and the masses in general. The combination of both religious and state laws are another important dimension of Barani's thought. Unlike an orthodox fundamentalist, Barani goes for moderation. Therefore, his only test for adopting a particular law is the interest, security and stability of the state. Even if the ruler has to deviate from the Quranic laws, he must do 'if' it is done in protecting the interest of the state. In other words, we can say that for Barani- Ends justifies Means. If the end of strengthening the state is being ensured there is no harm in deviating from the religious laws. Interest of the state is paramount. Hence, it was stated in the preceding section that the hallmark of Barani's thought is in political expediency. In the section under the *Zawabit*, he advised the formulation of new laws where, in the changed circumstances, the Shariat was unable to serve

the purpose of the state. Laxity in not following the Shariat, both in personal and political domains was tolerable till it began to affect the stability of the state. Suppressing the rebellious elite, both Hindus and Muslims, banning education to the under-privileged and nondescript people including Muslims (Advice XI) ‘welfare’ of the subjects, etc. were all intended for consolidating the powers of the Muslim rulers. He knew that, philosophically, monarchy is anti-Shariat (Advice IX.2), yet he accepted it on the grounds of reality. This reveals his intentions of treating the Shariat as a means for political ends.

### **THEORY OF KINGSHIP**

The Ideal Ruler The advices related with this subject are all of which spring up from this fundamental understanding - Since the Islamic following was still restricted to a very narrow section of the population, Barani felt it necessary to widen the Islamic base for political obligation towards the monarchy. Barani made a distinction between the personal life of the Sultan and his political role (Advice II). In both aspects, however, he envisaged in him an ideal person— noble born, preferably belonging to the family of the monarch, having an innate sense of justice, wise enough to understand the deception and conspiracies of the wicked understanding the importance of his time and dividing it judiciously between his personal needs and political requirement and following the path of the Shariat, which laid

down that he was an agent of god on earth to do the 'welfare' of the people. The Sultan was expected to reflect supplication, helplessness, poverty and humility to compensate for the existence of monarchy which was contradictory to the principles of Islam. As far as following the Shariat was concerned, Barani conceded that in the personal realm, the Sultan may choose to be lax but he opposed the idea of laxity in the political sphere as it might lead to disease in the administration, for the ideal polity and the political avatar of the Sultan were intertwined. Five qualities to desist for the Sultan The Sultan must desist from five mean qualities such as falsehood, changeability, deception, wrathfulness and injustice Similarly, differentiation between the determination in the enterprises of the government and tyranny/despotism was necessary to command faith, fear and prestige among his friends and foes. High resolve, lofty ideals, fair administration, distinctiveness from other monarchs, obligation over people, etc (Advice XV) were the other required characteristics to influence people. As people were influenced by the character and actions of the monarch, it was necessary for him to maintain all the regalities associated with kingship. Counsellors, army and intelligence officers were indispensable parts of these royal functions. Their selection, gradation, etc. were obviously the duty of the Sultan and required careful attention. It was the king's

responsibility to protect the old political families, to check their possible usurpation of power and to ensure they are not left to live in material deprivation .

### **Idea of Justice, Royal Authority and Just Rule**

Barani considers justice as the foundation of social organization and political order. For the same, he apprehended the ruler as the curator of justice and described power and authority as the two major components of efficient kingship. The justification for the royal authority of kings lies in their power and dignity, which enabled them to apply justice. The supremacy of the Sultan and the safety of his Sultanate, then, couldn't have been secured without delivering justice to the subjects. 'The real justification for the supremacy of the kings and of their power and dignity', Barani had remarked, 'is the need for enforcing justice'.

Appointment of Judges Accordingly, what came next was the appointment and gradation of judges, with the king himself being at the apex. The functions delineated for them were 'protection of money, property, women and children of the weak, the obedient, the helpless, the young, the submissive and the friendless'). Further, it was to 'prevent the strong from having recourse to oppression in their dealings with people' without which 'there would be a complete community of women and property' leading to anarchy in the ruling

class. While delivering justice, however, the king should know the appropriate occasions for both forgiveness and punishment. Punishment to the rebellious, cruel, mischievous, etc. had to be combined with mercy and forgiveness for those who accepted their sins and were repentant. To dispense justice, the courts were divided into civil and criminal categories and they operated at central and provincial levels. The judges were to be appointed by the king, with himself at the apex of the judicial structure, and the fountain-head of justice and highest court of appeal.

Justice for Hindus (Zimmis) and Muslims In all these deliberations on justice, one aspect was conspicuous by its absence, i.e., the deliverance of justice was to be according to the religious practices of the subjects, though Barani nowhere mentioned separate kinds of justice for Hindus and Muslims. Yet, it may be argued that when justice based on the Shariat was favoured by Barani, then justice based on religion was already implicit in it. Moreover, his proclamation for all-out war against zimmis made his intention clear. But, as observed earlier, the growing redundancy of the Shariat in the changed circumstances and the corresponding importance of Zawabit, emphasized by Barani himself (Advice XIV), explicitly nullified the existence of any Islamic religious justice as state policy of the Sultanate. Moreover, Barani's recognition that Sultans in India

behaved moderately towards the zimmi (Advice XI.3) recognizes the existence of customary justice during the Sultanate period. Although Barani emphasized following the Shariat wherever possible, the very possibility of its operation was, first, marginalized by the changing composition of the rulers and military-bureaucratic, quasi-judicial personnel of the administration and greater incorporation of Hindus and Indianized Turks into it. The economic basis of the Sultanate necessitating revenue collection and leading to compromises with the local aristocracy was the second factor that annulled the operation of the Shariat. The third factor was the vast population of Hindus inhabiting the rural areas surrounding the miniscule population of the Muslims living within the restricted urban-administrative centres who could not have been antagonized at the cost of jeopardizing the security of the state. Therefore, it is found that adoption of a liberal attitude on the part of the Sultanate ruling class towards the Hindus for which Barani complained, but also simultaneously emphasized the formulation of the *Zawabit*. Barani's theory of justice, thus, essentially emanated from the perspective of the security of the state.

### **Remission of Taxes**

Another aspect related with justice and consequently with the security of the state was remission of taxes. At least during calamities, Barani suggested, the king should remit or reduce taxes and extend



monetary help from the treasury till the time it was possible and necessary. All these suggested measures did not emanate from any philanthropic reasoning-rather these were the articles of advice of a realist concerned with the security of the state.

Favouring the Elite Barani's conception of justice was strongly tilted in favour of the rich and powerful. His hatred against the rustic and underprivileged and bias in favour of the noble-born clarifies the basis of his justice. Infact, the very paradigm of the Fatawa was based on the consolidation and expansion of the elite in the Sultanate; and like any other element of feudal society to be used as an instrument for the perpetuation of monarchy, justice was meant to be a facade for maintaining the serenity of the Sultanate. Three main points may be summarized from the above discussion on Barani's ideas and purpose of Justice. Firstly, using religion he attempted to consolidate the Muslim population and various factions of the ruling class and tried to link the two; secondly, through the Zawabit he tried to solve the grievances of the Zimmis, and other social problems which remained unsolved by the Shariat; and finally, he used 'justice' as an instrument to expand the basis of political obligation of the subjects towards the state.

## **Abul Fazl (1551-1602)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Abul Fazl (1551-1602) was one of the greatest historians of India. An officially commissioned historian, an ‘ideologue’, nonetheless, was not a ‘conventional’ official historian. He was an erudite scholar, but suffered from a ‘superiority complex’ that made him arrogant and egotist. Abul Fazl joined the imperial service a year before the establishment of Ibadatkhana (1575). Abul Fazl’s major monumental work was Akbarnama (c.1595), written by the order of Akbar issued in 1589. It covers the account from Adam to the 46th regnal year of Akbar. Ain-i Akbari, which is a statistical account of the empire, written in a gazetteer format, was originally its third part (later in the early seventeenth century. treated as a separate book; originally it was known as Ainha-i Muqaddas-i Shahi, and later sometime in the early seventeenth century, it was called Ain-i Akbari). He composed Munajat which centred around Abul Fazl’s invocation to God. He also wrote the ‘Introduction’ of the Persian translation of Mahabharat (Razmnama). Besides this monumental work, a plethora of Abul Fazl’s letters have survived which were compiled posthumously – Mukatabat-i Allami (collected by his nephew Abdus Samad) and Ruqqaat-i Abul Fazl (collected by his other nephew Nuruddin Muhammad). Abul Fazl took seven years to

finish the task of writing Akbarnama and finally presented it to Akbar in 1598. During that period, he revised the draft five times, suggestive of the fact that each word that he used in the text was the author's calculated choice. Abul Fazl was an elite, and he was not catering to the needs of the laity. He himself admitted, 'What have I to do with a crowd?'

### **ABUL FAZL'S PHILOSOPHICAL INSPIRATIONS**

Abul Fazl's ideas had a great influence of his circumstances. Abul Fazl received his initial education from his father and a great scholar of his time, Shaikh Mubarak. Abul Fazl's family was greatly influenced by Mahdawi ideas. Abul Fazl's father Shaikh Mubarak's sympathy with the Mahdawis (with Mahdawi saint Shaikh Alai and Miyan Abdullah Niyazi) landed the family to face the wrath of the ulama. For long twenty years the family led the life of a fugitive and was haunted by the ulama. Makhdum-ul Mulk Abdullah Sultanpuri even ordered for the confiscation of his grant. This embittered Abul Fazl against the orthodoxy. Abul Fazl derived his philosophical insights and inspirations from varied sources and scholars. Behind his philosophical grounding were ideas of Ibn Sina (Avicena; peripatetic philosophy), Ishraqi tradition of Iran (Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi Maqtul), thoughts and philosophy of Ibn al-Arabi, Imam Ghazali, 'Mirror of Princes', Firdausi's Shahnama, Hakim Fathullah Shirazi,

and Gilani brothers. Among the Indian traditions he was influenced by Mahabharata, Dharmashastras, and Kalil wa Dimna (Panchatantra). Abul Fazl believed in wahdat-ul wujud (Unity of Being) of Ibn al-Arabi. He also derived heavily from Akhlaq-i Nasiri of Nasiruddin Tusi. Irfan Habib views possible impact of Mahmud Pasikhwani (d. 1427-1428), the founder of the Wahidiya/Nuqtawiya sect on Abul Fazl's ideas. Harbans Mukhia (2020: 65-71) also believes that Abul Fazl had deep influence of the ideas of saint-poet Kabir as well and calls him muwahhid (monotheist).

#### **ABUL FAZL'S IDEA OF HISTORY**

Abul Fazl's approach to history was guided by Akbar's idea of history. Akbar had a deep desire to immortalise his achievements and name. Thus, in Timurid tradition he asked all those associated with political developments in the past to pen down their memoirs. In the process, Gulbadan Begum (Humayunnama), Bayazid Bayat (Tazkira-i Humayun wa Akbar), Jauhar Aftabchi (Tazkirat-ul Waqiat), and Abbas Khan Sarwani (Tarikh-i Sher Shahi; Tuhfat-i Akbarshahi) composed their memoirs. Akbar's millennium project, Tarikh-i Alfi, received specific instructions. Akbar entrusted the task of compiling the history to a panel of scholars, asking them to shift from Hijri to Rihlat (Ilahi) year, keep the language simple, and explain the circumstances leading to the assumption of power by the Sultans.

However, these instructions appear to have been modified when Abul Fazl was asked to write history. He realised the problem Abul Fazl of compiling a text by a number of scholars, so the task was given exclusively to Abul Fazl. Further, a whole secretariat was made available to Abul Fazl to compile and collect the data. Even Akbar, who disapproved of the Hijri era, did not insist upon Abul Fazl using that. Besides, the simplicity of the language restriction was also not insisted upon. Interestingly, Abul Fazl himself boasts of departing from 'ornate verbosity'. However, his claim to language simplicity is hardly tenable.

#### **ABUL FAZL'S APPROACH TO SOURCES OF HISTORY**

Abul Fazl may be considered a pioneer in the field of data collection and the careful and meticulous use of statistical data after investigation. He opted for a new methodology to collect facts. His *Ain* is the height of the presentation of such statistical data. He has extensively used the official documentation and, at the same time, incorporated oral narratives as well. For the task, as Bayazid Bayat records, he was provided with a full secretariat of scribes (writers). He took the utmost care to place events in chronological order and within their geographical context. His 'Account of Twelve Subas' provides exhaustive information on the administrative-cum-revenue details of each suba (province). It is an administrative manual, full of

geographical and revenue details of the empire. However, *Ain* merely presents a compilation of data and fails to reflect upon the evolution of institutions. His *Ain* often presents an 'ideal' picture, instead of presenting the 'actual' working of the administrative institutions. 'These details read like a railway time-table or a department report, shorn of everything which can tell us something about the real conditions of the people and give an insight into the content, purpose and meaning of their life' (Siddiqi 2018: 148). It also lacks an account of the customs, beliefs, habits, social practices, and superstitions of the laity. Thus, he fails to present the story of the society, instead turning it into a 'story of Akbar'. Abul Fazl 'rarely acknowledged the sources from which he derives his specific piece of information' (Mukhia 2017: 66). Such a charge is also made by his English translator, Jarrett that, 'he not seldom extracts passages word by word from other authors, undeterred by fear, or heedless of the charge of plagiarism' (cf. Mukhia 2017: 68). Jarrett is accusing, here, Abul Fazl's copying Rashiduddin's Persian translation of Al-Biruni's text in volume III of the *Ain*. Similarly, Abul Fazl has copied on Hindu philosophy and customs from Vishwanath Kaviraj's *Sahitya Darpan* and *Manusmriti*. Similarly, his section on sarkar Kabul is largely derived from Babur's account (Mukhia 2017: 68). He also derived huge extracts pertaining to Humayun's reign from Jauhar Aftabchi

(Tazkirat-ul Waqiat) and Bayazid Bayat (Tazkira-i Humayun wa Akbar). At times, he even played with official documents by either dropping or adding some words. In Abul Fazl's reference to Shah Tahmasp's farman to the governor of Khurasan, first he drops the title of Jannat Ashiyani, given by the Persian Shah to his father, and next he adds three names who met to entertain Humayun. Further, he does not include the draft of mahzar which his own father, Shaikh Mubarak, had drafted. Similarly, he drops Todar Mal's Memorandum from his final draft and just provides its gist.

#### **BIAS IN ABUL FAZL'S WRITINGS**

Sharma (1948: 44) argues that, 'Abul Fazl, far from influencing Akbar, perhaps imbibed the emperor's idealism and became a very instrument in its realization.' The key factor in Abul Fazl's historical approach was Akbar's likes and dislikes. Thus, his account entirely revolved around Akbar's personality, which was 'thoroughly original but painfully unreal' (Nizami 1982: 150). He attempted to present Akbar as an 'Empror-Prophet' who was endowed with 'spiritual greatness'. He projected Akbar's closeness to divinity. His proclamation of the Ilahi era was a 'Divine Inspiration'. In the process, he, who was critical of ulama and religious superstitions, himself got trapped in that analogy. He reported birth of Akbar coupled with a 'strange light' perceptible from Mariyam Makani's

‘bright brows’. He informs that Hamida Bano was asked to delay the birth by the astrologers. Or, he narrates, ‘His Majesty by virtue of his perfect memory, recollects every occurrence in gross and detail, from the time he was one year old’ (Nizami 1982: 151). Abul Fazl recounts, ‘by fortune and miracle of his sacred person [Akbar]’ the flooded river Mahindri in Gujarat turned fordable. When Abul Fazl is pressed to defend certain acts of Akbar, he attempted to camouflage that under the garb of his philosophical artistic play of words. Akbar’s silent support to Maham Anaga in the killings of two innocent girls of Baz Bahadur’s seraglio in possession of Adham Khan, was immediately followed by praise of the high qualities of mercy of His Majesty. Similarly, mahzar, a decree of great significance, is very briefly reported by him. The full text of the document could only be known to us through Badauni’s text. ‘In his treatment of the subject matter he is subjective, rather than objective. His phrases and adjectives, and his construction of sentences imply his own-assessment and evaluation of a particular event or situation’ (Siddiqi 2018: 144). The emperor was so much at the centre of his ideas that, for him, everything good emanated from him, and in the process, the deeds of some of the great men of his time, like Todar Mal and Shah Mansur were completely lost. Abul Fazl possessed so much unconditional loyalty to Akbar that in the process, Nizami (1982: 156) argues that, Abul Fazl’s



‘Akbarnama has all the inevitable defects of a government [publication...it embellishes the emperor’s character and blackens his enemies. From the beginning to end it is full of unmeasured flattery.’ That, at times, led to distortion of facts: He presented Sher Shah as a mere Afghan rebel; his achievements are belittled; he was always addressed as Sher Khan; casualties of Birbal’s forces against the Yusufzais were wrongly reported by him; the catastrophe of the famine and pestilence of 1594-1595 was underplayed. Similarly, he does not record his karori experiment and converting jagir lands into khalisa, a fiasco. He also fails to record the long-drawn process of reforms in the office of the sadr. We also fail to get the side of the Rajput and Afghan stories in their struggle against the Mughals.

#### **RATIONAL AND SECULAR APPROACH TO HISTORY IN ABUL FAZL’S WRITINGS**

Islamic historians he does not refer to the Prophet Muhammad and Caliphs. Instead from praise of Allah, he goes to Adam. According to him, between Adam and Akbar 52 generations passed (though he records only 26). Thus, he projects Akbar as not the Islamic ruler but the ruler of humanity. His narration begins with the birth of humanity (Adam) and Akbar, in his articulation, stood at the ‘climax’ of ‘humanity’. Abul Fazl even uses the word Ahmadi Kesh (Muhammad’s ‘sect’) for the religion of Islam. For him, ‘Islam was

not the only source of culture and that besides religion, whether Islamic or any other, there were other, secular, sources contributing to human thought and civilisation' (Mukhia 2017: 87). Abul Fazl strongly denounced taqlid (tradition). His writings had 'unfailing' appeal to reason. He might fail in capturing the true spirit of his time, 'but, except for him, no other medieval historian can lay claim to a rational and secular approach to history' (Siddiqi 2018: 130). He completely dissociated himself from narrating 'achievements of Muslim rulers' and did not attempt to 'establish any relations with forces of past Islam'; for him, the Mughal empire was an 'Indian empire'. The imperial warriors were no longer addressed as mujahidini Islam; or ghaziyan-i Islam instead, they were depicted as mujahidin-i iqbal and ghaziyan-i daulat.

#### **IDEA OF TIME IN ABUL FAZL'S WRITINGS**

Islamic scholars have invariably drawn from the Hijri era. They believe the beginning of Hijra heralds the end of ignorance (jahaliyat) and the beginning of a new era, lit by Islam. Abul Fazl, however, worked on distinct historical time. His historic time flowed uninterrupted from Adam. In Islamic theology, time is 'eternal'. At the same time, Islam has also inherited the Christian notion of linear time from Adam to the day of judgement, along with the cyclicity of Prophets till Muhammad. However, the Hijri era heralded a historic

time. Almost all Islamic histories are recorded in Hijri time. However, Abul Fazl recognises several notions of time. According to him, it ‘opens with a day of rejoicing for foes and distress for the dear ones’ (Mukhia ‘Time’: 7). He opted in favour of the Ilahi year which was crafted by Fathullah Shirazi in the 28th regnal year of Akbar but was applied by Abul Fazl from the very inception of his reign. Another important point with regard to Abul Fazl’s idea of time was that he recorded world events in a strict timeframe within its chronology. For him, 191 rulers ruled over Kashmir for 4109 years, 11 months and 9 days. Akbar’s stay in Kashmir is described in exact numbers: 3 months, 29 days, and so on. Akbarnama is full of such precise timelines. In the process, however, he sometimes mixes mythological time with historical time. The time period of the Mahabharata is defined by exact dates based on Hindu idea of time, calculating back from the 40th regnal year of Akbar, thus calculated to 2355 years, 5 months and 27 days.

#### **ABUL FAZL ON RELIGION**

Abul Fazl’s veneration of Akbar may have ‘subscribe [ed] him to religious views held by Akbar’. Abul Fazl attempted to blend religion with politics. His propagation of the idea of farr-i izidi (divine light) brings the king close to God. Thus, ‘even if the sovereign is not a product of any religion, he yet has authority from God’ (Habib

1998: 333). ‘Abul Fazl wanted...to answer one question...What were the causes of misunderstanding and quarrels between various religions of India?’ (Nizami 1982: 147). The answer he provides in his section on the religions of Hindustan as: a) diversity of languages; b) long distances; c) ‘indolence’ of people towards investigation; d) adherence to customs; e) animosity and persecution. Abul Fazl believed that it was the ‘apathy of the rulers’ that was responsible for that. When Akbar’s introduction of the Ilahi era met with criticism, ‘Abul Fazl had lamented the “shortsightedness” of the ignorant men who believe the currency of the era to be inseparable from religion’ (Nizami 1982: 152). However, he expected everyone to follow a secular approach, and presented the ‘Emperor’ in religious garb. Abul Fazl sees it as the foremost duty of the king to respect all religions alike. He comments, ‘He [emperor] will not be fit for the royal dignity if he does not regard all conditions of humanity and sects of religion with the single eye of favour, and not be mother to some and step mother to others’ (Sharma 1948: 46). He believed that without understanding the ‘Hindu’ philosophy, literature, and religion, it would be difficult to understand contemporary political and cultural developments. This was the main reason for keeping a full section in the Ain-i Akbari on Indian philosophy and religion. However, here he deeply borrowed from Al-Biruni. The God he invokes is not the ‘finite’ God. He rebuked those

who worshipped in mosques and temples and those who built places of worship

### **ABUL FAZL'S IDEA OF SULH-I KUL**

Abul Fazl's distinct bias for Akbar is evident throughout his writings. Nonetheless, where Abul Fazl has excelled is in elevating Akbar to the larger cause of humanism and compassion, i.e., his idea of 'absolute peace' (sulh-i kul). Following the political philosophy of Ibn al-Arabi and mixing it with mystic (sufi) ideology for the highest perfection and happiness of the Muslims, Abul Fazl advocated 'happiness of all'. Abul Fazl condemned asceticism over kindness/humanism and emphasised that, 'Asceticism helps only the individual who performs it, but service enables one to help a great multitude' (Rizvi 1975: 372). In Abul Fazl's opinion, 'For the ruler, Sulh-i Kul meant a policy of tolerating all religions (and other) differences' (Habib 1998: 334)

### **ABUL FAZL'S IDEA OF SOVEREIGNTY**

Abul Fazl moved from the traditional idea of a king being 'shadow of God' (zil-al Allah) to farr-i izadi (divine light emanating from God). He comments, 'Royalty is a light emanating from God, and a ray from the sun, the illuminator of the Universe' (Sharma 1948: 44). For him, kingship not a necessary evil, but instead he believed that 'no dignity is higher than royalty'. For him, Padshah was the source of 'stability

and possession' (pad=stability and possession; Shah=Lord). Like Nasiruddin Tusi, who speaks of virtuous and deficient governments, Abul Fazl also advocates true and selfish rulers. Abul Fazl advocated the philosophy of insan-i kamil, and for him, Akbar was the 'Perfect Man' not only on account of his benevolent nature, but also because he was endowed with the 'divine light'. Connecting Akbar's descent with the mythical Mongol ancestor Alan Qua (Alanquawa), who was conceived through the intervention of a 'ray of light,' thus provided historical justification for the divine foundation of the Abul Fazl imperial power. Abul Fazl's idea of insan-i kamil was borrowed directly from Ibn al-Arabi. However, while Ibn al-Arabi's insan-i kamil was the Prophet Muhammad, for Abul Fazl it was Akbar. Abul Fazl also regards justice as the foremost 'virtue', in line with Nizam-ul Mulk Tusi and Ghazali. Akhlaq-i Nasiri of Nasiruddin Tusi also emphasises 'universal justice'. He argues that king should see that 'no injustice is done within his realm'. Abul Fazl says, 'Kingship is a gift of God...And on coming to the exalted status if he did not establish absolute peace (sulh-i kul) for all time and did not regard all groups of humanity and all religious sects with the single eye of favour and benevolence...he will not become worthy of exalted dignity' (Mukhia 2020: 58). Abul Fazl also appears to have believed in the idea of 'welfare state' where everyone should get an equal share and have

enough work to sustain oneself. 'He should minutely observe the income and expenditure of the various classes of men, and, by a refined vigilance, reflect honour on his administration. The rich shall not take beyond what is necessary for their consumption...He should set the idle to some handicraft...

## UNIT-III

Modern Thinkers – Rajaram Mohan Roy-M.G.Ranade-G.K.Gokhale-  
Mahatma Gandhi.

### Objectives

- To study the contributions of Raja Ram Mohan Roy to social and religious reforms in India
- To study Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence and its influence on India's freedom movement

### LIFE SKETCH

Ram mohan Roy was born on 22 May 1772 in an orthodox Brahman family at Radhanagar in Bengal, His father, Rama kanta Roy, was a revenue official and dependent land-holder under the Maharani of Burdwan.<sup>1</sup> Rammohan's early education included the study of Persian and Arabic at Patna, where he read the Koran, the works of the Sun mystic poets of Persia and the Arabic translations of the works of Plato and Aristotle. Then he went to Benares, to study Sanskrit and read the ancient Hindu scriptures, especially the Vedas and the Upanishads. Returning to his village at the age of sixteen, he wrote a rational critique of Hindu idol worship Which invited criticism from all quarters Raja Ram Mohan had to leave his home even.

From there he went to different places including Tibet, from



where he secured a firsthand knowledge of Buddhism, and to Benares, where he undertook further studies of the Sanskrit texts of the Advaita-Vedanta school. From 1835 to 1814, he worked for the East India Company as the personal Diwan first of Wood forde and then of Digby. The association with English civil servants, especially Digby, was instrumental in Roy's study of modern Western thought.<sup>2</sup> In 1814, he resigned from his job and moved to Calcutta in order to devote his life to religious, social and political reforms.

In November 1830, he sailed for England to be present there to counteract the possible nullification of the Act banning sati (widow-burning); powerful propaganda had been mounted by the orthodox Brahmans against the banning of sati in 1829 by William Bentinck, (the British Governor-General of India). Again Raja Ram Mohan was given the title of 'Raja' by the titular Mughal Emperor of Delhi, whose grievances the former was to present before the British king. In England, Raja Ram Mohan was well-received by the king and the Directors of the East India Company. Among his important activities in England was the presentation of a memorandum to the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Revenue and Judicial Systems of India.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy inaugurated the age of enlightenment and liberal reformist modernisation in India. To achieve all this he relied

heavily on his wide knowledge of Perse-Arabic, Classical Greek, Vedantic and modern Western thought. He had learnt as many as ten languages— Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, English, Urdu, Hindi, Hebrew, Greek, Latin and French—and was influenced by such contemporary events such as the French Revolution and the freedom movements in Naples, Spain, Ireland and Latin America. Hence, his concerns as a reformer and thinker were not confined to India. This has been acknowledged by, among others, Jeremy Bentham, C.F. Andrews, Brajendranath Seal and Rabindranath Tagore. Andrews called him the 'pioneer of the whole world movement,<sup>3</sup> while Bentham, before he met Raja Ram Mohan during the latter's visit to England, addressed him in a letter as an 'intensely admired and dearly beloved collaborator in the service of mankind.

“There was a day when, all alone, Ram Mohan Roy took his stand on the common claim of humanity and tried to unite India with the rest of the world. His vision was not dimmed by obsolete conventions and customs”. Raja Raja Ram Mohan Roy inaugurated the age of enlightenment and liberal-reformist modernisation in India. He taught us that truth belongs to all men, that we Indians belong to the whole world. Ram Mohan extended India's consciousness in time and space.<sup>5</sup> Raja Ram Mohan Roy's immediate problematique was the religious and social degeneration of his native Bengal. Raja Ram Mohan adopted

three approaches to socioreligious reform: (i) exposing and discrediting those religious dogmas and practices which are irrational and/or contrary to social comfort; (ii) the promotion of modern Western education; and (iii) state action in support of both these programmes. Several of the degenerate features of Bengal society were singled out scornfully in Raja Ram Mohan's first published work, *Tuhfal-ul-Muwahhiddin* (A Gift to the monotheist), (published in 1803-4 at Murshidabad, where he was living at that time. It was written in Persian with a preface in Arabic). In it, he exposed such irrational religious beliefs and corrupt practices of the Hindus like belief in revelations, prophets and miracles, the seeking of salvation through bathing in a river and worshipping a tree or being a monk and purchasing forgiveness of their crime from the high priests' and the 'hundreds of useless hardships and privations regarding eating and drinking, purity and impurity, auspiciousness and inauspiciousness'

Raja Ram Mohan was particularly concerned with orthodox religious doctrine and practices. He noted that in the name of their separate religious orthodoxies, people develop discord among themselves by "giving peculiar attributes to that Being and ... [by] holding different creeds consisting of the doctrines of religion and precepts of Haram (the forbidden) and Halal (the legal).

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### **EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN**

Raja Ram Mohan is well known for his pioneering thought and action on the emancipation of women and especially on the abolition of sati or widow-burning. He, to use the words of David Kopf, found Bengali Hindu women 'uneducated and illiterate, deprived of property rights, married before puberty, imprisoned in purdah, and murdered at widowhood by a barbaric custom of immolation known as sati

Unless women were freed from such inhumane forms of oppression, Raja Ram Mohan felt, Hindu society could not progress. He characterized sati as 'the violation of every humane and social feeling' and as symptomatic of 'the moral debasement of a race'. Just as he opposed the orthodox Christian doctrine of Atonement, so he rejected the theory that the wife can, or has to, atone for the sins of her husband. He also cited the Sacred Texts to show that they permitted the wife to continue her life after her husband's death. Ram Mohan Roy was largely as a result of Raja Ram Mohan's campaign, sati was banned by Lord Bentinck in 1829. Raja Ram Mohan also advocated widow

remarriage, female education and the right of women to property.

### **PIONEER OF MODERN WESTERN EDUCATION**

Raja Ram Mohan was a pioneer of modern Western education, which, he believed, would enlighten the Indians against the superstitions and injustices of religious orthodoxies. The mere study of ancient, Sanskrit texts, he said, would only 'keep the country in darkness. In his famous letter on education to Lord Amherst, he wrote: If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge, the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of the school-men which was the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. In the same manner the Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness if such had been the policy of the British legislature. But as the improvement of the native population is the object of the Government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy, with other useful sciences.

In 1816, Raja Ram Mohan founded an English school and some years later he lent support to the founding of the Hindu College. In 1825, he started the Vedant College, in which the study of Western knowledge was combined with that of Indian learning

## **HIS POLITICAL THOUGHTS**

In Raja Ram Mohan Roy's economic and political thought, there are some uncertainty between liberal-capitalist and feudal-aristocratic values as well as between colonial and postcolonial orientations.

The socio-historical changes that Raja Ram Mohan was responding to did not permit any neat and simple theoretical and philosophical treatment or paradigmatic encapsulation. In the face of the unprecedented socio-historical changes that were unfolding before him, he, in his writings, advocated the cause of what he felt were the liberating and growth-promoting forces and opposed what seemed to him to be the oppressive and growth-inhibiting features of the emerging political economy...

Initially, as he himself acknowledged, he had a 'great aversion' to British rule, but subsequently he' became its admirer and responsible critic. The basic ingredients of Rom Mohan Roy's political thought seem to have been from the anti-medievalist composition of his general philosophy of life.<sup>16</sup> He derived a system of social ethics, in which individualistic ethics was tempered by the principle of communitarian ethics. In economics and politics, while he recognised the autonomy of the sphere of both, he also emphasised the role of religion as a rational regulative principle of both economics and politics and as an instrument for creating an ideal state.

## **SOCIAL AUTHORITY WITH INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM**

Ram Mohan Roy's political thought can be understood correctly as great synthesizer. In the field of social ethics, he tried to harmonise social authority with individual freedom. According to him, individual progress is the criterion of social progress, but individual progress is impossible unless the conditions of social progress are created and sustained by social action. Like Locke, Grotius and Thomas Paine, he believed in the immutable sanctity of 'natural rights', including the right to life, the right to property, the right of free speech and the right of free association-the fundamental 'human rights' as understood in the modern world. Nevertheless, his ethical sheet-anchor was the Benthamite principle of the 'greatest happiness of the greatest number'. Moreover, he understood that 'natural rights' did not imply any possibility of the violation of the equal right of others.

## **REASONS FOR SUPPORT OF BRITISH RULE**

Broadly speaking, there were two main reasons for Raja Ram Mohan's favorable attitude towards British rule in India. First, he was persuaded that British rule, unlike the despotic and tyrannical rule of the Mughals or the Rajputs, provided security and other civil liberties to the Indian people. Secondly, he felt that the introduction of capitalist norms and principles by the British were contributing to India's economic development. In his political thinking he admired the British

system of constitutional government for the civil liberties it gave to the people. He wanted to extend the benefits of that system of government to the Indian people. He wrote: 'I am impressed with the conviction that the greater our intercourse with European gentlemen, the greater will be our improvement in literary, social and political affairs.

He sympathised with the freedom struggles of the Greeks and the Neapolitans. The French Revolution gladdened him. He rejoiced at the passage of the Reform Bill of 1832 by the English Parliament and the successful revolt by the Spanish colonies in South America. Yet he welcomed British rule over India. Commenting on his philosophy, B. Majumdar writes: "He was the first Indian who imbibed the spirit of the English constitution and demanded civil liberty with all its implications. Fully Aware as he was of the limitations of the Indians of his age he never thought of demanding political liberty for them. He was conscious of the ignorance and superstitions that enveloped the minds of his countrymen, who betrayed a deplorable lack of public spirit in their conduct. So he could not think them capable of exercising self-government. The great problem which confronted the well-wishers of India in the first half of the nineteenth century was not autonomy for India but the bare recognition of the principles of justice and security of life and property.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy attributed India's decline in the immediate



pre-British period to the 'tyranny and oppression" of the Rajput rulers and the despotism of the Muslim rulers. In contrast, British rule appeared to him as providing to the Indians a God-sent opportunity of securing civil liberties. Raja Ram Mohan Roy believed that the British rulers, who enjoyed civil and political liberties in their country, could 'also interest themselves in promoting liberty and social happiness, as well as free inquiry into literary and religious subjects, among those nations to which their influence extends.

Ram Mohan Roy realised that India is as diverse as humanity itself – a sense of confluence of many languages, religions, customs and social practices, diverse sub-cultures and varieties of experience on many levels. He perceived that India must have a modern secular state and a modern economy. But this does not mean secularism in the sense of preoccupation of the state and the individual with materialistic self-interest unconcerned with religion. Ram Mohan Roy thought that in a country like India in which religion pervades diverse cultures and sub-culture in variety of subtle ways, what secularism required is a broadening of the base of religion as humane culture by ridding it of superstition, ritualism and blind conformity to scriptures and tradition and making it as a constructive and liberating social force. He wanted a theology liberation and freedom.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy believed that in his time, Indians could derive the advantages of the liberal spirit of British public or political life if the laws for India were made by the British Parliament rather than by an Indian Legislative Council located on Indian soil. If such a legislative council was set up, he feared that it would be controlled by the British GovernorGeneral of India and his Council. That would be in contravention of the principle of separation of powers, of which Raja Ram Mohan was an ardent supporter. 'In every civilised country,' he wrote, 'rules and codes are found proceeding from one authority, and their execution left to another. Experience shows that unchecked power often leads the best men wrong and produces general mischief' He maintained that if legislation for India was left to the British Parliament, it would benefit from the liberal public opinion in England. He was aware of the difficulties involved in making liberal legislation for a distant land. He, therefore, proposed three measures to ensure that the British Parliament makes good laws for the Indian people: (i) a free press; (ii) commissions of inquiry; and (iii) ascertaining the views of 'gentlemen of intelligence and respectability'.

Only these classes seemed to him to be able to exert any influence on the government in those times. Both through his writings and through his activities, Raja Ram Mohan Roy supported the movement for a free press in India- When press censorship was relaxed by Lord

Hastings in 1819, Raja Ram Mohan founded three journals: The Brahmanical Magazine (1821); the Bengali weekly, Samvad Kaumudi (1821); and the Persian weekly, Mirat-ul-Akbar (1822). John Adams, who succeeded Lord Hastings as Governor-General, re-imposed press censorship in March 1823. Against this a petition was made to the Supreme Court by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dwarkanath Tagore and several others. When the petition was rejected by the Court, Raja Ram Mohan submitted an appeal to the King-in-Council which too was rejected. The British colonial case against a free press in India was that India's was a colonial administration and not a representative constitutional government and that there was no effective public opinion in India. Raja Ram Mohan argued that a free press will help to generate such a public opinion. He also maintained that precisely because India was a colony, it stood in greater need of a free press if a revolutionary overthrow of the rulers was to be avoided.

#### **NATURE AND FUNCTION OF STATE :**

Ram Mohan has a definite understanding of the nature and function of the modern state. In his opinion, the chief function of the state is to protect the life, religion and property of the individuals. For this reason the sovereign in the state must have power to enforce law and order. He argued that since 1712 until the emergence of the Company as a political power there was no effective political force in

India. Akbar II, the last but one representative of the imperial throne of Timur, enjoyed only the empty title of "King of Delhi" without royal prerogative or power. Ranjit Singh's power was confined to north-western India only. The new middle classes were no doubt a significant social and economic force in Bengal, but they lacked cohesion to become an effective political force and had no influence outside the province.

The British were in those circumstances the only effective political force in the country and what was more important, had used that position to maintain orderly relations of exchange and to protect the lives, religion and property of the individuals. It was also in British India that the literary and political improvements were continuously going on. But he emphatically asserted that sovereignty must not be in the office of the Governor-General or his subordinate officers but in King-in-Parliament, who was the supreme legislative power in the country.

#### **REFORMS IN JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION :**

In order to introduce reforms in judicial administration, Ram Mohan recommended the codification of the criminal and civil law and the publication of the two codes in Indian languages to familiarize the community with the law of the country. In the Benthamite fashion he argued that the code of criminal law ought to be "simple in its

principles, clear in its arrangement and precise in its definitions, so that it may be established as a standard of criminal justice in itself." Raja Ram Mohan Roy's focus, however, was not on any organisational blueprint for a re-structured world order. His preoccupation rather was with synthesising a transnational, humanist culture. He appreciated the liberal, scientific, world-affirming attitude of modern Western thought. But he critiques its foundation in the conflictual cosmology of the Judeo-Christian tradition of thought which justifies the violence done unto one being or person in atonement for the sins of another. He appreciated the spiritual (inner self and self-purification) and communitarian values of Advaita-Vedanta. But he disapproved of its world-denying and self-denying assumptions. By such a critique of cultures and religions, he undermined the cultural arrogance of orthodox Brahmins, Christian missionaries and Macaulayan educationists. Thus, he, as noted by Brajendra Nath Seal, paved the way for a synthesis between Eastern and Western social values and postulates against the common background of universal humanity." In other words, he pointed the way "to the solution of the larger problem of international culture and civilisation in human history, and became a precursor... a prophet of the coming Humanity."<sup>22</sup> Hailing Raja Ram Mohan Roy as the herald of a world society, Rabindranath Tagore wrote : " Raja Ram Mohan Roy paved the way for a synthesis between

eastern and western social value and postulated against the common background of universal humanity”

Thus it can be safely concluded that Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the only person in his time to realise completely the significance of the modern age. He knew that the ideal of human civilisation does not lie in isolation of independence, but in the brotherhood of interdependence of individuals as well as nations. His attempt was to establish our peoples on the full consciousness of their own cultural personality, to make them comprehend the reality of all that was unique ... in their civilisations in the spirit of sympathetic cooperation.<sup>23</sup> He was the pioneer of modern education and a socio religionist par excellence.

### **POLITICAL IDEAS OF M.G.RAUADE**

#### **A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF M.Q. RANADE:**

Mahadev Govind Ranade was born on 18th January, 1842 at Naxphad in Nasik district . He belonged to the famous Chitpawan Brahmin community, which has played a dominant role in the educational and political life of Maharashtra. Ranade's parents were orthodox and conservative and exerted influence on him to some extent. Ranade completed his early education at Kolhapur at the end of 1856. After this, his father sent him to Elphinstone High School at Bombay for further education. In 1859, he completed his Matriculation examination, and in 1862 B.A. examination, in First division 2 and

Honours examination in second class. His examiner was impressed by the knowledge and his reading, because of which he collected money from his friends and presented a gold medal and also books worth Rs.200/~ to him. He completed his M.A, in 1864 and LL.B.in 1865. In 1861, he become the fellow of Bombay University and rendered useful service to the University in that capacity. He began his career as a teacher. Later on he worked as an oriental translator and then as a subordinate Judge at various places. In 1868 he was given permanent appointment as a Professor of English and Marathi at Elphinstone College,Bombay.

In 1871, he was given permanent appointment in Judicial Department as a First Class Subordinate Judge by Bombay Government and he rose to be a Judge of Bombay High Court, 3 in 1881 . This office he retained till his death in 1901. As a Judge, Ranade was a great success, as his judgements bore marks of his considerable learning and a Judicious mind. Ranade throughout his life, had studied many books on various subjects. He had good command over Marathi, Sanskrit and English and had deep interest in History. He wrote his famous book on Maratha History, entitled 'Rise of Marathi Power'. His English knowledge gave access to new ideas. His studies of different subjects led him not only to take interest in subjects like politics and economics but also made him a great social reformer.

He began to work in social sphere from 1859, even during student days. In 1860, he read an essay on "Marathi Rajerajwade in 'Dnyanprasarak Sabha' (1848). He was a guiding force of the 'Prarthana Samaj' and the 'Poona Sarvajanik Sabha' which were established in 1867 and 1870 respectively. He also started to write in 'Indu-Prakash' (1862) on social evils. In 1873, when his wife died and the question of remarriage arose; he could not marry a widow and instead he was forced by his father to marry a virgin girl who was only eleven years. This was a life long stigma that got attached to him.

In 1885, the Government of Bombay nominated M.G.Ranade as the Law Member of the Bombay Legislative Council in place of a British Civilian. He was the Law Member of Council again in 1890 and 1893. In the field of education, he inspired his friends to establish Deccan Education Society which came into existence in 1884. In 1887, he established Indian Social Conference with the help of Dewan Bahadur Raghunath Rao. He played an important role in the establishment of Indian National Congress in 1885. So much so the founder of the Congress A.O.Hume acknowledged him as his political guru. Through Indian Social Conference, he decided to discuss and to solve the Indian social problems. He was also appointed as a Member of the Finance Committee in 1886. This distinguished jurist, economist, historian, social reformer and educationist died on 16th January, 1901 at



Bombay.

It is time as C.Y.Chintamani has pointed out that, the gigantic intellect, saintly character, many sided activity, unflinching devotion to duty and passionate love to the ' Motherland 1 of the late Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade ' were the wonder and inspiration of millions of his admiring countrymen and that his whole life as a noble record of glorious exertions and self-sacrificing labours for the regeneration of his teeming millions in all the departments of our activity in general and in the holy field of social 8 Reform in particular.

**MAIN FEATURES OF POLITICAL IPSAS OF M.G.RANADE:**

Justice Ranade can be considered as the most important theoretician of Indian liberalism, because it was he who gave real thought content to liberal political ideas that were advocated by Ram Mohan Roy. Ranade was not only liberal, he was moderate also in the sense that he wanted the things to mature before they assume any definite form. Advocacy of social reform, role of religion, moderation, commitment to economic development of the country and secular and liberal ideas of nationalism, can be considered as the main features of political ideas of M.G.Ranade. This he devocated through his writings.

**RELIGIOUS IDEAS OF M.G.RANADE:**

Ranade was a deeply religious soul and firm believer in existence of God, as a Supreme Reality on whom, both man and nature depend.

In his 1 Theist's Confession of Faith 1 he explained that the intellectual capacity of a man is limited, therefore, a man cannot explain the things which are happening in the world. So also in many religious books ijp explained the origin and decay of the world. But all these books are written by men and not by the God? and hence if we were to believe in them naturally we would be called g superstitious . He accepted that by due devotion to God the chastening of conscience, the solid foundations of character are created. He had great belief in the purification of the human heart, in accordance with the dictates of conscience. The national mind of India cannot, in his view# be satisfied with agnosticism. Being a deep believer in the omnipotent majesty of God, he was persuaded of the truth that the divine force was active in history. History, thus is a manifestation of Divine Will. Even in the working of external nature, like the Stoic philosopher, Ranade found evidence of God's existence. According to him, the human soul is not identical with supereme Godhead and to this extent his position is different from that of Vedantism of the extreme monistic school. Thus, Ranade grants a measure of independence and free will to the human soul Ranade further said that, it is wrong to believe that 11 everything is happening according God's Will • He did not accept the view that man was free and he could do anything as he pleased. But he accepted the middle way of the development of man as it dependents upon his education,

company, 12 and circumstances • Though he believed in the existence of God he did not believe in the concept of ' Moksha ' or liberation. He argued that every man should believe in God, otherwise, he would not be in a position to perform virtuous acts and also a man should worship God. The worship of the God should not be done individually, it should be done collectively as due to it all people could come in close

#### **IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL REFORMS:**

M.G.Ranade is rightly counted as one of the greatest man who contributed to the building up of renascent India. The idea of social reform was very much in the air at the time when Ranade went to Bombay for his higher education. The ' Paramhansa Sabha ' (1849) had been established to eliminate social evils. During that period, in Maharashtra and also in India many a social evils were prevailing like caste astern, child marriage, untouchability, ban on foreign travel and prohibition of widow's remarriage. Generally, the people were ignorant and superstitious in every sphere of life. He realised that all these social evils were a hinderance to the development of society. Therefore, he had given first preference to social reforms. Ranade says, " You cannot have a good social system when you find yourself low in the scale of political rights, nor can you be fit to exercise political rights and privileges unless your social system is based reason and justice". Therefore, he took keen interest in the activities of social reform, such

as the Widow marriage Association (1866), the Prarthana Samaj (1867), the Indian Social Conference (1887) etc.

From 1860, he began to take part in social activities by reading an essay on “ Marathi Rajerjawade “ in 'Dnyanaprakasha Sabha 1 and advised, Maharashtrian nobles to acquire new OQ knowledge and to follow the part of Bengali nobles . @8hten the Indian National Congress was founded in 1885, some of the leaders thought that, side by side with political problems, they should also discuss social problems. But there was a controversy, therefore, the Indian Social Conference met separately for the purpose of promotion of social reforms. M.G.Ranade, Dewan Bahadur Raghunath Rao were responsible for its establishment.

#### **ECONOMIC IDEAS OF M.G.RANADE;**

M.G.Ranade had deeply studied European economic thought and drawbacks of Indian economy. He suggested the measures to overcome it. Therefore, he was called as a fether of Indian economics . He expressed his economic ideas t'rough his various essays and lectures. In 1864 he read on essay on evils of over population and made it clear that in India the people thought that they were suffering due to their misfortune, but this type of thinking created laziness in the life of man. He further argued that in India it was believed that giving birth child was a sacred duty of man in his life. But increasing population was the cause of increase in deseases and famines, and Indians had no chance to

establish their colonies as free nations' people for their livelihood. Therefore, customs like child marriage and A joint family system should be abolished to check the growth of over population.

In December, 1872, he delivered a lecture on ' Indian Commerce ' and pointed out to the people how Britishers were exploiting the Indians and destroying Indian arts and handicrafts. In India, imports were exceedingly larger than exports. Therefore, he argued that this condition should be reversed. But the commerce and also political power were two instruments that were in the hands of foreigners. Therefore, Indians should develop their own industries but 58 for it, there should be our own capital i.e. money To mobilise resources, he suggested some measures. He argued that from 1861 to 1870 one hundred and fifty crores rupees were given to Indians in the form of gold, but out of that one-half gold was used for ornaments and some was buried in soil, remaining one-half was used to mint the coins. Instead of making ornaments of that gold, it should be used for the development of commerce and industries. This would create more employment.

### **CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE CONCEPT OF NATIONALISM EXPOUNDED BY RANADE;**

Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade developed several important ideas in the field of religious, social, economic and political reforms.

Therefore, he is rightly called as a father of modern Maharashtra. In those days the Indian society was rampant with superstition, poverty, had manners and superstitious religious beliefs. Under those circumstances, even if Indians had got political freedom, they would not have been in a position to retain it and instead they would have remained the slaves of traditional customs. Therefore, whole society should be reformed. He established several organizations, to lay foundation of rich public life and initiated the organised activities of social reforms in Maharashtra and in India as well. And by means of various methods like applications, requests, meetings, speeches, magazines, he awakened the people in respect of religious, social, economic and political problems and thereby created nationalistic feelings. He exhorted the people to preserve the spirit of nationalism which we had lost due to our ignorance and social backwardness. Along with social reformation, Ranade gave importance to religious reforms, because he knew that religion had a very powerful hold on the Indian society and therefore, if social reforms were to succeed, the people should change their religious attitudes. He opposed fanatic and narrow minded religious attitudes and advocated equality, liberty and fraternity, among people as that existed in the Varkari Sampradaya. Ranade adopted a moderate policy in respect of religious reformation, and instead of launching an all out attack on the religious and social evils,

he advocated a gradual change, of course in accordance with the main national stream of life. The reason for this softer line was the fear, that, if an all out attack was directed against the social and religious evils prevailing at this time, he might be isolated from the society and his reformist activities might fail. But in a country like India, where the social and religious evils had taken deep roots due to ignorance, the gradual change would be achieved only at a snail's pace. However, Ranade did not realise that a softer attitude to bring about change in age-old backwardness and ignorance in social and religious attitudes delayed our political freedom. As a result, Ranade's nationalist forces did not acquire the expected momentum. Ranade had drawn the attention of the educated and socially conscious people to his activities and thereby created social awareness. This truly helped in creating the political consciousness, but Ranade should have laid stress on political reforms along with social reforms. Had he been aware of the fact that, it was difficult for the people under an alien rule to come together to solve social problems as quickly as they would agree to come together for political problems, as it would have certainly added the vigour to nationalist movement. When the Extremists became dominant in the 'Sarvajanik Sabha' Ranade in 1896 established the Deccan Sabha " . . . , and even like wise after the foundation of the Indian National Congress (1885), just to consider social problems, he formed the Indian Social

Conference in 1887. This helped to widen the gap between the moderates and extremists. Ranade, as a social reformer failed to practice what he preached as after the death of Ranade's first wife in 1873, his reformist friends expected that he would marry a widow: to set an example but instead, he married a virgin, because of this, he was badly criticised. Only the educated people participated in his social reforms movements; uneducated masses remained aloof. Ranade explained in detail the role of 'Laissez Faire' policy of British government in impoverishing Indians and stressed the necessity of struggle, but when the Indian people began to complain against excess tribute he said need not engage ourselves in that fruitless discussion, But people were of the view that Ranade should have discussed these matters which was not of lesser importance. Ranade had faith in British sense of Justice. Therefore, he was of the opinion that the development of the Indians had to take place in connection with the Britishers, hence he did not want to sever the existing relations between India and England. He was of the opinion that the Indians must first achieve social reforms, and then they should demand political freedom. Ranade accepted the manifesto of Queen of 1858 as the Magna Charta on which he laid the foundation of his political thoughts. But the history of Magna Charta is different. Ranade and his party had never realised that the political demands must get backed by some force as it



was realised by the extremists. Therefore, they were more successful in their future political activities.

### **GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE**

The development of modern Indian political thought is closely linked with the development of the Indian national movement. During the course of the national movement two distinct streams of thought appeared within the Indian National Congress prior to the emergence of Gandhi as a prominent political figure. These two streams of thought are popularly known as the Moderate and the Extremist school. The early phase of Indian national movement was dominated by the moderate thinkers such as Justice M.G. Ranade, D.E. Wacha, Pherozeshah Mehta and Dadabhai Naoroji who laid down the foundations of liberal political thinking in India. Gopal Krishna Gokhale was one of the leading moderate thinkers of his time. The moderate thinkers stood for a liberal political outlook and advocated an allround but gradual social progress. They significantly differed from the extremist thinkers like Tilak, Aurobindo Ghose, B.C. Pal and others with respect to their understanding of the British rule in India, their perception of the social reality in India, their ideas regarding the social and political goals and the means to realise them. Broadly speaking, the moderates appreciated and welcomed British rule in India and believed that it will set in the process of modernisation of Indian society. They

insisted more on social and economic reforms as they sincerely felt that mere political independence would mean nothing without attaining the minimum level of social and economic progress. Gokhale was a major liberal thinker after M.G. Ranade, who had contributed greatly to the liberal way of politics. As an ideal disciple of M.G. Ranade and the revered 'Political Guru' of Mahatma Gandhi, Gokhale provided a major intellectual link between Ranade and Gandhi. In the following pages therefore we will also try to understand Gokhale's political thought as an intellectual link between Ranade and Gandhi.

### **LIFE AND DEVELOPMENT OF GOKHALES POLITICAL CAREER**

In order to understand Gokhale's political thought it would be essential to first see the manner in which Gokhale's political career developed. It would be quite clear that his political activities are intimately linked with his beliefs and various influences that guided him. Biographical Sketch. Gopal Krishna Gokhale was born in a middle class Chitpavan Brahmin family at Kotluk-a small village in Ratnagiri district on May 9, 1866. His father Krishnarao was employed first as a clerk but later on rose to the position of police-subinspector. He died when Gopahao was hardly thirteen years old, leaving two sons and four daughters behind. Govindrao, the elder brother of Gopalrao shouldered the responsibility of the family. Gopalrao took his primary education at Kagal near

Kolhapur and completed his matriculation in the year 1881. He had his higher education in three different colleges viz. the Rajaram College at Kolhapur, the Deccan College at Pune and the Elphinston College at Bombay from where he completed his graduation in 1884. At one time he thought of becoming an engineer but ultimately decided to devote himself to the cause of education. In Pune a band of patriotic young men had already started a secondary school, called The New English School, under the inspiration of a veteran nationalist Vishnushastri Chiplunkar. Gopalrao accepted the job of a teacher in the New English School. His sincerity impressed the proprietors of the Deccan Education Society, and they made him a life-member of the Society. Soon Gopalrao was promoted to the post of lecturer in Fergusson College-a college run by the Deccan Education Society itself, and since then he devoted almost eighteen years of his life to the teaching career. During his teaching career he was introduced to M.G. Ranade and since then he volunteered his talents and services to the cause of public life under the able guidance of Ranade. He became the Secretary of the Sarvajanik Sabha-a public body that was chiefly activated by M.G. Ranade to articulate the interests of the common people. The Sabha had its influential quarterly and Gopalrao worked as an editor of the quarterly. For some years he also wrote in the English Section of the journal 'Sudharak' started by Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, a veteran social reformer

in nineteenth century Maharashtra. In the year 1889 Gopalrao attended the session of the Indian National Congress for the first time and since then he was a regular speaker at its meetings. In 1896 when Tilak and his associates captured the Sarvajanik Sabha Ranade and his followers including Gokhale dissociated themselves from the Sabha and founded a new association called the Deccan Sabha. Gokhale took keen interest in the activities of the Sabha. On behalf of the Sabha he was sent to England to give evidence before the Welby Commission which was appointed by the Government to suggest ways of more equitable distribution of expenses of the administration between the British and the Indian Government. This was his first trip to England. His excellent performance raised a lot of expectations. In 1899 he was elected to the Bombay Legislative Council. In 1902 he retired from the Fergusson College and devoted the remaining thirteen years-of his life entirely to political work. During this period he was elected, term after term, to the Imperial Legislative Council where he made a mark as an eminent Parliamentarian. His budget-speeches, in particular, have become classics as they contained so much ~onstructive but at the same time fearless criticism of the Government's fiscal policies. At the instance of Mahatma Gandhi, Gokhale also took keen interest in the affairs of the Indians in South Africa. In 1910 and 1912 he moved resolutions in the Imperial Legislative Council for relief to Indian indentured labour in

Natal. He went to South Africa at Gandhi's invitation in 1912 and played a significant role in tackling the problems of Indians settled there. In 1913 he raised funds for helping the South African Satyagraha Movement. Gokhale's strenuous routine ultimately caused his untimely death in Feb. 1915.

**Formative Influences** Political thought and ideas do not evolve in a vacuum. They emerge in a particular social atmosphere. A thinker is a product of his times. Gokhale was no exception. His ideas and thinking were influenced mainly by the leading personalities of his time and the events he encountered. As a product of the British educational system Gokhale was bound to acquire a modern outlook towards life which characterised the English educated elite of his time. During his student days he learnt by heart Beaten's 'Public Speaker', repeated passages from Bacon's 'Essays' and 'The Advancement of Learning', mastered Fawcett's 'Political Economy' and memorised Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution. All this had a far reaching effect on the development of his political ideas. The liberal philosophy of John Stuart Mill made a profound impression on him and he was particularly inspired by Mill's political doctrines. As a student of history, Gokhale was particularly impressed by the Irish Home Rule Movement. The coherence, dynamism and democratic evolution of European history, considerably influenced his thinking and led him to believe that there is

much to learn from the West. Among the Indian personalities it was M.G. Ranade who influenced Gokhale to a great extent. Gokhale always took pride in being a follower of Ranade. He was particularly impressed by the social and economic ideas of Ranade. While Gokhale had a deep respect for the sacrifice made by nationalist leaders like Tilak and others he was not much attracted by their nationalist ideology and this made him move closer to the moderate thinkers like D.E. Wacha and Pherozeshah Mehta, who exercised considerable influence on him in matters of party organisation and technique. Contemporary liberal politicians in England such as Morley and others also had a considerable influence on Gokhale's political career. Gokhale always looked to Gladstone and Morley with a reverential attitude and believed that they would apply just Principles to the governance of India. Gokhale's political thinking essentially represented the liberal ethos of his time and it was that liberalism which shaped his social and political ideas.

#### **SOURCES OF GOKHALES POLITICAL THOUGHT**

Gokhale was not a political thinker in the strict sense of the term. He did not produce any political treatise like that of Hobbes or Locke. Neither did he write a political commentary like Tilak's 'Geeta Rahasya' or Gandhi's 'Hind-Swarajya' which could be referred to in order to explain his political tenets. But we do have a number of articles written

by him on various occasions that reflect his political thinking. Likewise the several speeches he made on important socio-economic issues and his correspondence with his contemporaries, now available in the form of collected works, enable us to explore his political ideas. There are some excellent biographies and scholarly works on Gokhale that also constitute an important source for the study of his political thought. Thus with the help of all these sources it is possible for us to delineate the political thinking of Gokhale.

Gokhale's political thought revolves more around the socio-political issues of his times rather than any basic political concept like that of the state or nation or sovereignty. Hence in order to understand his political doctrines we have to refer to the basic political issues of his time and way' he responded to these. Now the issues being many in number and complex in nature, the ideas that emerged as responses to these issues reflect the rich diversity of Gokhale's political thinking. In this lesson, however, we shall concern ourselves mainly with discussing Gokhale's political thought under three major headings viz. Gokhale's responses to British rule in India, his liberalism and the political programme that he devised and worked for.

**Responses to British Rule in India** Like most of the liberal Indian thinkers of his time Gokhale appreciated and welcomed the British rule in India. His appreciation of the British rule and particularly his

insistence on the continuation of the British rule in India were based on two premises. In the first instance, like all the moderates, Gokhale was convinced that it was because of British rule that the process of modernisation of the Indian society had set in. The British upheld the concept of equality before law, they introduced the principle of representative government (on however limited a scale it might be) they guaranteed the freedom of speech and press. All these things were certainly new. It was again the British who set in the process of political integration in India. There was much for Indians to learn from the British and hence, Gokhale pleaded that we should bear with them for some time and make progress in the field of industry, commerce, education and politics. Gokhale was convinced that if British rule continued for some time, India would be modernised completely and eventually join the community of nations like any other independent state in Europe. Gokhale believed that in keeping with their liberal traditions, the British would fulfill their pledges and bestow on India self-government once Indians qualified themselves for the same. This concept of 'England's pledges to India' was built upon the declarations of Thomas Munro, Macaulay, Henri Lawrence and above all Queen Victoria's Proclamation. In spite of the fact that from the end of Ripon's viceroyalty in 1884 to the August-Declaration of 1917 successive Viceroys and Secretaries of India emphatically repudiated the



feasibility of introducing English political institutions to India, Gokhale still believed that by appealing to the British sense of liberalism, by convincing them of India's genuine capabilities the British would ultimately be convinced and would introduce to India western political institutions. It was this faith in British liberalism that made Gokhale plead for the continuance of the British rule in India. His justification for the continuance of the British rule in India did not mean that he was totally satisfied with the British administration in India. For instance, he was a bitter critic of the high handedness of the Curzonian administration. He also argued on many occasions that the British raj was more raj and less British in the sense that it was reluctant to introduce English parliamentary institutions to India, yet he believed that British rule was destined to accomplish its providential mission in India. Gokhale sincerely felt that the history of India had nothing to offer so far as the development of democratic political institutions was concerned. In a paper read before the Universal Races Congress, London, July, 1911, Gokhale admitted, "India did not develop {he national idea of political freedom as developed in the west." He was convinced that the social and political institutions of the country must be reformed in the image of the west. To him the European history presented a wellmarked evolution of the democratic idea and was therefore useful in shaping our ideas of liberty and democracy. The

British connection would definitely serve this purpose and hence he welcomed the British rule in India. In one of his letters to his friend Gokhale wrote: "You must all realise that whatever be the shortcomings of bureaucracy ... however the insolence of individual Englishman, they alone stand Political Reform in . today in the country for order; and without continued order no real progress is the 19th Century possibb for our people." Thus to Gokhale British rule in India stood for social order which was the pre-condition of progress and hence he justified the continuance 'of British rule in India.

### **LIBERALISM**

As noted at the outset Gokhale was essentially a liberal thinker. But his liberalism was slightly different from the classical liberalism that existed in the eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe. In order to understand the distinct character of Gokhale's liberalism it is essential to get ourselves acquainted with the liberal ideology in general. Liberalism as an ideology may be defined as an idea committed to individual freedom, as a method and policy in government, as an organising principle in society, and a way of life for the individual and community. Liberty is the core doctrine of liberalism and it stands against coercive interference of any kind in any walk of life. In the social sphere liberalism stands for secularism. It advocets man's freedom from the shackles of religious orthodoxy and believes in

freedom of conscience. In the sphere of economy it appreciated the ideal of free trade coupled with internal freedom of production and external freedom of exportation. It stands for free competition implying no curb on import and export of goods. For this reason it stands for the exploitation of natural resources and distribution of economic dividends at the hands of the individuals. In the sphere of politics liberalism and instead of restricting the role of the state in economic life of the nation, he wanted the state to play a positive role in promoting industrial development and trade. As a liberal Gokhale cherished the ideal of individual liberty. But to him, liberty did not imply the total absence of restraint; on the contrary, he felt that individual liberty could be usefully allowed only when the individuals behave with a sense of self-restraint and self organisation. He knew that the ideal of liberty could not be realised unless the citizens are guaranteed certain rights to freedom. To him the right of free expression and the freedom of press were essential to ... realise the ideal of individual liberty. He, therefore, opposed the Official Secret Bill in 1904 on the grounds that it was proposed to arm the government with a greater power to control the press. Gokhale also favoured the right to private property and the freedom of contract. Commenting on the Land Revenue Code Amendment Bill Gokhale said that "the ordinary citizen is as tenaciously attached to his proprietary rights over his holdings ... that

there is nothing he will not do if it is in his power to ward off what he regards as a direct or indirect attack on these rights. And it is not difficult to understand that a proposal to take away from his power of alienating, when necessary, his holding should appear to him to be a most serious encroachment on his rights. Thus Gokhale defended the right to private property, individual liberty and freedom of contract which essentially constituted the core of liberal doctrine. In order to maintain individual liberty and essential civil rights, Gokhale proposed the establishment of representative institutions in the country. According to him the first prerequisite for the improvement of relations between Britain and India was 'an unequivocal declaration in England to put her resolve to help forward the growth of representative institutions in India and a determination to stand by this policy.' However, Gokhale did not demand universal franchise. He proposed property qualification for enfranchisement. For example, for the village Panchayat elections Gokhale wanted that only such persons should be enfranchised who paid a minimum land revenue. Gokhale also preferred the representation of interests along with the representation of people in the legislature. In his last testament and will he suggested that the Legislative Council in each province should constitute of 75 to 100 members. Taking Bombay as an illustration he pleaded for one seat each in the legislature for the Karachi Chamber, the Ahmedabad Mill

Owners and the Deccan Sardars. He also , suggested the principle of special representation for the religious minority., Recognising the communal differences between the Hindus and the Muslims Gokhale pleaded for separate representation of the Muslims. Thus, as a liberal, copd Klishna Cokhale Gokhale on the one hand defended the concept of individual liberty and on the other hand supported the establishment of representative institution in a limited sense

### **POLITICAL GOALS AND PROGRAMME**

Gokhale's understanding of the British rule in India was one of the factors that determined his political goals and programmes. As noted earlier Gakhale sincerely believed that India's connections with the British were going to help her in many ways in the long run and hence any idea of severing these connections was always repugnant to his mind. The political goal which he put forward, therefore, was that of self-government for India. The earlier Congress leaders were satisfied with the idea of the 'good government' which meant an efficient and enlightened government. But Gokhale, like Dadabhai Naoroji, gradually realised that no good government was ever possible without having self-government.'Moreover, he felt that the British had given good government in the sense that they had established law and order in the society but then the time had come to associate the Indians with the work of government and this was possible only if the British granted

self-government to India. In his Presidential address to the Banaras Congress (1905) Gokhale said, "Now the Congress wants that all this should change and that India should be governed, first and foremost, in the interests of the Indians themselves. This result will be achieved only in proportion as we obtain more and more-voice in the government of our country."

### **Mahatma Gandhiji**

Mahatma Gandhi is one of the greatest national leaders. He was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1869 and was named as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. He studied law in England and after returning from England, he started legal practice in India. In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Gandhi went to South Africa, where the government subjected Indians to great discrimination and to the most humiliating treatment. He became renowned in South Africa as a champion of truth, non-violence and preserving the dignity of human beings. He returned to India in 1914, and dedicated the remaining years of his life to the cause of his motherland. In India, Mahatma Gandhi decided to fight against the British Raj. This period marked by the freedom struggle came to be known as the Gandhian era (1920–1948). For the first time in the history of the world, a man was leading millions of people of a dependent country and teaching them the practical use of techniques like non-violence, non-cooperation and civil disobedience. In 1942, Gandhi called upon the British to quit

India. Five years later the British left India, granting it complete independence (on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947).

Gandhi's visit to South Africa in 1893 changed the course of his life. His experience in South Africa helped him to be a great leader. At Maritzburg, capital of Natal, he was thrown out of a railway compartment by a white policeman, and left to shiver in the cold on the railway platform. On this incident Gandhi wrote,

I began to think of my duty. Should I fight for my rights or go back to India or should I go on to Pretoria without minding the insult and return to India finishing the case? The hardship to which I was subjected was superficial, only a symptom of the deep disease of colour-prejudice. I should try if possible to root out the disease and suffer hardships in the process. Redress for wrongs, I should seek only to the extent that would be necessary for the removal of the colour prejudice.

This shock changed the course of his life. Gandhi decided to fight and remained in South Africa till 1914 to champion the cause of the coloured people. He organized the Natal Indian Congress and during the Boar War and Zulu Rebellion organized medical camps and helped the government. He published the Indian Opinion in 1904 as a mouthpiece of coloured people. During his journey from Johannesburg to Durban, he read John Ruskin's *Unto This Last*, which had a deep impact on Gandhi's philosophy. He was greatly influenced by this work and started his

Satyagraha against the discriminatory policy of the government of South Africa

### **Major Influences on Gandhi**

The major influences on Gandhi's life may be summed up as the following:

- His mother's sense of self-sacrifice, spirit of service, religiousness and fasting
- His father's spirit of renunciation
- Influence of Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, Vaishnavism and the Bhagavat Gita
- Plain living and high thinking of Raichand Bhai and works of Tolstoy and Ruskin had profound influence on Gandhi. In his autobiography, Gandhi wrote, 'Three moderns have left a deep impression on my life, and captivated me. Raichand Bhai by his living contact, Tolstoy by his book, The Kingdom of God is Within You and Ruskin by his Unto This Last
- The holy Quran and other books on Islam
- Thoreau's Passive Resistance

These major influences helped Gandhi achieve his ideals in life.

### **Political Ideas**

The following are the basic ideas of Mahatma Gandhi:



**(i) No political creed, but application of eternal truths**

In 1936, Mahatma Gandhi said that there was no such thing as Gandhism, and he was not prepared to leave a sect after him. Gandhi said,

*There is no such thing as Gandhism, and I do not want to leave any sect after me. I do not claim to have originated any new principle or doctrine. I have simply tried in my own way to apply the eternal truths to our daily life and problems. There is, therefore, no question of my leaving any code like 'Code of Manu'.*

Gandhi's ideas were influenced by the writings of Ruskin, Thoreau and Tolstoy. He was also influenced by the Vedas, the Bhagavad Gita, the Bible, the Quran, and the other scriptures. It is essential to point out that Gandhi's political thought was mixed with religious principles.

**(ii) Spiritualization of politics**

Gandhi is said to be a saint amongst politicians and a politician among saints. He was not a politician in the ordinary sense of the term. He exhibited uncommon tact and intelligence in choosing the time as well as the methods and techniques to be used in launching his non-violence agitation. This made him the ideal for all political leaders, who were struggling for India's independence. A great contribution of Mahatma Gandhi to political theory and politics is political action guided by morality or spirituality. The leaders must be inspired by a sense of

sacrifice and service. Gandhi stressed on the importance of means and stated that right and just means should be adopted to achieve right and just ends. Thus, according to him ends and means are the same looked at from different angles.

**(iii) The state a soulless machine destroying individuality**

As an advocate of non-violence and philosophical anarchism, Gandhi was against the state. His anti-state attitude was justified on historical, moral and economic grounds. The state uses force, and its existence cannot be justified on moral grounds. By the use of force, the state deprives the moral value of the individual's action. The individual has a soul, but as the state is a soulless machine, 'it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence.' The state hinders progress by destroying individuality and it does great harm by its increasing reliance on force.

Gandhi's ideal is a stateless democracy, in which there is a federation of village communities, functioning on the basis of voluntary cooperation, and peaceful coexistence. Gandhi states, 'Thus every village will be a republic or panchayat having full powers.' It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world. Such a society is necessarily highly cultured in which every man or woman knows what he or she wants and knows that no one should want anything

that others cannot have with equal labour.

**(iv) Decentralization, labour and classless society**

While in democracy there is a great deal of centralization and inequality. Gandhian philosophy puts emphasis on decentralization with equality, non-possession and labour being the ideals of this society. Gandhi writes,

*If all laboured for their bread and no more, then there would be enough food and enough leisure for all. Then there would be no cry of over-population, no disease and no such misery as we see around . . . There will be no rich and no poor, none high and none low, no touchable and no untouchable.*

While in the state, as it exists now, the growth of individuality is thwarted; in a stateless democracy every individual is given the maximum freedom to devote himself to the service of society, according to his calibre or capacity. According to a critic, ‘Gandhi was a firm believer in a classless, egalitarian society in which there would be no distinctions of rich and poor, high and low. In some respects, he went further even than the orthodox socialists, in as much as he would not exempt anyone from obligatory socially useful body-labour.’

Gandhi was against high-centralized production and pleaded for decentralized production. The idea is not to do away entirely with machinery as such, but to prevent the concentration of power in the hands of a few people. The salient features of Gandhian economy are as follows:

- (i) Intensive, small-scale, and cooperative farming as opposed to mechanized, large-scale or collective farming
- (ii) Development of cottage industries
- (iii) Private ownership subject to the benefit of society
- (iv) Proper balance of animal, human and plant life
- (v) Provision for social justice and equally economic opportunities to all
- (vi) Organization of economy through decentralization and village panchayats
- (v) State based on non-violence or ahimsa**

Mahatma Gandhi is against violence in thought, word and action. According to Gandhi Ahimsa is based on the principles of non-violence and love for all. Gandhi maintained, 'Ahimsa is not the crude thing it has been made to appear. Not to hurt any living thing is no doubt a part of Ahimsa. The principle of Ahimsa is hurt by every evil thought, by undue haste, by lying, by hatred, by wishing ill to anybody. It is also violated by our holding on to what the world needs.' He believed that the state is not an end but it is a means for the welfare of the people. He is opposed to the view that the state is above, nothing is outside the state and nothing is against the state. He is unwilling to accept the state as the highest group and an end in itself.

The ideal, however, is that the state functions on the principle of

Ahimsa. It is possible when there is goodwill and crime is absent. Such a state where justice prevails represents the Ramarajya (kingdom of Lord Ram).

People in the Gandhian state have various rights and duties. As a thinker who dislikes the absolute sovereignty of the state, Gandhi allows the citizen the right and duty of disobeying the laws of the state, where necessary. He is against the use of force by the state. Force should be used in minimum for the sake of maintenance of law and order. The police should think that it is to serve as the servants of the people and not their masters.

**(vi) Property as trust and not as instrument of exploitation**

Gandhi is against the use of property as an instrument of exploitation. Capitalism and exploitation should be removed through non-violent methods. Those who have property must regard it as trust and not as an instrument of exploitation. Gandhi's theory of trusteeship makes no distinction between private and non-private property. All property is held in trust, no matter who owns it, and what its nature or quantity is. It applies not only to tangible and transferable property, but also to places of power and position. It implies the transformation of the present capitalist system of society into an egalitarian system. Property is not to be a source of profit but a source of people's welfare. Gandhi said, 'No one should have property more than what one needs.'

**(vii) Good end and good means**

Gandhi was in favour of good end through good means. To him, the end can never justify the means. To realize the Gandhian state, only fair means are to be adopted. Non-violence and truth form the soul of Gandhi's technique. Regarding means and ends, Gandhi observed, 'The means may be linked to seed, the end to a tree, and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and ends as there is between the seed and the tree.' Thus, the end and means should be invariably good.

**(viii) Harmony between nationalism and internationalism**

Gandhi put emphasis on the importance of nationalism in its noblest form. He was against nationalism based on violence and aggressive tactics. He was in favour of world peace, and wanted to bring about a harmony between nationalism and internationalism. People in a country should be patriotic, but they should be friendly towards the people of other countries. He said, 'My nationalism is intense internationalism.'

**Satyagraha**

Gandhi used the word Satyagraha in 1906 to express the nature of the non-violent action undertaken by the Indians in South Africa against the racist government. With his involvement in the Indian National Movement, he adopted it as a technique of love-force, soul-force, non-violence, aiming constantly at the search and pursuit of truth. To him,

Satyagraha is the vindication of truth, not by infliction of suffering on the opponent but on one's own self. It is eternal insistence on truth. Satyagraha is based on non-violence and as such it does not permit violence in any form. Ahimsa and Satyagraha are synonymous for Gandhi. Satyagraha emphasizes always the purity of means as well as the purity of the ends. It is a moral weapon in the hands of a morally strong person to fight injustice, tyranny or evil and can be applied in any sphere. Gandhi said, 'it is force that may be used by individuals as well as communities. It may be used as well in political as in domestic affairs. Its universal applicability is a demonstration of its permanence and invincibility'.

Evil should be resisted through the techniques of Satyagraha, a moral weapon based on soul force, which is superior to physical force. According to a critic, Satyagraha means 'clinging to truth', and as truth for Gandhi is God, Satyagraha in the general sense of the word means the ways of life of one who holds steadfastly to God and dedicates his life to him. The true Satyagrahi is accordingly a man of God.'

It is the weapon of the non-violent struggle. Mahatma Gandhi has explained the meaning of Satyagraha as follows:

*The term Satyagraha was coined by me in South Africa to express the force that the Indians there used for full eight years and it was coined in order to distinguish it from the movement then going on*

*in the United Kingdom and South Africa under the name of passive resistance. Its root meaning is holding on to truth, hence truth-force. I have also called it love-force or soul-force.*

Satyagraha may assume the form of (a) non-cooperation, (b) fasting, (c) striking, (d) civil disobedience, (e) picketing and (f) Hijrat, i.e., voluntary exile. A Satyagrahi, in order to fight the non-violent struggle, has to prepare himself for it by self-discipline, purity, courage and civility.

Before practicing Satyagraha in public life, a Satyagrahi must practice it in domestic or personal life. Like charity, Satyagraha must begin from home. An individual in search of truth, whether in domestic or public life, has a heavy burden of ethical code over his shoulders. He is a man of peace. The aim is self-realization through social service and sacrifice. Satyagraha is a weapon to counteract the evils and difficulties that come in the way of realization of truth. It is a weapon to be used for public good and never for personal gains. It is not to be resorted to defend immoral acts and wrongly earned gains. There is no place for ill-will and hatred in Satyagraha. A Satyagrahi does not think, in relation to his enemy in terms of victor and vanquished.

Satyagraha may not be confused with passive resistance. It is true that both are peaceful techniques of meeting aggression and bringing about social and political changes. However, there are differences



between the two. Passive resistance as practiced is a political weapon of expediency but Satyagraha is a moral weapon based on the superiority of soul force over brute force. Passive resistance is the weapon of the weak but Satyagraha can be practiced only by the brave. The passive resistance aims at embarrassing the opponent into submission, but a Satyagrahi aims at winning the opponent from error by love and patient suffering. There is hardly any place for love for the enemy in the case of passive resistance. In Satyagraha, there is no room for ill-will. Mahadeo Desai observed,

*Satyagraha is dynamic, passive resistance is static. Passive resistance acts negatively and suffers reluctantly. Satyagrahi acts positively and suffers with cheerfulness because from love he makes the suffering fruitful. Passive resistance is not by its very nature universal in its application. It cannot be directed against one's nearest relations as Satyagraha can be. Passive resistance offered in a spirit of weakness and despair weakens the resister psychologically and morally. Satyagraha emphasizes all the time internal strength and actually develops the same. Satyagraha can offer more effective and determined opposition to injustice and tyranny than passive resistance.*

### **Forms and Techniques of Satyagraha**

The techniques of Satyagraha may take the form of non-cooperation and civil disobedience or fasting and strike. As regards non-

cooperation, Gandhi pointed out that oppression and exploitation can be checked by non-cooperation of people. If people refuse to cooperate with the government, the latter cannot function. Gandhi said,

Even the most despotic government cannot stand except with the consent of the governed, which consent is often forcibly procured by the despot. As soon as the subject ceases to fear the despotic force, his power is gone.

Non-cooperation may manifest itself in the form of hartals, or picketing. Hartal involves stopping of work as a measure of protest and its object to strike the imagination of the people and the government. Hartals to be effective are to be voluntary and no violence is to be used. Only persuasive methods are to be employed. Gandhi wrote,

*Object of peaceful picketing is not to block the path of a person wanting to do a particular thing but to rely on the force of public opprobrium and to war and even shame the blacklegs. Picketing should avoid coercion, intimidation, discourtesy, burning or burying of effigies and hunger strike.*

Another form of Satyagraha recommended by Gandhi is civil disobedience. This is regarded by him as ‘complete, effective and bloodless substitute of armed revolt.’ Bad laws are to be challenged and violated. Civil disobedience implies ‘the register’s outlawry in a civil, i.e., non-violent manner.’ Gandhi put the greatest emphasis on the word

‘civil’. He said,

*Disobedience to be civil, must be sincere, respectful, restrained, never defiant, must be based upon some well-understood principle, must not be capricious and must have no ill-will or hatred behind it. Its use must be guarded by all conceivable restrictions. Every possible provision should be made against outbreak of violence or general lawlessness. The area as well as scope should also be limited to the barest necessity of the case.*

The leaders, and not the Satyagrahis, are to decide which laws are to be violated. Another form of Satyagraha suggested by Gandhi is fasting. This is considered by him as a strong weapon against oppression and Gandhi recommended the greatest caution in resorting to fasting. Fasting is not meant for all occasions but only on rare occasions. It can be undertaken for self-purification or for the purpose of resisting injustice and converting the evil-doer. Fasting is to be undertaken only by those who have spiritual fitness. It requires purity of mind, discipline, humility and faith. Gandhi’s view is that fasting rouses conscience and fires the loving hearts to action.

Those who bring about radical changes in human conditions and surroundings cannot do it except by raising ferment in society. There are only two methods of doing this – violence and non-violence. Non-violent pressure exerted through self-suffering and by fasting touches and

strengthens the moral fibre of those against whom it is directed.

The last method of Satyagraha is in the form of strike. However, Gandhi's view of strike is different from that advocated by Socialists and Communists. According to him, strike is a voluntary, purificatory suffering undertaken to convert the wrong doers. Gandhi does not believe in the theory of class war. His view is that industry is a joint enterprise of labour and capital and both of them are trustees. The strikers are required to put forward their demands in very clear terms. Those should not be unjust. Those should be within the reach of the capitalists to concede. The strikers are required to learn some manual craft so that during the strike period they do not have to depend upon the strike fund.

Gandhi recommended Satyagraha even in the case of foreign invasion. He explained his method in these words:

*A non-violent man or society does not anticipate or provide for attacks from without. On the contrary, such a person or society firmly believes that nobody is going to disturb them. If the worst happens, there are two ways open to non violence. To yield possession but non-cooperate with the aggressor. Thus supposing that a modern edition of Nero descended upon India, the representatives of the States will let him in but tell him that he will get no assistance from the people. They will prefer death to submission. The second way will be the non-violent way. They*

*would offer themselves unarmed as fodder for the aggressor's cannon. The underlying belief in either case is that even Nero is not devoid of a heart. The unexpected spectacle of endless rows upon rows of men and women simply dying rather than surrender to the will of an aggressor, must ultimately melt him and his soldiery.*

When China was being conquered by Japan during the 1930s, Gandhi said, *If the Chinese had practiced non-violence of my conception, there would be no use left for the latest machinery of destruction which Japan possesses. The Chinese would say to Japan, 'Bring all your machinery. We present half of our population to you, but the remaining two hundred millions won't bend their knees to you.' If the Chinese did that, Japan would become China's slave.*

In 1916, Gandhi laid down certain principles to be observed in the Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati. Those principles of behaviour are truth, non-violence, non stealing, non-possession and celibacy. A true Satyagrahi is required to practice those ideals, in his day-to-day private and public life. In course of time, Gandhi favoured a few more virtues and qualities to be borne by a Satyagrahi. Those qualities are soul force, moral discipline, honesty, 'spiritual kinship with the opponent', implicit faith in human nature and goodness, self-inflicted suffering for truth and a will to crucify the flesh by fasting and humility. A Satyagrahi is not to harbour

anger, suffer the anger of the opponent, retaliate or insult his opponent. If a Satyagrahi violated the rules prescribed by him, Gandhi preferred to stop the movement than to see the violation of those rules. Purity and non-violence of the persons engaged in a cause were always fundamental to him.

Satyagraha is based upon moral development of the Satyagrahi. He is to 'overcome evil by good, anger by love, untruth by truth, Himsa by Ahimsa.' He is to treat his opponent as a member of his own family and the family method was to be employed to iron out the differences. A Satyagrahi is to trust his opponent even if the latter plays him false. A Satyagrahi is required to have an open mind and whenever he realizes that his own opinion is wrong, he should confess his mistake and revise his judgement accordingly. Gandhi stated, 'Confession of error is like a broom that sweeps away dirt and leaves the surface cleaner than before.' A Satyagrahi is to meet his enemy, not to attack him but to compromise with him. A Satyagrahi is to compromise on non-essentials and not fundamentals or the basic moral issues involved in the conflict.

A Satyagrahi has double responsibility. He is responsible to himself, i.e., to his own inner conscience and to the people. According to Gandhi, if there is a conflict between the two, a Satyagrahi should submit to the public opinion if the matter does not conflict with his moral conscience very often; he has to depend upon his conscience for guidance.

There can be situations for a Satyagrahi when he should not surrender his personal moral intuitive judgment to mass opinion and follow the dictates of his conscience and leave free his followers to pursue their own course of action.

*Satyagraha is related to the concept of love and non-violence. A Satyagrahi must have a sound basis for his love and affection. A Satyagrahi makes a distinction between the evil and the evil-doer. He wins the heart of the opponent through love and persuasion. He should not be obliged to accept things as they are. His aim is to secure social justice. The non-violence of a Satyagrahi has its impact. The wrong-doer gets tired of committing wrong in the absence of resistance. Gandhi states, All pressure is lost when the victim betrays no resistance. I seek entirely to blunt the edge of the tyrant's sword, not by disappointing the expectation that I would be offering physical resistance. The resistance of the soul would at first dazzle him and at last compel recognition from him which recognition would not humiliate but uplift him.*

According to Gandhi, Satyagraha is non-violent coercion. The aim of the Satyagrahi is to move the heart of the enemy only by love and not by giving or causing any injury to him. Satyagraha is a weapon that only well-disciplined soldiers can use. He who leads the life of an honest and truthful man, can use it effectively. The user should be fearless. There are two other things viz., non-stealing and non possession, which are very

important. Gandhi wrote,

*Possession implies provision for the future. A seeker after truth, a follower of the Law of Love cannot hold anything tomorrow. God never stores for the morrow. He never creates more than what is strictly needed for the moment. If, therefore, we repose faith in His Providence, we should rest assured that He will give us every day our daily bread, meaning everything that we require.*

Gandhi stated,

*Theoretically, when there is perfect love, there must be perfect non-possession. The body is our last possession. So a man can only exercise perfect love and be completely dispossessed if he is prepared to embrace death and renounce his body for the sake of human service. But that is true in theory only. In actual life, we can hardly exercise perfect love, for the body as a possession will always remain with us. Man will ever remain imperfect and it will always be his part to try to be perfect.*

According to Gandhi, humility and self-restraint must be practiced by the Satyagrahi because they give him strength and force. At the time of the 1930 movement, Gandhi made the following rules for the Satyagrahis:

*The Satyagrahi must harbour no anger, must suffer the anger of his opponent, putting up with assaults but refusing to retaliate; but he must not submit out of fear of punishment or the like to any order given in*



*anger. He must refrain from insults and swearing; he must protect opponents from insults or attack, even at the risk of his life. He must not resist his arrest for the attachment of his property, but if he has got any property in his possession as a trustee, he must refuse to surrender it even though in defending it he might lose his life. As a prisoner he must behave in an exemplary manner; as a member of his unit in the struggle, he must obey the orders of his leaders although he may resign in the event of serious disagreement. He may not expect guarantee for maintenance of his dependants.*

If Satyagraha is a way of life for an individual, it is also a means of group action by which through collective non-violent resistance, conflicts are settled and the cause of truth is vindicated. Gandhi has suggested various precautions and ethical codes to be followed while undertaking Satyagraha as a group action. For instance, it must be non-violent. The enemy should not be embarrassed. Gandhi put emphasis on 'open-dealing' in Satyagraha. Everything, including discussions or settlement of the dispute, should be done openly. The reason is that truth and secrecy cannot go together. Satyagraha is a struggle for righteousness and virtue. It is a vindication of the right of opposition to coercive authority. No force in the world is as effective as Satyagraha. It is progressive in character. Gandhi's advocacy of the right of Satyagraha is a great contribution to political thought. As a moral technique for waging

the battle of national freedom, Satyagraha gained dramatic and historic character. According to Stanley Jones, Satyagraha is the greatest contribution of Gandhi to the modern world. D.E. Smith describes Gandhi as a revolutionary leader on account of his developing the technique of Satyagraha.

The question arises whether the ideas of Gandhi are relevant for us today when we see ourselves surrounded in our day-to-day lives by so called Satyagrahas, Dharnas, fasts unto death and Gheraos. Gandhi laid emphasis on means as well as on ends. It is suggested that if the Gandhian spirit is imbibed by the new generation, many problems can be solved without taking recourse to violence. Gandhi's technique can be employed successfully to fight the evils of corruption, black-marketing or injustices in economic, industrial or social life. Without bloodshed, Gandhism can be a complete revolution.

### **Concept of Society and Individual**

Gandhi believed in the concept of the individual being the soul of the social system. The individual is the centre of the social system, but there is interdependence of the individual and the society. However, the individual is the root and the society is the fruit. He rejects unrestricted individualism that ignores social obligations as well as the other extreme view, i.e., individual as a cog in the social machine. Gandhi said,

*I value individual freedom but you must not forget that man is*

*essentially a social being. He has risen to the present status by learning to adjust his individualism to the requirements of social progress. Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. We have learnt to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint. Willing submission to social restraint for the sake of the well-being of the whole society enriches both the individual and the society of which one is a member.*

Society must provide maximum opportunities to the individual for his development that consists of selfless service to society and willing fulfillment of social obligation. If the society fails in discharging its duty, resistance is justified.

According to Gandhi, individuals acquire the right of resistance or violation of the law of the state becomes a right and a duty when the laws are: (a) not of people's own making, (b) repugnant to public or private morals, (c) not promoting social good, (d) oppressive in nature and cause, all round harassment, hardship, humiliation, oppression and tyranny.

Thus, resistance becomes moral and just in the name of dictate of conscience, individual freedom, self-government and social good. Of course the manner of resistance must be of specific character and be in conformity with the Gandhian general principle of purity of means. Gandhi's prescriptions are: (1) non-violent resistance, (2) civil resistance,

and (3) civilized resistance. The resistances shall assume the form of: (1) non-cooperation and (2) civil disobedience, or Satyagraha. Those who resist the State in the name of morality, justice, dictate of conscience or freedom and self-government should adopt non-violent techniques or the techniques of Satyagraha and shall be prepared for suffering the consequences of such resistance. Gandhi wrote,

*Government of the people is possible only so long as they consent either consciously or unconsciously to be governed. There is no government that can control an individual without his sanction. Voluntary obedience to the laws of the State and the society should be there so far as they are not repugnant to public or private morals. Willing obedience to social restraint for the sake of the well-being of the whole society enriches both the individual and society of which he is a member.*

Gandhi is a philosophical anarchist for whom state was an unacceptable institution. Like Marx and the anarchists he thought that the state is an instrument of exploitation based on violence and sustained by violence. According to him by use of violence, the state suppresses the individuality of man. For Gandhi, the individual is the centre of the social system, and the political structure. The state is meant to promote the interest of the individual and to provide him adequate opportunities for the development of his personality which consists in rendering selfless service to the society. Thus, according to Gandhi the state is a means to an

end and the end being the all-round development of the individual.

Rights of the individual according to Gandhi are not created by the state. They are created by the individuals who by due performance of their duties qualify themselves for the enjoyment of their duties. The state only recognizes these rights. The individual has the right to resist the state for the vindication of his rights born out of due performance of one's duty. According to Gandhi, rights have their source in due performance of duties. If one performs his duties to the society, rights will automatically follow. Rights and duties are related as cause and effect, the latter being the cause and the former being the effect.

Gandhi was a philosophical anarchist who did not relish the idea of an organism like the state that is based on violence. His ideal condition of human existence is a condition of Statelessness. However, as a practical idealist he realized that due to the imperfections of the individuals the state is often felt as a necessary evil. Hence the individuals should obey the state and the principles of political obligation or what constitutes the basis of political obligation.

Gandhi as a philosophical anarchist was not only critical of the state but also of all governments extraneous to individuals. He understood Swaraj in the sense of self-government of the self by the superior self, or control of the individual behaviour, passion, greed and selfishness, by the dictates of conscience. Hence in his Hind Swaraj he observed 'Real

home-rule is self-rule or self-control.' However, as a practical idealist he felt that since individuals are incapable of perfect self-control and their conduct does not become completely self-regulated, there is need for some form of government external to man. However, the government must be democratic in nature, i.e., democratic both in form and content. Such a government must be: (1) free from foreign control, (2) promote the welfare of all members of the society, (3) based on the equality of all members of the society irrespective of the religion, race, caste, sect or place of birth, (4) secular in nature, (5) free from domination by any section of the community, (6) based on the principle of democratic decentralization, (7) based on the principle of village self-government and (8) based on mutual toleration.

### **Gandhian Socialism**

Gandhi was a critic of capitalism. He condemned the 19th century doctrine of laissez faire. To him accumulation of capital is an evil and immoral act.

Today the word 'socialism' has become a controversial one. Socialism is often compared with a hat, which has lost its shape because everybody wears it.

If socialism is defined as a political and economic theory according to which the means of production, distribution and exchange should be owned and controlled by the people, everyone should be given

an equal opportunity to develop his talents and the wealth of the community should be fairly distributed, then Gandhi may be called a true socialist. Gandhi visualizes a social structure in which every attempt is made to ensure everybody's rise. We shall now examine the main tenets of Gandhian socialism.

### **Equitable Distribution of Wealth**

Gandhi believed in the concept of economic equality and advocated, 'a wise regulation of riches and absolute social justice.' He once wrote,

*Socialism is a beautiful word and so far as I am aware, in socialism all the members of the society are equal, none low, none high. In the individual body, the head is not high, because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as parts of the individual body are equal, so are the members of the society. This is socialism.*

This statement clearly reveals the concept of equality as embodied in Gandhian socialism. On another occasion he wrote,

'I am working for winning Swaraj for those toiling and unemployed millions, who do not get even a square meal a day and have to scratch along with a piece of stale 'Roti' and a pinch of salt.'

Gandhi was a practical man. He realized that complete equality is an improbability. Hence, he pleaded for equitable distribution. As he says,

‘My ideal is equal distribution but so far as I can see, it is not to be realized. I therefore work for equitable distribution of wealth.’

He felt that disparity of income should be reduced to a reasonable limit. In the ideal Constitution of India, which had his approval Gandhi pleaded, ‘Every citizen shall have the right to obtain a minimum living wage through honest work or employment.’ No servant of the State shall be paid more than `500 per month. Inheritance taxes on a graduated scale shall be levied on property above a fixed minimum.

The following types of wealth that are now owned by the private capitalists shall become national property.

All the land shall belong to the State. Private landlords and Zamindari systems of land tenure will, therefore, cease to exist. The State shall grant long lease to those farmers who actually till the soil.

All key industries shall be owned by the nation.

Mines, rivers, forests, roads, railways, air transport, post and telegraph, shipping and other means to public transport shall be national property.

Gandhi was in favour of culmination of all forms of economic exploitation through non-coercive technique. He regarded accumulation of capital as immoral and a social crime. There should be no accumulation and no useless possession of wealth in society. The doctrine of equal distribution means that each man’s need should be fulfilled. Gandhi, in his



later years, subscribed to the Marxian formula 'to each according to his need.'

### **Theory of Trusteeship**

Gandhi was not altogether in favour of abolition of private property. He believed in the principle of trusteeship under which the rich could possess all their wealth in trust for the good of the people. He did not want to give unlimited power to property owners. They should become trustees of their surplus wealth for the good of the society.

The theory of trusteeship is a cardinal point of the economic policy that Gandhi had advocated for independent India. Gandhi strongly believed in the concept of 'Aparigraha' (non-possession) and contended that 'a thing not originally stolen must nevertheless be classified as stolen property if we possess without need for it.' When in 1929 Gandhi advocated his theory of trusteeship, he expected good response from the capitalists in India. But in actual practice when the response was very poor, he revised his view and accepted the idea of 'statutory trusteeship'. In the beginning he assumed that trusteeship would be inherited by the son but later on in 1938 he declared that a trustee has no heir but the public.

*Gandhi never idealized private property. As K.G. Mashurwala aptly writes, He (Gandhi) would like to dispossess every person of all kinds of belongings. If he tolerates the institution of private*

*property, it is not because he loves it or holds it to be necessary for the progress of humanity but because he had yet to discover a truthful and non-violent method of abolishing that institution.*

### **Bread Labour**

Gandhi's idea of bread labour is based on the principle of dignity and sanctity of labour. According to Gandhi, the real wealth of the nation consists of labour. The idea that man should earn his bread by the sweat of his labour has greatly influenced him. The theory of bread labour postulates that every healthy individual must labour enough for his food, and his intellectual faculties must not be exercised in order to obtain a living or amass a fortune but only in the service of mankind.

Further Gandhi wrote, 'If all laboured for their bread and no more, then there would be enough food and enough leisure for all. There will then be no rich and no poor, none high, none low, no touchable and no untouchable.'

Gandhi rightly realized that labour has its unique place in any civilized nation. Although he did not blindly support the Ricardian or Marxian theories of labour, yet he adhered to the moral idea of the sanctification of labour. He not only preached it but also practiced it in South Africa. Every individual must work. 'Everyone should deem it a dishonour to eat a single meal without honest labour.'

### **Decentralized Order**

Gandhi advocated decentralization both in the political and economic spheres. He was well aware of overcentralization. Centralization is a form of regimentation and authoritarianism and it 'makes the world so complex that the common man fails to understand the forces that are working in his life and society.'

In order to raise the common man into a high pedestal of glory, a large measure of decentralization of both political and economic power is necessary. Gandhi wanted to evolve a decentralized structure of power and economy based on the effective reconstruction of self-reliant and self-sufficient village communities. The strength of the nation can be built only if the villagers lead a life of peace, harmony, goodwill and self-sufficiency. Hence, Gandhi advocated for powerful village panchayats and promotion of small-scale and cottage industries. As J.B. Karipalani writes, 'Decentralization in industry and devolution of power in politics are the only means by which humanity can hope to establish a social order based upon equality and justice and free from economic and political exploitation.'

### **Democratic Socialism**

Gandhi was a socialist at heart. It is a political blasphemy to deny that Gandhi was a socialist. His socialism was not a blind imitation of the West. Hence, it had a few unique features. Gandhi wrote,

*I have claimed that I was a socialist long before those I know in India avowed their creed. My socialism was natural to me and not adopted from a book. It came out of an unshakeable belief in non-violence. No man could be actively non violent and not rise against social injustice, no matter where it occurred, unfortunately. Western socialists have, so far as I know, believed in the necessity of violence for enforcing socialistic doctrines.*

Gandhi believed in democratic socialism. He was not prepared to sacrifice the individual at the altar of the state and was opposed to dictatorship of any kind, either of the capitalists or of the proletariat. Gandhi's socialism is to be achieved through democratic means.

### **Non-violent Socialism**

What makes Gandhian socialism practically different from communism is its faith in 'Ahimsa' or non-violence. That is why Gandhism is often called 'Marxism minus violence.' Gandhi had firm faith in non-violence. He was convinced that social justice can never be achieved by means of force. Nothing permanent can be built on violence. What is gained by violence may be lost before superior violence. Hence, he wanted to bring a social revolution through non-violent ways. He wanted to convert human nature by persuasion, not by coercion. He wrote, 'Some have called me the greatest revolutionary of my time. It may be false, but I believe myself to be a revolutionary— a non-violent

revolutionary.’

### **Moral and Spiritual Socialism**

Gandhian socialism is not only non-violent, but also moral and spiritual. Gandhi believed in the purification of means and ends. He was convinced that noble ends cannot be achieved by evil means and contended ‘our progress towards the goal will be in exact proportion to the purity of our means.’ ‘This socialism’, he wrote, ‘is as pure as crystal. It requires crystal-like means to achieve it.’

Gandhi believed in the fundamentals or ethics that love is better than hate, peace is better than war, cooperation is better than conflict, and persuasion is better than coercion. While Marx put emphasis on matter, Gandhi put emphasis on spirit or life.

To Marx religion is ‘the opium of the people’ but to Gandhi ‘the existence of the world in a broad sense depends on religion.’

Gandhi rejected the Marxist theory of class war, which preached permanent antagonism between the have and the have nots or between the capital and labour. He is not of the opinion that ‘capital and labour need to be antagonistic.’ Further, he wrote,

*A labourer’s skill is his capital. Just as the capitalist cannot make his capital fructify without the cooperation of labour, even so the working man cannot make his labour fructify without the cooperation of capital . They would get to respect each other as*

*equal partners in a common enterprise.*

### **Agrarian Socialism**

Gandhi developed his socialist ideas against the background of Indian economic life. India is essentially a land of villages where more than 85 percent of the population depends upon agriculture. Unless villages prosper and rise the true development of the country would not be possible. Hence, Gandhi wanted to reconstruct and rejuvenate the villages through various schemes, particularly through small-scale and cottage industries. His ideal is a decentralized rural economy consisting of small, self-sufficient village communities. While Marx's socialism is urban and industrial, Gandhian socialism is rural and agrarian in character. Gandhi was not altogether opposed to machinery and industrialization. His object was 'not to destroy the machine but to impose limitations on it.' He wanted to save the toiling masses from the clutches of unemployment and starvation.

### **Indigenous Socialism**

Gandhi developed his socialism against the background of Indian life. It is wrong to charge Gandhi of having diluted the meaning of socialism. His humanism inevitably leads him to be a socialist. He is a socialist because he wants to put an end to exploitation, injustice and inequality in society—a society in which the poorest of the poor should feel that it is his country, and in which people would be guided by

devotion to social ends and social service instead of private gains and selfishness.

Gandhian socialist edifice was built, as far as possible, by the indigenous materials. Being influenced by the exalted life of abnegation of Buddha and the doctrine of sacrifice of Hindu philosophy, Gandhi put emphasis on non-accumulation, non-stealing and non-possession. Believing in the conception of Aparigraha, (i.e., non-possession), Gandhi contended that 'a thing not originally stolen must nevertheless be classified as stolen property, if we possess it without need for it.' On another occasion he wrote, 'Real socialism has been handed down to Gopal, then where is the boundary line? Gopal literally means shepherd; it also means God. In modern language it means the State, i.e., the people.'

The first verse of the Ishopanishad, which contains the doctrine of 'renounce and enjoy' had also considerably influenced Gandhian socialism.

Hence, Gandhian socialism is essentially Indian in character. Gandhi had Indianized socialism. It is not a blind imitation of Western socialism or orthodox Marxism. We may brand it as an indigenous or 'Swadeshi' socialism. It is expected that the present-day socialists in India will give up all false pretensions of being called socialists and have a fresh look at Gandhian socialism that seems to be a good panacea to solve many ills of our society.

## **Evaluation of Gandhian Thought**

The influence of Mahatma Gandhi on Indian politics has been tremendous. Every decision of Gandhi on the political situation in India was of great significance to all; to his admirers as well as critics. As a freedom fighter, Gandhi actually showed that the principles of truth and non-violence were not the mere theme of an idle talk, but the core of actual action. He became a dynamic force in the political and spiritual life of India. Indians could never have fought against the powerful British government by using force, because the latter could have suppressed them by using still greater force, which they commanded. The symbolic use of the weapons of non-violence and Satyagraha were responsible for spreading patriotic fervour throughout the country. Decentralization of political power, democracy of village communities, decentralized production, bread labour, elimination of exploitation, prison reforms, private property to be held in trust, the state functioning as an agency of service on the basis of non-violence, etc., clearly show the strengths of the Gandhian thought. It is true that to vest absolute power in the state is risky. Decentralization of political power and decentralization of production, when introduced judiciously, will do immense benefit to a country. Gandhian thought lays great emphasis on service and cooperation and expresses itself strongly against power as a weapon.

The world cannot forget Gandhi, the apostle of truth and non-



violence who lived the life of an ascetic. He said about himself, 'The law of complete love is the law of my being.' George Marshall remarked that 'Mahatma Gandhi is the spokesman for the conscience of all mankind.' Commenting upon Gandhi's assassination, George Bernard Shaw said, 'It is dangerous to be too good.' Gandhi was a great thinker, a great leader, a great reformer, a great philanthropist and a great revolutionary. Paying due homage to Gandhi, Sir Stafford Cripps observed, 'I know of no other man of any time or indeed recent history, who so forcefully and convincingly demonstrated the power of spirit over material things.'

### **Sarvodaya**

The leaders who followed Mahatma Gandhi's constructive programmes include Acharya Vinoba Bhave, Kaka Kalekar, late Jay Prakash Narayan and late K.G. Mashruwala. Regarding establishment of the Sarvodaya Society, a detailed plan was published on 20<sup>th</sup> January 1950. In such a society, there will be freedom for all and utmost equality; there will be no class and castes; no exploitation nor injustice; and equal opportunity for each for fullest development. Man will be the centre of such a society, but self-interest will not be the basis of social organization. Life in such a society will be an integrated whole, so that work, art and play will form a unified pattern making possible the growth of an integrated human personality. Further, there will be complete equality in a Sarvodaya society and no one would be oppressed under the tyranny of

another person. It will be an ideal society and love and cooperation would be its bases. Truth and non-violence will dominate this society.

Sarvodaya is Gandhi's most significant socio political movement. Like Satyagraha, this also comprises two terms, Sarva- meaning one and all and Uday meaning wellbeing or upliftment. This combination thus indicates overall boost or development of all as the definition of Sarvodaya.

Gandhi first came across this righteous concept in the form of a book titled *Unto This Last*, by John Ruskin, which he read in South Africa in 1904. The effect of this book was so strong that it changed Gandhi's outlook towards life. He resolved to change his life according to the ethics of the book.

Three fundamental codes of belief formed the basis of Ruskin's ideology:

- An individual's benefit is in the benefit of everyone.
- A lawyer's work is as respectable as that of a barber; in as much as everyone has equal right to earn their living from their work.
- The life of labour, i.e., the life of one who tills soil and that of the handicraftsman are the lives that are worth living.

This system of belief made Gandhi feel obligated towards the society. He recalled these beliefs in his autobiography, 'The first of these I knew. The second, I had dimly realized. The third had never occurred to

me. Unto This Last made it clear as daylight for me that the second and third were contained in the first. I arose with the dawn, ready to reduce these principles to practice’.

Despite Sarvodaya being a social philosophy in its basic form, India’s pressing post-independence requirement demanded that it be changed into an urgent political set of guidelines. Its aim was to free the social classes from inequality and the best way to put it into practice was with the help of political resolve and state machinery. For Gandhi and for India, this was an indication of grassroots level boost which started in the villages with the most deprived classes, and then progressed to cover the higher social sections.

Nevertheless, to Gandhi, this was a physical expression of Sarvodaya. The more profound philosophies served as an inherent spiritual link for him. His quest for God guided him to the establishment of the most deprived and in the noble service of this lowest of the lowly man, Gandhi glimpsed God. This became his worship and the soul of the deprived became his pilgrimage. Gandhi’s exalted aspiration seemed to be getting fulfilled by service to the poorest of the poor. A justification to this perception is given by Gandhi himself, when he wrote in *Socialism of My Conception* in 1936: Man’s ultimate aim is the realization of God, and all his activities, social, political, religious; have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. The immediate service of all human

beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour, simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it. This can only be done by service of all. And this cannot be done except through one's country.

After 1948, Gandhi's associates carried forward this movement. The chief torchbearers of Sarvodaya were Acharya Vinoba Bhave, Jaiprakash Narayan and Dada Dharmadhikari. Their competent leadership and incessant striving propelled Sarvodaya from a mere initiative to a historic movement.

Sarvodaya puts emphasis on land. All wealth, including land, will be considered as common property to be used for common benefit. The class distinctions will vanish; everyone will work for society according to their capacity and receive from society in accordance to their needs. Production will be for consumption and mutual sharing, and not for profit. To put an end to bureaucratization of the economy, decentralization of production will be preferred in the new society. The economy will pre-eminently be based on small and cottage industries. There are two reasons ascribed for that. First, in a country like India where capital is short and the size of labour supply too big, any attempt at industrialization through high technology is destined to fail. Second, the decentralization of production would prevent bureaucratization of the economic system and benefit the masses.

There will be no state in such a society. The state will not be abolished at once in such a society. The society will move gradually from a good government to a society without a government. The supporters of the Sarvodaya society are not in favour of indirect democracy, because in such a democracy there are political parties, which propagate wrong things. In a representative democracy all decisions are taken by majority and there is no regard for the minority. In such a government, all powers are concentrated in the hands of the government and its officials. Therefore, the Sarvodaya leaders are against this democracy and they suggest a government by the village. Acharya Vinoba Bhave has written that the village disputes should be solved in the villages. Then it would become a kingdom of God where there would be no conflicts and tensions. Vinobaji's Bhoodan movement aims at ushering in a new society on the basis of the Sarvodaya principles.

The Sarvodaya principles are highly commendable. They promote everything good that we strive for—selflessness, high morals and cooperation. If practised, it can only lead to betterment of the individual and mankind as a whole. However, it would not be wrong to state that the concept is more visionary than applicable. Human beings fundamentally come with a lot of flaws and so does society. Non violent revolution, for one, cannot succeed without the backing of a party. Also, the fact that a society will exist that will have all its citizens live together in harmony is

a pipe dream that will, as things stand, never be realized. Still, it would be a folly to dismiss the concept as too utopian and having no place in the real world. Even if humans achieve a portion of the principles advocated by the concept, much can be achieved.

## Unit-IV

Radical Thinkers – Bal Gangadhar Tilak – Subramania Bharathi-

V.O.Chidambaram- Aurobindo Ghosh

### Objectives

- To understand Bal Gangadhar Tilak's role in shaping Indian radical nationalism
- Understand Bharathi's progressive views on caste, religion, and gender equality, and how they influenced modern Tamil society.

## Radical Thinkers

### Bal Gangadhar Tilak

Bal Gangadhar Tilak was one of the most important leaders of the Indian Independence Movement. He is also known as 'Father of Indian Unrest.' This article shares details on the life history of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, his contributions in making India a free country and other related facts.

### Bal Gangadhar Tilak's Personal Life

1. Born as Keshav Gangadhar Tilak in 1856 in Ratnagiri, modern-day Maharashtra.
2. Born into a middle-class Hindu family; got a bachelor's degree from Pune.

3. Initially worked as a Maths teacher. Later started working as a journalist and joined the freedom movement.
4. He was one of the founders of the Fergusson College in Pune.
5. He died in 1920 aged 64.

### **Bal Gangadhar Tilak's Political Life**

1. Tilak joined the Congress in 1890.
2. He was opposed to moderate ways and views and had a more radical and aggressive stance against British rule.
3. He was one of the first advocates of Swaraj or self-rule. He gave the slogan, "Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it." He believed that no progress was possible without self-rule.
4. He was part of the extremist faction of the INC and was a proponent of boycott and Swadeshi movements.
5. He published two papers – Kesari in Marathi and Mahratta in English. He was fearless in his criticism of the government in these papers.
6. He was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment on charges of "incitement to murder". He had written that killers of oppressors could not be blamed, quoting the Bhagavad Gita. After this, two British officials were killed by two Indians in retaliation to the 'tyrannical' measures taken by the government during the bubonic plague episode in Bombay.



7. Along with Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai, he was called the 'Lal-Bal-Pal' trio of extremist leaders.
8. He was tried for sedition several times. He spent 6 years in Mandalay prison from 1908 to 1914 for writing articles defending Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose. They were revolutionaries who had killed two English women, throwing bomb into the carriage carrying the women. Chaki and Bose had mistakenly assumed that Magistrate Douglas Kingsford was in it.
9. Tilak re-joined the INC in 1916, after having split earlier.
10. He was one of the founders of the All India Home Rule League, along with Annie Besant and G S Khaparde.
11. For his political ideals, Tilak drew heavily from the ancient Hindu scriptures.
12. He called for people to be proud of their heritage. He was against the blatant westernisation of society.
13. He transformed the simple Ganesh Puja performed at home into a social and public Ganesh festival.
14. He used the Ganesh Chaturthi and Shiv Jayanti (birth anniversary of Shivaji) festivals to create unity and a national spirit among the people. Unfortunately, this move alienated non-Hindus from him.
15. The Sarvajanik Ganeshotsav as popularised by him since 1894 is still one of the biggest festivals of Maharashtra.

## **Subramania Bharatiyar**

Chinnaswami Subramania Bharatiyar (11 December 1882 – 11 September 1921) was an Indian writer, poet, journalist, Indian independence activist and social reformer from Tamil Nadu, India. Popularly known as "Mahakavi Bharatiyar", he is a pioneer of modern Tamil poetry and is considered one among the greatest of Tamil literary figures of all time. His numerous works were fiery songs kindling patriotism and nationalism during Indian Independence movement. Born in Ettayapuram of the then Tirunelveli district (presently Tuticorin district) in 1882, Subramania Bharati had his early education in Tirunelveli and Benares and worked as a journalist with many newspapers, notable among them being the Swadesamitran and India. Bharati was also an active member of the Indian National Congress. In 1908, an arrest warrant was issued against Bharati by the government of British India for his revolutionary activities forcing him to flee to Pondicherry where he lived until 1918. Bharati's works were on varied themes covering religious, political and social aspects. He was badly affected by the imprisonments and by 1920, when a General Amnesty Order finally removed restrictions on his movements, Bharati was already struggling. He was struck by an elephant named Lavanya at Parthasarathy temple, Triplicane, Chennai, whom he used to feed regularly. Although he survived the incident, a few months later his health deteriorated and he

died on 12 September 1921 early morning around 1 am. Though Bharati was considered a people's poet, a great nationalist, outstanding freedom fighter and social visionary, it was recorded that there were only 14 people to attend his funeral. He delivered his last speech at Karungalpalayam Library in Erode, which was about the topic of Man is Immortal. The last years of his life were spent in a house in Triplicane, Chennai. The house was bought and renovated by the Government of Tamil Nadu in 1993 and named Bharatiyar Illam (Home of Bharatiar). Songs penned by Bharati are widely used in Tamil films and Carnatic Music concerts.

#### **Brief history of the person -personal**

He was educated at a local high school called The M.D.T. Hindu College in Tirunelveli. From a very young age he learnt music and at eleven, he learnt poetry. It was during this time that he was conferred the title of "Bharati", the one blessed by Saraswati, the goddess of learning. Bharati lost his mother at the age of five and his father at the age of sixteen. He married Chellama who was seven years old when he was fourteen years old. He was brought up by his father who wanted him to learn English, excel in arithmetic, and become an engineer. Through his great efforts he learnt 32 languages (29 Indian languages and 3 foreign languages). During his stay in Benaras (also known as Kashi and Varanasi), Bharati was exposed to Hindu spirituality and nationalism.

This broadened his outlook and he learned Sanskrit, Hindi and English. In addition, he changed his outward appearance. He also grew a beard and wore a turban. Though he passed an entrance exam for a job, he returned to Ettayapuram during 1901 and started as the court poet of Raja of Ettayapuram for a couple of years. He was a Tamil teacher from August to November 1904 in Sethupathy High School in Madurai. During this period, Bharati understood the need to be well-informed of the world outside and took interest in the world of journalism and the print media of the West. Bharati joined as Assistant Editor of the Swadeshamitran, a Tamil daily in 1904. In December 1905, he attended the All India Congress session held in Benaras. On his journey back home, he met Sister Nivedita, Swami Vivekananda's spiritual heir. She inspired Bharati to recognise the privileges of women and the emancipation of women exercised Bharati's mind. He visualised the new woman as an emanation of Shakti, a willing helpmate of man to build a new earth through co-operative endeavour. He considered Nivedita as his Guru and penned a couple of lyrics praising her. He attended the Indian National Congress session in Calcutta under Dadabai Naoroji, which demanded Swaraj and boycott of British goods. By April 1907, he started editing the Tamil weekly India and the English newspaper Bala Bharatham with M.P.T. Acharya. These newspapers were also a means of expressing Bharati's creativity, which began to peak during this period. Bharati started to

publish his poems regularly in these editions. From hymns to nationalistic writings, from contemplations on the relationship between God and Man to songs on the Russian and French revolutions, Bharati's subjects were diverse. In 1908, Bharati gave evidence in the case which had been instituted by the British against V.O. Chidambaram Pillai. In the same year, the proprietor of the journal India was arrested in Madras. Faced with the prospect of arrest, Bharati escaped to Pondicherry which was under French rule. From there he edited and published the weekly journal India, Vijaya, a Tamil daily, Bala Bharatha, an English monthly, and Suryothayam, a local weekly in Pondicherry. The British tried to suppress Bharati's output by stopping remittances and letters to the papers. Both India and Vijaya were banned in British India in 1909. Bharati assisted Aurobindo in the Arya journal and later Karma Yogi in Pondicherry. This was also the period when he started learning Vedic literature. Three of his greatest works namely, Kuyil Pattu, Panchali Sabatham and Kannan Pattu were composed during 1912. He also translated Vedic hymns, Patanjali's Yoga Sutra and Bhagavat Gita to Tamil. He resumed editing Swadesimeitran from 1920 in Madras (modern day Chennai).

Career in political Bharati participated in the historic Surat Congress in 1907 along with V.O. Chidambaram Pillai and Mandayam Srinivachariar. During that time the divisions deepened within the Indian National Congress between the militant wing led by Tilak and Aurobindo and the

moderate wing. Bharati supported Tilak and Aurobindo together with V. O. Chidambaram Pillai and Kanchi Varathaachariyar. Tilak openly supported armed resistance against the British. During Bharati's exile, he had the opportunity to meet many other leaders of the revolutionary wing of the Independence movement like Aurobindo, Lajpat Rai and V.V.S. Aiyar, who had also sought asylum under the French. When Bharati entered British India near Cuddalore in November 1918 and was promptly arrested. He was imprisoned in the Central prison in Cuddalore in custody for three weeks from 20 November to 14 December and was released after the intervention of Annie Besant and C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar. He was stricken by poverty during this period, resulting in his ill health. The following year, 1919, Bharati met Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Bharati and the Mahatma met once; it was an exceptional and memorable incident. Gandhiji visited Chennai and stayed in Rajaji's house to discuss the Rowlett Committee's Report.

#### **Critical moments of independence, struggle,**

. Though Bharathi died so young, he cannot be reckoned with Chatterton and Keats among the inheritors of 'unfulfilled renown'. His was a name to conjure with, at any rate in South India, while he was still alive. But his fame was not so much as a poet as of a patriot and a writer of patriotic songs. His loudly expressed admiration for Tilak, his fiery denunciations in the Swadeshmitran, and the fact that he had to seek

refuge in French territory to escape the probing attentions of the Government of Madras, made him a hero and a 'freedom fighter'. His lilting songs were on numerous lips, and no procession or public meeting in a Tamil district in the days of 'non-cooperation' could begin, carry on or end without singing a few of them... Bharathi's love of Tamil, both the language as it was in his own day and the rich literature left as a heritage, was no less than his love of India.

Principles & Practices Bharatiyar was considered the first to have advocated and campaigned for women's participation in politics. He advocated greater rights for women and their education. He visualised a modern Indian woman at the vanguard of society. He condemned the Shashtras, the procedures formulated by some orthodox Hindus and weren't held as holy by most Hindus, that suppressed women's rights. Most of his views are considered contemporary even in modern times. Bharathi was a Hindu. But his spirituality was not limited. He sang to the Hindu deities, and at the same time he wrote songs of devotion to Jesus Christ and Allah. Bharati also fought against the caste system in Hindu society. Although born into an orthodox Brahmin family, he gave up his own caste identity. He considered all living beings as equal and to illustrate this he even performed upanayanam to a young Harijan man and made him a Brahmin. He also scorned the divisive tendencies being imparted into the younger generations by their elderly tutors during his

time. He openly criticised the preachers for mixing their individual thoughts while teaching the Vedas and the Gita. He strongly advocated bringing the Harijans to the Hindu mainstream.

### **Awards and achievements**

At the age of eleven he composed poems on lines given by various Tamil scholars in an assembly of learned men, he was then awarded the title of 'Bharati' by the admiring scholars. He contributed tremendously to the political emancipation of India, social reformation of the community and literary rejuvenation of Thamizh. Bharathiyar did appear to have had the vision of a prophet, the religious equanimity of a saint, the dreams of a patriot and the noble aspirations of a social reformer. Most of his predictions regarding his country and community and all his warnings regarding the malaise afflicting his society have materialized already. Bharati is considered the initiator of modern Tamil literature. Bharati used simple words and rhythms, unlike his previous century works in Tamil, which had complex vocabulary. He also employed novel ideas and techniques in his devotional poems. He used a metre called Nondi Chindu in most of his works, which was earlier used by Gopalakrishna Bharathiya. Bharati's poetry expressed a progressive, reformist ideal. His imagery and the vigour of his verse were a forerunner to modern Tamil poetry in different aspects. He was the forerunner of a forceful kind of poetry that combined classical and contemporary elements. Under the guidance of



Bharathiyar and others, Thamizh literature has served as a tool to mobilize our energy to achieve political freedom.

### **Literary Works**

His insightful similies have been read by millions of Tamil readers. He was well-versed in various languages and translated speeches of Indian National reform leaders like Aurabindo, Bala Gangadar Tilak and Swami Vivekananda. He had a prodigious output penning thousands of verses on diverse topics like Indian Nationalism, love songs, children's songs, songs of nature, glory of the Tamil language, and odes to prominent freedom fighters of India like Tilak, Gandhi and Lajpat Rai. He even penned an ode to New Russia and Belgium. Bharathiyar's literary works include nationalistic poems, prayer songs, philosophical poems, didactic songs and minor poems related to social issues. His didactic poems are Murasu , Puthiya Atthichudi and Pappa Pattu . He was the originator of the short and crisp style of poems which has now become very popular.

### **V.O.C Chidamabaram Pillai**

Valliappan Olaganathan Chidambaram Pillai (1872–1936), popularly known by his initials, V.O.C. also known as Kappalottiya Tamilan "The Tamil Helmsman", was a Tamil political leader. He was a disciple of Bal Gangadhar Tilak. He launched the first indigenous Indian shipping service between Tuticorin and Colombo with the Swadeshi

Steam Navigation Company, competing against British ships. At one time a member of the Indian National Congress, he was later charged with sedition by the British government and sentenced to life imprisonment; his barrister license was stripped. V O Chidambaram Pillai spent such an impoverished lifestyle after he was released from prison and he died on November 18, 1936.

V.O.Chidambaram Pillai was born on 5 September 1872 in Ottapidaram, Tuticorin district to Olaganathan Pillai and Paramayee Ammal.

Brief life history of the person When Chidambaram was six years old he learnt Tamil from the teacher Veeraperumal Annavi. He heard stories about Lord Shiva from his grandmother and stories from Ramayana from his grandfather. He heard stories from Mahabharatha told by Allikulam Subramanya Pillai. As a child, he played goli (marbles), kabaddi, horse riding, swimming, stilt walking, archery, wrestling, silambattam and chess. He learnt English from a Taluk Officer named Krishnan in the evenings. When Krishnan was transferred, Chidambaram's father built a school with the help of the villagers and appointed Aramvalarthanatha Pillai from Ettayapuram as the English teacher. The school was run by a priest at Pudhiamuthur. At fourteen, Chidambaram went to Thoothukudi to continue his studies. He studied at St. Xaviers High School and Caldwell High School, Thoothukudi and Hindu College High School,

Tirunelveli. Chidambaram worked as Taluk office clerk for some time before his father sent him to Tiruchirappalli to study law. He passed his pleadership exam in 1894, returning to Ottapidaram to become a pleader in 1895. V O Chidambaram Pillai married Valliammai in the year 1895, but she died prematurely in the year 1901. He married Meenakshi Ammiar a few years later. The couple had four sons and four daughters. His eldest son died when still a child, the second son was a politician, the third son was the employee of the American Embassy in Madras and the fourth son, still alive is settled in Madurai. All his daughters had been married in Madras.

From 1892 Chidambaram was influenced by Tilak Maharaj, and became his disciple. Along with Subramanya Siva and Subramanya Bharathi, he became a prominent spokesperson for the cause in Madras Presidency. In Chennai, Chidambaram met Ramakrishnananthar, a saint who belonged to Swami Vivekananda Ashram (monastery), who advised him to "do something for the nation". Here he met the Tamil poet Bharathiyaar who shared his political ideology. The two men became close friends. Apart from his works as an eminent lawyer and a politician, V O Chidambaram Pillai was also a scholar. He started his autobiography while in prison and completed it soon after his release in the year 1912. V O Chidambaram Pillai was the author of a couple of novels; he translated several James Allen works in Tamil and made compilations of important Tamil works

like the Thirukural and the Tolkappiam. V O Chidambaram Pillai spent such an impoverished lifestyle after he was released from prison that Justice Wallace who sentenced V O C to prison restored his bar license. But V O C was never successful in repaying his debts and lived in poverty till the end of his life on November 18, 1936. V O Chidambaram Pillai breathed his last at the Indian National Congress office in Tuticorin.

### **Political Life**

Following the partition of Bengal in 1905 Chidambaram entered politics, joining the Indian National Congress and taking a hardliner stance. He also presided at the Salem District Congress session. Chidambaram established many institutions like Swadeshi Prachar Sabha, Dharmasanga Nesavu Salai, National Godown, Madras Agro-Industrial Society Ltd and Desabimana Sangam. In response to the British India Steam Navigation Company's trade monopoly, Chidambaram started an Indianowned shipping company. He registered the Swadeshi Shipping Company in October 1906. The capital of the company was ten lakh rupees. The number of shares was 40,000 and the face value of each share was Rs. 25/- . Any Asian could become a shareholder. The director of the company was Pandi Thurai Thevar, a Zamindar and the Founder of "Madurai Tamil Sangam". Janab Haji Mohammed Bakir Seit paid Rs. 200,000 for 8000 shares, which was the first capital for the Company. B.I.S.N.C. pressured Shawline Steamers to cancel the lease; in response,

Chidambaram leased a single large freighter from Sri Lanka. Realizing the need for the Swadeshi Shipping Company to own its own vessels, Chidambaram travelled around India selling shares in the company to raise capital. He vowed, "I will come back with Ships. Otherwise I will perish in the sea". He managed to secure sufficient funds to purchase the company's first ship, the S.S. Galia; shortly afterwards they were able to acquire the S.S. Lavo from France. In response to the new competition, the B.I.S.N.C. reduced the fare per trip to Re.1 (16 annas) per head. Swadeshi company responded by offering a fare of Re.0.5 (8 Annas). The British company went further by offering a free trip to the passengers plus a free umbrella; however, nationalist sentiment meant that the free service was underused. The B.I.S.N.C. attempted to buy out Chidambaram, but he refused the deal. The ships commenced regular service between Tuticorin and Colombo (Sri Lanka), against opposition from British traders and the Imperial Government. On 23 February 1908 Chidambaram gave a speech at Thoothukudi, encouraging the workers at Coral Mill (now part of Madura Coats) to protest against their low wages and harsh working conditions. Four days later, the workers of the Coral Mill went on strike. Chidambaram and Subramanya Siva led the strike. Their demands included incremental earnings, weekly holidays and other leave facilities. Chidambaram ensured the strike was widely publicised, and it quickly gained popular support. On 6 March the head clerk Subramanya Pillai met

Chidambaram and said that the management was ready to concede their demands. Chidambaram went with 50 workers and met the managers, who agreed to increase the wages, to reduce the working hours and to give leave on Sundays. The workers went back after a nine-day strike. The outcome of the strike encouraged the workers of other European companies, who also gained increased wages and better treatment. Aurobindo appreciated Chidambaram and Siva for the unequalled skill and courage with which the fight was conducted in his Vande Mataram daily on 13 March 1908.

Upon Chidambaram's release he was not permitted to return to his Tirunelveli district. With his law license stripped from him he moved to Chennai with his wife and two young sons. There he ran a provisions store and a kerosene store. In 1920, Chidambaram withdrew from the Indian National Congress, citing ideological differences with Mahatma Gandhi. He focussed his efforts on establishing Labor Unions in Madras and writing. After moving to Coimbatore Chidambaram worked as a bank manager. Dissatisfied with the income, he petitioned the court seeking permission to practise law again. Judge E.H. Wallace gave permission to restore Chidambaram's pleadership license; to show his gratitude Chidambaram named his last son Valacewaran. Chidambaram moved to Kovilpatti and practised as a lawyer. He rejoined the Congress party in 1927 and presided over the third political conference held at Salem. He

said that he wanted to join Congress again because he noticed a remarkable change in the policies of Congress and he was happy to note that the policies which he did not approve of were withdrawn one by one. However, after the Salem conference Chidambaram again severed his contact with Congress. In 1932 he moved to Thoothukudi, where he spent his time writing and publishing Tamil books.

### **Critical moments in his life**

After his arrest met on Mar 1908, a widespread protest organized in Thirunelveli where shops, schools and colleges were closed in protest, and rioting broke out. Thirunelveli municipal office, post offices, police stations and municipal courts were attacked. A general strike was declared in Thoothukudi, which was probably the first political strike in India. Public meetings and processions were held, and four people were killed by the police. Although his supporters were able to raise sufficient funds for bail, Chidambaram refused to leave the jail without the release of Siva and his other comrades. Subramanya Bharathi and Subramanya Siva also appeared in the court for questioning for the case instituted against Chidambaram. He was charged under sections 123-A and 153-A of the Indian Penal Code for speaking against the British and giving shelter to Siva. Chidambaram refused to take part in the proceedings. He was charged with sedition and a sentence of two life imprisonments (in effect 40 years) was imposed. He was confined in the Central Prison,

Coimbatore (from 9 July 1908 to 1 December 1910). The judgement was widely condemned in the popular press, with even the British Statesmen magazine claiming that it was unjust. Chidambaram appealed the sentence in High Court, gaining a reduced punishment of 4 years imprisonment and 6 years in exile. An appeal to the Privy Council led to a further reduction in sentence. Chidambaram was interned in Coimbatore and Kannanoor jail. He was not treated as a 'political prisoner', nor was the sentence 'simple imprisonment', he was rather treated as a convict sentenced to life imprisonment and required to do hard labour, which caused his health to suffer. The historian and Tamil scholar, R. A. Padmanabhan, would later note in his works that Chidambaram was "yoked (in place of bulls) to the oil press like an animal and made to work it in the cruel hot sun....". From prison Chidambaram continued correspondence, maintaining a steady stream of legal petitions. He was finally released on 12 December 1912. To his dismay, the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company had already been liquidated in 1911, and the ships auctioned to their competitors. The company's first ship, the S.S. Gallio was sold to the British Shipping Company.

### **AUROBINDO GHOSE**

Introduction Aurobindo Ghose is a well-known philosopher and humanist. He is also known as a renaissance person. He is known for his philosophical insights, but has also written extensively on education, and



its different components such as curriculum, school, relationship of teacher and pupil, discipline, and philosophy of education which are relevant even today.

### **Early Life, Education and Career**

Aurobindo Acroyd Ghose (Sri Aurobindo) was born on August 15, 1872 at Calcutta. His father Krishna Dhun Ghose was the Assistant Surgeon of Rangapur, Bengal. His mother Swarnalotta Devi was the daughter of Rajnarayan Bose- a religious and social reformer. His mother played a decisive role in his early childhood. Aurobindo had been influenced by her rich spiritual nature, and owed his literary capacities to her. His father Krishna Dhun Ghose was always fond of English education and western social life. He wanted his sons to have English education and at the age of five Aurobindo was sent to Loreto Convent School at Darjeeling. In 1879, at the age of seven, he was taken along with his two elder brothers to England for education and lived there for fourteen years. His schooling at St. Paul's, London began in 1884 and he joined the King's College, Cambridge in 1890. He also cleared the Indian Civil Services examination during this time and returned to India in 1893. However, he failed to stand the required test in horsemanship and hence was not allowed to enter the coveted service of the Indian Government. Aurobindo's career began when he entered the Baroda government service. Later, he joined the Baroda College as a Professor of English.

While working at Baroda he studied Sanskrit, Bengali literature, philosophy and political Science extensively. Over a period of time he developed interest in civil service and began to involve himself in politics. He gave up his service and joined the political movement but had only a short career in politics. But it was during his imprisonment in Alipore jail that he dreamt of setting out on a divine spiritual mission and this became a turning point in his life. He moved to Pondicherry and embarked on his spiritual career. At Pondicherry, where he moved Aurobindo initially lived with four or five companions. Gradually their number increased and an Ashram was founded. He strongly believed in spiritual practice which he said could transform any human being and every human being into a divine being. He preached various aspects of philosophy such as Brahmacharya, philosophy of Dharma and Karma, spiritual growth and learning through philosophical and scientific means. His mission in life was to bring out the divine within every individual through integral yoga and turn that person into a divine being. In 1926, with the help of his spiritual collaborator, Mirra Alfassa (referred to as 'The Mother') he founded the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. The rest of Aurobindo's life was spent in the Ashram doing yoga and meditation for spiritual growth and development. He died on 5th December 1950 at Pondicherry.

Aurobindo's Writings Aurobindo Ghose was a versatile writer and has written extensively on Indian philosophy and culture. His writings cover a

wide range of topics which are relevant to Indian society even today. Ghose had profound knowledge of disciplines such as science, literature, psychology, sociology, political science, philosophy and others and that is the reason why he could cover such a wide range of subjects. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1943 and for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950. His major writings include A System of National Education; The Life Divine; Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol ;The Essential Aurobindo: Writings of Sri Aurobindo; Synthesis of Yoga; Powers Within and Gems from Sri Aurobindo .

Aurobindo's Concept of Education Aurobindo's concept of 'education' is vastly different from that of traditional approaches to education. According to him, acquiring information is not the aim of education; it must build powers of the human mind and spirit'. Aurobindo Ghose was an idealist to the core. He narrates the kind of education, we need in our country in the following words- 'We need an education proper to the Indian soul temperament, and culture that we are in quest of, not indeed something faithful merely to the past, but to the developing soul of India, to her future need, to the greatness of her coming-self creation, to her eternal spirit' (schoolofeducators.com). Aurobindo Ghose wrote a series of articles on education in the Karma Yogin during 1909- 10 under the title "A System of National Education" and "The National Value of Art". He also wrote "A Preface to National Education" which appeared in the

Arya in 1920 in two parts. His book, “The Synthesis of Yoga” in which we find extraordinary insights with regard to education, appeared serially in the Arya from August 1914 to January 1921 in four parts. His main motto was to synthesise western rationalism with eastern metaphysics. His academic interest was interdisciplinary in scope; he incorporated the ideas of political science, education, sociology, psychology and philosophy in his thoughts. He was deeply influenced by western thought, most significantly, Charles Darwin’s evolutionary theory and French intellectual Henri Bergson’s philosophy of cognitive evolution. The ideas of impending human evolution and global futurism became the foundation for his spiritual philosophy, sociological theories, political ideology and educational thought (see karmayogi.net). Aurobindo emphasised that education should be imparted in accordance with the needs of modern life. He believed that education should create such citizens who are dynamic and able to face any challenge in the modern society. According to him education has six aims, these being: Physical development and holiness Training all senses- hearing, speaking, listening, touching, smelling and tasting. Achieving mental development of the child Development of morality Development of conscience Spiritual development Aurobindo emphasised that the main aim of education is to promote spiritual development. According to him every human being has

a fragment of divine existence within himself and education can scan it from each individual to its full extent.

### **Role of Teachers**

Aurobindo enunciates certain sound principles of good teaching, which have to be kept in mind when actually engaging in the process of teaching-learning. He explains that knowledge is already dormant within the child and for this reason, the teacher need not function as an instructor or task-master. He is a helper and a guide. The role of the teacher 'is to suggest and not to impose. He does not actually train the pupil's mind, he only shows him how to perfect the instruments of knowledge and helps him and encourages him in the process. A teacher does not impart knowledge to him; he shows him how to acquire knowledge for himself. He does not call forth the knowledge that is within; he only shows him where it lies and how it can be habituated to rise to the surface' (<http://saccs.org.in>). Aurobindo Ghose stated that, whenever there is repetition, meditation and discussion it will awaken an individual's mind with enlightenment. This will further be developed by intellectual clarity, deep study, and understanding.

**Conclusion** Aurobindo Ghose widely known as a philosopher and spiritual guru has written extensively on issues relating to education that have enormous contemporary relevance. Education according to him is not just about acquiring information but building the powers of the human

mind and spirit. He speaks of education which is suitable for Indian soul, temperament and culture. He synthesised western scientific rationalism with eastern transcendent metaphysics into a holistic narrative of reality. Aurobindo emphasised that education should be in accordance with the needs of modern life but include the core ideas and methods of ancient education. He wanted education to be child centric and build the right type of emotions, habits and motivate the child to engage in the right type of acts.

## Unit –V

### **Egalitarian Thinkers – E.V.R. Periyar-B.R.Ambedkar, Socialist**

**Thinkers: Ram Manohar Lohia – Jayaprakash Narayan**

#### **Objectives**

- To understand E.V.R. Periyar's contributions to the anti-caste and social reform movements:
- To explore B.R. Ambedkar's role as the champion of Dalit rights and social justice
- To study Jayaprakash Narayan's philosophy of Total Revolution and his role in the anti-Emergency movement

### **EGALITARIAN THINKERS-**

#### **Periyar**

Erode Venkatanaiicker Ramasamy (1879–1973), better known as Periyar (The Great Man) has a complex legacy. He began as a nationalist, worked as a follower of Gandhi, but turned into a firebrand leader of the anti-Brahminism movement in Madras Presidency. He saw the salvation of the country in the destruction of the Congress, the Hindu religion, and Brahmin domination. He declared the goal of the Dravida Kazhaghham, the new avatar of the Justice Party in 1944 to be a 'sovereign, independent Dravidian Republic' and called upon his followers to observe Independence Day as a day of mourning representing the enslavement of the southerners'. Meanwhile, he saw himself as a

social reformer and then as a Communist and again as a social reformer. Even in his call for social justice, we find a juxtaposition of race, varna, caste, class, gender, language, urban-rural divide and Tamil nationalism. On the one side of the divide of inequity, he places the Brahmins, the descendants of northern Aryans and, on the other, the Dravidian shudras. However, underlying his untiring campaigns spanning from 1917 to 1973 is a passionate advocacy of human dignity and in this lies his lasting contribution

Even in more concrete terms, Periyar's accomplishments are phenomenal. His movement indeed led to the end of Brahmin hegemony in Tamil politics and social life. His mission helped in spreading the message of egalitarianism and scientific temper. Elimination of caste-based social segregation and discriminations, improvement in the condition of women, right of temple entry and management to non-Brahmins, prevention of supremacy of Hindi over Tamil and obtaining Tamil as official language thereby enhancing its status and contributing to its growth, reservations for backward castes in government jobs, which entailed the first amendment in the Indian Constitution, and the emergence of a new leadership in Tamil Nadu from backward castes are solid instances of his revolutionary legacy which are too visible to be ignored.



### **Situating Periyar**

Understanding Periyar must begin with understanding the person. He was born in a rich business family of the backward caste of Naickers in Erode, a town in the former Madras Presidency (Now Tamil Nadu). He studied only up to the fourth standard and as a young man left home to tour the nation. He even lived the life of an ascetic in Benares. It was here that he learnt the deceptions spread in the name of religion. Back home, he reflected his proficiency in business and became active in public activities. He was the Chairman of the Erode Municipality and an honorary magistrate. He held numerous positions of social importance. He joined the Indian National Congress in 1919 and became a staunch Gandhian. He held the positions of the Secretary and President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee. In each of his positions, he always strove for social justice, and 'service' was his sole motto. In 1924, he led the famous Vaikom Satyagraha in Kerala. The Ezhavas were not allowed to enter the streets around the Vaikom temple because of their 'low birth'. He faced imprisonment but he ultimately succeeded in his satyagraha and was declared the hero of Vaikom. Though he worked in the Congress in an important capacity, he faced caste prejudices within the organisation. He tasted the prejudices in the party first-hand when he was elected the first non-Brahmin President of the Tamil Nadu Congress party. No sooner was the result declared, than a no-confidence motion

was brought in on absurd grounds. It was nonetheless defeated. In 1925, when his resolution for the ‘communal representation’ at the Kancheepuram Congress, which he had been trying to get the party to accept for six years, was disallowed in the open session, he left the Congress once and for all, declaring it as the fortress of Brahmin imperialism.

Thereafter, he associated himself with the Justice Party which he headed in 1938. Six years later, he converted it into the non-political social outfit Dravidar Kazhagam. The original formation has now been sidelined and its offshoots—the DMK, AIADMK, and MDMK—dominate the politics of Tamil Nadu today. Meanwhile, he launched the Self-Respect Movement committed to social reform and social upliftment. The first Self-Respect Movement was held at Chengalpattu in February 1929. In 1932, Periyar travelled extensively within the Soviet Union and was very much impressed by the rationalistic anti-religious egalitarian social order and scientific, technological, and economic advancements therein. After his return from his prolonged exposure to Communism, he started the Self-Respect Communist Party as a political offshoot of the movement. He was imprisoned and the party was later banned. He was warned that if he did not stop working for the Communist Party, all his activities would be banned. He gave up his communist activities to be

able to continue with the Self Respect Movement but his ideas carried their influence.

Periyar cannot be understood without referring to the colonial context. The colonization of India exposed her to the renascent spirit of Europe. For a civilization, ancient but moribund, the encounter was overwhelming. The vigour of their overseas rulers and their modern ways were eyeopeners for the enlightened Indians of the early colonial phase. The Indians who regarded themselves as proud descendants of an ancient civilization were not to submit to the cultural supremacy of the West. Instead, they raised serious concerns about the state of their own culture and civilization. Many rose to the occasion to redeem what they considered as the lost glory of their ancient civilization. The great project endeavoured to entwine the essence of modernity with what they considered good in Indian traditions. In fact traditions were tested on the bases of rationalism and humanism— the twin interdependent fundamentals of modernity. Their endeavours and the accomplishments are known as the Indian Renaissance. The next stage was the propagation of Indian nationhood. The phenomenon of nation, like modernity and related to it, emerged in Europe. It was essentially an ethno-militaristic phenomenon which substituted religion to a great extent in the new rationalist world view of Europe. The phenomenon seeped into colonies too through the empires. In India, the concept of nationhood was also

combined with the civilizational mission of self-redemption and with the passage of time a new nation was born but with an ancient spirit.

Renaissance and nation in the beginning were upper caste elitist projects. Nationalism which germinated in the course of the reformist spell of colonial India later subsumed the reform process and also spread to the emerging and expanding middle and lower middle classes. But its appeal was not universal. Civilizational redemption carried hardly any meaning to the vast majority of the population of this land. Imperial exploitation, oppression, humiliation and national pride mattered little to those, who led even otherwise, lives of gross degradation and deprivation. Nonetheless, the philosophical foundations of these projects, i.e., rationalism and humanism raised concerns which though not addressed by these projects did awaken people of even those sections who had suffered a dehumanised existence for centuries. The essence of this awakening was the worth and dignity of human beings as such. For many the struggle for dignity and liberty became, and very legitimately so, more important as a social struggle than the anti-imperial struggle.

Periyar was certainly one of the greatest champions who raised the issue of this fundamental freedom. The problem of colonial subjugation was secondary for most Indians who were at the lower rung of the hierarchical caste order of India. The exploitation and oppression perpetrated by the ancient social regimen was immediate and an

excruciatingly painful experience. Large numbers faced a scriptural or religious sort of apartheid. Periyar himself faced such caste prejudices despite being an influential Congress leader of the South. Despite the fact that he belonged to a wealthy family, he established himself as a great social and religious reformer and was a very important Congress leader. Yet, he could not avoid being treated as one whose presence or contact was considered polluting or defiling. And he found every move for the empowerment of the depressed castes blocked by a very active and powerful lobby of Brahmins.

In this mission, he did not appeal in the name of God, as has been the practice among most of the great leaders of the world, rather he dismissed the concept of God in the most forthright manner. Neither did he exhort the people in the name of some other lofty ideals. He relied mostly on the faculty of reason possessed by everyone and for this he indulged himself till his last in arguments with people, provoking them to come out of their stupor not only by his words but also with his deeds. He is rightfully addressed as the Socrates of East, as his ways bear a striking resemblance to Socrates.

He was also very impressed by the achievements of the West. He keenly observed that their advances in science and technology had made them the masters of the world and freed them of many of the miseries inflicted by nature. He found their rational orientation, instilled in them by

their schooling system, the reason behind their advancement. The western philosophical traditions starting with Socrates and passing through Ingersoll, Broadlaw and Herbert Spencer had strengthened his conviction and even Indian rationalist traditions propagated by such greats like Gautama Buddha and Thiruvalluvar had inspired him and he took on the mantle of completing their unfinished task. His contemporary, Jawaharlal Nehru, who was also an unwavering rationalist, also won his admiration.

Another very powerful phenomenon of his times, Communism, also affected his thinking profoundly. He was very impressed by the rationalistic and anti-religious approach of the movement and the economic development with egalitarianism achieved in the Soviet Union

### **Periyar's Theorization**

Periyar was a rationalist with all his being and objectivity was his avowed means of analysis. Though his tools were scientific and universalistic, his concerns related to his milieu. He was deeply anguished by an imposed and historically institutionalised order of Brahminic hegemony in the name of religion, caste and spirituality which dehumanised the overwhelming majority of Dravidian peoples in the South. He took upon himself the mantle of undoing injustices and laying the foundation of a fair and egalitarian society. But it was a complicated mission. The fight was against something which was internalised and accepted by the suffering people as natural. The battle lines he drew and

the wars he fought were more within the minds of the individuals and their collective consciousness. He was perturbed by the miserable existence of the Dravidians in southern India, particularly in Tamil Nadu. He fought for their emancipation but his ideas indeed have wider applications as well implications.

Rationalism, the very basis of Periyar's principles, was however not impersonal. His appeal for social justice was based on concrete rationalism but as it had to be a missionary campaign in order to defeat deep-rooted injustices perpetrated by a deeply entrenched caste which derived sanctity from a fossilised religion, his approach to the issue was very personal. The war he waged was not abstract. It was direct and very personal. He proclaimed:

*E.V. Ramasamy, have taken upon myself the mission of making the Dravidian society acquire awareness and become a society of dignity like the societies elsewhere in the world.*

*I consider myself qualified enough to carry on the mission insofar as I am attached to nothing else, perceive concepts and devise schemes on the basis of rationalism. I consider that by itself it is enough for anyone who takes up a social mission.*

He also personified the ideas he professed. For instance, he propagated atheism to be a great personal virtue. 'If one professes that there is no God, he should then have godly attributes about himself. ... he

should be aware of the causes behind the phenomenal realities of the world? ..., to whom is there no God? There is no God to the truly enlightened. He should have the end of all philosophy. No one would be prejudiced against such an enlightened man. He would also not hate anyone. Anyone who hates him is an idiot.' And he demanded that a true atheist should not be hated; he is to be appreciated and followed.

Generally, normative theorizations seek an axiomatic proposition to be developed into a system of thought in a geometrical fashion. This fundamental proposition is either deductive or inductive. Related to this is another aspect of such theorization that is related to the position of the theorist. There are armchair theoreticians who construct societies in their imagination only, which have little to do with real societies and real peoples. Periyar was not an armchair theorist, who conjectured new worlds in his/ her (logical) imagination. He derived his ideas from practice. What he believed in he practiced and what he practiced he believed. He reached his rationalist worldview without taking any recourse to books or research. He derived his principles from observing life. At the other end, there are practitioner-theoreticians who are so obsessive about their immediate surroundings that their visions do not go beyond the immediate. Periyar's ideas were indeed derived from experiences - experiences of a very active and effective political leader and social reformer. But his derivations were based on objectivity. He



surmounted the follies of both science and activism with considerable success.

Many positivists were also prophets of utopia. Periyar was free from this predilection of scholarship too. He did not provide any visions of utopia. His message was hard-hitting and realistic. He did believe in Communism. But his notion of Communism was rooted solidly in the ground and deeply imbedded in the specificities of the Tamil land. What he wanted from people was very simple—redemption of their humanity. The idea was crystal clear. There was no intimidating philosophy, confusing mystical discourse, jargonised theory building or a goal of an unattainable utopia. The clarity of Periyar's objective made it sound very simple but its actualisation was a process of colossal magnitude. The mission had to confront millennia of misgivings, prejudices and practices. Nonetheless the magnitude of the mission was well matched by his untiring vigour, immense courage and unwavering conviction.

There are rare combinations of activism and scholarship which go beyond the ephemeral and the immediate. Periyar belonged to that genre of activist-philosophers. Besides, clarity of thought, commitment to objective and making rationality an article of faith and basis of his messianic appeal make him stand out even in that rare genre of activist-philosophers.

## **Abolition of Caste**

The fundamental problem confronting Periyar was thus the denial of basic dignity to the large majority of humanity around him. And basic to his philosophy was the view that all men and women should live with dignity and have equal opportunities to develop their physical, mental and moral faculties. In order to achieve this, he wanted to put an end to all kinds of unjust discriminations and promote social justice and a rational outlook. The problem was not related to outright physical subjugation but to an order of oppression garbed in spirituality and religiosity. The order he sought to encounter was Brahminism. This holistic order entailed a hierarchical social system, in which economic vocation, social relations and a number of privileges and restrictions were associated with castes located in that hierarchy. The worst aspect of this order was the practice of pollution and purity which were so extreme that even the sight and shadows of the outcastes, the lowest in the social order, were considered polluting. In this order, the Brahmins occupied the highest position, were considered the purest, and commanded a supreme position not only ritually but in every respect. Ironically all castes were graded superior or inferior in relation to each other except the Brahmin sitting at the top of the heap. And this order as such was sanctified as a divine creation.

Periyar himself, though a wealthy man, a man of influence as he worked for the Congress as a leader, suffered humiliation because of his

caste even within the set up of that national organisation, the greatest platform of the national movement. He was treated as a being that defiled his surrounding by his presence and the articles he used. Casteism flourished not only in traditional social set-ups and upcoming political organisations but also in factories and trade unions. Even the progressive Marxists were not able to address this deeper malaise of Indian social relations. He fought these discriminations by exposing the conceptual hollowness and deception behind them and by making the fight his personal mission. He asked, ‘A sizable population today remains as untouchables, and another sizable population exists in the name of shudras and the serfs, coolies and menials. Who wants an independence that cannot help change these things? Who wants religion, scriptures and god, which cannot bring about a change in this sphere?’.

The fundamental problem had its ramifications — the moral and material backwardness, social schisms, and mutual hatred among people, which made society weak and caused untold miseries. He theorised that the main reason behind social malaises was casteism, which was imposed on the people of the South by the Aryans for their own benefit. The people were naïve, did not realise the deception of the Aryans and became victims of their divisive designs and domination. The system was sanctified by the basic Aryan scriptures—the Vedas. The principle was the Varnashrama Dharma. According to this the society was divided into

four Varnas, viz. Brahmins, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra and were assigned specific social functions. Brahmins, the offspring of the Aryans, became the self appointed legislators of Indian society. They wrote the Vedas, in fact, for their own benefit and declared them to be the words of God. This was a ploy to avoid comprehension of the truth based on reason, reality, experiences and experiments. They forbade inquiry, and spread the canard of sin and hell to frighten people into subjugation. The Brahmins assigned a superior position to themselves in this order; the other Varnas were extended a hierarchical division among themselves. There emerged castes within Varnas with the distinctions of superiority and inferiority. In this arrangement the society got irresolutely divided. The root of this division was Brahmin supremacy and Periyar decided to eliminate this supremacy.

Periyar made it sufficiently clear that he was against Brahminism and not the Brahmins. To him, Brahminism was the basis of the caste system which justified social inequality, untouchability and many other problems. His prime goal was the elimination of the caste system which he found against the principles of human civilization and self respect. It did all these things on the basis of divine ordination. He raised the fundamental issues of human dignity in a rational manner to counter these social evils. His exhortations were straight and hard-hitting.

A bunch of rascals have enslaved us. They have imposed upon us a certain system that brands us their slaves.

Your very birth is ignoble of course. The reason for that is ignoble about you is that you have accepted the status of the shudra. At least hereafter, you should feel ashamed of it. It is not harmful to die for the sake of undoing the name of shudras instead of procreating in the name of the shudras.

How long hence are we going to remain shudras in this world? How long are we going to allow our children to be called the shudras? Aren't we supposed to do something to eradicate the dishonour and become human at least during this age of freedom and scientific temper?.

When stained with the excreta of a man or an animal we wash our hands with water. However, they insist upon taking a bath if they came into contact with the body of a person or even if the dress of a man brushes against them. Is there anything human about such human beings?.

They lead the cow; take dung and the urine of cows to sanctify the temple. But if a man enters the same temple, they consider the temple to have been defiled and arrange for sanctification. Are they reasonable men?.

We should eradicate casteism in the name of the Brahmin and the pariah getting rid of God, getting rid of all the scriptures.

He also attacked the caste distinctions among non-Brahmins using only logic to prove his point. 'Though each caste ascribes superiority to itself on solid bases, all their arguments only serve to show that all of them together are inferior to the Brahmins. Otherwise, all the evidences they cite do not serve any intended purpose. This is the picture of reality as such.' This, according to him, meant that people of castes other than the Brahmins belonged to inferior castes, and were untouchables. This deprived them of certain civil rights on par with the Brahmins and made them slaves to the Brahmins. According to Periyar, this discrimination meant that the birth of persons of other castes lacked honour since it may be the result of prostitution or cross-caste union. And he gave the clarion call to do or die.

*The untouchable should not go within the sight of the Brahmins. He should not walk about the streets. He should not take water from the pond. What social justice is there in such restrictions? If God does not bring destruction on such a society, how could he be merciful? For how long do you desire such oppressed, suppressed society to be patient, non-violent and passive? It is better to die fighting such social evils rather than live in a society that is the scene of such inhuman acts and attitudes.*

His approach was to tackle the root of the social problems. For untouchability, the worst form of human degradation, he analysed the evil

and traced its origin. Untouchability, he found, was based on religion and religion found its base in scriptures which again claimed to be the words of God. Attacking the very root of human degradation, he rejected the trio of God, scriptures and religion in totality. Periyar did not stand for cosmetic changes. For instance he did not advocate equality of castes in jobs or in social positions as the only solution to caste discrimination. He sought a complete normative and physical transformation to root out caste based discrimination.

### **Women's Liberation**

Caste was not his sole concern. Among the many issues he touched upon, gender was a major one. For the subjugation of women, he said, they themselves were responsible as they did not feel that they deserved total freedom. And they did not suffer alone from their own bondage. Men lost their honesty and freedom too, since they had families dependent on them. They had to assume unnecessary responsibility and suffer needless anxieties. But men didn't see reason. They had enslaved women, devised concepts like chastity and categorised women who were 'unchaste' as prostitutes but they themselves did not observe such norms with respect to conjugal conduct. Whatever and wherever women were, they were monitored by men. Only when a woman was able to attend to the business of her life independent of a husband or a son could they attain the position they deserved.

In fact his approach towards women's issues was quite gendered as he viewed the problem as a separate one. His depiction of the state of women made it clear that women's liberation was independent of the larger plans of liberation.

*The way man treats women is much worse than the way landlords treat servants and the high-caste treat the low-caste ... Women in India experience worse suffering, humiliation and slavery in all spheres than even the Untouchables ... A woman is for the male, a cook for himself; a maid for his house; a breeding farm for his family and beautifully decorated doll to satisfy his aesthetic sense. Do enquire whether they have been used for any other purpose. The slavery of women is only because of men. The belief of men that God created man with superior powers and woman to be slave for him, and woman's traditional acceptance of it as truth are alone responsible for the growth of women's slavery.*

Women were denied education so that they did not have the ability and intelligence to question their slavery. However, the most important factor for women's subjugation, Periyar held, was that they lacked the right to property. In fact men treated women as their property. It was for this purpose that they devised the principle of chastity exclusively for women.



Qualities like freedom and courage were claimed as ‘masculine’ thus characterising male superiority as a natural phenomenon. Women would never be free unless they put an end to male domination and they could not depend on men for the same. ‘The pretence of men that they respect women and that they strive for their freedom is only a ruse to deceive women. Have you ever seen anywhere a jackal freeing the hen and the lamb or the cat freeing the rats, or capitalists freeing the workers?’.

Women must get rid of their slavish mentality and they should realise that being civilised was not about dressing fashionably or looking good but living on equal terms with men. He sought rigorous education in rational thinking for women, changes in the custom of marriage and birth control for the sake of women’s liberation. He considered the terms, ‘husband’ and ‘wife’ inappropriate and called them companions and partners. He also rejected the words, ‘wedding’ or ‘marriage’ and termed it as a ‘contract for companionship in life.’

### **Rural–Urban Divide**

Periyar’s propagation of social justice touched another inequity plaguing India—the urban-rural divide, or what is often today referred to as the divide between India and Bharat. The fact is that economic relations between town and country dwellers are based on unequal exchanges and while villagers do back-breaking labour and survive on the bare minimum, the city dwellers exploit their produce. Periyar equated the

status of villagers to that of the Panchamas (untouchables) in the Varnasharama (caste) system, wherein the high castes flourished by exploiting the toiling low caste people. The notion that shudras (backward Dravidians) and the Panchamas were created to serve the high caste Brahmins was applicable to villagers too as it was believed that villages existed to serve towns. He in fact advocated that villages should be eliminated and even the word 'village' deleted from dictionaries. Villages, bereft of bare amenities like hospitals, school and parks where ninety per cent of people resided, were hardly places worth living. All the schemes for village development were mere hogwash.

The way out was complete urbanization. He sought newer methods in industry and reorganization of agriculture and total mechanization of all feasible agricultural activities. He wanted the farmers to be brought under co-operative bodies so that the produce could be shared equally by all of them. Villages must be linked together and developed as towns with schools, hospitals, parks, cinema theatres, drama halls, recreation centres, libraries etc. and there should be a magistrate and market for securing all commodities. He also stated that agriculture should be supplanted by smallscale industries located in the vicinity of such clusters.

## **Rationalism**

The root cause of this human bondage and suffering, he found, was the lack of a rational outlook among the people. ‘The reason for the present chaos and deterioration in our country is that we have been hindered from enquiry and repressed from the use of rationality.’ The Tamilian outlook was largely based on their perceived ancient wisdom. They assumed that they should be what they were two thousand years before. They rationalised their actions on incomprehensible bases. They justified their acts in the name of Gods, writings in scriptures and sayings of sages. This was unlike the West where people were marching ahead, exploring new frontiers of knowledge, inventing new technologies. Their progress was based on their future-oriented rationalist approach. He differentiated scientific approach from the traditional belief systems. His one such illustration made his point clear. He said that Gods, religions, preachers and scriptures all for instance told people that an act of kindness to the poor guaranteed a place in heaven, whereas modern science would work for finding the causes of poverty and try to eliminate it. Here he found, that in the name of scholarship the same old ideas were reiterated. The mode of education was such that it forbade new thinking and forced the learner to accept the old uncritically. In the end this kind of education blunted the faculty of reasoning among people here.

Periyar asked people not to accept anything without ratiocination. One should not accept anything only because it is old, customary, habitual, generally accepted, based on hearsay, appeared mysterious, magical or divine, spoken by some saint, or claimed to be said by God. The distinctive aspect of a human being was reason and she/he must apply his/her this faculty in order to lead a life which could be called proper. In this process, he made rejection of God the fundamental application of rationalism. He said, 'I have examined thoughts fibre by fibre, maintaining the attitude of a dispassionate enquirer into Truth. I could not achieve any perspective of God.' He found that the concept of God drained energy out of Indians. He was very particular about not accepting anything on hearsay without applying one's own reason, which, he maintained, resulted in disappointment and misery. He said, 'God has never revealed himself to anyone. God is only taught and projected to the uninitiated by those who claim enlightenment.' He conjectured that worship in the old human societies as well as the modern ones had its origin from fear and dread of the unknown natural phenomena. He believed that a rational approach was the key for social emancipation and crucial for development. He surmised that economic development was possible only through rationalistic thinking.

Periyar started the Self-Respect Movement with the objective of guiding people to redeem their deserved place in society. Periyar stated,

‘The aim of a genuine Self-Respect Movement is to change whatever appears to be adverse to man’s feelings of self-respect. That which enslaves you to customs of the world, to orthodoxy, to the rigours of religion, contrary to your rationality and awareness of truths of experience, is what I shall describe as antagonistic to self-respect. This all-important awareness of self respect based on feelings of dignity and indignity, may be deemed man’s birth right, as the word ‘man’ is itself a word based on dignity. Therefore, he who is called ‘man’ embodies dignity in himself, and only through his right to this dignity, reveals his human qualities. That is why self-esteem is his birth-right. Man must cast aside his feelings of inferiority, the feeling that he is less important than other beings, and attain self-confidence and self-respect, it will automatically set right politics, nationalism and also theology.’ The Self-Respect Movement was aimed at eradication of caste based discrimination. The objectives of the movement were the establishment of a casteless society based on complete equality of the masses, eradication of all social evils and freeing society from the shackles of superstition and blind faith in God and religion, promotion of educational and employment opportunities for women, popularization of self-respect marriages conducted without any Brahmin priest and propagation of rationalism. Conceptually self-respect was the basis for ensuring equality in society. He wished every non-Brahmin to realise that they had their own self-

respect to maintain in all their dealings with their fellow-beings. If a man realised that he was equal to all other men and that he had the right of equality with all other men, then he became a self-respecting person. He also wished women to have this self-respect.

### **Revolution and Communism**

Another aspect of Periyar's thought was his belief in Communism. He exhorted people to be unafraid of revolution and ready themselves for the next change. He said that revolutionary changes in the affairs of men had been a continuous process since time immemorial. He cited numerous contemporary changes. He cited the abolition of a large number of kingships, which were treated as divine institutions earlier and people feared speaking ill of kings. Similarly in India some people were regarded as agents of God on earth and certain others not fit to be seen or even touched. The disappearance of untouchability indeed brought about a revolutionary change in society. Holy books also ordained girls to be married before puberty banning child marriage legally was also a social revolution. This was also a religious revolution in that the gods of the puranas (mythologies) had become the laughing stock of the people and so did the religion propagating them. He moved to exhort people for the final stage of change.

‘Because of these revolutions in man's ideas and attitudes, we have come to question about the need for kings, priests, castes, religions

and Gods as well. The present century has taken on a more revolutionary cry. People are now questioning the very existence of rich people, capitalists and tilted barons. Why should these people exist? We are trying to see how far these parasites are responsible for the misery of the proletariat - the poor of our land.

He, however, adapted the ideology to his own vision and mission. He merged the Self-Respect Movement with Communism and founded the Self Respect Communist Party. The action plan of the Party included the nationalization of all industries, railway, banks, waterways, all agricultural lands, forests, botanical wealth, community farming, writing off all debts of peasants, limiting the working hours to eight hours, enhancing the wages and improving working conditions, and providing amenities like access to libraries. He later disbanded the party in favour of the Self-Respect Movement but his ideas remained influenced by Communism. He iterated that God, religion and law support the prevalence of the distinction between the rich and the poor, the existence of caste hierarchy and the cruelty of supremacy and servility. Periyar vowed to destroy the government, justice, morality and customs that permitted them. Periyar explained the Dravidar Kazhagam was an institution of the workers. Every Dravidian to him was a worker because they worked for the others and had been through the ages, servants as per the scriptures of Manu. All men, whether a cart man, scavenger, street

cleaner, washer man, barber, potter, tiller, carpenter, cobbler, weaver or anyone who lived by the dint of manual labour were workers for him. The Brahmins and caste Hindus were not labourers as they did not do any manual labour. Only the shudras did and they were the Dravidians. The movement of the Dravidians was therefore the movement of the workers.

He offered an economic explanation for women's subjugation. It was with the advent of private property that the concept of marriage came into existence. Private property created the problem of its inheritance. Men would have thought of bequeathing his property to his own progeny alone which necessitated marriage.

Periyar believed that only if women, workers and agricultural labourers all joined in the revolution could there be communist government in India. He however sought the revolution by revolutionising the thinking habits of people. He said that the end of right to property would be the end of God. There would be no place for God, religion, or scriptures in a nation of socialism where property rights did not exist. Intellectual ability assumed the position of prominence in such a nation. There was neither superior nor inferior and no professional hierarchy. All individuals were equal and paid the same wages. The nature of work done alone was different and whoever assumed a higher office assumed greater responsibilities.



He believed that Communism would hold the whole world in its grip ensuring international peace and prosperity. To him, Communism's objective was making a family, a fraternity of all people of all nations in the world. The wealth of the whole world would be the common property of all in the family. Every member of the family would be equal partner in the larger family.

Periyar also championed a socialist agenda. The resolution adopted in the Eighteenth State Conference of the Dravidar Kazhagam in December 1948 at Thuthukkuti called for the nationalization of all service industries like the generation of electricity, mines, transport, airways and waterways which were essential to the welfare of the common man; fixing ceilings on property holding in the form of lands, houses and cash as the first step in the process of promoting a socialist state and reducing the wages of the higher income group at the same time increasing the minimum wages to the workers in India.

### **The World of the Future**

Periyar did have a vision for the future. He said that a rationalist deduced from the past, examined the present and constructed the future on a scientific basis. Nature had provisioned for people in plenty and in modern times mass production had resulted in a glut in markets and yet millions of people did not have the means to meet their basic needs. Periyar ruled that though many extraordinary men had claimed to have

realised God and were even associated with godhood, none of them could find any solution for the miseries of the people. It was only because people were unable to dissociate themselves from God and religion and see the affairs of the world independently. With rationalist thought and science, the future world would be reshaped. The future was a socialist world in which there would be no private property. In the future plutocrats would not be there to dominated the people; technology would free people from the drudgeries of hard labour and demeaning jobs (like scavenging), slavery would be unknown, one would not live on the mercy of another and women would not want special protection, safeguards and support. With only an hour or two of work, it would be possible for the people to produce the goods they need. The rest of the time would be available for leisure to indulge in fine arts or simple pleasures. Communal life would have reached such heights that the pains and trials of some citizens would be the pains and trials of the whole community. Co-operative effort and unitary feeling would have wiped out all differences and discriminations. Wars and armies would be unknown in the cooperative world state of the future.

### **Humanism**

The common thread which joined Periyar's Self-Respect Movement, his advocacy of rationality and his championing of Communism was his essential humanism. To him humanity alone was the

supreme value. He said, 'Forget God; think of man.' And the most human act to him was not to cause any suffering to anyone and help fellow beings. It was the very basis of community living. When man chose to live in communities giving up his barbaric way of living, he ought to have sought mutual support, through which each other's life could be bettered. He further thought that inequalities must be removed in order to ensure a humane society. The only means for achieving equality of all was to form a rational society where there was no place for any superstitions.

He opposed any sort of violence in human relations. He reasoned that it was in the nature of the tiger to growl and kill other animals. But violence was not natural to man. On the contrary to be human was to be aware of it. It is to the extent one lived without causing suffering to the other that one became a rationalist creature. He advocated that one had to protect oneself from personal suffering but at the same time desist from causing suffering. 'If I were to encourage violent struggle, only the Dravidian would spring upon each other's throat. None of the Aryans who instigate violence would be touched in the least.' He was in favour of results achieved through peaceful rational and loving means even if they were delayed because of the very process. He firmly believed that only such revolutions without any violence involved would ensure real and permanent welfare to the people.

According to Periyar, humanism consisted of respecting the sentiments of the other. There were bound to be divergent opinions and it was not necessary to accept all but no one could be deprived of the right of the expression. He attached great importance to good human behaviour and conduct. He reiterated that one should behave or conduct himself in the same manner in which he expected others to conduct or behave themselves towards him.

Lastly Periyar's respect for all individuals and their reason was reflected in his statement, 'I have told you whatever I could perceive. I request you to accept whatever appears to be right to you and act accordingly. If there is anything wrong in whatever I have said. I request you to pity my ignorance.' Though he worked for the Dravidians, his concerns were universal. He clarified that he held no attachment towards any particular country, people or language and that all his activities were guided by his love of humanity and the need to serve it.

### **Periyar's Legacy: A Critique**

Periyar aspired and worked for a new society where rationalism would rule the roost. Rationalism to him was freedom. He was very enthusiastic about science and technology which he felt made people's life easier. He talked of what fundamentally could be construed as self-empowerment. For this matter he was very particular about the prevailing notions and terminology. He never intended to treat a social malaise

symptomatically but worked for rooting out the problem and all other systems supporting that evil.

Despite his insistence on rationality and humanism, Periyar presented all the values he championed in his own life. He, in fact, personified rationality, atheism and the cause of justice. He tried but failed to separate his persona with his ideas and his towering persona indeed subsumed the values he imparted. This was perhaps necessary for the wider appeal of his ideas. However its implication in the long term was counterproductive. He was now viewed as a prophet. A prophet as an analogy reflected the personality cult and reduced rationalism to revelation. One author presented him as an avatar, 'The old saying is that whenever impropriety came to reign supreme, God will manifest himself in human form and restore propriety in the world. It is in a way thus that Periyar was born to defeat the impropriety of vested interests and to endow the illiterate and irrational common man with reason and self respect so that he can walk with a head held high.' The message was subtle and unintended but it had its repercussion. In this rationality was not an approach to be cultivated by each and every individual but a gospel to be told and believed. The Movement's fall from grace to become part of the personality cult of Tamil Nadu was perhaps the logical culmination of this approach.

At the second level, even for a rationalist movement, if the social bases of change and mobilization were a parochial or pre-modern collective identity, the mission itself stood negated. Though he proclaimed to attack brahminical practices alone, in reality it seemed to be against Brahmins as individuals. It was testified by the flight of a large number of Brahmins from the state. The caste system he sought to eliminate was in fact reinforced. Like the 'new class' of the Communist world, Tamil Nadu also saw the rise of the 'new caste' or 'neo-Brahmins' negating freedom in newer fashions. The personification of ideas and primordialism in social mobilization went against the modern makeover of Tamil society and politics.

Social relations according to Marxism were based on the mode of production. Periyar's analysis of caste-oppression as an Aryan import does not fit the bill. Moreover tracing an ancient and unconfirmed causation and racial social base of an unjust order was not justified. The fact that displacing Brahmins from positions of power in Tamil Nadu simply did not result in a just society has proven the fallacy in Periyar's approach.

Godhood is a very high level of abstraction, and it is functional. It is not apparently comprehensible. It is the fulcrum of religiosity which has been a major tool of social organisation so far. For instance Mahatma Gandhi defined God as truth. It is such a high level of abstraction that it

sounds almost superstitious and indeed for a layman it remains a superstition, because s/he believes in the concept without knowing its import and his/her conduct in this respect does not conform to the real meaning of Godhood. The fact remains that if Godhood has been used as a justification of statusquo so it has been employed as an inspiration for revolutions.

Nonetheless, Periyar raised issues which are equally relevant today. The problem of dignity is one such vital issue. The point to ponder, which Periyar raised so forcefully, is that the oppression is often self-inflicted. It is the result of ignorance, fear, greed and inaction. One is in fact down because of one's own vices. Domination and oppression is the product of the belief system rather than of actual social relations. Slavery which is the highest state of domination and oppression is more metaphysical than physical. His great contribution lies in fighting against oppression and for the sovereignty of individual human beings. He attacked the metaphysics of oppression with aplomb but he left his job half-done. He failed to provide a credible philosophy of freedom—a philosophy ensuring and sustaining freedom.

#### **DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR**

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born on 14 April, 1891 in Mahar caste. The Mahar caste was one of the 'untouchable' castes. This created many difficulties in Ambedkar's higher education. With the help of a

scholarship from Sayajirao Gaekwad, Maharaja of Baroda, he attended Columbia University, USA, and later on with hard work managed to study at the London School of Economics. In England he attained a doctorate and also became a barrister. On returning to India he virtually dedicated himself to the task of upliftment of the untouchable community. Soon he won the confidence of the- untouchables and became their supreme leader. To mobilise his followers he established organisations such as the Bahishkrit Hitkarni Sabha, Independent Labour Party and later All India Scheduled Caste Federation. He led a number of temple-entry Satyagrahas, organized the untouchables, established many educational institutions and propagated his views from newspapers like the 'Mooknayak', 'Bahishkrit Bharat' and 'Janata'. He participated in the Round Table Conference in order to protect the interests of the untouchables. He became the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly and played a very important role in framing The Indian Constitution. He was also the Law Minister of India up to 1951. Right from 1935 Ambedkar was thinking of renouncing Hinduism. Finally, in 1956 he adopted Buddhism and appealed to his followers to do the same. He felt that the removal of untouchability and the spiritual upliftment of the untouchables would not be possible by remaining a Hindu. Hence, he embraced Buddhism. Ambedkar was not only a political leader and social reformer but also a scholar and thinker. He has



written extensively on various social and political matters. 'Annihilation of Castes', 'Who Were the Shudras', 'The Untouchables', 'Buddha and His Dharma' are his more important writings. Besides these, he had also published many other books and booklets propagating his views. His thinking was based on a deep faith in the goals of equity and liberty. Liberalism and the philosophy of John Dewey also influenced his thinking. Jotirao Phule and Buddha have exercised a deep influence on Ambedkar's ideas on society, religion and morality. His political views were also influenced by his legal approach. Ambedkar's personal suffering, his scholarship and his constant attention to the problem of bringing about equality for the downtrodden untouchable community forms the basis of his thinking and writings.

#### **AMBEDKAR'S VIEW ON THE BRITISH RULE IN INDIA**

Ambedkar was aware of the drawbacks inherent 'in foreign rule. The British government had introduced some representative institutions in India. But full self-government could not have any alternative. Besides, Ambedkar always complained that the plight of the untouchables did not change under British rule. The British rulers were not interested in removing untouchability. Their policy had always been cautious in the matter of social reform. Reforms were likely to anger the upper castes and give them an opportunity to rally against' British rule. Therefore, British rulers did not encourage rapid social reforms. I Even in the field of

education, Ambedkar felt that the government was not sincere in spreading education among the untouchables. All educational facilities were utilized by the upper castes only. Moreover, the interests of the upper castes and those of the untouchables were opposed to each other. Ambedkar wanted the British government to mediate on behalf of the untouchables. But the government neglected this responsibility. Because of this attitude of neglect, the untouchable community could not get any benefit from the British rule. He was also not very happy about British administration. He was particularly critical of the administration on account of its over expensive character and general neglect of public welfare. But he knew that abrupt departure of the British would result into political domination of the upper castes. Therefore, a political settlement was necessary clearly mentioning the powers and safeguards for the untouchable community. Without this, independence would be meaningless for the untouchables. In short, Ambedkar criticized the British rule for failing in its duty to uplift the untouchables. For this reason he supported the cause of self-government. But he insisted that in free India, the untouchable community must get a proper share in the power structure; otherwise independence would merely mean rule by the upper castes.

## **Political Strength**

As a step in this direction, Ambedkar attaches much importance to political participation of the oppressed classes. He repeatedly emphasized that in the context of colonialism, it had become imperative that the untouchables gain political rights by organizing themselves politically. He claimed that by attaining political power, untouchables would be able to protect safeguards and a sizeable share in power, so that they can force certain policies on the legislature. This was so because during the last phase of British rule, negotiations had already begun for the settlement of the question of transfer of power. Ambedkar wanted the untouchables to assert their political rights and get an adequate share in power. Therefore, he formed political organizations of untouchables.

Conversion Throughout his life Ambedkar made efforts to reform the philosophical basis of Hinduism. But he was convinced that Hinduism will not modify its disposition towards the untouchables. So, he searched for an alternative to Hinduism. After careful consideration, he adopted Buddhism and asked his followers to do the same. His conversion to Buddhism meant reassertion of his faith in a religion based on humanism. Ambedkar argued that Buddhism was the least obscurantist religion. It appreciated the spirit of equality and liberty. Removal of injustice and exploitation was the goal of Buddhism. By adopting Buddhism, the untouchables would be able to carve out a new identity for themselves.

Since Hinduism gave them nothing but sufferings, by renouncing Hinduism, the untouchables would be renouncing the stigma of untouchability and bondage attached to them. To live a new material life, a new spiritual basis consistent with the liberal spirit was essential. Buddhism would provide this basis. Therefore, at the social level, education; at the material level, new means of livelihood; at the political level, political organization and at the spiritual level, self-assertion and conversion constituted Ambedkar's overall programme of the removal of untouchability.

### **Political Awakening among Untouchables**

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar His writings and activity greatly contributed to the resurgence of the untouchable community. He created a sense of political awareness among the downtrodden. This resulted in the emergence of Dalit power in the Indian society. Ambedkar realized that the most oppressed section of the society was that of the untouchables. Therefore, he insisted upon the progress of this section as a condition for the development of Indian society. In order to create a spirit of self-assertion among the untouchables, they had to be given their own identity. This task of their mental liberation was fulfilled by Ambedkar's criticism of Hinduism. He touched upon the most basic feature of Hinduism: the authority of the Vedas and Shastras. He argued that Hindu religion was merely a set of meaningful rules and regulations. It was devoid of any

philosophical basis. He demonstrated that Hinduism had come to be identified with Chaturvarna and Brahminism. By Brahminism he meant negation of the spirit of justice.

### **SOCIALIST THINKERS:- RAM MONOHAR LOHIA**

Ram Manohar Lohia was born in Akbarpur village in Ambedkar Nagar district, Uttar Pradesh. He was influenced and initiated into the freedom struggle by his father Hira Lal, with whom Lohia attended numerous protest assemblies during his formative years. At the age of 10, Lohia contributed in his own way to the freedom struggle – on the death of Lokmanya Tilak, he organized and led a strike comprising his school mates.

Lohia's father was an ardent follower of Mahatma Gandhi, which contributed to his son's inclination towards Swaraj. Gandhi's spiritual maturity and self-control influenced Lohia to follow in his footsteps. As a 10-year-old, he had already proved his allegiance to Gandhi and the independence movement by participating in a Satyagraha march. In 1921, Lohia met Jawaharlal Nehru and over the years, both Gandhi and Nehru contributed immensely to the development of Lohia's personality and political ideas. What began as only an acquaintanceship with Nehru transformed into close friendship. However, even as a young man, Lohia never minced his words. He admired Nehru and at the same time, disagreed with him over many key ideological issues.

In 1928, as a student leader, Lohia organized a protest against the Simon Commission which had been sent by the British government to prepare a report on granting dominion status to India without considering the opinion of its citizens. Lohia studied for his Ph.D. in Berlin, Germany. Once, in Europe, Lohia attended the League of Nations Assembly in Geneva where India was represented by the Maharaja of Bikaner, an ally of the British Raj. Lohia took a strong exception to this and launched an immediate protest from the visitor's gallery. As a result, Lohia became popular in India overnight. In Berlin, he helped in the formation of the Association of European Indians and became the secretary of this club. The organization's focus was on preserving and expanding Indian nationalism abroad.

After receiving his doctorate, Lohia returned to India and joined the Indian National Congress. Lohia was inclined towards socialism and played an important role in the formation of the Congress Socialist Party in 1934. He wrote extensively on the possibility of a socialist India for the party's journal, *Congress Socialist*. In 1936, upon his election to the All India Congress Committee, Lohia revived the party's near-defunct foreign affairs department. Nehru himself appointed Lohia as the secretary of this department. During his tenure of two years, Lohia helped concretize India's foreign policy.

In the Second World War, Lohia saw an opportunity to topple the

British Rule in India. He travelled across the country, instigating the citizens through his speeches to boycott all government institutions. Resultantly, Lohia was arrested on May 24, 1939. However, the British authorities feared his arrest could cause a youth uprising and, thus released him from prison just a day later.

A determined Lohia then wrote an article titled *Satyagraha Now* in Gandhiji's newspaper *Harijan* on June 1, 1940. Six days later, he was re-arrested and imprisoned for two years. While passing the judgment, the magistrate had observed: 'He (Lohia) is a top-class scholar, civilized gentleman, and has liberal ideology and high moral character.' In a meeting of the Congress Working Committee following Lohia's imprisonment, Gandhi had said, 'I cannot sit quiet as long as Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia is in prison. I do not yet know a person braver and simpler than him. He never propagated violence. Whatever he has done has increased his esteem and his honor.' In prison, Lohia was severely tortured and harassed by the jailors. In December 1941, all imprisoned Congress leaders, including Lohia, were released in a desperate attempt by the British authorities to stabilize the country which was reverberating with the demands for independence. In 1942, the Indian National Congress launched the Quit India Movement under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi. Prominent leaders, including Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad, were put

behind bars to muzzle nationalistic voices. The responsibility to guide and lead the struggle of the nation towards independence fell on the shoulders of the Socialist cadre, which included senior leaders like Lohia. He went underground to escape arrest and from there, published posters and documents to awaken the people's spirit of 'do or die'.

Along with freedom fighter Usha Mehta, Lohia started a secret radio station called Congress Radio from Bombay to inspire people towards revolution. He also edited *Inquilab* (Revolution), a monthly publication of the Congress. Other senior leaders like Aruna Asaf Ali, Abdan Shaikh and Madiha also took active part in the Quit India Movement. While remaining underground, Lohia visited Calcutta to revive the movement in the state. He changed his name to escape arrest even as the police was closing in on him. Lohia then fled to Nepal's dense jungles. There, Lohia met many Nepalese revolutionaries, including the Koirala brothers, who remained his allies for the rest of their lives.

Lohia was finally captured in May 1944 from Bombay and was taken to the notorious Lahore prison, which was known to perpetrate torture on prisoners. Lohia too was subjected to inhuman treatment by jail authorities to extract information from him. He was released in 1946 under the pressure put on the British authorities by Mahatma Gandhi.

As India's tryst with freedom approached, the antagonism and



clashes between the Hindus and Muslims increased. Lohia vehemently opposed Partition and wrote extensively against it. He appealed to the two communities in the regions affected by riots to stay united, ignore the divisive forces and adhere to Gandhi's ideals of nonviolence. On August 15, 1947, as political leaders hovered in Delhi to take over the reign of the country, Lohia stayed by Gandhi's side who was lamenting the consequences and killings brought about by Partition.

### **Goa and Nepal**

In 1946, soon after his release from prison by the British authorities, Lohia went to Goa for rest. He was accompanied by his communist friend Juliao Menezes, the author of the anti-Catholic and anti-Portuguese work *Contra Roma e além de Benares* (Against Rome and Returning to Benares). Menezes had later revealed he had invited Lohia to Goa to disturb peace and encourage revolution in the state which was under the Portuguese rule. On the other hand, Nehru had publicly stated that Goa was a foreign territory and Indian politicians would not intervene in its internal affairs. He had said: 'Eighteen years ago, a Congress committee was started in Goa by Mr. Tristao Braganza Cunha and for some years he was a member of the All-India Congress Committee. Later, under the constitution of the Congress, such foreign committees were not affiliated.'

Thus, despite being a tourist and clearly an outsider as far as the

Congress leadership was concerned, Lohia inspired struggle and launched satyagraha in Goa. He began intervening in the local political affairs, influenced the small Goan Communist movement and fostered sedition. He was arrested by the Portuguese administration, while delivering a public speech, was imprisoned and later sent to British India. Gandhi supported Lohia and responded to his arrest stating: ‘the little Portuguese settlement, which merely exists on the sufferance of the British government, can ill- afford to ape its bad manners. In free India, Goa cannot be allowed to exist as a separate entity in opposition to the laws of the Free State. Without a shot being fired, the people of Goa will be able to claim and receive the rights of citizenship of the Free State. The present Portuguese government will no longer be able to rely upon the protection of the British arms to isolate and keep under subjection the inhabitants of Goa against their will. I would venture to advise the Portuguese government of Goa to recognize the signs of the times and come to honorable terms with the inhabitants, rather than function on any treaty that might exist between them and the British government.

Gandhi added: ‘It is ridiculous to write of Portugal as the Motherland of the Indians of Goa. Their mother country is as much India as is mine. Goa is outside British India, but it is within geographical India as a whole. And there is very little, if anything, in common between the Portuguese and the Indians in Goa.’ Amid

growing support, Lohia tried to re-enter Goa on September 28, 1946, but was arrested at the Colem Railway Station, put into solitary confinement. He was banned from entering Goa for the next five years. Lohia desisted from entering Goa for the third time on the advice of Gandhi and Nehru.

In Nepal, with support of his socialist and communist friends, Lohia initiated a struggle to bring the country within the Indian domain and free them from the clutches of monarchy. However, contradictions failed his attempts; while on one hand, the Koiralas supported him, the Nepalese citizens were not keen on merger with India. Lohia was not only influenced by socialism but also practiced it. He deeply favoured the use of Hindi as the official language of India. Lohia argued that the use of English hindered people's thoughts, 'was a progenitor of inferiority feelings and deepened the gap between the educated and uneducated public'. He called upon the people: 'Come, let us unite to restore Hindi to its original glory.' He also recognized the importance of a nation's economic strength and encouraged the citizens to join the post-freedom reconstruction activities. Lohia urged people to construct canals, wells and roads voluntarily in their neighbourhood. He volunteered to build a dam on river Paniyari, which stands strong till date and is also known as the 'Lohia Sagar Dam'. Lohia said: 'Satyagraha without constructive work is like a sentence without a

verb.’ He felt that public work could unite and bring a sense of awareness in the community. Lohia felt that as a democracy, the Parliament was obliged to listen to the citizens who elected them. He, thus helped create a day called ‘Janavani Day’ on which people from around the country could assemble and express their grievances to the members of Parliament. The tradition still persists.

In 1963, when Lohia entered the Parliament for the first time, the country had evolved a one-party government through three general elections. He wrote a pamphlet titled ‘25000 Rupees a Day’, the amount spent on Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru’s daily activities. Lohia felt this was an obscene sum spent on a leader in a country whose majority population lived on 3 annas (less than one-quarter of a rupee) a day. Lohia called it an important issue, one which required a special debate in Parliament.

The controversy is still remembered as the *Teen Anna Pandrah Anna* (3 annas 15 annas) controversy. Lohia was neither a Marxist nor an anti-Marxist. Unlike Marxist theorists, Lohia argued that caste, more than class, was the prime deterrent to India’s progress. Caste, according to Lohia, was a form of class in the Indian context. He said that class was a mobile caste since the country was anyways dominated by ideas of the upper castes constituted by the brahmins and the *baniyas*. Lohia said caste restricted one’s social and economic opportunities, which in

turn constricted people's ability. This, he argued, further restricted opportunity. Where caste prevails, Lohia said, opportunity and ability were restricted to ever-narrowing circles of people. In his own party, the Samyukta (United) Socialist Party, Lohia promoted lower caste candidates by giving them electoral tickets and senior party positions. With this, Lohia aimed to ensure people accepted and voted for his party's candidates, irrespective of their caste.

### **Lohia's Views on Capitalism and Marxism**

Lohia argued early that Marxism and Capitalism were similar in as far as their views on industrialization were concerned. He stated that industry was no solution for the Third World. In fact, in 1951, Lohia had warned the Americans that their lives would soon be taken over by big industries. He called Marxism the 'last weapon of Europe against Asia' and propounded the 'Principle of Equal Irrelevance', declining both Marxism as well as Capitalism. He perceived Capitalism as the doctrine of 'people living upward of 40 degrees north of the equator'. Lohia preferred search for an appropriate technology, which could reduce hard work but at the same time, not put the common man at the mercy of machines. He considered capitalism to be 'the doctrine of individual, free enterprise, mass production and balance of power based peace'. Lohia rejected capitalism and believed it encouraged only poverty and war.

According to Lohia, capitalism could destroy national freedom. He further perceived communism as part of capitalism and said that 'it only seems to smash the capitalist relations of production'. According to him, both capitalism and communism were 'part of a single civilization as both are driven by continuous application of science to economy and rising standard of living'.

### **Revolutionary Thinker**

Lohia was always concerned with the welfare of the masses. Besides his revolutionary ways during the civil disobedience movement, his concern to bridge the divide between the rich and the poor, and the elimination of caste and irrelevant industry, Lohia also sought to promote equality between sexes, discourage discrimination on the basis of colour and preservation of individual privacy. Lohia also believed in joint action. He supported overthrow of a government which misused its power, even if it had to be done before the completion of its official term. Lohia gave action to his words. He was the first parliamentarian to move a no-confidence motion against the Nehru government, which had by then been in office for 16 years.

Lohia is popularly known as a maverick socialist. He often surprised his supporters as well as opponents through his words and actions. In one instance, he astounded everyone by calling on the Indian government to produce the bomb, after the Sino-Indian War of 1962.

### **Lohia's Anti-English View**

Lohia was in favour of abolishing private schools and establishing better municipal (government) schools, which would be open to students from all castes. He saw this approach as a means to abolish caste system.

At the annual convention of the Socialist Party, Lohia formulated a plan to decentralize the power of the government and give more powers in the hands of the people. He also set up the Hind Kisan Panchayat to give an ear to the problem of the farmers.

As a socialist, Lohia sought to unite socialist from across the world to form a potent global platform. He died on 12<sup>th</sup> October 1967 in New Delhi and left behind no property or bank balance.

### **Jaya Prakash Narayan**

Jaya Prakash Narayan (1902–79) was a pioneer of the socialist movement and a renowned theoretician of socialist ideologies in India. In fact, he was the foremost leader, propagandist and spokesman of Indian socialism. He had played an important role in the struggle for India's independence as the acting General Secretary of the Indian National Congress in 1932 and had undergone imprisonment due to his nationalistic activities. He later organized the Congress Socialist Party in 1934 and became its general secretary.

### **Political Ideas of J.P. Narayan**

J.P. Narayan was a high-ranking pioneer of the socialist movement in India and one of the most renowned theoreticians. His rationale for socialism was based on the fact that inequality leads to the social consequences, which threaten the stability of social relationships, such as exploitation of the poor by the rich and freedom, and freedom, which is the most fundamental of human urges, becomes the domain of the prosperous few only. Hence socialism which has equality as the foundational value can ensure freedom for all and put an end to exploitation of man by man.

### **Democratic Socialism**

The political philosophy of J.P. Narayan stands for Democratic Socialism. He felt that socialism needs to evolve through a democratic process. He felt that there is no need for dictatorship of the proletariat when the old ruling classes have been destroyed in India. He rejected the Soviet model of socialism and reinterpreted Marxism by referring to Marx at the Hague convention of the First International in 1872 where Marx did not consider a 'violent revolution' necessary for achieving socialism. That is why he felt that India needs to evolve its own picture of socialism, which is not possible without democracy. Therefore, it has to be a socialist state with democratic method.



### **Concept of Sarvodaya**

J.P. Narayan along with Vinobha Bhave stood for a political revolution through the Sarvodaya society. The term *Sarvodaya* is composed of two words, 'Sarva' and 'udaya' which mean the 'rise of all' and 'upliftment of all'. This term was first used by Mahatma Gandhi as a translation of Ruskin's '*Unto the Last*' in 1904. The words 'Unto the Last' meant to uplift of the last or 'good of all' or 'service to all' or welfare service. Therefore, he wanted the society to be organized on the lines of *Sarvodaya*.

The Sarvodaya Society was to be more or less a loose federation of a number of small self-governing villages with each of the unit self-sufficient and self-governing as far as possible. It is done so to attain the highest degree of decentralization in the political as well as economic spheres. There would not be any coercive or centralized authority such as a parliament which is elected on the basis of adult franchise and making laws with national administration on the principle of majority rule.

He wanted *rajniti*, i.e. politics to be replaced by *lokniti* which he defined as self-discipline or self-control while the former strengthen authoritarianism and there is ceaseless rivalry for power and a constant struggle for power. Since in a *sarvodaya* society, there is no place for government, therefore, it is free from oppressive rule of the foreign

government.

The Sarvodaya Society will have two main principles, i.e. truth and non- violence. All the changes will occur peacefully. Peace would revolutionize the society in what J.P. Narayan called peaceful revolution or *sarvodaya*. There will not be any immorality or class hatred or gambling and no distinction between the rich and poor, privileged or under-privileged.

Self-control and self-suffering will be the basic requisites for realizing *sarvodaya*. The Sarvodaya Society should have the governor as the head of the state who should be living in a cottage which is accessible to all the citizens. Being a citizen of India, he must also be a citizen of the world. In the Sarvodaya Society, the rights of the minority should be ensured and not exploited by the majority. It repudiates the concept of majoritarianism, i.e. the elements of superior virtue supposed to be present in the judgement of the majority. The minorities have the right to differ from the majority and all the decisions which should be carried out through majority should be carried out through consensus.

There will not be any class conflict in the society unlike that of Marx's class struggle. All the wealth, land, intellect and the property will be shared equally among the members of the society. Individual freedom should be ensured and each individual should learn the values of co-operation, mutual adjustment and self-sacrifice values which they

should seek to preserve and value.

### **Concept of Democracy: Partyless Democracy**

J.P. Narayan was a passionate patron of individual liberty. To him, democracy was both a creed as well as a way of life. He believed in the moral value of democracy and build up a new democratic setup in India according to the *sarvodaya* thought. As the institutions of democracy such as constitutions, systems of governments, parties and elections are futile unless the moral and spiritual qualities of the people appropriate the best constitutions and political systems. Although J.P. Narayan was an advocate of democracy, he was also a critic of Indian democracy in its present form and suggested ways to remove the weaknesses that he felt.

The most serious drawback of Indian democracy was its highly centralized character of the Government. This prevented it from functioning as a direct democracy and the citizen was reduced to a vote-caster as a functionary of democracy. It also hampered the individual freedom as the bureaucracy did the major work which a citizen was supposed to perform. This was seen to lead to political apathy among the people.

Secondly, according to J.P. Narayan the democratic set up in the country has a narrow base. It is like an inverted pyramid that stands on its head and therefore it should stand on its base. He pointed that this

defect in our legislative assemblies leads to the formation of a minority Government. He was critical of the fact that instead of the majority, the minority rules. Besides, the political parties also seek to come to power through their muscle as well as money power where the voters are bribed to cast their votes in their favour. The only solution out of this political mess is what J.P. Narayan advocates as a partyless democracy such as in the then Yugoslavia and Switzerland. Under such systems, democracy can function through a decentralized authority. He said that the concept of partyless democracy can be realized through the Bhoodan Movement:

- ✓ The people in each village should nominate through consensus and the techniques, which he called as *Bhoodan*, *Gramdan*, *Sampattidan*, individuals whom they consider as their best servants. These individuals will form the *panchayat* or *mandal*. The members of the *Gram Mandal* will then form the *Thana Mandal* from which they will choose the members of the *District Panchayats*. In this way, the partyless democracy will start from the bottom. It will replace party politics and elections by community consensus as well as replacement of the principle of the majority by unanimity.
- ✓ A Sarvodaya Society will be established so that it remains free from party politics and the workers will not contest any elections

but dedicate themselves to the service of the movement.

- ✓ All the political members should cooperate in the *sarvodaya* work such as in the Bhoodan movement, which is acceptable to all.
- ✓ All the political parties should be neutralized in the legislatures. All members should vote not on part lines but on the basis of highest preference that the member obtains.

J.P. Narayan made an important contribution to political theory through his idea of participatory democracy. It is an extension of the Gandhian system of decentralization and Vinoba's idea of *Gram Swarajya*. He accepted the idea of a world community which could do justice to the suppressed sections of humanity. Although he is one of the most outstanding personalities in the field of Indian socialism but at times he is too idealistic and impractical to follow in a country like India. Nevertheless, he was great humanist revolutionary who pleaded for the maintenance of conditions which are necessary for the realization of equality of opportunities as the economic minimum is a pre-condition for the resplendence of the fruits of culture.

### **Recommended Books**

1. VishnooBhagwan, Indian Political Thinkers, Atma Ram& Sons, New Delhi, 1999Guha,
2. Ramachandra Guha, Makers of Modern India, Penguin India, New Delhi, 2012.
3. V.P. Varma, Modern Indian Political Thought, Vol. II, Laxmi Narain Agarwal, Agra, 2020 53

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1. Bidyut Chakrabarty, et. al., Modern Indian Political Thought: Text and Context, Sage Pub., New Delhi, 2009
2. M. Sharma, Political Theory and Thought, Anmol Publisher, New Delhi, 2004
3. V.R. Mehta, Foundations of Indian Political Thought, Taylor & Francis Exclusive, CBS Publishers & Distributors Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2022