SNS COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

An Autonomous Institution
Coimbatore-35

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DEPARTMENT OF AUTOMOBILE ENGINEERING

III YEAR/ VI SEMESTER
19HST105 ESSENCE OF INDIAN TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

UNIT I ANCIENT INDIA & STATE POLITY
Society in Ancient India

Society in Ancient India

- Society in ancient India had several distinguishing features.
- It was arranged in the form of four varnas.
- The life of individual was divided into four stages or *āshramas*.
- There were rules regarding marriage, family etc.
- The purpose of life was to attain four goals called *purusārthas*.

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

Purusārtha

- The concept of *purusārthas* is the fundamental principle of Indian social ethics.
- The word *purusārtha* means "attainments" or "life purposes".
- The aim of every person is to attain the four noble ends or *purusārtha*.
- These four *purusārthas* are — *dharma, artha, kāma and moksha.*

A. Dharma

- *Dharma* or the principle of righteousness is considered to be the supreme of the *purusārthas*.
- *Dharma* in Indian tradition is different from the Western concept of religion.
- The word religion has been derived from the latin root *religare* which means "to connect".

- In this sense religion is a set of principles which connects human beings with God or which connects the this worldly and the that worldly.
- Therefore, religion essentially has some notion of God or some other supernatural entity.
- It is a particular way of worshipping.
- it is the essential foundation of something or of things in general, and thus signifies 'truth'.
- it is that which is right, virtuous, meritorious, and accordingly 'ethical'.
- It is that which is required, precepted, or permitted through religious authority, and thus legal.

CONCLUSION:

- Therefore, *dharma* in ancient India was a code of conduct for members of the society.
- In the words of Kane, "the word *dharma* passed through several transitions of meaning and ultimately its most prominent significance came to be the privileges, duties and obligations of man of the castes, as a person in a particular stage of life".
- We find various forms of *dharma* in the sense of duty in ancient India like-

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

B. Artha

- *Artha* is the second *purusārtha*.
- The term *artha* refers to worldly prosperity or wealth.
- It includes all the material means of life.
- Kautilya maintains that wealth is the basis of human requirements and that social well-being depends ultimately on material prosperity.
- Indian thinkers had recognised the pursuit of wealth as a legitimate human aspiration. But *artha* must be acquired by right means.

C. Kāma

- *Kāma* means worldly pleasures or sensual pleasures.
- It refers to some of the innate desires and urges in human beings.
- In the narrow sense *kāma* means sexual pleasure but in the wider sense it involves sexual, emotional and aesthetic life all together.

D. Moksha

- It is the ultimate *purusārtha*.
- *Moksha* means salvation or liberation from the cycle of birth and death.
- It is the summum bonum (Ultimate goal according to which values established in an ethical system) of human Existence

THANK YOU