

# Societal Aspects of Ancient India: The Views of V. S. Smith

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**Abstract – Smith was born in Dublin on 3 June 1848 which was then part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Smith wrote books on various rulers such as the Buddhist emperor, Ashoka and the Mughal emperor, Akbar, and a history of fine arts in India and Ceylon. He also published two comprehensive volumes on Indian history, The Early History of India and The Oxford History of India. This paper analyzes about social aspects of ancient India in the views of V.S. Smith**

**Keyword: V.S. Smith, Societal Aspects, Ancient India**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This is the most established theory of the beginning of the state in India and has been specified in the Atharva Veda. As indicated by this theory the state is the after-effect of developmental advance and it didn't begin at a settled time. The tenth song of the eighth section of the Atharva Veda gives a photo of the developmental source of the state. Based on Atharva Veda a few phases of the development of the state can be followed (Basham, A.L.).

The songs of the Atharva Veda express that the most punctual period of human life was the phase of *vairājya* or stateless state. It was a condition of finish political agitation. In any case, in this manner, with the rise of farming, stable life wound up conceivable. To satisfy the requirements of horticultural society the family rose and the leader of the family turned into the main wielder of specialist. Further, the need of co-task in the diverse domains of society prompted the development of *sabhā* and *samiti*. *Sabhā* was the association of elderly individuals and *samiti* was the general get together of regular people.<sup>3</sup> With the development of *sabhā* and *samiti* composed political life started which at long last finished in the rise of the state (Basham).

A.S. Altekar, N.N. Law and H.C. Raychaudhuri by one means or another support the theory of developmental beginning. Altekar opines that as with other Indo-Aryan people group, the state likewise advanced in India in pre-noteworthy circumstances out of the organization of the joint family.<sup>4</sup> R. Shamasastri likewise supports the transformative theory however as he would see it the most punctual type of family in antiquated India was matriarchal

which after the intrusion of Aryans wound up man centric (Altekar)

Among contemporary antiquarians, Ram Sharan Sharma centers around the part of family, *varna* and property in the advancement of the state, referring to cases from *Shānti Parva*, *Dīgha Nikāya*, and *Ayodhyā Kānda* of *Rāmāyana*. According to Sharma, there was a crucial association between the presence of these foundations and the ascent of the state. The premise of political commitment and the elements of state demonstrate the part of these establishments. What might happen if the state did not exist? The one intermittent subject in the *Shānti Parva*, the *Ayodhyā Kānda* and the *Vishnu Dharmottara Purāna* which contain the long depiction of *arājaka* (kingless) state is that family and property would not be protected in such a state (Altekar).

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURES

Bhandarkar has cited five entries from *Shānti Parva* which propose that the royal office emerged to secure the frail against the solid (Montesquieu, 1949). Sharma opines that potentially it may not be right to decipher the feeble as poor and solid as rich however there are sure references which give the feeling that the royal office was intended to help those who are well off against the consolidated assaults of the less wealthy (Hegel, 1949).

The main elements of the lord additionally toss light on the reason for which his office was made. One of the principle obligations of the ruler was the security of private property by rebuffing the hoodlum and that of the family by rebuffing the philanderers. So incredible was the duty regarding ensuring property

that it was officeholder on the ruler to reestablish to a subject the stolen riches at any cost. Preservation of the varna (position framework) was another extraordinary obligation of the ruler. For the most part the support of the rank framework was viewed as an imperative component of dharma, for as indicated by Kamandaka if dharma is abused by the individuals from the state, there will undoubtedly be pralaya or disintegration of the entire social request. (Karl, 1994).

The predominant perfect that moved the lord in old India was the achievement of dharma, artha and kāma. In the event that the artha is taken in the feeling of delight in property, the kāma in the feeling of pleasure in family life and dharma in the feeling of support of the legitimate framework, it would be evident that in the trivarga perfect likewise, standards of property, family and station ruled.

### Power Theory

Despite the fact that antiquated Indian political scholars did not propound compel theory deliberately, constrain was thought to be an essential factor in the development of the state in India (Sharma, 2003). Earliest Aryan groups battled among themselves for pet creatures (particularly for the dairy animals), pastureland, settlements and wellsprings of drinking water. Just a solid and capable warrior could lead the faction in such wars. So he was given unique status and the individuals from group began obeying him. This inclination proceeded in the times of peace additionally and consequently the pioneer progressed toward becoming lord (Richard, 1956). Citing cases from the Vedas (Rig Veda and Sāma Veda) and the Brahmanas (Aitareya, Shatapatha) John Spellman additionally opines that the lord in antiquated India was basically a military pioneer (Richard & Altekar). But it ought to be unmistakably said that none of the political observers give a precise and very much weaved clarification of the part of power in the rise of the state in antiquated India.

### 3. STAGES OF STATE FORMATION IN ANCIENT INDIA

Six fundamental stages in the historical backdrop of old Indian country can be distinguished. The soonest organize was that of ancestral military majority rules system in which inborn gatherings, which had some place for ladies were fundamentally pre-possessed with war. The time of Rig Veda was fundamentally a time of gatherings.

The second stage saw the separation of the inborn nation under the worry of consistent clashes between the rājanyakshatriya and the common specialist called the vis. The boss was helped by the brotherhood called the Brahmins. This stage saw the

start of charges and classes or varnas which came to be immovably settled in the third stage.

The third stage was set apart by the arrangement of the undeniable state. There emerged huge regional governments of Kosala and Magadha and ancestral theocracies in North-Western India and at the foot of the Himalayas. Out of the blue we know about huge standing armed forces and composed hardware for the accumulation of land income. The fourth or the Maurya stage saw bureaucratic centralisation in view of the growing financial exercises of the state. The state with the assistance of its administration controlled different parts of the life of its subjects.

The fifth stage was set apart by the procedure of decentralized organization in which towns, feudatories and military components went to the front line in both the Deccan and North India. This was somewhat killed by the accentuation on the heavenly nature of the ruler.

The last stage, indistinguishable with the Gupta period, might be known as the time of proto-medieval commonwealth. Land gives now had a vital influence in the development of the political structure and those made by the Gupta feudatories presented monetary and authoritative benefits on clerical recipients.

### Majesty

The ruler was the most imperative figure in the body politic. In the Saptānga hypothesis of the state, created by Kautilya the ruler has been depicted as the head or the most critical organ of the state.

The ruler performed multi-dimensional capacities. The ruler's capacities included the assurance of his kingdom against outer hostility, as well as of life, property and conventional custom against inner adversaries. He secured the virtue of class and position by guaranteeing that the individuals who tested the framework were banished. He secured the family framework by rebuffing infidelity and guaranteeing the reasonable legacy of family property. He secured dowagers and vagrants by making them his wards. He secured the rich against the poor by stifling theft, and he ensured the poor against the rich by rebuffing coercion and mistreatment. Religion was ensured by liberal stipends to learned Brahmins and sanctuaries and as often as possible to heterodox groups too.

The perfect set before the ruler was one of vigorous advantage. Ashoka was by all account not the only ruler of India to broadcast that all men were his kids, or to take pride in his incessant movement for the welfare of his subjects. The Arthashastra, in spite of its support of each deceptive catalyst for the obtaining and upkeep of energy, advances the royal obligation in basic and intense dialect, setting a

perfect which couple of old civilisations can brag of. Looking at the ruler and the parsimonious it says:

"In the bliss of his subjects lies the lord's satisfaction, In the welfare of his subjects, his welfare. The ruler's great isn't what satisfies him, But that which satisfies his subjects."

Somewhere else the Arthashāstra recommends a period table for the lord's day, which permits him just four and a half hours rest and three hours for eating and amusement, whatever remains of the day being spent in state undertakings of some kind. Most likely such a program was once in a while kept practically speaking, however it at any rate demonstrates the perfect at which the lord was relied upon to point. In all sources the ruler is informed that he should be expeditious in the organization of equity and constantly available to his kin. The swarms of gatekeepers, ushers, and different authorities who encompassed the ruler's individual should regularly have requested rewards, and generally have blocked the entrance of the subject to his sovereign. In any case, the best of Indian rulers consistently have made general society group of onlookers, or darbār, an imperative instrument of government.

The perfect before the ruler in old India was that of being a chakravartī meaning a lord who led over the unified huge region of the Indian sub-mainland reaching out from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. With the Mauryas this probability was considerably acknowledged, and was consolidated into the Buddhist convention and mixed with later Vedic colonialist thoughts, at that point assumed control by standard Hinduism. Similarly as Buddha shows up every once in a while in the astronomical cycle, proclaimed by promising signs and blessed with ideal signs, to lead every living being along the street to edification, so do widespread heads seem to overcome all Jambūdiva (India) and administer prosperously and uprightly. The idea of the general head was additionally known to the Jainas, and in the sagas various rulers of legend, for example, Yudhisthira and Rama, are said to have been digvijayins or champions of all the four quarters. The all-inclusive sovereign was a supernaturally appointed figure with an uncommon place in the vast plan, and all things considered was commended to semi-divine status. The convention was a motivation to driven rulers, and in the Middle Ages some even asserted to be widespread sovereigns themselves.

## CONCLUSION

As per Altekar the position, powers and benefits of the lord have changed from age to age.<sup>36</sup> When in the ancient time frame, the ruler was just the senior-most part in the committee of associates, when he frequently owed his position to an decision, either genuine or formal, when there was a mainstream

chamber (samiti) to effectively administer his organization, his position was regularly unreliable and powers were restricted. After 500 B.C.E. the workplace of lord was hoisted higher than ever.

Amid this period the ruler turned into the successful leader of the official organization and there was no prevalent get together like samiti to check him.<sup>37</sup> He controlled both the treasury and the military powers, however president and treasurer were under him.

Clergymen were chosen by the lord and held office at his pleasure. The lord managed the gathering of pastors and its choices needed to get regal consent.

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