**Syllabus - INDIAN TRADITIONS, CULTURAL AND SOCIETY (KNC-502/602)**

**Module 1- Society State and Polity in India**

State in Ancient India: Evolutionary Theory, Force Theory, Mystical Theory Contract Theory, Stages of State Formation in Ancient India, Kingship , Council of Ministers Administration Political Ideals in Ancient India Conditions’ of the Welfare of Societies, The Seven Limbs of the State, Society in Ancient India, Purusārtha, Varnāshrama System, Āshrama or the Stages of Life, Marriage, Understanding Gender as a social category, The representation of Women in Historical traditions, Challenges faced by Women. Four-class Classification, Slavery.

**Module 2- Indian Literature, Culture, Tradition, and Practices**

Evolution of script and languages in India: Harappan Script and Brahmi Script. The Vedas, the Upanishads, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, Puranas, Buddhist And Jain Literature in Pali,Prakrit And Sanskrit, Kautilya’s Arthashastra, Famous Sanskrit Authors, Telugu Literature, Kannada Literature,Malayalam Literature ,Sangama Literature Northern Indian Languages &

Literature, Persian And Urdu ,Hindi Literature

**Module 3- Indian Religion, Philosophy, and Practices**

Pre-Vedic and Vedic Religion, Buddhism, Jainism, Six System Indian Philosophy, Shankaracharya, Various Philosophical Doctrines , Other Heterodox Sects, Bhakti Movement, Sufi movement, Socio religious reform movement of 19th century, Modern religious practices.

**Module 4-Science, Management and Indian Knowledge System**

Astronomy in India, Chemistry in India, Mathematics in India, Physics in India, Agriculture in India, Medicine in India ,Metallurgy in India, Geography, Biology, Harappan Technologies, Water Management in India, Textile Technology in India ,Writing Technology in India Pyrotechnics in India Trade in Ancient India/,India’s Dominance up to Pre-colonial Times

**Module 5- Cultural Heritage and Performing Arts**

Indian Architect, Engineering and Architecture in Ancient India, Sculptures, Seals, coins, Pottery, Puppetry, Dance, Music, Theatre, drama, Painting, Martial Arts Traditions, Fairs and Festivals, Current developments in Arts and Cultural, Indian’s Cultural Contribution to the World. Indian Cinema

**Module – 1 Society State and Polity in India**

**Topic - 1**

**Introduction**

Do you think that the culture of Indian people has been the same since the beginning?

* The answer is no. No culture remains the same. And this is true of India as well.
* It has gone through many phases of change. Do you know why these changes occur? This is because every dynasty, every invader who comes and settles down in the country leaves their marks on the culture of that country.
* In order to understand the present culture of Indian people, it is necessary to understand the process it has gone through in the past.
* Thus, in this lesson we will attempt to take a look at the life of the people of Ancient India. You will read about the various stages of ancient Indian history from the Harappan times through Vedic, Mauryan and Gupta periods.
* The emphasis is on the changing nature of Indian society with corresponding changes in society and culture.
* When we read history we can understand how the modern world has emerged over long centuries of development. It is important to appreciate what we have achieved in the past to make our future worthwhile.

**IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING HISTORY**

* I am sure you have often asked yourself why you are studying history.
* Studying history is one way of getting to know the past.
* History is an attempt to understand how and why our ancestors lived as they did, what difficulties they met with and in what manner they overcame them.
* It is important for us to be acquainted with the past to understand better what is happening in the India of today.
* After going through this lesson you will come to know the story of your country, which started many centuries ago.
* History is no longer treated as merely a study of dates and events and that too largely only political events.
* Its scope has been widened to include many aspects of life. These include the study of patterns of life, which we call culture.
* Culture was once defined as that which relates to art, architecture, literature and philosophy. Now it includes all the activities of a society.
* Therefore the emphasis of history has shifted from the study of only the upper groups of society to all levels of society. It now covers information on kings and statesmen as well as on ordinary people who make history. It includes the study of art and architecture, of the evolution of languages in India, literature and religion.
* Now we do not look only at what was happening at the aristocratic level of society. We also try to reconstruct the interests and concerns of people at lower levels. This makes history more interesting and helps us understand our society for better.
* The people that went into the making of our society, at both the aristocratic and the ordinary level, were not all indigenous to India, to start with.
* Many came from other regions and settled down in India. They married locally, intermixed with the existing people and became a part of Indian society.
* Our society, therefore, has a rich heritage of different kinds of people. Because of this large variety of people, there has been an equally large variety of religions, languages, and customs in our country.
* The correct understanding of history depends on two things.

1. One is a careful and critical use of source material given to us by historians defending certain statements which should be decided on rational analysis.
2. Secondly, historical events have causes and these causes should be fully examined. Above all, even the past must be subjected to a critical analysis. It is only in this way that historical knowledge will advance.

* The past of India goes back several thousand years. We learn about it from the evidence which our ancestors have left behind. For the near past we have written and printed records. For times when printing was not known, there are records written by hand on paper. But earlier still, when paper was not made, records were written on dried palm leaves, the bark of the birch tree and plates of copper and in some cases, they were inscribed on large rocks, pillars, stones walls or tablets made of clay and stone. There was a time still further back when even writing was unknown.
* Our knowledge of the life of people in those ancient days comes from the objects which they left behind, for example, their pottery or their weapons and tools.
* They are all clues in the game of a historical treasure hunt.
* But these clues can be of many kinds. The clues most commonly used are manuscripts.
* Manuscripts are ancient books, written either on dried palm leaves or the thick bark of the birch tree, or on paper.
* Some of the languages in which the very old books are written are languages which we in India do not use in everyday life any more, such as **Pali** and **Prakrit**.
* Others are written in **Sanskrit** and **Arabic**, which we still study and sometimes use in our religious ceremonies.
* Another language **Tamil**, which is spoken in South India and whose literature goes to an early period in used even today.
* These are called **‘classical languages’** and the history of many parts of the world is recorded in various classical languages.
* In Europe, ancient manuscripts were often written in **Greek** and **Latin** in western Asia, they were written in **Arabic** and **Hebrew,** and in China, **classical Chinese** was used.

**ANCIENT INDIA**

* India has a continuous history covering a very long period.
* Evidence of Neolithic habitation dating as far back as 7000 BC has been found in Mehrgarh in Baluchistan.
* However, the first notable civilization flourished in India around 2700 BC in the north western part of the Indian subcontinent, covering a large area.
* The civilization is referred to as the Harappan civilization. Most of the sites of this civilization developed on the banks of Indus, Ghaggar and its tributaries.
* The culture associated with the Harappan civilization is the first known urban culture in India.
* The Harappans built the earliest cities complete with town planning, sanitation, drainage system and broad well-laid roads.
* They built double storied houses of burnt bricks each one of which had a bathroom, a kitchen and a well.
* The walled cities had other important buildings such as the Great Bath, Granaries and Assembly Halls.
* Agriculture was the main occupation of the Harappans who were living in rural areas. Those living in the cities carried on internal and external trade and developed contacts with other civilizations such as Mesopotamia.
* They were excellent potters. Various types of utensils, toys, seals, figurines have been excavated from different sites.
* Harappans also had the technical knowledge of metals and the process of alloying.
* The bronze sculpture of a dancing girl found in Mohenjodaro testifies the sculptural skills and aesthetic sense of the Harappans.
* Shell, ivory, bone and faience were used as material for different crafts and objects.
* Lothal was a dockyard situated in Dholaka Taluk of Ahmedabad in Gujarat. It was also a well planned wall city. It was an important centre of sea trade with the western world. Another important town in Gujarat was Dhaulavira while Kalibangam was in Rajasthan.
* Numerous seals carrying the images of the one-horned rhinocerous known as unicorn, peepal leaves and a male god throw light on the religious beliefs of the Harappans.
* It appears that they worshipped plants and animals and the forces of nature.
* They worshipped a male god resembling Lord Shiva of later times and a mother goddess among others.
* They probably believed in life after death and also in charms and spells.
* Seals engraved with animal figures like the humped bull, elephant and rhinocerous suggest that these animals were considered sacred. ‘Peepal’ has been found depicted on many seals.
* Harappans knew how to write and most of their seals contain some form of script. But unfortunately no one has yet been able to interpret that script.
* As a result, our knowledge of the Harappan civilization is based on the archaeological evidence alone.
* The figures of men and women on various seals found in the excavations reveal that the people knew the art of spinning and weaving.
* They were perhaps the first people to cultivate cotton.
* A large number of Indus seals found in Mesopotamia which indicated of a possible trade between the Indus valley and Mesopotamian civilization.
* By 1800 BC the Harappan civilization began declining. However, we do not know the exact reasons why this happened.

**Topic - 2**

**State in Ancient India**

State has been the key concept in political science since the period of grand thinkers like Plato and Aristotle. To look into the origin and evolution of the state has been one of the greatest issues in Political Science.

In ancient India also thinkers like Bhisma, Narada, Brihaspati, Kautilya, Kamandaka have looked at the problem. On the basis of the writings of these thinkers we can detect four important theories regarding the origin of the state in ancient India, namely—

a) Evolutionary Theory

b) Force Theory

c) Mystical Theory

d) Contract Theory

Out of these four theories the theory of mystical origin and the theory of contractual origin are more prevalent. We will look at these theories one by one.

**Theory of Evolutionary Origin**

* This is the oldest theory of the origin of the state in India and has been mentioned in the Atharva Veda. According to this theory the state is the result of evolutionary progress and it didn’t originate at a fixed time. The tenth hymn of the eighth chapter of the Atharva Veda gives a picture of the evolutionary origin of the state.
* On the basis of Atharva Veda several stages of the evolution of the state can be traced. The hymns of the Atharva Veda state that the earliest phase of human life was the stage of **vairājya** or **stateless state**. It was a state of complete anarchy.
* But subsequently, with the emergence of agriculture, stable life became possible.
* To fulfil the needs of agricultural society the family emerged and the head of the family became the first wielder of authority.
* Further, the need of co-operation in the different realms of society led to the emergence of **sabhā** and **samiti**.
* Sabhā was the organisation of elderly people and samiti was the general assembly of common people.
* With the emergence of sabhā and samiti organised political life began which finally culminated in the emergence of the state.
* A.S. Altekar, N.N. Law and H.C. Raychaudhuri somehow favour the theory of evolutionary origin.
* R. Shamasastry also favours the evolutionary theory but in his opinion the earliest form of family in ancient India was matriarchal which after the invasion of Aryans became patriarchal.
* Bhandarkar has quoted five passages from **Shānti Parva** which suggest that the kingly office arose to protect the weak against the strong.
* One of the main duties of the king was the protection of private property by punishing the thief and that of the family by punishing the adulterers.
* Preservation of the varna (caste system) was another great responsibility of the king.
* Generally the maintenance of the caste system was considered an indispensable element of dharma, for according to Kamandaka if dharma is violated by the members of the state, there is bound to be pralaya or dissolution of the whole social order.
* The dominant ideal that moved the king in ancient India was the attainment of dharma, artha and kāma. If the **artha** is taken in the **sense of enjoyment of property**, the **kāma** in the **sense of enjoyment of family life** and **dharma** in the **sense of maintenance of the legal system**.

**Force Theory**

* Though ancient Indian political thinkers did not propound force theory in a systematic way, force was considered to be an important factor in the evolution of the state in India.
* Earliest Aryan clans fought among themselves for pet animals (specially for the cow), pastureland, settlements and sources of drinking water. Only a strong and able warrior could lead the clan in such wars. So he was given special status and the members of clan started obeying him. This tendency

continued in the days of peace also and subsequently the leader became king.

* Citing examples from the Vedas (Rig Veda and Sāma Veda) and the Brahmanas (Aitareya, Shatapatha) John Spellman also opines that the king in ancient India was primarily a military leader.
* But it should be clearly mentioned that none of the political commentators give a systematic and well knitted explanation of the role of force in the emergence of the state in ancient India.

**Theory of Mystical Origin**

* This was the most popular theory of origin of the state in ancient India.
* Kingship was given divine sanction and the king was considered not to be the representative of God but himself a God who contained the powers of important Gods like Indra, Varuna and Agni.
* According to A.L. Basham the doctrine of royal divinity was explicitly proclaimed. It appears first in the epics and the law books of Manu. The latter declares in dignified language:

“When the world was without a king

And dispersed in fear in all directions,

The lord created a king

For protection of all.”

“He made him of eternal particles

Of Indra and the wind,

Yama, the Sun and fire,

Varuna, the moon and the lord of wealth.”

* In the course of the ceremonies king was identified with Indra “because he is a kshatriya and because he is a sacrificer” and even with the high God Prajāpati himself.
* He took three steps on a tiger skin and was thus magically identified with the God Vishnu whose three paces covered earth and heaven.
* The king was evidently the fellow of the God. The magical power which pervaded the king at his consecration was restored and strengthened in the course of his reign by further rites, such as the

ceremonial rejuvenation of the Vājapeya and the horse-sacrifice (Asvamedha) which not only

ministered to his ambition and arrogance but also ensured the prosperity and fertility of the kingdom.

* The brahmanic rituals such as horse sacrifice became inactive under the Mauryas, but was revived by the Sungas and was performed by many later kings both in North and South. After the period of the Guptas these sacrifices became rare, however, the last we have been able to trace took place in the Chola Empire in the eleventh century.
* But the tradition of royal divinity continued. Kings referred to their divine status in their titles and

commended, and they were regularly addressed by their courtiers as deva, or God.

* The Chola kings and some others were even worshipped as God in the temples.
* Regarding divine origin of kingship, a story repeatedly appears in the Mahābhārata and other texts. This is the very ancient story of the first man, Manu, who combined the characteristics of Adam and Noah in the Hebrew tradition. The story tells that at the beginning of this period of cosmic time, when greed and wrath had disturbed human relations, men inflicted untold misery upon one another.
* Arthashāstra states that the people should be told that, the king fulfils the functions of the God Indra (the king of Gods) and Yama (the God of death) upon earth.
* Ashoka and other Mauryan kings took the title **“Beloved of the Gods” (devānāmpiya)**, and, though they seem not to have claimed wholly divine status.
* **John Spellman** also favours the view that the theory of divine origin was the dominant and popularly accepted theory regarding the origin of the state in ancient India. According to Spellman **“The king was appointed by the God and ruled through divine grace.”**
* The viewpoint which supports the theory of divine origin of state in ancient India has been widely criticized by Western as well as Indian scholars.

**Contract Theory**

* Contract theory is the most extensively discussed theory of the origin of the state in ancient India.
* The reference to contract theory can be seen in the Buddhist texts like Dīgha Nikāya and Mahāvastu and brahmanical texts like Shānti Parva and Arthashāstra of Kautilya.
* **John Spellman** and **U.N. Ghoshal** accept only the Buddhist sources as the authentic source of contract theory because according to them the brahmanical texts have a mixture of contract and divine origin whereas Buddhist sources give a clear cut account of contract theory.
* On the other hand **K.P. Jayasawal** and **D.R. Bhandarkar**, citing examples from the Vedas and Brāhmanas advocate that the contractual origin of the state can be traced to brahmanical texts as well, along with the Buddhist texts.
* The first clear and developed exposition of this theory is found in the Buddhist canonical text Dīgha Nikāya where the story of creation reminds us of the ideal state of Rousseau followed by the state of nature as depicted by Hobbes.
* It is said that there was a time when people were perfect, and lived in a state of happiness and tranquility. This perfect state lasted for ages, but at last the pristine purity declined and there set in rottenness.
* Differences of sex manifested themselves, and there appeared distinctions of color.
* In a word, heavenly life degenerated into earthly life.
* Now shelter, food and drink were required.
* People gradually entered into a series of agreements among themselves and set up the institutions of the family and private property. But this gave rise to a new set of problems, for there appeared theft and other forms of unsocial conduct.
* Therefore, people assembled and agreed to choose as chief a person who was the best favoured, the most attractive and the most capable. In return they agreed to contribute to him a portion of their paddy. The individual, who was thus elected, came to hold in serial order three titles:

a) Mahāsammata

b) Khattiya and

c) Rājā

According to the text –

* the first title means one chosen by the whole people,
* the second title means the lord of the fields
* the third title means one who charms the people by means of dharma.
* The speculation made in the Dīgha Nikāya is the product of an advanced stage of social development when tribal society had broken up giving rise to clash of interests between man and woman, between people of different races and colors and between people of unequal wealth.
* This idea was a adumbrated in the middle Ganga plains, where paddy was the basis of the economy of the people.
* Political compact as developed in the Dīgha Nikāya not only lays a different type of emphasis on qualifications for election as king but also clearly states the obligations of the two parties.
* The king has been assigned the task to punish the wicked people. The only definite form of punishment is the banishment of the guilty.
* Thus, on the whole, the obligation of the head of the state is negative. He steps in only when people break the established laws.
* The khattiya which means the lord of fields, suggests that the primary duty of the king is to protect the plots of one against being encroached upon by the other.
* The interpretation of the title rājā imposes on the king the positive obligation of charming or pleasing the people.
* In contrast to the several obligations of the king, the people are assigned only one duty, namely, to pay a part of their paddy as contribution to the king. The rate of taxation is not prescribed but the contemporary law-book of Baudhayana lays down that the king should protect the people in return for one sixth of the produce.
* Originally the agreement takes place between a single kshatriya on the one hand and the people on the other, but at later stage it is extended to the kshatriya as a class. Towards the end of the story of creation in the Dīgha Nikāya it is stated that thus took place the origin of the social circles of the nobles, Khattiya Mandala.
* The earliest brahmanical exposition of the contract theory of the origin of the state in clear terms occurs in the Arthashāstra of Kautilya. Just as in the Dīgha Nikāya this theory is propounded incidently in connection with the refutation of the brahmins claim of social supremacy.
* It states that overtaken by a state of anarchy the people elected Manu Vaivasvata as their king and undertook to pay 1/6th of their grain, and 1/10th of their articles of merchandise in addition to a portion of their gold.
* In return for these taxes the king guaranteed social welfare to the people by undertaking to suppress acts of mischief, afflicting the guilty with taxes.
* Even the inhabitants of the forest were required to give him 1/6th of the forest produce.
* This account of the origin of the state closes with the moral that the king should not be disregarded.
* The Kautilyan speculation is in keeping with an advanced economy, when different kinds of grain were produced so that the king laid claim not only to an unspecified part of paddy but also to a fixed part of all kinds of grain produce.
* Similarly, trade had been established as a regular source of income to the state, for both Megasthenes and Kautilya refer to officers regulating trade in this period.
* Besides, mining was a thriving industry in the Mauryan age.
* Probably on account of this, provision is made for payment of a part of hiranya, which covers not only gold but also includes similar other precious metals.
* Finally, the fact that even the inhabitants of the forest are not exempted from taxes is an indication of the comprehensive character of the Kautilyan state.
* Thus taken as a whole the first three taxes, namely, those in grain, commodities and metals, reflect the developed economy of the Mauryan period.