

NATIONAL SEMINAR REPORT
POLITICAL SYSTEMS OF ANCIENT BHARTIYA DYNASTIES
(23 & 24 DECEMBER, 2019)

The Departments of Political Science and International Relations & Mass Communication and Media Studies, School of Humanities has organized a National Seminar on **Political Systems of Ancient Bhartiya Dynasties** on 23rd & 24th December 2019. The Seminar sponsored by ICSSR, and Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi.

Inaugural Session



The Seminar inaugurated by Prof Kapil Kapoor, Chairman, Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla and attended by luminaries from the academic world. The hosts comprising of the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Bhagwati Prakash Sharma, Prof. Bandana Pandey, Convener of the Seminar and Dr. Vivek Kumar Mishra, Organising Secretary & Head of the Department of Political Science and International Relations, welcomed the dignitaries in the inaugural session of the Day one of the Seminar.

Prof. Kapil Kapoor

Prof. Kapoor emphasized the importance of the *Mahabharata* and extrapolated on the plethora of wisdom, which lays in the ancient epics of our country. Further, he delineated on the issue of the systematic neglect of the ancient

Bhartiya dynasties from the history books. Dynasties like *Chaulakyas*, which reigned over 600 years seldom find mention at length in the historiography undertaken by the Indian Historians. He also deciphered that how the state and governance evolved in India with organic institutions like *Mandals*, *Janapadas* and amongst these the decentralisation of power was into force. Moreover, he repeatedly underlined the equality, which remained into force and was primarily responsible for the longevity of the ancient Bhartiya dynasties. Also, it was the political unity that was the end to be achieved while keeping the democracy intact. Democracy was prevalent as in the 8th century as kings were elected ones. The underlying idea of his lecture was that we have been interpreting the political processes through the dormant Western concepts and definitions.

Prof. Bhagwati Prakash Sharma

The patron of the National Seminar, Prof. Bhagwati Prakash Sharma, Vice-Chancellor, Gautam Buddha University, delivered an enlightening speech on the structures of political systems in the ancient Bharat. The governance was always going up to the last man of the society and also emanated from the society itself. Prof. Sharma pointed out that the "kings were always subservient to the needs of the society". The only Dharma of the King was to remain responsible to the *Praja* and responsive to the societal needs. That the presence of self-righteousness was prevalent in ancient times even the concept of the just war, which was operating in ancient India, finds a mention in Magasthanese's *Indica*. Arguably, he explained the length and breadth of the Cholas dynasty and that it is very important to dwelling on the ancient wisdom, which is available in the forms of at least thirty *Tamba Patras*. He further underlined the importance of the thorough study and research of the ancient political dynasties, knowledge about which are available in various forms like inscriptions, edicts and so on. At the end of his lecture, he threw his weight behind the dire need of a dedicated team of scholars for the chronological epigraphy of the ancient dynasties.

Technical Session 1

THEME: RAJDHARMA AND GOVERNANCE IN ANCIENT SCRIPTURES

Chair: Sri Prakash Singh

Prof. Prakash Singh spoke at length on "Rajdharmā in Adikāvya" and outlined the key features of governance. He further emphasized on the issue of serving the society, which was the Rajdharmā of the king. The King was required to be judicious and devoid of any vices. The sap tang theory, the character of Ram influenced the emergence of governance in ancient India. The key point of his lecture was centred on the Purohit Parishad and Amartya Parishad and how these functioned in an unbiased and judicious manner to dispense justice or to perform his raj dharmā.

Prof. Dilip Kumar Mohanta

Prof. Mohanta delineated the concept of governance in ancient India and that how the Buddhist texts inspired spirituality and morality in the realm of political apparatus. The vehement materialism could not have provided governance bereft of injustice, greed, corruption so on and so forth. Further, he extrapolated on the Buddhist idea of the conflation of economics and political principles such as *Dhamma*, *Political morality*, *equality*, *democratic rights*, *tolerance of criticism* and the need to recognise the diversity. In a nutshell, Prof. Mohanta outlined the importance of the principles such as accommodation, integral humanism.

Dr. Bhaktiputra Rohtam has talked about political systems of Vedic periods and its linkages with the Bhartiya society. He stated that in our Vedas, there was a systematic and organised system from village to nation-based of spirituality and morality.

Technical Session II

Theme: Bhartiya Political Thought and Governance

Chair: Prof. S R Bhatt, former Chairman ICPR, New Delhi:

Prof. Bhatt chaired the 2nd technical session and pointed out three basic guiding principles which are the marked characteristics of our civilisation. These guiding principles are Peaceful existence, Harmonious cooperation, mutual caring, and sharing. For the realisation of the said principles, an organisation required both mundane and transcendental. That political organisation existed to promote *Hita and Sukh* of the Praja. Further, he outlined that for the protection of the people, the King should augment and protect the resources of the state.

Prof. Pawan Sharma, Head Political Science Department, Meerut University:

Prof Sharma emphasised on the process of selection and the right to recall the King. According to him, there are hundreds of stories that describe the process of election, re-election, and rejection of the kings. For instance, when Kekai requested Raja Dasharatha to make his son be the King, the decision has been made unanimously. Even in the Nanda dynasty, the power was scattered amongst ten brothers. The prevalence of decentralised and democratic structure was discussed at length.

Technical Session III

Theme: Bhartiya Political Thought and Governance

Chair: Prof. S R Bhatt, former Chairman ICPR, New Delhi:

Dr. Ram Shankaran

Dr. Ram spoke at length on the “Political systems of Cholas”. According to him, the Cholas dynasty was the golden era of administration in ancient India. It was having decentralised governance, like autonomous village units, where even villages were having wards. There was a proper mechanism for

agricultural development, like land survey, taxation, tax waiver, water management and committee to protect lands. Trade and commerce were also very vibrant and this was the era of economic prosperity as well. The judicial mechanism was very democratic which followed a determined path to dispense justice. And, the bureaucracy was highly organised.

Sri Kalyan Raman

Sri Raman spoke on the “Political System of Pallava Dynasty”. The administrative system was divided into five different domains on a geographical basis. For instance, paleyi,(desert area), Kurunji (hills area), nedal (shore area), Mardam (Most fertile area), etc. He aptly pointed out that in the past no divisions existed between North and South, and the whole country was unified. This is a false narrative promoted by centrifugal forces. In every administrative sphere, there use to be a post of Dharmasena to dispense justice.

Technical Session IV

THEME: GOVERNANCE IN VEDIC AND POST VEDIC LITERATURE

Chair: Prof. Gulab Chandra Jaiswal

Prof. Gulab Chandra Jaiswal has explained the administration in the Maurya dynasty and outlined the importance of our history to realise the needs of the nation in the present times. Further, he also urged the students to dwell on the academic discourse to have an analytical bent of mind.

Dr. M L Raja

Dr. Raja discussed the political system of the Magadh Empire. He presented the emergence and fall of these dynasties. Further, in the initial stage, there were no kings and the concept of Dharma was operating into the minds of the general populace which resulted in mutual protection. He explained the administrative structure of the village and differential functions like tax collection, defense, etc. performed by different villages based on their capacities. At the town level, there were Nagarika, who was the chief town officer to look after the various needs of the town.

Conference Report: Day 2 on 24/12/2019
SPECIAL SESSION ON POLITICAL SYSTEM OF ANCIENT INDIAN
DYNASTIES



The special session was chaired by Prof Bhagwati Prakash Sharma, Vice-Chancellor Gautam Buddha University and Keynote speaker of the session was Dr. Krishana Gopal Ji.

Dr. Krishna Gopal Ji at length outlined the dire need of reviving our ancient wisdom. Further, he also dwells upon the administrative, economic and political vibrancy, which existed in ancient India.

He stated that there was social harmony in the ancient political and social system in Ancient India. Dr. Krishna Gopal ji has illustrated by citing the scripture of Rig Veda, he said in ancient India women saints have given vedic mantras and also men who belonged to so called lower castes. Everything depended on the capability of a person in those days. But this system has somewhere been lost gradually. He said that there should be an understanding among people from different classes as in civilised society cooperation among people is a must.

The Bharat as a Rastra is united not only on a territorial basis but because of our common social and ethical and cultural values are the binding and uniting force across the country. Dr. Krishna Gopal Ji stated that nation-building does not only comprise of maintaining and increasing the geographical borders, but also requires building the moral character of the people of a country and to imbibe nationalist spirit in them.

Further, he emphasised on the comparative study of Indian and Western political structures, which existed in the past. The main idea given by him is that Indian civilization and political systems were always multi-polar whereas the Western political system was unipolar. The Indian system is never lost its existence because of its multipolarity, which is the uniqueness of Bharat. He has highlighted the importance and different model of ancient Bhartiya governance.

Technical session 1

THEME: GOVERNANCE IN VEDIC AND POST VEDIC LITERATURE

Chair: Prof. Kumar Ratnam, Member Secretary ICHR, New Delhi

While speaking on “ Governance in Vedic and Post-Vedic literature” Prof Ratnam argued that according to Manu Rastra is not only about territory alone but also how existence is an ongoing process, where King also is guided by some basic rules and regulations. For example, Sabha- Samiti was also not fully controlled by King, thus the King did not enjoy the absolutist powers. The society was guided by values and ethics. That ancient society was organized in such a manner that it was bereft of vices.

Prof. Kaushal Mishra has delivered a lecture on “*Manusmriti Mai Ram Rajya and Sushashan*”. He stated that according to Manu Politics is about Sanskar, life process, and Rastra in itself. Manu is a symbol of humanism and that Manu in a detailed manner laid down the foundation of politics. Manu touched a variety of subjects like employment with security, clean environment, disease-free society,

a society free from violence and a place where there will be a lot of water and wealth. In the presence of the said amenities, the state will be constructed.

Technical Session 2

THEME: POLITICAL SYSTEM AND GOVERNANCE IN HIMALAYAN KINGDOMS

Chair: Prof. Ashwini Mahapatra has thrown light on the ancient political system of the Kashmir dynasty with a focus on the king Lalitaditya period. He also highlighted the geo-political and cultural importance of the Himalayan region.

Padam Shree Prof. Jawahar Lal Kaul

Prof Kaul spoke on “Principles of Governance in Ancient and Medieval Kashmir”. During the Buddhist rule animal slaughter was banned, governance was based on equality, non-violence, and liberty. Further, every sect was accorded the same status and the political dispensation acted in an unbiased way. Lalitaditya of the Karakoram dynasty was a great strategist monarch who anticipated the danger from the foreign invaders. Thus, the ruling elite was well versed in politics.

Dr. Neerja Gupta:

Prof. Gupta has stated that Buddhist Lamas had a great impact on the formation of greater Ladakh. During the time of Lochava Rinchope, in the sphere of religion, a renaissance occurred. In the 12th century, King Lachhan Ptpal United the Ladakh. During his reign, Ladakh became a hub of the educational center.

Sri Ashutosh Bhatnagar:

Sri Ashutosh Ji spoke on the “Administration and Value System in Ancient Kashmir”. He explained the system of the compulsory education system in the ancient Kashmir and the punishment of the parents if their children not getting enrolled in education. And the King could be removed and even a widow was allowed to rule the territory.

Technical session 3

THEME: RASTRA: ANCIENT REPUBLICS

Prof. Sanjeev Kumar Sharma, Vice-Chancellor of Central University Motihari Bihar chaired the session and illuminated the gathering with his words of wisdom. He addressed the allegation leveled against Indian history that we don't have facts and only have interpretations. He argued that in our Indic thought we should focus on thinking and interpretations and not on facts and dates. Our history has always been the contest between the old and new. He also pointed out the handicaps that we face in the process of translation.

Prof. Vibha Upadhyay

Prof Upadhyay sheds light on the need of studying history and how it is important to understand how we arrived at the present. Further, she pointed out that the study of Politics and history goes in tandem. She outlined that the process of historiography was imported from the western world and applied it in the Indian context, which in turn failed to portray the true and impartial history of India. Also, the definitions like that of Nation, Nation-state was taken from the west and after their application led to the fallible conclusion that India has not been a nation and could not become one. Since the concept of nation in the western world was conceived in terms of uniformity i.e, one language, race, religion, etc. Ancient Bharatiya political system was based on *Dharma* i.e Hinduism.

Dr. Binod Kumar Mangalam explained the political systems in the Vedic age. He raised a question that how the political tradition and culture of India has declined. Further, in the modern world. He has stressed the process of documenting history, especially with the advent of the modern age.

Prof. Rakesh Kumar Upadhyay

Prof. Upadhyaya delivered his lecture on *Political thought in Indian tradition*. Further, it was argued that the written evidence on the political systems of ancient Bharat started mainly from the Kautilya's Arthashastra when it was

retrieved in 1905. Kamdanka's *Nitisara* has also given a detailed analysis of the political systems. Banbhatt, who lived during the reign of King Harshvardhan written a book *Harshcharit*, given details about the political system of Harsha.

The Huns' barbarity and their march towards India were also explained along with the resilience of Indian civilization that how it survived the relentless blows from the external invaders.

Dr. Manan Dwivedi

Dr. Manan talked about the importance of cultural precepts and their importance to understand the vibrant political systems or dynasties, which existed in the past. The ethics and moral values of the Maurya Empire have discussed at length that it had a very responsive justice system and the political decentralization in the spirit of democratic rule. Further, the characteristics of the Maurya Empire like irrigation system, revenue, trade, sound bureaucracy, espionage system were also dwelt upon.

Sri Praful Ketkar

Prafulla Ji in a very thought-provoking manner shed the light on the dichotomy, which the intelligentsia alleged that whether or not, India had a culture of contemplation, political thinking or not. Sri Ketkar exposed misplaced constructs like the Nehruvian conception of the nation in the making, second that India is not the nation. He dwelt upon the mesmerizing topic on the Evolution of *Rashtra*. He outlined the central characteristic of the *Bhartiya* Political Dynasties, which ran through all the *Bhartiya* dynasties has been that of a "Spiritual Democracy".

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS BY DR KRISHNA GOPAL JI

Valedictory Address was given by Dr. Krishna Gopal Ji, Sah Sarkarvah of *Rashtriya Swayam Sevaksangh (RSS)*. Dr. Sahab has advised the academicians of the Political Science that develop a strategy and planning to work on the political systems of ancient dynasties. There is an urgent need to work on the issue and work to strengthen the political and social system of *Bharat*.

Dr. Krishna Gopal Ji has encouraged that academicians especially from the field of Political Science that the primary mission of all nationalistic academicians should be to revive the ancient Bhartiya political systems based on culture and traditions of Bharat and it will continue to work to achieve that target.

Prof. Bhagwati Prakash Sharma, VC of Gautam Buddha University has thanked Dr. Krishna Gopal Ji and all eminent scholars of the Seminar and also stressed that our university will constitute a working group for the further detail study and academic work on the Political systems on Ancient Bharat.

Dr. Vivek Kumar Mishra has presented the report of the seminar and Prof. Bandana Pandey has given Vote of Thanks.



Prof Bandana Pandey

Convener

Dr. Vivek Kumar Mishra

Head and Organising Secretary

Department of Political Science and International Relations

Gautam Buddha University, Greater Noida