

Indian Council of Historical Research

Ministry of Education, Govt. of India
New Delhi-110001

Cordially invites you to

Book Release Function

India: The Mother of Democracy

Chief editors : Raghuvendra Tanwar & Umesh Ashok Kadam
at the auspicious hands of

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan

Hon'ble Minister of Education

in the gracious presence of

Smt. Annpurna Devi
MoS, Education

Dr. Subhas Sarkar
MoS, Education

Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh
MoS, Education

Date & Time: 24 November 2022 | 3:00 p.m.

Venue: Constitution Club of India, Rafi Marg, New Delhi

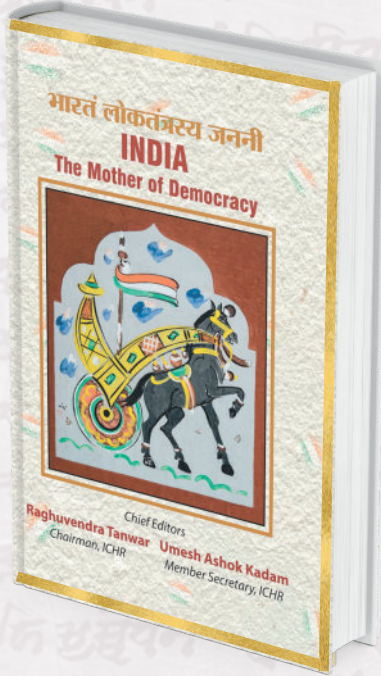
Google Meet Link- <https://meet.google.com/ncw-vvxx-miq> and join live on



R.S.V.P.

Prof. Raghuvendra Tanwar
Chairman, ICHR

Prof. Umesh Ashok Kadam
Member Secretary, ICHR



75
आज़ादी का
अमृत महोत्सव

शिक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION

भारतीय इतिहास अनुसंधान परिषद्
शिक्षा मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार,
नई दिल्ली

भारतं लोकतन्त्रस्य जननी

(मुख्य संपादक : रघुवेंद्र तंवर एवं उमेश अशोक कदम)
पुस्तक-विमोचन कार्यक्रम में आप सादर आमंत्रित हैं।

श्री धर्मेन्द्र प्रधान

माननीय केंद्रीय शिक्षा मंत्री

के कर कमलों द्वारा पुस्तक का विमोचन किया जाएगा।

विशिष्ट गरिमामयी उपस्थिति:

श्रीमती अन्नपूर्णा देवी
राज्य शिक्षा मंत्री

डॉ. सुभाष सरकार
राज्य शिक्षा मंत्री

डॉ. राजकुमार रंजन सिंह
राज्य शिक्षा मंत्री

दिनांक एवं समय : 24 नवम्बर 2022 | 3:00 बजे सांय
स्थान: कॉन्स्टीट्यूशन क्लब ऑफ इंडिया, रफ़ी मार्ग, नई दिल्ली

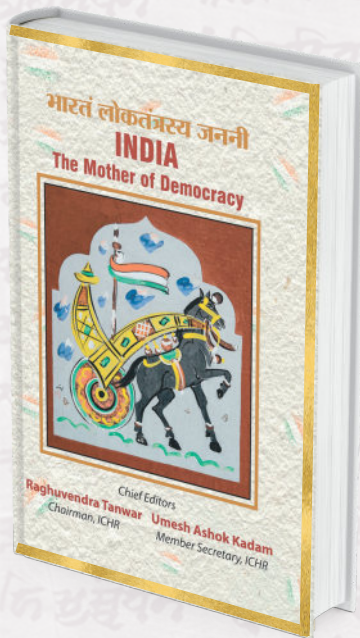
गूगल मीट लिंक- <https://meet.google.com/ncw-vvkx-miq> और लाइव ज़ाइन करें



उत्तरापेक्षी:

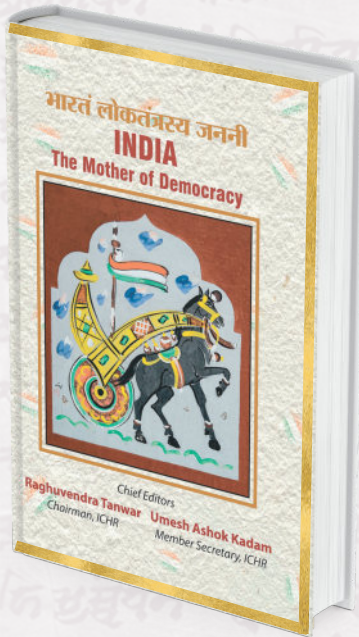
प्रो. रघुवेंद्र तंवर
अध्यक्ष, भा.इ.अ.प.

प्रो. उमेश अशोक कदम
सदस्य सचिव, भा.इ.अ.प.



Minute to Minute Programme

National Anthem		3:00 PM
Lighting of Lamp & Saraswati Pujan	By the Dignitaries on Dais	3.05 - 3.10 PM
Felicitation of Guests		3.10 - 3.15 PM
Introduction of the Book	Prof. Umesh Ashok Kadam, Member Secretary, ICHR	3.15 – 3.20 PM
About the Theme	Prof. Raghuvendra Tanwar, Chairman, ICHR	3.20 – 3.25 PM
Book Release	Sh. Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Minister of Education	3.25 – 3.30 PM
Presentation of Book to	Sh. Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Minister of Education and dignitaries	3.30 - 3.35 PM
Address of Hon'ble Minister of Education	Sh. Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Minister of Education	3.35- 3.45 PM
Dance performance on 'Pledge'	Ms. Maya Kulshrestha	3.45 – 3.50 PM
Media Interaction	With Sh. Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Minister of Education	3.50 – 4.00 PM
Vote of thanks	Ms. Neelam Malkania	4.00 – 4.05 PM
National Anthem		4.05 PM
High Tea		4.10 PM



कार्यक्रम विवरण

राष्ट्रगान		3:00 सांय
दीप-प्रज्ज्वलन एवं सरस्वती वंदना	गणमान्य अतिथियों द्वारा	3.00 - 3.10 सांय
अतिथि सत्कार		3.10 - 3.15 सांय
पुस्तक परिचय	प्रो. उमेश अशोक कदम, सदस्य सचिव, भा.इ.अ.प.	3.15 - 3.20 सांय
विषय परिचय	प्रो. रघुवेंद्र तंवर, अध्यक्ष, भा.इ.अ.प.	3.20 - 3.25 सांय
पुस्तक विमोचन	श्री धर्मेन्द्र प्रधान, माननीय केंद्रीय शिक्षा मंत्री	3.25 - 3.30 सांय
पुस्तक प्रस्तुति	श्री धर्मेन्द्र प्रधान, माननीय केंद्रीय शिक्षा मंत्री एवं गणमान्य अतिथियों को	3.30 - 3.35 सांय
माननीय केंद्रीय शिक्षा मंत्री द्वारा संबोधन	श्री धर्मेन्द्र प्रधान, माननीय केंद्रीय शिक्षा मंत्री	3.35- 3.45 सांय
'प्रतिज्ञा' पर आधारित नृत्य कार्यक्रम	श्रीमती माया कुलश्रेष्ठ	3.45 - 3.50 सांय
मीडिया - संवाद	श्री धर्मेन्द्र प्रधान, माननीय केंद्रीय शिक्षा मंत्री द्वारा	3.50 - 4.00 सांय
धन्यवाद ज्ञापन	श्रीमती नीलम मल्कानिया	4.00 - 4.05 सांय
राष्ट्रगान		4.05 सांय
जलपान		4.10 सांय



सत्यमेव जयते
भारत सरकार

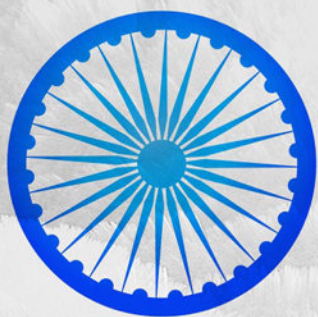
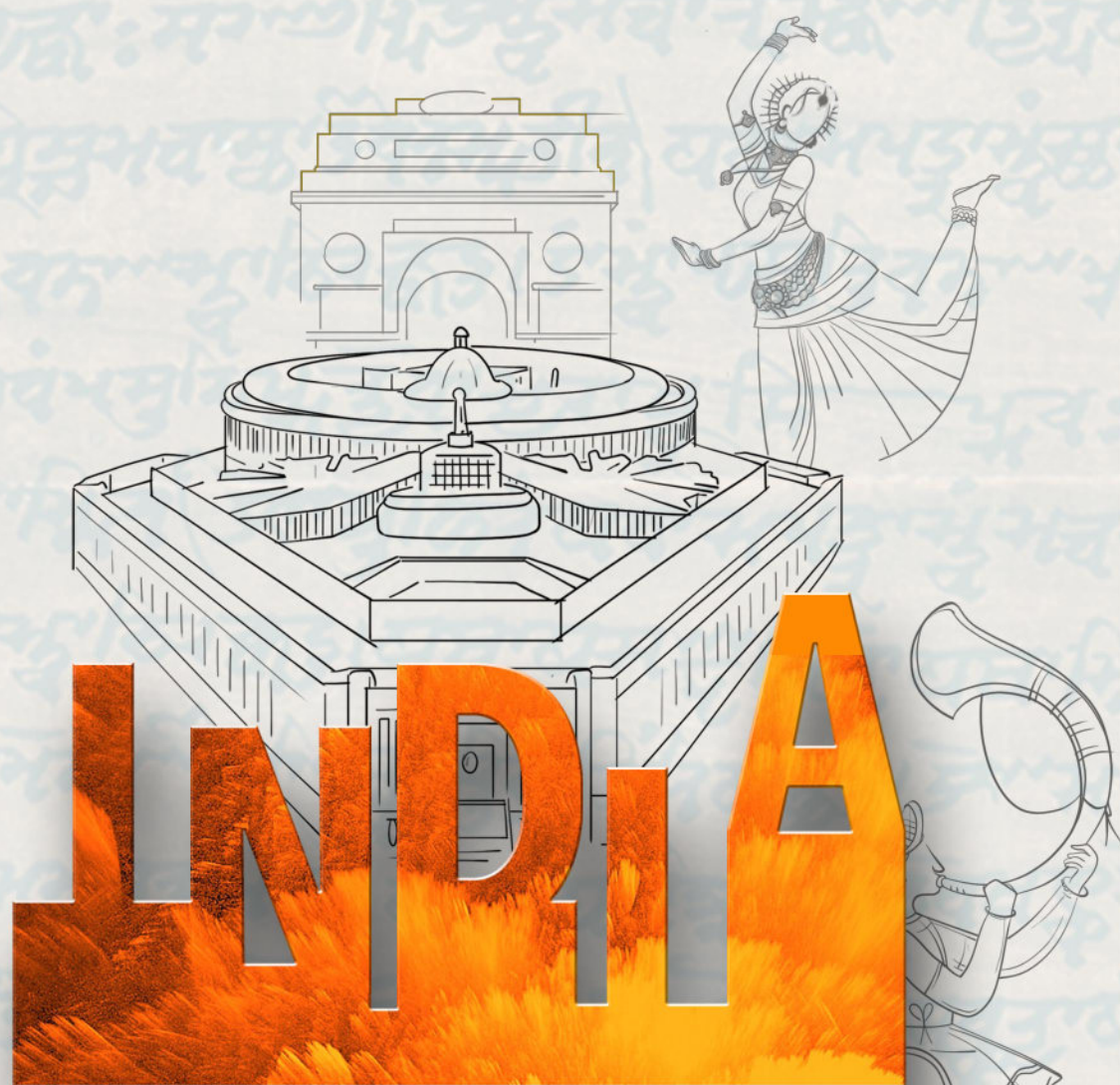


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Bharat

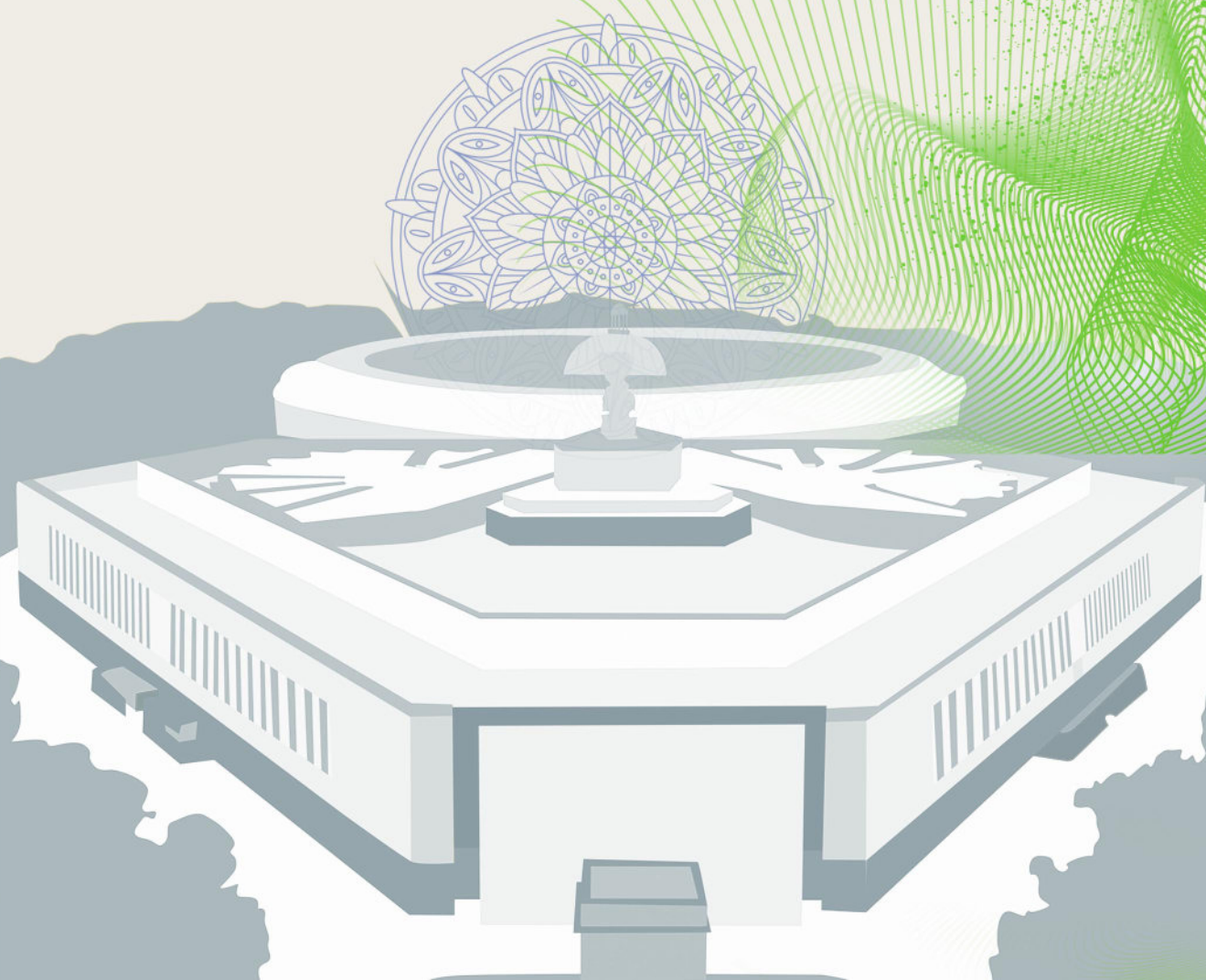
LOKTANTRA KI JANANI'



भारत

SUB -THEMES:

- (i) Archaeological evidences and democratic roots in Bharat;
- (ii) Examples of loktantrika-parampara in literature;
- (iii) Rigveda and roots of Bhartiya loktantrika-parampara;
- (iv) Sabha and Samiti: exploring Bhartiya democratic traditions;
- (v) Dharma-Sutras and loktantra;
- (vi) Upanishads and Parishad;
- (vii) Exploring Dharama as loktantrika-parampara;
- (viii) Kautilya's Arthshastra and Bhartiya loktantra;
- (ix) Gana-Janpadas and Janatantra during ancient period;
- (x) Epigraphical sources and loktantrika-parampara;
- (xi) Bhartiya Kala, Epigraphs and loktantrik traditions;
- (xii) Lichchhavi Gana-raja and loktantra
- (xiii) Bhakti and democratic traditions;
- (xiv) local institutions/khaps and loktantrika-parampara; and,
- (xv) any other subject related to the main theme.



‘Bharat: Loktantra ki Janani’

The idea of Bharat needs to be cherished as there are millions and millions of Indians across the globe since times immemorial. It is so because Bharat and its 'Loktantra' have influence and conclaves civilizations across the world. It made the world to know that the 'Lok' and its 'Tantra' are very symbiotic and complement each other. It is only through its fusion good governance can be made possible. It is from the land of Bharat, that this spontaneity of serving the masses made its origin.

A distinction needs to be drawn between Praja-Tantra, Jana-Tantra, and Loka-Tantra. One is a straight translation of the political system known as 'Democracy', the second is 'people versus the ruler(s) oriented system', and the third is 'a community-system oriented towards the welfare of the community'.

There are three dimensions of people's polity, a system of governance broadly referred to as 'Democracy': (i) limits on the 'Ruler(s)'; (ii) accountability of the 'Ruler(s)'; (iii) people's direct or indirect participation in governance and/or their rights of self-governance.

In India, from the Vedic times itself, two kinds of states, janapada and rajya have been in existence. The Indian experience evolved its own form of governance at the levels of the village and the central polity: (i) the federal/central political structures were delinked from the life of the community (village communities), and consequently (ii) village communities became self-governing and autonomous, and (iii) developed a hierarchy of self-governing institutions, such as Panchayat and Khaps, that enabled them to remain unaffected by and large by the changing kingdoms/ empires particularly those of the invaders hostile to Hindu culture.

This explains the survival of Hindu culture and civilisation in the face of 2000 years of invasions by alien ethnicities and cultures. This became possible because the Hindu mind from the beginning addressed the central question of how to weld this vast multiplicity that is India into a single larger community and from ancient times a geo-cultural definition has been given to this entity, rashtra, Bharata -- The country which lies to the south of the Himalayas and the north of the oceans is called Bharata and the Bharatiyas are the people of this country.

Democratic system in Bharat has evolved over the ages. There are ample archaeological, literary, numismatic, epigraphical, bhakti, and so on, evidences which emphasis on the Loktantrik tradition of Bharat. The roots of people's self-governance also lie in India's Vedic period going back, vide the recent archaeological excavations at Rakhigarhi and Sanauli, to at least 5000 BCE, if not more.

Vedic literature talks of cosmic cohesion, harmony of existence. The Upanishads stress on fundamental unity, right to life and existence for all beings. Shrimad Bhagavad Gita emphasizes on knowledge, faith, action, virtue all synthesized in human conduct.

The Vedic term for law is Dharman. In this age in other parts of the world law meant 'eye for an eye'. A Vedic prayer notes: "If I play false may I lose the merit of all my religions performances, gifts of good deeds -- my life and even my progeny".

Dharman was the anchor of society. Compassion, empathy, non-violence were ways of life. Good character and moral action were fundamentals of Bhartiya society.



In the Rigveda there are several terms which were undoubtedly applied to non-monarchical institutions. The two assemblies called Sabha and Samiti formed an essential feature of the government. The term Sabha denotes "The people in conclave. The Samiti in the sense of an assembly of people is mentioned in the Rigveda. It appears the Samiti was an august assembly of a larger group of people for the discharge of tribal (i.e., political) business and was presided over by the King. Both these Assemblies exercised considerable authority and must have acted as healthy checks on the power of the kings. Great importance was attached, not only to the concord between the king and the assembly but also to a spirit of harmony among members of the Assembly. The last hymn of the Rigveda invokes such unity: "Assembly, speak together, let your minds be all of one accord... the place is common, common the assembly, common the mind so be their thought united..." (Ghosh, R. C. Majumdar, p.357). It is clear that the importance of these two bodies continued in later period as well.

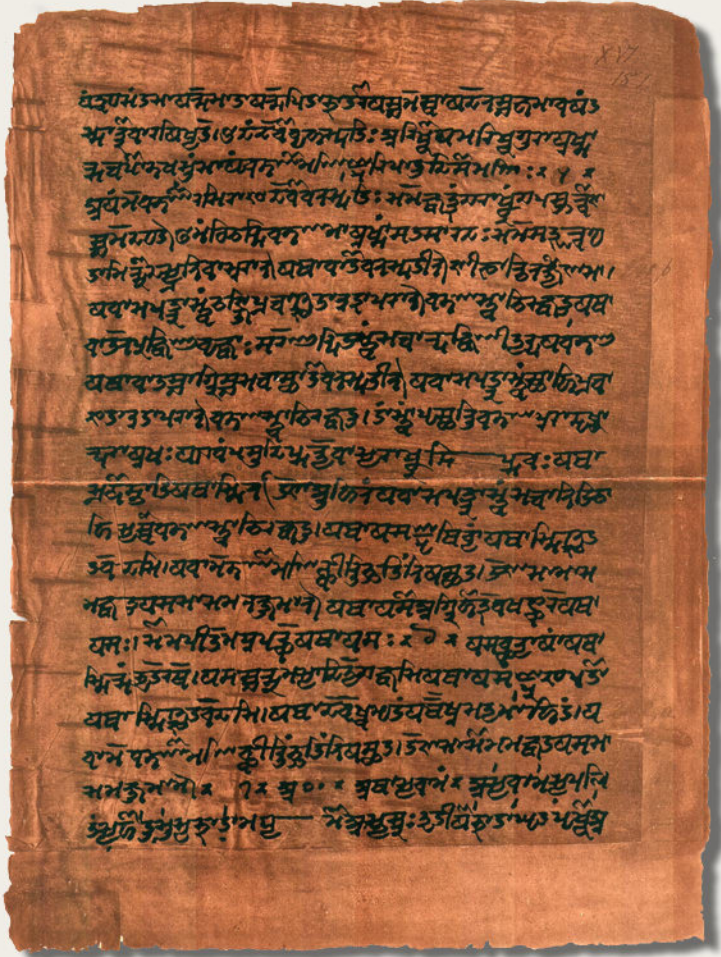
Also, there is no doubt that the people played an important part in politics. Thus, stress is laid on the necessity of concord between the king and his electors in a passage in the Atharvaveda, which is a clear testimony of the prevalence of the system of election of the kings.

Simultaneously, it should be underlined that the Bhartiya context of governance had a crucial difference with other ancient political philosophies like say Greece and Rome. In India there was the constant emphasis on inner consciousness and the need to integrate with the totality of the Universe.

Another key difference that separates Bharat from other ancient civilizations is -- there was no concentration of the prestige of birth, influence of wealth and political office which made social organizations autocratic and aristocratic. There was no aristocracy in India like say in Greece. The Hindu state rarely presented that high degree of centralization associated with the Roman empire.

Nevertheless, in Hindu political theory, sovereignty rests in Dharma or law in the wider context. One of the most profound ideas in ancient Indian political philosophy is that power or the office of the king is only a trust.

India to the great surprise of the world with all its multiple plurality is today the world's largest successful working democracy is, because Indian people, infused with the spirit of equality, have had since the very Vedic times a lokatantrika-parampara.



INDIA

THE MOTHER
OF DEMOCRACY



Chief Editors
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INTRODUCTION

The History of India is not the story of how she underwent foreign invasions, but how she resisted them and eventually triumphed over them. Traditions of modern historical research founded by British scholars of repute were unfortunately colored by their attitude towards ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, which have a dead past and arguably are museum exhibits. Thus, an examination of the Indian past akin to a post-mortem would be scientifically inaccurate; for every period of Indian History is no more than an expression, in a limited period, of all the vital forces and dominant ideas created and preserved by the national culture, which would surface at every moment across time.

The modern historian of India must approach her as a living entity with a continuing and live character, of which the apparent life is a mere expression. Without such an outlook it is impossible to understand India, which, even though when a part of it has seceded in search of an independent existence, stands today three hundred and fifty million strong, with a new apparatus of state, determined not to be untrue to its ancient self, and yet to be equal to the highest demands of modern life during all this period the vitality of the race and culture; altered from time to time in direction and objective, it has expressed itself with unabated vigor in resistance movements, be they military, political, and cultural.

As we proceed with our narrative, we gradually realize that the different epochs of Indian history present great commonalities, and a civilizational kindred spirit to those of other such countries which boast of a culture and civilization going back to remote antiquity.

The discoveries in the Indus Valley and adjacent regions have further emphasized the close association between the cultures of India and those of Western Asia, and thereby link up Indian history with that of the most ancient period of the world known to us. India now takes her place alongside Egypt and Mesopotamia as a country to which we can trace the dawn of human civilization, and the beginnings of such thoughts, ideas, activities and movements as have molded the destinies of mankind all over the civilized world. The history of India thus possesses an aspect of uniqueness blended with universality, which so strikingly distinguishes it from the histories of Egypt, Babylonia, and Assyria in the early, and Persia, Greece, and Rome in a somewhat later age. In the case of each of these the universal aspect greatly exceeds in importance the individual or regional aspect. This is not, however, the case with India. This difference has modified the outlook and treatment of the history of India and made it a problem almost *sui generis*.

The chief difference between India and the other ancient countries mentioned above lies in the continuity of her history and civilization. The cultures and civilizations of ancient Egypt, Sumer, Akkad, Babylon, Assyria, and Persia have long since vanished. They are now merely antique memories and their history inspires only an academic interest. Indian history and institutions, however, form an unbroken chain by which the past is indissolubly connected to the present. The modern peoples of Egypt and Mesopotamia have no ostensible commonality whatsoever with the civilizations that flourished there millennia ago, and their traces, bits and fragments of that ancient memory, have no more meaning to them than to any other enlightened person in any other part of the world.

This, however, is not the case with India. The iconography from the pantheon of Mohenjo-Daro represents gods and goddesses who are still worshipped in India, and Hindus from the Himalaya to Cape Comorin repeat even today the Vedic hymns which were chanted on the banks of the Indus nearly four millennia ago. This continuity in language and literature, and in religious and social usages, is more prominent in India than even in Greece and Italy, where we can trace relative continuity in history. The social and religious ideas of ancient Greece and Rome and their philosophy and outlook in life- in short, the very cultural essence which gives individuality to a nation and preserve its continuity, is almost foreign to the peoples now inhabiting those lands.

An artificial continuity is no doubt maintained in these two countries, and the link with the past is not altogether snapped, as in the cases of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Nevertheless, the difference can only be regarded as one of degree and not of kind; moreover, neither Greece nor Italy stands parallel to India, in respect of either antiquity or continuity of civilization.

To this difference may be added the contemporary predicament of India. Her political subjugation and scarcity of material resources have relegated her to a position of marked inferiority in international eyes. Both these causes have affected the study of the history of India in more ways than one. It has not been easy, for instance, to bring a detached scientific spirit to bear on the study of the history of India. This spirit, which so conspicuously distinguishes European writers of the history of Egypt and antique civilizations in the Near East, is not seldom lamentably absent while they deal with the history of India. The reason is not far to seek, and may be traced to a psychological instinct, or political prejudice.



The India of today has cast its shadow on the past, and few writers have been able to disentangle the two and view each of them in its true perspective. The political history of India, even of ancient times, has been almost invariably viewed through the lenses of the high modernism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. V. A. Smith, the well-known historian of ancient India, and a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service, never concealed his anxiety to prove the beneficence of the British Raj by holding before his readers the picture of anarchy and confusion which, in his view, has been the default political status in India, with rare intervals. To him, as to many others before and after him, ancient Indian history after the death of Harsha-Vardhan was merely a pathetic tale of political chaos and internecine struggles, pointing to the inevitable colonial truism: 'such was India and such it always has been till the British established a stable order.'

Sometimes we see the pendulum swing to the opposite extreme, and Indian writers seek to find in ancient India a replica of the most advanced political institutions of the West. From isolated phrases of doubtful import, they conjure up a picture of a full-fledged modern democracy and even of an up-to-date parliamentary form of government. This is a counter-critique, from the Indian side, to the inveterate belief of European writers in undiluted autocracy as the only form of government that ever prevailed in India. To them, 'Oriental despotism' is almost an article of faith that colors their whole outlook. Some have also inherited the classical idea that wisdom and enlightenment were always a near-monopoly of the West, and the East, arguably as backward compared to the Occident as she is today, must have acquired all the elements of higher culture from the West. The squalid poverty of modern India colors the outlook on economic conditions in ancient and mediaeval times.

Even enlightened historians find it difficult to accept the view that Indians built ships and navigated the seas, for no better reason than that modern Indians show such an aversion to, and ineptitude for, maritime activities even today. Such instances may be seen on other occasions too. There are, no doubt, exceptions, but one cannot deny, or overlook, the broad pattern, which shows that that Indian history has suffered much from an instinct to read the present into the past.

The initial section, thematically based on a perusal of archaeological, numismatic, epigraphic and literary sources, seeks to investigate and reconstruct traces of democracy in pre-modern India as presented by these sources.

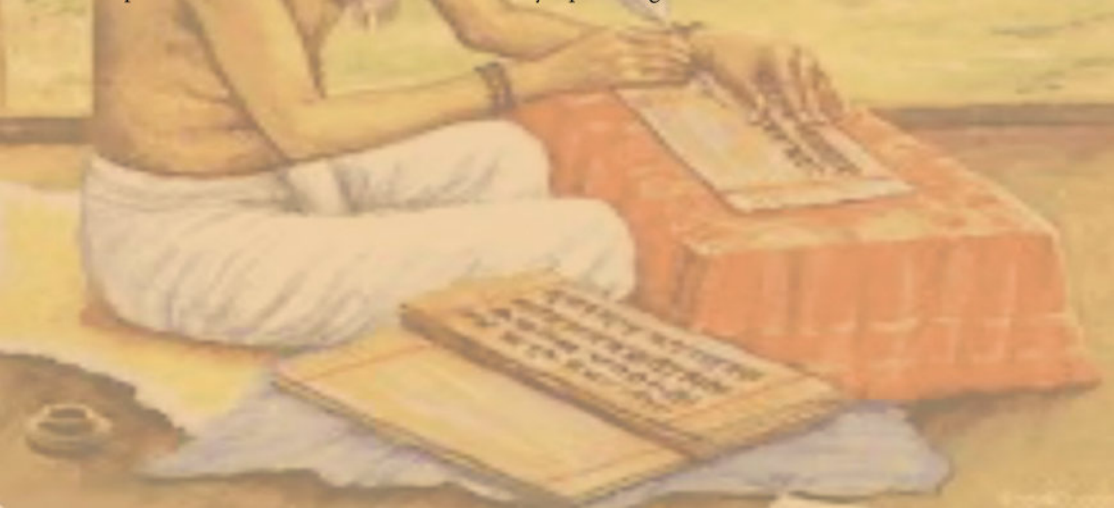


To begin with, the paper ‘Harappans- the Pioneering Architect of the Democratic System in the World: Archaeological Perspective’ by Vasant Shinde undertakes an inquiry for the origins of democracy within the Indian Subcontinent within the culture of the Harappan Civilization. The Harappan script as of yet remaining undeciphered, the methodology deployed by the author is to reconstruct the traces of a democratic form of governance from the material culture of the Harappan sites. He maintains that the architectural culture, the recurring patterns of town planning, the organization of settlements and the lack of convincing archaeological evidence regarding a rigid system of socio- political stratification point together to a democratic form of governance that prevailed in the civilization.



Examine the roots of Indian democracy, the essay 'Bharat Ka Loktantra: Udbhava Parampara Sansthan' by Kapil Kapoor projects the democratic ethos within the political culture of Ancient India back into the remote antiquity of the subcontinent. The author's contention is that, besides its extremely antique and all-pervasive nature, Indian democracy was a unique political phenomenon in that even the Emperors or 'Samrats' were bound by, and steeped in, democratic ethos, and were functioning as constitutional heads responsible before bodies such as the Sabha and the Samiti, which were organic institutions that consisted of the people's representatives who hailed from various sections of the society and in practice, they served as a check upon the monarch's authority, having evolved as tried and tested mechanisms of an indigenously-developed system of checks and balances. The most unique takeaway from the author's contention, however, is his assertion that besides having a 'Prajatantric' or overall democratic dimension, democracy in Ancient India had a 'Janatantric' or popular dimension vide the citizenry's rights vis a vis the ruler's, as also a 'Lokatantric' or community-centric dimension. It was thus, the author argues, an all-embracing, all-pervading system, penetrating down to the grass-root levels of the 'gana' and the 'janapada'.

The paper 'The Ideal king, Rājārṣi according to Kauṭilya and Concept of Rājārṣi in Bhagavad-gita' by A.P. Jamkhedkar dwells into the persona of the Rājārṣi or the sage-king as envisioned in two crucial texts concerning historical forays into the political thought of Ancient India-, which are the Bhagavad Gita, and the Arthashastra. Narrated through the person of Krishna, the Rājārṣi as he appears in the Bhagavad Gita is, above all, a 'Karma Yogi', a dispassionate and detached yet untiring performer of his kingly duties, a wise leader and yet an accomplished philosopher, and therefore the ideal candidate for 'Moksha' or salvation. Vivasvan, Manu, Ikshvaku, Janaka and Vasu Uparichara are some of these monarchs who, in Krishna's estimation as narrated within the Bhagavad-Gita, are prime examples of the 'Karma Yogi' Rājārṣi in its ideal form, personifying all the ideals of the vision. Kautilya in his magnum opus, the Arthashastra, also comes to a similar conclusion, declaring the enterprising or 'Vijigishu' king to be the envisioned Rājārṣi. It is these notions of the 'Rājārṣi' which are said to have percolated into the Buddhist vision of the 'Chakravartin' king, as well as in the modern Indian discursive political traditions, as such Lokmanya Tilak's ideal of 'Karmayoga', and Mahatma Gandhi's doctrine of the ruler as the trustee of people, thereby displaying the long thread of continuity of democratic ethos in India's political discourse of an ideal, democracy-upholding order.



Dwelling upon the democratic streak within the conception of monarchy in Ancient India, the paper 'Ancient Indian Value System and Concept of Kingship vis-à-vis Democracy' by Prasad P. Joshi highlights to us how a spirit of democracy circumscribed the authority of the monarch as it was envisioned by the earliest textual sources for our Ancient history, that is, the Vedas, as well as the early authoritative texts on statecraft like the Arthashastra of Kautilya. The Atharva Veda clearly delineates the fact that the ultimate sanction of legitimacy underpinning a monarch's authority, is the consent and satisfaction of his people or subjects. Similarly, the Arthashastra notes that a king's welfare is one and identical with the welfare of his subjects. Building his argument upon similar instances, the author argues that even monarchy in Ancient India was characterised by a distinctly democratic flavour.

Undertaking an incisive textual study, the paper 'Governing Principles of Democracy in Ancient Sanskrit Scriptures based on Śruti, Smṛti, Itihāsa and Mahākāvya Texts' by Neerja A. Gupta explores the democratic ethos as prevalent in ancient Indian political treatises, as also in practices. Through a detailed study of the classical Sanskrit texts, that is, Śruti (Vedas), Smṛti (law codes), Itihāsa (historical narratives) and Mahākāvya (epic literature), and through a deep study of the opinions of their commentators and authors, it has been argued by the author that not only did democratic ethos and mores of governance bind the monarch and other organs of the state, such as the ministers, the parliament and the bureaucracy in their day to day functioning, but rather these ethos percolated down to the grassroots, at the very level of village polities. It can also be seen that these scriptures also present their own, indigenously- evolved view of concepts such as rule of law, checks and balances, rights and duties, inter alia. From political ideas and practices, to the normative politico- legal juridical canons, to the organization, conception and even the functioning of the various organs of the state, down to the level of self- governing local communities, it has been argued that a republican ethos, deeply entrenched in the intellectual psyche of Ancient India, permeated the Indian Subcontinent's political traditions.

In incisive detail, the paper 'Kingly Democracies of Ancient India: Examining Democratic Trends in Sanskrit Literature' by Sanjeev Kumar Sharma thoroughly examines the impress of democratic ideals upon the monarchical polities of Ancient India. The author argues that all the four Vedas, which are the earliest extant literary sources which give us a detailed picture of what life in Ancient India was like, uphold the notion, including both the theory and the practice, of democracy even within the monarchical system as it operated in the Ancient epoch of Indian history. The tenor of the author's central argument is that, even though political systems in Ancient India were monarchical in their form, in their spirit, they were governed by a gamut of democratic mores and conventions, all strung together into a binding rope in the strong sentiment concerning the inviolable and sacrosanct ideal of 'rajadharma', or the king's divinely-sanctioned duties. This notion of 'rajadharma' was enforced by public censure, popular bodies and along with these, under the ever- watchful vision of the rishis or sages who exercised great moral and intellectual influence, and constantly exhorted the kings to look after the 'yoga- kshema' or well- being of his subjects. The two great epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana upheld the notion of rajadharma with great gusto as well, while monarchical systems coexisted with republican forms of governance. Thus, the author contends that the monarchies in Ancient India were not absolute in their scope, but something akin to 'kingly democracies'.

Examining indigenously evolved democratic governance as it was operational at the very grass-roots, the paper 'The Tradition of Local Self-Government In Ancient And Medieval Tamilnadu' by Nanditha Krishna examines the operation of democratic forms of self- government as it prevailed in rural and urban Tamil Nadu right from the Ancient times up to the span of time through which the Vijayanagara Empire continued to exist. A number of sources, both literary and epigraphic, have been utilised by the author to reconstruct the ideas and practices of democratic local self -governance as it operated in the villages and towns of pre-Modern Tamil Nadu, taking into account the picture that the literary and epigraphic sources present of the organisation and functioning of the village assemblies and the urban guilds- cum- assemblies.

A thorough and interesting textual analysis, the paper 'Democratic Thoughts and Traditions as Reflected in Arthaśāstra' by G.C. Chauhan examines the influence of democratic thoughts and traditions in the Arthaśāstra, Kautilya's magnum opus on political economy, diplomacy and other vital sectors of statecraft. The most interesting aspect of the author's argument lies in the fact that, while so long, the Arthaśāstra had been thought to be a treatise championing royal absolutism and ruthless quest for power and material riches, with an 'end justifies the means' approach to the question of governance, Machiavellian in its temperament and Hobbsian in its vision. The author, however, contends that this is only a partial picture. A detailed analysis of the Arthaśāstra reveals that the contents of the book also had a democratic flavour to it, as it made meticulous arrangements to organise the kingdom's social, economic and even wild -life to the benefit of all creatures, not just humans. Kautilya, the author points out, constantly exhorts the king to seek the affection of and legitimacy from his subjects.

A study in numismatics, the paper 'Janatantra as perceived through the coins of Gana-Janapadas (BCE 400 – 300 ACE)' by Padmakar P. Prabhune ,undertakes the reconstruction of the organisation and functioning of the democratic polities or Gana-Janapadas through an analysis of the coinage within Ancient India. The author maintains that the term 'tribal coins', used for those coins hailing from these republican polities, is an inadequate term utilised by colonial archaeologists and historians, and that the term 'democracies' is more suitably applicable to these. He says that a study of the coins of these republican states reveals their democratic character, and the antiquity of the existence of democracy in Ancient India.



In the paper 'Creating a Democracy, Indian-Style,' Rajiv Lochan argues in a spirited manner for the formulation of an Indic approach to democracy within the Republic of India, in the light of the country's Ancient, antique, long- standing shared tradition which have evolved over several millennia. Essential components of formulating such an approach, he argues, is a faith in the country's shared past, negating the artificial geographic lines drawn by colonial powers dividing the common inheritors of this shared democratic civilizational heritage, as also overcoming the divisive tendencies encouraged by imperialist powers over religious and ethnic faultlines. This, the author contends, is the only way to rediscover the antique democratic heritage of India.

A most interesting insight, the paper 'Republican leanings of the Kakatiyas of Warangal : As Gleaned Through Epigraphical and Literary Sources' by Varsha Shirgaonkar, discerns a distinctly democratic temper in the welfarist orientation of the Kaktiya monarchs of Warangal in Southern India in the Ancient times. She says that, despite being monarchical and characteristically championing royal authority, the Kakatiya Emperors were not absolute monarchs, but also imbued with 'gana-tantric' or democratic influences that ran deep in the kingdom's political traditions. Their policies and governance indicated a merge of monarchical and republican traditions. This has been done on the basis of epigraphic and literary sources from the period.

Linguistic and religious inclusion is an important component of a composite nationhood, and in this regard, the paper 'Religious and Linguistic Democracy in Ancient India As Reflected in Early Indian Art and Epigraphs' by Manjiri Bhalerao offers a most interesting window in this regards concerning the conditions as they existed in the Ancient Indian epoch. The author argues that right from the Vedic era, an essentially pluralist religious ethos prevailed in the Ancient Indian society, which led to the flourishing of two distinct spiritual traditions- a 'sacrificial' and a 'popular' or 'folk' one. This religious pluralism was essentially democratic in its outlook. Similarly, along with the language of the intelligentsia, that is, Sanskrit, the languages of the masses, such as Pali and Prakrit, also flourished, and found representation in the contemporary literary and epigraphic creations. This phenomenon points to the existence of linguistic democracy as well.

The next section of the book examines the theory and praxis of democracy as it operated within the various units of political organisation and administration in Ancient India, viz the Janapadas, Rajyas and Ganas.



The paper 'Lichchhavi Gana-rajya? India's Republican Past' by Himanshu Roy studies the functioning of democracy within the gana- rajyas or republics of Ancient India, with special focus on the Lichchhavi gana-rajya in the Ancient Vaishali region of Eastern India. Based on a number of literary and epigraphic sources in multiple languages such as Pali, Sanskrit and Tibetan, as well as upon archaeological sources from the excavations in and around the Basarh village in North Bihar which is the site of the former Lichchhavi republic, the author dates the existence of the republic to at least 2500 before the beginning of the modern epoch. Features like universal franchise, general assembly, civic rights of voting, deliberations, application of procedures, system of committees and appeals, inter alia, are visible in the working of this republic more than two millennia ago. This is in contrast to the Occidental democracies, which did not grant their citizens universal adult franchise until as late as World War II.

In a similar vein, the paper 'Existence of Ganasarajya In Kalinga During Asoka's Invasion : A Historiographical Analysis' by Harihar Panda inquires into the working of a gana- rajya of the atavikas or aborigines residing in forests, situated on the western frontier of the Kingdom of Kalinga which was conquered by Asoka and integrated into the Mauryan Empire. The author suggests that a reading of the sources, mainly epigraphic sources, against the grain and a careful and critical perusal of the contemporary documentation proves that, on the eve of Asoka's invasion of Kalinga, there existed a gana- rajya or republic of the atavikas, enjoying relative autonomy from the administration of Kalinga, and democratic in its form.

Community -life and decentralisation of power are suggestive of the penetration of democratic ethos in a society down to the popular level at the lowest rung. The paper 'Corporate Bodies and Community Participation During Kakatiya Times' by Ch. Radha Gayathri takes a similar phenomenon into account as it attempts to reconstruct the experience of self -governance at the level of corporates in the medieval Andhra Desa under the Kakatiya rulers of Warangal. These corporates were voluntary associations of people which conglomerated around a common identity or occupation, a unity of caste, religion or profession. In a large measure, the power at local levels, be it administrative, judicial or financial, was customarily delegated to these corporates. Their community- centric style of functioning and local autonomy points to a democratic ethos at work at the very grass roots of contemporary society.

The paper 'Concept and Practice of Working and Living Together in Kashmir under Sultan ZainulAbidin (1420-70)' by Jigar Mohammed sees the reign of Sultan Zain ul-Abidin in Kashmir as a continuation of the Ancient process of the fusion of various constituent elements into a unique regional identity formation. He highlights several aspects of his administrative policies which were aimed at establishing a link between the king and his people. For instance, he recognized the rich sentimental value of the region's Sanskrit literary heritage and commissioned scholars to write works in Sanskrit. He also appointed Kashmiri Brahmins, who enjoyed an important social position and were old experts in the art of administration, to several important posts. He extended patronage to the region's most venerated temples and commissioned many public works. Such assimilative and popular policies point towards the democratic zeitgeist of his reign.

The next section examines the role played by the vibrant Bhakti Movement in fostering a democratic spirit with the country's spiritual culture.

The paper 'Bhakti Tradition of Deccan - An Intellectual Revolution of the Masses, 8th to 18th century' by Umesh Ashok Kadam examines the Bhakti Movement as a radical spiritual revolution in the religious psyche of the masses, especially in Medieval Maharashtra which, by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries AD had emerged as a hub of the Bhakti Movement in the Indian subcontinent. Through the life and works of such eminent saints in the galaxy of the Bhakti Movement, hailing from all walks of life, such as Gyaneshwar, Eknath, Namdev, Tukaram, Janabai, Bahinabai, Muktabai and Chokhamela, the author argues that, through their sharp and incisive critique of the establishment religious orthodoxy, and re-interpreting spiritualism in a radically new light, the Bhakti saints introduced a formidable culture of spiritual democracy, which rejected such artifices as caste and gender divides and democratised the minds of the masses by removing all barriers between man and God.

Building upon similar premises of spiritual democracy as a fundamental characteristic of the Indic civilization's spiritual life, 'Temple Establishment Functioning in Democratic Way' by G.B. Deglurkar brings out the democratic character of the management and working of temples in Ancient India. He contends that people from different sections of the society, no matter what their background, had a say in the building and functioning of temples, and rendered vital services in their working. Moreover, deities from different cults, sects and traditions were often included in the pantheons of these temples, pointing towards a culture of accommodation and spiritual democracy. The Chidambaram temple at Tamil Nadu has been studied as a concrete exemplar embodying these trends.

The pluralist ethos of religious life in India and the subsequent efflorescence of many religious denominations are a testimony to a long- standing tradition of religious democracy within the subcontinent since time immemorial. The next section deals with historical explorations concerning this theme of India's democratic culture.

The paper 'Democracy as Known to Ancient Indian Buddhism' by K.T.S. Sarao vigorously argues that democracy was the part and parcel of the very grain of India's civilizational psyche, a fact which is borne out by the study of several Ancient Indian textual sources in Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit. This fact was obscured by a colonialist historiography in the interest of their empire -building exigencies. Religious pluralism, an indicator of India's democratic culture, was in operation since the R̥g Vedic period, and the same democratic ethos was present in Buddha's dhamma, which may be seen against the backdrop of several contemporary republican states.

The paper 'Democratic Ideals and Institutions of the Sikhs' by Mohinder Singh explores the spirit of democracy which permeated the functioning of the nascent Sikh panth in Medieval India. The democratic character of the faith was in effect since the religion's inception itself, Guru Nanak having set the trend of selecting a successor through the common consensus of the sangat, the wider congregation of the believers. The tradition of langar and pangat, of a common kitchen and partaking food together democratised the society by erasing barriers of caste, class and creed. During the constitution of khalsa, Guru Gobind Singh chose his five choicest followers, the panj piare from various castes, including the subaltern castes. In matters where a decision had to be made, the Guru involved the sangat in the process. Thus, even in the day to day functioning of the community, a democratic spirit was clearly visible.

In a similar vein, the paper 'Democratic Features of Namdharis in India' by S.K. Jolly examines the democratic practices within the Namdhari denomination of the Sikhs. Focused on the life and activities of an early figure in the denomination's history, Baba Ram Singh, the essay notes how his program for reform was intertwined with a deeply democratic ethos. The organisational structure of the Namdharis was decentralised, while Baba Ram Singh's preaching made frontal attacks on casteism and gender discrimination against women, advocating inter- caste marriages as well as widow remarriages. This egalitarian and democratic spirit fostered by the preacher continued to be a characteristic of the movement.

The next section deals with the ideas and practices at the level of the 'loka' or the folk and community, and investigations pertaining to this theme allow us to better appreciate the operation of democracy at the local level.

The paper 'Community Participation in State Formation: A Case Study of Punjab c.600 CE- c.1600 CE' by Priyatosh Sharma examines the involvement of the local communities within state formation in Medieval Punjab. There was a long- standing process of interaction and bargaining at work between the local mercantile, agrarian and pastoral communities and the central authority on the other hand, right since the early days of the Delhi Sultanate. The local monastic and mystical groups, such as the Sadhus and the Sufis acted as mediators between the masses and the state. Thus, the state had to be accommodative of the popular opinion.

The next paper, 'Tribal Traditions and Governance: The Way of Democracy (Special Reference to Chotanagpur Plateau)' by T.V. Kattimani undertakes a study of the tribal experience with democracy and local self- governance in the Chhotanagpur Plateau region. Backed by their age- old customs and traditions of governance, the mode of self- government under operation in the tribes of this region, such as the Mundas, the Oraons and the Birhors, even though in its essence constitutes hereditary chieftainship, is quite democratic in nature, as in the matters of decision making, the opinion and consensus of the entire village is required. Similarly, there are no rigid gender divisions, and men and women equally partake in the region's social life, an index of social democracy. Last but not the least, the author examines the impact of modernity on these self- governing practices, and argues how best to fuse these with modern modes of governance while preserving the best traits that they have to offer.

Moving the gaze of investigation to India's western region, the paper 'Democratic Traditions among the Bhils of Mewar Hilly Tracts and their erosion during the British paramountcy' by V.K. Vashishtha examines the working of self- governing democratic traditions among the Bhil tribesmen of the Mewar region in Rajasthan, and the impact of colonialism and modernity on these institutions and traditions. Having instituted a village- centric self- governing order under the leadership of their village headmen and tribal chiefs, as well as the crucial role of the panchayats and popular opinion in matters of governance, the Bhils also enjoyed organic ties with the royal house of Mewar, and aided them in their quest for regional autonomy. These self- governing democratic mechanisms, however, came under strain with the establishment of colonial rule in the region, and with India's independence, the Bhil tribes of the region fully participated in the nation's nascent democratic experiment, in keeping with their age- old democratic traditions.

In a similar vein, the paper 'Loktantrik Tradition among the Janjatis of Purba Bharat with special reference to Tripura' by Nilanjan De examines the democratic traditions and institutions at work within the tribes who have inhabited the present-day Tripura region in the North-Eastern portion of the country. Drawing upon a wide array of evidence, the author argues that the existence and the ubiquity of democratic norms is not anything new in the subcontinent, but it is a tradition that can be traced back to even the early historical times, and even in the farthest corners of the nation. Such traditions, for instance, are also observable among the janajatis or tribes of the Tripura region. The tribal villages, he argues, deployed a system of self-governance and democracy wherein the village headmen were popularly elected, and abided by public opinion.

Further adding to this discourse, the paper 'Democratic Traditions among the Tribes of North East India' by Veenu Pant makes an important departure from the conventional understanding of democracy, arguing that one should not conflate democracy solely with the working of modern democratic polities based on the nation-state system. Rather, in its essence, democracy as a system of collective decision making can be found to exist in the traditional societies as well. Democracy, she pleads, is not merely about parliaments, policy-making or legislation, but also the self-governance of villages, and the maximum possible inclusion of people in the decision-making process at the grassroots. It is in the light of this new and qualified framework of democracy that she examines the self-governing procedures and traditions of the tribes in North East India.

With a similar focus on the working of the democratic traditions, the paper 'Khap Panchayats and Democratic Traditions in Haryana' by Rajbir Singh Dalal examines the working of democracy in what is presently the state of Haryana with a focus on the Khap panchayats, which are conglomerates based on ties of kinship and region or locality. The author argues that, fostering their local traditions of self-governance and collective decision-making, these khap panchayats introduced a degree of stability and resilience in the rural society of Haryana, and protected and implemented democracy at the grassroot level.

Last but not the least, the final section deals with the impact of colonialism upon the indigenous notions and practise of democracy within the Subcontinent.

The colonialist discourse on indigenous conception of polity is a long and winding topic of discussion and investigation. Giving us an insight into their mentality, the paper 'Early administrators of the East India Company and their views in indigenous judicial institutions' by Meenakshi Jain gives us a peek into what the early colonial administrators employed by the East India Company thought of, and how they engaged with, the indigenous ideas and practices of self-governance. The early British administrators have left behind extensive accounts of the traditional judicial mechanisms- the panchayats and the persistence of customary laws, among other things.

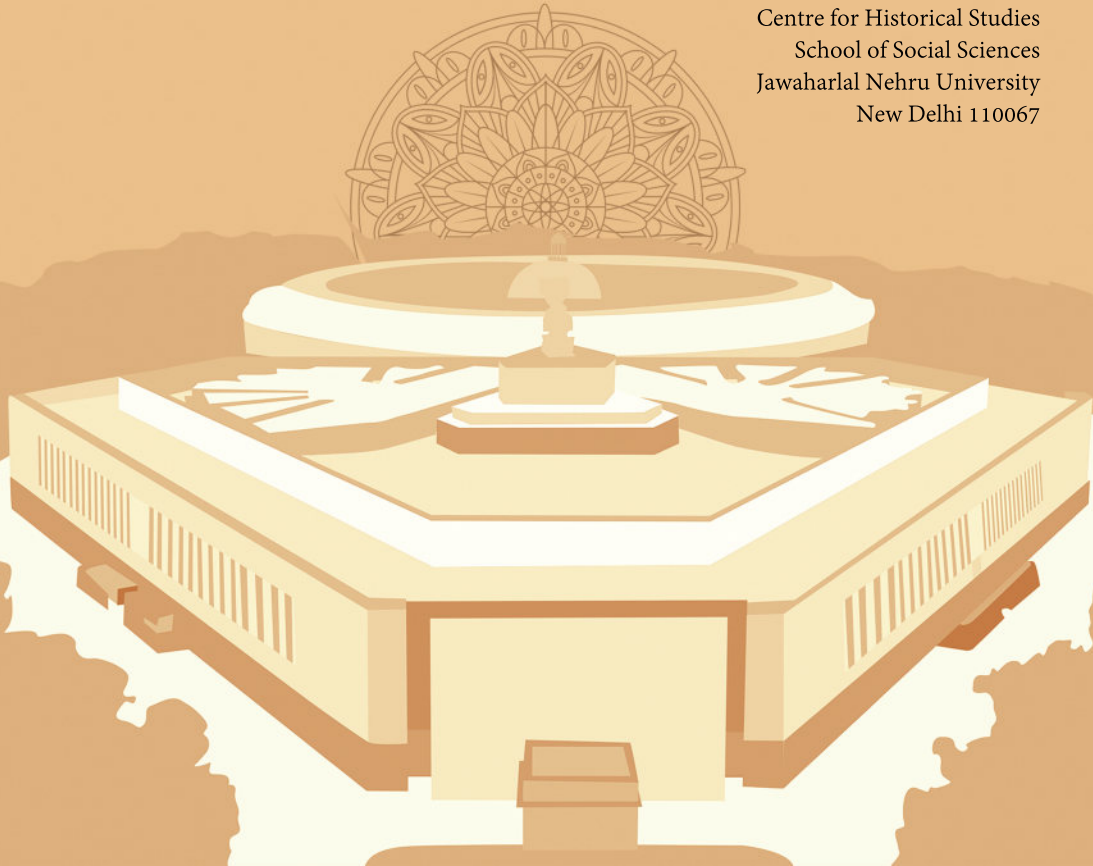
Building upon the theme of continuity in a similar vein, the paper 'Continuation of The Panchayat System by the British in Maharashtra (1818-1827): A Democratic Approach to Justice in the Transition Years' by Sandhya Pandit investigates in detail the early British administrators' perception about the panchayat system as it operated in Maharashtra in the early nineteenth century. A section of these administrators, including such figures as Elphinstone and Robertson, were appreciative of the panchayats' functioning, regarding it as a customary time-tested, speedy and cost-effective method of dispensing justice, which, except for minor rectifications, ought to have been retained. They especially noted with appreciation its utility and efficacy in the rural context.

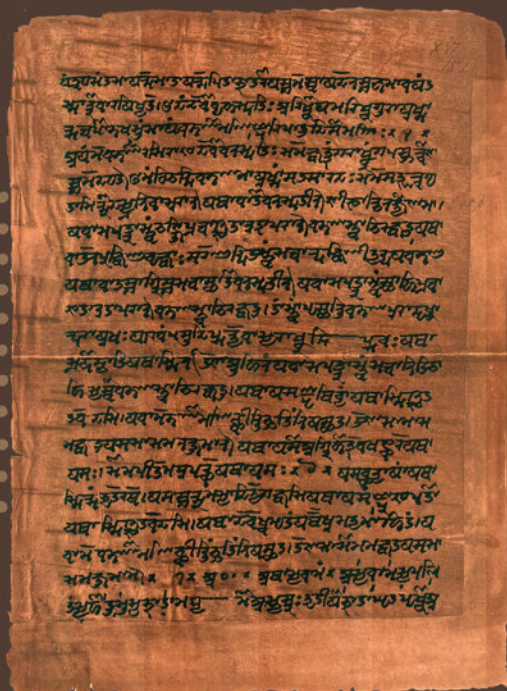
This early colonial engagement with the institution of panchayat in Maharashtra has been studied in this paper.

Concluding this section, the paper 'Colonial Situation and Our 'Renaissance' figures: Their ideas on democratic polity for India' by Saradindu Mukherji marks a shift in perspective as it focuses on the intervention within the colonial discourse of such figures within the eighteenth and nineteenth century 'Bengal Renaissance' and the freedom movement as Raja Rammohan Roy, Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendranath Banerjee and Rabindranath Tagore, enumerating their ideas on freedom, democracy and governance. A thread of continuity is drawn between their ideas and those which have been enshrined in the constitution of the post- Independence Indian Republic.

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Kartika Krishna Paksha Dashami
Date: 20/10/2022
Place: New Delhi

Professor Umesh Ashok Kadam
Member Secretary
Indian Council of Historical Research
New Delhi 110001
&
Professor of Medieval Indian History
Centre for Historical Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi 110067





भारतीय इतिहास अनुसंधान परिषद
शिक्षा मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार,
नई दिल्ली