

Rājadharma-As A Technical Term for Understanding of Ancient Indian Good Governance



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Abstract

Rājadharma comprises two words one is Rāja and other is Dharma. Rāja means ruler or king and dharma means his duty or property which must be possessed by him. Rājadharma is a determinative compound word of Sanskrit in which, meaning of the second word of compound has a supremacy.¹ The meaning of the first word generally deals relationship with the second word. Thus, the literary meaning of this compound word is Rājño Dharmah iti Rājadharmaḥ. Rājñāṁ Dharmah iti vā. It means the peculiar duty of the ruler or rulers is called Rājadharma. Here, Duty is the property and the ruler is the property-holder, ruler holds that duty. The relationship between property and property-holder is Dharma-dharmi-bhāva-sambandha. As per Indian logic, without dharma, dharmī cannot be known. Dharmī is known by knowing dharma. In the same way without the knowledge of the duty ruler cannot be known. Rājadharma is a dharma of the king. The king has to do his all activities as per Rājadharma. Rājadharma must be constantly remembered by the king. Rājadharma is a source of will power to act. Rājadharma is an energy of the king to perform his duty. The king achieves real bliss by following Rājadharma. Real bliss is not a happiness. It is a perfectly balanced state, where there is no happiness and sorrow, there is no good and bad, there is no past, present and future. It is a complete state of liberation which, could achieve following by Rājadharma. The king has no existence without Rājadharma. The ruler is the ruler due to this duty only. This is a peculiar duty which resides only in the ruler. The ruler must possess this duty. The nature of this duty is an essential works viz. educating, civilizing, nursing, protecting the state for making Mankind prosperous both spiritually and materially. Rājñāmavaśya Kartavye Prajāpālanādu Karmaṇī. The duty of ruler, which must be inclined towards welfare of all beings who reside in his area of particular State-Rājñāḥ Rājñāṁ vā Kartavyaṁ Karma is Rājadharma.

In view of aforementioned concept, this paper would like to discuss Rājadharma as a technical term in a Sanskrit literature, which will provide a tool for understanding of ancient Indian Good Governance.

Keywords: Rājadharma, Rulers, Duty, Education, Health, Security, Lokarājanam.

Introduction

Rājadharma is a seed of knowing Indian Intellectual Traditions in general and social, Political and economic structure of ancient India in particular. Rājadharma connects Ruler with his State. Rājadharma provides a governing tool to the king for running the State for achieving sustainable development. Rājadharma does not merely deal ethical values of the rulers, but it also deals essential duties of the rulers. It is not a normative principle based on ideas. It is a real quality which must be inherent in the rulers. On the basis of this Dharma the Rulers govern their state. Rājadharma is a universal property of the rulers which reflects into their day to day activities in the form of balanced realism and idealism. Social-economical- Political development of the State with social justice occurs through Rājadharma. Khann's text entitled Rājadharma a critical study elaborates that: Rājadharma is only an extension of Varṇāśrama and an enlargement of Kṣātradharmā. The real spirit of Rājadharma consists not in trying to reach a remote ideal but in the king's being conscious of the dictates of the command from within - these dictates arising out of the

station in which he is placed. (Khanna, Rajadharmā a critical study, 2016). The King follows Rājadharmā in the form of divine energy that is called transmission in Vedic scriptures for a maximum utilization of his power for the sustainable development of the State. Rājadharmā makes the King more knowledgeable, humbler, more pure, free from all bondages. Due to Rājadharmā, the power of the King appears in the form of Power-Less-Power. The king uses this power for the sake of the common people without dominating others. He achieves everything by this power but nothing is being suppressed, exploited and neglected. This Power makes common people to do their duties in such a manner so that each and every being of the state become happy and prosperous, which is the ultimate goal of all the living beings.

Review of Literature

Holistic approach of the study has attracted to entire world to look into Indian Intellectual Traditions and its unique way of learning based research methodology, which may pay an important role model in the academic world to tackle the contemporary issues, challenges and to suggest a universal solutions almost in all the fields of Academic. India has been also realising the same need for past two decades and now keen to relook into ancient Indian intellectual properties. Therefore, Sanskrit is again becoming the most vibrant and efficient discipline to evolve that intellectual wealth with modern prospective by using modern tools and techniques. Keeping above-mentioned view in the mind the author has reviewed available literature and research works on Rājadharmā and came to Idea on that Rājadharmā is a technical term in which pervaded meaning of intensive and extensive applications of it, is inherent. Proper understanding of this technical term would lead to knowing deductive mythological output of Rājadharmā.

The book of Geeta Upadhyaya entitled "Political Thought in Sanskrit Kāvya" has elaborated some salient features of Rājadharmā, which are symbolically mentioned by the prominent Sanskrit poets in Sanskrit literature. The author has also elaborated the inherent concept of political thought mentioned in Aśvaḥoṣa's Buddhacarita and Saundarānanda. Highlighting political concepts in Kādambarī, Harṣacaritam, and so on the author has discoursed in detailed the political concepts in Kalidās works as well. The Ph.D. thesis of Debajyoti Jena which has been published in the book form titled "Concept of Kingship in Kālidāsan Dramas" describes the duties and responsibilities of kings, and socio-political conditions of the state which symbolically inherent in Kālidāsan dramas. The author has also described political condition and institution of kingship mentioned in Arthaśāstra. A PhD thesis of Panjab University- "Rājadharmā A Critical Study" written by Khanna, K.C. is the pioneer research on the Rājadharmā in which field hospital inputs give enlightenment of how Rājadharmā has delimited entire Indian Intellectual Traditions. The research article of Sachindra Kumar Maity, 1998, "Early Indian Tradition of Rajadharmā," Jadavpur Journal of International Relations, vol. 4(1), pages 39-47, June,

has scholarly elaborated tradition of Rājadharmā. Dr. Priyanka Pandey has described the Rājadharmā in the light of Sānti Parva of Mahābhārata by introducing theoretical and practical aspects of politics in western tradition and background of the politics in Indian tradition in general and deep analysis of political structure in Sānti Parva of Mahābhārata.

Aim of the Study

1. To discourse literary meaning of Rājadharmā and its relationship between Dharma.
2. To justify that Rājadharmā is the highest dharmā and all dharmas are delimited by the Rājadharmā
3. To justify that Rājadharmā connects the ruler with common people and it is essential tool to achieve materialistic and spiritual development of the king individually and of the people universally.
4. To show the extensive and intensive application of Rājadharmā in Indian Political Thought.
5. To show comprehensiveness of Rājadharmā which is widely used in Sanskrit shastras as well as Sanskrit literature.

Description of Dharma

Dharma derives from the Sanskrit root Dhṛ which means Dhṛyate Tiṣṭhati Vartate Yaḥ Sa Dharmāḥ- Dharma is a property which is contained, which resides, which exists somewhere. Yatra Yaḥ Vartate Sa Tasya Dharmāḥ. Yathā Pātre Jalam Vartate iti Pātrasya Dharmāḥ Jalam. Whatever exists somewhere is called a property of that viz. water is contained in a pot, so water is the property of pot.³ Mm. Mahesha Chandra Nyayaratna has rightly pointed out that Dharma is a property which is possessed by somebody. The literary meaning of Dharma is the same i.e. Dhṛyate Anena iti Dharmāḥ-Dharma is a property which should be hold or it is an instrument for holding. Vaiśeṣikasūtra written by Maharishi Kanada has clearly defined Dharma by mentioning its purpose. Yato Abhiyuda niḥśreyasasidhiḥ Sa Dharmāḥ⁴- Dharma is that from which (results) the accomplishment of Exaltation and of the Supreme Good. The purpose of dharma is to get Abhyudaya and Niḥśreyasa. Abhyudaya means knowledge of the essence Niḥśreyasa is final cessation of pain. That from which both of them result is Dharma. The compound of two words, rendered as Niḥśreyasa by the path of Abhyudaya, belongs to the class of compounds which are formed by the elision of the middle term. Abhyudaya is a materialistic development, Niḥśreyasa is a spiritual development. In this context, the difference between materialistic development and spiritual development is based on desire. Whereas materialistic development is the source of infinite desires. It has no upper limit. In materialistic development, one desire creates another desire. One desire is the cause of another desire. Fulfilled desire is the cause of non-fulfilled desire. The relationship between fulfilled desire and non-fulfilled desire is cause and effect relationship. After fulfilling of one desire another desire generates, from the fulfilled desire itself. Thus, an infinite number of desire-based channels goes on culminating restlessness in human life. Spiritual development has the upper limit of desire. After fulfilling spiritual desire there will be no creation of any other desire. Once

desire of spiritual development has been fulfilled then this spirituality automatically leads to sustainable happiness, makes free from all the bondage, destroys impurities, distracts the chain of karma theory, prohibits making of Sañcīta and Kriyamāṇa Karma. Achieving spiritual level is the ideal condition of the liberation. Once fruits of Prārabdhā Karmaphala have been over then this spiritual development leads. Hence, Dharma is clearly defined as a tool to get overall development, happiness, peace and prosperity. It is the source of achieving everything. Once, thing has been achieved: thing itself becomes dharma, which opens another platform for further development. Initially Dharma is for knowledge after that getting the knowledge, Knowledge converts into Dharma. Dharma is Knowledge. Dharma is an instrument to get liberation. After achieving liberation, it becomes dharma only. Everything is inherent in Dharma.⁵ Therefore, In Indian Intellectual Traditions: Dharma is a primary step as well as ultimate step too. Dharma is for both rituals and knowledge. Whereas Dharma is an essential component in rituals which leads to liberation whereas Dharma is a ground of knowing the World. Entire World is based on Dharma-Dharmi- Bhāva- Sañbandha. Dharma is an essential component for knowing the World. Indian Intellectual Traditions emphasized to elaborate Dharma which is a nucleus of everything. Indian knowledge systems are dharma centric. Whereas Mīmāṃsā school of thoughts explain dharma to interpretating tool of Vedic sentences in terms of rituals. There-as, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school of thoughts explains dharma as a property of property-holder of all knowable things. The knowledge leads towards liberation therefore Dharma must be known. Now it is clear that Dharma is not a religion. Dharma cannot be treated as a religion. Whereas religion has its own dogmas there dharma is free from all the dogmas. Whereas religion has a one God there dharma has either many Gods are no God. Whereas religion has a one holy text there Dharma accepts either all texts are holy texts or the concept of the holy text is absent. Therefore, Dharma is a way of life.

Aforesaid Vaiśeṣikasūtra has pointed out that Dharma is for Abhyudaya and Niḥśreyasa. Abhyudaya is social-economical-political centric. Sāmānyadharmā, Varṇadharmā, Āśramadharmā, have been associated with social, economic and political development which have delimited by Puruṣārtha-catuṣṭaya i.e. Dharma-Artha-Kāma and Mokṣa. Puruṣārtha-catuṣṭaya is a major goal of human being which is based on Mokṣaśāstra. As per their Mokṣaśāstra, human beings have to perform their dharma. As per dharma, each and every human-being has to earn Artha. As per Dharma and Artha, he has to fulfil his desires i.e. Kāma. If Kāma is associated with artha and artha is associated with dharma then inclusive culmination of dharma-artha and kāma lead to mokṣa. Mokṣa is the ultimate goal of each and every human being. In Indian knowledge systems, Puruṣārtha-catuṣṭaya provides system to survive the life happily. Each puruṣārtha deals separate Śāstra. Dharma is elaborated in Dharmasāstra, Artha is elaborated in Arthasāstra, Kāma is elaborated in a

Kāmasāstra and Mokṣa is elaborated in the Mokṣaśāstra. Although our śāstras or autonomous yet they are interlinked to each other and inclined to mokṣa. Ultimately, mokṣaśāstra has a supremacy, delimits each and every activity of human being. Manusmṛiti Yājñyavalkyadharmasūtra, Gautam dharmasūtra, Āpastambadharmasūtra and Arthasāstra texts discourse dharma in the light of social, economic and political upliftment of human beings. A study of the ancient Indian society reveals the operation of varṇadharmā and āśramadharmā as governing the relations between man and man. As for the influence of dharma on the life of the king, we have maintained in the succeeding pages that Rājadharmā is only an extension of varṇāśramā dharmā and an enlargement of Kṣātradharmā (Khanna, Rajadharmā a critical study, 2016). Varṇāśramā dharmā deals Indian social structure, Vyavahāra dharmā deals Indian Judicial systems, Rājadharmā deals Indian polity and economy.

Rājadharmā is the property of the king who is responsible for ahiyudaya and niḥśreyasa of himself on individual level as well as all mankind of the state on universal level. All knowledges are governed by the Rājadharmā. All sacrifices are witnessed by the Rājadharmā. All disciplines are associated with Rājadharmā. The Rājadharmā implements all the dharmā. All Dharmas are inherent in Rājadharmā. That is why Rājadharmā is the highest of all dharmas.⁶ Rājadharmā binds king's physical, physc and spiritual balance for implementing good governance to the State and people of the state connect with king by Rājadharmā. The Rājadharmā makes both-way traffic of duties from King to people and people to king. Therefore, Rājadharmā mutually binds king and his people. The king has to perform his duties and People have to perform their duties. Hence, The State becomes duty-bound state. The king has been known as superior servant (Pradhāna-Sevaka) and people of the state are treated as servants (Sevaka). There is no scope of dominance or suppression. Every being of the state has to do his duty as assigned by Śāstras. The goal is common for king and his people to retain Abhiyudaya and Niḥśreyasa. King and his people are dependent to each other. The King is main corpus of the people and people are the handsome body of the King. The country cannot be without king and without country the King cannot exist⁷.

Meaning of Rājadharmā

Now let us discourse on Rājadharmā as a technical term which is systematically as well as scientifically must be followed by the king with the help of liberated Intellectuals for materialistic, psychc and spiritual welfare of the state, which leads to achieve overall harmony, sustainable happiness and prosperity. The discussion of Rājadharmā in Sanskrit literature is visible from Vedic texts to contemporary Sanskrit writings. Śānti-Parva of Mahābhārata explains Rājadharmā in its subchapter named Rājadharmānūsāsana parva. Rājadharmā has been treated as a separate discipline in Athasāstra written by Kauṭilya around 300 B.C. Although there would be a School of thought of Rājadharmā, prior to Kauṭilya

but it is not available yet so far. That is why Arthaśāstra is currently known as the basic scriptural discipline of Rājadharmā. Anuśāsana parva of Mahābhārata defines Rājadharmā as a eternal property of the kings by which the State becomes blissful. (Lokarājjanamevātra Rājñām Dharmāḥ Sanātanaḥ⁸). The aim of blissful state can be achieved by Vinayādhanā (Education), Ābharāṇa (Health) and Rakṣaṇa (Security).⁹ The rulers, having three essential duties under Rājadharmā as coated in Raghuvamśam:

Prajānām vinayādhanadrakṣaṇādbharāṇādapi.
Sa pitā pitarastāsām kevalam janmahetavaḥ.-
Raghuvamśam, 1.24

Vinayādhanam

The king has to provide a qualitative education to the people. The State must be educated. Education is the source of civility.¹⁰ Civility is the tool for Mastery over the senses. Mastery over the senses is the base of the State. The State is dependent upon Economy. Economy is base on Dharma (Duty) and Dharma is the base of blissful stage of life. Hence, indirectly blissful stage is based on education only. That is why the king has a duty to provide education to the people of the State for welfare of the society.

Bharāṇam

The king has to provide good health facilities and focusing sufficient availability of nutritious food to the people of his State. He has to focus on agriculture, animal husbandry, trade and commerce so that State could become materialistically rich. In this connection economy plays major role. The king has a duty to make state economically rich. A rich state would able to feed people and able to provide good health infrastructure to make people healthy.

Rakṣaṇam

The king has a primary duty to protect his people by providing good infrastructure of the security. Protection is a primary essential duty of the king. He has to make state fear-free. People of the State should feel secure from all the way from where they scare of insecurity. Fear-free people of the state perform their duty in enhanced manner. Mahābhārata states that -Tadarājye Rajyakāmānām Nānyo Dharmāḥ Sanātanaḥ, Rte Rakṣām Tu Vispaṣṭām Rakṣā Lokasya Dhāriṇī¹¹ The king who wants State. The security of the State is his primary essential duty. Without security, the State cannot exist. The secured state has an infinite possibility to develop and to become prosperous.

Conclusion

Now above mentioned study has described Raja dharma and its peculiar nature for understanding ancient Indian Governance. It has cleared that without knowing the Rājadharmā people cannot know India. Rājadharmā has become a key to know India and its political thought as well. Performing three primary duties, a king can possess Rājadharmā which is inclined to achieve blissful Stage of the State i.e. Lokarājjanam—Lokānām Rājñāmitilokarājjanam. The purpose of Rājadharmā is lokarājjanā. Here, Loka is the place of living beings where people live and perform their duties. The King follows Rājadharmā for making People healthy, wealthy and wise. Inclusive result of healthy, wealthy and wise is - lokarājjanā.

Endnotes

1. *Prāyēottarapadārthapradhānastatpuruṣaśtrīyah -laghusiddhāntakaumudī, bhaimīvyākhyā, samāsa prakaraṇa, caturtha bhāga, pṛṣṭha 02.*
2. *Vācaspatyam, vṛhat-, saṃskṛtābhidhāna.*
3. *Jha, Ujjwala, A Primer of Navya Nyaya language and Methodology, Mahesh Chandra Nayayaratna, the Asiatic Society Kolkata, text one p. 21*
4. *The Vaisheshik sutras of Kanada, 1.1.2.*
5. *Dharme sarvam pratisthitam.- Taittiriya Aranyaka 10.63.1*
6. *Sarve dharmāḥ rājadharmā pradhānāḥ.
Sarve varṇāḥ pālyamānāḥ bhavanti।
Sarve bhogāḥ rājadharmeṣu dṛṣṭāḥ।
Sarvā dīkṣā rājadharmeṣu cokatā।
Sarvā vidyā rājadharmeṣu yuktā।
Sarve lokāḥ rājadharme praviṣṭā।
Sarve dharmāḥ rājadharmeṣu dṛṣṭāḥ।
Sarve dharmāḥ rājadharmeṣu rājan-
।।Mahābhāratam, śāntiparva, 12.62.26-29*
7. *Rājā prajānām prathamam śarīram।
Prajāśca rājñopratīmam śarīram ।।
Rājñā vinā na bhavanti deśāḥ।
deśairvinā na nṛpāḥ bhavanti ।।- Mahābhāratam,
śāntiparva, 12.67.59*
8. *Mahābhāratam, 12.57.11*
9. *Raghuvamśam, 1.24*
10. *Vidyā dadāti vinayam, vinayadyāti pātratām।
Pātratvāddhanamāpnoti dhanāddharmam tataḥ
sukham ।।Hitopadeśaḥ, 06*
11. *Mahābhāratam, śāntiparva, 12.57.42*