CHAPTER III
THE IDEALS OF SOCIETY AND IT'S WELFARE

This chapter discusses the dominant themes that have been prevalent in Indian philosophy, relating to the individual's relationship to the society; the ideals of the society; it's organisation and welfare.

The major sources that are used in this chapter include the Vedic hymns, the Dharma Šastras, Rānāyana and Mahābhāratha, Artha Šastra of Kautilya and the Sukranīti. All these sources contain voluminous matter and what has been attempted in the following sections is to identify and present only such ideas and concepts that are necessary to develop an understanding of the society, as it was envisioned by the authors of all these works, so that a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental pattern of the Indian society can be developed. Subsequently, the relevance of these ideas to the present times and their usefulness to social work can be worked out.

Individuals and Society

In Indian thinking the individual and the society are not viewed as separate entities. The society is considered as an extension of the individual. "The characteristic feature of the Hindū philosophers thinking on the subject of
society is that they start not with society in the abstract but with the concrete individual. If the individual is helped into a personality (of course through society) he in his turn influences society and makes it what it is." Hence, if the individuals are good the society becomes good. The individuals thus create a good society, which in turn helps in developing good individuals, and consequently a reciprocal relationship between the individual and the society emerges. However, the individuals remain supreme and not the society, as it is the individuals who create the society.

The importance given to the individual can result in development of 'rugged individualism', or it can make the human beings to become recluses, who have no need for the society. Such tendencies are curbed and the individual is made to be obligated to the society by the adoption of certain social obligations. The puruṣārthas, āśrama scheme of life, and the pañca maha yajñas develop this social obligation of the individual, in and through the family and other social institutions from early childhood.

The Puruṣārthas

Taking into consideration the normal human needs and aspirations, four aims of life relating to the moral, material, psychological and spiritual aspects of life have
been prescribed in the Indian tradition. These four aims together called as the puruṣārthas, include dharma or righteousness, artha or prosperity, kāma or pleasure and mokṣa or liberation. It is significant to note that dharma comes first and mokṣa last, implying that before the final liberation can be reached one has to have positive psychosocial living. Liberation is the final stage and certainly not the only aim of life. If it were so, liberation alone could have been specified as the aim of human life, or in the arrangement of the puruṣārthas it could have been placed first. On the contrary dharma is placed first, artha or prosperity second, kāma or pleasure third and finally mokṣa.

Dharma as a concept has tremendous social significance and placing dharma first implies that one should first of all adopt beliefs, practices and life styles that are for the good and welfare of one and all, then seek liberation. Thus, the puruṣārtha model of Indian philosophy makes clear that while spiritual realisation is the aim of human life the way to realisation is laid with good psychological and social living, and offers guidelines to the individuals in leading a personally satisfying and socially productive and harmonious life.

Dharma is a unique Indian concept. "Dharma formed from the root dhr, to hold, means that which holds a thing and
maintains it in being.\textsuperscript{2} The word dharma has been subjected to several interpretations. On the basis of the various interpretations it may be concluded that dharma is a force or principle which aids in creating and maintaining an orderly, organised, dynamic society, wherein high standards of morality and justice prevail and the members are socially conscious and are aware of their roles and duties, enjoying sufficient freedom. Dharma is a basic belief, and an attitude to life, and one's own self. It is manifested in the behaviour of the individuals. Socially, it is an integrating force, an agent of social control, guardian of the welfare of the people. Spiritually, it is a means to raise oneself higher. The comprehensive nature and meaning of dharma becomes clear when the different interpretations of dharma are analysed.

Dharma maintains society is obvious from the etymological meaning of the word. The Mahābhārata states that "righteousness (dharma) is so-called because it upholds all creatures. Infact, all creatures are upheld by righteousness. Therefore, that is righteousness which is capable of upholding all creatures."\textsuperscript{3}

It is commonly accepted that the forerunner to the word dharma is the Vedic concept of rta, which stands for "a
cosmic order including natural, religious and social phenomena. Thus, dharma stands for order.

The Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad equates dharma with truth and justice. The justice aspect is highlighted in the passage which states that there is nothing greater than dharma as it rules even the ruler. So even a weak person, wishes to defeat one who is stronger through dharma. The verse further states "what is righteousness is indeed truth. Hence, people say of one speaking what is true, that he speaks what is righteous, or of one speaking what is righteous, that he speaks what is true, because both of them are but righteousness." On analysing this verse Gopalan states that "ṛta is truth in thought, satya is truth in words and dharma is truth in deed." According to Kuppuswamy the gleanings of social justice is apparent in this verse. It is perhaps, worth noting at this juncture, the understanding of the word truth. In the words of Gore, truth is a dynamic concept and means "not only the telling of truth and eschewing of lies or untruthfulness, but a positive pursuit of all the consequences following from the perception of truth. A man devoted to truth could not stand by and be a witness to injustice and untruth. He has to fight untruth and fight it not by inflicting pain but by his own willingness to suffer. One cannot be truthful and yet be
a silent witness to injustice." Thus, truth and justice together propel a person to action and the significance of understanding of such a concept to social work is but obvious.

Dharma is never static. Dynamism is a characteristic of dharma. As Dandekar states: "Another significant characteristic of dharma which deserves to be specially noted is that it was regarded as not being static. The content of dharma often changed in the changing contexts of time place and social environment." In Prabhu's opinion, "it is however, very necessary and important to note that the dharma concept, embraces as it's essential part, the principle of dynamic growth, of flexibility, of relaxability in the prescriptive regulations in accordance with the changing conditions and times (deśa and kāla)." Kane in his exhaustive work on Dharma śāstras offers several evidences of changes in various aspects of dharma over a period of time, thus establishing the fact that understanding of the dynamic nature of dharma has been of a long tradition and not of recent origin. Infact, Manu himself acknowledges that dharma would change according to the times, as well as the place.

Dharma as manifestation of high morals has been emphasised by the Dharma śāstras. Each of them emphasise
practicing of various virtues like truth, non-violence, purity of thought word and deed, control of senses etc. These virtues prescribed by the Dharma Śāstras is called the sādhārana dharma and are to be practiced by all people at all times. The most commonly accepted ones being satya-truth, ahimsa-non-injury in thought word and deed, saucha-purity, indriya-nigraha-control of senses, asteya-non-covetousness.

Exhaustive discussion of dharma as duties has been the major thrust of the Dharma Śāstras. Duties as prescribed by them have been classified into five types as follows.

- **Varna dharma** - inclusions based on varna alone such as a Brahma should never drink wine.
- **Āśrama dharma** - such rules as begging and carrying a staff by a brahmacāri
- **Varnāśramadharma** - rules of conduct enjoined on a man because he belongs to a particular class and is in a particular stage of life.
- **Gupadharma** - such as protection of subjects in the case of a crowned king
- **Naimittika dharma** - such as expiation on doing what is forbidden.

It is clear from the above classification that, the Dharma Śāstras have tended to identify dharma with duties of individuals based on their stage of life, and as members of a particular community. The unfortunate consequence of this
tendency has been the understanding and interpreting of dharma as "the privileges, duties and obligations of a man, his standard of conduct as a member of the Aryan community, as a member of one of the castes, as a person in a particular stage of life."\textsuperscript{15} This narrow definition of dharma has resulted in crystallization of castes, creation of untouchability and inequality based on birth and in the process, the other important dimensions of dharma have been overlooked. The problem arises especially in relation to the varna dharma, which classified people into different groups with unequal privileges and disabilities, especially as varna began to be understood as jāti or caste, which ascribed social status to individual on the basis of birth. The interpretation of dharma as duties is valid at any time because any society for its own order, integration and proper functioning, needs its members to conform to certain norms and perform their duties. The problem lies in not understanding the spirit and context of the usage of dharma as duties but in being conditioned by the actual injunctions which perhaps may have been valid at a given time.

Understanding of dharma as working for the welfare of others creates and nurtures the social consciousness in individuals. The Gītā's declaration that wise men perform actions for the welfare of all, supports this understanding
of *dharma*. According to the *Mahābhārata* "one should never do that to another, which one regards as injurious to one's own self. This, in brief, is the rule of righteousness." The Kantian principle of categorical social imperative expresses a similar sentiment.

*Dharma* in the form of *svadharma* recognises the uniqueness of an individual person or object and allows the particular individual entity to be true to one's own self. One's *svadharma* is based on one's *svabhāva*, or inherent nature. It is based on a "person's psycho-physical potential." Commonly *svadharma* is understood as one's duties. However, these duties which may be equated to the roles and functions of an individual in society logically would arise out of a person's potential and aptitude. Thus, *svadharma*, implies potentials and aptitudes of an individual which manifest in the individual's social functioning.

*Dharma* according to the *Mahābhārata*, was declared for the advancement and growth of all creatures; and to restrain creatures from injuring one another. *Dharma* is so called because it upholds all creatures.

The significance of *dharma* lies in the proper understanding of its comprehensive nature. In simple words, *dharma* is for the good of the individual and the society.
The *Vaiśeṣikasūtra's* definition of *dharma* as "that from which results happiness and final beatitude"\(^{20}\) and the definition by *Manuśmṛti* of *dharma* "to be that which is practised by the learned that lead a moral life, that are free from hatred and partiality, and is accepted by their heart (i.e. conscience),"\(^{21}\) are important to note. Another significant definition is given by the *Nītiśara* of Kamandaka, which states "that is Dharma which when done is praised by aryas (respectable people) that are conversant with (the vedic) tradition and adharma is said to be that which such people censure."\(^{22}\) These definitions make clear that *dharma* quite simply, is that which evolves on the basis of the fundamental values of the society and the content of *dharma* is decided by the 'conscience keepers' of the society.

Mees,\(^{23}\) Kuppuswamy\(^{24}\) and Gopalan\(^{25}\) have analysed in their writings on the concept of *dharma* the various meanings of the concept of *dharma*. From the point of view of social work it is useful to compare these various meanings with the modern social science concepts. The following chart presents the comparison between the two:
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<tr>
<th>Meaning of dharma</th>
<th>Modern social science concepts</th>
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<tr>
<td>svadharma</td>
<td>- individual's aptitude</td>
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<td></td>
<td>individual differences</td>
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<td>duties of varna and asrama</td>
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<tr>
<td>working for the welfare of all</td>
<td>- social concern</td>
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<tr>
<td>truth and justice</td>
<td>- social justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>yuga dharma</td>
<td>- social change</td>
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<td>salutary and healthy check on individual</td>
<td>- social control</td>
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<td>righteousness</td>
<td>- social good</td>
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<tr>
<td>ordering and coordinating agent</td>
<td>- social organization</td>
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<td>considering individual as an end</td>
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<td>reflective morality</td>
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<td>Law</td>
<td>- Law</td>
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Indian thinking also recognises the need for human beings to have a materially satisfying life. Artha and kāma as two aims of human life, take into consideration the human need for material acquisition and enjoyment which are considered to be part of good life. It is believed that there is no sin in wealth just as there is no virtue in poverty. Artha includes all kinds of prosperity and kāma all kinds of pleasure. However, both artha and kāma have to be within the orbit of dharma. While human beings are encouraged to seek prosperity and enjoy the pleasures of life for their own need and satisfaction, they are not
allowed to do so in an *adharma*ic manner. Thus the individual good blends with the social good. The good and growth of an individual cannot be at the cost of another person. Thus while a person can earn money and grow rich by honest means, adopting dishonest means is not permitted. The end does not justify the means and the means are as important as the end.

Thus, *kāma* - sensate satisfaction, and *artha* - wealth, which is the means to *kāma* are considered valid human pursuits; whereas *lobha* or greed and *moha* or delusion arising from unchecked desire are unethical, because they are anti-social. *Dharma*, restrains *artha* and *kāma* from becoming anti-social.26

*Artha* and *kāma* as *puruṣārthas* can be significant from yet another dimension. Material prosperity and pleasure cannot be achieved by one who is a recluse; or an inactive person. One has to be psycho-socially healthy and active in order to obtain *artha* and *kāma*. Thus, these two *puruṣārthas* necessitate active participation in life and discourage inactivity and escapism. If the latter is the life-style of a large number of individuals the society will have socially and economically unproductive members, who add to the burden and dependency on society.

*Mokṣa*, the supreme *puruṣārtha* apparently negates society and social responsibility. However, as was seen in
the earlier chapter, mokṣa itself can be obtained only on the basis of positive psycho-social living. The Gita’s statement that "Janaka and others attained perfection verily by action only" makes the point clear. A further point to be noted is that even those who have attained this state socially remain relevant. Placed in a better position than many others the liberated ones are better equipped to help and guide others. Since, they also have no selfish motives and interests, they are able to selflessly help others, and provide the right direction to society. To believe that mokṣa is nothing but individual liberation is self-defeating. Because, mokṣa implies a state wherein the limited self of the individual merges into the larger Self, and begins to feel with all that happens around a person. "Such a blessed soul smiles and weeps with others, strives and suffers for others, and is happy or sorrowful for the lot of others and yet personally he is totally unaffected." So, the liberation of the individual self, goes together with the expansion of the self into a larger consciousness, feelings and actions. "For the man who has become perfect, nothing remains but to apply his understanding. He lives only to help the world desiring nothing for himself... He does good because it is his nature, not because any fancied good commands it." 

Thus, the puruṣārthas imbibe in the individuals their social responsibility.
Āśramas

"The Āśramas are four life stages with a graduated course of duties calculated to lead an individual, step by step, towards a realisation of the supreme spiritual ideal. They are stages through which by intensive exertion and effort (śhrama) of the body and the mind, by acts of religious exercise and austerity, by the self-denial and self-discipline, one may bring, one's whole self under subjection."\(^{25}\) The āśrama idea of the Indian thinking can be equated to the developmental psychology of modern times. Developmental psychology divides the human life into different stages of development, beginning from neo-natal and ending in old age and identifies specific developmental tasks corresponding to each of the stages. Similarly, the human life is divided into āśramas or stages and the roles, responsibilities and duties of each of the stages is specified. The primary role and responsibility of each of the āśramas is related to the four puruṣārathas as presented below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Āśrama</th>
<th>Major Role</th>
<th>Related puruṣārtha</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brahmacharya</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Dharma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gṛhstha</td>
<td>Householder</td>
<td>Dharma, Artha &amp; Kāma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vānaprastha</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sannyasa</td>
<td>Renunciation</td>
<td>Dharma &amp; Mokṣa</td>
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This order of life again, emphasises the social role and responsibility of the individual. In the bramacarya stage, the young ones mostly between the ages of seven and twenty received education which was holistic. The educational curriculum included spiritual training, martial arts, astronomy, language, linguistics etc. After completing proper education, one enters the state of grhstha asrama. This is a period of life where one marries, and enters family life. The grhstha or the householder is extolled, as it is on the householders that the entire society depends. They are the economically active and socially productive adults. They are expected to take care of all those who are bramacaris, vānaprasthas or sannyasins. This stage of life is meant for deriving the maximum benefit out of life and in turn to contribute one's best to society. As age advances, and one nears the age of fifty or thereabouts one is expected to hand over responsibilities and gradually withdraw from mundane activities. A vānaprastha is advised to even physically move away from the busy and active society into forests and lead a life of contemplation. Sannyasa can be the final stage in one's life, when one has reached a mental level, and is able to renounces everything. The life of sannyasa can be adopted at any stage. It may also so happen that many individuals may not adopt sannyasa. Thus sannyasa is not a stage that
is obligatory for everyone; whereas the other three stages are almost obligatory for everyone.

In Kakar's opinion, the āśramadharma is "an epigenetic principle applied to man's development in relation to his society." 31 It offers and proposes the ideal images and is "deeply etched in the Hindu psyche." 32

Rpa Traya and Pañca Maha Yajña

One of the most socially relevant concept is the pañca maha yajña. In Manu Dharma śāstra every grhastha (householder) is instructed to perform five sacrifices daily. 33 It is believed that every human being is indebted to three kinds of beings. First the Gods, then the rṣis who have provided the knowledge and wisdom, the tradition and culture to the society. Thirdly the parents and ancestors to whom a person owes his very physical existence. 34 These three debts called rpa traya are related to the performance of the pañcha maha yajñas or the five great sacrifices.

The first sacrifice is the deva yajña - sacrifice to God. This yajña or sacrifice is carried out through the daily ritual of offerings to the fire or Agni.

The second yajña is done to the rṣis, when a person studies scriptures and absorbs the culture and tradition of the society and transmits to the next generation. This
yajña is done to honour the ṛṣis who are the originators of the spiritual knowledge.

Pitru yajña is the third. Performing death ceremonies to the departed manes and begetting children and propogating societies constitute this yajña. Fourth is the manusa yajña. The specific act that is performed here is the feeding of the guests. Nurturing and protecting all living beings including the trees and plants and creepers is the fifth yajña called as bhūta yajña.

Every householder is expected to perform these five yajñas. The pañca maha yajñas emphasise the social responsibility of the adult individual. The yajñas constantly remind the individual that he is an active member of the society and consequently, he has responsibilities towards it. In the words of Kane,

"The sentiments that promoted the performance of these five observances appear to have been as follows:

... Everyone could offer a fuel stick to fire that was deemed to be the mouth of the great Gods of Heaven and thus show his reverence and devotion to them. Similarly everyone could show his reverence for and gratitude to the great sages that had bequeathed a glorious heritage of sacred literature by repeating at least one verse and one could propitiate his deceased ancestors by offering in loving memory and filial devotion a mere handful of water (which costs nothing). The whole world human and non-human is one creation and there must be a
spirit of live and let live or give and take. Therefore one must offer what one can afford to a guest and have something for all beings, (including even such shunned animals as dogs, crows and insects). These feelings of devotion, gratitude, reverence, loving memory, kindliness and tolerance seem to have been the springs that promoted the Aryans of the old to emphasize the importance of the five daily yajñas."

Further analysis of the pañca maha yajñas will highlight their relevance even in the modern times. First of all these yajñas are consciously performed. They are not some monotonous, meaningless, rituals. Thus, the individual who performs the yajñas is fully aware of the rational and the method of performing them. The various offerings of the sacrifices are simple and easily available. In the brahma or deva yajña one fuel stick is to be offered; reciting at least one verse from the scripture is the offering in the rsi yajña. Water is the offering in pitru yajña and food is the offering in manuṣa and bhūta yajñas. The underlying idea seems to be to constantly remind the individual of his place in the society, which itself is a part of the universe or creation.

The brahma yajña provides the individual with his existential identity. It makes him aware of the fact that the individuals are part of the larger creations. The rsi yajña provides him with the cultural heritage. The
pitru yajña motivates him to propagate the society. Manuṣa yajña makes him share with the fellow humans and finally the bhūta yajña brings in the ecological awareness and provides the means for nurturing and protecting the ecological system. Thus, the pāṇca maha yajñas embrace the existential, cultural, demographic, ecological and service aspects of the human life and nurtures the social responsibility of the individual.

Ideals of Society and It's Welfare

The ideals of society were not different from the aims of the individual life. The society was expected to be prosperous, peaceful, full of harmony, co-operation and toleration. The contents of the Vedic hymns portray group living and group needs. The hymns, while praising the various deities like Agni, Indra, Varuna, Mitra, and Yama pray for favours that will contribute to the well-being of all the people. Harmony, prosperity, health, victory, peace are some of the favours asked of, from the deities.

The Atharva Veda contains a hymn sung in praise of Pritivi or deified earth. It offers a graphic description of the earth in all its splendour, variety and abundance. The hymn praises the Earth, and seeks protection, peace and prosperity. The concluding verse of the hymn states, "O mother earth, do thou kindly set me down well established;
in concord with the heaven, O sage, do thou set me in fortune, in prosperity." The hymn prays for blessings in the form of power in 'loftiest domain,' prosperity, life of long duration, annihilation of hatred amongst people, and riddance of foes.37

The very first hymn of Rg Veda sung in praise of Agni seeks for prosperity. The next hymn addressed to Vayu, seeks "strength that worketh well." In the third Sarawati is requested to "brighten every pious thoughts." The fifth hymn addressed to Indra prays that "no man hurt our bodies, keep slaughter far form us." The next two verses seek prosperity and wealth.38

That prosperity and wealth were considered to be essential is clear from the following verses from Yajur, Rg and Atharva Vedas respectively.

"Lord may there be born in the Kingdom brahmanas distinguished for the knowledge of Brahman; heroic kshatriyas, skilled, piercing with shaftle mighty armours, cows giving abundant milk, good at carrying weight, shift horses and industrious women. May the clouds send rain according to our desire; may our fruit-trees ripen; may we secure and preserve prosperity."39

"Do not reduce us, agni, to the lack of heros, to the wearing of wretched cloths, to destitution – no, not to
that. Do not Holy one, abandon us to hunger or to wicked aggressor. Do not condemn us to poverty."40

"May we be free from debt in this world, free from debt in the worlds to come."41

In Indian society wherein "Artha" is accepted as one of the aims of human life, seeking material prosperity is considered a legitimate activity that has to be pursued by the human beings. This thought is clearly emphasised in the Mahābhārata. After conquering the Kurushektra war, Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandava princes does not rejoice in his victory. Instead he feels deeply depressed and wishes to relinquish his kingdom as he feels guilty of having killed his own kith and kin to obtain the kingdom and the accompanying prosperity. In response to his anguish, the other Pandava princes extoll the merit and necessity of the acquisition of prosperity and power.42 Seeking prosperity was considered essential for the grhastras or the householders. Only the brahmans, sannyasins, and brahmacāris were exempted from seeking of prosperity.

The Indian tradition was not based much on the philosophy of renunciation and that, the Indian spiritualism has within it an appropriate place for materialism has been well established by Milton Singer. According to him: "In the
traditional Indian pantheon material wealth and power have an important place. Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth is worshipped at least once a week and is the patron deity of the merchant class."\(^{43}\)

The other ideals that were sought for the society are peace, harmony, tolerance and cooperation. Prayers for peace abound in the Vedic literature. Each of the Upanishads is preceded by chanting of a special invocation called as the \(\text{Śānti Mantra}\). The actual content of each of the mantras are different, but all of them end with the chant for peace chanted thrice as "\(\text{Śānti, Śānti, Śānti.}\)"

In the Yajur Veda, one hymn, prays for peace "among the bright bodies, in the mid-ocean, on earth, in water, mineral and aerial worlds, in the vegetable and animal Kingdom."\(^{44}\)

Similarly, one of the Śānti mantras prays for peace in all quarters of the earth, sky, water, plants, trees, Gods, Brahman and ultimately in the person praying for the peace.\(^{45}\)

Several hymns and passages speak for harmony and cooperation. Harmony is sought through division of labour; sharing of wealth, and by being kind to one relatives in the family.\(^{46}\)
Valmiki’s description of Ayodhya, provides a picture of an ideal society. In the words of Valmiki,

"There dwelt a just and happy race,
With troops of children blest.
Each man contented sought no more,
Nor longed with envy for the store,
By richer friends possessed.
For poverty there was unknown.
And each man counted as his own
Kine, steeds, and gold and grain.
None deigned to feed on broken fare,
And none was false or stingy there.
A piece of gold, the smallest pay,
Was earned by the labour for a day
None lived upon another’s wealth
None pined with dread of broken health
or dark disease of mind.
High - souled were all - The slandarous word,
The boastful lie, were never heard.
Each man was constant to his vows,
And lived devoted to his spouse.
No other love his fancy knew
And she was tender, kind and true."

This lengthy quotation brings out clearly the characteristics of the kingdom. Obviously poverty, crime
and exploitation, did not exist. People lived under peaceful conditions earning their livelihood by honest means. They were not avaricious. They were charitable and kind. Neither physical nor mental diseases tormented them. Honest and harmonious relationship existed between husband and wife. In short, the passage describes an affluent, non-exploitive, well organised, healthy society.

Political and Social Organisation

The State

In Indian tradition the State has been as important institution to be understood. The science of polity has been termed as Rāja dharma, Danda Nīti, or Artha Śāsthra. Study of original sources like the Mahābhārata, Dharma Śāstras particularly that of Manu, Kautilya’s Arthaśāstra, and the Sukranīti yield copious information on polity and governance. All of these information is not of immediate interest from the point of view of the present thesis. The aspects of the welfare orientation of the king's duties and the right of the civilians are of great importance and interest from the social work perspective.

Monarchy has been the common pattern of rule, though there are evidences to indicate the existence of republics. The origin of kingship according to the above mentioned sources lie in anarchy which increased as a
consequence of men having no controller over them. When men were overcome by greed, desire, and lust the *matsya nyāya* or anarchy resulted. *Matsya nyāya* or anarchy is a condition wherein, men devoured one another as stronger fish devour the weaker ones in water. Thus, the Creator was required to create a king to protect the good and punish the wicked. Similar theories are offered by Kautilya, Manu, and Sukra. Therefore, it may be concluded that *rāja dharma* starts with imperfections in human beings and disorganization and exploitation in the society. The king has been attributed with divine origin in several works. According to Ghoshal the "theories of the Divine creation and affinity of the temporal ruler occupy an important, though not a fundamental place in Ancient Indian political thought."\(^{49}\) *Danda* or punishment is a vital instrument of the king. In the absense of *danda*, the state cannot exist. Consequently, neither *dharma*, nor property can exist. Therefore, the king has the *danda* for protection of the people and preservation of social order.\(^{50}\) *Danda* or the coercive authority of the king should be handled appropriately and justly. The king who misuses his coercive authority would himself perish. In Kane's opinion, elevation of the king's status to that of divine, helps in strengthening the sanction of the king's use of *danda*.\(^{51}\)
On analysing the various works on Arthaśāstra, Kane concludes that the purposes of rāja dharma can be classified into the ultimate and proximate ends. The ultimate end was mokṣa, which is the goal of most of the Indian philosophy as well. "The proximate goal of the State in India was to create such conditions and environments as would enable all men to live in peace and happiness, to pursue their avocations, to follow their own customs and usages and their svārdhama, to enjoy without interference the fruits of their labour, and the property acquired by them."\(^{52}\) Towards such an end, the fundamental duty of the king was to protect the citizens from internal and external aggression. The internal aggression included theft, robbery and invasion of one's rights. Ramaswamy Aiyer explains that, "protection was not merely preservation of law and order. It is the administration of State in such a degree of perfection as to enable the king and everyone of his subjects to pursue undisturbed, the paths of Dharma, Artha, and Kāma."\(^{53}\) Thus, the two-fold purposes of objective of the State was freedom from fear and want.

Functions and duties of the King: The king's functions as prescribed by Sukra, are of six categories, they are:

- protection of person and property
- administration of justice
spread of religion
philanthropy and charity
realisation of revenues.\textsuperscript{54}

The specific duties of the king were clearly identified. One of his duties was to donate fields and money to the \textit{brahmanas} according to their worth. The king had to prevent danger from thieves in villages and forests. Apatsamba describes the king as \textit{ksema-krit} or welfare worker in whose kingdom there is no fear from thieves.\textsuperscript{55} Yet another task was to punish those who did not perform their duties. The king's duty of protection had to extend to supporting students, learned \textit{brahmanas} and sacrifices. Kautilya, while specifying the daily routine of the king requires him to "look into the affairs of temple deities, hermitages, heretics, \textit{brahmins} learned in the Vedas, cattle and holy places, of minors, the aged, the sick, the distressed and the helpless and women, in(this) order, or in accordance with the importance of the matter or its urgency."\textsuperscript{56} According to Kane, "the king is also called upon to support helpless and aged people, the blind, the cripple, lunatics, widows, orphans, those suffering from diseases and calamities, pregnant women by giving the medicines, lodging, food and clothing, according to their requirement. These provisions for the old, the blind, the
widows, orphans, and helpless persons and for the relief of unemployed kṣatriyas, vaisyas, and sudras strike one as rather modern in tone." The first form of welfare state is evidenced in the exhaustive system of state relief that has been worked out by the authors of rāja dharma. Kautilya proclaims that "in the happiness of the subjects lies the happiness of the king and what is beneficial to the subjects is dear to himself, but what is dear to the subjects is beneficial to the king." Sukraṇīti adopts the extreme position of considering the king as the servant of the people, as the king collected revenue from the citizens, in return for which he offered them protection.

Civil Rights

Tremendous emphasis was placed on the king's conduct and morals. He was expected to be a model for his citizens. The Sukraṇīti states that "the prince is the cause of time, the maker of his age." According to the Mahābhārata, when the king, "oppresses his subjects by evil means of diverse kinds, then the age that sets in is called Kali." Manu warns that a king who harasses his subjects looses his life, family and kingdom. When the king uses his power of control properly he and his subjects achieve the three ends of dharma, artha and kāma, but when the king misuses it, it
recoils on him along with his relations. The Smritis permit the brahmanas, who otherwise are never allowed to wield weapons, to do so, only to resist an oppressive ruler. In a situation of political crisis which arises due to such an oppressive ruler, to defend the sacrificial priests, and to protect the masses the brahmanas are allowed the right of defence. The killing of the assailant could not be considered as murder. The Mahābhārata states that the "king whose ministers are dishonest and sinful and who is the destroyer of righteousness ..., deserves to be slain, and he quickly languishes with his family." The king from whose kingdom women are abducted is better be dead. "The people should arm themselves and kill a king, who does not protect them, who plunders their wealth, who obliterates all distinctions, who is incapable of taking their lead, who is without compassion and who is evil incarnate among kings. When the king fails to protect the people after giving them his word of for protection ..., they should combine together and slay him like a mad dog that is afflicted with rabies." Sukranīti states that one can be a king, only as long as he is devoted to righteousness. In Ghoshal's opinion, Sukranīti firstly invokes passive submission to the evil of a tyrannical ruler even like resigning to a natural calamities. Secondly, passive resistance to the evil ruler should be exhibited by deserting him and joining the enemy
camp. Thirdly, the tyrannical ruler should be disposed of in a suitable manner. 65

The above review of the rights of the citizen makes clear that at no time was the king glorified, unconditionally. "When the king is virtuous people are also virtuous, where the king is a sinner subjects are also vicious," states Sukraniti. 66 Sukra even recommends that in Kali yuga any punishment should be only to be half its extent as the subjects are poor and miserable through the king's wickedness. 67

Social Organisation

Marriage, family and caste, the three major social institutions of the traditional Indian society were so evolved that they aided in the achievement of the societal ideals of co-operation, harmony and peace.

Marriage is considered to be a sacrament. The purpose of marriage was not merely the satisfaction of the individual need of sex, security etc. "Marriage is not so much a concession to human weakness as a means of spiritual growth. It is prescribed for the sake of development of personality as well as the continuance of the family ideal." 68 By marrying and begetting children the couple offer unto the society to which they belong, sound citizens. "Personally,
they enter into stage of *grhasthāras* to achieve the purusārthas of artha, kama and eventually Moksha.\(^{59}\)

Marriage and family are closely interlinked as these two together constitute the second stage of life, viz., *grhasthāra*. As seen earlier the *grhisthas* or householders are extolled as it is on them that the rest of the society depended for their needs and welfare. By becoming a householder, a person assumes tremendous personal and social responsibilities. The duties of the householder have been clearly defined in the *Grihya Sūtras* and the *Dharma Śāstras*. The duties of the householder included hospitality, feeding of the poor etc.

The traditional families in the process of socializing their young members, made them aware of their identity as a member of the family group; their responsibility towards the family and the privileges that were due to them.

Thus, all the members of the family were made conscious of their identity, rights and duties and their roles and function. The basic orientation to group needs and welfare were thus initiated and fostered by the families. The families functioned as co-operative units wherein the members learned to cooperate share and care.

To a great extent the caste groups also oriented individuals towards their responsibility. The caste, gave
a social identity to the individuals; a role to perform; emotional and occupational security. Caste according to Radhakrishnan "insists that every human being shall have the right and proper opportunity to contribute to human achievement as far as his capacity goes." Caste, either in the initial stages as the varna system based on class, as well as the modern degenerated jāti system based on birth has managed to instil in its members the basic attitude of cooperation and integration. A standing example being the jajmani system that was prevalent in Indian rural communities until recent times.

Thus it can be seen that through the institutions of state, family and caste, the ideals of harmony, cooperation and peace have been achieved in the Indian society.

The foregoing analysis also makes clear the point that one of the basic values has been group orientation. The individuals have been constantly made conscious of the groups to which they belong and to contribute to the welfare of the group. The acceptance of dharma as a prime factor in individual and social life emphasises this factor. If dharma is defined as that which sustains society and adharma as that which destroys, extreme individualism, greed, selfishness – all these are different forms of adharma and therefore are unacceptable. Whereas cooperation, harmony
and peace sustain the society and therefore are manifestations of dharma and are therefore not only acceptable but cherished and sought after.

Social Problems and Indian Philosophy

The writings in the Indian philosophical literature offer analysis for the understanding of social problems.

By and large the individuals are made responsible for their own problems. There is no external agent creating problems. Problems at the individual as well as the societal level are created mostly by lack of proper understanding by the individuals of their own true nature and by lack of ethical behaviour.

According to Gita, "when a man dwells in his mind on the objects of sense, attachment to them is produced. From attachment springs desires and from desire comes anger. From anger arises bewilderment, from bewilderment loss of memory, and from loss of memory, the destruction of intelligence and from destruction of intelligence he perishes."\(^70\)

"For the uncontrolled, there is no intelligence nor for the uncontrolled is there power of concentration and for him without concentration, there is no peace and for the unpeaceful, how can there be happiness?"\(^71\)
Thus one creates unhappiness for oneself, by being unable to control oneself. Lack of self-control and excessive self-indulgence result in misery and unhappiness.

Patanjali's yoga also emphasises control of thoughts towards attainment of peace and tranquility as was seen in the earlier chapter.\textsuperscript{72} The yuga concept of the mythologies and the Dharma Śāstras offer rather a simplistic explanation about social disorganisation and problems.

The Manu Dharma Śāstra states that in the Treta Yuga, dharma was four footed. In the successive yugas, dharma is reduced by quarters and so in Kali yuga only one fourth of dharma will be present. This kind of reduction of dharma occurs "on account of the foulness of means by which money or knowledge was acquired in them, became successively divested in its one foot in each. On account of theft, untruthfulness and dissimulation the virtue, which is earned by pursuing an honest profession, successively became less by a quarter."\textsuperscript{73}

Thus, it is the conduct of the members of the society, that results in the prevailing conditions. This idea ties in with the Karma theory as well. Karma theory states that by one's own action one creates the life situation in which one is placed. Similarly, the social conditions of a given
time are the direct results of the actions, attitudes and aspirations of the members of the society. Practice of dharma leads to prosperity and peace while adoption of adharma as a way of life results in social disorganisation.

The chaotic condition of the modern times can be well explained thus. A major contributory factor to the present conditions of poverty, inequality, corruption is the failure on the part of the individual to be dharmic. It is obvious that practice of the sādāraṇa dharmas of truth, non-violence, purity in thought, word and deed, non-covetousness and control of senses, would considerably reduce the problems of violence, poverty, inequality, alcoholism, and drug addiction which are the major problems. The current thinking in terms of a new international economic order, simple living and high thinking are all reflections of similar understanding of human problems. In his article on "Buddhism and Development," Sulak Sivarakasa explains that the economists perceive development in terms of increasing currency and things thus fostering greed or lobha. Politicians on the other hand foster ill-will or dosha by perceiving development in terms of increasing power. Both then work together and measure the results in terms of quantity, thus fostering ignorance or moha thus resulting in propagation of what is considered as the triad of evils by Buddhism.⁷⁴
The basic approach to human problems according to the Indian tradition is best summarised in the following words of Swami Vivekananda, "We may convert every house in the country into a charity asylum, we may fill the land with hospitals, but the misery of man will still continue to exist, until man's character changes." 75

Relevance to Social Work

The social work practitioner in India has to realise the influence of the above traditions of Indian society. It is possible that none of these traditions may be existing in today's society in their original form. But it is not so much the form of traditions, as the motivations and aspirations behind these traditions that are important to be understood. Vast majority of the Indians, still follow customs and practices that are the resultants of these traditions. Most of the Indians are still affected by group identification and group expectations. To respect authority, to yield to others and to cooperate with one another comes easily to the Indians. These factors are vitally important in the practice of social work. The social worker's approach to work, if fitted into these traditions, would be highly beneficial.

It is also significant to analyse the implications of these concepts and traditions for social work profession. The puruṣārtha model emphasises and supports the social and
economic development orientations of the modern times. As explained earlier, the concept of dharma, in its comprehensiveness, includes justice, which is a major aspect of social development. The ideals of society provide the direction towards which the society should move. Artha and kāma stand for the prosperity and enjoyment in society. Sādhārana dharmas offer a guide for the social behaviour of the individual. Matsyanyāya explains the possibility of exploitation and general lawlessness in society. The political organisation offers the solution to this situation of anarchy and specifies the duties of citizens at times of anarchy. Together, these concepts provide a framework for the formulation of good society.

The pañca maha yajñas are still practiced at least in minor forms. Customs like the daily worship, celebration of annual death ceremonies of the departed members of the family particularly the parents, feeding the poor, offering food to animals, are all probably vestiges of this tradition. The sentiments underlying these customary acts are similar to the sentiments underlying the performance of pañca maha yajñas.

The āśrama system is still in practice in a slightly modified manner. The constitutional provision for compulsory education for all children below the age of
fourteen, is a modern form of the traditional *brahmacārya* stage. Illiteracy, drop-outs, child labour, are some of the present day social problems which arise due to the inability of a large section of the society to complete this stage of life at the appropriate time. Emphasis on the role and duties of the householder, would result in making the adults to be responsible to themselves and to the society to which they belong. The fundamental ideas underlying the *grhañaspūra* are, fulfilment of normal human needs and aspirations; arousing the social consciousness and social responsibility of the adult members of the society.

These qualities are definite needs of the present society, wherein rank selfishness in combination with materialism and hedonism seem to dominate. Revival of *vānaprastha* would be one solution to the problems of the aged. Instead of merely accepting the Western idea of institutionalisation of the aged, the welfare agencies and the government can plan 'Senior citizen Colonies' which could be self-sufficient in terms of habitat, health and recreational facilities.

Thus, it is not possible to ignore the relevance of the concept and theories presented in the chapter. Integration and appropriate use these concepts and theories would strengthen the profession of social work, by providing indigenous basis for many social work functions and roles.
References


14. ibid., pp.2-3.

16 cf., Gita's view of mature person in chapter 2.


18 B. Kuppuswamy, op. cit., p.129.


20 P.V. Kane, vol.I, op. cit., p.3.


22 P.V. Kane, Vol.I, op.cit., p.3.


30 ibid., pp. 570-571.

31 Sudhir Kakar, The Inner World, (Delhi Oxford University Press, 1978), P.42.

32 ibid., P.43


37 cf., ibid.


42 Kisari Mohan Ganguli, trans., op.cit. Śanti Parva, pp.9 - 34.


50 ibid., p.445.
51. P.V. Kane, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 239.


64. *Ibid.*, 207.


66. Benoy Kumar Sarkar, tran., *Sukraniti, op. cit.*, p. 132


71 ibid., p.143.

72 Patanjali defines Yoga as control of thoughts.

