Monarchy was a more popular form of government than any another system in ancient India. The expression monarchy denotes 'one-man rule'; on the other hand, democracy in the words of Abraham Lincoln, the famous President of the U.S.A., is "government of the people, by the people, for the people". Finding democratic elements in a monarchical system may seem practically impossible. The king who enjoyed enormous power and prestige could easily establish an autocratic regime in the country, but this generally did not happen in ancient India, thanks to the ingenious checks and counter-checks devised by our political thinkers. Pure autocracy was never contemplated in ancient India, even during the time when the king was considered to be divine. The high ideals set for the king by our political thinkers tended to inspire the mightiest of them to be a servant of the people and never to place his own interests above theirs.

These thinkers provided the main restraints on the king’s authority through various agencies such as the Mantri-pariṣad, the Brāhmaṇas, besides the moral and spiritual sanctions. Some may be inclined to think that such restraining factors do not signify the existence of democratic elements in the modern sense of the term.
since there was no power directly in the hands of the people. But considering the circumstances of those times, the checks provided by the socio-religious-political society of ancient India appeared natural. An attempt has been made in this study to explore the existence of 'Democratic elements in ancient Indian Monarchy'.

This work is divided into eight chapters, Ch. I discusses the 'sources' of information; Ch. II deals with 'kingship' under which the 'social contract theory' of the origin of kingship, the 'Ratnahravimśi' and the 'coronation oath' are discussed Ch. III is devoted to a discussion on 'Vedic Popular Assemblies'; Ch. IV deals with the theory of 'Paurā-Jānapada' as propounded by Dr. Jayaswal; Ch. V comprises a discussion on 'Mantripārśad'; Ch. VI discusses the 'Rural Administration'; Ch. VII deals with the 'Principles of Taxation'; and Ch. VIII deals with the 'Judiciary'.

While the political achievements of the period have been brought out, the snap and shortcomings have also been mentioned so as to present a balanced and impartial assessment.

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