INDRA IN THE INDIAN MAHĀKĀVYAS.
CHAPTER II
INDRA IN THE MAHĀKĀVYAS

The Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata constitute the epic literature of India, the former is termed as ornate poetry while the Mahābhārata is known as the didactic poetry. The study of these two epics are essential for the correct interpretations of the Vedas because the origin of the epics has been traced to the Vedas. For over two thousand years the Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata have been influencing deeply the religious and the moral thought as well as the literary production in India. Swami Vivekananda has declared 'The Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata are the two encyclopaedias of the ancient Aryan life and wisdom, portraying an ideal civilisation, which humanity has yet to aspire after'.

As the scholars have attributed the two epics to the Vedas, so the Vedic Pantheons have also played important roles in the epics too, thus influencing the religion and life of the people at epic age. Right from the beginning of the early Vedic period to the epics, thousands of years have passed and older religious thoughts, values, customs, nature of divinities have undergone tremendous changes. The religion which had its basis in the hymns and sacrifices in the early Vedic period gradually tends towards the paths of self-realisation in the Upaniṣād in the later Vedic period. And at the time of the Mahākāvyaśas, the Bhakti movement or worship of the divinities by devotion only commences which takes its full forms in Purāṇas.
It is already seen that Indra who was the supreme god in the early Vedic period, is relegated to the inferior position by Prajapati or Brahma in the later Vedic period. And in epics, the three divinities, popularly known as Trinity, who were of not much significance in the Vedic period, emerge as the supreme gods in the epics. They are Brahma, the creator, Visnu, the sustainer and Siva, the destroyer, Indra is relegated to further inferior positions by these three gods. In epics, the centre of attraction and propitiation is not Indra but this Trinity divinities. But still Indra continues to play vital role in the epic as an important god, which is evident from the discussions and interpretations as made in the next few pages.

**Indra in the Ramayana**

In the lesser epic, the Ramayana, Indra appears in lesser numbers and in comparison to Mahabharata his role and significance is also of not much consequence. The Ramayana has a strong showing that Indra was believed to have become guilty of the grossest immorality - the seduction of the wife of his spiritual teacher. He is said to have visited the house of Gautama in the form of Gautama and wished to have intercourse with Ahalya, the wife of the sage whose beauty was unparalleled in three worlds. Thereafter Ahalya could identify Indra but could not resist herself and yielded to the passion of Indra. But as Indra was about to leave, Gautama returned and understood
the entire thing. He became furious and cursed Indra and his wife. Consequently Indra lost his manhood and Ahalyā was doomed to live for many years in the form of a stone in the forest until was rescued by Rāma. Another account of this curse of Gautama was that Indra was compelled to carry a thousand disgraceful marks on his body so that everyone must know the sin of Indra. At the earnest request of the Gods, these marks were changed to eyes which the ignorant thought of omniscient nature of Indra. One result of this sin of Indra was the fact that a son of Rāvaṇa, Meghnāda, was able to defeat him in war. There was a fierce battle between gods and demons and the gods led by Indra suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the demons led by Meghnāda, and ultimately Indra was taken as a captive and imprisoned at Lāṅkā. Brahmā came to the rescue of Indra. He promised immortality to Meghnāda upon performing of Nikumbhīlā Yajña and in turn he set Indra free. Brahmā conferred this prince the name Indrajit, the conqueror of Indra.

When the sons of mother of the Demons, Aditi, were killed by the Gods led by Indra, she prayed to Kāśayapa, the son of Marichi, for a worthy son who would be able to slay Indra. Kāśayapa, on being approached by Aditi, was pleased and blessed her that she would give birth to a son capable of killing Indra after a period of thousand of years of austre life and penance. Aditi started obeying his advices. Meanwhile, Indra helped Aditi in all possible ways in her meditation and austerity.
After a lapse of 990 years Aditi, being pleased by Indra, told him that the child whom she would give birth would be a brother of Indra instead of killing him. By mistake, one night Aditi went to sleep placing her feet at the place where head should be placed thus violating the rules of austerity. Finding this Indra laughed and entered inside the female organ of Aditi and crushed the embryo in seven pieces. The foetus started crying and Indra told him "Ma Rudo" i.e. do not weep. After getting up from her sleep, Aditi understood her fault and forgave Indra and said that these seven pieces of the child would be known as Maruts derived from 'Ma Rudo' and they would guard the three worlds at the command of Indra.

At the time of the crucial war between Rama and Ravana, Ravana started fighting with the help of a chariot that can move in the atmosphere while Rama's chariot was of ordinary type. So all the gods, Gandharvas and Kinnaras thought that with uneven chariots the war will also be an uneven one and Ravana will get an upper hand. Seeing this, Indra, the King of the Gods sent his chariot along with his Sārathi Matali to the aid of Rama and Rama killed Ravana mounting on the chariot of Indra. After Sita's Agniprabhesh, when Sītā was handed over to Rama in the same form and Rama was praised, consoled and appreciated by all the gods, Indra decided to give him a boon and accordingly at the request of Rama,
Indra gave life to all those monkeys and bears who were killed in the war with Rāvana. Moreover it is also stated that Lakshmana killed Indrajit with the arrow given to him by Indra thus taking revenge on Meghnāda, who once made him a captive.

From the references as stated above, Indra is also found to be engaged in activities, like a god closely resembling any mortal. He does mischievous by seducing Ahalyā and as a result of which he is cursed and also defeated and taken as a captive at the hands of Meghnāda. He helps Rāma by providing him with his Chariot at the time of battle with Rāvana. He steals the sacrificial horse of Ambarīśa because he is always afraid of people engaged in penance and sacrifices. In a very short spell, Indra lives up to his standard and characters. He appears as a War-god involved in battles. But his strength and valour as seen in Vedic period does not remain so in the Rāmāyana. He fails to win against Meghnāda and only at Brahmā's intervention he is rescued. But at the earliest opportune moment he helps Lakshmana to slay Meghnāda and Rāma to kill Rāvana. Whatever may be the position and power of Indra, he continues to reign as the king of the gods, most adorable to other divinities and as usual Indra rallies with the winning force or rather to say Rāma, the incarnation of Viṣṇu and identified as truth, needs the help of this supreme Vedic god at crucial moments.
As in Vedic period, in Mahābhārata too, Indra is the head of Sura's or Deva's. \(^6\) Indra by means of his sacrifices surpasses all other gods and secures Indraship. \(^7\) After killing a number of demons and asuras he has become Devādhipa. \(^8\) He killed Vṛtra and thus given the epithet Mahendra. \(^9\) Other epithets of Indra in Mahābhārata are Meghavān, Rbhuksa, Vāsava, Arha, Purandara, Devendra, Vajrapāni, (the holder of thunderbolt in hands), Meghavāhana, (borne upon the clouds); Pākeṣaṇa (the sub-duer of demon Pāka) Marutsāvēn (the lord of the Maruts or Winds), Vajrabhartā, (the holder of the Vajra) Sahasrakṣa, (the thousand-eyed one). Another epithet of Indra is Sakra meaning strong and signifying mighty.

Indra's wife is known as Saci. \(^10\) She is also called Indrāni, \(^11\) and she is also called Mahendrāni. \(^12\) Maharāṣṭri Bharadvāja's daughter, the beautiful and Virtuous Śrubabatī, was engaged in great austerity in order to become Indra's wife. She performed tapas for one hundred years and then Indra in the disguise of sage Vaiśīṣṭha tested her intensity of austerity, and on being satisfied accepted her as his wife Saci and they started living in the heaven. \(^13\)

Indra's elephant is known as Airavata and it is very beautiful and victorious and stands at the gate of the heaven.
Sometimes it is also called *Airāvata*. It resembles the mountain *Keilaśa*. During the churning of the ocean, **Indra's horse Uccaihāraṇas was created along with his elephant *Airāvata*. Both are of white colour and the elephant is four tusked one.** His chariot or Ratha is mentioned without any name.**

It is drawn by ten thousand reddish yellow horses as speedy.** Also it is mentioned that it is drawn by one thousand white horses.** It scatters the dark clouds as it cleaves the sky and fills all quarters of the heavens with a din like the crush of thunderclouds. The chariot carries the swords, the spears, the clubs flashing lightning and thunderbolts as well as most frightful serpents. At Arjuna's desire it appeared to him immediately.

*Indra's Charioteer, Sarathi, minister and friend is Mātāli who is equal to Indra in bravery.** Mātāli's wife is called Sudharma and his daughter Guṇakeśī was famous for her beauty. When Mātāli was looking forward for a bridegroom for her, he found none suitable and ultimately he along with Nārada found beautiful Samukha as bridegroom of his daughter.** At times the Ratha of Indra is known as *Vimana*. Several weapons of Indra are mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*. The main weapon of Indra is Vajra or thunderbolt. It was fashioned by Tvastr from the bones of the Sage Dadhīca (Agastya). It surpasses all other weapons and with it Indra cleaves the mountains and struck the head of Vṛtra.**
His bow is known as Vijaya. His sankha or trumpet is termed Devadatta. Indra is the king of Svarga. His Kingdom is Indraloka, Sakraloka, or called Svaratī, Svārloka. Div and Devaloka i.e. the world of light and shining gods. According to Faurebol L Svérga is most likely originally an adjective implying Mārga, road therefore leading to Svarga. The entrance to Svarga is called Svargadvāra, and at the gate stands Airavata. The city of Indra, the Amaravati, is very lucidly described in Mahābhārata. It has one thousand gates and an extent of one hundred yojanas. It is adorned with precious stones and yields all season’s fruit that are desired. The sun does not scorch there, neither heat nor cold or fatigue torments the people. Here all are content because grief, despondency, weakness, anger, covetousness do not have any place there. The trees always bear desired foliage, fruits and flowers. The various lakes are filled with fragrant lotuses. Here the breeze is cool, delicious, fragrance and inspiring. There are innumerable beautiful beasts and in the sky beautiful birds. Along with Indra here live Vasus, Rudras, Sādhyaś, Maruts, deitys and the Aśvins and other Gandharvas and the Celestials. The grove in Svarga is called Randana.

Indra’s palace hall, Indra-Sabhā and attendants are also beautifully described in Mahābhārata. His assembly hall, Sabhā, is known as Puskarāmālī. It is built by Viśvākarma at the instance of Indra and it is mobile. It is one
hundred and fifty Yojana in length and hundred Yojana in breadth and five Yojana in height. It turns back the weakness of old age, fatigue, grief fear and is very auspicious and bestowed with good fortune. It is extremely beautiful and full of rooms and seats and ornamented with heavenly trees. Indra assumes a beautiful form incapable of any discomfort. He sits here along with Saci. He has a crown on his head and bright bracelets in the upper arms and robed in pure white and decked with floral wreaths of many hues. He is united upon by other gods and ascetics. Three classes of mankind find entry at Indra-Sebha. They are those who sacrifice, those who do penance and those who conduct like heroes in the battle. 35

Indra is supposed to be residing at mount Mandara, that covers the earth up to the ocean. 36 Indra is adjudged as the model King to the King of earths. Indra displays his power at the proper time and place and thus reign the heaven along with other Vasus. 37

Now we consider the deeds of Indra in order to ascertain the characteristic features of Indra and his position in Mahabharata. We have observed that Indra, the supreme Vedic god, lost his position to Brahma in later Vedic period and in epic age Siva and Vishnu surpassed him. Still in Mahabharata, he is regarded as Davaraja and remains the performer, doer and
giver god. We have come across with number of deeds of Indra, of which some are related to his Vedic period. Indra is the king of all other gods and he gives strength, power, children and happiness to all creatures, when worshipped he fulfills everybody's wishes. Indra destroys the wicked and protects the righteous. He assigns duties to all creatures. In absence of sun and moon he works for them. When required, Indra acts for Agni, Vayu, Prthivi and Apeh. Indra is the symbol of limitless strength, enterprising force and valour and unending lustre. It is certain that Indra, in Mahabhurata, is primarily considered as a rain god as appears from prayer of Kadru, the mother of the Snakes, for release of rains. She prays to Suraepati Indra.

In Kadru's prayer to Sakra for rain, he is identified with all other gods. Kadru propitiated Indra, saying:

"I bow to thee, thou Lord of all the deities! I bow to thee, thou slayer of Vrtra! I bow to thee, thou slayer of Namuci! O thou of a thousand eyes, consort of Saci!

by thy showers, be thou the protector of the snakes (mythical development of saving or rescuing clouds, Ahi meaning snake also) scorchcd by the sun! O thou best of the deities, thou art our great protector. O Purendara, thou art able to grant rain in torrents! Thou art Vayu (the air), the clouds, Agni and Vidyuta in the sky.

Thou art the propeller of the clouds, and has been called the great cloud (i.e. that which will darken the universe at the end of yuga)!"
Thou art the fierce and incomparable thunder and the roaring cloud.

Though art the creator of the worlds and their destroyer!
Thou art unconquered.
Thou art the light of all creatures, Aditya Vibhāvasu, and the wonderful elements.
Thou art the ruler of all the deities,
Thou art Viṣṇu,
Thou hast a thousand eyes.
Thou art a god and the final source!
Thou art, O deity, all amṛta,(Immortality) and the most adored Soma! (Nilakaṇṭha says that Soma denotes Isvara).
Thou art the moment, the lunar day, minute (the love),
Thou art the (moment) Kṣana.
Thou art the lighted fortnight, and also the dark fortnight.
Thou art kāla, thou keśṭha and thou trutī (divisions of time).
Thou art the year, the seasons, the months, the nights and the day!
Thou art also the firmament resplendent with the sun.
Thou art the great ocean with heaving billows and abounding with whales, swallower of whales, and makaras and various fishes.
Thou art adored by the wise and by the great Rṣis with minds reft in contemplation.
Thou drinkest, for the good of all creatures, the Soma juice in sacrifices and the clarified butter offered with sacred invocation.
Thou art always worshipped at sacrifices by Brahmanas, moved by desire of fruit. O Thou of incomparable strength, thou art sung in the Vedas and Vedāṅgas.

From the above prayer of Indra, we can easily ascertain the position of Indra. He is adored and worshipped at very high esteem. As suggested earlier, in epic Indra is considered, basically, as a performer god. More Indra is conceived as the highest entity and the guiding force behind everything.

Number of episodes and stories centre round Indra in Mahābhārata revealing certain important aspects of Indra.

The story relating to Indra and Garuḍa occupies an important position in Mahābhārata. The story is given below in brief.

Garuḍa, the King or the Indra of the birds, was created on account of Indra's fault only. Once Prajāpāti Kāśyapa, in longing for a son, arranged one Yajña and asked Indra and the dwarf sages to bring woods for the Yajña. Seeing the limitation and height of the dwarf sages, Indra laughed at them. These sages, in turn, on being insulted, performed a Yajña for the creation of another Indra who would be superior to Indra in respect to strength, valour and efficacy. Learning about this Yajña, Devarāja Indra prayed and pleased Kāśyapa &
Kasyapa appeared before the dwarf sages, and told them that the creation of another Indra will be against the desire of Brahman. But however this Yajña resulted in two mighty sons who were supposed to assist Indra, not harm him. Then Kasyapa advised Indra not to insult the Brahman sages as their wrath would harm him. Garuḍa, the king of birds along with Aruna were born of Vinata. Once Kadru, the mother of snakes and the sister of Vinata, had a controversy and a betting bet with Vinata, the mother of Garuḍa, regarding the colour of Indra's horse. Vaneśvara was created at the time of churning of ocean. Vinata said that the colour of the horse is pure white which was true while Kadru's contention was that it is white but black at its tail. They decided that loser would remain as a slave to the winner. Kadru, in order to win the bet, took help of deception and as such directed her snake-sons to cover the tail of the horse so that it looks black. As a result of which, Vinata lost to Kadru and became her slave, on account of her mother's slavery, Garuḍa had to obey lot of commands of the snakes. One day he wanted to know from the snakes that how his mother would be freed from this bondage of slavery. The snakes replied that he and her mother would be free if Garuḍa could bring Amṛta from the heaven. He sought and received blessings from his mother and set forth to bring Amṛta. Garuḍa's journey caused great sensations, while he killed and ate Misādas. In this process one Brāhma entered into the mouth of Garuḍa and as Garuḍa was against Brāhminicide,
he allowed the Brahmin along with his wife to escape from his mouth. Then Garuda met his father Kasyapa and was greeted by him. When Garuda asked for any food that would satiate him as well as to enable him to bring Amrta from heaven for release of his mother from slavery, Kasyapa advised him to gain strength by eating the elephant and the tortoise, the animal forms of two brother Supratip and Vrāvāsa engaged in continuous conflict. Afterwards Kasyapa pleased the dwarf sages and directed Garuda to proceed. Then on reaching heaven, a fierce battle broke out between Garuda on one hand and Indra and other gods on the other hand. The battle was more fierce than the battle with Asuras. Indra along with others such as Vasu, Rudra, Āditya, Śādhya, Maruta and other gods started showing their valour and strength. Even Pañjānga started raining. On account of heavy dust-storm, generated by the ferocity of the battle, the garlands and the crowns of the gods became shineless. Garuda created this dust-storm and the gods could not see anything. Then, on Indra’s advice, Vāyu, removed this dust storm. But the gods and Suras were either injured or fled from the battle field on account of Garuda’s might. Then after collecting amṛta, Garuda met Narayana and became his Vāhana and in turn Narayana blessed him to become immortal. Then seeing Garuda leaving with the amṛta, Indra struck him with his Vajra. Garuda told him that Indra’s Vajra caused no injury to him but he, in order to show honour to Indra and his Vajra,
shed one beautiful feather from his self. Then all the gods
found the feather very beautiful and so termed it as suparna
(feather) because the feather was beautiful. Indra came
forward to be friend Garuda for ever. Garuda told him the
reason for carrying the amrta and then on Indra's advice he
kept the amrta on Kusa(grass) before the snakes and immedi-
ately he and his mother were freed from slavery. But as soon
as the snakes wanted to consume the amrta, Indra took away
it to heaven.

Another myth that originated in Vedas and still
continued in Mahabharata is Indra-Vṛtra traditional
story. An interesting story relates to birth of Vṛtra and subsequent
killing of Vṛtra by Indra in Udyog-parva. This story resulted
from killing of Trisirā by Indra. Trisirā was created by
great tapas Tvasta to cause trouble to Indra. Trisirā had
three faces. Trisirā started performing great tapas which
made Gatakratu afraid and he sent the apsaras to distract his
attention from tapas, but they failed in their mission. Then
Indra struck him with his Vajra which caused him to fall down
but his valour and life remained. On Indra's instruction one
carpenter cut the head of Trisirā with an axe. Learning the
death of his son Trisirā, Tvasta became very angry and created
Vṛtra and directed him to kill Indra in the heaven. Mighty
Vṛtra was engaged in a dreaded battle with Indra. Once he
swallowed Indra inside his mouth but due to the intervention
of other gods Indra could escape. Again, Indra was engaged
In a fierce battle with Vṛtra but subsequently fled from heaven. Finding no other alternative to kill Vṛtra, Indra along with other sages and gods started praying to Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu advised them first to make peace treaty with Vṛtra and then he would enter inside a Vajra of Indra so that Indra could annihilate Vṛtra. The sages returned to Vṛtra and advised him to make a peace treaty with Indra because Indra was a sage like in character, honoured by the wise-people, a shelter and comfort for the greatmen, religious, truth spoken god, to Vṛtra ought to make a friendship with Indra. Vṛtra in turn, laid certain conditions for the treaty such as he would not be killed by Indra and the other gods by any weapon fashioned from stone or wood and which is dry or wet and also not during day or night. Indra agreed to these and the peace treaty was enforced. But Indra like a true war god, was always absorbed in thought of killing Vṛtra one day observing foams of sea in one evening, he killed Vṛtra with the ocean foams in which Viṣṇu entered at that time, and it was neither day nor night, neither dry nor wet and also the weapon was neither fashioned from stone nor from wood. All the gods and the sages were pleased in the death of Vṛtra. But Indra became afraid of Brahmānicidal of killing Trisiri and Vṛtra and flew from heaven and took shelter in a lotus stalk. From here generated another nice story relating to Indra.

In absence of Devarāja Indra, the gods and the sages became afraid and ultimately they invited one man named
Nahusa, an wise, religious and strong, to become their
king or Indra. Nahusa initially refused to become their
Indra. Afterwards he agreed and started reigning religiously
and wisely and became the king of the heaven. But afterwards
he was so much absorbed in luxury and entertainment, that
he became corrupt, and always addicted to vices only. Then
one day Nahusa saw Indra’s consort Saci and desired her. He
asked for Saci’s service immediately. Saci took refuge in
Brhaspati and he comforted her. Finding Nahusa very much
angry, the gods and the sages reminded him that Saci is
Indra’s wife, so to enjoy her would be immoral. But Nahusa
was so passionate that he cited the example of Indra’s lust
for Ahalya and remained firm in his decision to have Saci.
Then the gods requested Saci to embrace Nahusa as her husband.
Saci once again approached Brhaspati for help. Brhaspati the
perceptor of the gods, remained firm in his decision to
accept Saci at this crucial moment. Brhaspati advised Saci
to tell Nahusa to wait for a day because he would search for
Indra. As Nahusa requested her to accept him as her husband,
Saci requested him to wait for sometime because she wished
to search Indra. Nahusa agreed to it and permitted her to
do so. Saci went to Brhaspati and with them all the gods met
Visnu and Visnu advised Saci to perform Asvamedha
Yajña to get rid of the sins he had committed. Saci prayed
in order to find out Indra. Upasrutti came and assured her
to help her. With her Saci came to Himalayas and found Indra
in one lotus stalk and she explained him everything. One
Bṛhaspati's advice, Śacī told Nahuṣa that if he is
transported in a unique Vāhana carried by the sages, then
only Śacī would marry her. Nahuṣa agreed to it without
knowing that his time has become ripe for destruction. Being
carried by the sages, he condemned the Vedas. Then
Bṛhaspati performed a sacrifice for Indra and ultimately
Indra appeared in his own self. Immediately he assigned
Varuṇa, Yama, and Kuvera to their respective positions of
Lokapālas and also gave one part to Agni and then awarded
Agni as 'Aindragna' in the sacrifices, he also made
Kuvera the chief of Yaksas and wealth, Yama the Chief of
the dead and Varuṇa, the Chief of the water.

But in the meantime Nahuṣa was relegated from heaven
and became a snake to live in earth for ten thousand years
by the curse of the sage Agastya. 44

The stories related to Indra, Trisūra, Vṛtra and Nahuṣa
are told to Yudhīṣṭhīra by Salīya at the time of former's
sufferings because of the fact that if the king of the gods
Indra may suffer to such an extent, then any mortal on the
earth should not be afraid and sorry for his sufferings, rather
he should learn patience and endurance from Indra. So here,
Indra appears as a symbol of patience and endurance and thus
a teacher to the mankind.

Indra-Geruda conflict and subsequent mutual friendship
of theirs, clearly relates another myth of Vedic period. In
The Veda, along with Vrtra, Indra annihilated Ahi, the serpent-form-demon. That Indra had traditional rivalry with snakes, is evident from his friendship with Garuda, the arch-enemy of the snakes. Here, Indra made friendship with Garuda and deprived the serpents becoming immortal by trickily taking away the amrta, brought by Garuda. Also in case of Nahusa, he became a snake by the curse of Agastya when he committed sins. The story of Indra-Garuda is known as Sauparnākhyāna in Adiparvan of Mahābhārata in fifteen chapters. But this story has also got relation with Indra from Vedic period also. In Rv. 10.73.11, we find reference of 'Suparna' or ray of sun relating to Indra. While in Vedas it was just a natural phenomenon and in epics it became a mythological myth. The beautifully falling rays of the sun approached Indra imploring "uncover the encompassed region. Release us who are bound with shares as it were." 45

Here the beautifully falling rays of the sun rush for a share of water. In Brähmana texts Suparna means bird. 46 In the classical sanskrit text Suparna means Garuda. So the figurative expression indicates that the rays are the horses of sun came to be understood in the Mahābhārata and the Puranas that Garuda is the vehicle of Viṣṇu. This depicts the journey of Suparna from the Vedas to the Mahābhārata.

Similarly what became serpent in the Mahābhārata with myth meant clouds in the Vedas. Nighanta gives 'Ahi' as a synonym of clouds and the word 'Ahi' is never used to denote cloud
in the Classical Sanskrit where it only indicates a serpent. Another very significant word in the above story is Amṛta which is generally understood to denote nectar but the classical lexicons have preserved the other senses of the word. Amarkosa gives water as synonym to Amṛta. In fact the phenomenon of rain, as a whole, described in the hymns of Veda has been developed into such an extensive myth. Here Garuda stands for the rays of the sun; serpents stand for clouds. Amṛta means water, Indra is the god of rain. Carrying of the clouds by Garuda to Nāgloka (Nakeloka-sky) signifies how the rays of the sun makes the clouds. The rays of the sun cause the waters of the earth to become vapours and form clouds. Garuda or Suparna viz., the rays of the sun brings Amṛta for the Ahis, the clouds, the rays of the sun enrich the clouds with water. Then as soon as the rays of the sun place the water for ahis (clouds), Indra, the god of rain takes away the Amṛta or water i.e. as soon as the clouds are formed Indra dispells the clouds and releases the water in the form of rain, the showers of which are in no way less than the nectar to the being of the earth as well as gods who should also get their share of oblations only when the earth is prosperous. The same idea gets a poetic delineation from Kalidasa's Rāghuvamśa.

Another important myth of Indra which we have come across in Vedas also gets prominence in Mahābhārata. Once
Namuci, the king of the demons, entered inside the rays of the sun from fear of Indra. Indra made a friendship treaty with Namuci with a condition that he would not kill him during day or night, with any weapon wet or dry. But in one evening Indra killed him with the foam of the ocean. Then on being afraid of the sins arising out of Brahminicide, Indra went to Brahma and Brahma advised him to perform a sacrifice at Arunātirtha, the conjunction of Aruna and Saraswati river. Indra acted accordingly and was free from the sins of Brahminicide and returned to heaven for ever.49

Indra's slaying of Trisirā, Vṛtra and Namuci leads us to reveal certain important religious teachings of the epic age as well as the power of the gods to some extent.

Indra, the supreme god of the Vedic period, no longer remains the same. He does not remain all mighty by himself as we have seen in Vedas. Here, Indra could kill Trisirā but Trisirā's beheaded head looked alive and made Indra scared. Indra by himself could not do any further harm to Trisirā and as a result he had to take the help of an ordinary mortal, a carpenter, to do the rest after promising him that his weapon would become Vajra like powerful.50 Moreover, initially he lost to Vṛtra and when Vṛtra was about to swallow him, then other gods rescued him by the application of Jṛmbhika i.e. compelled Vṛtra to open his mouth and Indra escaped. After defeat, Indra and other gods had to take the help of Viṣṇu in order to kill Vṛtra. When Indra ultimately had slain
Vrtra with the foam of the ocean, it was no ordinary foam but Visnu entered in the foams thereby making it a mighty weapon capable of killing Vrtra.51 Also we find Indra being defeated at the hands of Garuda and his all powerful weapon Vajra failed to harm Garuda in any way. Even Indra though king of the gods could not safeguard the Amrta that was churned from the ocean.52 So it is quite evident that Indra could not retain his almighty position as was in Vedic period. But like an ordinary mortal king, he was defeated again and again and he had to take the help of other gods such as Visnu, Siva indicating their superiority over Indra in Mahābhārata. Another very interesting fact is revealed from the above stories. Indra, king of the gods, could not avert the sins arising out of Brāhmicide and falsehood as he did in case of Trisirā at the first instance and next Vrtra and Namuci. Trisirā was a Brāhmaṇ and Indra killed him. To kill Vrtra and Namuci, Indra had to take the help of deception. The teachings of our epics lead us to learn that Brāhmaṇ occupied very prominent and important position in our ancient life. Moreover, they were the guides and philosophers the kings. The Brāhmaṇs used to lead a very austere and sacred life. So to touch them was a great crime on those days, and the sinner was supposed to receive the wrath of the supreme gods. Indra was no exception to it. After killing Trisirā, a brāhmaṇ and taking the help of falsehood for killing Vrtra Indra became very sad and fled.
away from heaven though at that time it was free from his enemies i.e. Vrtra had already been killed, Indra came down to earth and like a snake forgot his self and started living in a lotus stalk in a lake. He was only invoked by the sacrifices made by Brhaspati. We know, after killing Namuci with the help of falsehood Indra had to perform sacrifices at Aruna river. The position of Brahma was so superior that even Indra could not escape their wrath leave aside ordinary human beings. The birth of Garuda was also associated with Indra's insult to the dwarf sages.

Indra though not so important in Mahabharata but was retained as the king of the gods and it is also very interesting to note that other gods excepting Visnu, Siva and Brahma, were always dependent on Indra in facing their enemies as it appears from the story of Nahusa where no god could match the might of Nahusa and they had to perform sacrifices for invoking Indra to kill Nahusa. So Indra remained the most important god and usually other gods were dependent on him excepting the Trinity divinities.

Virtue and honesty played an important role in those days. Nahusa was mighty and pre-dominant so long he was virtuous. But as soon as he became susceptible to vices and sins and desired Saci, Indra's wife, he immediately lost all his valour and by the curse of Agastya was transformed into a snake for ten thousand years. To the eyes of the gods, Indra was very virtuous, honest, patient, truth spoken god,
a shelter for the great souls, as is evident from the pleading of the gods with Vṛtra for friendship with Indra.

Indra is also considered as an Āditya in Mahābhārata. Indra is also found to be Viṣṇu's manifestation in Mahābhārata. The powerful and virtuous Māndhātā became the king at a time when the Dānavas multiplied in number and became corrupt. Māndhātā performed a sacrificial Yajña to have a sight of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu, in the form of Indra, appeared before him and tried to prevent him from seeing Viṣṇu and in turn offered him boons. Then Māndhātā and other kings paid their obedience to Indra. Here Viṣṇu is fully identified with Indra. Indra also acts as a guardian of Kshatriya Dharma. He tells that Kshatriya Dharma has evolved from Viṣṇu and according to the doctrine of this religion, Viṣṇu killed the Asuras thereby making Brahmā, Brahman and all other religions safe in this world. Indra described this religion as the best among all religions and it is fully dedicated to the welfare of the people. Fertility of the land, various Yajñas, to become charitable to the beggars, to look after the subjects and to give up life at wars are the principles of Kshatriya religion. The association of Viṣṇu with Indra reveals either Viṣṇu's acceptance of Indra as a guardian of Kshatriya Dharma or to show that all gods are but one, only their forms and deeds are different.

In Drona Parva we find numerous accounts indicating supremacy of Śiva over Indra.
In Mahabharata, Indra engages himself in spoiling the Tapas, the sacrifices and yajñas of others. As in the case of Triśūla, he also sent his nymphs to spoil the tapas of sage Visvamitra. He also sent his nymph Alambusa to Dadhica and as a result Sarasvata was born. Actually Indra becomes scared whenever anyone performs great tapas. The etymology of his name 'Satarkata' is derived from the word hundred sacrifices. So whenever Indra finds anyone performing sacrifices and tapas he tries to spoil their work because of the fact that he becomes afraid that he may lose his Indraship.

Moreover Indra appears to be very virtuous because, goddess Sri Associates herself with Indra, and she desires to be honoured by Indra as this would motivate all other gods and goddesses to honour her.

Prahlāda, an ardent disciple of Vāsudova Kṛṣṇa, though a deitya, delivers advice to Indra for awakening of the soul which Indra admired and in the long run worshipped Prahlāda.

Indra's kingly qualities are also revealed when the story of Skanda Kārtthikaya is considered. Kārtthikaya was born of Śvēṣa by Agni. Observing Kārtthikaya very powerful, Indra mounted on his elephant Airavata and struck him with his Vajra which struck Kārtthikaya on his right side and surprisingly Visakha was created. Then Indra admired Kārtthikaya and befriended him. Indra found Kārtthikaya superior to him.
and offered him the kingship of the heaven which Kārttikeya honourably refused and in turn Indra honoured Kārttikeya with the position of commander-in-chief of his army.\textsuperscript{66}

It is certain that Indra could not forget his primary position as Vedic period. When in epics, Viṣṇu and Śiva surpassed him and became largely worshipped, Indra tried to have a rift with Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa as is evident from the burning of Khāṇḍavāvana in Adiparva. This forest was burnt by Agni with the help of Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, the Nārāyana and the Nara and they did not allow a single life to escape. Scorched by the fire, the gods along with the sages appealed to Indra to protect them from fire. At Indra’s command it started raining but the rains could not reach the forest as dried earlier by the flames. Then Indra and other gods were involved in a fierce battle with Arjuna as they failed otherwise to protect the forest. But in that battle along with Indra all other gods lost to Arjuna-Kṛṣṇa combination inspite of heavy hailstorm and stone-storm by Indra. On being advised by celestial instructions that Indra is unable to defeat Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, he stopped his battle against them.\textsuperscript{67}

Then Indra descended with the Maruts and asked them to choose a boon from him and Arjuna asked all his weapon and Kṛṣṇa his eternal friendship with Arjuna.\textsuperscript{68}

The discussion on Indra as a god would remain incomplete unless we consider two great fathers and their glorious sons of Mahābhārata.
In the Mahābhārata, Indra is called the father of Arjuna. It is also said that Śiva along with four Indras became incarnate as the five Pāṇḍavas. Maghavan is also the cause of the birth of Ghatotkaca. Śūrya or sun is the father of Karna borne of Kunti at her unmarried state. Śūrya had all the affinities for his glorious son but his direct assistance to Karna in battle is rarely mentioned. While Indra did everything to ensure the victory of his great son in a manner that is characteristics of Indra only.

At the burning of the Khāṇḍavāna, Indra gave all his weapons to Arjuna. Indra brought Arjuna to his kingdom and at his instance, Arjuna was taught Gandharva dances and arts of sex from Indra's nymphs such as Urvasi, Rambha, etc. These lessons ultimately helped Arjuna at the time of their Agnatabas for one year when he remained in the form of Brāhanalla in the kingdom of Virat. Indra is all along alarmed by the power of Karna, so he appeared to him in the disguise of a Brāhmīna whom Karna could easily identify because he was already alarmed by his father Śūrya. Indra wanted the jacket and the earrings of Karna which made him unassailable. Indra was adamant to get these two things from Karna and in turn he gave him an weapon which after destroying one mighty enemy in the war would return to Indra. Thus Indra deceived Karna and ensured victory of his son Arjuna. Karna, in the disguise, of a Brāhmīna, became a pupil of Parasurām, the great sage, who was a hater of Kshatriya and who made the world free from the grip of
Kshatriya twenty one times. Once his guru Parasurama was
sleeping keeping his head on the thigh of Karna. In the
meantime, for the welfare of his son Arjuna, Indra entered
inside the thigh of Karna in the form of an insect causing
tremendous pain and bloodshed. But Karna tolerated ever­
thing in great pain and did not move an inch which may
cause disturbance to his guru. On getting up from sleep,
Parasurama seeing the tolerance and patience of Karna,
immediately detected his identify as a Kshatriya and cursed
him that he would forget the Brahmastra at the time of his
death. So Indra spoiled Karna’s entire effort at Parasurama’s
place. Indra exerted himself fully just like an ordinary
mortal to ensure the victory of his son at any cost. He,
being the king of the gods, wished his son also to become
all powerful and free from traditional enemies.

In earlier occasion we have mentioned the slaying
of Namuci by Indra. But in Santi Parva, Namuci appears as a
great ascetic giving a discourse to Indra on self control
and detachment from outward circumstances. Namuci was
conversant with the birth and death of all creatures and at
troubles he was unperturbed at heart. This was also testified
by Prahlada and Bali, the son of Virocana. Indra became an
ardent student and asked Namuci the reasons for his calm and
composure at the time of sorrow and grief. Namuci ans: red
"The sorrows that can not be warded off should not be given
indulgence because it would then enhance it and thus cause
waste of One's body and make the foes happy. The indulgence in sorrows destroys one's personality, calmness, prosperity, life and virtue itself. Sorrows and joys are the part of life and one who knows this philosophy of life is the best among all the species.\textsuperscript{75}

This is a great teaching to Indra. Indra also learn about the sway on time on everything including Indra himself from Bûli.\textsuperscript{76} Bûli categorically tells Indra that latter was an object of universal adoration in consequent to times course alone.\textsuperscript{77} Gain and loss, happiness and misery, lust and wrath, birth and death, captivity and release, these are all the encounters in times course. Bûli tells to Indra "I am not the actor, you are not the actor. He is actor who indeed, is all omnipotent.\textsuperscript{78}

In Mahâbhârata the superiority of Viśnu over Indra has already been discussed. It is evident from Droṇa Parvat that Siva has also been projected superior to Indra. There is an account of Asuras having three excellent and large cities in the heaven. One was made of iron and Vidyumâlin was its lord, another was of silver with Târaksa as its lord and the third one of gold with Kamâlka as its lord. Indra in spite of his best efforts could not make any impacts on these cities. Then the gods led by Indra approached Rudra or Siva for his help. He accepted their request and pierced the three cities with his terrible shaft consisting of three knots.\textsuperscript{79}
The continuation of the same story stresses Siva's superiority over Indra. While by the wrath of Rudra, the three cities were burning, Pārvatī went there to view the sight with a child on her lap who had bald head with five clumps of hair on it. While the goddess asked all the dieties to tell the identity of the child, ever mischievous Indra struck the child with his Vajra. But surprisingly, no harm was caused to the child but he smiled to paralyse the arm of Śakra that struck him. Then all the gods headed by Indra with his arm paralysed met Brahmā and told him the wonderful story relating to the child on the lap of Pārvatī. Brahmā revealed the identity of the child that he was none but Mahādeva himself. Then all the gods including Indra adored and prayed to Siva and ultimately Indra's thunder wielding arm was repaired.

The Soma is also associated with Indra since Vedic period. In Mahābhārata too it is mentioned that Visvamitra, the son of Jāmadagni, quaffed the Soma juice with Indra. Māṇḍhātā sucked the forefinger of Indra and obtained the
seat besides him. Indra was so mightily that just only test-
ing his foreginer, Māndhātā became possessed of mighty strength and the whole sacred learning together with the holy sciences of arms was acquired by that extremely intel-
ligent boy.

Māndhātā drank the milk secreted by Indra's finger and within twelve days he could assume the form like a twelve years old boy and he captured the entire world within a day. Indra, the king of the gods, is characteri-
sed by his mischievious activities. He has terrible lust and passion for beautiful women and at times he forgets whether relationship with them is moral or immoral.

The Ahalyā - Indra story of Ramayana is several times cited in Mahābhārata while any discourse is made on moral ethics. Indra fell in passionate love and lust for beautiful Ahalyā, the consort of sage Gautama. Indra seduced her in the disguise of the sage. Though Ahalyā could detect Indra's identity she could not but only to give in to Indra's desire. Afterwards, when Gautama came to know this incident he cursed Ahalyā to remain in
the forest in the form of a stone until was freed from the sin by the touch of Rāma. Indra was cursed to bear sings of thousand female yonis on his body. With the intervention of the gods these marks were changed to thousand eyes. At another place it is said that Indra was cursed by Gautama on account of his seducing Ahalyā and as a result he had to wear a green beard. Also to give stress on moral ethics another story relating to Indra's mischievous activities finds place in Anuśāsaṇa Parva. There was a great sage named Devasarmaṇ. His wife was Ruci, a beautiful and attractive lady. The sage's most obedient disciple was Vipul. One day the sage was supposed to leave his hermitage in order to perform a Yajña some where else. The sage apprehended violation of Ruci by the evil spirit Purandara or Indra. So he cautioned Vipul and asked him to protect her from the lust and desire of Indra. Afterwards, Vipul went near to Ruci and by his great austerity entered inside her body. Then came Purandara in a handsome attractive personality with smiling face. He proposed to Ruci and was certain that she would respond to him
But surprisingly, Ruci reprimanded him and reminded him of the curse incurred by him on account of seducing Ahalya. 

Indra could see Vipul inside Ruci's body and went away. Thus with the determination and honesty of Vipul, Ruci's chastity was not violated while Indra as a disciple of Gautama seduced Ahalya. In spite of Indra's relegation to inferior position, his celestial weapons were still very much destructive and a proud collection for any great warrior of that time. It is also certain that without Indra's arms and the weapons, the Pāṇḍavas could not stand as a match against the efficiency and might of Bhīma, Drona, Karna etc. Accordingly Ved Vyāsa advised Yudhishthira to send Arjuna for tapas in order to please Indra and Mahādeva to secure the celestial weapons. On being advised by Dharma, Arjuna went for austere penance and ultimately could satisfy both Siva and Indra and received Indra's weapon which helped him at the time of Kurukshetra War to overcome stiff challenges from Bhīma and others. 
Whatever may be the position of Indra in the epics, his festival popularly known as Indra Festival started developing from the time of Mahābhārata. At the advice of Indra, this festival was first introduced by the Čedi king Vasu Uparicara. But no image of Indra was propitiated, only a banner of Indra representing Indra in a symbolic manner was worshiped by the kings and the people belonging to the royal class for prosperity and wealth of the kingdom.

In Mahābhārata Indra’s views on certain aspects of worldly actions and renunciation of the worldly matters are quite identical with those expressed by Vasudeva Krishna when some beardless sages left their home and started moving around in the forest as Brahmachāris, Indra appeared before them in the form of a golden bird. He delivered a very good sermon to them expressing the superiority of the Brahmānas and austere penance required to reach the ultimate goal of renunciation. As those sages were not fit to adopt this difficult path, Indra advised them to return home giving up the Sannyāṣadharma and start performing worldly action. Here Indra clearly points out that the action or Karma is life and anyone who has abandoned action should be condemned. This view had precisely been expressed by Vasudeva Krishna in Bhīṣma Parba of Mahābhārata. Indra is also stated to reign as Indra on account of his Kshatriya dharma. He annihilated his enemies and the sinners ninety-nine times thus provided the other kings a precedence to follow.
It appears that Indra's Vajra or the thunderbolt could have changed forms according to the desires of Indra as evident from his desire to kill Subarnasthibi in Santi parva where Indra declares "O Vajra the son of Srinjoy has become powerful by the boons of Maharshi Parbat and he would defeat me one day. So you take the form of a tiger and kill him". Indra was also defeated by the powerful king Narutta in a battle and he invited Brhaspati to perform a Yajna but as Brhaspati was engaged in Indra Yajna so his brother of Surya, Maharshi Sanvada performed it.

As in case of Namrata, Bali and Prahlad, Indra also receives knowledge from his preceptor Brhaspati. Brhaspati enlightens him about the maintenance, prosperity and welfare of his subjects as Indra appears to be very keen to learn on these matters. Also Brhaspati teaches him about the techniques and behaviour to be adopted towards types of enemies which may be of three types i.e. powerful, medium powerful, and weak. Brhaspati also teaches Indra the means to identify an evil person. The king should have a composed character neither coward nor proud. So Indra bears the characters of an ideal king as revealed from his quest of knowledge from Brhaspati. Indra's scholastic knowledge also appears from his sermons that he gave to a Brahmachari named Tapadhan, in the form of a fox. Tapadhan was insulted by a rich Vaisya and so he decided to give up his life. Then Indra appeared in the form of a fox and advised him not to give up his
precious Brahmin life as wealth and desire can not make one happy only contentment generates happiness in one. Moreover one should always look at those who are suffering from diseases and other maladies. So everyone should be content with one's own life and birth and perform action accordingly. 97

It has already been observed that Indra is guilty of Brahminicide and other deceptions. But simultaneously he also helped 'Uttamka' a Brahmin to bring the earrings from the queen as a token of gurudakshina. 98

It has already been mentioned that Indra is the father of the Pāṇḍavas. But a beautiful story in Adi Parva also reveals Mahēdeva's role in the birth of the Pāṇḍavas. The story is narrated below.

One day the gods along with Indra during the course of their rest, came near the ganges and were surprised to find a golden lotus in the river. Indra wanted to find out the source of that lotus and he found one woman weeping in the river and each drop of her tears created one golden lotus in the ganges. Indra asked her about the cause of her crying and the woman requested him to follow her. On reaching the mountain, Indra saw a handsome youngman playing Pāsā with his beautiful wife. The couple neither recognised Indra, nor welcomed him. Indra became enraged and reprimanded them. As soon as that youngman looked at Indra smilingly, Indra became paralysed. The youngman was none other than Siva and he just wished to teach Indra a
lesson because of his pride. He ultimately repaired Indra's paralysis and asked him to enter inside a cave where Indra found four more persons of valour and ray who were the previous Indras. These Indras desired to be born as human beings and so according to the wish of Siva and Narayana, were born as Pāṇḍavas. Lakshmi was born as Drāupadi.\textsuperscript{99}

In Mahābhārata, Indra has all along played certain mischievous roles such as distracting the tapas, seducing the beautiful women. Moreover, Indra appears as a revengeful god and always, cautious to maintain his kingdom such as he did in case of Bhāṅgaswan, a king. Bhāṅgaswan was very religious and he had no sons. So he performed yajña against the will of Indra to get sons. After the Yajña, he had one hundred sons. But Indra felt insulted and always was eager to take revenge on the king. One day, when the king was in hunting spree, Indra created illusion and compelled him to bathe in a lake. As soon as the king dipped in the water, he was transformed into a female by the power of Indra. On returning to the kingdom, Bhāṅgaswan had another one hundred sons by a sage. Indra appeared to the sons of the king and motivated them to fight with each other. So they did. Bhāṅgaswan retired to a forest and heard the death of her two hundred sons. She constantly went on weeping. Indra appeared before her and disclosed his identity and told her that all the damages to her had been done by Indra because she antagonised him. When Bhāṅgaswan
apologised, Indra gave life to all her sons and Bhugaswan desired to maintain her female form. 100

In Mahābhārata, references of Indratirtha are also found. In this tirtha or pilgrimage, Indra performed one hundred asvamedha Yajnas according to the vedas and at last gave away enormous quantity of wealth to his perceptor Bhraspati and from then onwards he was famous as Satakratu. Visnu after slaying Madhu-Kaitav bathed in Indratirtha and veda Vyās was illuminated after taking bath in this tirtha. So not only Indra but Indra’s tirtha is also very much beneficial for the mankind. 101

So long Indra has been found to pour rains to the earth. But one account in Mahābhārata Santi Parba reveals that Indra was capable of raining gold. There was a very religious and a great king named Subotra, the son of Atithi. Being pleased with him, Indra rained gold in his kingdom. Gold used to flow in the rivers. Indra, worshipped largely at that time, converted all the animals of the rivers into golden ones. Subotro was astonished to find fishes, tortoises, crocodiles etc. all of gold, in the river. He performed a Yajña and gave away all the golds to the Brahmans. 102

In Mahābhārata, numerous references of Indra are mentioned in almost each Parva. In Mahāprasthānīka Parva, Indra appears before Yudhisthir and advises him to mount on his chariot so that he could immediately be carried to svarga. But when Yudhisthir enquired about Drupadi and his four brothers, Indra told him that they had reached the Svarga after death and Yudhisthir would be the
first living person to glorify the svarga. Indra discussed
with him about the ugliness and vices of the dog that accom­
panied Yudhisthir and requested him to leave it there only.
But Yudhisthir declined to do so. Dharma appeared from the
body of the dog and Indra said that he was testing Yudhisthir's
virtue and truths. 103

In svarga, Indra helps Yudhisthir to identify his
brother, wife, few relatives and others who could also reach
svarga after death. Indra identified Draupadi as Lakshmi, their
five sons borne of Draupadi as Gandharvas, Dhṛtarāśtra as the
king of the Gandharvas, his elder brother Karna with sun, his
parents Pāṇḍu and Kunti and Mādri dwell in Indraloke. Bhīma
dwells with the Vasus and Drañachārya with Brhaspati. 104 So,
Indra though relegated to secondary position in Mahābhārata,
still performs important role and continues to remain with
this Mahākāvyya and with the Pāṇḍavas till the conclusion of
the epics. Indra carries on his functions smoothly as expected
and desired from him.

Indra in Mahābhārata no longer played the role of the
supreme Vedic god, rather was relegated by Viṣṇu and Siya to
inferior position. Still he is the most attractive among all
the gods. He remains the most mortal among the gods. He con­
tinues to occupy the position of king of the gods. He is a great
warrior and without him the gods are unable to kill the asuras
and daityas. It is true that he remains no more efficient
eough to kill the asuras with his own might alone. He takes
the help of Viṣṇu and Śiva as and when required. When Indra
finds someone more powerful than him but not an aspirant for
the seat of Indra he does not hesitate to make a friendship
treaty with him as he did in case of Garuḍa and Skanda Kārtti-
keya.

He finds Kārttikeya superior to him and makes him
the commander-in-chief of his army. He does not bother to
take the recourse of tricks and falsehood for slaying his
enemies as he did in case of Vṛtra and Namuci. He knows the
sin of Brahminicidal and still he does so and escapes with a
confidence that gods themselves will bring him back to the
heaven. Certainly these all are very much kingly qualities
that to act according to the situation and this has been sub­
sequently revealed by Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa in Kurukṣetra war.
Indra is always afraid of the people observing Tapas and
sacrifices. He tries to spoil the tapas of Viśvāmitra by
sending nymphs and himself even kills Trisūva. Indra steals
the sacrificial horse of Ambariṣa. Indra is a prudent and
great scholar who abridged the treatise on ethics composed by
Brahma named 'Bāhūdāntaka' and he also teaches Kshatriya
dharma for the benefit of the mankind. Even the all mighty
god of Mahābhārata Viṣṇu takes the form of Indra. Indra is
still worshipped as a rain god and uses his weapon rain and
hail storm against Vasudeva-Krśṇa and his own son Arjuna. On failure, he makes friendship with them. Indra is regarded as an ardent student in whom the quest of knowledge never subsides as is apparent from his discussions with Bāli and Namuci. Though being a god, he has deep feeling for his powerful son Arjuna. To ensure Arjuna’s victory, he takes away the jacket and earrings of Karna by means of deception only. To spoil Karna’s entire knowledge on warfare from Parasurāmā, he does the mischief and last but not the least Indra’s lust and greed for beautiful women continues unabated whether it is immoral or not. He seduces Ahalyā and bears the wrath of the sage Gautama. But it does not deter him, he tries to violate Ruci, wife of another sage.

So Indra is a god composed of both merits and demerits, good and evil. He is born with both godly and evil characters. He is the most mortal among the gods, Bloomfield, in analysing the Rgvedic Indra has rightly said that Indra is the most mortal of all the gods and ‘on a pinch’ we could imagine the statue of Indra. 105

So in epics too Indra appears as one of the most mortal god resembling man in all practical sense. Numerous and important references of Indra are found in Mahābhārata right from the third chapter of Adi Parba to the fourth chapter of Swarga-rāgaṇa Parva and throughout this all time great epic Indra continues to perform his role as expected from the king of the god. He
appears in various forms, gets himself involved in varieties of actions, grabs assistance from other as required, takes the winning side as usual and thus maintains his position as the lord of the heaven. Though relegated by Siva and Vigna to the secondary position, but still a Mahabharata can not be dreamt of without taking Indra into consideration.
NOTES ON MAHĀKĀVYAS

2. Rāmāyana Uttarkanda, 39.1
3. Ibid Bālakanda 46.
4. Ibid Vruddha Kānda 122.
5. Ibid Vruddha Kānda 103
7. Ibid Bhitra Parba and Sānti Parba Chap 15.
8. Ibid Sānti Parba 3642
9. Indra Vṛtravadhānāvī Mahendrabhāmam vṛcchaita Mahendrama prasārāāmā prasārāāmā Lokānāma śāvavo bhāhct; Udyog P. 4512
10. Mb. Vana Parba and Anuśasan Parwa
11. Ibid Adi Parba and Vana Parwa 1854
12. Vana Parba 172
13. Sālya Parba, Chap. 49.
14. Vana Parba and Sānti Parba 147, 14321; Sānti p. 8221.
15. Adi Parba, Chap. 18.
16. Vana Parba 1714
17. Vana Parba
18. Anubāśana Parba 173
19. Vana Parba and Udyog Parba 3644
20. Udyog Parba 3519
21. Udyog Parba 3511
22. Udyog Parba 3672
23. Udyog Parba 4798
24. Vana Parba 12076
25. Sānti Parba Prasāntacēta muditaḥsvamālayanā trivāstapāṁ prapya mumodā vasavah.
26. Anusasan P. 211
27. Vana P. Adi P. Drono P. 242
28. Faubel V. Indian Mythology. 1972 p. 84.
29. Vana P. 108
30. Vano P. 1759
32. Ibid Adi P. 359
33. " Vana P. 1957, 12056/15449
34. " Sabha P. Oh. 310. 283
35. " Sabha P. Vana P. Salya P. 30%
36. " Vana 163.
37. " Vana 160.
38. " Vana P. 229, 9-11.
41. Mb. Dviparvan, Chapter 20.34.
42. Ibid Adi P. Chap. 30-31.
43. " Udyog P. Chapter 9.
44. " Udyog. Chapters 10-16.
45. Vayah yasnan rpa suciindram priyamedha rsayo
Naghamaha Apa dhanadamunih Purdhi caikrunmunugdyhas
manabhisva-budchJan.
47. Amarkosa 1.10.3.
49. Mb Salya P. Ch. 44.
50. Mb. Udyog. P. Ch. 8.
51. Mb. Salya P. Ch. 8-9.
52. Ibid. As P. Ch. 35.
53. " As P. Ch. 31.
54. " Udyog P. Ch. 9.
55. " As P. Ch. 123.
56. " Sānti P. Ch. 64.
57. " Ibid. 64.
58. " Sānti P. Ch. 65.
60. " As P. Ch. 71, 72.
63. " Sānti P. Ch. 228.
64. " Sānti Ch. 222.
65. " Vana P. Ch. 224.
66. " Vana P. 225-228.
67. " As P. Ch. 226-228.
68. " As P. Chap. 234.
69. " Asīp P. Ch. 197.
71. Mb. Vana P. Ch. 42, 43, 44, 45.
72. Ibid. virūt P. chap II.
73. " Vana P. Ch. 234.
74. " Karnāp. Ch. 43.
75. " Sānti P. Ch. 226.
76. " Sānti P. Ch. 297.
77. " Sānti P. Ch. 227.
80. "Vana P. Ch. 87.
81. "Vana P. Ch. 126.
82. "Santi P. Ch. 29.
83. "Santi P. Ch. 267.
84. "Santi P. Ch. 197.
85. "Anusāsan P. Ch. 40.
86. "A. P. Ch. 41.
87. "Vana P. Ch. 37-41.
88. "Mi P. Ch. 63.
89. "Santi P. Ch. 11.
90. "Bhīṣma P. Ch. 27-3.
91. "Santi P. Ch. 22.
92. "Santi P. Ch. 31.
93. "Santi P. Ch. 29.
94. "Santi P. Ch. 84.
95. "Santi P. Ch. 103.
96. "Santi P. Ch. 180.
97. "Mi P. Ch. 3.
98. "Mi P. Ch. 97.
99. "Anusāsan P. Ch. 112.
100. "Mb. Salya P. Ch. 50.
101. Ibid Santi P. Ch. 129.
102. "Mahaprasthānīk P. Ch. 3.
103. "Svargarchan P. Ch. 4.
104. Bloomfield, Religion of the Vedas p. 89.