



# SOCIETY STATE AND POLITY

# WHY GOVERNANCE

When a large number of human beings live together, there is need for some rules and regulations because human nature is such that matsya nyāya, 'the big fish eats the small fish', prevails, i.e., it is in the nature of things that the strong will exploit the weak.



# A STATE OR RAAJYA



- A 'state', rājya, has several dimensions — the duties / rights of the ruled and the rulers, the rules of governance and the rules that govern the rulers and the ruled. In the same way, a 'society', samāja, has its components, the different jātis or communities, and functional units that we may call varṇas or castes.



# Plurality of Indian Society

- The Indian society has always been pluralistic in that this land has been since time immemorial inhabited by many jātīs or ethnic communities (there are over 4,700 jātīs according to the Anthropological Survey of India), ethnic groups big and small, communities professing different religions and faiths, speaking different languages, wearing different dresses, eating different foods, following different occupations, different social norms, customs and practices.





# Plurality of Indian Society

- Add to this hundreds of panthas (sects) and thousands of professions and professional groups such as potters, ironsmiths, weavers, farmers etc., each with its own norms and values, and the picture confounds the sociologists and culture-thinkers alike.





# Underlying Principles of Indian Society

- The vast population of this major segment of the Indian society is structured into and reduced to just four groups called varṇa vyavasthā -
- These are four functional divisions to be identified in any society — intellectuals / thinkers, warriors / defenders, traders and the service class.
- This is a highly intricate social organization, which both separates an individual or a community from others, and at the same time makes all a part of each other.



# FAMILY

- Family is the keystone of the social arch: marriage is the instrument of family, and the mother/wife is the custodian of marriage.
- Family is sacrosanct and that involves an elaborate code of duties for each member of the family.
- Family is also the economic unit and as such it takes care of all members regardless of how much they earn and contribute individually to the 'family income'.





# Solah saṁskāras or 'sixteen ceremonies'

- Innumerable festive rituals and ceremonies, in particular those called solah saṁskāras or 'sixteen ceremonies', accompany an individual all through his or her life — birth, initiation into study, completion of education, engagement, marriage, birth of children, marriage of children, death of the parents and memorial ceremony for them, the entire process ending in one's death.



## VAIDIK 16 SANSKAR





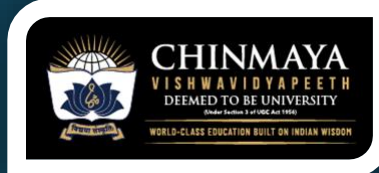
# The Indian State



- In India, the following four kinds of governments are attested since ancient times:
  - 1. self-governing gaṇas ('direct democracy');
  - 2. saṅghas ruled by nominated elders (a kind of oligarchy);
  - 3. gaṇas ruled by a nominated ('elected') leader/king; and
  - 4. consultative hereditary monarchy in which the king is advised by a samiti.



# Mahājanapadas and janapadas (c. 500 BCE)



- There was a hierarchy of assemblies, samitis, beginning with the village and going up through a whole group of villages, that is the whole community, to finally all the communities together janapadas.
- Panini uses the word janapada and refers by name to eighteen janapadas spread across north India. Republican forms of government were well established in ancient India.







# THANK YOU