

# Background to the Study of Indian Constitution

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## **Abstract:**

The analysis of ancient Indian political thought cannot be studied by direct application of existing Western concepts. Because in ancient India different concepts or tools were used than western concepts. Along with this, ancient Indian political thought focused on religion on the one hand and the state on the other. Thus, religion and the state were the backbone of Indian political thought.

**Keywords:** Political Thought, Indian Constitution, Indian Society, Metaphysics and Philosophy

## **1. Introduction**

In the history of political thought in the world, India represents Eastern political thought. Even in ancient India, political developments similar to Western Greek thought and worthy of comparison with Western thought in the world can be identified. Political thought of ancient India is found as a philosophical branch that is recognized only in the Indian subcontinent. Indian political thought can be traced in Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Mahabharata, Ramayana, Smritis, Puranas, Economics and Ethics. The analysis of ancient Indian political thought cannot be studied by direct application of existing Western concepts. Because in ancient India different concepts or tools were used than western concepts. Along with this, ancient Indian political thought focused on religion on the one hand and the state on the other. Thus, religion and the state were the backbone of Indian political thought.

Religion was central to ancient Indian philosophy. Of course, the political thought of that time was widely covered by religion. Along with religion, the concept of danda also played an important role in the political system of ancient India. Later in the Middle Ages, India's political system suffered disintegration due to various invaders and immigrants. Finally, India saw a new political dimension during the modern renaissance. The politics of India have also been lighted on the perspective of the fact that India's politics are currently convinced in the present chapter of India in the present chapter.

## **1.2 Ranajit Guha's Subaltern Perspective**

Subaltern means inferior. Inferior perspective represents the understanding of society based on the situation of people belonging to different castes, genders and races at the bottom of a society. The inferiority perspective represents aspects different from the natural social image that people believe. Downstairs studies thinkers focus on the historical contributions of farmers, the underprivileged, women, etc. to society. A bottom-up perspective in particular focuses on the relationships between the top and bottom in society. Among those who undertook the study of the lower classes in India and presented their innovative ideas, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, David Hardiman, Ranjit Guha is important.

Ranjit Guhar's contribution to the study of the lower classes in post-colonial India is immense. He worked for the development of that perspective as a junior studies editor. A professor of history at the

University of England and Australia, Guhar's writings have influenced historical research, subcontinental history, cultural studies, and social analysis across the world. Apart from this, ten volumes on the study of lower castes in India have been published under his editorship. Ranjit Guhar's Peasant Rebellion gave a new dimension to Indian political system.

A bottom-up study has made a major contribution. In this context Ranjit Guhar's contributions on the lower castes are briefly described below.

1. From 1982, Guha and a few researchers associated with him started writing essays on the lower castes and publishing them in book form. As a result, social scientists became curiously drawn to the perspective of the underdog.
2. Guhar criticized Indian historical study and research methods for neglecting the contributions of the lower classes. The reason for his displeasure was that the history of India stuck only to the perspective of the national movement and the leaders of the movement and ignored the role played by the poor, women and Dalits from the lower strata of the society.
3. Based on peasant revolts in India from 1783 to 1900, Guhar shed light on the aims of peasant revolts and grassroots efforts to transform in his 1983 work, Primary Elements of Revolts in Colonial India. This innovative study gave impetus to the study of other classes in society.
4. Guhar's view of the lower caste is a concept that came to the fore with the dream of establishing a balanced state between the upper caste elite and the lower caste in the society.

Overall, the understudy perspective is one of the many factors that have influenced the Indian political system. If we look at the contemporary developments, it is clear that the study of the underclass that flourished under the leadership of Ranjit Guhar has succeeded in exerting a profound influence. The contribution of Guhar's down-to-earth perspective to the political participation of the oppressed, exploited and weaker sections is unmistakable.

### 1.3 Colonial Impacts on Indian Society

India is an ancient nation with thousands of years of history. The original inhabitants had incorporated their own rich culture and civilization. Also, India was a country that acquired social, economic, political and religious identity from the very beginning. Over time many foreigners arrived in India. Some of the foreigners who came thus limited themselves to invasion, while others stayed here. Eg: Greeks, Persians, Kushans, Arabs etc., the point to be noted is that Mughals were the only ones who came to India and settled here. Babur was the founder of the Mughal Empire and ruled influentially during the reigns of Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. In the modern era, European colonialists such as British, Portuguese, Dutch, French came to India to establish colonies. Foreigners who came either for the purpose of invasion or to settle down have had a wide impact on many sectors of Indian society. Various effects of foreign colonists on India are briefly discussed below.

1. **Social Implications:** The original inhabitants of India followed hierarchical social classes. Foreign invaders or colonists changed the hierarchical social system of Indians. Also, with the arrival of the settlers, the rules in the society were tightened and many customs were born in the society. Eg: Prohibition of extramarital relations, child marriage, Parda system, Johar etc.
2. **Economic Implications:** Native Indians followed caste-based professions. The nature of professions changed with different invaders or colonists. In addition, the nature of ownership of land, which was subject to collective ownership, began to change. Also, people were made to pay various taxes including land revenue. Finally, cottage industries reached the brink of destruction

during the British period and changed the economic life of Indians.

3. **Educational Impact:** Various foreign invasions changed the education system of India. The learning and teaching system of the early Sanskrit language was transformed. Urdu or Persian language learning was implemented. Education, which was limited to certain classes, became available to many. As Western education became popular, the teaching and learning of religiously based education declined.
4. **Cultural Impact:** The culture of the original Indians was diversified by the arrival of the colonists. Traditional arts, sports, dress, food changed. Along with Prakrit or Sanskrit, Greek, Persian, Arabic and English languages were also used. Also, the customs and ideas of the people were influenced by the invaders or settlers.
5. **Religious Implication:** The original Indians practiced Sanatan Hinduism, Buddhism or Jainism. Islam and Christianity entered India from the colonists. Also, religious conversion gradually increased in India. Along with this, religious practices developed mostly in a religious fundamentalist chronology.
6. **Political Impact:** There was no political organization among Native Americans. When settlers or invaders arrived, the Indians organized politically. With the rise of the Swadeshi ideology and unity against the conquerors, nationalism gained political traction in India. Indians were able to cultivate a protest culture.

#### **Some Positive Consequences of British Rule are Mentioned Below.**

- The lower castes especially profited from the additional job opportunities the British offered. With these opportunities, they were more likely to experience upward social mobility.
- A strong middle class developed in India during British rule, and this elite would go on to lead Indian industry in the years following independence.
- The British government constructed numerous vital infrastructure projects, including schools, hospitals, and—above all—railroads. In any case, this infrastructure prepared the way for India to emerge as a major economic force.
- Known as the "jewel in the crown of the British Empire," India Thus, nations like Afghanistan and Persia that were safeguarded by the British

#### **What are some of the negative consequences of British rule?**

- After Britain seized power, the government insisted on importing goods from the British Isles rather than producing its own, which caused chaos in the local carpentry, metalworking, and clothing industries.
- It implied the worst impact on the Indian economy by essentially making India a virtual slave to Britain's economic-political schemes.
- Mismanagement by the British created distress. To feed India's enormous population, the British Raj prioritized the cultivation of cash crops over food production.
- They imported food from other parts of the empire to feed their people. Due to the unequal distribution of food, this practice caused 24 famines and the deaths of millions of people. The first, if not the deadliest, of these tragedies was the Bengal famine in 1770.
- They achieved success through the implementation of the Divide-and-Rule policy. The British Raj was aware of their inability to rule a nation the size of India.

- Over time, the British Raj strained relations across religions by paying religious leaders to criticize one another. This tactic directly contributed to the hostile relations between India and Pakistan.
- The British Raj plundered India's economy. Trillions of dollars are allegedly embezzled by the British Raj as a result of the unethical business practices of the East India Company.
- In the various areas discussed above, it is clear that the settlers had a diverse impact on Indian society. We cannot deny the contribution of the settlers to the diverse culture that is India's identity. As a result of colonization, contemporary Indian society incorporates complex and diverse features.

#### **1.4 Nationalist Perspectives of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo:**

The renaissance movement of the 19th century drove the transformation of India. Nationalism slowly began to emerge among Indians. At this time the ideas of many individuals for Indian nationalism gave a strong shape in India. Among such persons Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo stand in the first rank. Below let us try to understand briefly the views of both of them on nationalism separately.

##### **1.4 A. Swami Vivekanand**

Hindu monk Swami Vivekananda is regarded as one of India's most illustrious spiritual figures. He was not merely a spiritual thinker; he was also a prolific writer, an effective orator, and a fervent nationalist. Swami Vivekananda advanced Ramakrishna Paramhansa's free-thinking philosophy into a brand-new paradigm. He gave his all to his country, working relentlessly to improve society, serve the needy, and the underprivileged. Swami Vivekanand was in charge of reviving Hindu spirituality and making Hinduism a respected religion over the world. His message of brotherhood between all people and self-awakening is still pertinent today, particularly against the backdrop of the current global political unrest. Many people have found inspiration in the young monk and his teachings, and his words—particularly for the nation's youth—have evolved into self-improvement objectives. Because of this, India observes his birthday, January 12, as National Youth Day.

##### **1.1 Swami Vivekananda Early Life**

Swami Vivekanand was one of the eight children of Vishwanath Dutta and Bhuvaneshwari Devi and was born in Calcutta as Narendranath Dutta into a wealthy Bengali family. On January 12, 1863, the day of Makar Sankranti, he was born. Father Vishwanath was a prominent member of society and a successful lawyer. Mother Bhuvaneshwari, who had a powerful, godly mind, had a significant influence on her son Narendranath.

##### **1.2 Swami Vivekananda Education**

Narendranath was a bright little boy who showed intelligence. His playful demeanour belied his love of vocal and instrumental music. His academic performance was outstanding both at the Metropolitan institution and the Presidency College in Calcutta. By the time he received his college degree, he had broadened his knowledge of several subjects.

He participated in athletics, wrestling, gymnastics, and bodybuilding. He read voraciously and learned practically everything there was to know. He studied western philosophy, history, and spirituality by David Hume, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and Herbert Spencer in addition to Hindu scriptures like the Bhagvad Gita and the Upanishads.

### 1.3 Swami Vivekananda Biography

Despite growing up in a religious environment at home and having a pious mother, Narendranath experienced a severe spiritual crisis in his early years. His in-depth understanding caused him to begin to doubt the existence of God, and for a while, he held an agnostic belief. However, he was unable to deny the presence of a Supreme Being. For a while, he was involved with the Keshab Chandra Sen-led Brahmo Movement. Unlike the idol-worshipping, superstitious Hinduism, the Bramho Samaj recognized only one God. He was left with a plethora of unsolved philosophical issues about whether God existed. Vivekananda first learned of Sri Ramakrishna during this period of spiritual difficulty through William Hastie, the Principal of the Scottish Church College.

### 1.4 Swami Vivekananda Lecture at World Parliament

He learned about the World Parliament of Religions, which took place in Chicago, America, in 1893, while he was travelling. In order to represent India, Hinduism, and his Guru Sri Ramakrishna's teachings, he was eager to attend the gathering. While contemplating on the rocks of Kanyakumari, India's southernmost tip, he experienced the affirmation of his wishes. On May 31, 1893, Vivekananda, Raja of Khetri, and Ajit Singh departed from Bombay for Chicago after money was donated by his followers in Madras (now Chennai).

On his journey to Chicago, he endured unfathomable challenges, yet his enthusiasm never wavered. When it was time, on September 11, 1893, he entered the platform and startled everyone with the words "My brothers and sisters of America." The audience applauded him standing ovation for the opening sentence. He continued by elaborating on Vedanta's philosophical foundations and their spiritual relevance, putting Hinduism on the map of major world religions. He stayed in America for the following 2.5 years, starting the Vedanta Society of New York in 1894. He also went to the UK to spread the teachings of Hindu Spiritualism and Vedanta to the western world.

### 1.5 Swami Vivekananda Legacy

The actual pillars of India's national unity were unveiled to the world by Swami Vivekananda. He demonstrated how a country with such a wide range of cultures can be brought together by a sense of brotherhood and humanity. Vivekananda addressed the shortcomings of western civilization as well as India's role in overcoming them. Swamiji brought together the East and the West, religion and science, the past and the present, as Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose famously said. He is great because of this. His lessons have helped our countrymen develop unparalleled levels of self-respect, self-reliance, and self-assertion. Vivekananda was effective in creating a fictitious link between Eastern and Western cultures. He provided Westerners with interpretations of Hindu scriptures, philosophy, and way of life. He helped them understand that, despite its underdevelopment and poverty, India had a significant cultural contribution to contribute. He was instrumental in breaking India's cultural barrier to the rest of the globe.

### 1.6 Swami Vivekananda Death

It was predicted by Swami Vivekananda that he would not live past the age of forty. He continued his day's work at the Belur Math, instructing the students in Sanskrit grammar, on July 4, 1902. The same evening, he passed away while meditating. The renowned saint was burned on the banks of the Ganges after allegedly achieving "Mahasamadhi."



### 1.7 Swami Vivekananda's Nationalist Perspective

1. Concept of Humanism and Universalism: Nationalism in Vivekananda's view was a combination of humanism and universalism. Humanity in the thought of uplifting the weak and poor among the countrymen and universality in treating others with equal respect and treating them as brothers can be identified.
2. Three Bases: According to Vivekananda, nationalism in India should be based on three bases. They are spirituality, patriotism and religion.
3. Ancient inspiration: Vivekananda tried to build nationalism on the basis of religion and spirituality of ancient India. His stand was that with the help of traditional religious and spiritual elements, people could develop pride and self-respect and strengthen nationalism.
4. Revival of Vedapanishads: Vivekananda believed that religion was an effective tool to unite people. Thus, he strengthened the Vedas and Upanishads to foster nationalism under the shadow of religion.
5. Preference for Service and Sacrifice: Vivekananda instilled selfless patriotism in the people to strengthen nationalism. He strove to inculcate nationalism by inculcating the morals of being ready for any service to Mother Earth.

In the light of the above discussed points, it is clear that Vivekananda's nationalism is different from the geographical and secular Western concept of nationalism. Vivekananda's nationalism had a religious and spiritual basis. Later, Aurobindo and Gandhi presented their thoughts based on religion and spirituality as a result of Vivekananda's influence in their ideas.

### 1.5 B. Sri Aurobindo

Philosophical thoughts and beliefs offer insight and an explanation of life's purpose. "Love of wisdom" is what it signifies. One of the most influential philosophers in Indian history was Sri Aurobindo Ghosh. He had many different sides to him. In addition, he was an Indian nationalist, philosopher, poet, seer, excellent yogi, and liberation fighter. He also offered perspectives on earthly life and the spiritual realm. He labored and fought for India's independence.

### 1.1 Life Sketch

On August 15, 1872, in Calcutta (Kolkata), India, Sri Aurobindo was born. In addition to spelling Aravinda, his first name was Aurobindo Ghose. He passed away in Pondicherry (Puducherry) on December 5, 1950. He was well-known for his work as well. He was a prominent Indian nationalist, poet, philosopher, thinker, yogi, and seer. He also offered perspectives on earthly life and the spiritual realm.

- He completed his education at Darjeeling's Christian Convent School (Darjiling). For additional schooling, he also traveled to England. He then enrolled at the University of Cambridge, where he studied and advanced in a number of European languages. After his return to India in 1892, he worked in a variety of professional and administrative capacities in Calcutta (Kolkata) and Baroda (Vadodara). A few years later, he developed an interest in Indian dialects, especially Sanskrit, and yoga.
- He also took part in the campaigns to free India from British Raj (rule) between 1902 and 1910. In 1908, he was also imprisoned for political reasons. He fled to British India after two years and took sanctuary in the French colony of Pondicherry (Puducherry) in southeast India. He gained a thorough understanding of yoga and meditation there. He has dedicated his entire life to integral yoga, which

promotes holistic growth.

- He established a community of spiritual seekers in Pondicherry, which was named Sri Aurobindo Ashram, in 1926. Then, he became the consultant for many spiritual thinkers and also collaborated with Mirra Alfassa (1878-1973), also known as the 'mother' in the ashram. Many philosophers and thinkers from different countries worldwide came to the ashram throughout the years.

## 1.2 Metaphysics and Philosophy

Aurobindo Ghosh acknowledged the diversity of cultures between the Indian subcontinent and the West in his philosophy. He said that Indian seekers turned to intellectual and political pursuits to discover the true meaning of life. They cited the Buddha and other great thinkers' teachings as well as the Vedic pattern.

On the extremes, he declared, there exist philosophical understandings and results from both Indian and European traditions. He was hopeful about the future of secularism and the fusion of Indian and Western spiritualism. As a result, he anticipated a philosophy that balanced materialism and spirituality. Through his thoughts and writings, he attempted this. As a result, he saw diversity as a source of togetherness.

He considered the philosophical ideas of Aristotle, Leibniz, and Hegel to be both intellectual and symbolic of the human spiritual realm. He developed the field of metaphysics, which combines western and Indian principles. The Rigveda provided the concept of conscience, whereas the Upanishads provided the idea of spirituality. Aurobindo and Ramakrishna, on the other hand, identified the interrelationships between matter, life, and cognitive processes, which were also developed in western philosophy. He has also been a supporter of spiritual determinism. He holds that history is a means of Brahman's progressive self-revelation and manifestation. According to him, Goddess Kali possesses heavenly force. It serves as a motivating factor, particularly during the French Revolution and Bengal nationalism. He thought that God's will was connected to India's freedom.

He had authored numerous books and essays about spirituality and divine nature. These included Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol (1950), Collected Poems and Plays (1942), The Synthesis of Yoga (1948), The Human Cycle (1949), The Ideal of Human Unity (1949), and on the Veda (1956).

## 1.3 Sri Aurobindo's Nationalist Perspective:

Aurobindo Ghosh is important in the history of Indian renaissance and nationalism; Aurobindo is considered one of the radical leaders who was active in India's freedom struggle during the Swadeshi movement. Aurobindo. He tried to promote his ideas through newspapers named Vande Mataram, Juganthara, Karmayogi. Aurobindo was arrested in the Alipore Conspiracy case, accused of inciting militant activities against British rule. Their stand was to resist British rule through negative protest. In this background, Aurobindo is described as a patriotic poet, a prophet of nationalism and a lover of humanity.

Aurobindo's conception of the nation was deeply influenced by the ideas of Bankim Chandra. During his imprisonment, Aurobindo's fierce nationalism took on a spiritual form. Aurobindo's thoughts on nationalism, which differed from all other nationalists, are summarized below.

1. A nation is a concept of biological force, be it a piece of land or a group of human beings. In this background India is the Mother Goddess and we as her children should be ready to make any sacrifice for her preservation.
2. Nationalism is a concept similar to religion. Thus, the service rendered by an individual to the

nation becomes his sacred religious duty. Acts like protests for the liberation of the nation, boycott of foreign goods, support of national education, use of indigenous goods is equivalent to religious sacrifices.

3. National struggle is a godly inspired activity The National Freedom Struggle is an effort to realize God in India.
  4. The nationalism of modern or independent India needs to be based on systematic organization and not a copy of colonial rule. management
  5. Post-independence India should be reborn and have a distinctive nationalism with its own spiritual identity.
  6. A nation has a soul like a person and the nation also has the qualities of a person's body structure, growth and death.
  7. Nationalism is a concept with a spiritual base and the evolution of nationalism calls for human unity.
- Among the points mentioned above, Aurobindo's innovative nationalist outlook is convincing. Critics have identified many faults in this effort of Aurobindo. Among them, the first is that the Hindu religion-based view is not suitable for pluralistic India, and the second error is that their nationalist ideas have ignored the country's challenges like poverty, hunger, and unemployment. It can be said that his thoughts were successful in providing a spiritual base to the overall nationalism without limiting it to politics.

### 1.6 Conclusion:

Religion was central to ancient Indian philosophy. Of course, the political thought of that time was widely covered by religion. Along with religion, the concept of danda also played an important role in the political system of ancient India. Later in the Middle Ages, India's political system suffered disintegration due to various invaders and immigrants. Finally, India saw a new political dimension during the modern renaissance. The politics of India have also been lighted on the perspective of the fact that India's politics are currently convinced in the present chapter of India in the present chapter.

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