

Rajadharma in Indian Knowledge Traditions and the Concept of Good Governance: A Comparative Study

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Abstract:

At present, the interest of intellectuals in India's past and history is increasing. All governance systems globally are experiencing corruption, inefficiency, and cultural disconnection with indigenous root systems. This study examines the role of Indian knowledge traditions in reimagining political science using a decolonial Indigenous framework. Traditional political science has been largely Eurocentric and marginalizes non-Western epistemologies. The Mahabharata, Dharmashastras, Arthashastra, and Gandhian thought provide an alternative paradigm for understanding issues of power, justice, legitimacy, and governance. Issues of Rajadharma and Swaraj show the connection between politics and ethics and the well-being of the collectivity. In this paper, it is argued that comparative political science allows for a confluence of epistemic plurality and traditions, which leads to the decolonization of the discipline boundaries. In addition, the paper examines how dialogue can be established between the classical knowledge systems and contemporary democratic practices. This research helps construct a more pluralistic political science by bringing Indian knowledge systems into focus and adding value to the global discourse of good governance and ethics.

Keywords: Indian Knowledge Traditions, Decolonial Frameworks, Indigenous Epistemologies, Rajadharma, Swaraj, Nyaya, Good Governance

1. Introduction:-

The concept of Rajadharma is discussed in the ancient Hindu political literature of India like Dharmashastra, Manusmriti, Arthashastra, and Mahabharata. "Rajadharma" is made up of two words - Raj, which means "king", and Dharma which means law or duty. The word Rajadharma is used most frequently in the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata. (Subha, 2023)

A general misunderstanding regarding this is that dharma should be considered a religious principle, but this is totally wrong. The ancient Indian states were not theocratic in nature but secular. Contrary to current narrow interpretations, Dharma is a broad and fundamental concept in ancient Indian thought and is the most comprehensive concept in ancient Indian political philosophy. It has been mentioned from the Rig Veda to modern discourse, but no word in modern languages can fully express its essence.

Dharma transcends the realm of law; it holds human society together; it has moral, ethical, and cosmic dimensions.

Rajadharma is essentially monarchic in its nature. There are a number of obligations for the king prescribed by the Dharmashastras, which are endorsed by the Vedas. For example, in Kautilya's Arthashastra, the concept of Rajdharma is the source of all other dharmas through which emanates the power of the state. (Subha, 2023) Likewise, in the Shanti Parva, all Dharmas are said to be incorporated into Rajadharma, as the king is responsible for ensuring that the people of his kingdom adhere to the rules stated in the Smritis, who had been designated the task of dispensing justice within the varnas and ashramas.

Global discourse on good governance is currently premised on values such as transparency, accountability, participation, and the rule of law. These values have largely developed within Western political and administrative traditions. These theories have undoubtedly advanced democratic governance, but they often ignore non-Western intellectual resources that have long considered the moral and institutional foundations of the political order. Rajdharma in India encompasses the duties, morality, and obligations of the king in relation to the well-being of the people and social order. The concept of Rajdharma consists of morality, statecraft, and welfare administration. In the intellectual tradition of India, the concept of Rajdharma goes beyond power and authority. Kingship is defined as a moral institution rooted in Dharma. The legitimacy of a ruler depends not only on victory and consent but also on the fulfillment of moral duties and the protection of the people. It presents a unique normative paradigm in which governance is simultaneously moral, administrative, and spiritual. This study aims to reconsider Rajdharma from the perspective of contemporary political analysis, exploring its relevance to current governance debates and its potential contribution to comparative political analysis. Rajadharma offers an indigenous framework for the concept of good governance, which emphasizes moral integrity, welfare orientation, and institutional accountability.

2. Historical and Textual Foundations of Rajadharma:-

For a long time, sages have been the channels through which authority flows in Indian tradition. The sages of India lived disciplined and purposeful lives in union with supreme beings. Their spirit was evident not only in religion but also in statecraft, war, commerce, literature, and art of their time. Their aim was not to acquire but to attain realization, and they became free from all selfish desires. For this reason, the Indian psyche believes that sages are the natural directors of society. Having gained a comprehensive vision of truth in time and space and its expression in society, they formulated basic principles of governance. These principles and the policies and procedures derived from them, when grouped together for the guidance of administrators, form a body of knowledge called Rajadharma (Sarkar, 2022).

In the internal affairs of the country, a king has three duties: first, raksha, protecting the state from external attacks; second, palan, maintaining law and order within the state; and third, yoga-kṣema, the welfare of the people (Sarkar, 2022). Traditionally, the king was the ruler of a territory and the supreme authority of the state. However, in ancient India, the king was the Dharmapala (protector of dharma, i.e., religious law), whose main function was to enforce the laws prescribed by the dharma. The king of ancient Greece was not like the king of ancient India, where the king had legislative, executive, and judicial powers; in Greece, the king had mainly executive powers (his legislative and legal power was subject to the rule of law laid down by the sages). In the Indian context, the meaning of the word dharma

is very broad; its importance is much greater than religion. In its most basic sense, Dharma refers to the principles that hold any entity, whether human or non-human; that is, every being has its own Dharma or quality that defines and distinguishes it from other beings.

The king is expected to reward the righteous and punish the wicked. This helps the king maintain a balance between the good and bad deeds of his subjects. The policies in these areas are delineated in a specific branch of Indian scriptures (scriptures) called Danda Niti (principles of public administration or law enforcement). The word Danda means rod or staff, referring to the scepter wielded by rulers. Danda encompasses all aspects of the state's coercive power. These principles of the use of Danda, which maintain the position of the king, are part of Rajadharma. Such principles, strategies, and policies based on these theories have been discussed in considerable detail in various places in the great epics Ramayana of Vyasa, Mahabharata of Vyasa, Arthashastra of Kautilya, and innumerable Dharmashastras. Apart from this, such teachings can be found in books made for children, such as Hitopadesh and Panchatantra, so that children can be prepared as future leaders of society.

2.1 The Mahabharata and the Moral Ideal of Kingship:-

The "Shanti Parva" of the "Mahabharata" provides the oldest and most extensive information. In the wake of the destruction caused by the Kurukshetra battle, Bhishma guides Yudhishtira about his duties as a ruler. Bhishma tells Yudhishtira that being a king is a moral issue and is not an inheritance, and the significance of political power is in its service to the citizens. The main point made throughout the passage is that the most important duty of a king is that he should ensure the safety, justice, and well-being of all. Bhishma says that political power acquires a cosmic dimension and, as the guardian of cosmic order, the king should rule through self-control and equanimity.

Therefore, the Mahabharata offers a political theory according to which ethics validates political power. If a king neglects Rajadharma, then it is not just a political shortcoming, but also a moral failing, and a breach of social harmony. It appears that Dandaniti (the science of governance and punishment) is the most favored subject in the Mahabharata. According to Bhishma, the Lord uses Dandaniti to create the four different Yugas, namely, Satya, Treta, Dvapara, and Kali. In the Satya Yuga, the king acts in strict conformity with the principles of Dandaniti and people from all the four Varnas act as per their responsibilities and thus ensure prosperity for everyone. In the Treta Yuga, the king follows three-fourths of the Dandaniti principle, while in the Dvapara Yuga he follows half of the Dandaniti principle. The Kali Yuga, a time of the worst conditions, arrives when the king completely disregards Dandaniti; in this era, the ruler oppresses the people, the Vedas are lost, and morality ceases to exist (Sharma, 2021).

2.2 Kautilya's Arthashastra: Statecraft and Public Welfare:-

Arthashastra was written by Kautilya during the fourth century B.C.E. and contains a detailed account of the organizational facets of Rajadharma. Although the Arthashastra is always seen as a realistic treatise, it ensures that the power of the state remains subservient to the betterment of the people. According to Kautilya, the pleasure of the king is the pleasure of his subjects, and the welfare of the king is the welfare of the subjects (Mr. Amit Thaker, 2023).

The Arthashastra provides elaborate administrative arrangements such as the fiscal system, police, espionage network, and judiciary, based on the ethics of governance. The king is supposed to be the defender of social order, the maker of economic prosperity, and the protector of the weak. While other philosophies may not recognize the use of force (danda), espionage, and diplomatic deception, Kautilya recognizes the same but maintains that they should be used only for the sake of dharma and the good of the state.

Kautilya further states that a king should be well trained and practice self-control. According to him, the ideal king embodies the perfect combination of leadership, energy, intellect, and personal qualities. While upholding his Rajadharma, the king must also ensure that his subjects observe their dharmas. Kautilya provides the king with a detailed list of the performance of his daily obligations and the structuring of his daily routine.

2.3 The Dharmasastras: Law, Justice, and Cosmic Order:-

The Dharmashastra, especially Manusmriti and Yajnavalkya Smriti, further define Rajadharma as a law-based concept. The king becomes "the visible manifestation of dharma on earth," who is expected to preserve the law, solve disputes, and punish people for any kind of misconduct. Thus, justice (nyaya) appears to be an important factor that is the key to political stability; when kings break dharma, all hell breaks loose.

Dharmashastra further highlights the idea of mutual obligations between the subjects and the ruler in Rajadharma. While people have to obey and pay taxes, the ruler has to protect people and be just towards them. Moral transgressions committed by the ruler are public and dangerous, since they disturb the cosmic order.

Manusmriti is an ancient legal text that provides guidelines on various aspects of life, such as governance and social conduct. Manusmriti provides a detailed description of a king's duties, such as upholding justice and righteousness and ensuring the welfare of the people. It advises the king to rule impartially, punish wrongdoers, and protect the virtuous. Manusmriti emphasizes courage, loyalty, and discipline. It emphasizes the need to maintain social order and asserts that capable rulers and protectors are required to uphold it.

2.4 Synthesis: From Moral Ideal to Political Institution:-

These traditions altogether suggest an ongoing development of Rajadharma as an evolving idea from an ethical mandate to an institutionalized philosophy of governance. In the Mahabharata, there is a discussion of self-restrained monarchy in terms of ethical considerations; the Arthashastra contains practical aspects of administration, while the Dharmasastras give the legal and cosmic setting of the idea. These all combine to develop a complete theory wherein governance is understood as seva, order is achieved through justice, and welfare is seen as the final criterion of legitimacy.

Therefore, the origins of Rajadharma in history and texts point to an indigenous tradition of good governance, which is based on the synthesis of ethics, law, and policy in a holistic approach to righteous governance.

3. Core Principles of Rajadharma:-

The concept of Rajadharma is an extremely wide and complete formulation of political ethics in Indian philosophy. As a part of the overall philosophical idea of dharma, it defines the duties of political power at the ethical, legal, and administrative levels. Unlike modern conceptions of political theory, which make a clear distinction between politics and morality, Rajadharma views politics as a moral activity, where the right of the ruler is determined by fulfilling the responsibilities toward the community. The set of principles, common to many works, including the Mahabharata, Arthashastra, Ramayana, and Dharma Shastra literature, forms the normative base of Rajadharma.

3.1 Dharma as the Basis of Political Power:-

The primary precept of Rajadharma is that political power should rest on Dharma. In Indian philosophy, dharma denotes the normative order that supports justice, harmony, and responsibility. Therefore,

political power does not derive from the ruler; rather, the ruler acts as the custodian of the law and is bound to act within its limits.

The notion of kingship in the Mahabharata is presented as a divine duty, where the primary role of the king is to protect dharma. As Bhishma tells Yudhishthira, the key to prosperity in the state lies in the righteousness and truthfulness of the king. Likewise, Manusmṛti states that the king who rejects dharma ends up losing his power and respect among his subjects.

3.2 Protection of the People:-

The protection of the people is the foremost duty of Rajadharma. The King is supposed to protect the citizens from external attacks, internal disorders, injustice, and economic instability. Protection here is not only concerned with defense against external threats but also involves the preservation of the stability and security of individuals and society.

In the Arthashastra, the protection of security is highlighted as the state's foremost duty. Efficient administration, intelligence, and the judiciary are among the most important elements that should contribute to this goal. Nonetheless, the use of force (daṇḍa) is not seen as a goal in itself; instead, it should always be employed justly and beneficially. In the Mahabharata, the protection of the defenseless is emphasized as a major characteristic of kingly virtue.

3.3 Public Welfare:-

One of the unique characteristics of Indian political philosophy is the importance attached to governance for the purpose of welfare. The achievements of a ruler are not measured by territorial gain or any military success but by the prosperity of the citizens.

This ideal has been articulated most famously by Kauṭilya in his assertion "The king's happiness consists in the happiness of his subjects; his welfare in theirs." The Arthashastra emphasizes good taxation policies, economic growth, infrastructural development, disaster management, and economic regulation as key responsibilities of a good government. Similarly, the idea of lokasangraha is expressed in the Mahabharata.

3.4 Justice and Rule of Law:-

The concept of justice (Nyaya) is of utmost importance for Rajadharma. The classical Indian approach to politics always emphasizes the need for an objective administration of justice and fair implementation of law to ensure social order. The ruler should be able to adjudicate cases, protect property, punish offenders in accordance with the gravity of their offenses, and avoid exercising power arbitrarily.

The texts on Dharmasastras see the concept of justice as the key to political stability, while the Arthashastra elaborates on judicial proceedings and other legal provisions to guarantee objectivity and responsibility. Thus, the legitimacy of the political process is predicated on the ruler's capability to maintain justice, rather than his authority.

Despite the differences in terms of institutions, the idea that political authority is bound to function within a certain normative legal order has much in common with the rule of law.

3.5 Ethical Leadership and Self-Discipline:-

A third aspect of the notion of Rajadharma is the requirement that political leadership must be marked by moral discipline and personal integrity. This point is consistently made in ancient Indian literature, wherein it is stated that the moral behavior of the ruler determines the moral state of society.

In the Mahabharata, traits such as satya (truth), daya (compassion), dama (self-restraint), humility, and non-partisan attitude are identified as necessary attributes of the political leader. This is reiterated by Kauṭilya, who argues that the ruler must discipline himself, refrain from indulgence, and engage in state

affairs. Consequently, personal morality becomes not just a personal virtue but a part of good governance.

3.6 Accountability and Ethical Governance:-

While classical Indian political philosophy has not developed the concept of accountability in the form known in modern democratic politics, there are many important features within Rajadharma that serve to control the arbitrariness of the ruler.

The ruler of the state is accountable for his actions to dharma, to the welfare of the people, to the advice of ministers, and to the moral law in general. The Arthashastra speaks about the need for control over administration, auditing of state budget, consultations with ministers, and evaluation of the officials. These organizational forms show that there was an understanding that political power needs to be controlled and administered responsibly.

Instead of institutional accountability based on elections, there is moral accountability through public responsibility. This aspect of ancient Indian political theory corresponds well with the current debate on integrity and ethical politics.

3.7 Power and Duty:-

The most unique feature of Rajadharma is its idea of political power being inseparable from duty. While other schools of political thought have defined political power in terms of the sovereign's rights and powers to compel obedience, Indian political thought has always viewed political power in terms of the ruler's duty to society.

As such, political power becomes fiduciary power, not proprietary power. The king exercises power not for his own interest but as the trustee of justice, well-being, and social order. The ethical nature of political power turns it into a form of public service.

This normative concept makes an important contribution to modern political thought by highlighting the importance of ethics for efficient governance.

3.8 Synthesis:-

In totality, these principles show that Rajadharma is a well-thought-out framework for governance incorporating ideas such as ethical leadership, justice, well-being, accountability, and responsible governance. These principles do not confine themselves to the monarchical form of government but have a broader philosophical outlook on the relationship between political power and public responsibility. The historical situation in which these principles were formulated may be quite different from those that prevail in modern constitutional democracies, but their concern about morality, public welfare, and governance in general continues to be applicable to contemporary politics.

Rajadharma should be seen not in its historical context but as an enduring philosophy that makes valuable contributions to international discourse on good governance by emphasizing the ethical aspects of political power. It does not offer any institutional models for modern states but only provides the language for evaluating governance in terms of justice, responsibility and public welfare.

4. Good Governance:

In fact, governance and good governance were conceived almost at the same time. In order to understand what good governance means, one needs to see the background under which it was formulated. It is said that a sovereign state cannot readily concede any faults in its political system when considering reasons why the objectives of development have been unsuccessful in meeting those ends. This is why good governance did not come about in the sovereign state system but in the process of policy making on

account of pressure from non-state actors internationally. The question of good governance has become a major preoccupation in political economy, motivated by the ideals of liberal democracy and economic systems in both Western and Third World perspectives. The fall of the former Soviet Union and Eastern European communism, as well as the pro-democracy uprisings in developing nations, reinforced the liberal democratic system, revealing at the same time the weaknesses of the state and institutions in the economic sphere (Rhodes, 1996, p. 660).

It must be noted that the developmental activities undertaken by all Third World nations depended totally on external financial and technical support, as well as long-term funding provided by different international economic and financial organizations. The developing nations were faced with an unusual challenge. There existed a huge gap between their development objectives and their capabilities to meet those objectives. They were highly dependent on external assistance, which could be either bilateral or multilateral in nature. Such assistance was required to enhance economic performance and alleviate poverty (Aubut, 2004, p. 5). Once perceived as the vehicle of development and welfare of the state, the development paradigm came under challenge by the late 1970s, although it was considered the most efficient one in development in the 1950s-60s periods. The poor performance of aid recipient states led to a heated discussion on the efficiency of aid, since aid was coming but poverty remained a chronic problem. There was thus a need to find the reasons for development failure; hence the attention of donors started to turn to the quality of governance in aid recipients. In order to make aid more effective, there emerged a need to concentrate on governance quality, which involved defining governance in new ways, making sure that aid recipients had all the elements of good governance (Aubut, 2004, pp. 4-5).

There are two primary definitions of good governance in contemporary times. The narrow definition (World Bank, 1992, p. 1) is concerned only with administration and management. The second political definition from Western governments is broader and relates to competitive politics within a democratic framework. Though these two definitions may at times overlap, it is important to treat them separately since the former is purely an administrative issue and the latter connects democracy with development. The former is the most generally accepted definition of good governance (Nelson, 1996, p. 329). According to the principles and proposals of various international donor agencies (World Bank, IMF, UNDP, ODA, IDA) and good practices observed by the liberal democratic governments to achieve good governance, the presence of the following attributes is considered important:

4.1 Accountability:-

Accountability is one of the main pillars of good governance and it encompasses the responsibility of government leaders, institutions, and public servants to be answerable for their deeds and actions to the citizenry that they govern. This guarantees that individuals in position of power can be questioned, held accountable, and even punished when necessary for any abuse of power, inefficiencies, or misbehavior. Accountability takes place in the political sphere, administrative sphere, legal sphere, and social sphere; this is done through processes such as free elections, independent judiciary, audits, and freedom of press.

4.2 Participation:-

Inclusiveness is one of the essential elements of good governance, which involves participation of citizens, either directly or through the mediation of intermediating bodies, in the process of making decisions on issues that have a bearing on them. Participation ensures inclusiveness and representativeness of the whole society in the process of governance. This process can occur in different ways, including voting, consultations, civil society involvement in decision-making processes, and

community-based decision-making. Participation makes governance democratic, legitimates government actions, and improves policy outcomes.

4.3 Rule of law:-

Rule of Law is another vital pillar of good governance where all people, entities, institutions, and the government itself is answerable to laws which are impartially and consistently enforced to all people irrespective of their status or power. Rule of law demands that there should be an independent judicial branch, laws which are clear and well known by all citizens, protection of human rights and accessibility of justice for all citizens. Rule of law prevents misuse of power and helps protect individual liberties as no one is above the law.

4.4 Effectiveness and Efficiency:-

Effectiveness and Efficiency is another crucial aspect of effective governance that relates to the capacity of processes and institutions to generate outputs that satisfy the needs of the population, taking full advantage of all available resources, which include time, financial, and manpower resources. Effectiveness stresses the attainment of desired output and objectives, while efficiency stresses minimization of wastage and effective utilization of resources in the process of providing public services. It ensures that government initiatives bear fruits in the form of tangible results to the citizenry, without any wastage or undue expenditure.

4.5 Equity and Inclusiveness:-

Equity and Inclusiveness is a key principle of effective governance that ensures all members of the society, especially the marginalized ones, have the same opportunities to be involved in and reap the rewards of the governance process and development. It stresses equality in resource sharing irrespective of gender, caste, religion, ethnicity, economic position, or any other distinction one might possess. The principle of inclusiveness implies that different interests, especially those that had been neglected in the process of policymaking before, should be taken into account in the policy implementation process. This principle of governance aims to decrease social inequalities, prevent discrimination, and enhance social integration.

4.6 Transparency:-

Transparency is one of the fundamental pillars of good governance and refers to the openness and accessibility of information about the government's decision-making process, policies, and actions to the citizens. It ensures that citizens have information about the decision-making process, allocation of public resources, and policy implementation, thus allowing the citizens to participate and scrutinize the activities of the government. Transparency can be achieved through such means as Right to Information (RTI) laws, open budgets, disclosures to the public, and availability of government records. It limits chances for corruption and abuse of power by making the actions of the officials and institutions open to public and media scrutiny.

4.7 Consensus and legitimacy:-

Consensus and Legitimacy is one of the key pillars of governance which denotes the process of resolving the conflict of interests between various factions in the society by finding common ground on how the overall interests of society can be achieved. It requires a holistic outlook of what needs to be done for human development that takes into consideration the different historical, social, and cultural aspects of a society in question. The legitimacy of decisions and governance arises from their being seen as fair, inclusive, and representative by the stakeholders in the decision-making and governance process,

as opposed to being arrived at through the use of coercion or self-interest. It entails the process of resolving conflicting viewpoints from different stakeholders in society.

4.8 Responsiveness:-

One of the important pillars of effective governance is responsiveness, which implies the ability of institutions and processes to meet the needs, grievances, and requirements of all the stakeholders within an appropriate period of time. In other words, there should be no delays when delivering public services and implementing governmental policies. It is necessary for the government agencies to be responsive to the changes taking place among the citizens and to respond to them quickly and appropriately. This means that citizens' complaints and proposals should be heard and taken into consideration as soon as possible. The importance of this pillar consists in building trustful relations between citizens and the government.

5. Rajadharma and Good Governance: A Comparative Study:-

The idea of good governance, which is a contemporary notion, has acquired much importance through the efforts of organizations such as the UNDP, the World Bank, and OECD. These organizations emphasize principles such as accountability, transparency, and participation, rule of law, responsiveness, effectiveness, equity, and inclusiveness as basic features of good governance. Although these principles have been mainly developed in the context of modern democratic and liberal ideologies, their ethical foundations are strikingly similar to those of Rajadharma in India. A comparative study indicates that even though both approaches aim to ensure welfare and political legitimacy, they are fundamentally different philosophically and institutionally.

5.1 Convergences:-

The first and foremost area of convergence is the focus on citizen welfare. In the context of Rajadharma, the central duty of the ruler is to ensure the welfare of the citizenry (praja-sukha). Similarly, modern governance measures governments in terms of the services they offer citizens and socio-economic progress.

The second area of convergence is the rule of law. Classical Indian traditions lay great stress on the fact that the ruler should rule in accordance with dharma and be just in administering justice. Modern systems of governance consider the rule of law to be indispensable for the protection of rights, maintenance of order, and equality before the law.

Finally, both systems acknowledge the need for accountability. While accountability in Rajadharma has a moral-ethical dimension rather than an electoral one, classical Indian traditions, such as the Arthashastra, call for supervisory administration and public accountability.

5.2 Discrepancies:-

In spite of these common features, however, there are a number of differences which exist. First, good governance in the contemporary world is grounded in popular sovereignty, constitutionality, and individual rights, whereas Rajadharma is justified politically because the ruler adheres to dharma and ethics.

Second, the other major difference pertains to the question of rights versus duties. Whereas modern good governance is primarily focused on protecting individual rights, Rajadharma pays more attention to duties. Indian tradition suggests that good governance starts with the ruler's moral actions and public obligations.

Moreover, good governance in the modern world promotes citizens' involvement in the process through representation and democracy. In contrast, Rajadharma was created in the system of monarchy and, for this reason, does not promote political involvement in a modern way. At the same time, it presupposes the significance of consultations with ministers, scholars, and local authorities.

5.3 Relevance for Comparative Political Analysis:-

A comparison between Rajadharma and modern governance makes it clear that the Indian tradition of thought provides a unique normative approach to politics. While modern governance is analyzed on the basis of its efficiency and procedural legitimacy, Rajadharma focuses on the moral attributes of leadership and administration aimed at the welfare of the people.

From the point of view of comparative political analysis, Rajadharma should not be understood as a replacement for democratic governance but rather as a complementing theory that adds to the modern discourse of ethical politics and legitimacy.

5.4 Conclusion:-

Through the comparative approach adopted, it becomes apparent that Rajadharma has much in common with modern theories of good governance in terms of the norms and values associated with justice, accountability, and the welfare of the citizenry. Rajadharma is different from the modern theories in the way in which the foundation of the legitimacy of the ruler is placed on ethical duty (dharma). In this way, it is a good source for comparative political philosophy.

6. The Relevance of Rajadharma for Modern Democracy:-

Although the doctrine of Rajadharma evolved in the context of monarchical rule in ancient India, its underlying values continue to be relevant in modern democracy. It does not imply a return to the monarchical system; it presents an ethical code that upholds the virtues of leadership, responsibility, and the welfare of the people.

First, Rajadharma provides important insights regarding ethical governance. According to classical texts of Indian tradition, political power must be wielded with a sense of moral integrity, moderation, and dedication to the cause of the common good. In today's democracies, where public confidence in governmental authorities is shaken due to corruption and abuse of power, this value is especially important.

Second, the doctrine of Rajadharma corresponds to the welfare approach characteristic of the modern state. In accordance with this principle, the welfare of the people is the highest goal of the government. Modern states continue to follow this approach by developing policies in favor of social justice, inclusive development, and public services.

Moreover, the concept of Rajadharma provides an interesting framework for discussing the current notions of accountability. Unlike the concept of accountability as it exists in today's politics, which focuses on the electorally motivated behavior of politicians, the concept of accountability within ancient Indian political culture emphasized the moral responsibility of rulers.

From the standpoint of comparative political analysis, the notion of Rajadharma can be considered a duty-based framework for governance that would complement the right-oriented model of governance in the contemporary world by adding the element of ethics into the picture.

This means that the political legitimacy of the government is not only the function of its lawful status or election results but also is based upon the commitment to justice, well-being, and ethical governance of

the country. Thus, Rajadharma remains relevant as a normative framework for reconsidering governance in the contemporary world.

7. Problems and Critical Perspectives:-

Although Rajadharma provides significant insight into governance in a moral way, there is a need to analyze its application in modern political theories critically. The development of this principle occurred within the socio-political environment of the Indian monarchies, and thus it cannot be adopted as such in today's democratic society.

First, there is an issue related to its historical setting. In the classical literature, such as Manusmṛti and sections of Dharmasastras, there are elements of hierarchy among the different societal components, such as castes and gender; therefore, it cannot fit in with the constitutional ideals of equality and liberty. Thus, Rajadharma should be seen as a source of ethical ideas but not as an institution that can be copied as it is.

Second, there is the problem of the lack of democracy. While in modern governance the legitimacy of the process is derived from the participation of the people in choosing their representatives through elections, in Rajadharma, the decision-making power rests with the king despite consultations with ministers and intellectuals.

Third, there is the problem of anachronistic interpretation, wherein ancient ideas of politics are either considered as the ideal solution or selectively interpreted to serve political purposes at present. This is a case where the historical context of Indian political thought is not given much consideration. Therefore, a critical approach to Rajadharma would entail the need to separate the eternal ethical principles from the socio-political context in which it developed.

In spite of these problems, Rajadharma is very significant if it is used as an ethical system and not as a constitution. The values of justice, welfare of citizens, responsible governance, and accountability that it promotes are essential aspects of democratic governance that are often neglected. Thus, the significance of Rajadharma does not lie in its replacement of the principles of modern democracy but in its enrichment.

8. Conclusion:-

In this paper, Rajadharma has been analyzed as one of the basic concepts of Indian intellectual heritage and its applicability in contemporary discussions about good governance and comparative political analysis. The examination of such ancient works as the Mahabharata, Arthashastra, and Dharmasastras has shown that Rajadharma represents a comprehensive normative model which is based on ethics, justice, welfare, accountability and sound governance. Unlike other political doctrines, it treats political power as a mean but not an aim itself, while its goal is to improve welfare of the society.

The comparative analysis shows that Rajadharma has some similarities with contemporary models of good governance, concerning its preoccupation with issues such as justice, welfare, and accountable administration. In this case, Rajadharma has differences regarding the sources of political legitimacy, as it recognizes only the duty-based approach, as opposed to other approaches that may combine procedural aspects or the consent of the people.

Taking into account the viewpoint of comparative political analysis, Rajadharma proves that Indian political thought can contribute to the development of political theory by providing a valuable

intellectual model of governance and political legitimacy that cannot be considered in isolation from contemporary discussions of good governance.

Nevertheless, the study also takes into account the historical constraints inherent to Rajadharma, which is associated with monarchic government and hierarchy of society. In this case, its modern significance does not lie in the resurrection of the past political system but rather in its critical interpretation from the point of view of constitutional democracy, human rights, and democratic governance.

In sum, Rajadharma continues to be a significant intellectual legacy for reconsidering the practice of governance in the twenty-first century. Indeed, the key focus on ethical governance, welfare of the people, justice, and responsibility of political power provides us with important normative concepts of political governance. The incorporation of the Indian tradition of knowledge into comparative politics will help develop a more balanced understanding of political science in the future.

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