

A Critical Analysis on Traditional Bases of Indian Society

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Abstract : Indian culture, religions, literature and philosophy has attracted attention of the scholars across the globe since time immemorial. They endeavoured to interpret these dimensions as per their comprehension of Indian Society. The present paper is an attempt to portray a critical analysis of traditional bases of Indian Society as articulated by the great Indians who immensely contributed by shaping, practicing and passing these sub-systems on to the successive generations. India was endowed with a class of intellectuals par excellence during ancient times that traversed lengths and breaths of the country, interacted with the people, understood their capabilities & limitations and needs and churned such knowledge with their fellow beings. It witnessed an era of emergence of Varnashrama, Purushartha, Dharma and Sanskara system. Mention of Varna system in the Purush hymn of Rigveda, Vrihadyaranyak Upnishda. Shantiparva of Mahabharata, the Gita and the interpretations offered by Lord Krishna, Bhargava Rishi, Yudhishtira and philosophers of modern times give a glimpse of macro level division of labour in ancient Indian Society. The Ashrama system, the four stages of life as referred to in Upnishdas (Chandogaya, Jawali) Sutras (Vashisht Dharma Sutra, Gautma Dharma Sutra), Smritis (Manusmriti) and four step ladder described by Ved Vyasa is a comprehensive scheme of harmonious development of physical, mental and spiritual capabilities of human beings during different stages of life. The Purushartha, the four broad duties (Dharama, Artha, Kama & Moksha) of human being, lays emphasis on discharging duties as per ones Varna, Ashrama and also keeping in view the time, space and circumstances. Sanskaras are methods and a process to purify mind, body and soul. Today, one gets refraction (not reflection as shades of beliefs, customs practices and interpretations of Varnashrama, Purushartha, Dharma and Sanskara in letter and spirit has undergone changes) of such traditional bases from the writings of Indologists and other scholars.

Keywords : intellectuals, Rigveda, Sanskaras, traditional

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