

# ***Gantantra* – Is it a new paradigm?**

Presentation by

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To

**National Seminar at IIT Bombay**

On

**History and Philosophy of Indian Science –  
Recent Trends and Future Prospects**

27-28 February 2006

Published at [www.samarthbharat.com](http://www.samarthbharat.com)

# Paradigm Characteristics

- ◆ “ ... ‘**disciplinary matrix**’: ‘disciplinary’ because it refers to the common possession of the practitioners of a particular discipline; ‘matrix’ because it is composed of ordered elements of various sorts, each requiring further specification.”
- ◆ Constituents of the matrix include “**symbolic generalizations**”, “**shared commitments to beliefs**”, “**values**”, “**tacit knowledge**” and “**exemplars**”
- ◆ Men whose research is based on shared paradigms are committed to the same rules and standards for scientific practice.

# Science & Paradigm

- ◆ Normal science is an attempt to force nature into the **preformed and relatively inflexible box** that the paradigm supplies
- ◆ No part of the aim of normal science is to call forth new sorts of phenomena; indeed those that will not fit the box are often not seen at all.
- ◆ Scientists normally do not aim to invent new theories, and they are often **intolerant** of those invented by others.
- ◆ Normal-scientific research is directed to the articulation of those phenomena and theories that the paradigm already supplies
- ◆ All scientific research is “a strenuous and devoted attempt to force nature into the conceptual boxes supplied by professional education.”

# Modern Political Science Paradigm

- ◆ **Monarchy** – where supreme power rests in one individual
- ◆ **Republic** – where supreme power rests in the people and their elected representatives or officers, as opposed to one governed by a king or similar ruler; a commonwealth

# Monarchy vs. Republic

1. Republic is defined in contrast to monarchy.
2. Republic involves just one essential fundamental condition – the supreme power does not rest with any single individual
3. Monarchy is based on the concept that the *Sovereign power of the Crown is supreme.*
4. King is head of Legislature, Executive and Judiciary, while in Republic the three are independent

# Ancient India – Political System

- Ancient period started ending after 1001 C.E. when Sultan Mahmud defeated Jaipal. But was in practice for more than 3,000 years before that – the longest period of continuous civilizational history.
- Hundreds of kings but by and large uniform system of laws throughout the country known as Bharatvarsha.
- John Mayne said in July, 1878 “Hindu Law has the oldest pedigree of any known system of jurisprudence, and even now it shows no signs of decrepitude. At this day it governs races of men, extending from Cashmere to Cape Comorin, who agree in nothing else except their submission to it.”
- Contrast this with Europe – less than fifty kings, but no common set of laws. Right to make laws considered fundamental to sovereignty.

# Ancient India – Legislative System

- ▶ Laws codified as Smritis
- ▶ Smritis were supposedly written by Rishis
- ▶ Some Rishis - Manu, Atri, Vishnu, Harita, Yajnavalkya, Usanas, Angiras, Yama, Apastamba, Samvarta, Katyayana, Brihaspati, Parasara, Vyasa, Sankha, Likhita, Daksha, Gautama, Satatapa and Vashishtha
- ▶ Names of rishis represent schools / universities and not individuals
- ▶ Smritis were regularly modified by the schools / universities.

# Smritis and Kings

- ▶ Smritis decided the duties and role of kings
- ▶ A king was prohibited from making laws or even interpreting laws
- ▶ Muslim invaders destroyed the universities, this eliminated the mechanism that modified Smritis and kept them always in line with times
- ▶ Many Muslim kings continued to follow the Smritis
- ▶ After the destruction of universities, many ministers wrote commentaries of Smritis; but no king dared even comment on a Smriti let alone make a law.

# Commentaries in Muslim Kingdoms

- ▶ In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Dalapati wrote an encyclopaedic work on Dharmasastra called the Nrisimha-prasada. He was a minister of the Nizamshah Dynasty of Ahmednagar which ruled at Devagiri (Dowlatabad)
- ▶ Todarmalla, the famous finance minister of the Moghul Emperor Akbar, compiled a very comprehensive work on civil and religious law known as Todarananda.

## Two Relevant Points

There is no commentary of any Smriti written before 1000CE.

Even in Islam, a king is not supposed to make laws.

# Ancient India – Judicial System

- ▶ King was supposed to be a fountain of justice in a figurative manner.
- ▶ Actual dispensation of justice was done by a complex system consisting of a hierarchy of people's tribunals and the Royal Court headed by the Chief Judge.
- ▶ People at large participated through Kula, Puga and Sreni.
- ▶ There was more than an arm's length distance between the persons exercising the legislative function and the judicial system.
- ▶ King's will had no role to play in the dispensation of justice and it was neither possible for him to show any favours or disfavours.
- ▶ Overall monitoring of judiciary was exercised by the universities, while day-to-day superintendence rested with the King.

# Universities & Democracy

- ◆ **Ochlocracy vs. Democracy**
- ◆ **Failure of French Revolution (1798)**
- ◆ **Wilhelm Humboldt, University of Berlin;**
- ◆ **Limits of State Action**

[Please read the article "Universities and Democracy"](#)

# Gantantra & Republic

- ◆ Gantantra has been treated as Hindi / Sanskrit translation of Republic, which is not correct
- ◆ **Gantantra** – “A state in which law making and interpretation is influenced or controlled by independent institutions (and persons) of learning”
- ◆ **GAN** = to think, to count; as in GANIT, GANESH
- ◆ **GANAH** = a collection, group, followers, a community formed for a common purpose and a division of the army consisting of 27 elephants, 27 chariots, 81 horses and 135 soldiers on foot

# Gantantra & Bharatvarsh

- ◆ Bharat = Bha + Rat (Immersed in light)
- ◆ Bharatvarsh = the region where knowledge rains
- ◆ Hindu = H (Sky) + Indu (Moon) = Moon in the sky
- ◆ Ancient Indian system of gantantra allowed territorial expansion – any king joining the system would continue to rule while giving up his legislative and judicial powers.
- ◆ This was a political unity which could not be grasped by the British. Hence the claim that British united India.

# Gantantra – The Paradigm for Modern World

- ◆ Democracy, as only holding of elections, is inherently unstable and works only when
  - a) Resources are flowing from underdeveloped countries
  - b) Universities are strong
- ◆ Gantantra in the sense of University Controlled Democracy is different from Monarchy and Republic
- ◆ It is the only system that worked for more than 3,000 years over such a large land-mass and people.

## **Before Saying Thank You**

Let us stop celebrating 26 January as  
Republic Day or Gantantra Divas

India was a Gantantra (Republic) since  
times immemorial up to 1000 C.E..

Modern India is not yet a Gantantra

# Thanks for Your Patience

Please download and read the original article

[REPUBLIC IN ANCIENT INDIA –  
NEED FOR A NEW PARADIGM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE](#)

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