



Varna, Ashram, Purusharth and Sanskar Vyavastha

Special class

RPSC MAINS PREPRATION

Sociology for RAS

- Development of Sociological Thought in India
 - Social Values
 - Caste Class & Occupation
 - Sanskritization
 - Varna, Ashram, Purusharth and Sanskar Vyavastha
 - Secularism
 - Issues and Problems of Society.
 - Tribal community of Rajasthan: Bhil, Mina (Meena) and Garasia.

SYLLABUS

- Hindu society has been categorized into four classes, called varnas. They are:
 - Brahmins: Vedic teachers and priests;
 - Kshatriyas: warriors, nobles, and kings;
 - Vaishyas: farmers, merchants, and businessmen; and
 - Shudras: servants and labourers
 - Bhagavad Gita, the sacred text of Hindus, links the varna to an individual's duty (svadharma), inborn nature (svabhāva), and natural tendencies (guṇa).
-

- Traditionally the life of a Hindu is divided into four Ashramas (phases or stages).
- The first part of one's life, *Brahmacharya*, the stage as a student, is spent in celibate, controlled, sober and pure contemplation under the guidance of a Guru, building up the mind for spiritual knowledge.
- *Grihastha* is the householder's stage, in which one marries and satisfies kāma and artha in one's married and professional life respectively.
- *Vānaprastha*, the retirement stage, is gradual detachment from the material world. This may involve giving over duties to one's children, spending more time in religious practices and embarking on holy pilgrimages.
- Finally, in *Sannyāsa*, the stage of asceticism, one renounces all worldly attachments to secludedly find the Divine through detachment from worldly life and peacefully shed the body for Moksha

Ashram System

- Purushartha and Ashrama Vyavastha are closely linked with each other. These help in the conduct of human activities leading towards Moksha. Thus Ashrama and Purushartha systems run parallel to each other. Just like four Ashrama, there are four Purusharthas which are Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha
-


- Purushartha means those actions which are proper and correct. The aim of life of an individual is determined by the doctrine of Purushartha. It also decides the course of life of man and lays down norms and values for the behaviour patterns.
 - The ultimate end of Hindu culture is to attain 'Moksha' or salvation and hence, man should behave in such a manner that this aim may be achieved. By Purushartha we mean the pursuance of those actions which lead to the fulfillment of socially approved values and goal.
-

- The word Dharma is derived from the Sanskrit root ‘dhri’ which means to hold together or to preserve. Hence, the social implication of Dharma as a principle to maintain the stability of the society is brought out in various classical Hindu texts.
 - Dharma is so called because it protects all. Dharma preserves all that is created. Dharma, then, is surely that principle which is capable of preserving the universe. Dharma is for the welfare of mankind. It protects and preserves all human beings. Hence, Hindu view of Dharma is that it is the force of power which protects man from all kinds of dangers.
-

- Dharma provides direction to the acquisitive and emotional drives in man and by enjoying life in this manner; Dharma brings about harmony between temporal interest and spiritual freedom. It provides a code of conduct through which man has to conduct his day-to-day life.
-

- Artha means the economic and the material aspects of life. According to Zimmer, “it includes the whole range of tangible objects that can be possessed, enjoyed and lost and which are required in daily life for the upkeep of a household, raising of a family income and discharge of religious duties.” According to P. N. Prabhu, “Artha is to be understood as referring to all the means necessary for acquiring worldly prosperity such as wealth or power”.
 - Apart from this, Artha is desirable because it unfolds the spirituality of man only when he is not economically starved. A man has to maintain a household and perform the Dharma as a householder. Hence, Artha is necessary for the maintenance of life and the maintenance of Dharma.
-

- Kama refers to all the desires in man for the enjoyment and satisfaction of the senses including sex and the drives to which man is prone to
 - “Kama” refers to “the native impulses, instincts and desires of man; his natural mental tendencies, and finds its equivalent, we may say in the use of the English terms, ‘desires, ‘needs,’ basic or primary motives
-

- 
- Hence, due importance is also given on Artha and Kama. These, when pursued in accordance with Dharma are the right functions of a man.
-

- Sex refers to procreation and it is regarded as the lowest aim of marriage. According to old classical Hindu thought, Kama does not mean sex life alone. It means emotional and aesthetic life also.
 - Another belief of Hindu thinkers is that it is necessary to satisfy the basic desires; their suppression will ultimately be a great source of hindrance in the attainment of salvation. Hence it is necessary to allow the satisfaction of sex for the healthy development of personality.
-

- Moksha represents the end of life, the realization of an inner spirituality in man. Some thinkers believe that Moksha is the most important Purusartha and remaining three are only means while Moksha is end in itself.
-

- As per Hinduism, the Sanskar is a series of sacraments, sacrifices and rituals that serve as rites of passage and mark the various stages of the human life and to signify entry to a particular Ashrama (i.e. stage of life). The Sanskar is said to be helping for achieving spiritual nourishment, peace of mind and ultimately moksha. Sanskar give a spiritual touch to the important events at different stages of a Hindu life – right from pre-birth to post-death.
- Sanskaras are the turning points of life and need to be celebrated. Celebrations are very important ingredients of Sanskaras. They directly or indirectly involve our respected elders, scholars, & dear ones. Everyone gets together to convey their best wishes & blessings to the concerned person and thus there is social & religious sanction for the act & ceremony. Sanskaras are great, time-tested tools in our traditional systems which help carve out a great personality. Apart from scriptural validation, history also proves to us the great effectiveness of these methods.
- these famous sixteen Sanskaras of Hindus which cover the entire life span of a person and take him to the door steps to Truth.

Sanskar vyavastha

- **1. GARBHADHAN (CONCEPTION)**

- All sources recognize this as the first Sanskar. This is the enthusiastic prayer for a child. This is done for fulfillment of parental duty to continue the race. To produce a good child, its mother and father should have pure thoughts and observe the rules of Shastras. God characterizing parents are necessary for bringing up a good child in the world.

- **2. PUNSAVANA (FETUS PROTECTION)**

- This second sanskar Ceremony is performed during the third or the fourth month of pregnancy ,when the first signs of conception are seen, and is to be performed when someone desires a male child. The reason for expecting male child is believed to be in the belief that it is the male child who carries the Vansha forward. Like the first Sanskar i.e. Garbhadhan, Punsavana Sanskar is also restricted to the family members.
-

- **3. SIMANTONAYANA (SATISFYING WISHES OF THE PREGNANT MOTHER)**

- This Sanskar is performed during the seventh month of pregnancy and prayers are offered for the healthy physical and mental growth of the child. The other importance of this Sanskar is to free the expectant mother free from worries since the last 3 months are very difficult for pregnant woman- both physically and mentally. A Puja is performed for purification of the atmosphere and as an offering to God for the peace of mother and infant, for giving birth to a peaceful and holy child. This rite is primarily social and festival in nature, intended to keep the pregnant woman in good spirits. A future mother should have good thoughts at all times. She should place Picture of 'Balgopal' or 'Laddu Gopal' in her home. She should read the Gita and other scriptures in addition to performing her daily work and should avoid thrilling books and movies. During Solar and lunar eclipses, a woman should not use any kind of weapons. During normal times, she should avoid violent thoughts. Her husband should help keep her peaceful and cheerful.
-

- **4. JATAKARMA (BIRTH RITUALS)**

- Jaat-karma performed on six days from the birth of a child, is for the purification of the house. This is done in order to keep a child in a clean atmosphere where he may not incur any physical or mental problems. It is also called Shashthi. Goddess Shashthi is the protector of children. Jaat-karma is followed with Grah Puja, Homa.

- **5. NAMKARAN (NAME – GIVING)**

- This Sanskar is performed on the tenth , eleventh or twelfth day with recitation of Mantras. The baby child gets name on completion of this Sanskar, according to the 27 Nakshatra and the position of the moon at the time of child's birth. An appropriate name is given to the child according to the planetary position of birth time and the first letter of the name is taken from the Hora Shatra.

- **6. NISHKRAMANA (TAKING THE CHILD OUTDOORS)**

- This ceremony is performed on or after 40 days, but some scriptures allow it at the time of naming ceremony when the child is taken out of the home for the first time. The reason for this Sanskar is to show obedience to the sun, moon, fire, wind etc, -the Panchmahabhut (Five elements) . This is supposed to enhance the age and physical and mental development of the child.
-

- **7. ANNAPRASHANA (GIVING THE CHILD SOLID FOOD)**

- This sanskar is performed on sixth month, when the child is given solid food (anna) for the first time. Mantras recited and oblations are offered to the various deities. Sweet porridge or rice pudding can be given to the child, if parents are desirous of nourishment, holy luster, swiftness, or splendor. One of them with curd, honey and ghee is given it to the child while reciting Prasad Mantras.

- **8. CHUDAKARANA OR MUNDAN (HAIR CUTTING)**

- This Sanskar is the first time cutting of hair on the child's head . The ceremony is to be performed on an auspicious day after the age of one year. This ceremony is performed for the development of power better understanding, and for long life. The hair must be disposed of at holy places where no one can find the. Brahmins chant Mantras for a healthy, long life of the child. This Sanskar is restricted to the family level.

- **9. KARNVEDH (EAR PIERCING)**

- This sanskar is performed in the third or fifth year, Piercing of the ears. With the commencement of Surya Puja; the father should first address the right ear of the child with the mantra "Oh God may we hear bliss with our ears", performed so that child may listen to good things and to have a good education.
-

• **10. UPANAYANA OR YAGYOPAVEET (SACRED THREAD)**

- Upanayana is the ceremony of wearing the sacred thread called Yajnopaveetam. When male child attains 5 years, the wearing of the sacred thread Yajnopaveetam, is ceremoniously done. This Sanskar is second birth for child – A spiritual birth. The child is thereafter authorized to perform all rituals. Studies of Vedas begins with the Guru.
 - The ceremony has six parts: –
 - Puja: worshipping the Gods,
 - Havan: sacrifice,
 - Shiksha: teaching the morality and duties in life,
 - Bhiksha: begging as a renounced Brahmchari of Gurukula. Teacher's teaching has made him renounced minded that he has accepted a life of Vairagee,
 - Diksha: giving the most sacred Gayatri Mantra to the child, and
 - Blessings: child is bless by all Gods, Goddesses, ancestors, and elders
 - It is taking the child to the teacher for initiation of formal education. Along with the sacred thread, the hide of the antelope called Krishnajinam is also worn by the boy. The Upanayana ceremony is followed by brahmopadesha – teaching Gayatri mantra to the boy.
-

- **11. VEDARAMBH (STUDY OF VEDAS AND SCRIPTURES)**

- This Sanskar is done along with Upanayana. Vedarambha is the learning of Vedas and Upanishads in 'Gurukula' or 'Pathashala'. In the beginning of each academic period there is a ceremony called Upakarm and at the end of each academic period there is another ceremony called Upasarjana. The child commences his journey on the road to spiritual life. This is contrasted with a life of eating, sleeping and procreating, which kinds of life animals also live. The child is sent to Gurukul.

- **12. SAMAVARTANA (COMPLETING EDUCATION)**

- Samavartan is the ceremony associated with the end of formal education of Vedas in 'Gurukul'. After learning the rules of life he returns home from his Teacher's Ashram. When he completes his education about and religion the law of life, his first Ashram Brahmacharya is complete. He is now eligible to enter into the householder stage, and considered a qualified man to get married.

- **13. VIVAHA (THE MARRIAGE)**

- This sanskar is entry into the second Ashram. The life as individual family begins. Vedic Hindu marriage is viewed as sacramental, which is a lifelong commitment of one wife and one husband. It is the strongest bond between a man and a woman, which takes place in the presence of their parents, relatives, and friends. The bride and groom walks around Agni hand in hand. The bride sacrifices grains in the fire and chants mantras.
-

- **14. VANPRASTHA (PREPARING FOR RENOUNCING)**

- This ceremony is performed at the age of 50, in some cases at the age of 60. With the commencement of his ceremony, a man completes his Grahastha Dharma and enters into Vanprastha Ashram (forest hermit). Man withdraws himself from all worldly activities, retires into the forest and prepares himself for taking sanyas. This is the life of a Vanprastha.

- **15. SANYASA**

- Before leaving the body a Hindu sheds all sense of responsibility & relationships to awake & revel in the timeless truth. A sanyasi renounces the world and leads a life of study and meditation by living on alms.

- **16. ANTYESHTI (LAST RITE)**

- Antyeshti (literally, last rites), sometimes referred to as Antim-Sanskar, are the rituals associated with funeral. When death is imminent, a small piece of gold, tulsi leaf and drops of Ganga water are put in the mouth of the person on the death bed. The body is laid on the ground with the head towards the north. The eldest son generally performs the last rites before which he takes a purificatory bath amidst the chanting of mantras. The dead body is washed, perfumed and wrapped in a new white cloth and decked with flowers. For ten days following death, food is not prepared at home and relatives and friends take the responsibility of getting food for the family.
-