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THE CONCEPT OF PURUSARTHA: A STUDY IN INDIAN ETHICS

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of *Purusartha* is derived from sanskrit word 'Purusha' and 'Artha'. The word *Purusha* means human being, soul as well as universal principle and *Artha* means purpose, object of desire, meaning. So, *purusarthas* literally means 'desire of human being'. *Purusarthas* means object of desire (*param Kamayavastu*), everything else attain, nothing left. It is the stage of liberation. *Purusarthas* means which are needs, necessity and essential for purusa. In Indian ethics, there are four kinds of *Purusarthas*. These are Artha, Kama, Dharma and Moksha. In Charvaka ethics there are only two *Purusarthas*: Artha and Kama, because these are the ultimate goal of life. They did not believed Dharma and Moksha, accept only real life that is limited on birth to death. In Charvaka hedonism, they believe artha and kama are the highest goal of human life. The ultimate goal of life is happiness and pleasure, *Dharma* and *Moksha* are not necessary for human being. Charvakas believed kama is the highest purusathas, it is kinds of primary *Purusarthas*. The secondary kinds of *purusarthas* is artha. Charvaka ethics is known as a crude individual hedonism.¹

In Indian ethics *purusarthas* is supreme part of the 'Purusha', which is object of human desire. There are four important *Purusarthas*, but in Hindu philosophy, *Dharma* is more relevant than the concepts of artha and kama, liberation is the Supreme being of human life. According to Buddha, Nirvana is highest goal, stop rebirth, there is no suffering, attain sat-cit-ananda and supreme bliss. In Nyaya apavarga is highest goal of life, it is stage of liberation.

Many Indian schools believe liberation or moksha is the ultimate goal of life like as Jaina, Buddha, Nyaya, Vaishesika, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsaka and Vedanta. In Indian Ethics there are four kinds of *Purusarthas*. Every human being has need and necessity of these *Purusarthas*. These four kinds of *Purusarthas* are divided into two parts- i. *Trivarga purusarthas* and ii. *Chaturvarga Purusarthas*. Trivarga *purusarthas* are Dharma, Artha and Kama, but Chaturvarga *Purusartha* include Moksha. Chaturvarga means four kinds these are Artha, Kama, Dharma and Moksa.

There are four kinds of *Purusarthas* in the Indian ethics. These are -

1. Artha (Property, wealth etc.)
2. Kama (Pleasure, Happiness etc.)
3. Dharma (ritual, righteousness etc.)
4. Moksha (liberation, perfection, realization etc.)

Inter-relationship of various types of *Purusarthas* in Indian ethics:

The four kinds of *Purusarthas* are inter-related to one another, i.e they are inter-related to each others. Now I will highlight four kinds of *Purusarthas* and theirs inter-relation.

ARTHA-

Artha is more essential of human life. We cannot alive without money; it is first *Purusartha* in Indian Ethics. The Ethics of the Charvaka is a crude individual hedonism, pleasure of the sense in this life and that too of the individual is the sole end. Out of the four human values-Dharma, artha, kama and Moksa- only Kama or sensual pleasure is regarded as the end and Artha or wealth is regarded as the means to realize that end, while Dharma and Moksa are altogether rejected. Pleasure is



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regarded as mixed up with pain, but that is no reason why it should not be acquired, Nobody, casts away the gain because of the hust. Should nobody cook because of beggars. Should nobody sow seeds because of animals.² But, in the Carvaka Ethics Artha is a secondary Purusartha and Kama is a Primary Purusartha. So, Charvaka ethics is known as hedonistic. We see in the other Indian ethics where there is essential money or property, its need to earn a true path. It must be utilized a proper way. Artha is the important part of life, it is essential for social, political and religion field. But it does not used in unsocial work like black money, killing, greed and violence. Without property we cannot do anything. So, Artha is more essential for us. We know that ethics is human behavior which is Judge to be good and bad, to be right and wrong. In this regard we can understand which is good and which is bad. In Indian ethics advice to the human being earn of his money to Proper way. It is like a walk media of life, but it needs proper uses. If money is not carefully and truthfully used then its result will affect the society. So, everybody need money, it's must be earned properly, it's must be utilized truthfully and carefully. For instance, when a man goes to the market to buy his child's dress or for some marketing then the solution of this problem is only money. So, this kind of purusartha is essential for human being. But it should be remembered that it is used for true purpose of life, otherwise it's harmful for the human society. In the four Purusarthas, Artha, kama and Dharma, they have no intrinsic value, they have extrinsic value. Artha depends on Kama, Dharma and Moksha.

KAMA

Kama means desires, wish, passion, emotions, pleasures of the sense, love. Its need is to create an empirical world. It's also creating a new generation and a new world. Attachment of desire is not good for society. In the Hedonistic view kama is a Primary Purusartha because human being want to attain a pleasure. Pleasure is ultimate goal of life. In the Charvaka Philosophy Kama is prime Purusartha. Empirical pleasure or external pleasure is very important part of human life. Charvaka believed in make 'merry, eat and enjoy the life', because life is one when we die nothing else. They did not believe heaven, heal, God and soul. Human being ought to attain pleasure and avoid pain from the life. In the life of grahastha asram or samsara bandage there need kama. It is a part of life, it has no intrinsic value, but it has extrinsic value. There is absolutely necessary sustain or control of the human desire or kama. Kama depends on Dharma.

Kama is divided into three parts, satvika kama, rajasika kama and tamsika kama. In satvika kama is righteousness, it means dharma. Second kama is rajasika kama which includes sense organs and desires. The third kinds of kama is tamsika kama where individual are fond of laziness, ignorance and sleep. Of these three types of kama, satvika kama is best, it is universally recommended in the Indian society. We know kama is the part of life, its value in youth. According to Vatsyayana's Kamasutra, one should enjoy kama in youth.³

DHARMA

Dharma is the essential *purusarthas* of the human being. "The vedic term Rta, as has been pointed out earlier, stands for the cosmic principle of Dharma. Varnashrama Dharma, the basis of Vedic social organism. The Vedic ethics based on Dharma."⁴ There are four Varnas and four Asramas. The four Varnas are Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Sudra, according to their Varna they do their actions like Brahmanas teach the pupils and worship God, Kshatriyas rule the country and fight. Vaisya work as a businessmen. Finally, Sudra Varna serve the other upper three Varnas. In Hinduism, there are four Asramas- Bramacharya, Grahastha, Vanapasta and Sanayasa. They served their action according their Asrama. Varnashrama Dharma means action done as like as a Varna and as a Asrama. In Upanishad, Dharma means Righteousness and truth. The attainment of human life, there essential dharma or virtue. The jiva must be obeyed of his own workplace. It is the way of liberation, but not stage of liberation. Dharma is the attempt to realize of Brahman which is impossible without ethical uplift. Dharma has no intrinsic value. it's absolutely dependent on liberation.



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MOKSHA

Liberation is the highest stage of human being. In Bhagavata Gita, Sri Krishna said, Niskama karma is the path of liberation.⁵ Liberation is supreme end of human being. Artha, kama, dharma are essential path to the rising of liberation. Moksha is the highest reality, it is the realization of life of self identity with Brahman. It is the realization of supreme and infinite bliss of Brahman. Buddha wanted to say that Nirvana is the supreme reality human life, there is no cycle of birth and rebirth. Moksha is the highest and supreme stage of human life. The Vedantins emphasize liberation of the soul identity with Brahman.

It is said, that in Vaisheshika philosophy, Bondage is the cause of ignorance and liberation is the cause of knowledge. The soul, due to ignorance, performs actions. Actions lead to merits and demerits. In Vaisheshika philosophy, that is liberation which is absolute cessation of all pain. The Individual soul is treated as a substance and knowledge, bliss etc. are regarded as its accidental qualities which it may acquire when it is embodied. Hence, in liberation these qualities cannot exist because the soul here is not connected with the mind and the body. Liberation is the cessation of all life.⁶

Conclusion

Purusarthas are very important way of achievement in every human life, it is aim of the human being. Every part of life there is necessary four end of life, these are artha, kama, dharma and moksha. Moksha is the goal of life, it has intrinsic value. Vedanta philosophy believed liberation is the highest stage of life where jiva realize soul and Brahman are same or identity. Jiva and Brahman are indifference. According to Swami Vivekananda, "Morality is not an end in itself, mukti is its end, it is only means for the achievement of liberation."⁷

Reference

- ¹Sharma Chandradhar, *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Ltd, Delhi, 2009,p-46.
- ²Ibid
- ³Sharma Dr.R.N, *Indian Philosophy*, Surjeet Publications, Delhi, 2011,p-207.
- ⁴ Ibid, p-198.
- ⁵Sharma Dr.R.N, *Indian Philosophy*, Surjeet Publications, Delhi, 2011,p-198.
- ⁶ Sharma Chandradhar, *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Ltd, Delhi, 2009,p-186
- ⁷ Sharma Dr.R.N, *Indian Philosophy*, Surjeet Publications, Delhi, 2011,p-209.