Good Governance in the Indian Concept of Rajadharma:
A Study of the Linkages and Contemporary Relevance

An Abstract for the

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Summary of the Thesis

The concept of good governance is as old as human civilization, although some might argue that its origin is of recent and contemporary times. Being one of the most significant aspects of the state machinery, good governance has occupied a pivotal place in human life. It is believed that plans and policies for welfare, development and overall progress of the state can only be materialized through favourable governance. Democracy has been so far the best available means of political governance in the contemporary world and thus, the effective, visible and active institutionalization of democratic norms has, therefore, been gaining even greater significance in each political community caring for the democratic way of governance.

The proposed work has attempted to explain the nature and structure of the concept of Rajadharma with thoughtful perspective of good governance as the essential element of state craft which has its roots in the ancient Indian intellectual tradition and strong and vibrant line of thinking and thought. We have, to some extent, tried to concentrate on finding the real meaning, nature and scope of the terms and concepts which are basic to the nature of this work.

We have attempted to locate the boundaries of these major terms and concepts in a simple and lucid manner. Although we have been made to understand and believe through colonized education that the genesis and concept of democracy could only be linked to and understood in the context of Western tradition of political development. Additionally, the present research has also explored the linkages of the literary works and texts having sufficient political indications and prescriptions in the contemporary relevance of their works. The research work

has also endeavoured to delineate the linkages between the eminent scholarly works in the context of modern concept of good governance.

Ancient Indian Sanskrit texts have always discussed and deliberated upon the traditional idea of Rajadharma which is substantially broad and includes within its ambit various dimensions of the Trivarga. Therefore, Rajadharma is considered to be efficient tool to control and maintain the restraints of maryada in the wider population.

Ever since the inception of the state, the inevitability of its existence and the all-encompassing nature of its activity were accepted by all. Despite the omnipotence of Dharma in all walks of human activity, the requirement of state machinery was emphatically recognized by our forefathers in their writings. The meaning, nature, and scope of Rajadharma were essentially broader and higher than the narrow idea of state-craft prevalent in modern times.

It has been a positive improvement that some political scientists have at least started considering this bulk of literature on statecraft in ancient India as of having considerable significance in the understanding and comprehension of the socio-economic conditions of the ancient Indian political community. The duty-bound nature of the state machinery and men was reinforced regularly by moral and ethical prescriptions provided by ordains of Dharma for each and every segment of the socio-political community at individual and collective levels.