

PREFACE

The present work is a humble attempt to make an in depth study of the prevalence of human rights in Ancient India from circa 300 BC to 300 CE. The age is very significant on many accounts politically it witnessed the mighty Mauryan Empire, Sunga empire and a host of foreign invaders, the tribal republican states, the Śaka and Kushāṇa hegemony, culturally the fruition of art and religion and socially the amalgamation of foreign and indigenous way of life as a result of assimilation of the invaders in the Indian society. The study is based on the analytical study of the literary sources which includes the *Smṛtis*, the *Arthaśāstra*, dramas and the account of the foreigners. Equally important archaeological sources like inscriptions, coins, seals and sealings, sculptures will also be examined for the research work. Modern works on History of human rights and other general histories on society, legal system, political and administrative works have also been tapped to make a comparative study.

The first chapter *Introduction* provides the basic outline of the dynasties from 300 B.C to 300 C.E. It also throws light upon the administrative setup of the rulers under this period. The second chapter *Concept of Human Rights* deals with the Concept of human rights, historical background, their importance in the ancient period, their progress with the passage of time and how the judicial procedure carried out during this period. In the third chapter *Judicial Rights*, the duty of the kings, the social responsibility of the king for the protection of his subjects from disorder and anarchy, equal protection of all the people within the state, different types of judges who check the discrimination against the people and their freedom, function of the court and rights of the people, the rules of the civil and criminal law, role of the spies and fundamental aim of the state has been discussed. Then fourth chapter *Rights of Women* deals with the rights given to the women, status and position of women in society, religious activities followed during the marriage, position of women as widow and remarriage, during this period. Fifth chapter *Rights of Slaves* deals with rights given to the slaves, protection against the forced labour, slavery, etc and also about the protection of those who were not able to do work or who suffered from a certain amount of disability either by reason of their sex, disease or age. The sixth chapter *Right to Property* deals with the rules for the property of the state and the people. How it was divided among the people and different types of sons, right of

disinherited property etc. Was there any share for the girls in the property was also discussed in this chapter. Seventh chapter *Rights of the Accused* deals with the rights given by the state to the accused or convicted. In the last chapter the findings of the present study has been summed up.

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