

Foundations of Indian Knowledge Systems: Political, Economic, Strategic, Agricultural, and Veterinary Sciences



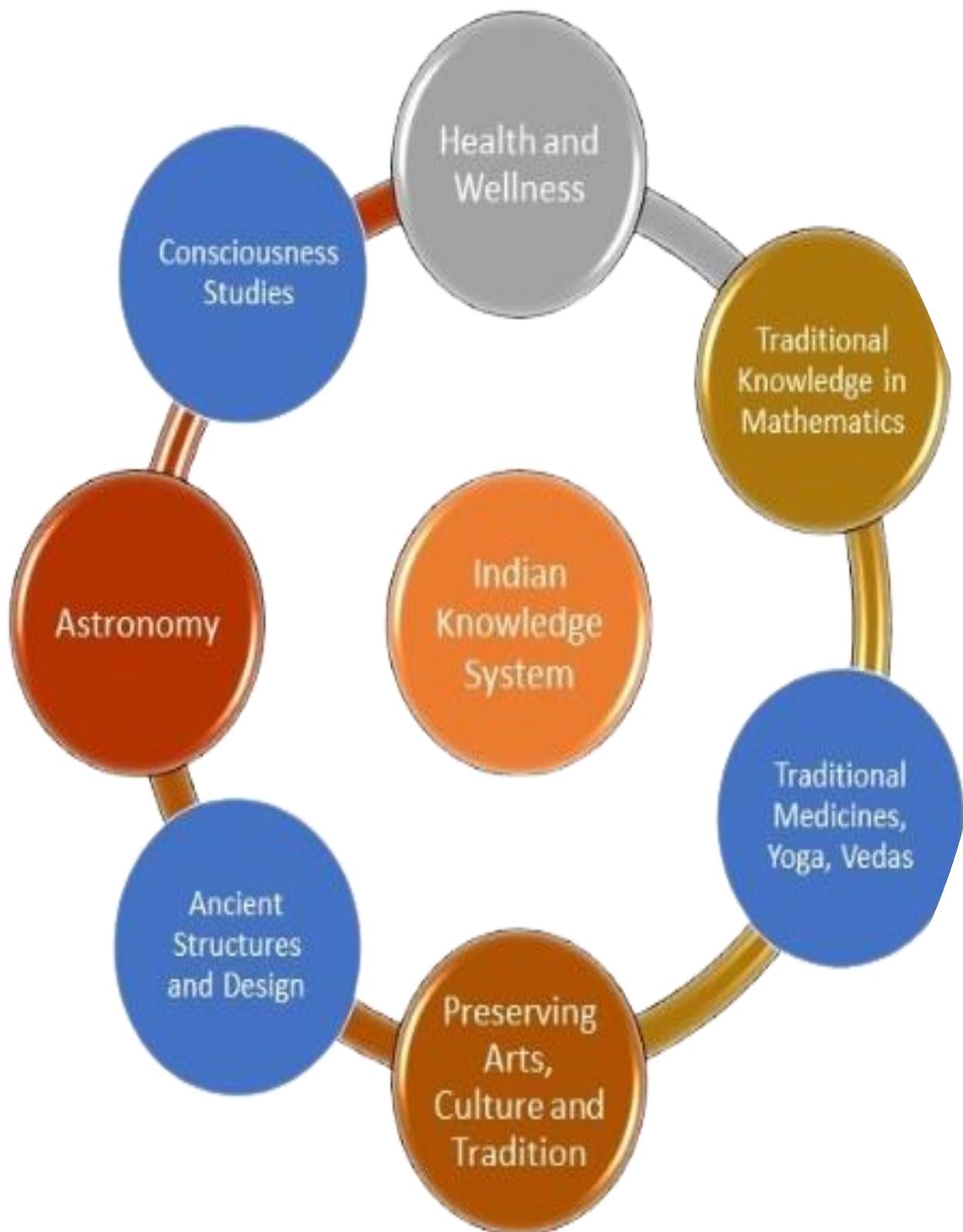
Roadmap for Implementing Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) Contribution by IKS Centre of National Sanskrit University, Tirupati in association with the Valmiki Research Centre on Ramayana, Ramanarayananam, Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh towards the 7th Edition of Bharatiya Vigyan Sammelan (BVS) 2025
(26 –29 December 2025)



Prof. G S R Krishna Murty
Hon'ble Vice – Chancellor
National Sanskrit University, Tirupati

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(Former Vice-Chancellor)
Director Valmiki Research Centre





PREFACE

The National Sanskrit University, Tirupati, in association with the Valmiki Research Centre on Ramayana, (*an affiliated Research institution of NSU*) Ramanarayananam, Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh, is pleased to present this souvenir as a commemorative issue on the occasion of the National Workshop on Indian Knowledge Systems. In alignment with the National Education Policy (2020) and the Ministry of Education's vision to strengthen the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) into higher education, this volume has been curated to serve as a guiding resource for university faculty across disciplines. It aims to illuminate how India's classical knowledge traditions, rooted in timeless works such as the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavad Gita, and other foundational texts, can be meaningfully connected to modern sciences and contemporary pedagogy. The insights compiled here, drawn from traditional sources, scholarly interpretations, and modern tools including AI, emphasize that Indian knowledge is not merely cultural heritage but a sophisticated intellectual ecosystem relevant to present-day academic and scientific inquiry.

A key objective of this initiative is to bridge the gap between traditional knowledge and modern scientific thought, enabling faculty to view the Indian Knowledge System as a complementary, not competing framework to contemporary disciplines. This souvenir highlights thematic models and analytical approaches for integrating IKS into Political, Economic, Strategic Sciences, Agricultural Science, and Veterinary & Animal Husbandry knowledge areas entrusted to National Sanskrit University, Tirupati, by the Ministry of Education through its IKS Division. By exploring the ethical governance principles of the Ramayana, the leadership psychology of the Bhagavad Gita, the statecraft models of the Mahabharata, and the ecological and agricultural wisdom embedded in ancient texts, this volume demonstrates how classical literature can inform and enrich curriculum development, research, and classroom discourse across the modern university system.

As Vice-Chancellor of National Sanskrit University, Tirupati, I express sincere appreciation to Prof. H Lajipathi Rai (Former VC), Director, Valmiki Research Centre on Ramayana for his dedicated and scholarly contribution in preparing these IKS modules. This collaborative effort in providing knowledge inputs, structuring the syllabus, and synthesizing classical wisdom for contemporary application would surely make this souvenir a valuable resource for faculty across India. This gesture of academic sharing exemplifies the spirit of partnership between institutions in advancing the cause of Indian Knowledge Systems.

I deeply appreciate the guidance and initiative of **Prof. Shivaram R. Bhat**, Principal Investigator and **Dr. Kumar Bagewadimath**, Co-Principal Investigator of the NSU IKS Centre, in bringing out this work.

This publication also resonates with the spirit of the 7th Edition of the Bharatiya Vigyan Sammelan (BVS) 2025, to be held at National Sanskrit University, Tirupati, from 26th to 29th December 2025, which champions the exchange of scientific ideas in Bharatiya regional languages. Encouraging scientific dialogue in India's diverse linguistic traditions including Sanskrit is essential for democratizing knowledge and reconnecting learners with indigenous scientific thought. This souvenir aspires to contribute to that national movement by presenting IKS frameworks in a manner accessible to educators from varied academic backgrounds.

The themes to be explored during the 7th Edition of BVS 2025, ranging from governance models in ancient texts to agricultural science, veterinary knowledge, statecraft, ethics, and interdisciplinary scientific insights, align closely with the Ministry of Education's vision to weave Indian Knowledge Systems into modern curricula as outlined in NEP 2020. As India moves toward hosting BVS 2025 at NSU Tirupati, we reaffirm our commitment to advancing scientific thought through Bharatiya regional languages and ensuring that indigenous knowledge becomes accessible, meaningful, and transformational for learners across diverse academic domains.

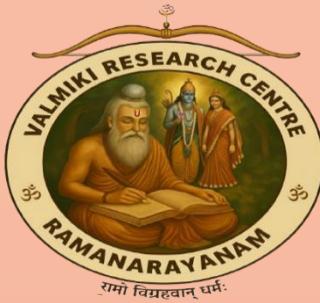
We warmly welcome all participants to this National Workshop on Indian Knowledge Systems and look forward to an enriching exchange of ideas, meaningful dialogue, and collaborative learning. May this workshop and the insights captured in this souvenir inspire deeper engagement with India's intellectual traditions and spark new avenues of research, innovation, and academic growth.

Prof. G. S. R. Krishna Murty
Vice-Chancellor

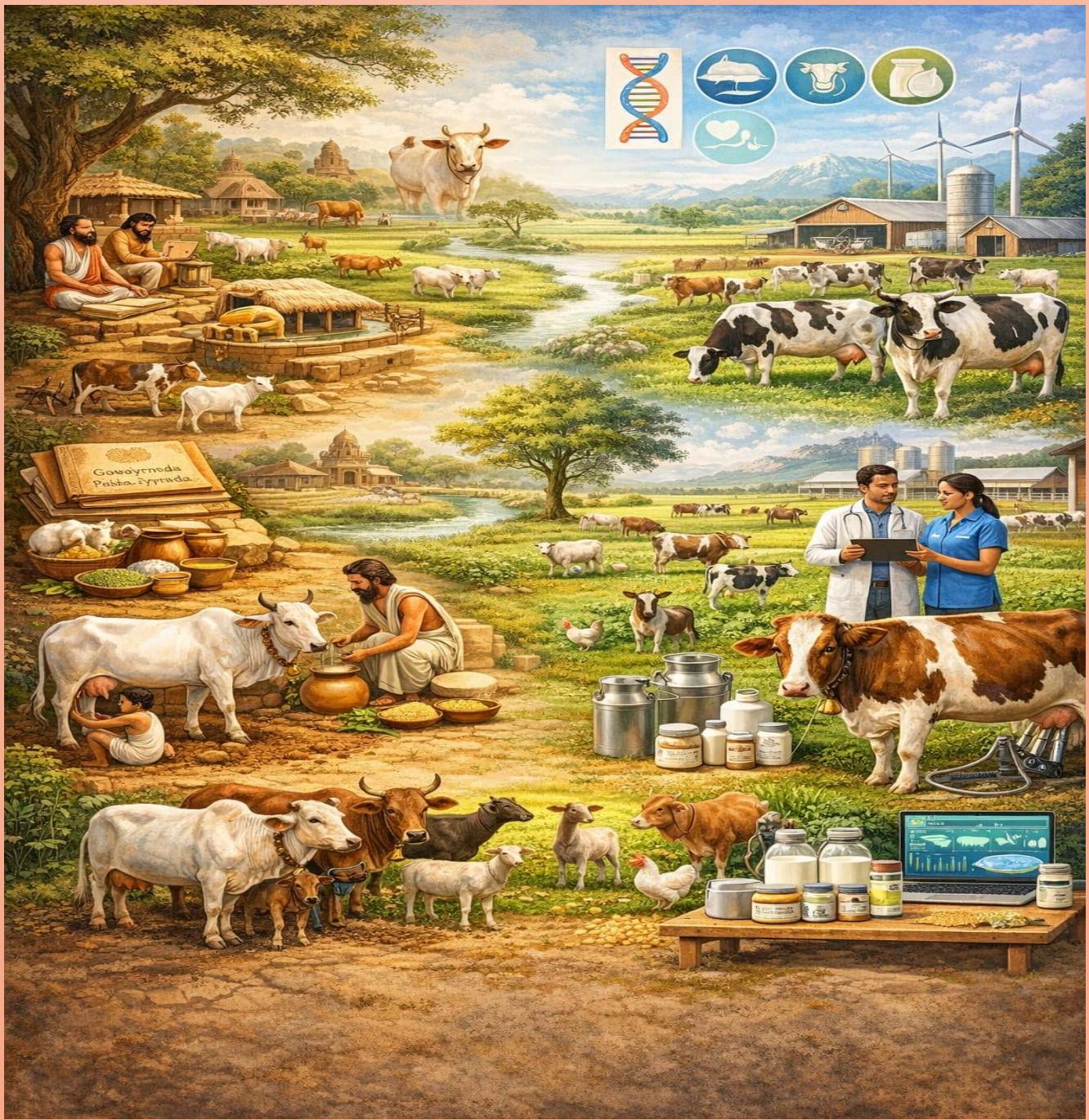
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CONTENT

PREFACE	P. 3
VETERINARY & ANIMAL HUSBANDRY IN RAMAYANA AND IKS ANIMAL HUSBANDRY IN THE RAMAYANA: INSIGHTS FROM INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS	P. 6 -7
CHAPTER-WISE SYLLABUS, IF INTRODUCED AS A COURSE.	P. 7 -9
ANIMAL HUSBANDRY REFERENCES IN THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO MODERN GOVERNMENT LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT"	P. 9 -10
AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE IN VALMIKI RAMAYANA: INSIGHTS FOR MODERN INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS (IKS)	P. 12 -13
VALMIKI RAMAYANA AND INDIAN AGRICULTURAL KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS (IAKS): A DIPLOMA COURSE	P. 14 -15
AGRICULTURE IN THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA AND ITS MODERN RELEVANCE	P. 15 -17
STRATEGIC SCIENCES: STRATEGIC THOUGHT IN THE RAMAYANA: FOUNDATIONS IN INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS	P. 19 -22
COURSE TITLE: STRATEGIC SCIENCE THROUGH THE RAMAYANA	P. 22 -25
AYURVEDIC SCIENCE IN THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA: A COMPREHENSIVE IKS STUDY	P. 27
DIPLOMA COURSE: AYURVEDA AND MEDICAL WISDOM IN THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA	P. 28 -29
HEALTH, HEALING, AND AYURVEDA IN THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA	P. 29 -30
ECONOMICS IN RAMAYANA AND IKS ECONOMIC THOUGHT IN THE RAMAYANA: AN INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE - ECONOMY OF DHARMA: RAMAYANA LESSONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WEALTH, WELFARE & DHARMA: ECONOMIC INSIGHTS IN THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA	P. 32 -33
1. AGRICULTURE AS THE ECONOMIC BACKBONE	P. 33 -34
2. TRADE AND COMMERCE	P. 35 -36
3. TAXATION AND STATE REVENUE	P. 36 -37
4. GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT	P. 37 -38
5. ETHICAL WEALTH AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	P. 38 -39
6. ECONOMIC WISDOM IN LEADERSHIP	P. 40 -41
7. SOCIAL EQUALITY AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES	P. 41 -43
ANCIENT ECONOMIC WISDOM IN THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA AND ITS MODERN RELEVANCE	P. 44
VALMIKI RAMAYANA RELATED POLITICAL SCIENCE AND IKS POLITICAL THOUGHT IN THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA: AN INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE STATECRAFT AND GOVERNANCE IN THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA: INSIGHTS FROM IKS RAMAYANA RULES: ANCIENT POLITICAL SCIENCE FOR THE MODERN WORLD DHARMA-BASED GOVERNANCE: POLITICAL INSIGHTS FROM THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA	P. 46 -47
MAJOR POLITICAL SCIENCE ISSUES RELATED TO THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA, ORGANIZED BY THEME:	P. 47 -49
PROPOSED DIPLOMA SYLLABUS: RAMAYANA IN POLITICAL SCIENCE	P. 49 -50
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND GOVERNANCE LESSONS FROM THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA	P. 50 -51
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND GOVERNANCE IN THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA: A DIPLOMA COURSE IN ETHICAL LEADERSHIP, STATECRAFT, AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	P. 52 -54



Veterinary & Animal Husbandry in the Ramayana: Insights from Indian Knowledge Systems



Roadmap for Implementing Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) relating to Veterinary & Animal Husbandry - Contribution by IKS Centre of National Sanskrit University, Tirupati in association with the Valmiki Research Centre on Ramayana, Ramanarayananam, Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh towards the 7th Edition of Bharatiya Vigyan Sammelan (BVS) 2025
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VETERINARY & ANIMAL HUSBANDRY IN RAMAYANA AND IKS

Animal Husbandry in the Ramayana: Insights from Indian Knowledge Systems

Introduction

The *Valmiki Ramayana* stands not only as a monumental spiritual and literary work but also as an important source of knowledge about the socio-economic foundations of ancient Indian civilization. Among the various aspects of society reflected in the epic, **animal husbandry** emerges as a key component that contributed significantly to the kingdom's prosperity, stability, and cultural values. Throughout the narrative, animals particularly cattle, horses, elephants, oxen, camels, and other domestic species play central roles in agriculture, transportation, warfare, ritual practices, and acts of charity. Their presence underscores a sophisticated understanding of livestock management, breeding, and welfare that was deeply woven into everyday life and state administration.

The Science of Animal Care in the Ramayana: Cattle, especially cows, occupy a place of primary importance. Ayodhya is described as a land rich in cows, natural abundance, and pastoral wealth, reflecting the flourishing agrarian economy of the time. The spiritual and economic significance of cattle is vividly illustrated through the story of the divine cow Shabala, whose value demonstrates the high respect accorded to cows in Vedic society. This reverence extended beyond symbolism and found expression in governance: kings and administrators were entrusted with supervising herds, ensuring availability of grazing lands, and protecting livestock from harm. Cattle thus served as indicators of prosperity, carriers of dharma, and essential resources that sustained households and communities.

Horses and elephants also hold vital positions within the epic, highlighting their importance in royal duties, warfare, and transportation. Horses powered chariots, supported military campaigns, and enabled rapid communication across kingdoms. Elephants especially trained female elephants and those living in designated forests were considered valuable assets requiring constant supervision. King Dasharatha's inquiries about the management, breeding, and upkeep of elephants and horses reflect the strategic importance of these animals in maintaining a strong and well-administered kingdom. Their health and population were matters of statecraft, emphasizing that animal husbandry was closely tied to governance and royal responsibility.

Beyond cattle, horses, and elephants, the Ramayana also references a diverse range of other domesticated animals such as donkeys, camels, and oxen. These animals supported transportation, farming activities, and trade, forming an integral part of the everyday economic system. The presence of trained keepers entrusted with feeding and caring for these animals shows a well-organized structure of livestock management. Ritual practices further enhanced the cultural significance of animals. For instance, Rama's donation of horses, bulls, and newly calved cows to Brahmanas demonstrates that livestock served not only economic purposes but also spiritual and ethical functions, symbolizing generosity, righteousness, and adherence to dharma.

Taken together, these references provide students and scholars with valuable insights into the **holistic and responsible approach** to animal life prevalent in

ancient India. The *Valmiki Ramayana* presents a picture of a society where humans lived in close harmony with animals, recognizing their contribution to economic stability, cultural growth, and spiritual practice. For learners, the study of animal husbandry in the Ramayana reveals how traditional knowledge systems embraced environmental balance, ethical care, and sustainable living principles that remain highly relevant in the modern world.

CHAPTER-WISE SYLLABUS, IF INTRODUCED AS A COURSE.

Chapter 1: Introduction to Animal Husbandry in the Valmiki Ramayana

Objectives:

- Introduce the epic as a source of socio-economic and cultural knowledge.
- Understand the importance of livestock in governance, economy, and culture.

Key Topics:

- Overview of the Valmiki Ramayana.
- Socio-economic context of ancient India.
- Animals as resources in daily life, administration, and rituals.

Suggested Activities:

- Reading and discussion of selected passages from Ayodhya Kanda.
- Group discussion on ethical treatment of animals in the epic.

Chapter 2: Cattle - The Symbol of Prosperity and Dharma

Objectives:

- Explore the central role of cows in economic and spiritual life.
- Understand Shabala and other references to sacred cattle.

Key Topics:

- Description of Ayodhya as a pastoral economy.
- The divine cow Shabala and its significance.
- Supervision, grazing, and welfare of cattle.
- Cattle as symbols of dharma and social welfare.

Suggested Activities:

- Case study: Shabala and its role in society.
- Group project: Mapping cattle-related practices from the epic.

Chapter 3: Horses and Elephants - Royal Assets and Strategic Resources

Objectives:

- Learn about the use of horses and elephants in administration and warfare.
- Examine breeding, care, and population management.

Key Topics:

- Horses in chariots, communication, and military preparedness.
- Elephants in royal forests and strategic administration.
- King Dasharatha's concern for livestock management.

Suggested Activities:

- Role-play: Planning royal livestock management.
- Comparative study: Ancient vs modern animal management strategies.

► **Chapter 4: Other Livestock - Diversity and Daily Utility**

Objectives:

- Recognize the variety of animals in ancient society.
- Understand the role of oxen, camels, donkeys, and other livestock.

Key Topics:

- Livestock for agriculture, transportation, and trade.
- Training and responsibilities of animal keepers.
- Systematic pastoral management practices.

Suggested Activities:

- Field visit or virtual tour of modern livestock farms.
- Assignment: Document the uses of different animals in ancient texts.

► **Chapter 5: Livestock in Rituals, Charity, and Cultural Practices**

Objectives:

- Analyze the ethical, spiritual, and cultural roles of animals.
- Study charitable practices involving livestock.

Key Topics:

- Ritual gifting of cows, bulls, and horses.
- Integration of animals in religious ceremonies.
- Ethical treatment and spiritual symbolism of animals.

Suggested Activities:

- Discussion: Ethical lessons from animal gifts in the Ramayana.
- Project: Preparing a chart linking animals to rituals and charity.

► **Chapter 6: Lessons from the Ramayana for Modern Animal Husbandry**

Objectives:

- Apply ancient knowledge to modern practices.
- Appreciate sustainable and ethical livestock management.

Key Topics:

- Principles of ethical care and animal welfare.
- Sustainable pastoral and agricultural practices.
- Human-animal relationships in historical and contemporary contexts.

Suggested Activities:

- Comparative analysis: Ancient vs modern livestock ethics.
- Student presentation: “Adapting Ramayana-based practices to modern animal husbandry.”

SHOWCASING THE CONTEMPORARY SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS HOW CAN THEY BE LINKED INTO THE SYLLABUS FRAMED ABOVE AS FOLLOWS:

- **Chapter 1 (Introduction):** Use breed-registration data (ICAR-NBAGR) to show how modern India values livestock diversity just as the Ramayana emphasizes animal importance in governance and prosperity.
- **Chapter 2 (Cattle):** When discussing sacred and pastoral cattle (like Shabala), bring in the conservation of *indigenous cattle breeds* (e.g., 53 cattle breeds now

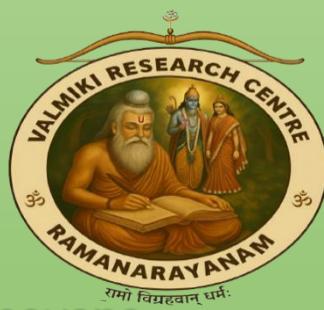
registered). Show how modern breed registration preserves the cultural and genetic wealth that the epic revered.

- **Chapter 3 (Horses & Elephants):** While the Ramayana talks about royal equines and elephants, modern genomic and conservation programs (NBAGR, AI tracking) help maintain viable populations and manage their health.
- **Chapter 4 (Other Livestock):** Correlate the Ramayana's mention of donkeys, camels, etc., with NBAGR's work on breed characterization and cryo-conservation across varied species.
- **Chapter 5 (Rituals & Charity):** The donor-culture of animals in the Ramayana can be juxtaposed with modern AI / sex-sorted semen technology that enhances productivity, making livestock gifting more sustainable.
- **Chapter 6 (Modern Lessons):** Directly map the ethical and sustainable practices of the Ramayana to today's breeding ethics, genetic conservation, preventive health (like AMM to prevent milk fever), and smart tech (AI-based health monitoring).

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY REFERENCES IN THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO MODERN GOVERNMENT LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT”

Kanda	Animal Type	Ramayana Reference / Context	Present-day Government Practice
Bala Kanda	Cattle / Sacred Cow	Vishvamitra offers a lakh of cows in exchange for the divine cow Shabala, highlighting the sacred status and high value of cattle.	Modern cattle breeding and conservation programs emphasize preservation of indigenous and high-value breeds, including “sacred” or culturally important cows in rural development schemes.
Ayodhya Kanda	Cattle	King Dasharatha's kingdom has abundant cows (Kamadhenu) and natural wealth, reflecting a prosperous pastoral economy.	Government dairy development schemes (NDDB, cooperative dairies) promote large-scale milk production, reflecting organized cattle management for economic prosperity.
Ayodhya Kanda	Cattle	Dasharatha expresses concern for female elephants, horses, and male elephants, showing importance of animal	Modern government forest and wildlife departments maintain elephant reserves, breeding centers, and regulate animal care in state-managed forests.

		management in administration.	
Ayodhya Kanda	Horses	Dasharatha instructs gifts to the charioteer including horses, highlighting their strategic importance.	Modern equine management in police, army, and forest services includes breeding, training, and allocation for ceremonial, patrolling, and security purposes.
Ayodhya Kanda	Horses	Dasharatha encourages active breeding and management of female elephants and horses.	Government livestock programs promote selective breeding, artificial insemination, and veterinary care to maintain healthy horse populations in rural and institutional settings.
Ayodhya Kanda	Elephants	Dasharatha inquires about supervision of elephant forests and female elephant numbers.	Wildlife departments manage elephant habitats, monitor population, and implement eco-tourism and conservation programs
Ayodhya Kanda	Other Livestock	Keepers feed horses, elephants, donkeys, camels, and cows, reflecting livestock diversity.	Government veterinary services provide extension support for diverse livestock, including camels, donkeys, and oxen, for agriculture, transport, and rural livelihoods.
Yuddha Kanda	Cattle	Rama donates horses, recently calved cows, and bulls to Brahmanas, demonstrating livestock as charity.	Modern government schemes (Gochar land, free livestock distribution, rural livelihood programs) distribute animals to improve nutrition, income, and community welfare.



Agricultural Science in Valmiki Ramayana: Insights for Modern Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)



Roadmap for Implementing Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) relating to Agricultural Science: Contribution by IKS Centre of National Sanskrit University, Tirupati in association with the Valmiki Research Centre on Ramayana, Ramanarayananam, Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh towards the 7th Edition of Bharatiya Vigyan Sammelan (BVS) 2025 (26 –29 December 2025)



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AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE IN VALMIKI RAMAYANA: INSIGHTS FOR MODERN INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS (IKS)

Introduction:

Historical-Agrarian Context: Agriculture formed the backbone of ancient Indian civilization, shaping its economy, social structures, and cultural life. The Valmiki Ramayana, though primarily an epic centred on dharma, heroism, and human values, provides significant glimpses into the agrarian foundations of its time. Through its descriptions of fertile kingdoms, prosperous villages, and harmonious coexistence with nature, the epic highlights the importance of agriculture as a pillar of societal stability. These references allow us to reconstruct a vivid picture of agricultural science, land use patterns, water management, and livestock practices during the Ramayana period.

Agrarian Wisdom Embedded in the Epic: The Ramayana subtly weaves agricultural knowledge into its narrative, reflecting both the scientific understanding and cultural reverence for farming in ancient India. Descriptions of ploughed fields, irrigation tanks, orchards, cattle rearing, and forest subsistence reveal not only the technical practices but also the values attached to sustainable living. Kings like Dasharatha are portrayed as guardians of fertile land and prosperous harvests, emphasizing that effective governance was deeply intertwined with agricultural abundance. Thus, agriculture emerges not merely as an economic activity, but as a moral responsibility grounded in dharma.

Relevance to Modern Agricultural Thought: Studying the agricultural references in the Ramayana offers valuable insights for the present day. The epic's emphasis on ecological balance, ethical land use, water conservation, and respect for natural resources resonates strongly with contemporary concerns about sustainability and environmental stewardship. By exploring the agricultural practices and philosophies embedded in the Ramayana, this book seeks to bridge ancient wisdom with modern agrarian science, inspiring readers to appreciate the enduring relevance of the epic in shaping a holistic understanding of agriculture.

The **Valmiki Ramayana**, while primarily an epic on dharma, kingship, and human values, contains several references to **agriculture and agrarian life**, which provide insight into **agriculture science and practices in ancient India**. Here's a detailed summary:

1. Agriculture as a Pillar of Kingdom Prosperity:

- The Ramayana repeatedly links the **prosperity of a kingdom** with fertile lands, abundant crops, and well-maintained irrigation systems.
- Kings like **Dasharatha** are described as having **vast fields, orchards, and granaries**, showing organized agricultural management.
- Prosperity included a combination of **plow-based cultivation, animal-assisted farming, and irrigation**, reflecting a systematic approach to agriculture.

2. Crop Cultivation and Land Use:

- **Crops Mentioned:** Rice, barley, sugarcane, and various grains are referenced indirectly through the abundance of food offerings and feasts. Forest fruits, roots, and herbs were collected during forest life, showing knowledge of **wild edible plants**.
- **Land Use:** The epic mentions **fields (ksetras)**, **orchards (vana)**, and **pastures**, indicating **planned land management** for both crops and livestock. King Dasharatha's kingdom had well-maintained **paddy fields and grain storage**, showing awareness of **seasonal cultivation and storage techniques**.

3. Irrigation and Water Management:

- Rivers, ponds, and wells are frequently mentioned, indicating **water management practices** for agriculture.
- **Tanks and canals** were dug to ensure sufficient water supply for crops and animals.
- Forest scenes often mention streams and rivers used for **irrigation and cattle watering**, reflecting integrated water and agriculture science.

4. Use of Animals in Agriculture:

- **Oxen** were used to plough fields and pull carts, demonstrating the use of animal labour in farming.
- Cattle and bulls were carefully maintained, both for **ploughing and dairy production**, showing combined **agriculture and animal husbandry practices**.

5. Forest Agriculture and Subsistence:

- During Rama's exile, he and Lakshmana relied on **forest produce, fruits, roots, and herbs** for sustenance.
- This indicates an understanding of **foraging, seasonal availability, and sustainable use of natural resources**.
- The epic emphasizes **coexistence with nature**, showing ethical and sustainable agricultural practices.

6. Festivals and Agricultural Produce:

- Many festivals and religious offerings in the Ramayana are **linked to agricultural cycles**, such as harvest festivals and offerings of **grain, fruits, and milk**.
- The use of crops in **rituals and charity** reflects the integration of agriculture with culture, religion, and economy.

7. Ethical Perspective on Agriculture:

- Kings and sages are expected to **protect fertile lands, ensure adequate harvest, and support farmers**, showing the **moral dimension of agriculture**.
- Overexploitation or neglect of land is considered a sign of poor governance.

8. Examples from Valmiki Ramayana:

1. **Ayodhya Kanda** - King Dasharatha's kingdom is described as fertile with **fields yielding abundant crops**, well-irrigated, and rich in cattle.
2. **Bala Kanda** - Forest life shows Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana living off forest produce, demonstrating **subsistence and sustainable practices**.
3. **Yuddha Kanda** - Reference to granaries and storage of crops during wartime, highlighting **crop management and preservation techniques**.

VALMIKI RAMAYANA AND INDIAN AGRICULTURAL KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS (IAKS): A DIPLOMA COURSE

Course Duration: 6 - 8 months

Mode: Distance / Hybrid Learning

Target Students: Senior school students, college students, or learners interested in traditional knowledge, agriculture, and ancient Indian practices.

Course Objectives:

1. To explore the agricultural references and practices described in the Valmiki Ramayana.
2. To understand the link between agriculture, governance, and society in ancient India.
3. To derive sustainable agricultural practices and ethical perspectives from ancient texts.
4. To integrate theoretical knowledge with practical applications in modern farming and forest resource management.

CHAPTER-WISE SYLLABUS STRUCTURE

Chapter 1: Introduction to Agriculture in the Ramayana

- Overview of Valmiki Ramayana and its socio-economic context.
- Agriculture as a pillar of kingdom prosperity.
- Role of kings and governance in promoting agriculture.
- Ethical perspective: Moral responsibility of rulers and citizens in land and resource management.

Learning Outcomes: Students will be able to explain how agriculture was central to societal well-being and governance in ancient India.

Practical Component: Mapping fertile lands and irrigation systems described in Ramayana using diagrams.

Chapter 2: Crop Cultivation and Land Use

- Types of crops: Rice, barley, sugarcane, and grains.
- Forest produce: Fruits, roots, herbs, and their seasonal availability.
- Land management: Fields (kshetras), orchards (vana), pastures, and crop rotation.
- Storage practices: Granaries and preservation of harvest.

Learning Outcomes: Students will understand ancient crop cultivation techniques and planning of agricultural lands.

Practical Component: Creating a seasonal crop calendar based on references in the Ramayana.

Chapter 3: Irrigation and Water Management

- Rivers, ponds, wells, and their agricultural uses.
- Tanks, canals, and integrated water resource management.
- Forest irrigation systems for sustenance and livestock.

Learning Outcomes: Students will learn traditional water management techniques and their relevance today.

Practical Component: Designing a simple irrigation layout inspired by ancient methods.

Chapter 4: Animal Husbandry and Agriculture

- Use of oxen for ploughing and carts.
- Maintenance of cattle for ploughing, milk, and manure.
- Integration of livestock and crop farming.

Learning Outcomes: Students will grasp the synergy between animal husbandry and crop cultivation in ancient times.

Practical Component: Case study on draft animal usage and pasture management.

Chapter 5: Forest Agriculture and Sustainable Foraging

- Subsistence practices during Rama's exile.
- Collection and utilization of forest produce.
- Ethical harvesting and sustainable resource use.

Learning Outcomes: Students will learn ancient sustainable agricultural and foraging practices.

Practical Component: Field exercise on identifying edible plants and forest resource management principles.

Chapter 6: Festivals, Rituals, and Agricultural Cycles

- Agricultural festivals and harvest celebrations.
- Use of crops in rituals, charity, and feasts.
- Cultural integration of agriculture with economy and religion.

Learning Outcomes: Students will understand how agriculture shaped cultural and religious life.

Practical Component: Documenting a harvest festival and the crops involved.

Chapter 7: Ethical and Governance Perspectives on Agriculture

- Kings and sages' responsibilities in protecting land and crops.
- Ethical land use and consequences of overexploitation.
- Governance strategies for agricultural prosperity.

Learning Outcomes: Students will analyse the moral and ethical dimensions of agriculture in society.

Practical Component: Role-play on decision-making for sustainable agriculture policies.

Chapter 8: Case Studies from the Valmiki Ramayana

- **Ayodhya Kanda:** Prosperity, fertile lands, irrigation, and cattle management.
- **Bala Kanda:** Forest life and subsistence practices of Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana.
- **Yuddha Kanda:** Granaries, crop storage, and wartime agriculture.
- Comparative study: Ancient practices vs. modern sustainable agriculture.

Learning Outcomes: Students will synthesize knowledge from previous chapters and apply it to practical and modern contexts.

Practical Component: Project assignment: “Design a sustainable agricultural system inspired by Ramayana principles.”

This syllabus not only highlights agriculture as a scientific and ethical practice in the Ramayana but also equips students with actionable knowledge for sustainable agriculture today.

AGRICULTURE IN THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA AND ITS MODERN RELEVANCE

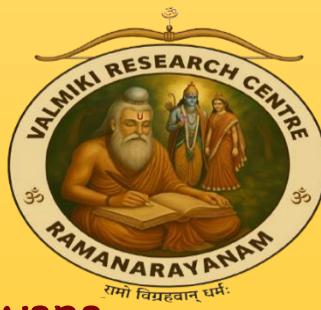
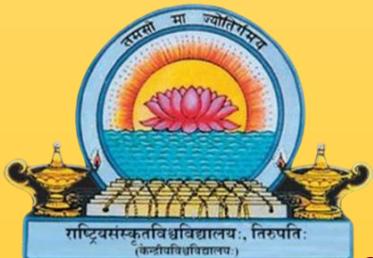
Theme / Practice	Valmiki Ramayana (Ancient Agriculture)	Modern Agriculture Practices	Insights / Relevance Today
Role of Agriculture in Prosperity	Fertile lands, well-maintained irrigation, abundant crops linked to kingdom wealth (e.g., Ayodhya Kanda)	Economic growth linked to farm productivity; national food security	Emphasizes governance support for agriculture and importance of land management for prosperity
Crop Cultivation	Rice, barley, sugarcane, grains; forest fruits and herbs; seasonal cultivation	Diversified cropping, cereals, pulses, cash crops; modern crop rotation	Ancient crop diversity and seasonal planning aligns with sustainable agriculture and crop rotation practices
Land Use & Management	Planned fields (ksetras), orchards (vana), pastures; storage in granaries	Zoning of farmland, orchards, pastures; warehouse storage and silos	Shows early understanding of land allocation, integrated farming, and post-harvest management
Irrigation & Water Management	Rivers, ponds, wells, canals, tanks; integrated irrigation for crops and livestock	Drip irrigation, sprinklers, canal networks, rainwater harvesting	Ancient water management mirrors modern integrated water resource management and sustainability
Animal Husbandry	Oxen for plowing, cattle for milk and	Mechanized plowing, dairy	Highlights synergy between animals and

Theme / Practice	Valmiki Ramayana (Ancient Agriculture)	Modern Agriculture Practices	Insights / Relevance Today
	manure; combined livestock-crop system	farms, integrated crop-livestock systems	crops; manure as organic fertilizer is relevant today
Forest Agriculture & Foraging	Forest fruits, roots, herbs; sustainable harvesting during exile	Agroforestry, wild plant foraging, sustainable harvesting, permaculture*	Demonstrates early concepts of sustainability, biodiversity, and ethical resource use
Agricultural Festivals & Culture	Harvest offerings in festivals, religious rituals with crops	Crop-related festivals, thanksgiving events, community fairs	Cultural link between agriculture and society persists; reinforces social value of farming
Ethical Governance & Sustainability	Kings responsible for fertile land protection, fair harvest, supporting farmers	Government agricultural policies, subsidies, land-use laws, sustainable farming programs	Ancient ethical principles align with modern agricultural policy and sustainability goals
Storage & Post-Harvest	Granaries for crop preservation during wartime (Yuddha Kanda)	Silos, cold storage, warehouse management	Early post-harvest techniques inform modern storage solutions and food security
Subsistence & Survival Farming	Rama and Lakshmana living off forest produce during exile	Subsistence farming, community gardens, emergency food systems	Highlights resilience, seasonal foraging knowledge, and minimal-impact farming

Notes: Permaculture*: Permaculture in agriculture is a concept that combines sustainable farming practices with ecological design principles.

Some of the main principles of permaculture in agriculture include:

- Observation of Nature:** Understand how natural ecosystems work and use those patterns in farming.
- Diversity:** Growing a variety of crops to reduce pests, improve soil health, and ensure resilience.
- Closed Loops:** Recycling nutrients, water, and energy within the farm (like composting, rainwater harvesting).
- Minimal Waste:** Every output becomes an input somewhere else, just like nature.
- Sustainable Resource Use:** Using renewable energy, avoiding chemical fertilizers and pesticides.
- Integration of Animals and Plants:** Animals, plants, insects, and soil organisms all support each other.



Strategic Thought in the Ramayana Foundations in Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)



Roadmap for Implementing Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) relating to Strategic Sciences: Contribution by IKS Centre of National Sanskrit University, Tirupati in association with the Valmiki Research Centre on Ramayana, Ramanarayananam, Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh towards the 7th Edition of Bharatiya Vigyan Sammelan (BVS) 2025



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STRATEGIC SCIENCES
STRATEGIC THOUGHT IN THE RAMAYANA: FOUNDATIONS IN INDIAN
KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

Introduction:

The Ramayana, while celebrated as an epic of dharma and human values, also serves as a profound text on strategic thought within the Indian Knowledge System (IKS). Its narratives reveal a sophisticated understanding of decision-making, governance, conflict resolution, and resource management, where ethics, foresight, and societal welfare are inseparable from strategy. Through examples of kings, warriors, and sages, the epic demonstrates how intelligence, planning, and contextual awareness symbolized in the use of Agni, Astra, and battlefield tactics inform operational excellence. Beyond warfare, it emphasizes statecraft, diplomacy, economic management, and coalition-building, highlighting a holistic model of leadership. By studying the Ramayana as a strategic guide, contemporary leaders and organizations can draw timeless lessons in ethical decision-making, risk assessment, resource mobilization, and organizational strategy, showing that ancient wisdom continues to offer actionable insights for modern management and strategic planning.

1. Strategic Thought in the Ramayana: Foundations in Indian Knowledge Systems

The Ramayana, beyond being an epic of dharma and human values, offers profound insights into strategic thinking embedded within the Indian knowledge system (IKS). Its narratives present complex decision-making scenarios, conflict resolution, and governance strategies that reflect an integrated understanding of politics, ethics, and societal welfare. By examining the choices of kings, warriors, and sages, we uncover a systematic approach to strategy that balances tactical foresight, moral responsibility, and long-term consequences, demonstrating that strategic thought in ancient India was inseparable from ethics, culture, and holistic statecraft.

2. Agni, Astra & Strategy: Strategic Science in the Ramayana and IKS

In the Ramayana, the use of fire (Agni) and celestial weapons (Astra) symbolizes not only martial prowess but also strategic acumen within the Indian Knowledge System. The epic illustrates how timing, precision, and contextual awareness govern the deployment of these powers, reflecting the broader principles of strategic science. Leaders and warriors are depicted applying intelligence, planning, and ethical considerations before action, showing that true strategy involves careful assessment of resources, terrain, allies, and adversaries. This interplay of symbolic and practical strategy offers timeless lessons for decision-making and operational excellence.

3. Epic Statecraft: How the Ramayana Shapes Strategic Science

The Ramayana presents a rich canvas of epic statecraft, illustrating how governance, diplomacy, and military strategy are deeply interwoven with morality and human values. Kings like Dasharatha and Rama exemplify the art of ruling through foresight, justice, and ethical prudence, while navigating challenges such as succession, alliances, and wartime logistics. The epic reveals that strategic science in the Indian context is not confined to battlefield tactics alone but encompasses economic management, resource allocation, societal welfare, and negotiation, highlighting a sophisticated model of leadership and policy-making relevant even in modern governance studies.

4. Ramayana as Strategy: Ancient Insights, Modern Applications

The strategic lessons of the Ramayana extend beyond its narrative to provide actionable insights for contemporary leaders and organizations. From resource mobilization and risk assessment to coalition-building and ethical leadership, the epic offers a blueprint for modern strategic thinking rooted in timeless principles. By studying the Ramayana as a strategy text, we gain an understanding of how human behavior, organizational dynamics, and situational intelligence converge to shape outcomes, illustrating that ancient wisdom can inform present-day management, military strategy, and decision-making in complex environments.

Strategic Sciences is a broad term that refers to the systematic study of planning, decision-making, and action to achieve long-term objectives, usually in contexts of conflict, governance, or competition. It draws from multiple disciplines like military science, political science, economics, and management. Here's a structured breakdown:

1. Military Strategy

- Definition: Science of planning and conducting war or defines operations.
- Focus Areas:
 - Tactics and operational planning
 - Force organization and logistics
 - Siege warfare, battlefield maneuvers
 - Use of intelligence and espionage
- Example in Ramayana: Building the vanara army, bridge to Lanka, battle formations against Ravana.

2. Political Strategy

- Definition: Art and science of achieving political objectives and maintaining power.
- Focus Areas:
 - Governance and administration
 - Alliances and diplomacy
 - Succession planning and leadership development
 - Policy-making for long-term stability
- Example in Ramayana: Rama forming alliances with Sugriva and Vibhishana, ethical governance in Ayodhya.

3. Diplomatic Strategy

- Definition: Planning and managing relations to influence other parties peacefully or strategically.
- Focus Areas:
 - Negotiation and mediation
 - Psychological influence and persuasion
 - Peace treaties and conflict resolution
- Example in Ramayana: Rama's peace mission to Lanka, convincing allies to support his cause.

4. Leadership & Organizational Strategy

- Definition: Planning and structuring teams to achieve objectives efficiently.
- Focus Areas:
 - Team building and role allocation
 - Motivation and morale management
 - Delegation and accountability
 - Crisis management
- Example in Ramayana: Hanuman leading search missions, Sugriva's troops organized efficiently.

5. Strategic Ethics (Moral Strategy)

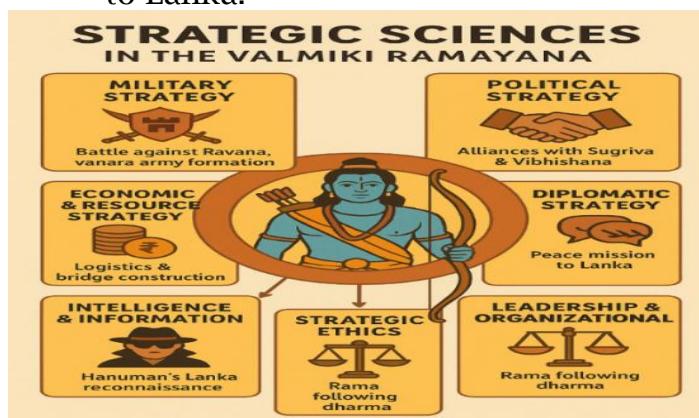
- Definition: Integrating moral principles into decision-making for sustainable outcomes.
- Focus Areas:
 - Ethical leadership
 - Balancing ends and means
 - Decision-making under uncertainty
- Example in Ramayana: Rama adhering to dharma even in war, choosing ethical strategies over shortcuts.

6. Intelligence & Information Strategy

- Definition: Gathering, analysing, and using information for strategic advantage.
- Focus Areas:
 - Espionage and reconnaissance
 - Communication networks
 - Signal intelligence and coded messaging
- Example in Ramayana: Hanuman spying in Lanka, using messages to coordinate with allies.

7. Economic & Resource Strategy

- Definition: Managing resources effectively to support strategic objectives.
- Focus Areas:
 - Resource allocation and logistics
 - Supply chain management for armies or projects
 - Infrastructure planning
- Example in Ramayana: Provisioning the vanara army, constructing the bridge to Lanka.



Summary Table

Strategic Science	Definition	Ramayana Example
Military Strategy	Planning and executing war operations	Battle against Ravana, vanara army formation
Political Strategy	Governance, alliances, succession planning	Alliances with Sugriva & Vibhishana
Diplomatic Strategy	Negotiation & influence	Peace mission to Lanka
Leadership & Organizational	Team building, delegation, morale management	Hanuman leading missions, army organization
Strategic Ethics	Ethics in decision-making	Rama following dharma
Intelligence & Information	Information gathering and analysis	Hanuman's Lanka reconnaissance
Economic & Resource Strategy	Efficient use of resources	Logistics & bridge construction

In essence, Strategic Sciences is about planning, decision-making, and action across multiple domains - military, political, diplomatic, organizational, ethical, intelligence, and resource management.

COURSE TITLE: STRATEGIC SCIENCE THROUGH THE RAMAYANA

Course Duration: 4-6 months

Mode: Online / Hybrid / Classroom

Target Learners: Students, professionals, and enthusiasts of strategy, management, leadership, and Indian knowledge systems (IKS)

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Explore strategic principles embedded in the Ramayana and Indian Knowledge Systems.
2. Understand the interplay of ethics, decision-making, and governance in ancient strategic thought.
3. Apply epic-based insights to modern strategic management, leadership, and organizational contexts.
4. Develop analytical and practical skills in planning, risk assessment, and resource management inspired by the epic.

CHAPTER-WISE STRUCTURE

Chapter 1: Foundations of Strategic Thought in the Ramayana

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the strategic framework in the Ramayana.
- Examine how dharma, ethics, and societal welfare shape decision-making.

Topics Covered:

- Overview of the Ramayana and its socio-political context.
- Key strategic episodes and decision-making scenarios.

Practical Exercise:

- Analyze a key decision by King Dasharatha or Rama using a strategy framework.

Chapter 2: Governance and Epic Statecraft

Learning Outcomes:

- Analyze governance, administration, and economic management in the epic.
- Recognize leadership qualities and statecraft principles.

Topics Covered:

- Administration and resource management in Ayodhya.
- Succession planning, alliances, and negotiation.
- Coordination of human, natural, and material resources.

Practical Exercise:

- Create a “kingdom management plan” integrating resources, population welfare, and defense.

Chapter 3: Agni, Astra, and Strategic Science

Learning Outcomes:

- Examine symbolic and practical applications of weapons in strategy.
- Understand timing, precision, and resource allocation as strategic principles.

Topics Covered:

- Use of celestial weapons and war tactics in battles.
- Intelligence, reconnaissance, and situational awareness.
- Strategy and ethics: When and how to act.

Practical Exercise:

- Simulation activity: Plan a mission scenario inspired by a Ramayana battle, including resources, risks, and ethical choices.

Chapter 4: Leadership, Ethics, and Decision-Making

Learning Outcomes:

- Explore moral and ethical dimensions of leadership.
- Learn how ethical decision-making affects strategy and outcomes.

Topics Covered:

- Rama, Dasharatha, and other leaders' ethical choices.
- Balancing short-term gains with long-term societal welfare.
- Decision-making under uncertainty.

Practical Exercise:

- Case study discussion: Ethical dilemmas in leadership and governance from the epic.

Chapter 5: Resource Management and Logistics in Epic Strategy

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand resource mobilization, logistics, and supply chain management in the Ramayana.
- Apply these concepts to modern organizational and operational contexts.

Topics Covered:

- Granaries, storage, and wartime logistics.
- Mobilization of allies, human capital, and natural resources.
- Planning for contingencies and risk management.

Practical Exercise:

- Design a logistical plan for a campaign or organizational project inspired by the epic.

Chapter 6: Strategic Applications in Modern Contexts

Learning Outcomes:

- Translate epic-based strategic principles into modern applications.
- Apply insights to corporate, military, and organizational strategies.

Topics Covered:

- Leadership, foresight, and resilience in modern organizations.
- Crisis management, coalition-building, and negotiation.
- Integration of ethics and values into decision-making.

Practical Exercise:

- Project: Develop a modern strategic plan inspired by a Ramayana episode.

Chapter 7: Synthesis and Case Studies

Learning Outcomes:

- Synthesize knowledge from all chapters.
- Analyze epic strategy holistically and connect it to contemporary practices.

Topics Covered:

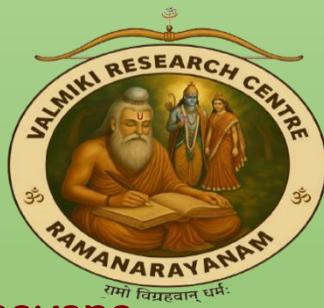
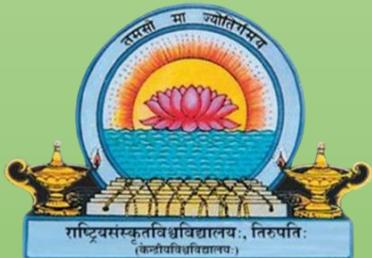
- Key case studies: Ayodhya administration, forest exile strategies, Yuddha Kanda wartime planning.
- Comparative analysis: Ancient vs. modern strategic management.

Practical Exercise:

- Final assignment: Present a comprehensive strategic analysis of an episode from the Ramayana with modern implications.

Chapter	Topics Covered	Learning Outcomes	Modern Applications	Practical Exercises
1. Foundations of Strategic Thought in the Ramayana	Overview of the Ramayana, key strategic episodes, dharma-based decision-making	Understand strategic framework in the epic; analyze decision-making influenced by ethics and societal welfare	Strategic thinking, decision-making frameworks in modern leadership and management	Analyze a decision by Dasharatha or Rama using a strategy framework
2. Governance	Administration in Ayodhya, succession	Recognize leadership qualities;	Modern organizational management,	Create a “kingdom management

Chapter	Topics Covered	Learning Outcomes	Modern Applications	Practical Exercises
1. The Art of War and Epic Statecraft	planning, alliances, resource coordination	analyze governance and policy-making in epic context	policy planning, governance strategies	plan" integrating resources, welfare, and defense
3. Agni, Astra, and Strategic Science	Use of celestial weapons, battle tactics, intelligence and reconnaissance	Examine symbolic and practical applications of strategy; understand timing and precision	Operational planning, risk assessment, tactical decision-making	Plan a mission scenario inspired by a Ramayana battle, including resources and ethical choices
4. Leadership, Ethics, and Decision-Making	Ethical dilemmas of leaders, balancing short-term and long-term outcomes	Explore moral dimensions of leadership; evaluate ethical decision-making	Ethical leadership, corporate governance, crisis management	Case study discussion on leadership dilemmas from the epic
5. Resource Management and Logistics in Epic Strategy	Granaries, storage, wartime logistics, mobilization of allies and resources	Understand resource planning and logistics in epic campaigns	Supply chain management, project planning, resource allocation	Design a logistical plan for a campaign or organizational project inspired by the epic
6. Strategic Applications in Modern Contexts	Leadership resilience, crisis management, coalition-building, negotiation	Apply epic-based principles to modern organizational and strategic scenarios	Corporate strategy, military planning, organizational leadership	Project: Develop a modern strategic plan inspired by a Ramayana episode
7. Synthesis and Case Studies	Key case studies (Ayodhya administration, exile strategies, Yuddha Kanda), comparative analysis	Synthesize epic strategies and analyze modern relevance	Strategic planning, integrated decision-making, learning from historical models	Final assignment: Present a comprehensive strategic analysis of a Ramayana episode with modern applications



Ayurvedic Science in the Valmiki Ramayana a Comprehensive Indian Knowledge System (IKS) Study

Ayurveda

Philosophical Foundations

Panchamahabhuta (Five Elements)

Holistic Ecology

Classical Texts

Charaka
Sushruta

Human Constitution & Health

Therapeutr.

Therapeutics

Herbal formulations. Rasayana

Dinacharya,
Seasonal routines, meditation

Preventive & Lifestyle Science

Yoga meditation
Ethical Living
(Swasthritta)

Roadmap for Implementing Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) relating to Ayurvedic Science: Contribution by IKS Centre of National Sanskrit University, Tirupati in association with the Valmiki Research Centre on Ramayana, Ramanarayananam, Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh towards the 7th Edition of Bharatiya Vigyan Sammelan (BVS) 2025 (26 –29 December 2025)



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AYURVEDIC SCIENCE IN THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA: A COMPREHENSIVE IKS STUDY

Introduction:

The *Valmiki Ramayana*, while primarily revered as an epic of dharma, ethics, and human values, also offers profound insights into health, medicine, and preventive care, reflecting principles consistent with Ayurveda. From the concept of longevity and holistic well-being to the detailed depiction of herbal remedies, surgical practices, and daily regimens, the epic illustrates a sophisticated understanding of physical, mental, and societal health. Episodes such as the miraculous Sanjīvanī herb revival of Lakshmana demonstrate not only the use of medicinal plants but also the systematic knowledge of plant-based therapeutics, surgical care, and first-aid techniques, highlighting early Indian expertise in medical science. Additionally, the descriptions of Rama's lifestyle, forest diets, and emotional equilibrium reflect the timeless Ayurvedic emphasis on personal hygiene, mental balance, and dietary discipline as foundational to health.

Beyond individual well-being, the *Ramayana* also portrays the integration of medical wisdom into governance and societal welfare. In Ayodhya, rulers ensured access to healthcare, preventive measures, and the overall prosperity and longevity of citizens, embodying principles of public health that resonate with modern concepts of preventive medicine and social health policy. The epic's attention to dietary balance, emotional regulation, and environmental harmony emphasizes the interdependence of body, mind, and society a holistic approach central to contemporary wellness frameworks.

Modern relevance of these ancient insights is striking. From herbal pharmacology and trauma care to lifestyle medicine and preventive health strategies, the practices described in the *Rāmāyaṇa* anticipate key aspects of today's integrative medicine. Studying these narratives provides a unique lens to appreciate how ethical leadership, personal discipline, and environmental awareness contribute to public health, offering inspiration for contemporary healthcare, nutrition, and wellness practices while grounding them in India's rich traditional knowledge systems.

DIPLOMA COURSE: AYURVEDA AND MEDICAL WISDOM IN THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA

Course Duration: 6–9 months

Target Learners: Students of Ayurveda, Sanskrit, Indian knowledge systems, or traditional medicine

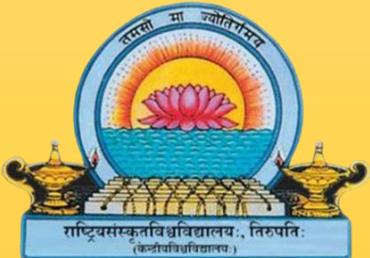
Module / Chapter	Topics Covered	Learning Outcomes	Practical / Assignments
1. Introduction to Ayurveda in the Ramayana	Overview of Valmiki Rāmāyaṇa; Concept of dharma and health; Ayurveda's objectives: "Swasthasya swasthya rakshanam, āturasya vikāra prashamanam ca"	Understand how the Ramayana embeds early medical knowledge; relate dharma and health	Essay: Role of health in dharma and governance
2. Concept of Health and Longevity	Longevity, well-being, preventive care in Bala and Ayodhya Kāṇḍa	Learn the ancient conceptualization of physical, mental, and social health	Discussion: Compare Rāmāyaṇa ideals with modern preventive health practices
3. Herbal Medicine and the Sanjīvani Episode	Yuddha Kāṇḍa – Use of Mrta-sañjīvanī, Viśalyakaraṇī, Suvarṇakaraṇī, Saṃdhānakaraṇī; plant-based remedies in Aranya Kāṇḍa	Identify medicinal herbs and their applications; understand miraculous and therapeutic plants	Assignment: Create a chart of herbs mentioned and their Ayurvedic properties
4. Surgical and First Aid Practices	Śalyakarma (arrow removal), Lepa chikitsa (herbal application); battlefield medicine	Learn early surgical and first-aid practices; principles of wound care	Practical demonstration: Simulate herbal wound treatment using safe plants or materials
5. Daily Regimen and Preventive Health	Dinacharya, Sadvritta, hygiene, meditation, diet, exercise; forest lifestyle of Rama, Sita, Lakṣmaṇa	Apply preventive health concepts to daily life; understand lifestyle medicine	Activity: Design a daily health routine based on Ayurveda and Ramayana principles
6. Emotional and Mental Health	Tridosha balance, Sattva predominance, stress management; Rama's emotional regulation	Understand mental health management in epic context; relate to modern psychology	Case study: Roleplay scenarios of stress and emotional control inspired by Rama
7. Diet, Nutrition, and Satvika Ahara	Forest diet, plant-based nutrition, seasonal foods, balance of tastes and doshas	Learn principles of Satvika ahara; dietary discipline for health	Meal planning: Prepare a Satvika diet chart for a week

Module / Chapter	Topics Covered	Learning Outcomes	Practical / Assignments
8. Medical Wisdom in Governance	Rama Rajya as an early model of public health; sanitation, preventive medicine, longevity of citizens	Understand policy-level integration of health; link to modern public health	Project: Design a public health initiative inspired by Rama Rajya
9. Synthesis and Application	Integration of herbs, surgery, preventive measures, lifestyle, and governance; comparative study with modern Ayurveda	Demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of Ayurveda in epic context; propose modern adaptations	Capstone Project: Create a detailed report or presentation linking Ramayana Ayurveda to contemporary health practice

HEALTH, HEALING, AND AYURVEDA IN THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA

S.No	Theme / Context	Kāṇḍa & Sarga / Sloka	Description / Key Points	Ayurvedic Principle / Modern Relevance	Practical Takeaways
1	Concept of Health and Longevity	Bala Kāṇḍa	Maintain health and cure disease	<i>Swasthasya swasthya rakshanam, āturasya vikāra prashamanam ca</i>	Emphasize preventive health and holistic wellness
2	Medical Treatment of Lakshmana – Use of Herbs	Yuddha Kāṇḍa, Sarga 74, Sloka 33	Mr̥ta-sañjīvanī, Viśalyakaraṇī, Suvarṇakaraṇī, Samdhānakaraṇī revive Lakshmana	Herbal pharmacology, Rasāyana (rejuvenation therapy)	Use medicinal herbs for trauma, injury, and vitality
3	Surgical and First Aid Knowledge	Yuddha Kāṇḍa	Arrow extraction, wound examination, herbal ointments	Śalyakarma (surgery), Lepa chikitsa (herbal topical therapy)	Early first-aid techniques and wound care using herbs
4	Medical Experts & Healing in Ayodhya	Ayodhya Kāṇḍa	People enjoy good health and mental peace under Rama	Holistic health: physical, mental, social well-being	Promote wellness programs and preventive healthcare
5	Awareness of Herbs and Healing Plants	Aranya Kāṇḍa	Rama, Sita, Lakshmana gather fruits, roots, herbs	Dravyaguna Vijnana (herbal materia medica)	Knowledge of medicinal plants and plant-based nutrition
6	Preventive Health and Daily Regimen	Bala Kāṇḍa	Bathing, meditation, moderate diet, early rising	Dinacharya and Sadvritta	Daily routines for hygiene, mindfulness,

S.No	Theme / Context	Kāṇḍa & Sarga / Sloka	Description / Key Points	Ayurvedic Principle / Modern Relevance	Practical Takeaways
					and balanced lifestyle
7	Emotional and Mental Health	Ayodhya Kāṇḍa	Free from grief, anger, or greed	Sattva predominance, Tridosha balance	Stress management, emotional regulation, mental resilience
8	Diet and Nutrition	Aranya Kāṇḍa	Forest diet: roots, fruits, flowers, water	Satvika ahara, balanced nutrition	Plant-based, seasonal diet; digestive and metabolic balance
9	Medical Wisdom as State Policy	Uttara Kāṇḍa	Rama Rajya ensures healthcare, sanitation, preventive medicine	Public health principles, preventive and curative medicine	Model for modern public health: sanitation, accessibility, preventive care



Economics in Ramayana and IKS: Economic Thought in the Ramayana an Indian Knowledge Systems perspective



Roadmap for Implementing Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) relating to Economics Contribution by IKS Centre of National Sanskrit University, Tirupati in association with the Valmiki Research Centre on Ramayana, Ramanarayananam, Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh towards the 7th Edition of Bharatiya Vigyan Sammelan (BVS) 2025
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ECONOMICS IN RAMAYANA AND IKS
ECONOMIC THOUGHT IN THE RAMAYANA:
AN INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

ECONOMY OF DHARMA: RAMAYANA LESSONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
WEALTH, WELFARE & DHARMA: ECONOMIC INSIGHTS IN THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA

Introduction:

In the *Valmiki Rāmāyaṇa*, agriculture (Krishi) is not merely an economic activity but a fundamental pillar of societal prosperity and governance. The epic vividly describes the cultivation of staple crops such as rice (Sali), barley (Yava), wheat (Godhuma), and pulses (Mudga, Canaka, Masha), which provided food security and supported trade (Vanijya). These references underscore the importance of systematic crop management, seasonal planning, and resource utilization, reflecting the advanced agrarian knowledge of ancient India. The term *Varta* in the Ramayana encompasses agriculture, animal husbandry, and commerce, illustrating a holistic and integrated approach to economic activity that sustained both the kingdom and its people.

Kings like Dasharatha and Rama are portrayed as ethical rulers who recognized the critical role of agriculture in maintaining prosperity. Their duties included protecting fertile lands, ensuring adequate water supply through rivers, tanks, and irrigation systems, supporting farmers (Krishakas), and levying fair taxes on produce. Such narratives reveal that governance, economic management, and social welfare were interdependent, with the health of the agricultural sector directly influencing the kingdom's stability and wealth.

The relevance of these principles extends to modern times. Just as the Ramayana emphasizes sustainable land use, protection of water resources, and support for farmers, contemporary agricultural policy focuses on crop diversification, irrigation management, and farmer welfare programs. The epic's integration of ethical governance, economic planning, and agrarian productivity offers timeless lessons for balancing environmental sustainability, food security, and economic development, demonstrating that the foundations of modern agricultural economics were conceptually present in ancient Indian literature.

The Valmiki Ramayana, while primarily a spiritual and moral epic, offers profound insights into ancient Indian economic principles. These insights encompass agriculture, trade, taxation, and governance, reflecting a well-organized society. Below are key economic themes derived from the Ramayana, supported by relevant shlokas.

1. Agriculture as the Economic Backbone:

Agriculture (Krishi) was central to the economy, with references to various crops such as rice (Sali), barley (Yava), wheat (Godhuma), and pulses (Mudga, Canaka, Masha). The term "Varta," encompassing agriculture, cattle-breeding, and trade, signifies the national economy. The state ensured the welfare of husbandmen (Krishakas), as taxes on agricultural produce were a primary source of state revenue.

2. Trade and Commerce:

Trade (Vanijya) was vital for economic prosperity. The Ramayana acknowledges the role of merchants (Vanij) in generating wealth. The epic also highlights the

importance of fair pricing and the value of goods, indicating an understanding of market dynamics.

3. Taxation and State Revenue:

The state's revenue primarily stemmed from agricultural taxes. The Ramayana illustrates the importance of just taxation and the role of the state in ensuring the prosperity of its subjects. For instance, the Ayodhya Kanda discusses the king's duty to protect and provide for the people, indirectly emphasizing the role of state revenue in governance.

4. Governance and Economic Management:

Lord Rama's governance, often referred to as "Ramarajya," is depicted as ideal, characterized by justice, prosperity, and moral righteousness. The Ramayana emphasizes the importance of wise ministers, skilled in various arts, including economic management, to ensure the kingdom's welfare. For example, Sarga 100 of the Ayodhya Kanda advises on selecting ministers who are valiant, learned, and masters of their senses.

5. Ethical Wealth and Social Responsibility:

The Ramayana underscores the ethical acquisition and use of wealth. It teaches that true prosperity is achieved through righteousness (Dharma) and that wealth should be used for the welfare of society. The epic portrays characters who, despite their wealth, prioritize duty and moral conduct over material gains.

6. Economic Wisdom in Leadership:

The Ramayana illustrates the importance of economic wisdom in leadership. King Dasharatha's decision to send Rama into exile, though economically challenging, was based on upholding moral principles. This decision reflects the idea that economic considerations should align with ethical values.

7. Social Equality and Economic Opportunities:

The Ramayana promotes social equality, illustrating that individuals from all walks of life can contribute to the economy. The stories of Shabari offering berries to Lord Rama and Rama seeking help from a boatman emphasize that social status does not determine one's worth or ability to contribute to society.

These themes from the Valmiki Ramayana highlight a sophisticated understanding of economic principles intertwined with ethical and moral values, offering timeless lessons on governance, prosperity, and social responsibility.

1. AGRICULTURE AS THE ECONOMIC BACKBONE

Agriculture and the economic backbone in the Valmiki Ramayana with relevant sargas and context.

Context in the Valmiki Ramayana

Agriculture (Krishi) was considered the foundation of the economy in ancient India, and the Ramayana reflects this in multiple ways:

1. Mention of crops and produce:

- Crops like rice (Sali), barley (Yava), wheat (Godhuma), and pulses (Mudga, Canaka, Masha) are described as staples.
- Agriculture supported trade (Vanijya) and state revenue (taxes on produce).

2. Varta (Economic Activities):

- The term Varta in the Ramayana encompasses agriculture, animal husbandry, and trade, showing the integrated approach to the economy.

3. King's duty:

- Kings like Dasharatha and Rama are portrayed as ensuring the welfare of farmers (Krishakas) and protecting the land to maintain prosperity.
- Ethical governance includes protecting agriculture, ensuring water supply, and fair taxation.

Relevant Sargas and References

1. Bala Kanda- *Description of Agriculture and Land*

- Context: In the description of Ayodhya and Kosala, Valmiki mentions fertile lands, irrigated fields, and the prosperity of the kingdom due to productive agriculture.
- Key point: These sargas highlight the centrality of farming to the kingdom's wealth.
- Reference: Bala Kanda

2. Ayodhya Kanda- *Administration and Welfare of Subjects*

- Context: These sargas describe the king's ministers and their duties, which include ensuring the prosperity of farmers and proper taxation.
- Key point: Economic management is intertwined with moral governance.
- Reference: Ayodhya Kanda

3. Ayodhya Kanda- *Description of Prosperity in Ayodhya*

- Context: Valmiki describes how the kingdom flourishes because of fertile fields, abundant crops, and well-managed agriculture.
- Key point: These sargas illustrate that agriculture is the backbone of the economy.
- Reference: Ayodhya Kanda

4. Aranya Kanda- *Food and Forage in the Forest*

- Context: While in exile, Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana live off forest produce, showing reliance on natural agriculture and sustainable harvesting.
- Key point: Even in forests, the emphasis on vegetation, fruits, and grains shows the value of agriculture.
- Reference: Aranya Kanda

Summary of Economic Insight from Agriculture

- Agriculture is depicted as the primary source of wealth, supporting trade, taxes, and societal prosperity.
- The king and ministers are responsible for the welfare of farmers, showing early forms of economic governance.
- Varta, encompassing farming, cattle-rearing, and trade, highlights an integrated economic vision.
- Even in exile, food security and respect for agricultural produce are emphasized, showing its cultural and economic centrality.

2. TRADE AND COMMERCE

Trade and Commerce (Vanijya) in the Valmiki Ramayana, including relevant sargas and context.

Context in the Valmiki Ramayana

Trade and commerce were recognized as crucial for economic prosperity. The Ramayana mentions:

1. Merchants (Vanij):

- They were essential in distributing agricultural produce, handicrafts, and other goods, linking villages, towns, and kingdoms.
- Merchants were respected, and their honesty in trade was considered a moral and economic virtue.

2. Market Dynamics:

- The epic emphasizes fair pricing, weighing goods correctly, and ethical trade practices.
- Trade was integrated with agriculture (Krishi) and crafts (Shilpa), forming part of Varta, the overall economy.

3. Economic Governance:

- Kings ensured markets were well-organized, trade routes were safe, and merchants were protected.
- Prosperity of the kingdom depended on thriving commerce.

Relevant Sargas and References

1. Ayodhya Kanda, - *Commerce in the City*

- Context: Valmiki describes Ayodhya as a prosperous city with marketplaces full of goods and traders, indicating active trade networks.
- Key point: Merchants and markets contribute significantly to the city's wealth.
- Reference: Ayodhya Kanda

2. Ayodhya Kanda- *Administration and Trade Management*

- Context: Dasharatha's ministers ensure smooth functioning of markets and fair pricing, reflecting the state's role in commerce.
- Key point: Governance included regulation of trade, protection of merchants, and ensuring economic stability.
- Reference: Ayodhya Kanda

3. Aranya Kanda- *Trade Goods and Forest Produce*

- Context: When Rama and Lakshmana meet forest dwellers, there is mention of barter and exchange of goods, showing early trade practices.
- Key point: Trade is not only urban but also exists in rural/forest areas, emphasizing its importance in the economy.
- Reference: Aranya Kanda

4. Sundara Kanda- *Merchants in Lanka*

- Context: While describing Lanka under Ravana, Valmiki mentions thriving markets, merchant caravans, and goods from distant lands.
- Key point: The text highlights the importance of trade for urban prosperity and interregional commerce.
- Reference: Sundara Kanda

Summary of Economic Insight from Trade

- Trade (Vanijya) is vital for the wealth and prosperity of the kingdom.
- Merchants (Vanij) are respected and essential for moving goods and services.
- Ethical trade, fair pricing, and secure markets are important aspects of governance.
- Commerce in the Ramayana demonstrates an understanding of market dynamics and economic interdependence.

3. TAXATION AND STATE REVENUE

Taxation and State Revenue in the Valmiki Ramayana, with the relevant sargas and context.

Context in the Valmiki Ramayana

In ancient India, as reflected in the Ramayana:

1. Primary Source of Revenue:

- The state's income largely came from agricultural taxes, levied on crops, land, and livestock.

2. Just Taxation:

- Kings were expected to ensure fair taxation, protecting farmers (Krishakas) from exploitation while maintaining state revenue.

3. Role in Governance:

- Revenue was used for the welfare of the people, including maintenance of infrastructure, military, and administration.
- The king's duty to provide and protect the people (Raja-dharma) is emphasized, linking ethical governance with economic management.

Relevant References

1. Ayodhya Kanda- *Duties of Ministers and Economic Governance*

- Context: Dasharatha's ministers are described as learned in administration, agriculture, trade, and taxation.
- Key point: The king's economic policy focuses on the welfare of farmers, just collection of taxes, and prosperity of the kingdom.
- Reference: Ayodhya Kanda

2. Ayodhya Kanda- *Description of Ayodhya's Prosperity*

- Context: Valmiki describes Ayodhya as a fertile and prosperous kingdom, with well-managed agricultural production contributing to the king's revenue.
- Key point: Prosperity is maintained through good governance, fair taxation, and protection of agriculture.
- Reference: Ayodhya Kanda

3. Bala Kanda- *Economic Activities (Varta)*

- Context: Varta includes agriculture, trade, and cattle-rearing. Taxes from these activities support the kingdom.
- Key point: The sarga highlights the integration of economic sectors and the state's role in ensuring productivity and revenue.
- Reference: Bala Kanda

4. Ayodhya Kanda- *Dasharatha's Governance and Ethical Dilemmas*

- Context: Even in crisis (Rama's exile), Dasharatha considers the welfare of the kingdom, showing that ethical decision-making impacts economic stability.
- Key point: Economic management is linked to morality and dharma; just governance ensures sustainable revenue.
- Reference: Ayodhya Kanda

Summary of Economic Insight from Taxation

- Revenue Sources: Primarily agriculture, supplemented by trade and other Varta activities.
- Fair Taxation: Kings and ministers ensure farmers are not exploited, maintaining both justice and prosperity.
- Economic Governance: Ethical rulership ensures wealth creation, social stability, and long-term prosperity.
- Integration of Dharma and Economics: Economic decisions are inseparable from moral responsibility.

4. GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT

Governance and Economic Management in the Valmiki Ramayana, focusing on Rama's rule (Ramarajya) and the relevant sargas.

Context in the Valmiki Ramayana

1. Ideal Governance (Ramarajya):

- Rama's kingdom is described as the model of justice, prosperity, and moral righteousness.
- The welfare of the people, ethical governance, and economic stability are central themes.

2. Role of Ministers:

- Ministers are expected to be wise, valiant, learned, and skilled in various arts, including administration, trade, agriculture, and taxation.
- Their role is crucial in ensuring smooth governance, economic prosperity, and social order.

3. Economic Management:

- The prosperity of Rama's rule depends on fair taxation, protection of agriculture, promotion of trade, and the wise use of resources.
- Ethics and dharma guide economic decisions, reflecting the integration of morality and governance.

Relevant References

1. Ayodhya Kanda- *Selection and Duties of Ministers*

- Context: King Dasharatha instructs his ministers on the qualities required for good governance. Ministers should be valiant, wise, morally upright, and skilled in economic management.
- Key point: The kingdom's prosperity depends on the competence and virtue of ministers.
- Reference: Ayodhya Kanda

2. Ayodhya Kanda- *Prosperity of Ayodhya*

- Context: Valmiki describes Ayodhya as a flourishing kingdom with fertile lands, active trade, and content citizens, emphasizing that economic management and ethical governance are intertwined.
- Reference: Ayodhya Kanda

3. Ayodhya Kanda- *Dasharatha's Ethical Governance*

- Context: Even in the crisis of Rama's exile, Dasharatha prioritizes dharma over temporary economic or political convenience, showing that long-term governance relies on moral and economic wisdom.
- Reference: Ayodhya Kanda

4. Bala Kanda- *Administration of Resources*

- Context: Descriptions of Ayodhya's administration, including irrigation, agriculture, trade, and resource management.
- Key point: The king ensures economic stability and prosperity through wise planning and resource management.
- Reference: Bala Kanda

Summary of Economic Insight from Governance

- Ramarajya: An ideal model of ethical, just, and prosperous governance.
- Ministers' Role: Skilled in administration, trade, taxation, and moral wisdom to ensure economic and social welfare.
- Integration of Dharma and Economics: Economic decisions are guided by ethical principles to sustain long-term prosperity.
- Resource Management: Agriculture, trade, taxation, and public welfare are managed carefully for societal stability.

5. ETHICAL WEALTH AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Ethical Wealth and Social Responsibility in the Valmiki Ramayana, highlighting relevant sargas and context.

Context in the Valmiki Ramayana

1. Ethical Acquisition of Wealth (Artha):

- Wealth is considered valuable only when acquired through dharma (righteous means), not through exploitation, deceit, or violence.
- Kings, merchants, and citizens alike are expected to follow ethical principles in earning and using wealth.

2. Use of Wealth for Social Welfare (Lokasangraha):

- Prosperity is measured not merely by personal accumulation but by contribution to the welfare of society, including the poor, scholars, and priests.
- The king is a trustee of public wealth, using it for infrastructure, festivals, charity, and protection of subjects.

3. Prioritizing Duty over Material Gains:

- Rama, Dasharatha, and other characters demonstrate that duty and moral conduct take precedence over personal or material gain.
- Even in exile, Rama and Sita live simply, showing that wealth should not dictate ethical behaviour.

Relevant Sargas and References

1. Ayodhya Kanda: *Dasharatha's Ethical Governance and Wealth*

- Context: Dasharatha gives in to Kaikeyi's boons despite the economic and personal loss, prioritizing righteousness and moral duty over material gain.
- Key point: Ethical principles guide economic decisions; wealth is subordinate to dharma.
- Reference: Ayodhya Kanda

2. Ayodhya Kanda: *Duties of Ministers and Ethical Management of Resources*

- Context: Ministers are advised to use the kingdom's resources wisely for public welfare and prosperity, not personal enrichment.
- Key point: Governance and wealth management must align with ethics and social responsibility.
- Reference: Ayodhya Kanda

3. Aranya Kanda: *Rama's Simple Life in Exile*

- Context: Rama and Sita rely on forest produce, living modestly, emphasizing detachment from material wealth while fulfilling duty.
- Key point: Ethical living is not about accumulation but responsible use and self-discipline.
- Reference: Aranya Kanda

4. Sundara Kanda: *Charity and Welfare in Lanka*

- Context: Descriptions of wealth, trade, and generosity in Lanka, contrasting ethical versus unethical use of wealth (Ravana's hoarding versus Rama's dharmic use).
- Key point: The epic highlights social responsibility as an essential aspect of wealth.
- Reference: Sundara Kanda

Summary of Economic Insight

- Ethical Wealth: True prosperity arises from dharmic means of earning.
- Social Responsibility: Wealth must be used for the welfare of society, including infrastructure, charity, and justice.
- Prioritizing Dharma: Even kings and wealthy individuals prioritize duty and morality over personal gain.
- Practical Example: Rama's life in exile exemplifies ethical detachment and responsible use of resources.

6. ECONOMIC WISDOM IN LEADERSHIP

The relevant sargas and context in the Valmiki Ramayana regarding economic wisdom in leadership, specifically King Dasharatha's decision to send Rama into exile.

Context in the Valmiki Ramayana:

King Dasharatha, the ruler of Ayodhya, had planned to crown his eldest son, Rama, as the next king. This decision was based on Rama's qualities of virtue, skill, and dharma (righteousness). However, due to Kaikeyi's boons (given to her by Dasharatha earlier for her service), she demanded that her son Bharata be made king and Rama be exiled to the forest for 14 years.

This created a profound ethical and economic dilemma:

- Economic challenge: Sending the heir-apparent into exile could destabilize the kingdom, affect administrative continuity, and reduce prosperity temporarily.
- Ethical imperative: Upholding promises (to Kaikeyi) and dharma was paramount. Dasharatha chose ethical principles over immediate material or political gain.

Relevant Sargas in the Valmiki Ramayana

1. Ayodhya Kanda: *Kaikeyi's Boons*

- Context: Kaikeyi reminds Dasharatha of the two boons he promised her. She demands Rama's exile and Bharata's coronation.
- Key point: This is the root cause of the ethical-economic dilemma. Dasharatha is torn between moral duty and the kingdom's welfare.
- Reference: Ayodhya Kanda

2. Ayodhya Kanda: *Dasharatha's Grief and Decision*

- Context: Dasharatha struggles with his duty as a king and as a father. He recognizes the economic and administrative consequences but decides to honour his promise.
- Slokas describing his grief, the agony of parting from Rama, and recognition of dharma are critical.
- Reference: Ayodhya Kanda

3. Ayodhya Kanda: *Rama Accepts Exile*

- Context: Rama voluntarily accepts exile, upholding dharma and relieving Dasharatha of moral conflict.
- The leadership lesson: True leaders prioritize ethical values even at the cost of economic or political convenience.
- Reference: Ayodhya Kanda

4. Ayodhya Kanda: *Impact on Governance*

- Context: Dasharatha's sorrow affects the kingdom. Bharata refuses to rule in Rama's place, showing that ethical governance is intertwined with economic and social stability.
- Key lesson: Economic wisdom is not just wealth management; it is making decisions that ensure long-term prosperity while honouring dharma.
- Reference: Ayodhya Kanda

Summary of Economic Leadership Insight

- Ethical leadership: A king's economic decisions must align with dharma.
- Long-term vision: Immediate economic disruption is secondary to sustaining moral and social order.
- Delegated governance: Bharata manages the kingdom temporarily with a token (Rama's sandals), reflecting strategic economic continuity while respecting dharma.

7. SOCIAL EQUALITY AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Social Equality and Economic Opportunities in the Valmiki Ramayana, with relevant sargas and context.

Context in the Valmiki Ramayana

1. Social Equality:

- The Ramayana emphasizes that all individuals, regardless of social status, can contribute meaningfully to society and the economy.
- Moral worth and skill, rather than birth or caste, determine one's value in service to society.

2. Economic Opportunities:

- People from all walks of life - farmers, forest dwellers, boatmen, and ascetics play essential roles in sustaining the economy and community welfare.
- This reflects an understanding of inclusive economic participation.

3. Examples from the Epic:

- Shabari: An elderly tribal woman who offers tasted berries to Rama. Though of humble origin, her devotion and service have immense spiritual and moral value.
- Boatman (Guha): A Nishada chieftain who helps Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana cross the Ganga, showing that even marginalized communities participate actively in economic and social life.

Relevant Sargas and References

1. Aranya Kanda: *Meeting Shabari*

- Context: Rama meets Shabari, who, despite her low social status, demonstrates devotion and generosity by offering food.
- Key point: Social status does not limit the ability to contribute to welfare and service.
- Reference: Aranya Kanda

2. Aranya Kanda: *Meeting Guha, the Boatman*

- Context: Guha helps Rama and his companions cross the river, showing active participation of all societal groups in community affairs.
- Key point: Marginalized groups are integral to the functioning of society and the economy.
- Reference: Aranya Kanda,

3. Aranya Kanda: *Food and Exchange in the Forest*

- Context: Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana survive on forest produce, interacting with local dwellers and reflecting economic cooperation across social strata.
- Key point: Contributions from various social groups sustain the community, emphasizing inclusivity.
- Reference: Aranya Kanda

Summary of Economic Insight

- Inclusivity in Society: Economic and social contributions are valued from all societal levels.
- Service and Merit over Status: Devotion, skill, and willingness to serve outweigh social hierarchy.
- Practical Examples: Shabari's berries and Guha's help illustrate moral and economic participation from marginalized individuals.
- Broader Implication: The Ramayana promotes an inclusive economy and society, ensuring social equality and opportunities for all.

Theme	Context / Description	Relevant Sargas	Key Insights
1. Agriculture as Economic Backbone	Agriculture (Krishi) was the foundation of economy; staple crops include rice, barley, wheat, pulses. Varta included agriculture, animal husbandry, trade. Kings ensured farmer welfare and land protection.	Bala Kanda, Ayodhya Kanda, Aranya Kanda	Agriculture supports trade, taxation, and societal prosperity. Kingship involves protecting land and promoting production. Even in exile, respect for agricultural produce is emphasized.
2. Trade and Commerce (Vanijya)	Merchants (Vanij) distribute goods, ensure ethical trade, markets organized; commerce integrated with agriculture and crafts.	Ayodhya Kanda, Aranya Kanda, Sundara Kanda	Trade is essential for wealth; merchants respected; ethical trade and safe markets are vital; trade networks link regions.
3. Taxation and State Revenue	Revenue mainly from agricultural taxes; just taxation protects farmers; revenue used for welfare, infrastructure, military, administration.	Bala Kanda, Ayodhya Kanda	Fair taxation maintains justice and prosperity; integration of dharma and economics; sustainable revenue depends on ethical governance.

Theme	Context / Description	Relevant Sargas	Key Insights
4. Governance and Economic Management	Ramarajya as ideal governance; ministers skilled in administration, trade, agriculture, taxation; ethical governance central to economic stability.	Ayodhya Kanda, Bala Kanda	Ethical, just governance ensures prosperity; ministers' competence critical; resource management aligned with societal welfare.
5. Ethical Wealth and Social Responsibility	Wealth valuable only if acquired righteously; used for society's welfare; duty prioritized over personal gain; Rama and others live simply even in exile.	Ayodhya Kanda, Aranya Kanda, Sundara Kanda	Ethical acquisition ensures sustainable prosperity; wealth must be used for infrastructure, charity, and protection of subjects; dharma supersedes personal gain.
6. Economic Wisdom in Leadership	Dasharatha's dilemma in sending Rama to exile: balancing ethics (dharma) vs. economic stability; Rama's voluntary acceptance highlights moral leadership.	Ayodhya Kanda	Economic decisions must align with dharma; short-term disruptions secondary to long-term moral and social order; delegation ensures continuity.
7. Social Equality and Economic Opportunities	All individuals contribute to society and economy; skill and merit valued over status; marginalized communities actively participate.	Aranya Kanda	Inclusivity in society and economy; service and merit over hierarchy; practical examples: Shabari, Guha; emphasizes equal opportunity and participation.

ANCIENT ECONOMIC WISDOM IN THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA AND ITS MODERN RELEVANCE

Chart Structure:

Center Circle: *Valmiki Rāmāyaṇa - Economic Principles*

7 Surrounding Nodes (Themes), each with a brief modern relevance:

1. Agriculture as Economic Backbone

- *Modern Link:* Sustainable agriculture, food security, rural development, GDP contribution from agriculture.

2. Trade and Commerce (Vanijya)

- *Modern Link:* Market regulation, supply chains, ethical trade practices, domestic & international trade policies.

3. Taxation and State Revenue

- *Modern Link:* Fair taxation systems, fiscal policy, revenue allocation for public welfare, progressive taxation.

4. Governance and Economic Management

- *Modern Link:* Public administration, good governance, resource management, integrated policy-making.

5. Ethical Wealth and Social Responsibility

- *Modern Link:* Corporate social responsibility (CSR), ethical investing, wealth distribution, social entrepreneurship.

6. Economic Wisdom in Leadership

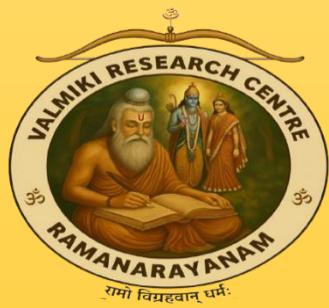
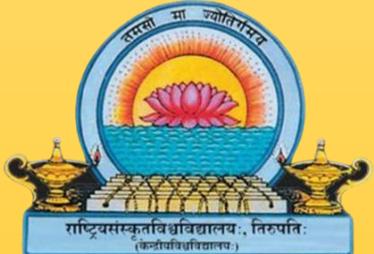
- *Modern Link:* Strategic decision-making, balancing ethics and economics, sustainable leadership, crisis management.

7. Social Equality and Economic Opportunities

- *Modern Link:* Inclusive economic policies, empowerment of marginalized communities, equal opportunity employment, social mobility.

Visual Flow:

- Central circle representing *Ramayana's economic vision*.
- Lines radiating outward to 7 nodes (themes).
- Each node splits into two sub-points: *Epic Example + Modern Relevance*.
- Optionally, color-code: green for agriculture, blue for trade, gold for wealth/ethics, red for governance/leadership, purple for social equality.



Political Thought in the Valmiki Ramayana: An Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) perspective



Roadmap for Implementing Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) relating to Political Science: Contribution by IKS Centre of National Sanskrit University, Tirupati in association with the Valmiki Research Centre on Ramayana, Ramanarayananam, Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh towards the 7th Edition of Bharatiya Vigyan Sammelan (BVS) 2025 (26 –29 December 2025)



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Prof. H. Lajipathi Rai
(Former Vice-Chancellor)
Director Valmiki Research Centre

VALMIKI RAMAYANA RELATED POLITICAL SCIENCE AND IKS
POLITICAL THOUGHT IN THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA: AN INDIAN KNOWLEDGE
SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE
STATECRAFT AND GOVERNANCE IN THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA: INSIGHTS FROM IKS
RAMAYANA RULES: ANCIENT POLITICAL SCIENCE FOR THE MODERN WORLD
DHARMA-BASED GOVERNANCE: POLITICAL INSIGHTS FROM THE VALMIKI
RAMAYANA

Introduction:

The *Valmiki Rāmāyaṇa* is not only a spiritual and literary epic but also a profound repository of political wisdom. Through its narratives, it presents enduring questions of governance, leadership, and statecraft, illustrating how rulers balance ethical duties with practical responsibilities. Central to this is the concept of kingship, where Rama embodies the ideal Rājarshi a king guided by dharma, justice, and selfless service. The epic emphasizes that political authority is inseparable from moral responsibility, a notion that parallels modern principles of constitutional morality, where leaders are bound by law, accountable to the public, and obliged to prioritize the welfare of citizens over personal interests. Rama's choices, such as accepting exile to honor Kaikeyi's boons or responding to public sentiment regarding Sita, reflect the tension between ethical imperatives and practical governance a dilemma that resonates with contemporary public administration where decisions must balance legality, ethics, and public trust.

The Ramayana also provides early insights into institutional governance and administrative structures. Descriptions of councils, ministers, city administrators, and judicial authorities in Ayodhya reveal an organized bureaucratic system where responsibilities are delegated and checks and balances are maintained. Similarly, modern public administration relies on structured institutions, separation of powers, and professional civil services to ensure efficient governance, policy implementation, and accountability. Furthermore, the epic underscores the role of social contracts, where the ruler's legitimacy is derived from ensuring the welfare, security, and prosperity of the people. This idea mirrors modern welfare-oriented governance, where public policy aims to provide social security, health, education, and justice to all citizens.

Additionally, the *Rāmāyaṇa* engages with strategic diplomacy, ethical warfare, political integration, and gendered dimensions of power issues still central to contemporary governance. Alliances with vanaras and other communities demonstrate early practices of coalition-building and inclusive governance, akin to

federalism and pluralistic policy-making in modern states. Rama's conduct in war and diplomacy reflects just war theory, proportionality, and restraint, which inform modern international law and ethical defense practices. Even the roles of women such as Kaikeyi, Sita, and Mandodari highlight the importance of gendered perspectives in leadership, echoing current debates on women's participation in politics and decision-making. In this way, the epic serves as a timeless guide, linking ancient political philosophy to contemporary public administration and ethical governance.

Valmiki Ramayana, though primarily an epic, is deeply political in its depiction of governance, justice, statecraft, and social order. Many themes from it can be examined through the lens of political science particularly in areas such as political philosophy, kingship, ethics of governance, and public administration.

MAJOR POLITICAL SCIENCE ISSUES RELATED TO THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA, ORGANIZED BY THEME:

1. Concept of Kingship and Ideal Rulership

Issue: What is the ideal role of a ruler in ensuring justice, welfare, and dharma?

- Example: Rama as *Rājarṣi* (saintly king) embodies *Dharma Rājya* rule based on righteousness, fairness, and self-sacrifice.
- Political Science Relevance: Early concept of *constitutional morality* the ruler is bound by law (*dharma*) and not above it.
- Debate: Should moral virtue or practical governance take precedence in political leadership?

2. Rule of Law and Accountability

Issue: Can a ruler act against personal interest to uphold the law and public trust?

- Example: Rama's exile due to Kaikeyi's boon showing *Rule of Law* over personal preference.
- Political Relevance: The tension between personal ethics and public duty similar to constitutional obligations in modern states.

3. Public Opinion and Democratic Sensitivity

Issue: How should a ruler respond to the voice of the people?

- Example: Rama's decision to abandon Sita due to public gossip (*janavāda*).
- Political Relevance: Early reflection of democratic accountability, where a leader's legitimacy depends on public trust.
- Contemporary Debate: Should governance prioritize moral truth or popular perception?

4. Statecraft and Political Diplomacy

Issue: What political strategies and diplomatic methods are used in inter-state relations?

- Example: Hanuman's diplomatic mission to Lanka; Rama's alliance with Sugriva; Vibheeshana's defection.
- Political Relevance: Insights into foreign policy, alliance-building, intelligence, and war ethics.
- Parallel: Early form of *realpolitik* tempered by ethical considerations.

5. Justice, Dharma, and Political Ethics

Issue: How do ethical principles guide political decisions?

- Example: Rama's treatment of Ravana's body with respect after battle honouring the enemy as a fallen king.
- Political Relevance: Foundation for ethical warfare and human rights, restraint in victory.
- Modern Connection: Geneva Conventions and ethical warfare principles.

6. Institutional Framework and Administrative Structure

Issue: How was governance organized and administered in Ayodhya?

- Example: Presence of councils of ministers, city administrators, judges, and spies described in *Ayodhya Kanda*.
- Political Relevance: Proto-model of bureaucratic governance and separation of powers.
- Modern Parallel: Early principles of public administration and bureaucratic accountability.

7. Social Contract and Welfare State

Issue: What is the relationship between ruler and subjects?

- Example: *Rāmarājya* where citizens are happy, law-abiding, and prosperous under a just ruler.
- Political Relevance: The *social contract* ideal ruler's legitimacy arises from people's welfare.
- Modern Connection: Conceptual precursor to Gandhian Ramarajya a just, self-reliant, moral polity.

8. Gender and Political Power

Issue: Role of women in political decisions and moral governance.

- Example: Kaikeyi's political manipulation; Sita's trials; Mandodari's counsel to Ravana.
- Political Relevance: Gendered perspectives in political authority and moral decision-making.
- Modern Question: Ethical limits of political ambition versus justice and compassion.

9. Ethics of War and Peace

Issue: Justification of war and conduct during conflict.

- Example: Rama's war against Ravana justified as *dharma-yuddha* (righteous war).
- Political Relevance: Ancient framework for just war theory, proportionality, and legitimacy of violence.
- Modern Analogy: UN principles on ethical warfare and national defence.

10. Political Integration and Nation-Building

Issue: How can diverse peoples and regions be united under a moral order?

- Example: Rama's alliances with vanaras, rakshasas, and humans uniting different groups for a moral cause.
- Political Relevance: Symbolic of national integration and inclusive governance.
- Modern Parallel: Federalism and pluralism in Indian polity.

PROPOSED DIPLOMA SYLLABUS: RAMAYANA IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Duration: 6-8 months

Mode: Distance/Blended learning

Eligibility: Graduate or equivalent

Module Structure:

1. Introduction to the Ramayana and Political Philosophy
 - Overview of the epic
 - Concept of dharma, kingship, and societal order
2. Concept of Kingship and Ideal Rulership
 - Rājarṣi concept
 - Ethical vs pragmatic leadership
 - Case study: Rama as an ideal king
3. Rule of Law and Accountability
 - Exile of Rama as example of law over personal interest
 - Contemporary parallels in constitutional law
4. Public Opinion and Democratic Sensitivity
 - Janavāda and responsiveness to public sentiment
 - Ethical dilemmas: Popular perception vs moral truth
5. Statecraft, Diplomacy, and Foreign Relations
 - Alliances, intelligence, and ethical diplomacy
 - Comparative study with modern international relations
6. Justice, Ethics, and Governance
 - Treatment of defeated enemies

- Principles of just war, proportionality, and ethical decision-making

7. Administrative Structures and Bureaucracy

- Councils, ministers, judges, and spies
- Comparison with modern public administration frameworks

8. Economic Governance and Social Welfare

- Ramarajya as a model of welfare state
- Resource management, taxation, and public service

9. Gender, Political Power, and Ethics

- Role of women in governance and moral decision-making
- Modern lessons on gender and leadership

10. Political Integration, Nation-Building, and Social Equality

- Alliances across communities
- Inclusive governance and pluralism

11. Ethical Leadership and Crisis Management

- Dasharatha's dilemmas and Rama's exile
- Decision-making under moral and economic pressures

12. Capstone Project

- Case study analysis of Ramayana-based political scenarios
- Policy paper connecting epic lessons with modern administration

POLITICAL SCIENCE AND GOVERNANCE LESSONS FROM THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA

Module No.	Module Title	Relevant Sargas / Episodes	Key Slokas / References	Modern Political Science Relevance
1	Introduction to the Ramayana and Political Philosophy	Bala Kanda, Ayodhya Kanda	General descriptions of Ayodhya, Rama's birth, and early life	Understanding dharma, ethics, and moral foundations of governance
2	Concept of Kingship and Ideal Rulership	Ayodhya Kanda	Rama as Rājarsi; ethical rulership	Ethical leadership, servant leadership, constitutional morality
3	Rule of Law and Accountability	Ayodhya Kanda	Rama's exile due to Kaikeyi's boon	Rule of law, personal sacrifice vs public duty, accountability
4	Public Opinion and Democratic Sensitivity	Ayodhya Kanda	Abandonment of Sita due to janavāda (public opinion)	Early concept of democratic accountability, balancing moral truth and public perception

Module No.	Module Title	Relevant Sargas / Episodes	Key Slokas / References	Modern Political Science Relevance
5	Statecraft, Diplomacy, and Foreign Relations	Sundara Kanda, Yuddha Kanda	Hanuman's Lanka mission, alliance with Sugriva, Vibheeshana's defection	Diplomatic strategy, alliance-building, ethical foreign policy
6	Justice, Ethics, and Governance	Yuddha Kanda	Respecting Ravana's body; war ethics	Just war theory, proportionality, human rights, ethical conflict management
7	Administrative Structures and Bureaucracy	Ayodhya Kanda, Bala Kanda	Councils of ministers, city administrators, spies	Bureaucracy, separation of powers, administrative accountability
8	Economic Governance and Social Welfare	Bala Kanda, Ayodhya Kanda, Aranya Kanda	Ramarajya, taxation, trade, agriculture	Welfare state principles, resource management, ethical economic governance
9	Gender, Political Power, and Ethics	Ayodhya Kanda, Aranya Kanda, Sundara Kanda	Kaikeyi, Sita, Mandodari's counsel	Gendered leadership, ethics in decision-making, limits of political ambition
10	Political Integration, Nation-Building, and Social Equality	Aranya Kanda, Yuddha Kanda	Alliances with vanaras, rakshasas, humans; Shabari & Guha	Inclusive governance, social equality, federalism and pluralism
11	Ethical Leadership and Crisis Management	Ayodhya Kanda	Dasharatha's dilemmas, Rama's exile	Leadership under ethical and economic dilemmas, long-term vision, crisis governance
12	Capstone Project	All Kandas	Selected sargas for case study analysis	Applied policy paper connecting epic lessons with modern public administration

POLITICAL SCIENCE AND GOVERNANCE IN THE VALMIKI RAMAYANA: A DIPLOMA COURSE IN ETHICAL LEADERSHIP, STATECRAFT, AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Theme	Political Science Issue	Epic Example	Political Relevance / Modern Parallel	Debate / Contemporary Question
1. Concept of Kingship and Ideal Rulership	What is the ideal role of a ruler in ensuring justice, welfare, and dharma?	Rama as Rājarsi, embodying Dharma Rājya based on righteousness, fairness, and self-sacrifice	Early concept of constitutional morality: the ruler is bound by dharma and not above it	Should moral virtue or practical governance take precedence in political leadership?
2. Rule of Law and Accountability	Can a ruler act against personal interest to uphold the law and public trust?	Rama's exile due to Kaikeyi's boon	Tension between personal ethics and public duty, similar to constitutional obligations in modern states	How to balance personal preference with public duty?
3. Public Opinion and Democratic Sensitivity	How should a ruler respond to the voice of the people?	Rama's decision to abandon Sita due to public gossip (janavāda)	Early reflection of democratic accountability, where legitimacy depends on public trust	Should governance prioritize moral truth or popular perception?
4. Statecraft and Political Diplomacy	What political strategies and diplomatic methods are used in inter-state relations?	Hanuman's mission to Lanka; alliances with Sugriva; Vibheeshana's defection	Insights into foreign policy, alliance-building, intelligence, and war ethics	Ethical constraints versus pragmatic diplomacy
5. Justice, Dharma, and Political Ethics	How do ethical principles guide political decisions?	Rama treats Ravana's body with respect after battle	Foundation for ethical warfare, human rights, and restraint in victory	How to maintain ethics in high-stakes conflict?

Theme	Political Science Issue	Epic Example	Political Relevance / Modern Parallel	Debate / Contemporary Question
6. Institutional Framework and Administrative Structure	How was governance organized and administered in Ayodhya?	Councils of ministers, city administrators, judges, and spies	Proto-model of bureaucratic governance, separation of powers	Modern relevance: public administration and accountability
7. Social Contract and Welfare State	What is the relationship between ruler and subjects?	Rāmarājya: citizens are happy, law-abiding, and prosperous under a just ruler	Social contract ideal: ruler's legitimacy arises from people's welfare	How to implement ethical governance in diverse societies?
8. Gender and Political Power	Role of women in political decisions and moral governance	Kaikeyi's manipulation; Sita's trials; Mandodari's counsel	Gendered perspectives in political authority and moral decision-making	Ethical limits of political ambition versus justice and compassion
9. Ethics of War and Peace	Justification of war and conduct during conflict	Rama's war against Ravana (dharma-yuddha)	Ancient framework for just war, proportionality, legitimacy of violence	Modern analogy: UN principles on ethical warfare and national defence
10. Political Integration and Nation-Building	How can diverse peoples and regions be united under a moral order?	Alliances with vanaras, rakshasas, and humans	Symbolic of national integration and inclusive governance	Modern relevance: federalism and pluralism in Indian polity

Suggested Research Topics

Here are specific political science research topics drawn from the Valmiki Ramayana:

1. *Dharma and Political Legitimacy: A Study of Rama's Governance.*
2. *Rāmarājya as an Archetype of Ethical Governance in Indian Political Thought.*
3. *The Role of Public Opinion in Monarchical Decision-Making: A Case Study of Sita's Exile.*
4. *Diplomacy and Realpolitik in the Ramayana: Lessons for Modern International Relations.*
5. *Comparative Study of Kautilya's Arthashastra and Valmiki Ramayana in Statecraft and Ethics.*

The study of the Valmiki Ramayana through the lens of political science, governance, and public administration reveals that this ancient epic is not merely a narrative of dharma and heroism but also a profound repository of political thought, ethical leadership, and statecraft. Through the lives and decisions of Rama, Dasharatha, and other key figures, the text demonstrates the integration of morality, law, welfare, and strategic governance, emphasizing that political authority is inseparable from ethical responsibility. Lessons from Rāmarājya, the rule of law, social contract, diplomatic alliances, and inclusive economic and social policies resonate strongly with modern principles of public administration, leadership accountability, and nation-building. By bridging ancient wisdom with contemporary governance models, the Ramayana offers timeless insights into the creation of just, prosperous, and ethically grounded societies, providing both theoretical and practical frameworks for students of political science, administration, and leadership.
