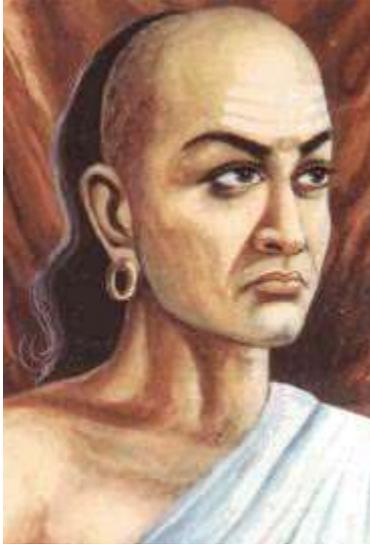


Module Detail

Subject Name	Political Science
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Module Name/Title	Political thought in Arthashastra : Kautilya
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Objectives	To study the political ideology of Kautilya and its significance.
Keywords	Kautilya, Politics, Arthashastra, War, Diplomacy, Mandala theory, State, War, Peace, Dharama, Anarchy

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Kautilya



“for in the absence of a magistrate (dandadharabhave), the strong will swallow the weak; but under his protection, the weak resist the strong.”#

SYNOPSIS

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

THEORY OF STATE

SUMMARY

REFERENCES

SELF ASSESMENT

Abstract:

Kautilya was the Prime Minister during the regime of Mauryan Dynasty and establishment of the Empire owes to this eminent political thinker. He had written his

political thoughts and his ideology in his book Arthashastra during 3rd-2nd century B.C. The principles enshrined in Arthashastra were followed not only in ancient India but are significant in the present scenario also. It is essentially a classic work on administrative theory and practice. In his political and administrative ideas, the focus of attention was the king. The powers of the king are justified because they lead to the good of state. To ensure rightful exercise of power by the king, Kautilya gives elaborate instruction. Kautilya used power as a tool to control his society as well as his enemies. He also believed that it is the king's duty to seek material gain, spiritual good and pleasures. Kautilya thinks that for a king to attain these three goals, he must create wealth, have army and should conquer the kingdoms to enlarge the size of his state by strategically not by war. Kautilya proclaimed that Politics was the supreme Science and supreme Art. Kautilya was a realist than a theorist. In this Module, I have discussed elaborately Kautilya as a political thinker.

Key words: Kautilya, Politics, Arthashastra, War, Diplomacy, Mandala theory, State, War, Peace, Dharama, Anarchy

Objective of the Study: To study the political ideology of Kautilya and its significance.

INTRODUCTION

Kautilya belonged to the Magadh State, which corresponds to present day South Bihar. Magadh was then the biggest state in India. Kautilya studied at one of the world's oldest universities, Takshasila University. He joined Chandragupta Maurya's empire, after a brief stint with the previous Nanda Dynasty.¹ The study of ancient Indian political thought is considered incomplete without the knowledge of Arthashastra written by Kautilya. He made politics a scientific study in ancient India, and attempted to test the political ideas on scientific lines with empirical orientation. Kautilya, in fact, left no single political aspect in his world famous treatise. He adopted the most pragmatic and analytical methodology in Arthashastra. Kautilya's Arthashastra is considered the most scientific work on the ancient Indian polity and an encyclopaedia of practical administration.² He understood politics essentially in administrative terms, of good and bad administration, recognizing the former is

¹ <http://anujamisra.blogspot.in/2010/01/kautilyas-arthashastra.html>

² <http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/political-science/life-of-kautilya-and-arthashastra/40144/>

necessary to the foundation and maintenance of a good state. A good king is necessary in order to ensure individual security and social stability.

In the period between 321 and 185BC we can detect the culminating points of the tendencies towards orderly speculations on Politics. The Mahabharata has indentified the state as something different from both the prince and the populace. Now, the complete autonomy has become the chief focus of political thought. The idea of Dharmasastra for the time being has receded into the background. Its place was taken up by the Arthasastra tradition which was more pragmatic in outlook. It is true that colours and shades of this tradition are also found in the earlier thought. It would be sheer intellectual contortion to prove that the Ramayana or the Mahabharata belonged purely to the Dharmasastra tradition; both were equally concerned with the preservation and development of the kingdom by whatever means the king thought expedient. The same could conversely be said of the Arthasastra tradition.

At the time when Kautilya was living, India consisted of a number of small states which were constantly at war with each other. There was very little peace within the states either. Intrigues and Murders were quite common. The place which Vyasa had so much yearned for in the Shantiparna was nowhere in sight. It was the time of Alexander's invasion in north-west India and in contrast to the authoritarian rule he established, there was much disunity. Undoubtedly, in the field of Literature, Art and Philosophy there was much sophistication but since the Political Centre in India was weak, there was very little Political Organization. Alexander's invasion might have provided some rethinking.

It atleast produced one great political thinker, Kautilya, who has not been superseded in depth of thought and breadth of vision by any subsequent political thinker in India. Kautilya is credited with being the founder of the Arthasastra tradition as distinguished from the Nitisastra tradition. He was the first to make political economy an independent discipline; while playing lip service to ideal of right, he propounded a theory of Politics which dealt with the immediate practical concerns of polity. He was known for his exceptional, frank and candid ideas.

Kautilya, also recognized as Vishnugupta and Chanakya, is traditionally credited as the author of the text.

Arthasastra entails the Science (Sastra) of wealth/ earth/ polity (Artha). 'Artha', however is bit wider and as all embraced term with different meanings. In 'Arthsastra' itself, it is being used in various contexts, indicated by LN Rangarajan in his translation of Kautilya-Arthasastra. It is used in the sense of material well being, in livelihood, economically

productive activity trade etc. This is alike with 'wealth' which is defined in 'Wealth of Nation' by Adam Smith.

In simple ways, Arthasastra' can be explained as 'Science and art of Politics and Diplomacy'. This treatise is divided into fifteen books dealing with virtually every topic concerned with the running of a State, Taxation, Law, Diplomacy, Military Strategy, Economics, Bureaucracy etc. The book is a Masterwork which includes an array of topics like Statecraft, Politics, Strategy, Selection and training of employees, leadership skills, legal systems, fiscal politics, civil rules, internal and foreign trade etc.

In the field of politics, Kautilya wrote his famous Arthasastra as well as Chankyaniti. He was highly intellectual and well-read in the Hindu religious scriptures and in works on polity and other allied subjects. Since the book not only discusses political theories but also gives elaborate details of the administrative system, Kautilya evidently had that familiarity with the detailed work in various branches of administration that we would expect from one who held the high office of prime minister of a great empire. He was thoroughly conversant with the minute details of legal principles and of the administration of justice, with military science (including rules of warfare, strategy, offensive and defensive weapons, fortifications, battle array, etc.), and with the principles governing interstate relations, corresponding to modern international law.³ It is often argued that they were not the work of the same person, but even a casual glance at the two would leave very little doubt about their authorship. Chankayaniti provides the background and Arthasastra the specific application to the State of the principles developed in Chankyaniti. However, we shall not enter into this debate. Tradition has viewed them as the writing of the same person.

THEORY OF STATE

It was for the first time, in ancient India, that the Arthasastra of Kautilya, provided a definition of the State that, "no territory deserves the name of the Kingdom (State) unless it is full of people and controlled by an agglomeration of a power with absolute authority over the territory." The definition of the State as mentioned in the Arthasastra is identical with the Modern definition of State. One of the basic presuppositions of Kautilya's thought is his acute awareness of the dangers of anarchy as well as the absolute necessity to transcend in by establishing order in society. Kautilya observed that it is on the Dandaniti (Science of Government) that the course of the Kingdom depends. The first book points to the dangers of

³ <http://www.encyclopedia.com/places/britain-ireland-france-and-low-countries/british-and-irish-political-geography/kautilya>

anarchy. Kautilya too used the simile of larger fish eating the smaller when anarchy prevails. In order to escape from it, Kautilya emphasizes the need for a strong ruler capable of creating order. He discusses in detail the consequences of such a society, the dangers it entails not only for the social system of the castes but also for the individual's sense of security and his yearning for pleasure.

Living at the time when the discipline and might of Alexander's army was in contrast to the decadent character of the state authority under the Nanda dynasty, he had sensed the impact of national humiliation when India had narrowly escaped being overrun. He may have also learnt a lesson from Bhimsa in the Mahabharata who had emphasized the tendency of all kingdoms to slip into anarchy in the absence of a strong political order. This fear find its echo throughout Kautilya's writings whatever the reason, he was convinced that society can never hope to be in peace without a Strong state. With this as the backdrop to his ideas, he repudiated any idea of attacking the state authority or staying the ruler. He had come to regard excessive concern for the individual as the great threat to the place of the Kingdom. This attitude comes out most clearly in the advice given by him to the rulers to maintain themselves. He is conscious that a weak king encourages impoverishment, greed, disaffection in his subjects. When people are impoverished they become greedy and overturn the State.

Kautilya puts more emphasis on the need for the rulers to curb the unrighteous and to protect the righteous, by respecting the leaders of the people and not deposing the worthy. He perhaps felt that the main purpose of the king is to see that such an eventuality when people rise in revolt against the king should never arise because anarchy is worse than the highest tyranny. Kautilya even goes to the extent of saying that a diseased king is better than a new king. This position was almost a reversal of the position taken by Manu and Vyasa. Kautilya gives two reasons in support of this contention.

First, while the diseased king is well versed in tradition and is bound by it, whereas, the new king, since there are not traditions to follow, acts without restraints.

Secondly, Kautilya generally preferred kings of high birth because, according to him, people obey high birth more readily and tend to weave in their loyalty to a king who is low born.

These arguments obviously involved a strong defense of the dynastic principle. Once the idea of the supremacy of the king is granted, Kautilya becomes quite liberate and warns against tyrannical tendencies which eventually incur popular wrath and destroy the Kingdom

:

"It is unrighteous to do an art which causes popular fury: nor it is an accepted rule."

It is to be noted that he is respectful of popular fury not because of any moral consideration as in the Mahabharata, but because as an exponent of real politics he accepts the substantial importance of keeping people happy. He adds, "when people are impoverished, they become greedy, when they are greedy, they become disaffected, when disaffected, they voluntarily go to the side of the enemy and destroy their own master." He further added, "Hence, no king should give room to such causes as would bring about impoverishment, greed or disaffection among his people."

Although Kautilya was in favour of a strong king, it may be doubted whether he was in favour of an absolute monarchy. In his State the king had to work under so many restrictions. But from another angle, there is no doubt that the emphasis shifts from a contract as in the Mahabharata to the assertion of the authority of the king and from the popular assemblies to the cornice of the king. He further held that the king was never the proprietor of the soil hence could not be called absolute. But in Kautilya the State had become highly bureaucratic. Indeed the bureaucratic apparatus described in Kautilya's Arthashastra very closely resembles the bureaucratic structure we have today.

Definition of the State

The State represents the efforts of its people to organize their activities, and the expression of their attempts to organise, is seen in the formulation and application of regulations or laws which are usually certified in some constitutional form. In Kautilya's book the idea of a welfare state is repeated with great force. The state does not consist of the territory, but is a much more complex organisation in which the territory, the people and their inter-relationships are indissolubly welded to form the entity which possesses an individuality, a character, which marks it off from all other states. According to Kautilya, the king must ensure that people of the four castes and four orders of life keep to their respective path, respective duties and occupations.

Kautilya classifies the functions of the state basically into four:

1. Protection: The first function of the state is guarding the country against internal as well as external threats. Internally people and their property have to be protected from thieves and dacoits etc and also externally from outside the state there may be threats from invasions that have to be dealt with.

2. **Maintaining the Law:** The king and the state, it is expected by the people, will maintain the customs and laws of the land. The king according to Kautilya should settle legal disputes in conformity with the sacred principles and laws in consultation with learned brahmins.
3. **Preserving Social Order:** Kautilya saw it the duty of the king to protect the *dharma* of the land by which he meant the social order. It is the duty of the king to deliver justice and help keep people of different *varnas* preserve their professions or in other words help maintain *varnadharmashrarma*.
4. **Promoting the welfare of the people:** The king according to Kautilya should function on the goal that it is in the happiness of his subjects that his happiness lies. The state should control the whole of social life. It should promote religion and spirituality and in so doing regulate the age and conditions under which one might renounce the world. Kautilya advised the state should provide support to the poor, pregnant women, and to their children, to orphans, to the aged, the afflicted and the helpless.

Elements of the State: The Doctrine of Seven Prakritis

Kautilya's Arthashastra has seven Prakritis or the constituent elements of State, where as in western conception of state only four elements find mentioning. The state of nature, is imagined to be one of total anarchy, in which 'Might was right' when people were oppressed by *matyanyaya*, the law of the fish, according to which the bigger fish swallows the smaller ones .. This was the nature of the state earlier In kautilya's Arthashastra, there is no explicit theory of social contract as laid down by the contractualist. Neither does Kautilya use the contract to make the king are powerful. Whatever the nature of the political entity referred to as the state, It must possess three basic elements the degree of its internal unity, the size of its capital city, the variety of products without a specific land area, inhabited and exploited by a certain number of people, there can neither be the existence of a state nor it can function without being organised.

The relationship of the state with other territories is based upon the sovereignty which it exercises directly or more normally through its leader over the territory. The sovereignty originates from the force of expansion of the body politic at the time of the foundation of state. Kautilya holds the view that sovereignty is possible only with assistance. A single wheel can never move. The city, the Minister, the country, the fort, the treasury, the army and the friends are the elements of sovereignty. ∴ Each of these elements must possess distinct qualities.

Thus, seven elements of sovereignty constitute the different limbs (angas) of state. This is also known as “Sapta Prakriti Theory of state”. They were:

- 1.The King
- 2.Amatya
- 3.Janapada
- 4.Durga
- 5.Kosa
- 6.Danda and
- 7.Mitra

Kautilya on the King

Kautilya's theory of government involved three aspects: the king, the officials and the mechanism of administration. The king, being the most important element in the hierarchy must possess the following qualities:

That he must belong to a high family, he must possess valour and be virtuous, truthful and highly enthusiastic and should not be addicted to procrastination, that he must possess a taste of discipline, a sharp intellect and trained in all kinds of arts. He must possess dignity and should be capable of taking remedial measures against danger and also possess foresight and ready to avail himself of opportunities.

Kautilya gave the highest place to the king.. The king has to be dynamic in order to ensure that his subjects are likewise dynamic. He clearly states that it is the duty of the kings to maintain the safety and security of their subjects and their property. This is called rakshana or palana. This protection has to be both from natural calamities as well as from anti –social elements. The king is also asked to ensure the ‘Yogakshema’ of the public. ‘Yogakshema’ is a broad term implying the idea of welfare, wellbeing, prosperity and happiness. There is nothing more important for a king than enterprise, wakefulness and concern for the welfare of his subjects. These are the three virtues he admired most.

He enjoins that the king must provide for the orphans, the aged, the helpless and the afflicted. Helpless women must be provided subsistence by the state when they are pregnant. The king is also required to construct dams, rivers and roads, to maintain forests and provide help and superintendence to places of pilgrimage. The king must protect agriculturists from molestation and other kinds of oppression, forced labour and oppressive tasks.

During famines, the king is asked to help the people by providing seed and provision. He declares, "A wise king can make the poor and miserable elements of the society happy

and prosperous, but a wicked king will surely destroy the most prosperous of loyal elements of his kingdom". He was convinced that a vicious and unrighteous king who ignores the welfare of his subjects would fall a victim of popular fury or become vulnerable to enemies. Such a state where people are not happy is a weak state. On the other hand, "a wise king, trained in politics, will, though he possesses a small territory, conquer the whole earth with the help of the best elements of his sovereignty and will never be defeated."

Kautilya goes on to describe an exhausting schedule in which the king has roughly four and half hours to sleep and the rest of the time is almost entirely involved in running the kingdom.⁴

Kautilya is convinced that although a good and wakeful king is necessary, this alone is not sufficient to ensure a well ordered state because people are generally selfish and tend to give more importance to their own selfish interests than the interest of the state. There is a general tendency among administrators and ministers to alter the state of things in their favour by practice of bribery and corruption, which if goes rampant can wreck a state. To meet this situation, he suggests two things.

First, the king must be aware of the motives and activities of his council of Ministers. He must not consult more than two ministers at a time. Ministers must be selected on the basis of their talent, loyalty and character.

Secondly , from time to time the king must test their integrity and loyalty by offering them temptations through his spies. They must be kept under constant watch so that they are not able to wield undue influence inimical to the king.

In cases of corruption, the king must impose the severest penalties and in certain cases he is even enjoined to get rid of such ministers. On the other hand, the king must reward all these who show integrity and deserving. Loyalty is very high on the list of Merits which enables the king to decide who is deserving.

Kautilya discusses in detail how corruption arises, its various forms, and what is needed to keep the state free of it. He also discusses the special procedure to be applied in such cases: he suggests that a panel of three Magistrates with ministers should be entrusted with this task. Kautilya was not only concerned with corruption of officials but also of everyone in public life. For instance, there should be a superintendent of merchandise to exercise control on trade practices so that traders are not able to oppress the people.

⁴ <http://www.ancient.eu/Arthashastra/>

The king is enjoined to punish thirteen types of criminals after ascertaining their activities with the help of the spies. This list includes manufacturers, traders, corrupt officials and judges. Corruption includes not only material gratification but also abuse of authority. All these criminals are to be tried by special tribunals according to a fixed procedure, a common practice it seems in the Mauryan Empire.

Kautilya's vision was undoubtedly rooted in the classical ideas of virtue and he admired courage, truth, fortitude and valour in all.

He understood politics essentially in administrative terms, of good and bad administration, recognizing the former is necessary to the foundation and maintenance of a good state. A good king is necessary in order to ensure individual security and social stability. Among his spies are included the false hermits, the false ascetics and the false mendicants. They are also enjoined to exploit popular superstitions in the interest of the king. If it is necessary for the preservation of the state, he authorizes the use of temple money on flimsy pretexts.

Religion is useful to the king because it can be a powerful instrument in the service of the state. So great is his concern for the stability of the state that the thought that even the powers of the king are justified because they lead to the good of state. To ensure rightful exercise of power by the king, Kautilya gives elaborate instruction on the education and training of princes, which also remind one of the education of the Guardian Class in Plato. Thus the ideal set before the ruler is that of paternalistic rule and welfare state.

The Amatya, or the Minister

Kautilya gives great importance to the Mantri Parishad i.e, the council of Ministers. No ruler, however competent or powerful, can run the state alone. The Arthashastra says : "one wheel alone does not turn and keep the Cart in motion." The helpmates in this task are the ministers constituting the second prakriti called the Amatya. The Amatya refers both to the mantri and the administrative officials.

The king appoints ministers to share the burden of administration and render advice to him.

In fact, the Arthashastra is more of treatise on administration than on politics and statecraft. The administrative principles are discussed with such insight as to make us wonder whether there has been any real progress in the science of administration since then. The most important function of the Mantris was to render advice to the king. Kautilya insists that the king should appoint three to four councillors. He says that a single mantri would be difficult

to control; two might quarrel and conspire against the king and a larger number would affect the secrecy of the council. These three to four mantrins constitute a consultative body. Kautilya prescribes the highest possible qualifications for a mantris in terms of personal characteristics. Kautilya is convinced that although a good and wakeful king is necessary, this alone is not sufficient to ensure a well ordered state because people are generally selfish and tend to give more importance to their own individual interests than the interest of the state. They must be kept under constant watch so that they are not able to do any conspiracy or disloyalty against the king and the kingdom. As regards the quality of the minister, who constitutes an important element of sovereignty, Kautilya says that he must be a native and born of high family, influential and well trained in all kinds of acts. He must try to remove whatever defects he finds in the king. In case of the king's death, the Minister shall install the heir apparent and then he should set the army against the enemy and when attacked he will take such measures to ward off the dangers. The Minister of Kautilya is identical with the pali "Amarca". It seems that in pre-Mauryan times, the ministers were employed in hundreds, acting as village headman, Judges, guides in worldly and spiritual matters, surveyors etc.

Janapada,

The third important organ was said to be Janapada, the territory with people settled on it. In the analysis of Kautilya, the citizens are not referred to directly. Their existence is to be understood by implication in the reference to the janapada. As regard the population, Kautilya says that it should be prosperous enough to be able to pay taxes, should be loyal and should habitually follow the orders of the king. Regarding territory, he goes on to say that it should have the best of natural resources and the neighbouring states should not be allowed to become very powerful. .

Another distinctive feature of the administrative system in the Arthashastra is marked as leaning towards decentralization. The king is asked to look personally into the affairs of the state. This makes one to assume that the state has to be small if personal attention is to be given. There are indications that a janapada is to contain 800 gramas headed by ' The Samaharta'. It is stated elsewhere that the janapada to be divided into four divisions for revenue and administrative purposes. All officers of the state should work under him. He may be regarded as a sort of governor or administrator in the country side. Each division was under an officer called sthanika.

The Durga or the Fortified capital

The Durga is as important as the janapada and is the symbol of the defensive and offensive capacity of the state. It should be fortified. It is on the fort that the security of the kingdom depends both in times of war and peace. The construction of defensive fort is symbol of strength provided they are situated on the strategically best situated regions. Kautilya suggests water fortification on an island or a plain surrounded by low ground, a mountain fortification and a desert fortification in areas of wild tract which is devoid of water and a forest fortification full of water. Kautilya also urges upon the king to build his fortified capital in the centre of the kingdom. Forts are also constructed for storing agricultural produce and such forts with grain store houses have to be used in times of natural calamities.

Kosa

Kosa or treasury is portrayed as the most vital element of the state as all its activities necessitate finance. The treasury is accumulated by righteous and legitimate manner. The treasury must be filled with gold, silver, precious stones jewels and gems and should be capable of standing the strain of expenditure during time of calamities. According to Kautilya without treasury, it is extremely difficult to maintain the army and keep it loyal.

Danda

The next important element of the state according to Kautilya was Danda or the army-Kautilya opines that the army consists of hereditary and hired soldiers constituting the cavalry, infantry, and the chariot riders. He considers kshatriyas as the excellent material for the army as they are good warriors. He does not deter the vaishyas and sudras for joining army when the state is confronted with emergency. The army is to be made effective by its proper equipment at the time of invasion and keeping sons and wives of soldiers contented through the provision of maintenance by the state. The basic qualities of the army according to Kautilya are inheritance, loyalty and strength. They should be trained in fighting of various kinds of battles and skilful in handling various forms of weapons

The last element or Prakrit is the **mitra** or the friend. He is the friend of the king, who is always ready to help him at the times of war, and natural calamity. In order to emphasize the contrast, Arthashastra defines an enemy as one who is not born of a royal family and who is greedy, helpless and impotent and such an enemy is easily uprooted

These elements were interdependent. In normal circumstances, the king was the most important component, but the importance of different constituents varied with the circumstances. For example, in times of war, the army became most important, and in times of enemy attack, the fortified capital city assumed primary importance. Allies were not exactly a part of the government, but as friendly powers always ready to help the king, they were of considerable significance.⁵

Kautilya on Mandala Theory

In Kautilya's Arthashastra the administrative principles are discussed with such great insight. He was the first thinker who consciously thought of an all India state or even empire. In a good state it is not only necessary to have right laws and institution, honest and clear administration devoted to public welfare but the right kind of relations with other states also. It may be remembered that both a friend and an enemy are constituent elements of Kautilya's concept of sovereignty. The exposition of state occupies much space in the book.

The relations with other states are important because no state exists in isolation. Infact, every state is competing with every other for land. This is the natural order where none is contented with what he already has. This implies that no state can be stable unless it takes care of its foreign relation. If such relations are ignored argues Kautilya, the state will soon fall a prey to conspiracy hatched by the other princes.

The only solution is to be wakeful and to treat offence as the best defence, to ensure that the state is not only capable of defending itself but also inflicting damage on others when need arises. It is only victories which can ensure stability.. This is known as Mandala Theory of Kautilya.

The Mandala theory of Kautilya occupies an important place in the light of the contemporary situation. Kautilya was not only the prime minister of the first historical emperor of India Chandragupta Maurya but was his friend, philosopher and guide and whatever he wrote, became the guideline for the king to follow and execute in order to achieve spatial-ecological organization of the vast Mauryan empire.

The Doctrine of circles or the Mandala Siddharta refers to the relations of one King with another. Kautilya formulated that "A King might represent that in the neighbouring circle of states a particular sovereign was growing too powerful, that he might destroy them

⁵ http://www.hindupedia.com/en/Political_Philosophy

all and that all should march against him." They are treated from the point of view of 'Vijigisu', the world conqueror placed in the centre of circle of States.

Five kings exist in front of the *Vijigisu*. They are:—

- (i) *Ari*, the enemy.
- (ii) *Mitraprakriti*, the friend of *Vijigisu*,
- (iii) *Arimitra*, friend of enemy.
- (iv) *Mitramitra*, friend of the friend of *Vijigisu*.
- (v) *Arimitra-mitra*, friend of the enemy friend.

Behind the *Vijigisu* exists :

- (i) *Parsanigraha*
- (ii) *Akrandas*.
- (iii) *Parsanigrahasara*
- (iv) *Akrandanasava*

Far around the '*Vijigisu*' exists :—

- (i) *Madhyama* (Intermediate)
- (ii) *Udasina* (Neutral).

In the above spectrum of 'Mandala', the *Vijigisu* functions as a sort of balance of power. It is assumed that the two adjacent States are generally natural enemies and consequently two States beyond his neighbours is highly natural ally being common enemies of natural enemies. The neighbouring States turn into enemies. Likewise, States with no common boundaries become friends. In such a situation, the neutral country occupies an important place. The intermediary occupies the second best position between the neutral country and other power.⁶

One of the distinctive principles of Kautilya Mandala theory is that whenever an enemy king is in trouble, and his subjects are exploited, oppressed, impoverished and disunited he should be immediately attacked after one proclamation of war.

⁶ SR Myneni; Political Science

There is another significant aspect of the Mandala theory of Kautilya that the victor should follow the policy of goodwill and cooperation towards the conquered enemy and win his confidence.

Kautilya has laid much emphasis in his Mandala theory that the "immediate king who is situated close to the territory of the conquerer is the enemy". There is the need for an alliance of enemy's enemies who could easily be won over to meet the common challenge.

The aspect of inter-state relationship find expression in the foreign policies of constituent states. These relations fall into a global pattern which is susceptible to change, and reveals underlying conditions which are worthy of analysis. It is concluded that the unequal growth of nations is directly or indirectly the cause of the great wars of history and is in large measure the result of the uneven distribution of fertility and strategical opportunity upon the face of the globe. The inevitability of conflict has been implicit in the political thought of many serious thinkers during the ancient period and also in the 19th and 20th centuries. Self-interest is a fundamental cause for foreign policy. It is vain to expect government to act continuously on any other ground than national interest. States have no permanent enemies but only permanent interests.

Six-Fold Policy

In a system of mandala, Kautilya advocated six-fold policy to interact with the neighbours, which included co-existence, neutrality, alliance, double policy, march and war.

To achieve this he advised the king to resort to five tactics: conciliation, gift and bribery, dissention, deceit and pretence, open attack or war. As such on the question of treaty and alliance, he suggests:

“A King should not hesitate to break any friendship or alliances that are later found to be disadvantageous.”

Kautilya presents us a six fold policy which he termed as six Gunas of foreign policy which are :

Peace

According to Kautilya, the words Sama (quiet), Sandhi (agreement of peace), and Samadhi (reconciliation) are synonymous. That which is conducive to mutual faith among kings is termed as Sama, Sandhi and Samadhi. Peace dependent upon honesty or oath is immutable both in this and next world. It is for this world only that a security require for strengthening the agreement

War

War in ancient India had been an important instrument of foreign policy. It was an attempt to measure effectiveness of the relative strength of a king. Kautilya describes war as an attempt to impose one's will over the others and to compel them to accept his supremacy. It is one of the six pillars of the six-fold policy.

When a king is convinced that he can successfully repel the attack of the enemy, he must prefer war to peace. Similarly when the enemy is in trouble or is engaged in war on another front, aggression is recommended. A king whose foreign policy aims at acquiring more power than what he actually has, seeks a favourable change in power status and pursues a policy of expansionism.

However, Kautilya advises the king to avoid war and adopt peace. Before resorting to war the king should make sure that his country is full of soldiers and fighting men. His country should possess natural defensive position as mountains, forests, rivers and forts. With invulnerable fortresses at the boundary the king can harass his enemy. He can even induce the enemy's population to migrate into his territories. He can augment his own resources by keeping open hostility with an enemy. The army should consist of infantry, cavalry, chariots and elephants. The army must be well organised and trained.

Kautilya divides war into open battle, treacherous battle, and silent battle. When it is fought in daylight and in some definite locality it is known as an open fight. Threatening in one direction and assault in another, destruction of any enemy when he is in trouble and bribing a portion of the army and destroying another are the various forms of treacherous fight.

Silent battle concerns itself with the secret practices and instigation through secret agent. An attempt to win over the chief officers of the army by intrigue is the salient features of a silent war. The sowing of the seeds of division and distrust in the army of the enemy is another form of silent battle

Kautilya regarded three seasons as suitable for campaigning :

1. December to January (Margasira Masam) was the month of starting on a campaign of long duration.
2. March to April (Chaitra Masam) for one of the medium of durations and
3. May to June (Jyestha Masam) for a short campaign. It should be avoided during the monsoon months.

Strengthening The Agreement.

Kautilya seems to favour peace to war like ancient Indian thinkers and observes that when the advantages derivable from peace and war are of equal character, one should prefer peace; for disadvantages, such as the loss of power and wealth and sin are ever attending upon war. Peace must be concluded according to the circumstances and in the interests of the state only. No state can afford to live in a state of continued war.

MARCHING

According to Kautilya, the third guna of foreign policy is marching. Kautilya points out that making preparation for war is marching. If a king thinks that by marching his troops, it is possible to destroy the work of his enemy, he may increase his resources by marching. Marching can be done in order to put pressure on the opposition.

Neutrality

The next guna, Kautilya talked about is neutrality. There are 3 aspects neutrality- keeping quiet, maintaining a particular kind of policy of non interference and withdrawal of hostile action for the sake of one's interest and taking no step against an enemy. Neutrality, according to Kautilya, is indifference to the political development and it is guided by self interest. Neutrality takes various forms, according to circumstances. It can be adopted out of indecisions or pressure from external forces. Kautilya specially advises the conquering king to seek the alliance of the neutral king.

Alliance and Double Policy

Alliance is another instrument of the six fold policy by which an inferior king or weak king maintains equilibrium in and around his territory. Kautilya says that one should make an alliance with a king who is situated between two powerful kings shall seek protection from

the stronger of the two or he may make peace with both of them on equal terms. A king may make an alliance with the Madhyama king or the neutral king. Alliance in Kautilyan way seems to speak of strategic grouping of strategic relation among kings.

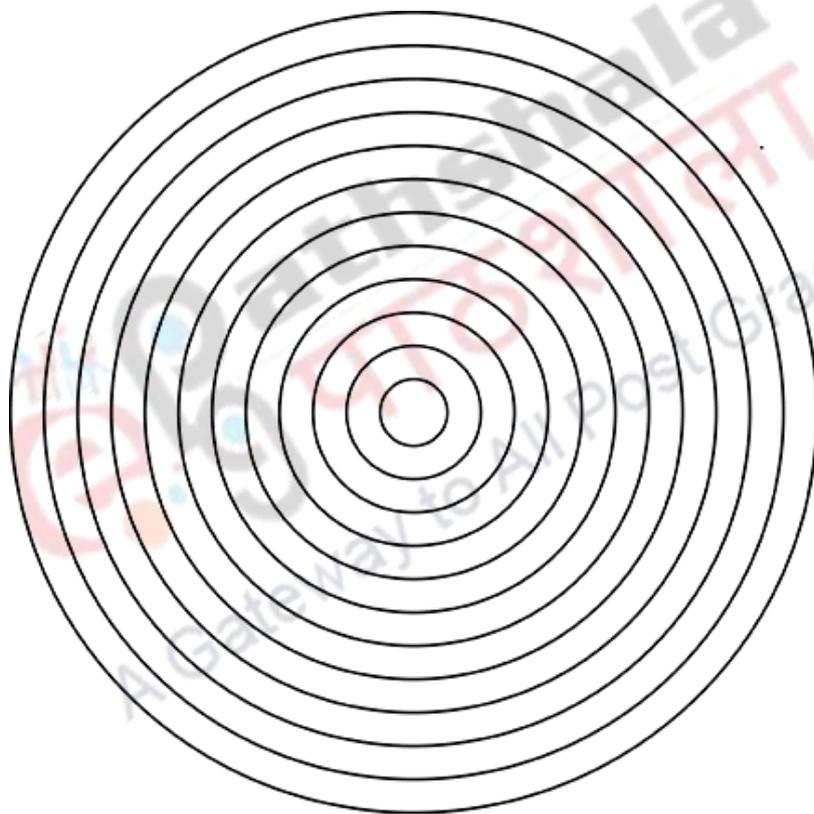
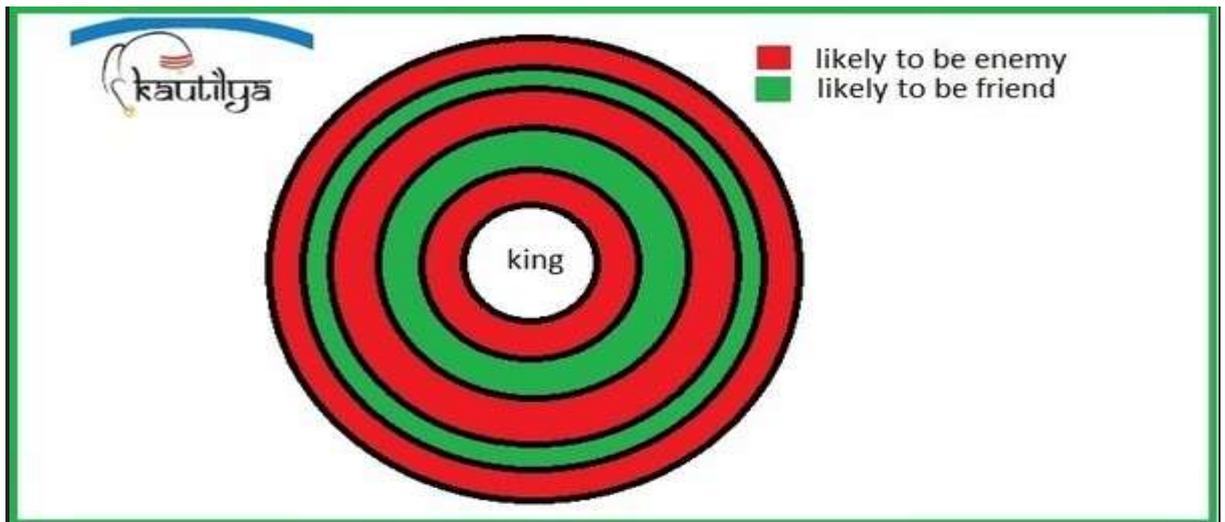
Related with the concept of alliance is the policy, which is termed as double policy, i.e. making peace with one country and waging war with another. Double policy is an instrument of maintaining geo political equilibrium in the horizontal plane. Kautilya prescribes that an inferior king should make peace with a powerful king and wage war against a superior king and vice-versa. In Kautilya's opinion double policy should be preferred because whoever adopts this policy enriches himself by improving his resources and at the same time he poses threat to his enemy.

Territorial Relations

The last and most important guna is territorial relation. Kautilya is remembered for his brilliant contribution towards enriching the heritage of political geography in his attempt to provide an explanation and analysis of the territorial relations—a distinct external function of the state system.

The doctrine of Mandala means a circle with a centre or nucleolus with organic power system. The concept of the circle of states is a brilliant step towards territorial relations among the state which form the circle of states. The circle of states enables all the states concerned to use the territory of the other for carrying trade and commerce and also to lead army in times of war. It means the pursuit of policy and tactics with a view to forming of geographical alignments of powers of circles of states which will result in maximum advantage to the policy framing states. The Mandala doctrine or council of state is regarded as the ancient Indian equivalent of the theory of Balance Of power.

MANDALA THEORY:



Conqueror's circles of states (1, 2, 3)

Madhyama's circles of states (7, 8, 9)

Enemy's circle of states (4, 5, 6)

Udasin's circles of states (10, 11, 12)

There are four primary circles of states the conqueror's circles of states; enemy's circle of states; Madhyama's circle of states; and Udasin's circle of states. Thus, there are twelve kings. Each of the twelve primary kings shall have their elements of sovereignty, power and end. **Circle 1** comprising the vijigishu i.e. would be conqueror, his friend and his friend's friend. **Circle 2** consisting of the enemy, his friend and his friend's friend. **Circle 3** consisting of the Madhyama king, his friends and his friend's friend. **Circle 4** consisting of the udasin i.e. neutral king his friend and friend's friend. The king with his territory intact will be termed as conqueror. He is of good character, the king who is situated anywhere immediately on the circumference of the conqueror's territory is the enemy. The king who with his territory is located on the borders of the conqueror and his enemy is termed as the Madhyama king or the mediatory, who is capable of helping both the conqueror and the enemy and the king who occupies a territory far beyond the riches of above state, is termed as Neutral state i.e. udasin.

Kautilya suggests that the members of the council of state whether they belong to any circle should provide territorial facilities to their allies in time of war. Kautilya says that having conquered the earth and its people of distinct caste and religion, the king should enjoy power in accordance with the duty prescribed forking. The conqueror first of all should seize enemy's territory that should direct his attention to that of the Madhyama king and also the udasin king.

Learn more about Mandala theory

our neighbor is your natural enemy and the neighbor's neighbor is your friend"

This was the basic thought behind Kautilya's Mandala Theory. And it is the very first thought that comes to one's mind when we read the texts of Kautilya. Mandala is a Sanskrit word which means 'circles'.

Mandala theory of foreign policy, is based on the geographical assumption that the immediate neighbour state is most likely to be an enemy (real or potential) and a state next to the immediate neighbour is likely to be one's friend, after a friendly state comes an unfriendly state (friend of the enemy state) and next to that a friendly state (friend of a friendly state) and so on i.e., "*With respect to the middle king [he himself], the third and the fifth constituents are friendly elements. The second, the fourth, and the sixth are unfriendly elements.*" However he also recognized the existence of neutral and mediating states.. (The same thing can be done with concentric circles, which would look more like a mandala, but it is difficult

to envision these circles as states.) Kautilya put this basic principle in a number of different ways, but most simply as, "One with immediately proximate territory is the natural enemy."

The Mandala concept is one in which there are circles of friends and foes with the central point being the King and his State. This embraces twelve kings in the vicinity and he considers the kingdoms as neighbors, the states which are the enemies neighbors are his enemies' friends and the next circle of states are his friends. He also believes that the states which are his neighbors and are also neighbors of his enemies are neutral and should always be treated with respect. He believes that this circle is dynamic and the King should strive to be expanding his central position and reduce the power of the other kings in the vicinity. He also proposes to build alliances with states which are two degrees away from the center to create a balance of power.

ENEMIES ACCORDING TO KAUTILYA:

Potential enemies were those to whom one showed a friendly face. They might be your ally or there might be no particular relationship between your country and theirs. But eventually, they would become enemies or so. Kautilya assume, After all, his politics were aimed at conquering the world, which can only be done by taking control of all other territories, most of which will fight to retain control.

Let us assume that Country 2 is an enemy too powerful to take on immediately. In such a case, it would be in the king's best interest to be friendly toward them until they grew weaker.(But Kautilya didn't suggest the king sit passively by and wait for this to happen. Instead, it was his duty to *make* it happen. And, since states always act in their own self-interest, moral principles and obligations carry little or no weight in the actions between states.)

"A neighboring prince possessed of the excellences of an enemy is the foe; one in calamity is vulnerable; one without support or with weak support is *fit to be exterminated*; in the reverse case, fit to be harassed or weakened. These are the different types of enemies."

When Kautilya described exterminating an enemy, he meant killing only the leaders. He believed that the best policy toward enemy soldiers and citizens was to treat them well...and then recruit them. A conquered people are much more likely to look favorably on

the conqueror if he acts as a benevolently. To him “Act despotically and you lose the support of the people”.

In this, Kautilya was unique. Kautilya pointed out that “If weak in might, a king should endeavor to secure the welfare of his subjects. The countryside is the source of all undertakings. From them comes might.” For his day, this was a revolutionary statement. India was divided into four classes: *kshatriyas* or the warrior and ruling class, *brahmins* or priests; *vaishyas* meaning farmers or merchants; and *shūdras*, agricultural laborers. Kautilya appears to have had little use for *brahmins*, since he wrote “by prostration, an enemy may win over Brahmana troops.” But he was taken by the energy, strength, and numbers of the *shūdras*. He does seem to have preferred an army of *kshatriyas* – the Greek ambassador to Chandragupta’s court notes that nearly one-fifth of the population were of this class – but in times of emergency, he would prefer the balance of the army come from the two lower classes of society. He also believed that units should be composed of “men from the same region, caste or profession”, since an army composed of brothers and friends fighting for each other is more difficult to defeat.

It is better to attack an enemy that is disunited rather than one in which the citizens have organized themselves into “bands.” Therefore, the first obstacle to overcome is to breakdown the enemy’s trust and reliance on each other. For this task, Kautilya advocated spies and secret agents who could exploit the divisions within a country and hopefully widen such gaps. Every country, according to Kautilya, has four types of disgruntled citizens: the enraged, the frightened, the greedy, and the proud. Secret agents should be employed to fan the flames of their discontent. The king should win over the seducible by “means of conciliation and gifts and those not seducible by means of dissension and force.”

He sought to provoke wars between neighboring states and their allies, which would weaken both. At the very least, to drive a wedge between them, leaving one possibly weak enough for “extermination.”

For countries that tried to remain neutral, he suggested ways of provoking a potential war between them and a neighboring state. Then, should the neutral nation seek his king’s help, it could be “placed under obligations.” Here again, Kautilya shows no moral qualms about breaking such obligations, for “that ally who might do harm or who, though capable, would not help in times of troubles, he should exterminate him, when *trustingly, he comes within his reach.*”

Kautilya's Mandala theory of foreign policies and interstate relationships : its relevance

To understand the ancient Indian political thought, it is very important to understand the inter-state relationships

To Kautilya nature of the distribution of the power belt, the uneven distribution of resources, unequal growth of lines of communication, discoveries of new lands, racial and population differences and economic imbalances are some of the factors which determine the nature of inter-state relationship. Political geographers have studied external relations of the state into territorial, economic, political and strategical relations.

The problem of the defence of the state is closely linked up with its external relation. Thinkers in ancient India advised the king to adopt the policy of peaceful co-existence and to avoid war as far as possible. Hence, they tried to minimise the chances of war by advocating a judicious balance of power among different kingdoms. The extensive body of rules concerned with interstate relation in Kautilya's work contains the most complete as well as the most important contribution on the subject made by our ancient thinkers. He recognises that multiplicity of topographic features along political boundaries is a constant source for conflict and instability. He says whoever builds fortification on strategically best fitted ground is able to maintain a balance of power. Instability of the boundary is a factor determining the mutual relationship between the two states. Similarly, when a river flows across the territories of two states, conflicts between the neighbours develop and arise out of the behaviour of the state. On the other hand if the neighbours who are not at good terms, defy the rules prescribed of the navigation. The presence of potential forests and pasture lands in one's territory is another factor for mutual disharmony.

According to Kautilya, the relationship between two neighbours also depends upon the quality and state of the people of their respective territories. If a king thinks that his country is full of good soldiers and fighting men and the reverse is the case with his enemy whose people are impoverished and oppressed and seem to be disloyal to their master, then the king should march against such an enemy. The oppressed people of the enemy shall be induced to immigrate to the conqueror's territory. The conqueror must construct strategic fortifications to defend populous centres. Disposal of population centres is a source of constant danger between the neighbours because Kautilya feels that dispersal allows invasion. Thus, Kautilya observes that the quality of population and its spatial concentration are two

factors largely affecting the interstate relationships that very much mould the behaviour of the neighbours.

The primary objective and goal of foreign policy has to be from equilibrium to progress. The success of a foreign policy would very much depend on a combination of sound council and material resources which would include revenue, army and enterprise. He discusses in detail the policies to be adopted by the king in dealing with a strong, an equal and a weak kingdom. The general feeling is that it is easier or preferable to deal with an unjust king however strong than a just king however weak because while in the case of an attack on the unjust king, the population would desert the victim, in the case of a just king it would be the reverse. However, the details of the policy, when to attack, opt for a compromise or surrender should depend on the relative strength or weakness of the enemy. For instance, should the enemy be strong, compromise is recommended. Again, the king is enjoined to expand his kingdom whenever he finds that there is sufficient economic prosperity and a strong army or when he finds that the enemy's state is divided.

Kautilya is categorical that if progress of a kingdom is equally attainable through peace, or war, then peace is to be preferred thereby saving the state from unnecessary expenditure on men and material. In any case, before an action is taken, there should be an assessment of the relative strength of one's own position in relation to the enemy terms of such factors as power, time, place, the time for mobilization of troops and the prospective loss of men and material. In these ideas, Kautilya is very creative and original in suggesting that a wise policy is to be preferred if one based on purely military or financial considerations. A policy based on wisdom can achieve the same, and perhaps even better results than a policy based purely on military or financial considerations. He is very clear that if a king is to become a chakravartin, he must have all these three assets, namely, military power, financial power and wisdom. The working of this scheme could be found throughout the history of Hindu India in the temporary alliances of two Kingdoms to accomplish the encirclement and destruction of the Kingdom between them.

Kautilya's Mandala theory of foreign policies and interstate relationships though cannot be said to be completely applicable in the present context, though one cannot ignore its relevance. His concept stands as a barrier against the idea of integration, both at regional and global level. But unfortunately in the present day, knowingly or unknowingly, Kautilya

dominates in regional and international relations. His warfare technique even in the present day helps a lot. He has actually very accurately had given his theories.

Moreover, even to understand the ancient Indian political thought, it is very important to understand the inter-state relationships and hence kautilya's contribution is immensely important when we look back at the Indian History and how under his guidance India reunited by the Mauryan Umpire

Summary

Kautilya's Arthashastra is an important source of knowledge on polity, economy and administration. However this important document has been forgotten for centuries. Thanks to syamasastri, who first interpreted Kautilya's economic and political thoughts is a book published in English in 1909 we had insights into the writings of that brilliant mind. Kautilya's philosophy based on the principles of "Sam, dam, dard, bhed" (Persuasion temptation, punishment and decision) as various, different, and sequential means to achieve an end. Kautilya used the word 'dharma' (which in general, means 'duty') and right easiness in personal and social conduct. He described the basic ethical (dharmic) values as, "Duties common to all- ahimsa (abstaining from injury to all living creatures), satyam (truthfulness), cleanliness, freedom from malice, compassion and tolerance". Kautilya was a true statesman who bridged the gap between experience and vision. For Kautilya, good governance was paramount. He suggested built-in checks and balances in systems and procedures for the containment of malpractices. Many postulates of Kautilya's philosophy of political economy are applicable to contemporary times.⁷

⁷ <http://anujamisra.blogspot.in/2010/01/kautilyas-arthashastra.html>