

# ARTHASHASTRA : A REVOLUTION IN THE DOMAIN OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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The *Arthashastra* is an ancient Indian Sanskrit treatise on statecraft, economic policy and military strategy. 'Artha' is the sustenance or livelihood of men, in other words it means the earth inhabited by men. Arthashastra is thus the science which shows how to acquire and preserve that earth or to prescribe means for securing and preserving power over the earth. Kautilya, also identified as Vishnugupta and Chanakya, is traditionally credited as the author of the text. The latter was a scholar at Takshashila, the teacher and guardian of Emperor Chandragupta Maurya. The text is likely to be the work of several authors over centuries. All the chapters of the treatise are primarily prose, each transitions into a poetic verse towards its end, a style that is found in many ancient Hindu Sanskrit texts where the changing poetic meter or style of writing is used as a syntax code to silently signal that the chapter or section is ending. Composed, expanded and redacted between the 2nd century BCE and 3rd century CE, the Arthashastra was influential until the 12th century, when it disappeared. It was rediscovered in 1905 by R.

Shamasastry, who published it in 1909. The first English translation was published in 1915.

The title "Arthashastra" is often translated to "the science of politics", but the book *Arthashastra* includes the nature of government, law, civil and criminal court systems, ethics, economics, markets and trade, the methods for screening ministers, diplomacy, theories on war, nature of peace, and the duties and obligations of a king. The text incorporates Hindu philosophy, includes ancient economic and cultural details on agriculture, mineralogy, mining and metals, animal husbandry, medicine, forests and wildlife.

The *Arthashastra* explores issues of social welfare, the collective ethics that hold a society together, advising the king that in times and in areas devastated by famine, epidemic and such acts of nature, or by war, he should initiate public projects such as creating irrigation waterways and building forts around major strategic holdings and towns and exempt taxes on those affected. The text was influential on other Hindu texts that followed, such as the sections on king, governance and legal procedures included in Manusmriti.

## KAUTILYA'S THEORY OF STATE

Political Thought is primarily concerned with the state and its functions. The word 'state' indicates the meaning of the state as stability or status. In

India many ancient works like Satapata, Brahman, Manusmriti and Mahabharat have dealt with problem of origion of the state. States were regarded in ancient India as due to divine agency or inspiration. Kautily's Arthashastra was unique, as it was concerned with the art of administration giving only passing reference to the origin of the state. According to Kautilya the state originated to fulfill the desire of the people to have a peaceful society. King took upon themselves the responsibility of maintaining the safety and security of their subjects. Kautilya did not propound any logical theory of the state, its origin and ends, but he appears to believe in the social contract theory according to which the state came into existence after such a contract between the king and the people.

Kautilya was the first contractualist in India like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Rousseau in the Western world. But unlike them, Kautilya's social contract was government and less social because he was not a interested in creating a theory on the origin of the state. His intention was to replace the misrule of Nanda Dynasty by Chandragupta who could make the strong and powerful state

In the Ancient Political Thinking, Kautilya has first time defined the state in Arthashastra. According to Kautilya, an area cannot be a state unless there are not people and rulers to control that state. According to him state is an area which consists many cities. It not only produces things for living but also protects its people from danger and animals.

Kautilya used the word 'Raja' which corresponds to the English word 'State'. The state is defined for the first time in the Arthashastra of Kautilya as consisting of seven elements. In Manusmriti, Manu deals with seven Prakritis of the state like king, the ministers, the capital, the realm, the treasure, the army and ally. But Kautilya in his Arthashastra put the same in a different order like the swami, the Amatyas, the Janapada, the Durgas, the Kosha, the Danda, the Mitra and the enemy. There is no doubt that the saptanga theory as given by Kautilya was almost universally accepted as the standard definition to know the nature of the ancient India. It has been generally recognized that the modern constituents of the state such as sovereignty, government, territory and population are covered by the elements of Swami, amatya and Janapada in the saptang theory of the state.

## SWAMI

Kautilya assign to the king the highest place in the body politic. King or swami was the consummation of all other elements in state and he represented the legal and moral authority, constitutionally king was the chief executive head and commander-in-chief of the army. The king was the very life of the state. According to the Arthashastra, the king was the defender of the Dharma. According to Kautilya, the king and his king are the primary elements of the state. Because all other elements depend on these two elements. In Kautilya's Arthashastra king was the head of the

state. King was vested with executive, legislative, Judicial and financial powers.

## AMATYA

Amatya constitutes the second elements of the state. But Kautilya refers to Amatya in different sense. Amatya generally means the council of ministers. In the Arthashastra the amatya constitute a regular cadre of the service from which all high officers such as chief priest, ministers, collectors, officers, envoys and the Superintendents of various department are to be recruited.<sup>20</sup> Kautilya says kingship is possible only with assistance. Therefore the need of ministers connection. In Arthashastra three words Mantri, Amatya and sachiva<sup>9</sup> use for the ministers by amatya is rather a general word for higher bureaucracy. The highest category of the amatya in the mantrins. The highest category of the amatya in the mantrins. The king deliberates over the policy of state with three or four ministers. The council of ministers is largely responsible for shaping the policy of the government.

JANPAD Janpad forms the third elements of the state. The implication of Janpad defined in the Arthashastra implies both territory and population of because without the territory and the population a state can not exist.

FORTS (DURGA) For every state it is necessary to have safety and protection system. Therefore, Kautilya considered the forts as one of the main components of a state. Forts continued to play an important role in

the stability and consolidation of states, Many functions like secret war, the readiness of the army and fighting the enemy are to be carried out from the fort.

**KOSHA (TREASURY)** Kosha or Treasury is an extremely important resource. It is the backbone of any business. A strong and well managed treasury is the heart of any 12 organization.<sup>27</sup> Kosha or Treasury constitutes the fifth elements of Kautilya's state. Kosha or Treasury is necessary for the protection and maintenance of the state in general and army in particular. In his Arthashastra Kautilya has given utmost importance to public finance.

#### **DANDA OR ARMY**

Without a sound defense system there cannot be the existence of state. And for the defense of the state there should be a strong army. Therefore, it is very necessary that he constitute a strong army and use it for the internal and external threats. Kautilya has described the army as sixth aspect of the state.

#### **ALLIES-MITRANI**

Kautilya's concept of Mitra (ally) is based more on ethical considerations. Kautilya realizes that every nation acts to maximize its own interests and power. Alliances are only good so long as they appear in the best interest of both parties. However as soon as the balance of power shifts allies and enemies may become enemies.

Kautilya assigns his state to discharge the role of modern welfare state. The Hindu philosophy covered a vast and comprehensive area of the functions of the state. Arthashastra go further and entrust the state with all functions which covers all aspects of human life. Kautilya describes the many functions of state like defence, protection of individual life and property, justice, law and order, education, Sanitation, regulation of trade and commerce, road-building transport, management of forest exploration and 16 exploitation of mines and minerals, help to the poor and destitute. The state should not create conditions only for material welfare but it should also create conditions and foster such institutions which will enliven spiritual life of the individual, so that his life after death is also better for the betterment of the subjects of the state, the ruler is to undertake such Karmas or activities as sunganivesana. Settlement on virgin land, setubunda, building of dams and other irrigational works, providing postures for cattle, Vanikpatha, opening trade routes and ensuring safety of them. 37 In Kautilya state all these functions discharged through its various organizations and employes. These employes come from different sections of the society. But the king was infact, the pivot of the state. Kautilya has clearly stated that the king on appoint ministers, different officials and departmental heads or superintendents. The council was generally presided over by the king. Kautilya's concept can be compared with the modern concept of the state, because the Kautilya state was a welfare state, which aimed at the exploitation of all possible

resources for the benefit of the state and its citizens. The Kautilya state fully regulated the life of citizens.

## DANDANITI

### **The science of punishment and the science of government**

The system on which the comfort and development of the sciences of Anvikshaki, Trayi and Varta depend is known as Danda. It is the law of punishment for the government which is called Danda Niti. Danda Niti is the source to make acquisitions, to keep them safe, to increase them and entire world is depending on Danda Niti.

The concept of *dandaniti*, variously translated as the science of punishment, the science of chastisement, and in Dr Shamasastri's translation, even as the science of government may be better understood to be the imposition of the rule of law. *Dandaniti* is central to *Rajdharmā*—the morality of governance—and is discussed at length in the *Shanti Parva* of the Mahabharata. In the *Arthashastra*, Kautilya suggests why and how the rule of law ought to be applied.

The mechanism or policy that uses of Danda as the law of punishment or science of government is **dandaniti**. It is a means to make acquisitions, to



keep them secure, to improve them, and to distribute among the deserved the profits of improvement. Accepting the army as the most important part of a state, Kautilya, in order to constitute the army, has described the six components of the army, Firstly the clan army in which the son of soldiers becomes a soldier. Secondly the hired soldiers (hired troops). Thirdly the army constituted by the corporations. Fourthly the army formed with help of friendly countries. Fifthly the army formed with POW (Prisoner of War) i.e. soldiers of enemy country caught during war. The sixth type of army can be formed with tribal people. But Kautilya has given the great importance to the Clan army. Because the soldiers of this type are born soldiers. They have good relation with the king family. They are loyal to the king and obedient to the king. They are tolerant and are aware of different types of war strategies.<sup>32</sup> According to Kautilya, the state army should be given the best training and they should be provided with the best weapons. Soldiers should be fully satisfied especially when they are fighting in the field. For this purpose the king should try his best effort to meet soldier's needs. Army played an important role in the state. A good soldier should be loyal, adventurous, courageous, brave, well versed in military science, etc. This element, according to Kautilya consists of hereditary and hired soldiers comprising infantry, chariots, elephants and cavalry. Kautilya says the Kshatriyas constitute the main part of the army. But unlike Manu, Kautilya allows even the lower castes to join the army if an emergency arises. But according to Kautilya, the best army should be

strong, obediently and happy.33 officers in the army should have more of these qualities. Kautilya gives a good description of the organization of the army and military science.

When the law of punishment is retained in disuse, it causes increase to disorder as is suggested the proverb of fishes (big fishes always swallow small fishes); the strong man will swallow weak. But under the good protection, weak man opposes the strong man. Therefore king should use Danda as proper instrument and watch for duties of four castes and ashrams. Because of it people become loyal and devoted to the king. Three Sciences are dependent for their comfort on the Danda. It can produce security and stability to life.