

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN KAUTILYA'S ARTHASHASTRA

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ABSTRACT: *The Arthashastra, ancient Indian treatise specifying statecraft, economic policy and military strategy, written in Sanskrit by Kautilya, who is traditionally credited author and also called as Vishnugupta and Chanakya which summarizes the political thoughts of Kautilya. This paper contains information of specific topics that are relevant for the rulers who need to run an effective government. This paper also includes recommendations on taxation, infrastructure, trade, administrations and diplomacy. This paper explores the Kautilya's Arthashastra, an ancient Indian literature and its perspectives on organizational management today.*

Key Words: *Arthashastra, Irrigation, Infrastructure, Law, Recommendations, Taxation and War.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Arthashastra is the title of monograph written how to run an empire, written by Kautilya, popularly called as Chanakya (350-275 BCE) an Indian statesman and philosopher, chief advisor and Prime Minister of the Indian Emperor Chandragupta, who is the first ruler of the Mauryan Empire. The Arthashastra is a Sanskrit word which is referred to as 'The Science of Material Gain'. In other translations it is referred to as 'Science of Politics' or 'Science of Political Economy'. This book was lost for many centuries but a copy of it which was written on palm leaves, was rediscovered in India in 1904 CE. This edition actually belongs to approximately 250 CE, many centuries after the time of Kautilya, but it covers Kautilya's main ideas.

The manuscript of ideas expressed by Kautilya in this treatise are practical and are not sentimental. He explored about controversial topics like assassinations, decisions regarding punishing the family members, how to manage secret agents, when it is useful to violate treaties, and when to spy on ministers.

Due to this, Kautilya is mostly compared to the Italian writer named Machiavelli, who is the author of 'The Prince' and was also called as Indian Machiavelli. It is to mention that Kautilya's writing is not consistently without principles but also writes about the moral duty of the king. He mainly states the duty of a ruler is "The happiness and welfare of the people is the happiness and welfare of the king. His own pleasure is not his good but the pleasure of his people is his good".

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know the King's (ruler) roles and duties in governing the people.
- To study the ethical rules to be followed by the Ruler of the government mentioned in Kautilya's Arthashastra.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Arthashastra mentions a list of several components of the state: The king, the ministers, population, geography, natural resources, treasury, army, and allies. Kautilya explained these components and importance of strengthening these elements in one's kingdom and weakening them in the enemies' states by using spies and secret agents.

Kautilya was a pioneer in diplomacy and government administration. His thoughts was not only on coming up with practical advice for government, but also in providing his theories in a systematic and logical way. He says that the best king refers to the **Raja-rishi**, the sage king. According to him, the Raja-rishi has self-control, learns continuously and cultivates his thoughts, avoids false and flattering advisors and always associates with the true and accomplished elders, promotes the security and welfare of his people, enriches and empowers his people, practices ahimsa, lives a simple life and avoids harmful people or activities.

In Kautilya's view, the enemies of a king are his lust, anger, greed, conceit, arrogance and foolhardiness not others. Kautilya quotes government as "In the absence of governance, the strong will swallow the weak. In the presence of governance, the weak resists the strong."

"A person should not be too honest. Straight trees are cut first and honest people are screwed first."
- Chanakya.

Book 1 and 2 of the monograph discussed how the prince should be trained and after becoming the king should continue learning, select his key Ministers, officials, administration, staffing of the court personnel, magistrates and judges, maintain a council and a Purohit (spiritual guide) for his personal counsel.

"Education is the best friend. An educated person is respected everywhere. Education beats the beauty and the youth." - Chanakya.

Book 3 is dedicated to civil law, economic relations of employer and employee, partnerships, sellers and buyers.

"The biggest guru-mantra is: never share your secrets with anybody. It will destroy you." - Chanakya.

Book 4 focuses on criminal law, where the king or officials acting on his behalf, take the initiative and start the judicial process against acts of crime.

"A man is great by deeds, not by birth." - Chanakya.

Kautilya's Arthashastra describes a bureaucratic welfare state, though some kind of socialized monarchy, the central government administers the details of the economy.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Secondary Data:

- Articles published in various journals.
- Reports of researchers on Arthshastra
- Books written on Arthashastra by authors and translations of the book itself.

Research is conducted with the help of secondary data. Secondary data was collected from various articles, journals, papers and websites.

5. ECONOMIC IDEAS OF KAUTILYA IN ARTHASHASTRA

The essence of Kautilya's economic treatise Arthshastra, is to maintain a balance between state management and people's welfare. Kautilya was a great scholar. He defined "Economics as the most important aspect as it provides the basis for human existence and survival." He played a vital role in the formation of Maurya Dynasty. Kautilya's guidance helped empire to attain growth with stability with strong administration and efficient fiscal management.

5.1 KAUTILYA'S VIEW ON TAXATION

kautilya also coined that heavy taxation should be avoided. If tax rates are high, public will not be willing to pay the tax and find out the ways of tax evasion. Low rate of taxation will yield more revenue to the state.

5.2 KAUTILYA'S VIEW ON INFRASTRUCTURE

Kautilya considers infrastructure as one of the factor for the state development. Infrastructure is also important for promoting commercial and trade activities. He suggests that state should invest in transport infrastructure specially roads so that foreign trade and commercial activities can be increased and so that states revenue. Roads would be helpful in opening up new markets for both domestic and imported products.

5.3 PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN KAUTILYA'S ARTHASHASTRA

Kautilya's book gives a detailed daily schedule that how a ruler should organize his works. According to his view, the duties of a ruler should be organized as follows:

- First 90 minutes- After sunrise, the ruler should analyze the different reports regarding the revenue, military, etc.
- Second 90 minutes- Time for public disputes and problems.
- Third 90 minutes - Breakfast and some personal time.
- Fourth 90 minutes- Meeting with ministers.
- Fifth 90 minutes- For correspondence.
- Sixth 90 minutes- For lunch

There is a brief description of an exhausting schedule wherein the king has roughly four and half hours of sleep and the rest of the time is entirely involved in running the kingdom and thinking of welfare of his people.

6. CONCLUSION

Kautilya's Arthshastra provides valuable basis for economy. Even today, the Arthashastra is the number one classic of diplomacy in India and one of the most complete works of antiquity by Kautilya's ideas and thoughts. Kautilya states that "Arthashastra is a serious manual on statecraft, on how to run a state,

informed by a higher purpose, clear and precise in its prescriptions, the result of practical experience of running a state. It is not just a normative text but a realist description of the art of running a state".

The world we face today is quite natural to the world that Kautilya operated in". The policies of the government mentioned in Arthashastra clearly indicate that the ruler of the kingdom or the country should follow the duties assigned to him without fail for the welfare of the people.

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