Modern relevance of Kautilya’s education policy

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Abstract
The paper describes the education of the prince that follows the thought of Kautilya’s Arthashastra. It is by education that the Prince would become a worthy ruler in the future. Kautilya has advised and presented the education system that the caring of the prince starts from the early time. In addition, to that he was trained in such a way that he would become a good man in his life. To know the society, economy and the administration the prince was trained in the various sciences, such as philosophy, the three Vedas, economics, and science of politics. The paper also discusses the modern relevance of Kautilya’s education policy that can be followed in modern education system.

Keywords: Samskara, Juvenile delinquency, knowledge, training

Introduction
In the Indian intellectual tradition, Kautilya’s name is known with the school of politics in ancient India. He was instrumental in the destruction of the unjust Nanda king of Magadha in 324 B.C. in ancient India. In his supervision, the Maurya king Chandragupta built the vast empire whose frontiers were larger than that of modern India. Chandragupta was the first king who was the king of greater India, whose historicity is certified in context to the time of administration. He was the first king, who after unification of northern India extended his kingdom from the Himalayas to south Indian continent. Chandragupta Maurya did this all undertakings with the help of intelligent Kautilya, who was also his teacher. Kautilya’s Arthaśāstra is a unique contribution in the area of political science, which covers the administration, polity, economics, foreign policy, and public administration also. We can see from historical sources that, the empire built by the Chandragupta Maurya, and was expanded by his son Bindusara and his grandson the Ashoka following the policies of Kautilya.

Modern relevance of Kautilya’s Education Policy
In Indian society, from the earlier times for material and spiritual life, many types of learning systems were established. For the formation of good character and for taking various types of responsibility of family life and state administration, the proper education has been compulsory from ancient India. Development of society and the state is achieved by the means of education. If the society is educated, the development can be achieved easily. For example, we can see the growth of the service sector in the economy of present India. Among the well said sixteen Sanskāras, the Upanayan and the Vidyārambha Sanskāra, are related to the education. Kautilya describes the education of the prince and his training. To know the society, economy and the administration the prince was trained in the various sciences, such as philosophy, the three Vedas, economics, and science of politics.

To know the society very well he was trained in the three Vedas, the Rgveda, the Sāmaveda and Yajurveda. After learning the Vedas, he would become able to understand the respective duties of four Varnas and the four stages of the life. To know the economy of state he was trained with agriculture cattle rearing and trade and by that science he becomes able to brings under control his own party or elements as well as the party of the enemies by the use of treasury and army. To know the proper function of state he was trained with the science of administration, that made him able to acquire what has not been acquired, to safeguard what has been acquired, to augment what has been safeguarded, and to bestow what has been augmented on worthy recipients.
Earlier Teachers: For the uninterrupted administration process Kauṭilya prescribes for the training of the prince. It is said that, during the description of security of the king himself from the princes, because they have similar nature as the crabs, they eat their progenitors. In this respect, we found the discussion of others earlier teachers. They give opinion similar as the modern criminal expert gives. First of them the Bṛhadāvāja says that, if the king see the absence of love towards him he make them the subject of silent punishment. xi

After refuting this opinion the Viśālakṣa says that by making the princes a subjects of silent punishment is very cruel and it involves the killing of innocent and the destruction of the Kṣatriya race. Thus, in this case the best option is the confinement in one place. viii

The followers of Parāśāra says that, the confinement is like danger as from a snake. In this condition if the princes realize that my father is confining me because he afraid of my valour, then he might get his father himself under his power. Therefore, making him stay in a frontier fortress is the best option. xiv Here the Piśuna says that, it is like the danger from a fighting ram. After understanding the causes of his rustication, he may be availing himself of the opportunity to make alliance with the frontier chief, against the king. Therefore, it is better to throw him inside a fort belonging to a foreign king far away from his own state. ix The Kaunapadanta says here that, this puts him in the position of a calf, just as a man milks a cow with the help of its calf, so as the foreign king may milk (reduce) the prince’s father. Thus, it is better to make him stay with his maternal relations. xii The Vātavṛddhi says here that, this action puts him in the position of a banner. By the means of that banner, his mother’s relative would be making demands like Aditikauśikas. xiii Therefore, he should let him free to indulge in vulgar pleasures. When the prince is enslaved by pleasures, he will not turn hostile against his father.

Opinion of Kauṭilya

Kauṭilya here rejects all the opinions of earlier teachers as described above and says that, this is a living death. It is like a piece of wood eaten by worms, the royal family with its undisciplined princes would break without any attack. He prescribes that, when the queen attains the age favorable for procreation (Rtu or period), the priests should offer a Caru-oblation (Milk-rice) xv to the Indra and Bṛhaspati. When she is pregnant, a children specialist should arrange for the nourishment of the fetus and for the delivery. When she has given birth, the chaplain should perform the sacraments ceremonial for the son. When the prince attains the necessary age experts should train him.xv

One of the earlier teachers the Āmbha, xvi opines about to tempt the prince with hunting, gambling, wine and women and suggests him to attack his father (king) and seize the kingdom. In addition, acknowledge him also the side effects of this activity, and prevent for this. However, Kauṭilya here rejects the opinion of Āmbha, and says that, no greater crime or sin than making a wicked impression on the innocent mind, just as a fresh object is absorbs whatever it is brought in close association. It is like a new earthen pot that absorbs whatever put in at the first time. Similarly, the prince immature in intellect understands as the teaching of the science whatever he is told. Therefore, the king should instruct him in what accords with spiritual and material good, never anything that is spiritually and materially harmful.xvii

By this description, we can see that, the education of the prince starts since he born in this world. His caring starts before his coming into this world. To design the character of the prince Kauṭilya advises a process of training that can make him a very good person. For the welfare of the society and the state, being of a worthy character and intelligence of the princes is very important. If the prince is not virtuous then the declining of his kingdom is sure. However, in the present time, we can see the example of modern education. It has developed on the foundation of Macaulay’s system, which only gives importance to preparing a class of interpreters. Macaulay’s objective was to prepare a class that should be “Indian in Blood and colour, but English in the tastes, in opinion, in morals and intellect”. xvi He wants to make a class of brown Englishman, and we can see that he also got success in this policy. The present government has started the “Right to Education” but, all this system of education lacks something, and that is affecting badly to the new generation. However, we can see that, in the modern India, the crime graph is increasing very fast, especially juvenile delinquency, and we are in the state of incapability in controlling this. From the past few years, the juvenile delinquency graph is increasing and they are committing heinous crimes such as murder, rape, and armed robbery. xix In the present time, youth is under the influence of aggressiveness and bad tendency, the government, sociologists, and physiologists are in the condition of dilemma, after seeing this. In past few years and in present days also, we can see the newspaper reports, in which the topic of debate among union cabinet ministers is to make amendments in the juvenile justice act. xx Here, we can see that, the Kauṭilya’s ideas of proper training and caring from early times can bring change in the modern society of India.

Kauṭilya describes that, the training is twofold acquired and natural or inborn. Moreover, the training could be done only of a suitable object not an unsuitable. A knowledge system can train only someone whose intellect is endowed with these qualities, such as desire to learn, attentive listening, grasping, and retention, through understanding, reasoning, rejection of false views and intention on truth, and not anything else. However, the training and drilling in the knowledge system depends upon the authority of the teachers of each respective knowledge systems. xxi He prescribes to have constant association with elders in knowledge in order to improve his training, because it is the foundation of training. The continues study produces a keen intellect, a keen intellect produces practical application, and practical application produces the exemplary qualities of the self, and such is the capacity of knowledge systems. xxii Thus, the proper learning of knowledge system is said as the root of human happiness.xxx

Control over the senses, which is motivated by training in the knowledge systems and it is accomplished by giving up lust, anger, greed, pride, arrogance and over joy. In addition, the control over the senses comes from discrepancies in the perception of sound, touch, colour or visible forms, taste and smells by the means of the ear, skin, the eye, the tongue, and the nose, is what is meant by the restraint of the organs of the sense. The practice of knowledge systems gives such control over the senses. A person who has no control over his senses, quickly parishes, even though he is ruler right up to the four ends of the earth.xxxi

Kauṭilya has described the education of the prince. It is by education that the Prince would become a worthy ruler in the future. He has presented the education system that the caring of the prince starts from the early time. The prince was trained in such a way that he would become a good man in his life.
The earlier teacher’s opinions are extreme in its view, but Kautiya’s theory is similar as the modern English proverb “Precaution is better than cure”. So, he has advised for training from the early time to transforming the character of a child into a good man. We know that the modern India is a country of ‘Young Generation’, and they are the future of the country. If the earthen pot is deformed at the time of manufacturing or shaping at initial stage, then it will be in the same form until the time of its end. Therefore, the Kautiya’s theory of proper training of the young generation can change the status of modern society.

References

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6 “तेतर्यात्मकं पितुंबुः प्राप्तं। शुभं हि भूपमा।” The Kautiya Arthaśāstra. 1.7.6 P-23.
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10 Here the Aditi are said as beggars who beg by showing the statues of gods, and Kaśikā are that people who beg by showing the snakes. ज्ञात्वान् प्राप्‌तात् शेषां भक्षणे च वक्रायामवाचः तु भूमिकार्।” The Kautiya Arthaśāstra. 1.17.18-21 P-23.
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