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## 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.<sup>i</sup> Chandragupta Maurya did this all undertakings with the help of intelligent Kautilya, who was also his teacher. Kautilya's Arthashastra 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, then development can be achieved easily. For example, we can see the growth of the service sector in the economy of present India.<sup>ii</sup> Among the well said sixteen *Samskaras*,<sup>iii</sup> the *Upanayan* and the *Vidyarambha Samskara*, 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 Samaveda 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 bring under control his own party or elements as well as the party of the enemies by the use of treasury and army.<sup>v</sup> 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.<sup>vi</sup>

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**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 Bhāradvāja says that, if the king see the absence of love towards him he make them the subject of silent punishment.<sup>vii</sup> After refuting this opinion the Viśālākṣa 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.<sup>viii</sup>

The followers of Parāśara 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.<sup>ix</sup> 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.<sup>x</sup> The Kauṇapadaṅṭa 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.<sup>xi</sup> The Vātavyādhi 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.<sup>xii</sup> 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.<sup>xiii</sup>

### 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<sup>xiv</sup>) 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 ceremonials for the son. When the prince attains the necessary age experts should train him.<sup>xv</sup>

One of the earlier teachers the Āmbha,<sup>xvi</sup> 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.<sup>xvii</sup>

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".<sup>xviii</sup> 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.<sup>xix</sup> 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.<sup>xx</sup> 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.<sup>xxi</sup> 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.<sup>xxii</sup> Thus, the proper learning of knowledge system is said as the root of human happiness.<sup>xxiii</sup>

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 perishes, even though he is ruler right up to the four ends of the earth.<sup>xxiv</sup>

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 Kauṭilya'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 Kauṭilya's theory of proper training of the young generation can change the status of modern society.

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<sup>i</sup> Radhakumuda, Mookarjii "Chandragupta Maurya and His Times". Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi, 1988. P-15

<sup>ii</sup> In the Economic Survey 2014-15, in the GDP the total percent of service sector is 72.4%. Source, Economic Survey 2014-15.P-106 Vol-2.

<sup>iii</sup> Garbhādhān, Puṁsavan, Sīmāntonnayan, Jātakarma, Nāmakaṛaṇa, Niṣkramaṇa, Annaprāśana, Cūḍākarma, Karṇavedha, Vidhyārambha, Upanayana, Vedārambha, Keśānta, Samāvartana, Vivāha and Antyeṣṭi. These are the sixteen Samsakāras said by Ancient Indian Law makers. Jayashankara Mishra, "Prācīna Bhārata kā Sāmājika Itihāsa". Bihar Hindi Grantha Academy. Patana. 1999. P-285.

<sup>v</sup> कृषिपाशुपाल्ये वणिज्या च वार्ता,

धान्यपशुहिरण्यकुप्यविशिष्टप्रदानादौपकारिकी। तथा स्वपक्षं परपक्षं च वशी करोति कोशदण्डाभ्याम्। The Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra. 1.4.2.P-5.

<sup>vi</sup> आन्वीक्षकीत्रयीवार्तानां योगक्षेमसाधनो दण्डः, तस्य नीतिर्दण्डनीतिः अलब्धलाभार्था लब्धपरिरक्षणौ रक्षितस्यविवर्धनी वृद्धस्य तीर्थे प्रतिपादनी च। Ibid. 1.4.3. P-6.

<sup>vii</sup> तेषामजातलेहे पितर्युपांशुदण्डः श्रेयान् इति भारद्वाजः। Ibid.1.17.6.P-23.

<sup>viii</sup> नृशंसमदुष्टवधः क्षत्रवीजविनाशः इति विशालाक्षः।

तस्मादेकस्थानावरोधः श्रेयान् इति। Ibid. 1.17.7-8.P-23.

<sup>ix</sup> अहिभयानेतद् इति पाराशराः। कुमारो हि विक्रमभयान्मां

पितावरुणद्धि' इति ज्ञात्वा तमेवाङ्के कुर्यात्। तस्मान्तपाल दुर्गे वासः

श्रेयान्' इति। Ibid. P-23.

<sup>x</sup> औरभ्रं भयमेतद् इति पिशुनः। प्रत्यापत्तेर्हि तदेव कारणं

ज्ञात्वान्तपालसखः स्यात्। तस्मात्स्वविषयादपकृष्टे सामन्तदुर्गे वासः

श्रेयान् इति। Ibid.P-23.

<sup>xi</sup> वत्सस्थानमेतद् इति कौणपदन्तः। वत्सवेनेव हि धेनुं पितरमस्य

सामन्तो दुह्यात्। तस्मान्मातृबन्धुषु वासः श्रेयान् इति। Ibid.P-23.

<sup>xiii</sup> Here the Aditi are said as beggars who begs by showing the statues of gods, and Kausika are that people who beg by showing the snakes. यथा हि

अदितयो देवप्रतिमाकृतीः कौशिकाश्च सर्पान् ध्वजान् कृत्वान्नदिकं

भिक्षन्ते, तथा मातृबान्धवाः कुमारं निमित्तं कृत्वा स्वाभीष्टमर्थं

याचेरन्निति वाक्क्यर्थः। śrīmūlā commentary.P-86. Vol.1.

<sup>xiii</sup> ध्वजस्थानमेतद् इति वातव्याधिः। तेन हि ध्वजेनादितिकौशिकवदस्य मातृबान्धवा भिक्षेरन्। तस्माद् ग्राम्यसुखेनमवसृजेत्। सुखोपरुद्धा हि पुत्राः पितरं नाभिदुह्यन्ति इति। The Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra. 1.17.18-21.P-23.

<sup>xiv</sup> Patrick Olivelle, "King Governance and Law in ancient India". Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2013. P-89.

<sup>xv</sup> जीवनमरणमेतदिति कौटिल्यः। काष्ठमिव हि घृणजग्धं

राजकुलमविनीतपुत्रमभियुक्तमात्रं भज्येत। तस्माद्दुतुमत्यां

महिष्यामृत्वजश्चरुमैन्द्राबार्हस्पत्यं निर्वपेयुः। आपन्नसत्वायाः

कौमारभृत्यो गर्भभर्मणि प्रसवे च वियेतेत्। प्रजातायाः पुत्रसंस्कारं

पुरोहितः कुर्यात्। समर्थं तद्विदो विनयेयुः। The Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra. 1.17.22-27. P-23-24.

<sup>xvi</sup> सत्रिणामेकश्चैत्रं मृगयाद्यूतमद्यस्त्रीभिः प्रलोभयेत्, पितरि विक्रम्य

राज्यं गृह्णाण इति। तन्मयः सत्री प्रतिषेधयेत् इत्याम्भीयाः। Ibid. P-24.

<sup>xvii</sup> महादोषमबुद्धिबोधनमिति कौटिल्यः। नवं हि द्रव्यं येन

येनार्थजातेनोपदिह्यते तत्तदाचूषति। एवमयं नवबुद्धिर्यद्युच्यते

तत्तच्छास्त्रोपदेशमिवाभिजानाति। तस्माद्धर्म्यं चास्योपदिशेन्नाधर्म्यमनर्थं च।Ibid.P-24.

<sup>xviii</sup> B.L Grover, Alaka Mehata, Yashpal, "Aādhunika Bhārata kā Itihāsa; ek navīna mūlyāṁkan", S. Chnad and company Limited, New Delhi, 2012. P-255-6.

<sup>xix</sup> "More juveniles figure in grave crimes", The Hindu.30 November 2014. Madurai.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Madurai/morejuvenilesfigureingravecrimes/article6648372.ece>

<sup>xx</sup> "Cabinet nod for juvenile law changes". The Hindu, New Delhi, 23 April 2015. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/cabinetnodforjuvenilelawchanges/article7131004.ece>

<sup>xxi</sup> कृतकः स्वाभाविकः विनयः। क्रिया हिद्रव्यं विनयति नाद्रव्यम्।

शुश्रूषाश्रवणग्रहणधारणविज्ञानोपहृपोहत्वाभिनिविष्टबुद्धिं विद्या

विनयति नेतरम्। विद्यानां तु यथास्वमाचार्यप्रामाण्याद्विनयो नियमश्च।

The Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra.1.5.3-6. P-6

<sup>xxii</sup> नित्यश्च विद्या वृद्धसंयोगो विनयवृद्ध्यर्थम्, तन्मूलत्वाद्द्विनयस्य।-----

----- श्रुताद्धि प्रज्ञोपजायते प्रज्ञायाः योगो योगादात्मवत्तेति विद्यानां सामर्थ्यम्। Ibid. 1.5.11 and 16.P-7.

<sup>xxiii</sup> विद्या ददाति विनयं विनयाद्याति पात्रताम्। पात्रत्वाद्धनमाप्नोति

धनाद्धर्मः ततः सुखम्। Hitopadesa of Nārāyana Paṇḍita. 1.6.

<sup>xxiv</sup> विद्याविनयहेतुरिन्द्रियजयः कामक्रोधलोभमानमदहर्षत्यागात्कार्यः।

कर्णत्वगक्षिजिह्वाघ्राणेन्द्रियाणां

शब्दस्पर्शरूपरसगन्धेष्वविप्रतिपत्तिरिन्द्रियजयः, शात्रानुष्ठानं वा। कृत्स्नं

हि शास्त्रमिदमिन्द्रियजयः। तद्विरुद्धवृत्तिरवश्येन्द्रियश्चातुरन्तोऽपि राजा

सद्यो विनश्यति। The Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra. 1.6.1-4.P-7.