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Kautilya the most political philosopher

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Abstract

Kautilya - The crooked politician
Janapada - The country
Anvikasi - Philosophy
Varta - Economics
Dandaniti - Science of Government and politics
Swami - The king
Amātya - The minister
Durga - The fort
Kosha - Treasure
Mitra - Friend
Yogakshema - Welfare
Dharma - Raja dharma is the code of conduct or rule

Keyword: Kautilya, Janapada, Anvikasi, Varta, Dandaniti, Swami, Amātya, Durga, Kosha, Mitra, Yogakshema, Dharma

Introduction

Firstly, Acharya Kautilya has become inclined in flourishing a lot of glory in Mauryan Empire as an uncompetitive politician by virtue of great UN measurable personality and own his own fame and glory immemorial in Indian political history. Secondly, he has glorified himself as learned only in Sanskrit immense achievements. His name and fame have spread at every nook and corner of our sacred land named Bharatabarsa and even in puranic literature like poem, drama, story, and prose due to his outstanding achievement. Above all, destruction of Nanda Dynasty and foundation of mauryan dynasty everything has been described in Vishnupurāna. In his political and administrative ideas, the focus of attention was the king Kautilya who used power as a tool to control his society as well as his enemies. He thought for the smooth functioning of administration and for the welfare of the people, the King had to acquire the knowledge contained Trayi (The three Vedas-Rig, Yajur, Sām), Anvikasi (Philosophy), Varta (Economics) and Dandaniti (Science of Government and Politics). Kautilya's *Arthashāstra* is a draft constitution of an ideal state. Due to his political wisdom and diplomatic skills in empire building, Kautilya is called "Machiavelli of India." Kautilya work is primary book of political realism where state is paramount and king shall carryout duties to preserve his state.

Discussion

A) State: According to Kautilya, state is the supreme association. The state and kingship are based on good will. The king is their leader as well as head of the state and Government. Kautilya compares the state as an organic unit which had its constrictive units such as the King, (Swami) the ministers (Amātya), the Country, (Janapada) the fort, (Durga) the treasure, (Kosha) the army and the friend (Mitra). In the book of *Arthashāstra* translated by R. Ramshastry in prakarana 96, first chapter, the elements of sovereignty as defined in the beginning.

King: If a King were head, he should acquire the knowledge of Vedas, Philosophy, Economic and Science of Government and Politics.

Amātya: If amātya were eyes, he should be satisfactory in all respects.

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Janapada (Territory): Territory or Country should possess of capital cities, both in the centre and extremities of the Kingdom. People should live in comfort and peace. It is like a basic of a Kingdom and all burden remains on people, like feet bear the burden; hence they should be taken care of very diligently.

Durga: Durga the hands. As hand can be extended for friendship, they should be always ready to protect the body. So strong fort should be constructed on the boundaries of the kingdom.

Koṣha: Treasury is just like mouth. And whatever the body requires goes through mouth. So, whatever goes in the mouth should be fit for the body. Treasury should be filled with right earning of a person or his fathers.

Army: Army should be treated as heart of the body. All other parts are visible but it's a part, which is most important but can be felt only.

Mitra (Friend): A friend is like ears- they should be always loyal to King, may help in need, coming down from father and grandfather.

These are the seven elements of state.

Kauṭilya says, the king is a servant of the state. The king is the head of the entire governmental system. The king is the symbol of law, but not the law maker. Kauṭilya's view on the king, those who are well educated in Vedas and six angas, well versed in the science of government, skilful in reading portents, are capable of preventing calamities besides that Kauṭilya says, that duties of the king are countless, he cannot perform them efficiently, without assistance of others. Chāṇakya has advocated a high-class education for king, and his council of ministers, which are also very highly educated. Besides that, in another context he holds that wealth alone is important. Wealth can enable the king to do charity and fulfil desires. Kauṭilya's views on kingship is like that of the philosopher king of Plato. The king should have the best of both head and heart. The entire *Arthaśāstra* is addressed to the king, the sole ruler of the state. It is also decided that the king would relieve one six parts of the grains and one tenth of goods and money as his share from his subjects. This measure was adopted in order to ensure the wellbeing of the subjects. Thus, Kauṭilya attributes a divine status to the first king on earth. These kings are stated to have occupied the role of gods like Indra and Yama on earth. Punishment is given to those who exhibit their disrespect towards the king.

According to Kauṭilya a king who is in the making must observe celibacy till the age of sixteen. He should be well trained in the art of ruling by the aged teachers or gurus. The king should be well acquainted with all forms of martial of human beings. In other words, Kauṭilya's king are like that of the philosopher kings of Plato. The king should have best qualities of both head and heart.

The first and the foremost responsibility of the king is to protect the life and property of his subjects. It is also the duty of the king to save the people from anti-social elements and also from natural calamities such as fire, flood, earthquake and the like. It is widely believed that the happiness of the king lies in the happiness of his subjects.

To make a state ideal in this modern age the ministers of every department should follow the ideal norms of the *Arthashastra* Kauṭilya. If the principles are maintained as laid down on the *Arthasāstra*, the rulers will be benevolent and the subjects will undoubtedly be prosperous for which the entire state will be prevailed as peaceful as in the age of Chandragupta Maurya.

B) Welfare State

A welfare state is a concept of government in which the state plays a key role in the protection and promotion of the economic and social well-being of its citizens. It is based on the principles of equality of opportunity, equitable distribution of wealth and public responsibility for those unable to avail themselves of the minimal provisions for a good life. In other words, it is a social system by which the state assumes primary responsibility for the welfare of its citizens, as in matters of health care, education, employment and social security. Finally, it is a system in which the government undertakes the chief responsibility for providing for the social and economic security of its population, usually through unemployment insurance, old age pensions and other social security measures. Thus, the functions of the state are not only confined to provide protection of life and property; maintenance of peace and order; protection from external invasion or defence, dispensing justice; but make all efforts for the sake of providing good life to its citizens. In this direction, it has certain functions which, though not compulsory, but vital for a state to achieve the status of welfare state. These are physical welfare providing medical facilities, sanitation and conservancy services; educational provisions for schools, colleges, universities, etc; regulation of trade, industries and development of agriculture; social security provision for old age pension, maintenance of orphans, provision for employment, insurance for workers, sick and disability allowance, relief, rehabilitation of distressed people, etc; social and economic security [protection against old age. Unemployment, etc.

The concept of a welfare state, signifying a regime which seeks to ensure the maximum happiness of maximum numbers of people living within its territory, is by no means new. Several kings and emperors in the course of history have given the highest priority to the people's happiness and welfare, even as there have been numerous rulers in all ages who proved to be tyrants and concentrated all their efforts and most of the state revenues on their personal comforts and luxury. The state of Maurya's and Emperor Vikram Aditya, for instance, were largely a welfare state. The golden era of Emperor Chandragupta Maurya in the ancient days is an outstanding instance of the rulers establishing a truly welfare state in his life time. It is only possible by his multiple talented Amatyas, Kauṭilya, Chanakya or Vishnu Gupta. *Arthaśāstra* lays the conceptual foundation for making India the first welfare state. Kauṭilya advocates welfare in all spheres. He does not talk only about human welfare but pays attention to animal welfare also. He shall not consider as good as only that which pleases him but treats as beneficial to him whatever pleases his subjects. He advocates the protection of livelihood, of weaker section, consumer protection and even the welfare of prisoners also. The king's dharma is to just, fair and liberal in protecting his people. His attitude to his people should be like attitude of a father towards his children. Kauṭilya defined the ideal ruler as one who was ever active in promoting the welfare of the people and who endears himself by enriching the public and doing well to them.

As regards the concept of welfare state, Kauṭilya insists that there are three-fold obligations of king towards his people- Raksha [protection] pālana [administration] and Yogakṣhema [welfare]. Kauṭilya very distinctly laid down that the end of government is the welfare of the governed; 'in the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness, in their welfare, his welfare. This view lays emphasis on welfare of both human beings and animals. Kauṭilya's vision of good governance and its

relevance in the modern context has been summarized by Bata.K. Dey in the following words- 'Kautilya's principles for state administration were enunciated about 2300 years ago, bear a striking resemblance to modern welfare state model in respect of ideology, ideals, function, tasks, duties, socio-administrative organization etc. Another interesting aspect is the Kautilya's framework of governance which included programmers for advancement of weaker and vulnerable sections of the society and provision of many concessions and facilities more or less akin to those for backward segments of society in recent times. All this indicates how Kautilya's system of governance was quits modern in concept and contemporary in operational guidelines.

It is realized that the views of Kautilya regarding welfare state is adopted in India. Though it is in practice, sometimes it is felt that this scheme adopted for the economical up lift meant of the poor don't became properly fulfilled.

C) The Theory of Danda

In *Arthasāstra* of Kautilya, we notice a development of the theory of danda in three principal directions. In the first place he amplifies the older view of the function of danda 'in the general make-up. Danda, he says, is the means of ensuring security and prosperity of the three sciences, namely, sacred cannon [Trayi], philosophy [anvikṣkī] and Economics [vārtā], in fact danda is their root; the course of worldly affairs [loka-yātrā] depends upon daṇḍa, and therefore he who seeks this course should constantly be ready to apply danda. In other words, the application of danda is justified on the ground that it is the safeguard of man's worldly existence, while it ensures the fulfilment of his complex interests as represented by the three other traditional sciences besides politics. In the second place, Kautilya applies his deeper political insight to lay down a new technique relating to danda. The king who is severe in the application of danda. We are told, affects all creatures, and one who is mild in its application is overpowered by them, while one who justly inflicts it is respected by them. This implies that respect for authority is ensured by the just application of danda in contrast with its sever and mild application which leads respectively to the over throw and disregard of the same. Thirdly and lastly, Kautilya gives us a complete explanation of the function of danda by posting three alternatives. When danda is applied with sound knowledge of the canon, it confers the threefold end of life upon the people; When it is applied improperly under the influence of desire or anger or without knowledge, it affects even the forest-dwelling ascetics, not to speak of the house-holders; When it is not applied at all, it deals to the condition indicated by the maxim of the larger fishes devouring the smaller ones. All this means that while the lawful application of danda ensures the complete happiness of the individual, its unlawful or vicious application causes universal disaffection, and its non-application produces anarchy symbolized by the law of the jungle. The people of the four varnas and in the four stages of life, protected by the king with the daṇḍa (Rod) and deeply attached to occupations prescribed as their special duties, keep to their respective path.

D) Council of ministers and amātya

Whatever the qualities and qualifications the king may have, the Hindu king can never be regarded as approval and co-operation of the council of ministers. The law sutras, the law books and the political treatises are all unanimous on this point. Manu calls a king foolish who would attempt to carry

on the administration by himself. He regards such a king as unit. He lays down that the king must have 'colleagues', i.e., ministers; and that in their midst and along with them he has to consider ordinary and extra ordinary matters of state,⁴⁷ even ordinary business ought not to be done by one man, not to speak of the conduct of a kingdom. Yajnavalkya is of the same opinion and so are other law-gives. Kautilya, likewise, [although he is the greatest advocate of monarchy] has to say that matters of state should be discussed by the council of ministers and whatever the majority decides the king should carry out. It should be noted that this rule is enjoyed even when there is a body of mantrins or cabinet separate from the mantrī-parīṣada.

The *Arthasāstra* says: "When there is an extraordinary matter the mantrins and the mantrī parīṣada should called together and informed. In the meeting whatever the majority decides to be done, should be done by the king." It is remarkable that the king is not given even the power of vetoing. Kautilya in emphasizing the importance of the parishad says Indra was called "thousand-eyed", although he had only two eyes, because he had thousand wise members in his mantri-parisada who were regarded as his eyes. In the same way, Kautilya considers the appointment of the amatya [the officials] indispensable for carrying out the work of government, and gives a comprehensive scheme of their functions. Government, he says at the conclusion of one of his chapters, is possible with the help of assistance, a single wheel does not move; the king should appoint ministers and abide by their advice. The king's acts have to be performed simultaneously, they are numerous and they are scattered in different places, and therefore the king has to get his acts performed by the amatya lest there be a lapse regarding time and place. In other words, the amātya's office is justified by the impossibility of one – man rule and by the number as well as the wide distribution in space and time of the governmental functions. In the second place, Kautilya while criticizing the view which ranks the calamity of the amatyas above that of the rural area [janapada], explains the high importance of the amātya's functions. All administrative acts relating to the Janapada; such are the acts of ensuring its security and welfare against its internal and external enemies, remedying its calamities, colonization and improvement of its waste lands, and benefiting it through the collection of taxes and fines. This means that the amātya is the motive force behind the security and development of the heart of the kingdom, namely, its rural area.

E) Interstate relation

With regard to interstate relations in the *Arthasāstra* Kautilya it is found that the attitude of the subjects to the king at the time of natural calamities. Kautilya gives a solemn warning to the king against ill treatment of his 'subject' (Prajā) in the interest of his own security. Due to effect of calamities the subjects became poor and needy. At the time the king should not produce the causes tending to make the subjects poor, greedy and disaffected, but on the contrary he should counter act them immediately after their appearance. If the king does not take appropriate steps to extend the kind help to the effected peoples them a lead to his destruction either by themselves or by the enemy. In this situation it is to mention here that as a ruler the king should try to satisfy the effected subjects by means of food, clothes or any desired needs. While discussing the policy of a weak king towards his powerful aggressor, Kautilya says the weak king to take refuge with a still more powerful ruler, or else seek shelter in

an impregnable fort. According to him the weak king should adjust his policy of purchasing safety according to the types of conquerors such as the righteous, the greedy and demonize. To establish peace the weak king should make a compromise with the nature of the aggressor by making treatise or offering suitable piece of land or costly articles. The above ideas involve what may be called a dynamic conception of the goal of interstate relation. The objective of interstate policy is progressive advance from a condition of decline to that of equilibrium and then to that of progress.

In the light of the above analysis, we can easily understand the goal of interstate relation as given by Kauṭilya.

F) Good Governance

Governance generally encompasses all aspects of the way a country is governed, including its economic policies and regulatory framework. Kauṭilya had immense knowledge about various aspects of governance such as taxation, diplomacy, trade, business, administration etc. It is said that he had a fair knowledge of medicine and astrology as well. It is a treatise on political economy similar to Machiavelli's *The Prince* and hence he has been compared to Machiavelli by some and Aristotle and Plato by others. Kauṭilya speaks of the way a state's economy is organized, how ministers should be chosen, war conducted, and how taxation should be arranged and distributed. Emphasis is placed on the importance of a network of spies and informers which function as a surveillance corps for the king, focusing on external threats and internal dissidence. He takes a holistic approach to governance and explains several areas critical to the functioning of a country in depth. The main sections deal with National security and Foreign Policy, Administration of Justice, Policies related to economic development, Taxation, Labour Management and Financial Management. To him attainment of good governance requires that the objectives of the state are fulfilled and realized. This is possible through properly organized and guided administration. He suggests that good governance should avoid extreme decisions and actions. Decisions should be taken according to the situation. Picking on Kauṭilya's four-pronged approach to public finance and state planning, which is actually economics, monetarism and much more, based on "dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣha," the experts agreed that understanding human welfare was the cornerstone of *Arthaśāstra*, said to be the oldest and most exhaustive treatise on governance and administration of state in the world, which set forth theories of state craft and monetarism and also a code of civil and criminal law still relevant today. The *Arthaśāstra* equates political governance with economic governance. The end is economic governance while political governance is the means. But as economic objectives are not realized in the absence of political ones, then political governance becomes an end and economic governance the means. 'The end justifies the means'; this is supposed to be the basis of Kautilyan philosophy. Political power and material wealth are the means and ends of governance. And good governance-political or economic depends upon justifying the ends and means as the socio, economic and political conditions.

Both *Manusmṛiti* and *Arthaśāstra* have insisted that the state should assist and support the three-fold ideals (Dharma, Artha and Kama) to ensure the existence of Dharma. The concept of ancient Indian polity is being bound by 'Dharma' to ensure good and responsible governance to the people which is generally named as 'Rajadharma'. Rajadharma is the code of

conduct or rule of law that is superior to the will of the ruler and governed all of his actions.

Arthashastra is a reference for state administration concerned about welfare of the people. The idea is clear that the king should cultivate good feelings of his people (Prajās) very carefully.

When the entire life is based on the principle of Dharma, there is no relevance for stressing rights, liberty or its violation in Indian philosophy. According to Barhaspatya Sutra, the goal of polity (Rajaniṭi) is the fulfillment of Dharma, Artha, and Kama. The Karna Parva in the 'Mahabharatha' gives a clear explanation regarding the concept and importance of Dharma in social life.

Dharma sustains the society
Dharma maintains social order
Dharma ensures well-being and
Progress of humanity
Dharma is surely that which
Fulfills these objectives

Dharma is the principle of integration of individual in all areas of social life which stresses the idea of affinity and interdependence among themselves. The kind of attitude and practices has provided no space for any question of human rights violations. India is the only country in the universe contributed this great quality towards the success of democracy and governance.

Thus, Kauṭilya's work contains the most perfect, the most complete and the most important contribution on the subject of state and its policies made by our ancient thinkers. Kauṭilya in contrast with some of his radical predecessors based his fundamental ideas of society and the state upon the Smṛiti pattern, thus helping to rehabilitate the science of *Arthaśāstra* in the eyes of the Brahmana canonists. It is tempting to suggest that he thus "Contributed not only to the remarkable conception the superlative merit of Rājadharmā in the Mahābhārata, but also to that wholesale incorporation of the *Arthaśāstra* material into the old Smṛiti tradition which constitutes one of the most distinctive characteristics of the political and philosophical thought of Manu and Yājñavalkya as well as of Bhīṣma in the Great Epic".

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is proved that Kauṭilya was a prominent political philosopher, because he did not exclude religion in politics. He could establish the ideal Mauryan state by dint of religion and politics.

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