

The Importance of The **Arthashastra** of Kautilya In the field of Researches

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In the series of our rare text such as – **Shatapatha Braahmana**, **Nirukta** of Yaaska, **Ashtadhyayee** of Paaninee, **Mahaabhaashya** of Patanjali, **Kaamsootra** of Vaatsyaayana and **Kaavya-Meemaasha** of Rajshekhar; the **Arthashastra** of Kautilya is a milestone in the field of researches. Basically, this text is known as a master-piece work in the discipline of Political Science, but its contents provide a multi-dimensional source for different disciplines along with Economics.

The composer of **Arthashastra** pays a great respect to the ‘Brihaspati’ and the ‘Shukra’ as the prominent scholars of this subject in the early beginning of his text¹. The first sootra of this text contains the statement that the present **Arthashastra** was composed mostly by bringing together all treaties on this subjects written by earlier teachers². The work is thus declared to be a compilation made from earlier works on the subjects. This description of the text is not incorrect. There is no doubt that it is based on earlier sources and is not an original work in the sense that author has thought out everything contained in it independently. The nature of its large contents, which required thorough knowledge of many diverse subjects makes it unlikely that any single author, howsoever gifted, could have produced this work by relying.

There is a fact that the text refers to a number of earlier authorities and mention what are apparently opinions held by them. There are more than one hundred places in the **Arthashastra** where such types of opinions are described by Kautilya. About twenty-five of these cases, the opinions are attributed to schools of the ‘shaastra’ (subjects), namely the ‘Baarhaspatyas’ (in six times), the ‘Ausanas’ (in seven times), the ‘Maanavas’ (in five times), the ‘Paaraasharas’ (in six times) and the ‘Aambheeyas’(once). In about thirty places, the opinions are ascribed to individual scholars concerned with different subjects. The opinions of ‘Bhaaradvaaj, (seven times), ‘Vishaalaaksha’ (six times), ‘Pishuna’ (five times), ‘Kaunapadanta’ (four times), ‘Vaattvaadhi’ (five times) and ‘Baahudantiputra’ (once) have been used by ‘Kautilya’. In more than fifty cases, the opinions are attributed to ‘Aachaaryah’ (the scholars), a term referring to most or all of these predecessors, ‘Eke’ (opinion of one scholar) and ‘Apare’ (opinion of others).

The references regarding above-mentioned scholars are not discussed only in the **Arthashastra** but their name and arguments regarding different subjects were also used in the **Mahaabhaarata**, the **Buddhacharita** and the **Tantraakhyaayika**. According to **Mahaabhaarata**, the knowledge of this subject was taught to Indra by Brihaspati³. The work

and name of this scholar also mentioned in **Buddhacharita** along with the name and work of Shukra⁴. The famous scholar of this subject Shukra is mentioned as the other names of Ushanaa⁵ and Bhaargava⁵ in many places of our different texts. Brihaspati also mentioned in our text as Vaachaspati⁷, while Manu mentioned as Pracheta-Manu⁸.

The conflicting opinions of the various schools of 'Arthashastra' are mentioned in many places. The opinion of the 'Manavaas', the 'Baarhaspatyas' and the 'Aushanas' concerning the numbers of 'vidyaas' (lores or sciences) are stated as:-

- a) According to the followers of Manu – the three Vedas, Economics and the Science of Politics are only sciences⁹.
- b) According to the followers of Brihaspati - Economics and the Science of Politics are the only sciences¹⁰.
- c) According to the followers of Ushanaa – the Science of Politics is the only science and further all discipline derived from it¹¹.

But all of these opinions are rejected in favour of Kautilaya's own opinion. According to him – 'Philosophy, the three Vedas, Economics and the Science of Politics are the only four sciences'¹². Since with their help one can learn, what is spiritual good and material well-being, therefore the sciences or 'vidyaas' are so called. Samkhya, Yoga and Lokaayata are the streams of Philosophy. Investigation, by means of, what is spiritual good and evil in vedic lore, material gain and loss in Economics, good policy and bad policy in the Science of Politics, as well as the relative weakness and strength of these three sciences, Philosophy confers benefit on the people, keeps the mind steady in adversity and in prosperity and brings about proficiency in thought, speech and action. Philosophy is ever-thought of as the lamp of all sciences, as the means of all actions and as the support of all laws and duties¹³.

Further, the different opinions of these schools regarding with the question of the numbers of 'Amaatyas' to be appointed in the 'Mantriparishada' are mentioned in the **Arthashastra**¹⁴ as -

- a) According to the followers of Manu – the king should appoint a council of 'twelve' ministers.
- b) According to the followers of Brihaspati – the number of ministers should be 'sixteen'.
- c) According to the followers of Ushanaa – the number of ministers should be 'twenty'.

But all of these opinions were rejected in favour of Kautilya's opinion. He says, "The matter must depend on the capacity and necessasity of the king".

The views of these three schools together with that of the 'Paaraashars' are mentioned in connection with the punishment to meted out to officers who cause loss of revenue to the State as¹⁵ :-

- a) According to the followers of Manu – the fine is *as much as the loss of money increased by one-fold in succeeding case*.
- b) The fine must be *eight times of the loss of revenue*, according to the followers of Paraashara.
- c) The fine must be *ten times of the loss of revenue*, according to the followers of Brihaspati.
- d) It must be *twenty times*, according to the followers of Ushanaa.

Kautilya again adds his own views and says, “The fine shall be in conformity with the offence”.

The opinions of previous scholars mentioned and rejected in favour of Kautilya’s opinion in many places regarding different subjects, while the opinion of the ‘Baarhaspatyas’ regarding punishment for abetment ‘saahasa’ is stated and only modified by him¹⁶.

The opinions of different earlier scholars regarding with the question of the ‘Appointment of Ministers’ in **Arthashastra** are well-discussed. According to Brihaspati – “The king should make his fellow students his ministers because their integrity and capability being known to him”. But some earlier scholars like as - vishaalaaksha, Pishuna, Kaunapadanta, Vaatavyaadhi, Baahudantiputra and the followers of Paraashara are not agree with this idea and express their views in different ways. After quoting the views of these teachers, Kautilya says – Everything stated above is justifiable. For, from the capacity of doing work is the ability of a person to be judged and accordance with their ability, suitably distributing works among the ministers and assigning place, time and work to them; he should appoint all these as ministers not however as councilors¹⁷.

The opinions of Bhaaradwaaja, Vishaalaaksha, the followers of Paraashara and Pishuna regarding with the question of ‘Appointment of Councilors’ are also mentioned by Kautilya . Here, again each later authority criticizes the opinion of only the last-named Pishuna¹⁸.

Kautilya also discusses about a lot of new topics in the **Arthashastra** independently. He says, “Discipline is twofold – acquired and inborn”. For, training disciplines suitable stuff not unsuited¹⁹. Again he says – training and discipline in the science are acquired by accepting the authoritativeness of the teachers in the respective science²⁰. In the discussion regarding with the topic of “science”, he says – A science imparts discipline to one, whose intellect has the qualities of the desire to learn, listening to teachers, learning, retention, thorough understanding, reflection, rejection and intentness on truth and not to any person²¹.

As we know, “Research is the activity undertaken to bring out something new, to extend the horizon of knowledge and to contribute some original idea. It is an attempt to make a diligent and systematic inquiry or investigation into a subject, in order to discover facts or revise the known facts in the theories”. In other words, Research involves interpretation,

elaboration, explanation, evaluation and critical examination of known facts and a Researcher simply adds some new information, some new facts or ideas. Kautilya always use the aforesaid norms of research in his grand departure. Therefore, the **Arthashastra** of Kautilya always guide researchers as a complete research the book.

References:-

1. **The Kautilieya Arthashastra**, Part I, Ed.- K.P.Kangle, Motilal Banarsidas Pvt. Ltd.
2. **Ibid**, 1.1.1
3. **Ibid**, Part III, page- 7
4. **Ibid**
5. **Ibid**
6. **Ibid**
7. **Ibid**, p-118
8. **Ibid**, p- 8
9. **Ibid**, Part I, 1.2.2
10. **Ibid**, Part I, 1.2.4
11. **Ibid**, 1.2.6
12. **Ibid**, 1.2.1; 1.2.8
13. **Ibid**, 1.2.9-12
14. **Ibid**, 1.15.47-50
15. **Ibid**, 2.7.11-15
16. **Ibid**, 3.17.11-14
17. **Ibid**, 1.8.1-29
18. **Ibid**, 1.15.13-27
19. **Ibid**, 1.5.3
20. **Ibid**, 1.2.6
21. **Ibid**, 1.5.5

ABSTRACT

The **Arthashastra** of Kautilya is a master-piece work in the field of Political Science. Before the Kautilya, a strong tradition of this subject was in existence. The subject Arthashastra was also famous by the name of Raajashastra or Dharmashastra. Shukra, Brihaspati, Manu, Paraashar, Vishaalaaksha, Pishuna, Kaunapadanta, Baahudantiputra & Vaatavyaadhi were some prominent scholar before Kautilya and their thoughts regarding different topics were practiced by their descendant pupil. During the discussion of techniques regarding good-governance, Kautilya usually takes a systematic investigations, critical examination of known facts delivered by the previous scholars and then adds some new ideas or facts where does he need. He also adds some new topics and extends the horizon of the subject. Therefore, the **Arthashastra** of Kautilya not provides only the source of studies to multi-discipline but it also inspires us that how can we take research and how can we contribute new findings to the subject properly.