

# ARTHASHASTRA

Kautilya was a minister in Chandragupta Maurya's court in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, Arthashastra is published by Shama Shastri in 1909. He was more **realistic thinker** than Manu. His thought is departure from earlier traditions of supremacy of religion or (Dharma). Kautilya gave greater precedence to economic prosperity above any other activities. He wrote a book 'Arthashastra' which is excellent book on statecraft, polity, administration and strategy.

## Secular Thought

Kautilya gave primacy to **Artha over dharma**. He believes that state and king came into being to control economic activities of individuals. According to Kautilya, Artha implies livelihood of people. Arth also refers to the virtue derived from acquiring of wealth and material prosperity i.e., acquisition of territory. Artha is an integral part of polity.

Arthashastra is a realistic book on statecraft because it rejected the concept of divine laws. He held king as sovereign institution and law made by him is supreme. Kautilya freed king from all moral obligation of ancient period. He believes that kings only duty was to ensure Welfare of its subjects. And provide security of state. Kautilya believes in monarchical kingship rather than on democracy or aristocracy. His views are closer to modern European thinker Machiavelli.

## A Moral Politics

Although Arthashastra is the book of statecraft and polity, the king's duty is to promote welfare to all its subjects. The king is not expected to be despotic and rule against the wishes of its subjects. He therefore believes that only Kautilya says that sham (peace) Dam (concession) Bheda (divide and rule) and Danda (Punishment) can be applied for maintaining security of state. **End justifies the means**. Morality is secondary to politics. Moral principles are not applicable our King. Nevertheless he said that subjects should follow the moral principles. He is not against the morality. He also utilize moral principles for the power and security of the state. It is better to say Kautilya **a-moral than immoral**. For him, there are two parameter of morality one for subjects, second for King. Thus Kautilya's view is natural towards morality. He accepted separation between politics and morality.

## Social views

Social system is similar of Dharmashastra. Kautilya also believes four fold **Varna system**. Four highest aims of life-that is **Parusarth**, four Ashrams. Thus, his classification of Varnas is more liberal than that of Manu. However, he believes in supremacy of Brahmins and was in favour of lesser punishment to Brahmins for committing same crime.

## Contract theory of origin of State

According to Kautilya, when **Masty Nyaya** prevailed, big fish swallow smaller one Thus, there was complete anarchy and instability under **Masty Nyaya**. Kautilya took help of social contract to liberate people from anarchy. Where people pledged to pay 1/6 of food grains and one-tenth of other goods as a tax to King.

Like Aristotle, Kautilya also believed in **organic theory of state**. He believes that like organs of body, each element of state are inseparable and incapable of independent existence. There is harmony among different organs of state and each element is integral part of state. State is comprised of seven element. State is comprised of Swami (King) Amatya (Minister) Kosh (treasury), Janapad (district), Durga (fort) Mitra (allies) and Danda (Punishment).

## Nature of State

It is organic state similar to Manu. Seven elements of state or like the seven organs of the human body. A healthy body cannot be imagined without healthy organs. Similarly strong state requires strong elements of state. If one element of state is weak then it will hamper the growth of entire state.

## Welfare State (Yogakshema)

Yoga refers of ascendance of resources. Kshema denotes utilization of resources for the well-being of the people. Objective of state is the happiness of the people. (Prajaranjan) prosperity of the people is essential for the well-being of the state. King gets more taxes from the wealthy subjects. Yogakshema is both moral and material development of the peoples.

## King

Kautilya has given high accordance to position of king, just like brain is most important part of human body. For Kautilya King Swami is head of the state. Kautilya, said that King should have complete knowledge of Vedas, Arthshastra and Dandaniti. He should also be master in technique of state craft. He should have highest quality of leadership and should possess intellect, energy. According to Kautilya, a ruler should have following qualities:-

1. **Abhigamika:** - Ability to win heart of people and inspire patience etc.
2. **Pragyaunas:** - Intellectual abilities like ability to learn, understand and discuss.
3. **Utsahgun:** - Which includes acts of bravery, quickness of decision making, assiduously.

The king should be truthful, resolute, enthusiastic, disciplined and should possess lofty aims. He should be free from vices.

- **Amatya:** Amatya is second element of state. According to Kautilya, Amatya and King are like two wheels of vehicle. Arthshastra reminds that King could succeed. If he is assisted by competent councillors (Amatya) to guide him. Kautilya believes that number of ministers should not be fixed but it should be determined by requirements. According to Kautilya, a Minister should possess following qualities-
  - a) Born in Noble family.
  - b) Skilful
  - c) Clever
  - d) Influence
  - e) Dignity and endurance

- f) Firm and loyal devotion
- g) Pure in character
- h) Endowed with excellent conduct, strength, health, bravery.
- i) Free from qualities like hatred enmity etc.

## Kosh (Treasury)

Kosh is extremely important element in Kautilya's organ of state. Kautilya believes that augmentation of power of state is dependent upon augmentation of Kosh (treasury). Strong army can be raised only through strong treasury.

The foremost duty of king is to keep the treasury of the state full and prosperous. The state should also maintain emergency fund to meet emergency like situation. Kautilya propounded three types of taxation.

1. **Theory of Maturity:** - The state should not impose tax on any industry at its infancy.
2. **Theory of rarity:** - Those commodities which are extremely essential for state should be made tax- free.
3. **Theory of Tax-Exemption:** - According to Kautilya, certain activities like yagnya etc should be exempted from taxation because of their importance in life.

**Danda:** According to Kautilya, the existence of state is dependent upon sound defence system with appropriate Danda. It is also an instrument of preservation and augmentation of wealth and power of the ruler. Kautilya prescribes different punishment for different crimes. He supported severe punishment for severe crime. The punishment included executions, economic sanction etc. However, he prescribes lesser punishment for same crime to people of higher caste. In order to implement Dandaniti, maintenance of strong army is necessary.

**Durg:** Fortification is important to ensure safety and security of state. It is capital of state. Kautilya's classifications of forts are follows:-

- a) Audak Fort (Surrounded by water)
- b) Parvat Fort (Surrounded by mountain)
- c) Danuk Fort (Surrounded by deserts)
- d) Van Fort (built in dense forest)

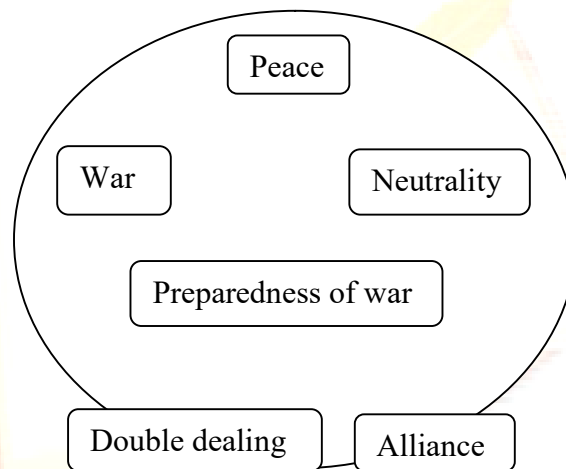
**Janpad:** The word Janpad in Arthashastra implies both territory and population. According to Kautilya, Gram will be smallest unit of state headed by Gramik. All dispute in Gram will be resolved by the Gramik and boundary dispute shall be resolved by **Panchgrami**, a group of 10 villages (sangrah). The Janpad should be prosperous and land should be fertile.

**Mitra:** (Ally) comprehensive description about Danda and Mitra is available in Mandal theory. Kautilya has emphasised on **necessity** of having reliant Mitra.

## Six Principles of diplomacy:

Kautilya is a realistic thinker state should maximize its strength and security. Kautilya gave six forms of diplomacy which king should apply to strengthen the power of state and defend its existing frontiers.

1. **Sandhi (peace):** - It is accommodation or convergence of interests on any issue among different states it stands for policy of peace.
2. **Vigraha (Hostility):** - It means pursuing hostile foreign policy towards states.
3. **Yana:** - Mobilisation of army.
4. **Aasan:** - Sitting quietly and consideration over various options.
5. **Samsarya:-** It is a policy of protection, weak state seeks protection of strong state.
6. **Duaidhibhava:-** It means perusing dual strategy foreign policy of allying with one state and enmity with another state.



## Four Upayas (Strategies) of diplomacy:

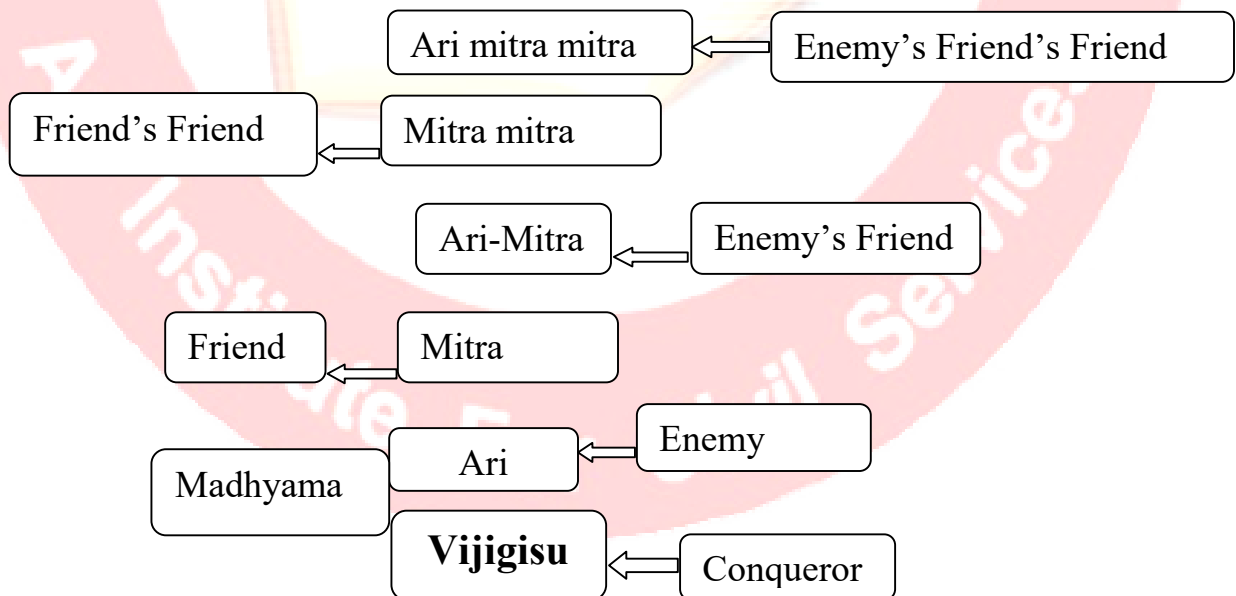
- a) **Sama (conciliation):** - This is a policy of conciliation which can be adopted in dealing with stronger king.
- b) **Dam (concession):** - It is a policy of appeasing stronger king.
- c) **Danda (use of force):** - This policy can be used against weaker states in order to coerce them.
- d) **Bheda (divide and rule):** - Promoting internal diversion within state.

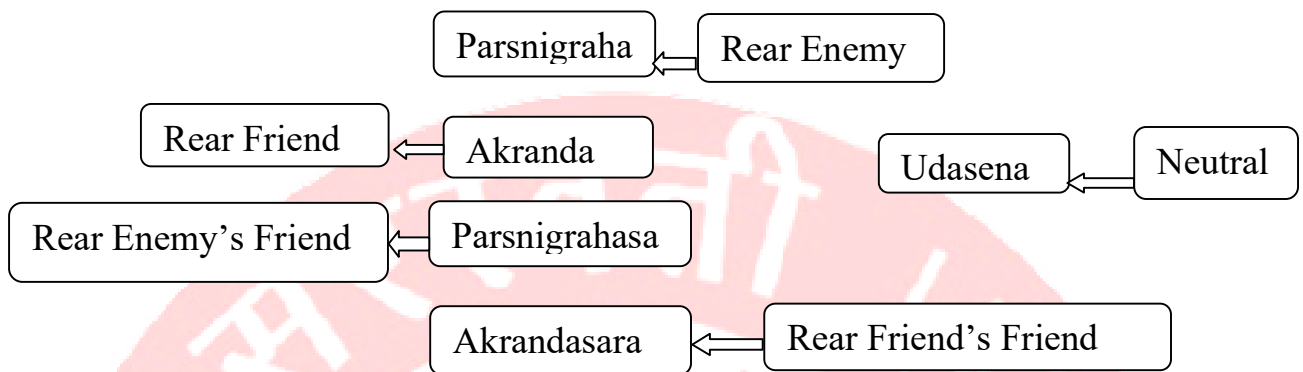
## Mandal Theory

Mandal is a group of states. Where states makes relation with each other according to their national interest. The Mandal is hypothetical concept in which there are circle of friends and foes. It is based

on geographical assumption that the immediate neighbour is most likely to be an **enemy**. And the state next to the immediate neighbour is likely to be Friend. Its salient features are: -

1. **Vijigishu**: The potential conqueror King. Kautilya calls a king Vijigishu. Thus, King occupies central position in the circle.
2. **Ari**: The immediate neighbour of Vijigishu who is his enemy.
3. **Mitra**: The next neighbour to Ari or enemy. The enemy's neighbour is King's friend.
4. **Ari Mitra**: The next state adjacent to the Mitra who is enemy to Vijigishu but friend to Ari.
5. **Mitra Mitra**: The next state adjacent to Ari Mitra is Mitra's friend and Vijigishu ally.
6. **Ari-Mitra-Mitra**: It is friend to Ari-Mitra. He is ally to Ari and enemy of Vijigishu.
7. **Parshinigraha state**: The state lies behind Vijigishu state.
8. **Akranda**: The next Kingdom, the ally in the rear is called Akranda.
9. **Parashimgrahasara**: The friends of the enemy or the next kingdom in rear are the Parashimgrahasara.
10. **Akarndasara**: The friend's friend in the rear.
11. **Madhyama or (intermediary)**: It is more powerful than Ari or Mitra. Madhyama or intermediary is the one of who occupies a territory close to both conqueror and his immediate enemy.
12. **Udasin**: Geographical condition is not defined for Udasin. It is most powerful state, in the galaxy of Mandala.





### Mandal theory and Kenneth Waltz -

Kautilya explain the International politics on the basis of International structure. Kautilya analysis of International Politics is not based on human nature. Similarly Kenneth Waltz believes in the structural realism which means the foreign policy of state is shaped by structure International relation. We can find out interesting similarities between Kautilya and waltz. Kenneth Waltz in 1979 wrote 'Theory of International politics' in which he told about anarchy in international relation due to absence of any international organization to control them. Thus, state is supreme institution engaged in maximizing their power. Kautilya also compares international relation with Mandal theory where state being basic unit is interlinked with one another. The **capacity** of each and every state varies and there is a struggle among state to maximize their power and security.

### Administration

Kautilya identifies five elements of good administration, viz, the appropriate means to start undertakings, the excellence of men and materials, allocation of place and time, provision against failure and accomplishment of work. Fear, duty and interest, are among a number of motives behind the act of obedience to the orders of an administrator. Kautilya believes that good governance is only possible with the cooperation of the people as well as of the bureaucracy.

### 18 Tirthas

1. Minister
2. Priest
3. Commander of Army
4. Prince
5. Chief of Palace Attendants
6. Chief of the King's Guards
7. Magistrate
8. Collector General
9. Chief Treasure
10. Commissioner

11. Town Guard
12. Chief of the Town
13. Superintendent of Mines
14. Chief of the Council of Ministers
15. Officer of the Army Department
16. Guardian of the Forts
17. Officer-in-charge, Boundaries
18. Officer-in-charge, Forests

### **Local Administration:**

Another distinctive feature of the administrative system is the marked preference for a decentralized polity. There are indications that a Janapada is to contain 800 gramas with a sthanika at its centre. It is also mentioned that a Samahartr (Collector General) should divide the Janapada into four divisions for revenue and administrative purposes. Under the sthanika, there are junior officers called gopas each in charge of five or ten villages. With their help, the samahrta is to maintain a record of all towns and villages. The gopa is responsible for maintaining a record of all agricultural and other holdings in the village, census etc. For maintaining order, the samahrta has the pradestrs who are stationed at the headquarters of the gopa and sthanikas. They operate both as revenue and police officers.

Next down the hierarchy is the village headman who is referred to as the gramika. Power in the rural areas was to be centred in the hands of the samaharta with subordinates spread over the country side. Decentralization in Arthshastra was for administrative convenience and efficiency alone. One cannot deduce a notion of village democracy from a reading of the scheme. Cities should be kept neat and clean. Kot-Palla was the officer-in-charge of the city and the Administrator was called Nagaradhyaksha. Each city was divided into 4 parts and each one was headed by a Sthanik assisted by a junior officer called gopa. Each looked after 20 houses. Nagarakas were to maintain peace and keep an eye on the income & expenditure of residents and foreigners. They were to take possession of unclaimed property and see that epidemics don't spread, maintain sanitary conditions and keep record of births and deaths. They could set up committees to take care of separate things like, collect taxes, maintain market standards, export and import of goods from cities etc.

The affairs of the village were looked after by the Sangrahana. Every 200 villages constituted a Kharwatika, 400 constituted a Dronamukha and 800 constituted a sthania. Villages had maximum autonomy. Villages were run by Gramiks and gopas. They negotiated with the central government for getting development plans approved. Both gramiks and gopas were state employees posted in the village.

Kautilya says that the source of financial strength of state is the mining industry and the state exercise power because of its treasury. Kautilya analyzed high degree of functional specialization and structural differentiation. 34 various departments of govt. and their respective heads is

propounded by Kautilya. Romila Thapar says Kautilya described about ministers and council of minister.

Kautilya's 'Arthshastra' is excellent treatise on administration. There is detailed description about entire administrative machinery of state, including requirements of officials, numbers of departments, auditing system etc. There were wide ranges of departments including trade, weights and measures, agriculture, mining etc. The officials were recruited on the basis of nobility.

The promulgation of laws and adjudication of justice was very important work of state. Arthashastra reveals us about full-fledged and developed judiciary. The king was regarded as fountain of all justice. The king was expected to be strictly impartial in administering Justice according to law. Responsibility of King is to protect people from various forms of corruption. According to Kautilya, the state functions have different dimension. It has to protect the Dharma, administer justice and promote interest of people. Kautilya puts number of restrains on activities of the king.

### Spy system

Kautilya has paid special attention towards arranging spy system. It helped in exposing any form of discontentment against state by officials or by people. Kautilya has maintained nine types of spies who disguised themselves as farmers, sadhus, students and servants to execute their jobs.

### Machiavelli and Kautilya

Both Machiavelli and Kautilya are realistic thinker. There are many similarities found in Kautilya's and Machiavelli's thought.

1. **Statecraft:** Prince and Arthashastra is treaty devoted for statecraft. How King should rule over the people. Means by which state becomes strong. Machiavelli said that every state is a potential every. Kautilya argued that King should keep four wings of army.
2. **Secular State:** State wants to maximise their power. Security of state is priority of Machiavelli. Prince should not believe in **fortune**. Kautilya also supports the policy of sam, dam, Bheda and Danda.
3. **A-Moral Politics:** Machiavelli argued that end justify the means. Prince is entitled to adopt any means for strengthening the state. Kautilya said that King is not bounded by Dharma.
4. **Realism:** Machiavelli always advocated that Prince should know **art of war**. Prince should not rely on mercenaries' army. Kautilya describes six tactics for King. King should use these strategies on right occasion. Apart from above mentioned similarities. We can point out various differences too -
  - a. Kautilya's thought is more comprehensive. It includes political, economic diplomacy and administration. However Prince focuses over statecraft.
  - b. Machiavelli, wrote **Discourses**. He said that republican form of government is best, Kautilya argued in favour of monarchical form of government.



- c. Machiavelli secularism, was inspired by strong and powerful Church of Italy. However, Kautilya was looking for replacement of Nand dynasty.

