

***Arthashastra: Assessing the Relevance of Military Strategy  
of the Ancient Indian Treatise in 21<sup>st</sup> Century***

A Dissertation Submitted to the Panjab University, Chandigarh  
For The award of Master of Philosophy in Social Sciences, in  
Partial Fulfilment of the requirement for the  
Advanced Professional Programme in Public Administration (APPPA)

BY

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UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF

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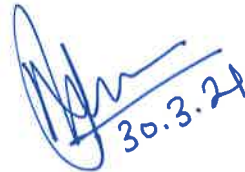
**46<sup>th</sup> Advanced Professional Programme in Public Administration  
(2020- 21)**

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**CERTIFICATE**

I have the pleasure to certify that **Brig D R Rai, VSM** has pursued his research work and prepared the present dissertation titled '*Arthashastra: Assessing the Relevance of Military Strategy of the Ancient Indian Treatise in 21st Century*' under my guidance and supervision. The dissertation is the result of his own research and to the best of my knowledge, no part of it has earlier comprised any other monograph, dissertation, or book. This is being submitted to the Panjab University, Chandigarh, for the purpose of Master of Philosophy in Social Sciences in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Advanced Professional Programme in Public Administration of Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi.

I recommended that the dissertation of **Brig D R Rai, VSM** is worthy of consideration for the award of M. Phil degree of Panjab University, Chandigarh.



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my guide Dr Neetu Jain for the continuous support, generous guidance, patience, motivation, enthusiasm, and immense knowledge for conducting this study in a short period of time. Her guidance helped me during the research and writing of this dissertation.

I would also like to thank the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) for providing the opportunity to select a very relevant topic for my dissertation and providing the infrastructural facilities to complete the research. I want to thank the IIPA library staff for the kind cooperation and making the required books/ articles available. I am grateful to all the subject experts for giving valuable comments during the research proposal presentations which have helped me a lot in conducting this research work. I would like to thank our Course Coordinators Dr Charru Malhotra and Dr Pawan Taneja for creating a very conducive and pleasant environment and providing time in unique online APPPA 46 Course conducted in challenging COVID 19 times. I would also like to thank the APPPA office staff Mr Anil Sharma, , Shri Manish Rawat and Shri Rajesh for providing the support.

Finally, I must thank my wife Nirupa, and sons Satyarth and Shivarth for their tremendous support during entire online APPPA particularly during the research work.

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**ARTHASHASTRA: ASSESSING THE RELEVANCE OF MILITARY  
STRATEGY OF THE ANCIENT INDIAN TREATISE IN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*In the happiness of his subjects lies the king's happiness, in their welfare his welfare. He shall not consider as good only that which pleases him but treat as beneficial to him but whatever pleases his subjects.*

*-Kautilya's Arthashastra*

The Kautilya's Arthashastra written in 4<sup>th</sup> Century BCE is an Indian classical work of political theory and theorized statecraft and a foundational text of the theory of international relations. It covers a vast range of topics and disciplines, of which defence, security, statecraft, intelligence, international relations, foreign policy, and diplomacy are the most relevant. The text is utilitarian and maintains a secular approach to statecraft.

Arthashastra has invoked serious academic debate in the field of Justice, Economics, Management and Foreign Affairs. However, its treatment on matters concerning contemporary security issues is largely unexplored. The prescriptive teachings of Kautilya are underpinned with his deeper understanding of the factors that promote stability in a state and through this stability, progress in the wider sense. Arthashastra therefore adds value to the state, the society, and the individual. Flowing from this fundamental wisdom, Kautilya builds on the state's strengths and provides courses of action that its policy makers can adopt when faced with situations in the security and foreign policy domain.

The central idea of Kautilya's doctrine, is the prosperity of King and country, and the King's quest for victory against rival neighbouring states. The King had to try to defeat his enemies one after another. Kautilya identified seven factors of power, which reinforced his ability to do so. These were the qualities of the King, then of his Ministers, his provinces, his

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city, his treasury, his Army, and his allies. The aim of the Arthashastra was to educate the King on how to improve the qualities of these factors and undermine those of his enemies. He showed great understanding of the weakness of human nature while enunciating his doctrine.

Kautilya professed that warfare was an extension and an integral part of statecraft. Kautilya's Arthashastra therefore advocates that war (in terms of use of forceful military power) is to be undertaken as the last resort, after having done the calculations, tried covert and clandestine methods to weaken the enemy, and having satisfied himself that he is superior to the enemy in all essential respects. This essentially translates into a minimal use of violence as the enemy has already been drawn towards the verge of defeat through other means. This resonates with a comment in one of the Seven Military Classics: 'First achieve victory and only then go to war.'

Kautilya has covered an array of strategies over a vast canvas from actual fighting and planning, to training and deceit. However, little has been written about the military strategy of the Arthashastra. Despite being one of the best works on military strategy, Arthashastra is not quoted enough like scholars such as Sun-Tzu and Thucydides. Most of the published books and articles on Arthashastra cover the administration, economic and political aspects of the treatise. Therefore, this research on military strategy of Kautilya would provide important lessons for conventional and unconventional warfare in the modern world, besides enhancing understanding and pride in the country (India) and its thinker (Kautilya).

This research aims to study the military strategy of the Kautilya and analyse its relevance in 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This paper will also explore the insights of diplomacy as enunciated in Arthashastra as Kautilya considered it as an extension of war. The qualitative research has been carried out mainly from secondary sources and is arranged in seven sequential chapters.

## VIII

The research concludes that basic military strategy enunciated by Kautilya remains relevant even in present times despite changes in warfare.

Arthashastra identifies fundamental themes through models and paradigms that have universal validity. The study reveals that it can be used in not only analysing and interpreting the ideal set of state policies, but also the flawed state policies and perceptions. Through the richness of options that Kautilya provides, allows problems to be understood and tackled through human decisions, aided by a wisdom that was understood 2,400 years ago. The secular and logical tone of its delivery accompanied with empirical learnings allow it to be interpreted through paradigms which can be detached from discussions involving religion or ideologies and address the root relationships amongst contending issues without a bias.

Even in today's world, the challenges of global security are no different from the challenges that vexed the Mauryan Empire in 300 BC. A cogent and dispassionate analysis of the Arthashastra reveals stark similarities between the problems faced by Kautilyan ideal state and the modern scourge of terrorism and insurgencies. Scientific techniques tempered by the application of high technology have failed to dent the practitioners of these reprehensible deeds; it is perhaps time for humanity to turn the Clock of learning backward and delve into its past to obtain an ancient remedy for this modern malaise.

Today we live in a world where power is more evenly distributed than in the Cold War period. The world is tending to multi-polarity, like the one that Kautilya knew, within which he worked to maximise the power of his king/ state. It would be interesting to work on the Kautilyan approach in coping with a multipolar world. This work should be at the junction of political science, diplomacy and military strategy as enunciated by Kautilya.



## CHAPTER 1

### OVERVIEW OF KATILYA AND ARTHASHASTRA

*'Power is (possession of) strength; Success is (obtaining) happiness.*

- Prime Minister PV Narsimha Rao

#### 1.1 Introduction

The afore mentioned quote from Kautilya's Arthashastra was spoken by the then Indian Prime Minister, Shri PV Narasimha Rao at Beijing University in China during an official visit in 1993. Spoken at the beginning of the age of modern globalisation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, fuelled by the information age and reordering of the world order, post-cold war, these words signify the importance attached to happiness flowing through the acquisition of power. The study of inter-state power relationship in an anarchic world has been a challenging discourse since the formation of civilised and functional societies and continues into the contemporary era. Arthashastra is an Indian scripture written around 300 BC by Kautilya that gives an insight into the kingdom of Chandragupta Maurya, revealing a comprehensive approach to statecraft that addresses the entire spectrum of activities of a state and its relations with power within the comity of states. Arthashastra literally means "The Science of Worldly Gains". Indian strategists hold Kautilya, in high regard. This chapter aims to provide an overview of Kautilya and Arthashastra and prepare the stage for the deliberating the relevance of the Arthashastra particularly the military strategy of the Kautilya in 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

#### 1.2 An Overview of Kautilya

Vishnugupta (350-283 BCE) is believed to be the actual name of the Kautilya. He was also known as Chanakya, the son of Chanak, the most renowned teacher in Magadha. He was an adviser and Prime Minister to the first Maurya Emperor Chandragupta (340-293 BCE)

and is regarded as the architect of his early rise to power. The Arthashastra identifies its author by the name of Kautilya, except for one verse which refers to him by the name of Vishnugupta.

There are several versions regarding the birth of Chanakya. According to the Jaina version, he was born in the village of Chanak to a Brahmin couple. The Pali version says that he was a Brahmin from Takshila. There is also a claim that he belonged to a Brahmin group from modern day Kerala. Chanakya was tutored extensively in the Vedas which he is said to have memorised at an incredibly early age. He was also believed to have studied mathematics, geography, the legal system of those times and science (including Astronomy and Ayurveda) along with religion. Chanakya's father, the revered Acharya Chanak, was beheaded by Dhanananda, the despotic ruler of Magadha, in moment of anger. Consequently, the young Vishnugupta flee from Pataliputra and is believed to have taken the name of Chanakya (son of Chanak) to always remind him of the circumstances of his father's death. He travelled to Takshashila (Taxila), where he became a teacher of politics. Takshashila was linked through the northern high road of commerce (Uttarapatha) along the base of the Himalayas to the kingdom of Magadha with its capital city, Pataliputra, (now known as Patna).

One of the earliest Sanskrit writing to explicitly identify Chanakya with Vishnugupta was Vishnu Sharma's Panchatantra, written in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BCE. Chanakya is considered a pioneer in the field of economics, diplomacy, and military strategy. He was a teacher at the Takshashila University and is widely believed to be responsible for the creation of the Mauryan Empire, the first empire on the Indian Subcontinent. Following the death of Alexander, the Great, Kautilya planned and coordinated the liberation of North Western India by his protégé-Chandragupta Maurya. With Kautilya's shrewd guidance, Chandragupta overthrew the existing rule of the Nanda Kings and founded the Mauryan Empire in 322 BCE. Chandragupta, who ruled from 324 to 301 BCE, earned the title of a liberator and the first emperor of Bharata or India.



Figure 1: Mauryan Empire

Source: Internet <https://imamges.app.google/BUcLal15w4SaPQjy8>

The condemnation of Kautilya as an unethical teacher by many scholars is based on their ignorance of his work. Kautilya always had a sane, moderate, and balanced view. He placed great emphasis on the welfare of the people. His practical advice is rooted in dharma. But, as a teacher of practical statecraft, he advocated even unethical methods in the furtherance of national interest. The unsavory reputation which Kautilya has acquired as an advocate of immoral and unethical policies is totally unjust because he always adds qualifications when he recommends such policies. These were required either because the interests of the state demanded it or because the persons against whom these were directed were enemies of the state. These methods were not to be used against those who were neither evil nor treacherous. Kautilya only made explicit, without hypocrisy, what nation states, ancient and modern, have always practiced. He never quotes the advice of an earlier and then offers his own, his view is the saner and more moderate. All teachers before him seem to have considered a prince a danger to the king from the moment of his birth. Only Kautilya emphasizes the need for bringing up the prince properly

and to train him to be a successor. One teacher, in fact, recommends that the prince should be tempted by secret agents to revolt against his father but Kautilya says that there is no grater sin than poisoning an innocent mind by temptation. Likewise, the king should not make himself or his queen the target in testing the probity of ministers.

### **1.3 An Overview of the Arthashastra**

Arthashastra written approximately 2400 years ago is believed to have been lost and then discovered in 1904 by Dr R Shamasastri of Mysore. He published the full text in 1909, English translation in 1911 and an index verborum in three volumes. Besides Shamasastri's translation, there is a Sanskrit translation by T Ganapati Shastri, a German translation by JJ Meyer and translation in many languages including Russian. On publication in 1909, it triggered extensive discussions on the nature of its contents and their implications for understanding the traditional Indian polity. It has wielded a profound influence on the development of administration, political ideas, and military strategy in traditional India.

The treatise is divided into 15 books/ adhikaranas, 150 chapters/ sections and 6,000 shlokas. The books are arranged in a manner that the initial books deal with internal administration and the later books on a state's relations with its neighbours, foreign policy, and warfare. The ninth to fourteenth books deal with foreign affairs, diplomacy and military aspects including covert operations. The parts of the book correspond to the three objectives of the state-wealth, justice, and expansion. An important topic which runs throughout the treatise, in both the internal and foreign policy sections, is the use of an elaborate secret service mechanism. Arthashastra forms the foundation of intrinsic Indian strategic thought.

As a book intended for practitioners of the statecraft, Kautilya does not simply lay down a rule but modifies it every time to suit the action to prevailing conditions. In Kautilyan terms, a nation needs to skilfully employ its strengths against an enemy's weakness. The asymmetric approach to conquest was understood and approved, and it fits into present pragmatic Indian

culture. In this context, many believe that the Indian policy of non-alignment was directly Kautilyan - a means of enhancing security by a low-risk strategy of playing one superpower off against another until India could gain sufficient strength to protect its own security. He was successful in developing the science of politics, as he had aspired to do, and we see his principles being used by political scientists and defence strategists even today.

However, assumption that the picture of India given in the Arthashastra is true for all periods of ancient Indian history may not be true. Though Kautilya wrote long after the time of Buddha, who died in 486 BC, the state of society portrayed in the Arthashastra is mainly of pre-Buddhistic time. On the other hand, the norms under which Hindu society has functioned for the last two millennia are those of the Smritis; the earliest and most important of these, the Manu smriti was codified sometime in the first two centuries AD. The Smritis depict the ideal Hindu society as reconstructed and reformed after the influence of Buddhism has begun to decline in India. It is not merely the norms of Indian society which changed and evolved over the millennia but even the knowledge of gems and jewelry, the state of art of metallurgy, the weapons and armour used, the way horses and elephants were trained - all these were different at different periods. To an extent our society is significantly different from Kautilya's era, therefore some of the Kautilyan precepts may not be as relevant in present times.

For proper comprehension of Kautilya's teachings and apply them judiciously to the modern world, we also must be aware of the essential characteristics of the work. The treatise is about an ideal state - not that such a state ever existed or is even likely to exist now or in the future. To the extent any of the six constituent elements of a state - the ruler, the ministers, the urban and the rural population, the economic power and the military might - differ from the ideals Kautilya has set out, to the extent the advice given by him could be modified. For Kautilya, existence of the state and the king are axioms. In fact, 'the king and his rule encapsulate all the constituents

of the state'. Two special contributions of Kautilya to the theoretical analysis of the functioning are:

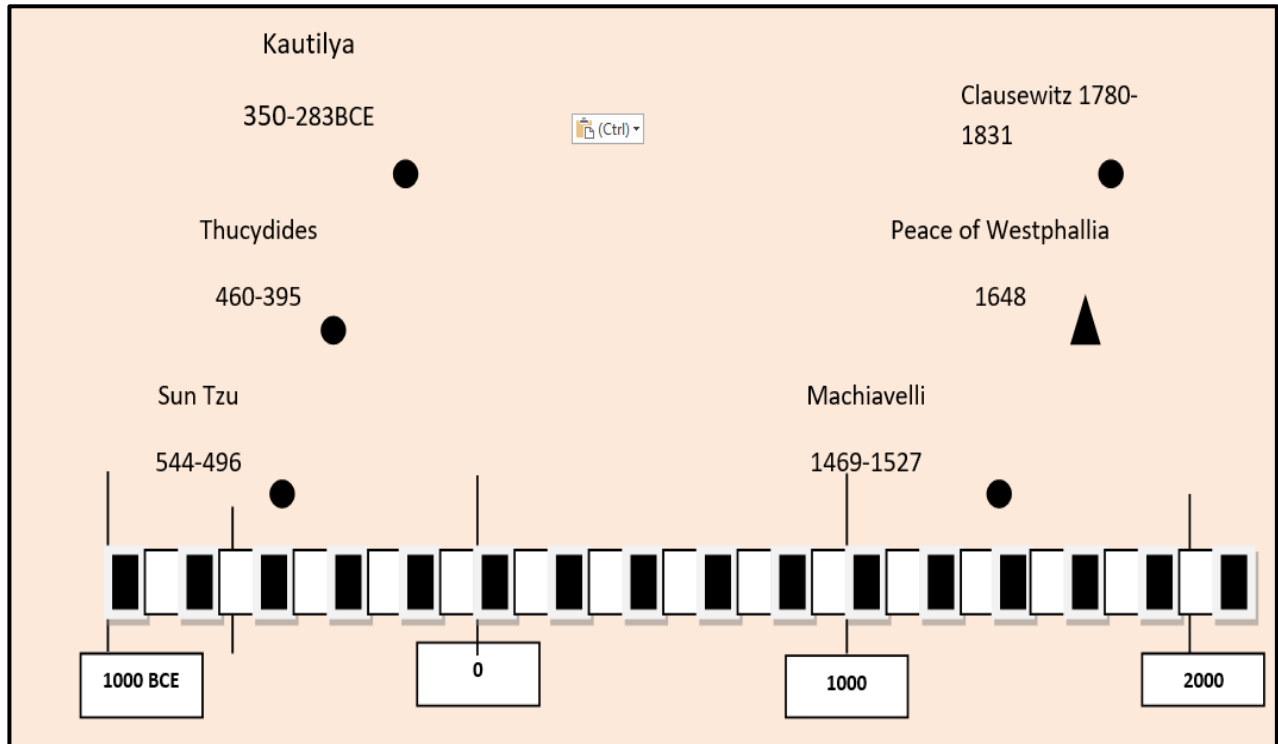
- (a) Analysis of internal administration aspects in terms of the six constituent elements of the state.
- (b) Analysis of the relations between states in terms of the theory of the circle of states.

The text is utilitarian and maintains a secular approach to statecraft despite the religious scriptures from which it periodically takes reference. Brekke notes that in the study of wider Indian scriptures, 'there is a tension between deontology and consequentialism in the ideology of war'. He comments that Arthashastra is clearly positioned in the consequentialist camp, as opposed to Mahabharata, which follows deontological traditions. This monograph notes that this consequentialist position strengthens the secular argument and reveals a rational framework within which Arthashastra was conceptualised and utilised. The understanding of religion as it existed in its milieu has minimal impact on the development of an understanding of Arthashastra. With the secular and rational approach, the basic tenets of Arthashastra can be used for studying the fundamental phenomena of statecraft and the security discourse as observed in the contemporary era.

#### **1.4 Comparison of Kautilya with other Strategic Thinkers**

Comparison of Kautilya with other strategic thinkers who lived much later are also quite common, the most absurd one with Otto Von Bismarck (1815- 1898,) of Germany. He is also often compared to Sun Tzu (544- 496 BCE) of China, author of 'Art of War'. A more common comparison is done with Italian Niccolò Machiavelli (1469- 1527), the author of 'The Prince'. This irritates many Indians, who believe that, because Kautilya lived many centuries before

Machiavelli, it is the latter who should be compared with the former. There may not be any intimidating design in it as people can only compare the unknown with known, most foreigners



*Figure 2: Kautilya with reference to other Strategic Thinkers*

*Source: Breena Croates and Col. Jeffrey Caton, "The Ultimate Pragmatist on Smart Power in National Security." (paper presented at 2010 ISME program, University of San Diego, Jan 28, 2010)*

know something of Machiavelli and very little of Kautilya. A more important point is that the sobriquet of 'Indian Machiavelli' given to Kautilya is unfair to both. This is not a study to delve into the details of the lamentable misapprehension of the significance of Machiavelli's work even in the Western world. If Kautilya and Machiavelli thoughts have similarities, it only shows that the nature of people and princes has changed little over the two millennia which separates them.

### 1.5 Research Objectives

This research aims to study the military strategy of the Kautilya and analyse its relevance in 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This paper will also explore the insights of diplomacy as enunciated

in Arthashastra as Kautilya considered it as an extension of war. This research will restrict the study to military strategy only including diplomacy and its relevance in all forms of warfare in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Two main objectives of this research are as under:-

- (a) To study the strategic thought and military strategy of the Arthashastra.
- (b) To assess the relevance of Kautilya's military strategy (as enunciated in Arthashastra) in 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## **1.6 Research Methodology**

The basic approach of this research is qualitative in nature. The research subject will be explained through analysis of secondary data to include literature, research papers and articles. Some of the selected literature and articles will be thoroughly studied and analysed.

## **1.7 Research Questions**

This paper will answer following research questions: -

- (a) What is the military strategy of Arthashastra for Conventional Military operations?
- (b) What is the military strategy enunciated by Arthashastra for non-Conventional military operations?
- (c) What is the role of the diplomacy/ foreign policy in warfare as per Arthashastra?
- (d) What is the relevance of military strategy of the Arthashastra in 21<sup>st</sup> Century for conventional operations?
- (e) What is the relevance of military strategy of the Arthashastra in 21<sup>st</sup> Century for non - conventional operations?



### **1.7 Justification of the study**

Kautilya lived in a period of constant warfare and realised the importance of studying war as an important aspect of statecraft. He viewed the state as a seven-limbed organism which grows in war and whose purpose is to destroy its enemies and extend territory under its control, including aggression against, and subversion of, its opponents. The Arthashastra deals with the many facets of governmental administration and economy and pays special attention to war, preparation for it, and its triumphant execution. In its spirit of realpolitik, the Arthashastra deals with a system of politics or principles based on practical rather than moral or ideological considerations. In its elucidation of machtpolitik, the Arthashastra is vociferous in the use of power by a political state in the attainment of its objectives. It, thus, reveals an altogether surprising aspect of Indian civilisation.

The Arthashastra is not only concerned about making conquests but it also emphasises the strategies and tactics for the prevention of conquest by others. But whether in conquering others or in preventing conquest, the Arthashastra takes a conflictual relationship between states as the norm. Kautilya does not indulge in any theory of a good society, good actions, etc. Therefore, to the modern mind, he comes across as a totally realistic and pragmatic practitioner of military strategies.

An analysis of most insurgencies/ terrorism in the world shows that Kautilya was accurate in his belief that the greatest cause of insurgencies was societal discontent, and he advocates that the state must attach great importance to the well-being of the people—“if they become impoverished, they become greedy and rebellious”. He also averred that “an internal rebellion is more dangerous than an external threat because it is like nurturing a viper in one’s bosom”. Rebellions (insurgencies) were classified based on the affected region and who their sponsors were. The similarities in the methods used today and those espoused by Kautilya are

striking. Kautilya proposed the use of four instruments of state power - Conciliation (Diplomatic), Dissension (Informational), Force (Military) and Gifts (Economic), which are the

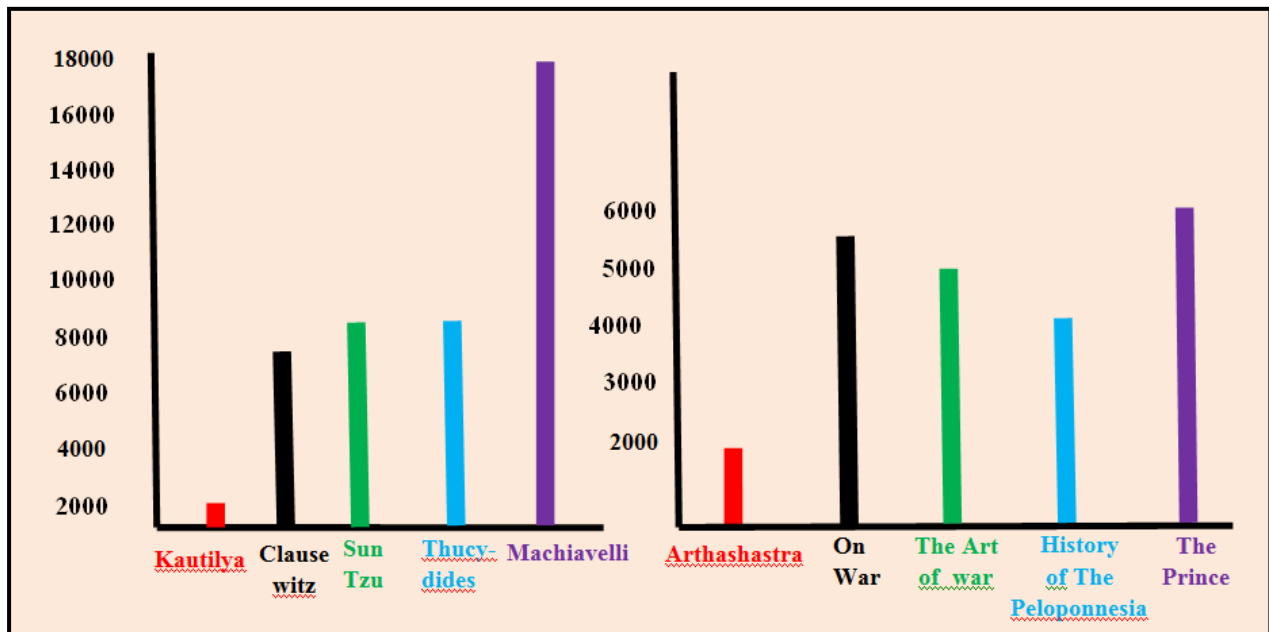


Figure 3: Search Result on Google Scholar for eminent Strategists .

Source: Kumar Maj Abhishek. "The Arthashastra: Assessing the Contemporary relevance of an Ancient Indian Treatise on Statecraft" 2016.

instruments used by states even today (DIME).

The Arthashastra has endured the test of time and it has since withstood the test of credibility. Kautilya's treatise enraptures the complexity of our current world in many ways, the problems that existed then, persist in a more widespread and magnified manner in present times. The significance of this study lies in promoting an understanding of non-western strategic thought and stimulating further research into Kautilya's treatise by exploring the relevance of the Arthashastra in 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The research is also justified as Arthashastra despite being one of the best works on military strategy is not quoted enough like scholars such as Sun-Tzu and Thucydides. Most of the published books and articles on Arthashastra cover the administration, economic and political

aspects of the treatise. Therefore, a research on military strategy of Kautilya would provide important lessons for conventional and unconventional warfare in the modern world, besides enhancing understanding and pride in the country (India) and its thinker (Kautilya).

## 1.8 Chapterisation Scheme

This research intends to answer the research questions in seven chapters as under :-

(a) **Chapter 1.** Purpose of the first chapter titled as “Overview of Kautilya, and the Arthashastra” is to introduce Kautilya’s and his treatise on statecraft - the Arthashastra, discuss the concept of strategic thought of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and set the stage for questioning the diplomacy and military strategy relevance of the treatise in 21<sup>st</sup> century.

(b) **Chapter 2.** This chapter will cover the literature review of Primary and Secondary literature to arrive at research gaps and thereby identifying the research objectives and research questions.

(c) **Chapter 3.** Conduct of Foreign Policy as an Extension of War’ as enunciated by the Kautilya is being covered in the third chapter. It mainly covers the Seven Elements of Sovereignty and the Mandala (circle of things), and six-fold foreign policy as the central idea of Kautilya’s doctrine. The King had to try to defeat his enemies one after another. Kautilya identified seven factors of power, which reinforced his ability to do so. These were the qualities of the King, then of his Ministers, his provinces, his city, his treasury, his Army, and his allies. The aim of the Arthashastra was to instruct the King on how to improve the qualities of these factors and undermine those of his enemies. He showed great understanding of the weakness of human nature while enunciating his doctrine.

(d) **Chapter 4.** Fourth chapter titled “Covert Operations” covers the covert

operations, creation of secret service; internal security and actions against the oligarchies and the enemy kings.

(e) **Chapter 5.** Fifth Chapter “Defence and War” includes all aspects of defence of a kingdom and conduct of operations for capture/ defeat of kingdom/ state. The Arthashastra recommends that a state should base its defences on the fort, and the Army. Of the two, he regards the fort to be more important since it allows the King to survive a siege and conduct his diplomacy from that base. The Army is, of course, important in defence matters but, in his view, it can be completely lost on the battlefield, leaving the King without any protection. On combat, Kautilya mentions that favourable positions for infantry, cavalry, chariots, and elephants are desirable for both war and the camp. According to Kautilya, the primary consideration which should weigh with a General in selecting a position must be the character and composition of his forces. It was universally recognised that the different arms required different terrains for the proper discharge of their functions. A Commander was expected to keep this fact persistently in view and dispose troops in harmony with the ground on which they were to conduct operations.

(f) **Chapter 6.** After having examined Kautilya in detail, chapter six deals with the relevance of the Kautilya’s military strategy in conventional and non-conventional operations in 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

(g) **Chapter 7.** Finally, chapter seven covers conclusion and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

*“A ruler, disciplined by learning, will be interested in disciplining his subjects. He will enjoy the earth unopposed, devoted to the welfare of all beings”.*

- Arthashastra

#### 2.1 Purpose of Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review is to examine and identify Kautilya’s ideas with respect to diplomacy and military strategy and analogous ideas in contemporary strategic thought and its relevance in 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The literature review for the Arthashastra comprises two parts. The first part of this chapter will study English translations of the Arthashastra as primary sources of literature and examine secondary scholarly works written about the Arthashastra. Literature reviews primary and secondary works on the Arthashastra with aim of seeking answers to the question “what are the key elements of Kautilya’s military strategy and strategic thought as explained in the Arthashastra”?

The normative setting of Kautilya’s Arthashastra is the political unification of common cultural Indian subcontinent. Within this, the Arthashastra has a twofold aim. First, it seeks to show how the ruler should protect his territory. Second, is how territory should be acquired. The end or primary goal in the Arthashastra is Yogakshema – protection, security, and stability of the State. Today, political unification of common cultural Indian subcontinent as in the text is no more applicable as India is a sovereign nation-state less parts of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. However, many theoretical concepts and ideas in the text can be applied in internal and external matters related to strategic studies and contribute to strengthen the Global International Studies from enduring Indian traditions. The concepts that need to be realised, are not only for waging war/application of force but can also be used in strategic vocabulary in all

disciplines of social science including peace research a task yet to be undertaken by contemporary scholars.

## **2.2 Primary Sources of Literature**

Kautilya wrote the treatise titled Arthashastra in Sanskrit, on palm leaves somewhere between the fourth and third centuries BCE. The treatise compiles principles Kautilya followed as a minister of the Mauryan Empire. The limited shelf life of the Arthashastra palm leaf manuscripts necessitated creation of copies by scribes, similar to modern day reprints. This paper reviewed three different English translations of the Arthashastra. Palm leaf manuscripts were the basis for English translations by Dr R Shamasastri and Dr RP Kangle. Dr R. Shamasastri, as the chief librarian of the Mysore Government Oriental Library, carried out the first English translation in 1915. Dr RP Kangle's later translation of the book has three volumes, one of which is a detailed analysis. Kangle's version has elaborate footnotes cross-referenced with other ancient Indian texts. A third author, LN Rangarajan, utilized Shamasastri's and Kangle's translations to produce another modern translation with regrouped verses and detailed remarks. These three translations are the primary sources of literature on the Arthashastra for this paper. Other than translations, this paper reviewed 'Military Strategy of the Arthashastra' by Col Harjeet Singh written in 2012. Arthashastra has been the object of significant research by scholars particularly after publication of Shamasastri's English translation of the treatise. Modern historians and political scientists have studied and researched Arthashastra resulting in a significant number of secondary sources of literature on the treatise.

## **2.3 Secondary Sources of Literature Review**

The secondary sources of literature include two categories of works. The first category is the work carried out by Indian authors and the second category is the work carried out by western scholars. The recent secondary sources of Indian literature are primarily articles and monographs published by the Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses (IDSA) and Centre for

Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), both in New Delhi, India. As in his monograph, Colonel (retired) P.K Gautam (Indian Army) examines the conceptual framework of the treatise and the scholarly controversies surrounding the Arthashastra and identifies opportunities for further research. Colonel (Retired) Harjeet Singh (Indian Army) provides a military perspective of the Arthashastra, in his monograph. Wing Commander Sachin More (Indian Air Force) attempts to establish the contemporary relevance of Arthashastra. In the first chapter of his monograph, Sachin More establishes the history, themes, construct, and concepts of Arthashastra. In later chapters, he uses South Asia (Pakistan) as a case study, wherein he uses the Arthashastra concepts to assess and understand Pakistan's contemporary security environment. Rashed-Uz-Zaman, a contemporary Bangladeshi author, has placed a lot of weight on understanding the Arthashastra in order to understand India's strategic culture. He relates Kautilya's doctrine to India's policy choices post-independence. Zaman cautions against using the treatise as a magical solution for explaining India's strategic behaviour. He argues against generalizing the Arthashastra as a part of a "universal theory of strategic behaviour", since different nations perform "realist calculations in ways that fit one's values, not the logic of some general theory of deterrence. Deepshikha Shahi, "Arthashastra beyond Realpolitik" published in 2014 presents the pragmatic views Kautilya on war and diplomacy. Col Deepak Palade's article "Kautilya's Arthashastra and its relevance in 21<sup>st</sup> Century" published by Centre for Land and Warfare Studies in 2019 provides substantial insight about relevance of Kautilya in this century.

Among works of western scholars, George Modelski's article analyzes the treatise and identifies key aspects of Kautilya's foreign policy doctrine. Modelski argues for the Arthashastra contemporary relevance due to the treatise's "abstractness," i.e., Kautilya does not refer to historical experiences or contemporary events to formulate or support his concepts. In the U.S Army War College Guide to National Security Issues, Glenn K. Cunningham identifies the value of Kautilya's treatise as a strategic text. Cunningham asserts that "The Arthashastra is one of the earliest and most complete treatments of holistic strategic-level leadership in existence . . . Every

resource, every element of national power, every waking moment of a ruler's days, should be spent with one intent: hegemonic conquest." Michael Liebig, a fellow of South Asia Institute (SAI), Heidelberg University, Germany identifies six pivotal idea clusters in his paper on Arthashastra. Liebig credits Kautilya with having anticipated the modern concepts of Machiavelli, Hobbes, Hans J. Morgenthau, and Max Weber. He promotes the treatise as a key for understanding modern day India's strategic culture. Strategy by Lawrence Freedman published in 2013, states that core issue at the heart of strategy, is whether it is possible to manipulate and shape our environment rather than simply become the victim of forces beyond one's control. The picture of strategy that emerges in this book is one that is fluid and flexible, governed by the starting point, not the end point.

Other secondary source authors include, Roger Boesche, and Herbert H. Gowen, who have written about Arthashastra from historical perspectives. These scholars compare Arthashastra with other Sanskrit works written in ancient India, Kautilya's biography, and key elements of his doctrine. Coates and Caton compare Kautilya's thoughts and philosophy to contemporary ethical and strategic concepts. The authors credit Kautilya for being pragmatic in his approach towards allies: "Kautilya never lost cognizance of the fact that allies could easily become enemies depending on the dictates of the environment." This review of the secondary sources of literature indicates certain scholarly debates and scholarly trends with respect to the treatise.

## **2.4 Scholarly Debates**

There are two valid ways of looking at Kautilya's Arthashastra. The historians view it as a valuable document which throws light on the state and society in India at that time, whether it be 300 BC or 150 AD. The second way, which this translation emphasizes, is to regard Kautilya as a great receptor of statecraft, whose teachings have a universal validity. The historical aspect



is the one that has till now been accorded prominence by scholars. The twelve-page bibliography in Aradhana Parmar's book is an indication of the numbers of Indian and foreign scholars who have drawn conclusions relevant to Indian history. Radha Kumud Mookerjee's; 'Chandragupta Maurya and His Times' has a valuable comparison of the information in the Arthashastra with the accounts given by ancient Greek historians.

Among scholars, there are two extreme points of view and many shades in between. One extreme is to deny that Kautilya said anything useful at all. An example is A.B. Keith's observation: "It is a very misplaced patriotism which asks us to admire the Arthashastra as representing the fine flower of Indian political thought. It would, indeed be melancholy if this were the best that India could show against the Republic of Plato or the Politics of Aristotle." The other extreme is to hold that Kautilya was a lone genius and other thinkers were worthless. For example, Parmar says: "Kautilya is not merely a preserver of old political ideas but a creator of new ones. He is impatient with the existing unsystematic and chaotic theories of polity and removes the cobweb in political thinking through his incisive logic and firm grasp of the realities of statecraft.

## CHAPTER 3

### FOREIGN POLICY AS AN EXTENSION OF WAR

*“The Welfare of a state depends on active foreign policy” -Arthashastra*

#### 3.1 Understanding the Strategic Thought of Arthashastra

Understanding the Arthashastra requires an appreciation for Arthashastra’s root word *Artha*. Kautilya explains the term Arthashastra as the “Science of Polity” which explores the “means of acquiring and maintaining the earth.” Kautilya’s treatise has an overarching aim of achieving *Artha* (profit or wealth) for the state. *Artha* is a part of ancient India’s four broad aims of human endeavor i.e., *Dharma* (moral behavior), *Artha* (profit or wealth), *Kama* (sensual pleasure), and *Moksha* (salvation). In the Arthashastra, Kautilya argues for the primacy of *Artha* despite the inter-dependence of the other three pursuits of human endeavor. Kautilya elaborates that since *Dharma* (propriety) and *Kama* (sensual pleasure) are critically dependent upon *Artha* (wealth) for their realization, *Artha* (wealth) alone is the most important out of the three. From Kautilya’s emphasis on *Artha*, it can be deduced that the Kautilyan state must adopt economically viable and progressive policies, which create conditions for economic growth and maximize the population’s happiness quotient.

Kautilya’s treatise is designed as prescriptive advice for a king who rules a state, which is akin to a modern regional power. Kautilya identifies this king using the ambitious term *Vijigishu* or “the would-be conqueror” whose area of operations lies between the “Himalayas and the Sea”. Kautilya limits the *Vijigishu* to subcontinental India and any extension of the empire beyond the Indian subcontinent “was regarded as an unjust expansion.”

In the *Arthashastra*, Kautilya uses the Sanskrit term *Danda Niti* to explain the science of governance. For Kautilya governance implies making acquisitions, securing these acquisitions,

further improving these acquisitions, and thereafter distributing the profits. The absence of governance leads to disorder or anarchy, which Kautilya terms *Matsya-Nyaya*.

### **3.2 Kautilya's Concept of *Matsya-Nyaya***

Kautilya's concept of *Matsya-Nyaya* (anarchy) refers to a power struggle both within the state and externally with other states; the internal social disorder of a state leads to a contractual relationship between society and government. Liebig explains that a state of anarchy creates a social need for effective governance with the power of *Danda* (punishment). In return for effective governance and an end to disorder, society willingly pays taxes and adopts a contract with the King to govern the state. The King of the Kautilyan state is not an absolute monarch. Kautilya bound the King in an implicit social contract to ensure social welfare, internal stability, and security from external aggression. Rangarajan defines the King's contract with society as a three-fold obligation i.e., *Rakshana* (protection of the state and subjects), *Palana* (administration of the state), and *Yogakshema* (welfare of the population).

Keeping in context the *Matsya-Nyaya* theory and the contract between the society with the King, Kautilya discusses the *Prakṛti* or constituent elements of a state. Liebig argues that Kautilya's treatise focuses on measuring, optimizing, and enhancing the seven *Prakṛti* (constituent elements of the state) to increase the state's power.

### **3.3 Kautilya's Prakṛti (Constituent Elements of State) and National Power**

Kautilya identifies seven elements of sovereignty. Kautilya characterizes these seven elements as the "limb-like elements of sovereignty". In order of priority of importance, they are :-

- (a) the King,

- (b) the council of ministers and high officials of the state, who represent the institutions,
- (c) the territory with the inhabiting population of the state,
- (d) the fortified cities
- (e) the country's treasury,
- (f) the country's forces and army, and
- (g) the allies.

Scholars use different terms to describe these seven elements. Shamasastri associates the seven elements with the word *Prakṛti* and includes an eighth element—the enemy. Kangle translates the *Prakṛti* as the “constituent elements of the state.” Rangarajan terms them as the “seven constituent elements of any state,” and Modelski terms them “the ‘elements’ of the state (*anga* or *Prakṛti*).” For harmonizing the contents of this paper, Kautilya’s sovereign state consists of seven constituent elements (*Prakṛti* or *anga*) (see figure 4) which are subordinate to the King or leadership. In his treatise, Kautilya identifies the ideal qualities and relative importance of each *Prakṛti* (constituent elements of the state), wherein the King is the most important *Prakṛti* of the state. Kautilya considers the internal constituent elements to be more reliable compared to the external element i.e., the allies. Kautilya arranges these *Prakṛti* in a *descending* order of importance and supports his prioritization of the constituent elements by comparing the relative effects of “dangers or calamities” on each of them. Kautilya warns the King to guard against *Vyasana* (dangers or calamities), which could weaken the seven *Prakṛti* (constituent elements of the state). The enemy is an inimical element, which adversely affects a sovereign state.

The source of these calamities could be found in policy failures, human activities, or simply misfortune. These calamities include lack of ideal characteristics of any of the constituents, absence of an entire constituent element, a significant defect in any of the elements,

personal vices, and natural calamities. Kautilya's concept of *Prakṛti* is analogous to the contemporary concept of national power.

Modern scholars compare Kautilya's concept of the constituent elements of state to the contemporary concept of the national power. Modelski finds Kautilya's concept of *Prakṛti*

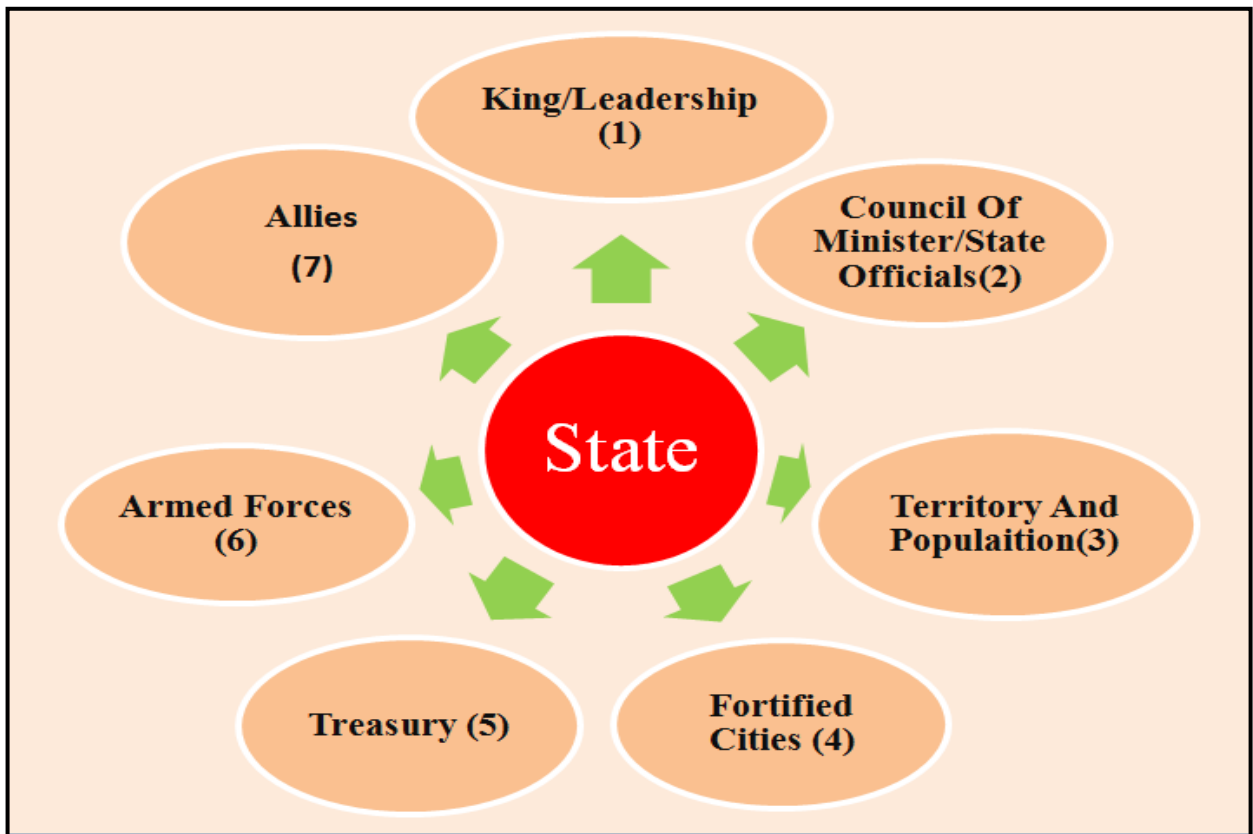


Figure 4 : The Seven Constituent Element of State (Sevan Prakrit or Anga)

Source : Created by Author

(constituent elements of state) as being a “part” of the modern idea of “elements of national power.” Michael Liebig argues that Kautilya's concept of a “state's seven state factors is homologous with Morgenthau's concept of ‘national power’ whose components are the geographical setting, population size, raw materials, agriculture, industrial potential and the armed forces of a state.” Apart from the *Prakṛti* (constituent elements of the state), Kautilya also discusses certain types of power, which are analogous to the modern concept of relative power among states.

### 3.4 Kautilya's Concept of Relative Power and Objectives of State Policy

Kautilya defines three kinds of power, which function within a state. Shamasastri translates these three powers as “[the] power of deliberation [which] is [the] intellectual strength; the possession of a prosperous treasury and a strong army [which] is the strength of sovereignty; and martial power [which] is [the] physical strength.” Kangle identifies the sequential order of importance of these three kinds of powers as:-

- (a) Power of diplomacy,
- (b) Power of army and treasury, and
- (c) The King's energy or drive.

Modelski identifies the three components of a state's power as, “power of deliberation or decision making, including capacity for intrigue; the treasury and the army; and resolve and determination.” Other scholars classify the state's powers under three broad headings, “[the] energy and drive of the ruler,” “the power of army and treasury,” and “the power of counsel and diplomacy.”

Different interpretations exist regarding Kautilya's categorization of a state's power and the previously discussed concept of *Prakṛti* (constituent elements of state). Liebig argues that “state power is the aggregate of the seven state factors [*Prakṛti*].” Kangle argues that Kautilya associates the three types of powers with the study of interstate relations and not the “internal structure [*Prakṛti*]” of a state. Modelski relates Kautilya's three kinds of power as the “activity and application of the [constituent] elements of state.” This research paper will interpret Kautilya's three types of powers as Kautilya's concept of prioritizing and measuring inter-state relative power (figure 5), which in turn is a result of the application of each state's constituent elements (*Prakṛti*).

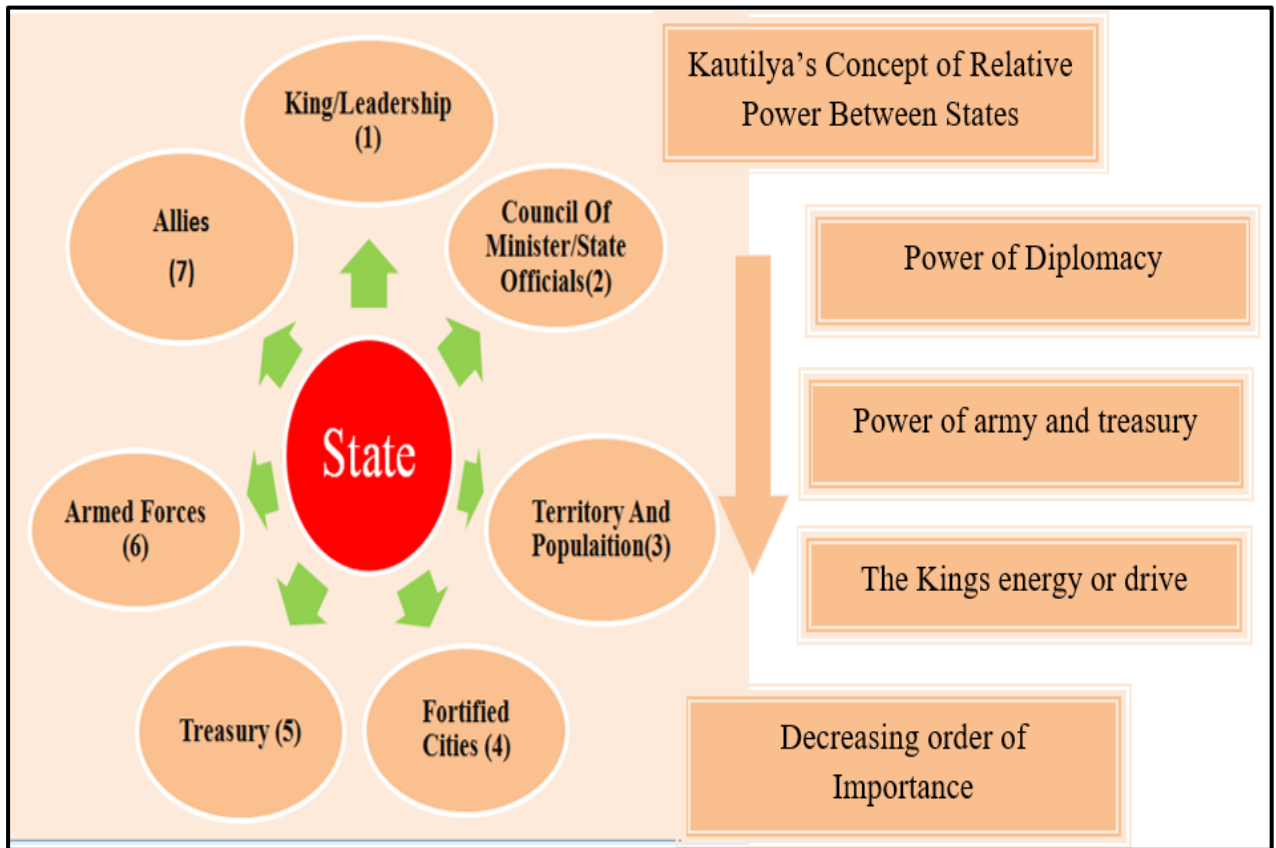


Figure 5: Kautilya's concept of relative power.

Source: Created by author.

The Kautilyan state's policies pursue both power and happiness leading to the state's increasing progress. Kautilya notes that a state's policies could also lead to stagnation or decline of the state (see figure 6).

He also argues that the subjects' happiness is paramount and drives the state's policies. Modelski relates Kautilya's concept of happiness to the "measure of success of foreign policy and the implementation of its [foreign policy's] objectives", "righteousness", and "internal stability. Kautilya encourages adoption of those policies which lead the *Vijigishu*'s state on a path of progress, strength, and happiness while causing the enemy state's decline.

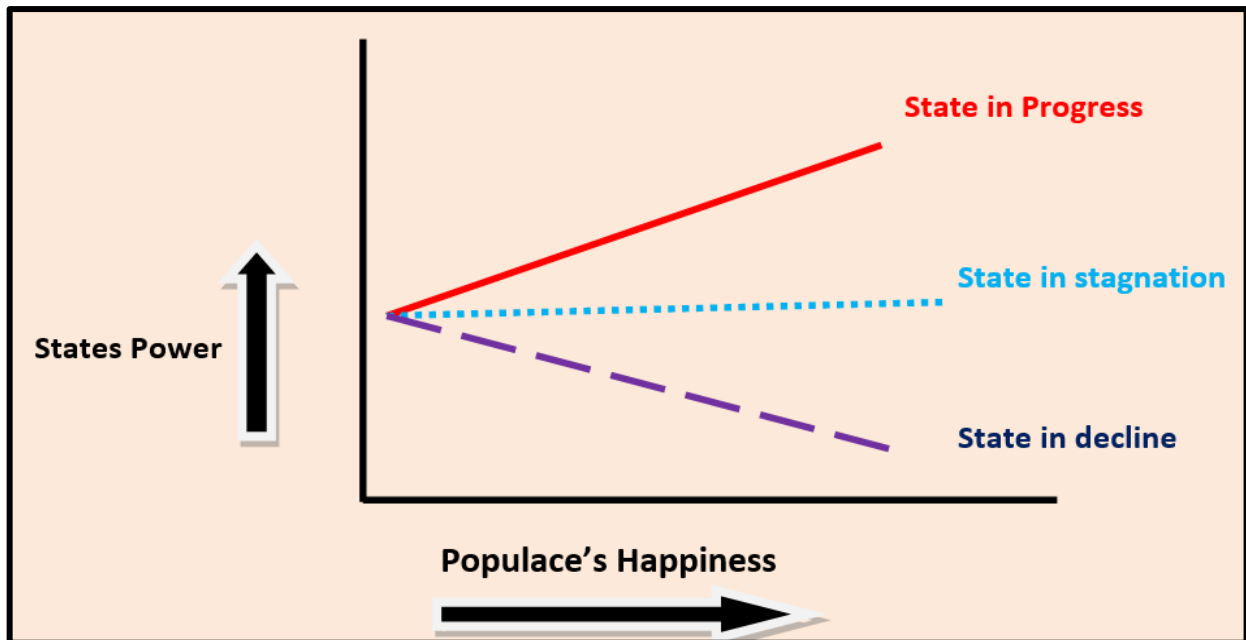


Figure 6 : Depiction of Kautilya's concept of state's progress, stagnation or decline.

Source : Kumar, Maj Abhishek. "The Arthashastra: Assessing the Contemporary relevance of an Ancient Indian Treatise on Statecraft" 2016.

The pursuit of power and happiness is interlinked with the state's international standing; power and "happiness" serve as the "twin determinants of status [of a king or state] in international society." Kautilya exhorts the king to strive towards enhancing his state's power and happiness quotient while simultaneously contributing towards the enemy state's decline. The objective of state policies, the *Prakṛti* (constituent elements of state), and the Kautilyan concept of state power together provide basic understanding for studying Kautilya's approach towards foreign policy.

### 3.4 Kautilya's Foreign Policy

Kautilya views the 'normal' state of international relations as that of anarchy or *Matsya-Nyaya*, and his objectives of foreign policy include the pursuit of "happiness" and power. Rangarajan distills the guiding principles of Kautilyan foreign policy as:-



- (a) A King shall develop his state, i.e., augment its resources and power to enable him to embark on a campaign of conquest.
- (b) The enemy shall be eliminated.
- (c) Those who help are friends.
- (d) A prudent course shall always be adopted.
- (e) Peace is to be preferred to war; and
- (f) A King's behavior, in victory and in defeat, must be just

Kautilya bases the choice of foreign policy upon the difference in relative power between the states. The policy used by a *Vijigishu* (the would-be conqueror) towards a weaker king are different from those used for a superior king. Modelski argues that Kautilya analyzes the foreign policy options from a superior-inferior or an inferior-superior perspective, however treatment of policy options for "equal powers" is limited.

The *Vijigishu* (the would-be conqueror) may design his external policy framework with active or passive methods using strategies aimed at consolidation or expansion of his kingdom. The king's relative progress compared to his enemy indicates a successful policy. The king's choice of policies may also result in a continuation of the balance of power among the states or a decline of the *Vijigishu*'s (the would-be conqueror) state.

The theory of *Mandala* is Kautilya's solution for anarchy in the international order. Keeping in perspective the concepts of the constituent elements of a state, state aspirations for growth, and the turbulent power struggle between the states, the *Arthashastra* propounded his theory of foreign policy called the *Raj* (King's)-*Mandala* (circle), more frequently called the circle of 12 states or the *Mandala*.

### 3.5 Mandala (circle of states) Theory

Kautilya classifies the relationships between the *Vijigishu* and other states as (see figure 7) those with an enemy, friend of *Vijigishu*, friend of the enemy, friend of the *Vijigishu*'s friend, and friend of the enemy's friend. Towards the geographical rear of the *Vijigishu* (the would-be conqueror) are the rearward enemy, rearward friend of the enemy in the rear, and friend of the friend in rear. The intermediary or middle king and the neutral king complete this circle of states.

The middle king's state adjoins the country of the *Vijigishu* and his enemy, more importantly, the middle king is more powerful than either of them. The neutral king's state is geographically farther away, however, he is superior and more powerful than the middle king. Kautilya's *Raj Mandala* (see figure 7) or the circle of states can be depicted as interlinked circles of states, wherein, each state has seven constituent elements of states. This paper's depiction of the circle of states in figure 7 marks enemy states in red, friendly states in blue, neutral states as green, and Kautilya's middle king in orange.

To aid the *Vijigishu*'s thought process in choosing strategic policy options, Kautilya discusses four stratagems (*Upayas*) and six foreign policy options (*Sadgunya*). Modelski terms the *Upayas* (stratagems) as "influencing techniques" which can be applied to both domestic and foreign policies. The *Vijigishu* (the would-be conqueror) controls his circle of states by using four stratagems (*Upayas*) i.e., conciliation (*Sama*), placating with gifts (*Dana*), sowing dissension (*Bheda*), or force (*Danda*). The strategy for controlling weaker states uses conciliation

and placating with gifts. The strategy for influencing stronger states; however, focuses on the creation of dissension (*Bheda*) or application of Force (*Danda*).

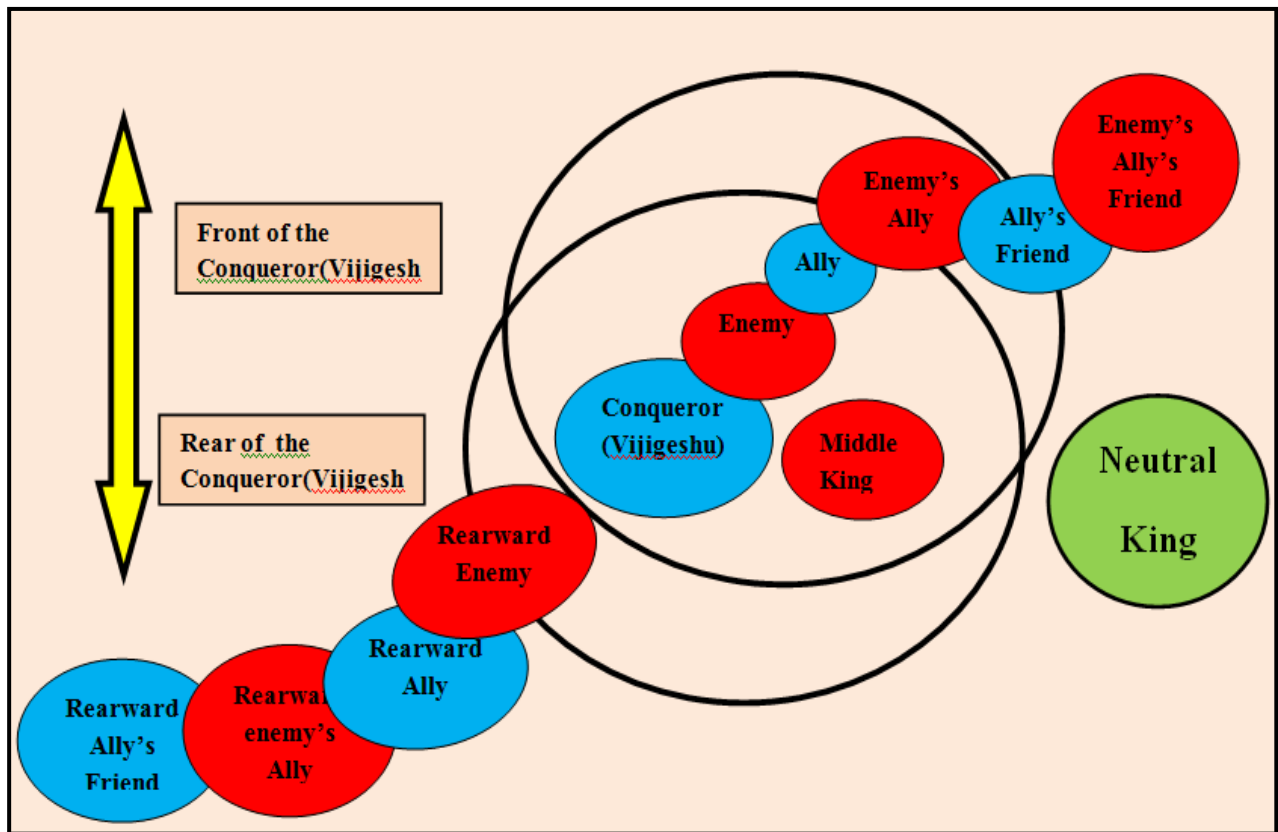


Figure 7: Mandala Theory

Source : Created by author

Although the treatise does not address the four stratagems in depth, modern scholars such as Hans J. Morgenthau have discussed similar concepts in their works. While identifying the similarity of ideas between Kautilya's four stratagems and the writings of Morgenthau on the balance of power, Gautam notes the absence of references for Kautilya's treatise in the latter work. Having provided a construct for viewing interstate relations i.e., the *Mandala*, Kautilya states that the "circle of states, is the source of the six-fold policy [*Sadgunya*]." Within the circle of states, the *Vijigishu* (the would-be conqueror) uses Kautilya's six-fold policy as a foreign policy tool for ensuring peace, expanding his power, and ensuring progress of his state.

### 3.6 Kautilya's Sadgunya (the Six-fold Policy)

Kautilya uses the *Sadgunya* (the six-fold policy) as the “backbone” of *Arthashastra's* foreign policy analysis. The six different foreign policy options are :-

- (a) *Samdhi* (policy of peace),
- (b) *Vigraha* (policy of hostility or war),
- (c) *Asana* (policy of staying quiet),
- (d) *Yana* (preparing for war),
- (e) *Samsraya* (policy of seeking shelter with another king or in a fort), and
- (f) *Dvaidhibhava* (the double policy of *peace* with one king and hostility or war with another).

These six policy options can be associated with war to a peace continuum (figure 8). *Vijigishu* (a would-be conqueror) should build up his power before attempting to conquer the enemy. Kautilya's policy of peace (*Sandhi*) aims at the progress of the *Vijigishu's* state, strengthening alliances, awaiting a favorable opportunity to conquer.

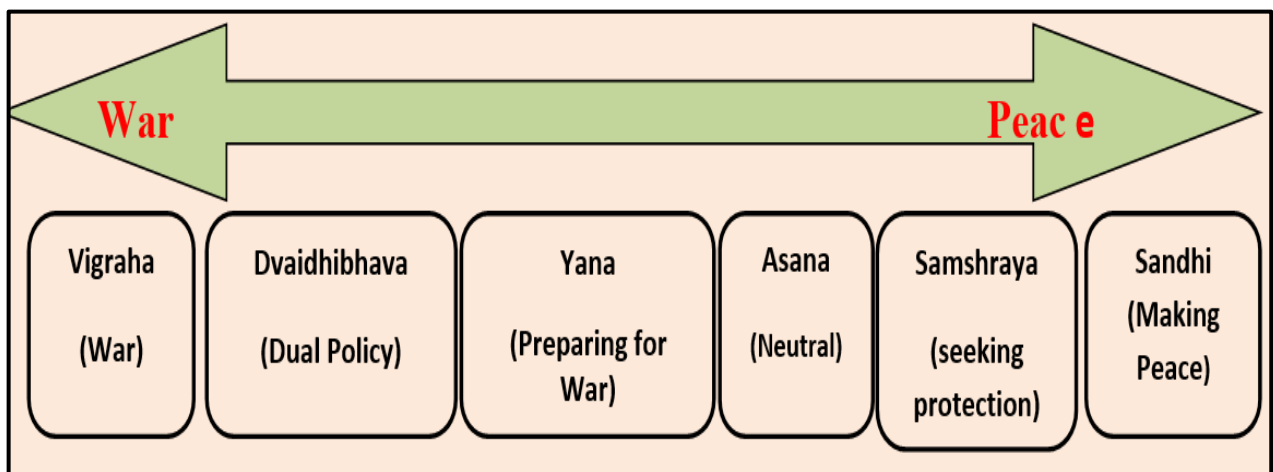


Figure : 8 Kautilya's Six-Fold (*Sadgunya*) Policy

Source: More, Sachin; *IDSIA Monograph Series. Vol 31 'Arthashastra Lessons for the Contemporary Security Environment with South Asia as a Case Study'* (New Delhi: Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis, 2014).

The enemy, and as part of a dual policy, within this policy option, Kautilya specifies different types of peace treaties to suit the relative power status of the king. Kautilya's options for negotiating peace treaties use offers of territory, wealth, and military hostages. Modelski has mentioned Kautilya's ability to distinguish different types of "unequal political cooperation" as a phase of continuous power struggle between states. Kautilya's options for economic and territorial peace treaties may provide ideas for settling contemporary geo-political disputes. Kautilya does not limit the policy of war (*Vigraha*) to physical conflicts alone. Kautilya classifies war into four categories:-

- (a) diplomatic offensive measures (*Mantrayuddha*),
- (b) an open war at a designated time and place (*Prakasayuddha*),
- (c) a secret war i.e., using treachery and psychological warfare to surprise the enemy (*Kutayuddha*),
- (d) and an undeclared war i.e., using clandestine methods, assassinations, and secret agents (*Gudayuddha*).

The treatise talks about breaking up confederacies and oligarchies by sowing dissension using "undeclared war." Kautilya's principles indicate his clarity of thought for consolidating the capture of territories and creating an enduring victory.

Having conquered a territory Kautilya advises the Vijigishu to follow policies, which focus on the welfare of the conquered population and endeavor towards earning the populace's respect and trust, as well as loyalty. Kautilya advises the Vijigishu to "adopt the way of life, dress, language, and customs of the people, show the same devotion to the gods of the territory, and participate in the people's festivals and amusements". Apart from the policies of war and peace, Kautilya also explores other strategic options in his treatise.

Treaties involving Economic Tributes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treaty involving offer of one tribute(Parikrayasandhi)-offer to pay off the superior king by giving one monetary tribute while other element of the state remain free</li> <li>• Treaty involving payment in tributes(Upagrahasandhi)-paying the superior king in multiple instalments termed as “tributes”.</li> <li>• Treaty involving an excessive payment(Kapalasantandhi)-payment of an excessive amount to the superior king, rendering the weaker king as a pauper</li> <li>• “Golden peace” (Suvarnasantandhi)-Payment of a reasonable amount which promotes mutual trust and unity among the two kings.</li> </ul>
Treaties Ceding Territory or Leasing Produce
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Treaty of cession”(Adishtasantandhi)-Cession of a part of the kingdom to the “superior king. This part of the territory is usually infested with thefts and secret agents.</li> <li>• “Scorched earth “treaty(Uchchhinnasantandhi)- Cession of a art of the kingdom except the capital to the “superior” king. The whole territory is impoverished and removed of any useful wealth or assets.</li> <li>• “Lease” treaty(Avakrayasantandhi)- Treaty involving handing over produce of the land as a “rent” to the “superior” king.</li> <li>• “Ruinous” treaty (Paribhushana)- Treaty involving handing over more produce than the land yields to the “superior” king.</li> </ul>

Figure 9 : Peace Treaty (Sandhi) options for a Weaker King.

Source: The figure uses terms quoted from Kautilya, *The Arthashastra*, translated by L N Rangarajan (New Delhi: Penguin Book India, 1992).

Kautilya favors adopting a double policy of peace with one king and hostility with another (Dvaidhibhava) in comparison to a policy of seeking alliances. Scholars view Kautilya’s Dvaidhibhava (dual policy of peace and hostility) as an overt friendship with one state and covert destruction of another. Kautilya argues that in a double policy, a king can focus on his state’s growth, while benefiting from an ally’s support. However, in an alliance, allies focus on helping each other, instead of focusing on their own self-interest and growth. Hence, Kautilya considers a double policy to be more beneficial than an alliance. His policy of Asana (staying quiet) resembles a strategic wait and watch policy.

The policy of staying quiet (Asana) is essentially a “pause in implementing [an ongoing] policy of peace or war.” In using this policy, the state either deliberately chooses not to act or waits for a favorable opportunity. Since a pause after mobilizing for war drains the treasury,

Kautilya takes up a substantial portion of his treatise to examine the incumbent factors before declaring war. Kautilya's prescriptive advice for the Vijigishu (would-be conqueror) is not designed for a strong regional power alone.

Kautilya offers detailed advice to a weaker Vijigishu as he faces a stronger conqueror. Kautilya first differentiates the nature of the conqueror and then uses the four stratagems (Upayas) to advise the weaker king on various policy choices.

### **3.7 Diplomacy and Foreign Policy as Extensions of Warfare**

As a political realist, Kautilya assumed that every nation acts to maximize power and self-interest and therefore moral principles or obligations have little or no force in actions among nations. While it is good to have an ally, the alliance will last only event of the growth of the enemy's power. Whether one goes to war or remains at peace depends entirely upon the self-interest of, or advantage to one's kingdom "war and peace are considered solely from the point of view of profit". Because nations always act in their political economic and military self-interest, even times of peace have the potential to turn abruptly into times of war, allies into enemies, and even enemies into allies.

For Kautilya, the principle of foreign policy that nations act in their political, economic, and military self-interest was a timeless truth of his science of politics or Arthashastra. He did believe that nations even act in an altruistic manner at times but he believed and advocated humanitarian acts also should coincide with state's interest. Kautilya also believed that one must assume if entrusted with political or military power that one's neighbors will eventually act in their own interests. In another words, one would be betraying one's own people if one did not assume a worst-case scenario. A nation forced to rely on the kindness of neighboring states is weak and, unless it can change rapidly, doomed to destruction. This same assumption can be seen in the work of Thucydides who discussed foreign policy a century before Kautilya, and in

the thoughts of the Chinese legalist Han Fei Tzu who wrote about fifty years after Kautilya's Arthashastra.

Kautilya is most famous for outlining the so-called Mandala theory of foreign policy, in which immediate neighbors are considered as enemies but any state on the other side of a neighboring state is regarded as an ally, or the enemy of my enemy is my friend. Imagine a series of states to one's West and then number them starting with oneself. States numbered 1,3,5,7, and so on will likely be friends, whereas states 2,4,6,8, and so on will probably be enemies (The same thing can be done with concentric circles, which would look more like a Mandala, but it is difficult to envision these circles as states). Kautilya put this basic principle in a few different ways, but most simply as, one with immediately proximate territory is the natural enemy. Elsewhere he stated the Mandala theory of foreign policy in more detail; with respect to the middle king (he himself); the third and the fifth constituents are friendly elements. The second the fourth and the sixth are unfriendly elements.

Kautilya viewed neighboring states as; a neighboring prince possessed of the excellences of an enemy is the foe; one in calamity is vulnerable one, without support or with weak support is fit to be exterminated; in the reverse case; fit to be harassed or weakened. These are the different types of enemies. When Kautilya wrote of "exterminating" an enemy he meant killing only the leaders. He thought the best policy toward ordinary soldiers and subjects was to treat them well and recruit them.

In the twentieth century, international relations theorists have defended the doctrine of the balance of power, as propagated by Kautilya because equally armed nations will supposedly deter each other and therefore no war will result. One does find this argument occasionally in Kautilya; "in case the gains (of two allies of equal strength) are equal; there should be peace; if unequal, fight," or, "the conqueror should march if superior in strength, otherwise stay quiet."



Kautilya wanted his king to arm the nation in order to conquer the world, or at least the sub-continent of India.

In Arthashastra we do not find any moral considerations other than a king doing what is right for his own people. The King he wrote, should march when by marching he would be able to weaken or exterminate the enemy. And Kautilya assumed that every other state would act in a like manner because “even the equal who has achieved his object tends to be stronger, and when augmented in power, untrustworthy; prosperity tends to change the minds.” Just as did Thucydides, Kautilya regarded a request for negotiations as a sign of weakness, indeed a desperate act of a weak nation trying to survive: “A weaker king may bargain with a stronger king with the offer of a gain equal to his troops when he is in a calamity or is addicted to what is harmful [that is, women, wine, or gambling] or is in trouble. He with whom the bargain is made should fight if capable of doing harm to him; else he should make the pact.”

Whereas Carl von Clausewitz said that war is just an extension of domestic politics, Kautilya argued that diplomacy is really a subtle act of war, a series of action taken to weaken an enemy and gain advantages for oneself, all with an eye toward eventual conquest, of preliminary movements toward war. “In this way the conqueror should establish in the rear and in front a circle (of kings) in his own interest....And in the entire circle, he should ever station envoys and secret agents, becoming a friend of the rebels, maintaining secrecy when striking again. The affairs of one, who can't maintain secrecy... undoubtedly perish like a broken boat in the ocean.” In Kautilya's foreign policy even during a time of diplomacy and negotiated peace, a king should still be “striking again and again” in secrecy.

Consider some of the measures Kautilya supported during times of peace. If opposed by an alliance of nations, a king should secretly “sow dissensions” within the alliance until one or

more of the parties in the alliance becomes weak. When he has weakened a neighbor, the king should violate the treaty.

He advised “As between an enemy fit to be harassed and an enemy fit to be exterminated, acquisition of land from an enemy fit to be exterminated is preferable. For, the king fit to be exterminated, being without support or with a weak support is deserted by his subjects when on being attacked, he wishes to flee taking with him the treasury and the army”. It is best to attack an enemy that is “disunited”, rather than an enemy in which the subjects have organized themselves into “bands”. During times of peace and negotiations Kautilya wanted spies and secret agents to exploit the divisions within a country. Most countries he maintained have four kinds of unhappy subjects the enraged, the frightened, the greedy, and the proud. Secret agents can widen and deepen these divisions by inciting these four types of people to act against their king. The opposing king “should win over the seducible in the enemy’s territories by means of conciliation and gifts and those not seducible by means of dissension and force”.

Because a king abides by a treaty only for so long as it is advantageous, Kautilya regarded all allies as future conquests when the time is ripe. He wrote, for example, that ally who remains common to the enemy (and himself), he should divide that rogue from the enemy when divided, exterminate him thereafter (exterminate) the enemy. Kautilya also sought to take a nation trying to remain neutral or indifferent and secretly provoke war between that nation and a neighboring kingdom until the neutral nation sought his help. Then Kautilya’s king could “place him under (his) obligations.” Kautilya himself had no moral qualms about breaking obligations or trust: “That ally who might do harm or who, though capable, would not help in times of trouble, he should exterminate him, when trustingly he comes within his reach”. Kautilya also propagated that as foreign policy is just an extension of a nation’s wars, the goal of foreign policy is not to end wars, but rather to ward off defeats and to make sure one is successful in subsequent warfare.

For Kautilya all ambassadors were potential spies with diplomatic immunity. Indeed, he wrote an entire section about how to “fight with the weapon of diplomacy”.

## CHAPTER 4

### COVERT OPERATIONS

*A single assassin can achieve, with weapons, fire, or poison, more than a fully mobilized Army.*

*- Arthashastra*

**4.1** After discussing the diplomacy as an instrument of war in chapter three, this chapter will deliberate on the covert operations in detail as propagated by the Kautilya. Kautilya believed that national aims be achieved by Diplomatic means first and then Covert operations. Physical contact operations Direct war should be the last option.

#### 4.2 Covert Activities

The creation of a secret service, with spies, secret agents, and specialists such as

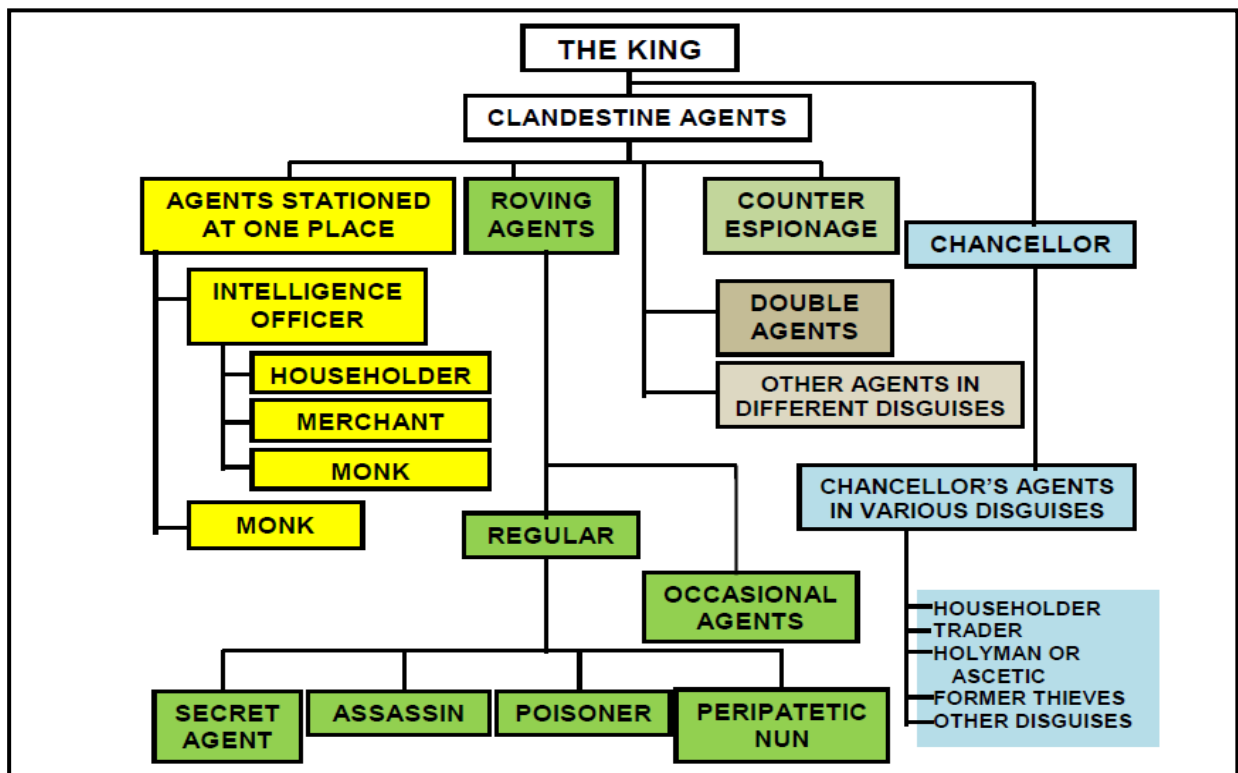


Figure 10: Types of Agents for Covert Operations

Source : created by author

assassins was a task of high priority for the King. After the Royal Councilors and ministers had been appointed, their integrity was tested using one of the four tests; (*Dharma test, Artha test, Kama test and test by Fear*) based on the work allotted to them. The next task was the creation of an entire network of secret agents for ensuring the security of the Kingdom and expansion by conquest. The organization of the Secret services is at Figure 10 above.

Clandestine agents were employed for the purpose within the country such as testing the integrity of ministers, surveillance over the population in general and high officials, secretly eliminating treacherous high official, preventing subversion by enemy kings, trapping criminal and forest bandits, and detecting anti-social elements.

As one would expect, the use of clandestine agents is extensive regarding relations with other Kingdoms, both in the context of foreign policy and in war. Some of the methods suggested involve the use of as many as three different types of agents. In general, the methods play on the weaknesses of men, such as ambition or lust. The use of rumours to create mistrust is quite frequent. In addition to clandestine agents, others could also be used to play tricks, e.g., the conqueror about to eliminate the enemy may also use allies, loyal tribal chiefs and so-called friends and supporters of the enemy into a false sense of security.

### **4.3 Creating the Secret Service**

The King creates the secret service using agents for gaining information. Any information corroborated by three different spies shall be taken to be true. Any agent who is consistently unreliable shall be eliminated. The secret service would consist of two types of agents:-

- (a) Agents Based at One Place.
- (b) Roving Agents.

#### 4.4 Agents Based at One Place

Agents Based at *one place* were employed to ascertain the integrity of government servants. A government servant unhappy with the King for good reason shall be pacified with honours and awards while those acting against the King or angry without reason would be quietly eliminated. Only a courageous and sharp student is to be trained as intelligence officer and sent out to report any activity against the King. Honest and intelligent persons are used as spies and may take the cover as Udashita, (a monk) who has relinquished his vocation but pretends to be one after recruitment or a householder, who is an impoverished farmer, or trader, who is an impoverished merchant. These agents, having been provided with plenty of money and assistants, shall pursue a profitable occupation at the places assigned to them. Out of the profits, they shall give other monks, farmers, or traders food, clothing, and shelter. Among those thus helped, the ones who want to earn money shall be recruited to act as spies using the appropriate cover. They shall swear loyalty to the King and be promised payment of salaries and expenses. With the new recruits also recruiting others, a network of spies shall be set up.

Ascetics with shaven head or matted locks who pretended, to practice austerity by eating very sparingly in public, may be established as an agent with his disciples near a city. He would establish his reputation and make predictions with the help of palmistry and similar technique as well as secret signs made by his disciples for his followers. Secret agents and other clandestine operators would make the predictions come true. He would be on the lookout for suitable recruits for government service.

#### 4.5 Roving Agents

The intelligence gathered by these agents is collected and transmitted by code. The transmitters shall not know about the gatherers were. Agents shall be recruited to act as spies according to the cover specified below:-

- (a) **Secret Agents (Sattri)**. These are recruited from orphans who are looked after by the state, trained in different techniques of interpreting signs and marks, palmistry and similar technique of interpreting body marks, magic and illusions, duties of the ashrams and science of omens and augury etc or alternatively in art of men and society.
- (b) **Assassin (Tikshna)**. They are recruited amongst the bravest, who would fight with disregard to personal safety, for money.
- (c) **Poisoner (Rasada)**. Persons who are cruel, lazy, and devoid of affection for their relatives are recruited as poisoners.
- (d) **Wandering Nuns (Parivrajika, Munda-Vrishala)**. They are recruited from poor but intrepid widows, who need to work for a living. They shall be treated with honour in the palace so that they may visit the houses of high officials freely to gain information.

#### 4.6 Other Agents

In addition, other occasional agents may be used. Other agents are:-

- (a) **Double Agents**. They are clandestine operatives who while employed by a King, spy for another King. They shall adopt a suitable disguise under the chancellor to carry out the task. The King must be aware of the possibility of his own servants being double agents and have their loyalty ascertained using other agents.
- (b) **Agents Abroad**. Kings shall have spies in the courts of the enemy, the ally, the middle and neutral Kings to spy on the Kings and their officials. The

different kinds of spies are as under:-

- (i) **Inside Their Houses.** These were hunchbacks, dwarfs, eunuchs, women skilled in various arts, dumb persons etc.
- (ii) **Inside Their Cities.** These were traders, espionage establishments.
- (iii) **Near the Cities.** These were the ascetics.
- (iv) **In the Countryside.** These were farmers, monks etc.
- (v) **Frontiers.** These were the herdsmen.
- (vi) **Forests.** These were the forest dwellers, such as shramanas and foresters.

#### **4.7 Counter Espionage**

To uncover enemy agents the King must employ his own roving and non-roving spies, operating in his own territory, who shall adopt disguise or covers like that of enemy agents or post at the frontiers high officials of unquestioned loyalty but acting as if they had reason for acting disloyalty (to attract approach from enemy agents).

#### **4.8 Agents Employed by the Chancellor**

The chancellor shall employ clandestine agents taking various disguises. These agents reported on the honesty or otherwise of village officials and heads of department.

#### **4.9 Work of Clandestine Agents.** The agents shall be used to:-

- (a) Neutralize principal officers working for the enemy.
- (b) Keep gullible people under surveillance.
- (c) Wage psychological warfare against the enemy.
- (d) Weaken the Enemy.



#### **4.10 Internal Security**

**Testing the Integrity of Ministers.** After appointing a minister, his integrity would be tested using one of the four tests viz. Dharma test, Artha test, Kama test and test by Fear. However, Kautilya cautions that these ancient teachings will not be accepted completely and that the King or Queen must not be made the targets while carrying out such tests for ascertaining the probity of a Minister. Also, he should not corrupt the uncorrupted, as even the mind of the steadfast and the valiant may not return to its original purity if it is perverted by fourfold secret test. Thus, Kings should make an outsider the object of the reference for the tests and keep the ministers under surveillance using clandestine agents.

#### **4.11 Surveillance of High Officials**

The King will select from the roving spies, those diligent, can disguise credibly and having knowledge of various languages and professions, to spy on high officials within the country. Assassins obtain employment under the official and report outdoor activities while poisoners employed by the officials as domestic, help report indoor activities of the official through wandering nuns.

#### **4.12 Surveillance of the Population**

The King must set up a system of keeping watch over the population in the cities and countryside. The agents must report rumours circulating, discontented people, facts of fields (size and production) households (taxes and exemptions) and families (varna and occupation) as well as crown property such as mines, water works, forests, various charges, subsistence expenses as well as the quantity stored in warehouses. They must ascertain the honesty of farmers, cowherds, merchants, and Heads of Departments and keep vigil on public property and isolated places.

#### **4.13 Treacherous High Officials**

Treacherous high officials that cannot be dealt openly being too powerful or united are suppressed by the King using secret methods such as using his relatives against him, entrapment or playing one against the other.

#### **4.14 Subversion/ Intrigue**

The King must protect his people from subversion by the enemy by means of appreciation for those happy with the King and for those discontented shall be tackled by either conciliation, placating with gifts, sowing dissension, and use of force. However, in enemy's country, those easily subverted shall be won by conciliation and gifts and those not easily subverted will be tackled by sowing dissension, use of force or pointing out to them the defects of their King.

#### **4.15 Entrapment of Criminals**

The thieves in settled areas and forest bandits may be apprehended by agents who will win their confidence and have them caught in the process of committing a crime.

#### **4.16 Against Anti-Social Elements**

The Chancellor's agents report dishonesty of village officials and heads of department, perjurers and procurers of perjury, persons practicing witchcraft, black magic and Sorcery, poisoners and dealers in narcotics and counterfeiters and adulterators of precious metals. Various methods may be used to expose criminals making money by causing injury to people and punished with exile or payment of suitable redemption depending upon the gravity of the offence.

#### **4.17 Marauding Jungle Tribes and Robber Bands**

Clandestine agents who were employed in deceiving an enemy sheltered in a fort or removing anti-social elements can be used to tackle jungle tribes and robber bands raiding

villages or ambushing caravans from the jungle in the similar manner of gaining their confidence, making them commit the act and catch them during the act.

#### **4.18 Against Oligarchies and Enemy Kings**

As per Kautilya miraculous results can be achieved by practicing the methods of subversion as under:-

(a) **Subversion in Enemy Territory.** The people in the enemy territory prone to subversion need to be identified. People who are angry with the King, greedy, frightened, or haughty are prone to subversion. Each potential traitor should be approached according to the method best suited to his character.

(b) **Against Oligarchies.** Oligarchies were characterized by collective leadership of a council of chiefs. Because of their cohesiveness, winning over an oligarchy was better than winning over an army or gaining a King as an ally. If an oligarchy could not be won over by conciliation or gifts, it was better to sow dissension among the chiefs by encouraging ambition or by exploiting lust.

#### **4.19 Sowing Dissension within a Confederacy.**

Before setting out on a campaign of conquest, a conqueror must avoid the danger of external treachery, particularly from a confederacy of Kings, who join to attack the conqueror by sowing dissension among them, mainly by making one of them out to be a villain, in league with the conqueror, against the interest of the confederacy. The agents shall then be used to implement the methods of deceptions and trickery.

#### 4.20 The Weak King Against an Aggressor

The weak King must resort to all possible means to avoid being conquered. Some of the recommended methods are:-

(a) **Assassinating the Aggressor.** The aggressor King may be administered poison by the queen using deception by clandestine agents in disguise.

(b) **Subversion.** Important persons in the Kingdom may be subverted to revolt against the King.

- **Prince.** A son of the aggressor may be instigated by secret agents into revolt to fight and seize the Kingdom.
- **Highest Level Officials.** A high-level official may be deceived into acting against the King through higher aspirations, subversion against the King, greed, or discontentment, which finally resulted in making them either fight their king or desert him.
- **The Viceroy and the Chancellor.** The viceroy is put in charge of the capital when the King is away on a military expedition. Secret agents through rumours among the people spread that viceroy was skeptical about the King getting back from the campaign alive, creating doubt in minds of the people and suggesting them to look after their interests and kill their enemies. Thereafter when rumour is widespread the agents would kill important people, rob etc. saying that these were punishments meted to those who disobeyed the viceroy and agents would also accuse viceroy of murder and pillage. Similar tactics is used against chancellor in countryside. After maligning the viceroy and chancellor, they shall be killed by rousing people against them. Secret agents would use this opportunity for destruction of property and accuse viceroy and chancellor for wanton destruction. Further, a pretender or Prince who is not in favour would be made King, who would then call off the attack.

- **Army Chiefs.** Army Chiefs could be subverted by provoking quarrels among them by beautiful young woman for whom they would be infatuated or may be bribed with land or wealth to desert or fight on the side of the weak King.
- **Chief Commanders of the Defense Corps.** Chiefs of the Chariot Corps, Elephant Corps, Cavalry, and Infantry shall be subverted by secret agents who would assassinate an official claiming orders from the King and advise others to save themselves by abandoning the King.
- **Others.** Three other types (those who request for recompense for services rendered had been rejected, those who had been recompensed after asking and those who had not even asked for recompense) were identified, who rendered some service to the King and could be subverted by using the same tactics as for Chief Commanders of the Defense Corps.

(c) **Counter Attacking the Aggressor.** The weak King shall overcome the aggressor by adopting a method of attack appropriate to the place where the aggressor may be found.

- **Provoking an Attack on the Aggressor.** This is done by providing war material to a neighboring Prince, a jungle chief or a pretender or a Prince disfavor along with formation about a region that could be captured, and together secret agents would strike at the weak points of the aggressor.
- **Attacking an Aggressor with Poison.** An agent in disguise as a wine vendor or trader/hawker is used to poison the aggressor's army in its camp or selling poisoned liquids or poison the elephants and horses.
- **Creating Chaos in the Aggressor's Camp on the Eve of an Attack.** Chaos can be created in the aggressor's camp on the eve of an attack by agents or by letting loose wild animals or serpents in the camp, setting fire to the camp or attacking troops and ambushing convoys with concealed troops also by proclaiming a night prior by blowing trumpets that capital had been captured.

- **Assassinating the Aggressor.** The aggressor King may be assassinated prior to the attack using assassins in disguise or by mechanical contrivances.

#### 4.21 Conqueror Besieging an Enemy's Fort

The conqueror may minimize his losses in overthrowing an enemy who has taken shelter in his own fort by various methods.

(a) **Lowering the Morale of the People in a Besieged Fort.** The gullible people inside the fort can be convinced that the conqueror is in direct communication with the Gods and Spirits by performing various tricks to lower their morale.

(b) **Enticing a Besieged Enemy by Tricks.** Various means are used to entice the King to make him vulnerable and killing him.

- **Agents in the Guise of Ascetics and Holy Men.** An agent disguised as an ascetic will convince the King of his magical powers using various tricks and promise him wealth and prosperity on performing the prayers for a week at an isolated spot. The King is thus enticed into spending a week outside the fort with his wife and children. This opportunity is used to attack and kill him.
- **Agents in the Guise of Demons.** Agents disguised as demons will frighten the people and convince them that the demons will disappear only if the King performs prayers for seven nights, at a secluded place, where he would be killed.
- **Exploiting the Enemy King's Weaknesses.** An enemy King's fondness for animals, hunting or women may be used to lure him into a trap and kill him.
- **Ambushing.** The enemy King may be ambushed by agents in hiding, at places he visits frequently and is unprotected or careless such as sanctuaries and temples, where an opportunity may arise for killing him.

(c) **Infiltrating a Force Inside the Enemy Fort.** Conquering a besieged fort will be less costly in men and material if a force can be infiltrated inside the fort. This force can

then be used to assist the conqueror's army in taking the fort either by tricking the enemy into opening the gates or by gradually building up a clandestine armed unit inside the fort.

#### **4.22 Magic, Illusions and Occult**

Kautilya also has spoken about techniques of secret practices to defeat the enemy including the occult and black magic. While maximum of these techniques deal with killing or maiming an enemy by chemicals or by black magic, a few are undoubtedly tricks and don't involve the occult. Also, he talks about list of counter measures and antidotes, and attacker making himself more powerful by becoming invisible or by acquiring ability to see in darkness.

A special preference has been given to chemical preparation which can be put into use against enemy in various ways causing death immediately or at end of different periods. Also making unconscious, killing, or blinding with poisonous smoke, causing diseases, making someone rabid, poisoning water or causing disfigurement. Other uses of chemicals are for survival. Ingredients used in making chemicals are mixture of parts of various animals, insects, and plants. The magical chemicals are mainly concerned with adding to the power of the attacker. Poison or poisoning are mentioned to get rid of traitors and enemies. While King was advised to use magical spells, occult methods, and poisons against his enemies but common people indulging in these practices were punished. Further by means of mantras, drugs, illusions, and occult practices, own people shall be protected and those of enemy destroyed.

#### **4.23 Summary of the Kautilya's Thoughts on Covert Operations**

Kautilya was ready to use almost any means of violence in fighting a war, although he wanted his king to direct his violence toward the leaders of the opposing kingdom and not toward ordinary people. For example, Kautilya discussed at length how to employ poison, but almost always directed its use at key enemy commanders. He advised that when "giving unadulterated wine to the army chiefs, [the secret agent] should give them (wine) mixed with poison when they

are in a state of intoxication”. Whereas Kautilya did suggest that an army laying siege to those in the fort surrender from illness, not to kill everyone in the fort. Mostly, Kautilya addressed the question of how to assassinate a king - by hiding “inside the image of a deity or a hollow wall” and emerging at night, by making something heavy fall on the king, or by using women as secret agents to “drop on him serpents or poisonous fire and smoke”. Kautilya was willing to use any possible means to assassinate an enemy king, drown him, burn him with fire, suffocate him with smoke, or even use crocodiles as assassins, not to mention employing women and children as poison givers. The wonder of assassination, according to Kautilya, is that it is so efficient, “for , an assassin, single-handed, may be able to achieve his end with weapon, poison and fire”. He does the work of a whole army or more. In an unrealistic passage in the Dharmasutras that Kautilya most certainly ignored, the authors directed that a king should not “strike with barbed or poisoned weapons”.

Aside from assassination, another method used to defeat an enemy without full-scale battle was to arrange for the enemy to quarrel and fight among itself. We have already seen how Kautilya intended to use beautiful women to instigate fights among high officers or officials. If the promise of pleasure can ignite quarrels, so can the promise of power. One should arrange for a secret agent disguised as an astrologer, to tell a high officer that he has all the marks of a king, and similarly arrange for a female secret agent, the wife of this officer, to complain that the king wants to keep her in his harem. A third secret agent who is a cook or a waiter should lie, saying that the king has ordered him or her to poison the high officer. “Thus, with one or two or three means”, according to Kautilya, the king “should incite the high officers one by one to fight or desert” the enemy king. In a discussion about sowing dissensions among oligarchies, Kautilya suggested that “assassins should start quarrels by injuring objects, cattle or men at night”, “should stir up princelings enjoying low comforts with (a longing for) superior comfort”, and “should start quarrels among the followers of the chiefs in the oligarchy by praising the opponents in



brothels and taverns. The goals were constantly to “sow discord” and to foment and inflame “mutual hatred, enmity and strife.”

Kautilya judged the means by the result, and the result he sought was the general good of his kingdom. Another military tactic that Kautilya praised was what we now call disinformation or propaganda designed to demoralize or frighten enemy soldiers. For example, secret agents should appear as messengers to troops saying, your fort has been burnt down or captured; a revolt by a member of your family has broken out; or your enemy or a forest chieftain has risen (against you). Convinced that disinformation could also inspire his own troops, Kautilya wanted agents to announce fabricated victories and fictitious defeats of the enemy “On the occasion of a night-battle,[secret agents] should and announce, we have entered it; the kingdom is won.

Much of this disinformation made use of religion. Placed strategically, astrologers “should fill [the king’s] side with enthusiasm by proclaiming his omniscience and association with divine agencies and should fill the enemy’s side with terror. Once more the need of the state are primary, and the king commands religion to serve the state: “He should make (Brahmins) recite blessings invoking victory and securing heaven. Singers and poets should “describe the attainment of heaven for cowards. Secret agents who have infiltrated the enemy side should use animal blood in order to “cause an excessive flow (of blood) from honoured images of deities, and then interpret that as a sure sign of future defeat for the enemy. Kautilya wanted anyone associated with religion or superstition “soothsayers, interpreters of omens, astrologers, reciters of Puranas” and so on to proclaim to his own troops and to the enemy the kings. “Association with divinities “or his meeting with divinities, creating confidence on his own side and simultaneously terror among enemy soldiers. Those priests in charge of interpreting omens must make certain that dreams and other signs are always favourable to the king’s efforts and

unfavourable to the enemy. Every kind of superstition was useful and religious authorities must be for hire.

In addition to brave and well-equipped soldiers, warfare requires deception, and over and over again Kautilya advocated the above measures and more for deceiving both his own and the enemy troops. If caught behind enemy lines, Kautilya outlined ways for one to escape “in the disguise of a heretical monk, decked out as a corpse, or wearing a woman’s garb. And he was eager to terrify the enemy by such ,multiple and varied means as by using “machines, by the employment of occult practices, through assassins slaying those engaged in something else, by magical arts, by (a show of) association with divinities, through carts, by frightening with elephants”, and so on. A favourite tactic in battle was to pretend to be defeated, retreat in apparent disorder, and then attack a disorganized and unsuspecting enemy. The leader, “feigning a rout with treasonable, alien and forest troops, should strike at the (pursuing enemy when he has) reached unsuitable ground. At all times, Kautilya wanted his king to use deception, play roles, and create appearances. Why risk heavy losses or even defeat in battle if deception and assassination can weaken or even defeat the enemy ?

Even if a king is forced to surrender in order to survive, Kautilya wanted him to pretend that his surrender was “an excellent thing” until he was clever or strong enough to fight back. Warfare was violent, but it also called for one who could calmly create false impressions, like a poker player.

## **CHAPTER :5**

### **DEFENCE AND WAR**

*“To be in accordance with dharma, the place and time of battle must be specified beforehand”*

*- Arthashastra*

**5.1** In the 21st Century, interestingly the context of what Kautilya wrote for his times now assumes importance as the very character of war has changed to war amongst the people and emergence of non-state actors, information, and cyber wars and so on. Surely war-craft, statecraft and diplomacy are now conjoined as was in the time of Kautilya in the 4th Century BCE. Yet, as India has ongoing territorial disputes it may be dangerous to assume that capture or defence of territory will not be expected. We need to understand that this is an ongoing issue of janapada/ rashtra or territorial integrity and sovereignty.

After having discussed the diplomacy as an extension of war in chapter three and covert operations in chapter four, this chapter aims to give out the planning and conduct of defensive and offensive battles as propagated by Kautilya. Before that, a brief word on strategy and military strategy.

#### **5.2 Strategy and Military Strategy**

Lawrence Freedman in his book *Strategy* (2013) argues that strategy remains the best word for expressing our attempts to think about actions in advance, in the light of our goals and our capacities.

Military strategy is the planning and execution of the contest between groups of armed adversaries. Strategy, which is a subdiscipline of warfare and of foreign policy, is a principal tool to secure national interests. It is larger in perspective than military tactics, which involves the disposition and manoeuvre of units on a particular sea or battlefield, but less broad than grand strategy otherwise called national strategy, which is the overarching strategy of the largest of

organizations such as the nation state, confederation, or international alliance and involves using diplomatic, informational, military and economic resources. Military strategy involves using military resources such as people, equipment, and information against the opponent's resources to gain supremacy or reduce the opponent's will to fight, developed through the precepts of military science.

NATO's definition of strategy is "presenting the manner in which military power should be developed and applied to achieve national objectives or those of a group of nations." Strategy may be divided into 'Grand Strategy', geopolitical in scope and 'military strategy' that converts the geopolitical policy objectives into militarily achievable goals and campaigns. Field Marshal Viscount Alanbrooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff and Co-chairman of the Anglo-US Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee for most of the Second World War, described the art of military strategy as "to derive from the [policy] aim; a series of military objectives to be achieved: to assess these objectives as to the military requirements they create, and the pre-conditions which the achievement of each is likely to necessitate: to measure available and potential resources against the requirements and to chart from this process a coherent pattern of priorities and a rational course of action." As per Field-Marshal Montgomery "Strategy is the art of distributing and applying military means, such as armed forces and supplies, to fulfil the ends of policy. Tactics means the dispositions for, and control of, military forces and techniques in actual fighting. Simply put "Strategy is the art of the conduct of war, tactics the art of fighting."

James L Cook defines strategy, like that in Kautilya's aphorism or sutras : 'strategy is designed to link ends (national interests), ways (concepts that describe how something might be done) and means (resources that are employed as capabilities)'. Lukas Milevski argues that the primary source of character of war is strategy and strategy's two main relationships are that

between military power and political consequences, and between interacting adversaries. What these authors are explaining is interestingly embedded in Kautilya's Arthashastra.

### 5.3 Kautilya on War

From the time immemorial, the four aims of human endeavour have been classified in India as; *Dharma, Artha, Karma and Moksha*, which could be translated as moral behavior, wealth, worldly pleasure, and salvation. Kautilya describes that a King had two responsibilities to his state, one internal and one external, for which he needed an army. He describes that one of the internal duties of the King as *raksha* or protection of the state from external aggression and the other responsibility was the enlargement of the territory by conquest. Kautilya states that the War against an enemy is not limited to only physical warfare. The four kinds of war mentioned are:-

- (a) **Mantra Yuddha (War by Counsel)**. It means the exercise of diplomacy; this applies mainly when a King finds himself in a weaker position and considers it unwise to engage in battle.
- (b) **Prakasa Yuddha (Open Warfare)**. It specifies time and place (i.e.) a set-piece battle.
- (c) **Kuta Yuddha (Concealed Warfare)**. It refers primarily to Upajapa (psychological warfare) including instigation of treachery in the enemy camp.
- (d) **Guda Yuddha (Clandestine War)**. It is using covert methods to achieve the objective without waging a battle, usually by assassinating the enemy. In waging clandestine war, the King used not only his own agents and double agents but also allies, Vassal Kings, tribal chiefs and the suborned friends and supporters of the enemy.

Kautilya describes the defence of the realm as constant preoccupation for the King consisting not only of the physical defence of Kingdom but also the prevention of treachery, revolts, and rebellion. The physical defensive measures were the frontier posts to prevent the

entry of undesirable aliens and forts in various parts of the country. Four different types of forts; mountain, river, jungle, and desert are mentioned in Arthashastra.

#### **5.4 Control of Army**

Kautilya describes that the King maintained control over his army by a variety of means. The Chiefs of the army were paid well so that they would not be tempted by the bribes of the enemy and could afford to pay their men well. Their integrity was tested, particularly to weed out the cowardly. They were kept under constant surveillance through clandestine agents especially to see that they did not succumb to the instigations of the enemy. For the same reason, each of the four wings of the army were placed under the control of more than one chief, so that mutual suspicion and fear would ensure their loyalty. Those suspected of treachery, were posted to remote areas while their families were kept in the capital as hostages. Sometimes, they were secretly eliminated. The military forces describe in Arthashastra confirmed the classical Indian pattern of four wings of elephants, chariots, horses, and infantry. In battle each warrior on horseback was surrounded by six-foot soldiers and elephants and chariots by five horse units. Infantry had archers as well as soldiers equipped with swords, spears and lances for hand-to-hand combat. References are also found of fighters on water and fighting from trenches. The classification of troops into different types (i.e.) standing army, the territorial army, the militias, allied troops, alien forces and tribal forces is also described in Arthashastra.

#### **5.5 Military Organization**

Kautilya describes, the characteristics of ideal army, six types of troops ranging from standing army to the unreliable alien and jungle forces, the organization structure and duties and responsibilities of officials concerned with war.

## 5.6 The Ideal Army

Kautilya examines the various calamities which can affect the fighting capacity of the army. A study of comparison brings out what an ideal Army should be like. It should be well paid, honoured and kept up to strength. It should not have any traitors or dissension within its ranks. It should not be scattered but kept together. Even if demobilized, the soldiers should be kept in one's own country, in case it is necessary to collect the army together again. In war, it should never be abandoned, left leaderless or totally merged into someone else's army. It should always have adequate reinforcement. It should not be allowed to become too tired by long marches. The terrain most suited to the type of force should be chosen for the battle. It is better to allow it to withdraw than perish in a frontal battle. It should not be allowed to be sandwiched between a frontal enemy and an enemy-in-the-rear nor be completely encircled. Some of the calamities are explained as under:-

- (a) **An Unhonoured Army.** Will fight if honored with money, not so a dishonored army which holds resentment in its heart.
- (b) **An Unpaid Army.** Will fight if paid immediately, but not so a sick army, which is unfit to fight.
- (c) **An Army Newly Arrived.** An army newly arrived in a region will fight if, mixed with experienced troops, not so an army tired after a long march.
- (d) **An Exhausted Army.** Will fight after refreshing itself by bathing, eating, and sleeping but not so a depleted army, having reduced in fighting men and draught animals.
- (e) **An Army Repulsed.** Will fight if rallied by heroic men, not so an army defeated after a frontal attack, as would have lost many of its brave men.
- (f) **Season and Terrain.** An army made to fight in an unsuitable season will do so if provided with suitable vehicles, weapons, and armor. An army cannot fight in unsuitable terrain because its movement will be impeded, and it cannot take raids.

- (g) **A Despondent Army.** Will fight if the hopes are fulfilled, but not an army abandoned by its chief.
- (h) **An Army with Women.** Will fight if the women accompanying it are separated from it, not so an army with traitors and enemies in it.
- (j) **An Angry Army (Whose Officers are Provoked for Some Reason).** Will fight if their resentment is overcome by conciliation and similar means, not so a disunited army whose members are estranged from each other.
- (k) **A Disunited Army.** A defeated army may take refuge in one state or be scattered in many states. An army staying together and taking refuge with an ally or in a fortress will fight if persuaded by diplomatic and conciliatory tactics. It is more dangerous to try to collect a scattered army.
- (l) **An Army Fighting Alongside.** In case of a joint expedition, one's own army may be encamped near another and fight alongside or may be merged completely into another. An army fighting alongside can fight the enemy separately because it will have its own positions and possibilities of mounting independent tasks. An army completely integrated with another has no independence of movement.
- (m) **An Obstructed Army.** It can fight the enemy obstruction by choosing another direction of attack, not so as encircled army, being obstructed from all sides.
- (o) **Supplies and Reinforcement.** An army with its supply of grains brought from elsewhere, it can also subsist on locally available animals and vegetables. But an army cut off from its reserves of men cannot fight being bereft of reinforcements.
- (p) **A Dispersed Army.** An army kept dispersed in one's own land can be collected in case of trouble, being disbanded in one's own territory, not so an army dispersed in the land of an ally, being far removed in place and time.



(q) **An Army Threatened from Hostile Army in the Rear.** An army full of traitors will fight if officered by trustworthy commanders who can isolate the traitor units, not so an army with a hostile army in the rear being frightened of an attack from behind.

(r) **An Army Whose Base Has Been Weakened.** An army with a denuded capital city behind it will fight after it is fully mobilized with the support of the citizens, not so an army cut off from its leaders being without a King or commander. An army whose commander is dead will fight under a new commander, not so a blind leaderless army.

### 5.7 Prevention of Calamities in Army

Kautilya also gives out the following remedies to prevent the calamities:-

- (a) Removal of vices and defects.
- (b) Reinforcements with fresh troops.
- (c) Entrenching one- self in a strong defensible place.
- (d) Reaching over the enemy to secure allies or attack him from the rear and making treaty with one who can help.

The best Infantry is that which consists of men of the qualities as described. The soldiers shall be men of tested loyalty, strong, obedient, not averse to long expeditions, skilled in handling all weapons, possessed of endurance and with the experience battles. The best horses and elephants are those with good pedigree, strength, youthfulness, vitality, loftiness, speed, mettle, good training, stamina, a lofty mien, obedience, auspicious marks, and good conduct.

### 5.8 Types of Troops

The six types of troops described by Kautilya are:-

- (a) **Maula (Regular Standing Army).** It is composed of the natives of the country, dependent on the King, sharing his interests and constantly trained. A special part of the

regular army is the King's Own Guards (antaravamsika sainya), which was never disbanded.

(b) **Brita (Territorial Army)**. It is raised from the natives of the country for a particular campaign, can be easily mobilized and are more obedient.

(c) **Sreni (Organized Militias)**. They are the native militias, acting as a group, having the same interest as the King.

(d) **Mitra (Friendly Troops)**. Troops of an ally, or those hired or brought from other King under a treaty, available at desired place and time and with interests like those of the King.

(e) **Amrita (Alien Forces)**. These are those troops which happen to fight with the King for their own reasons.

(f) **Atavi (Tribal Forces)**. These are commanded by their own chiefs.

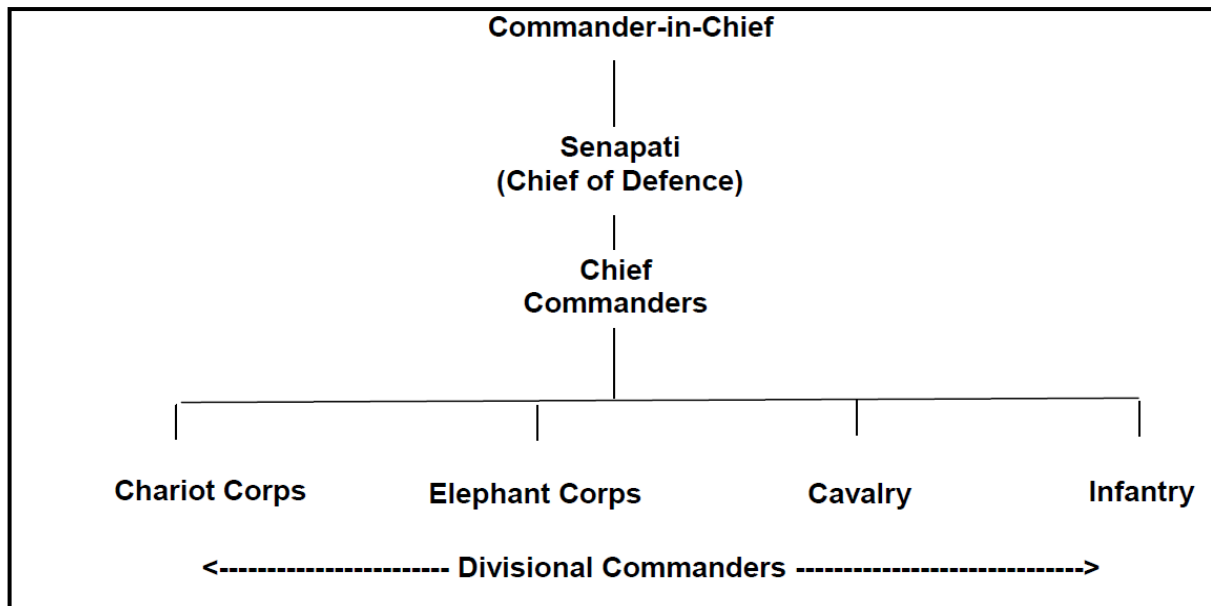
It is always better to mobilize the forces in priority of Para (a) to (f) above. The standing army depends on the King for its existence, and it is constantly under training, therefore definitely better than territorial army. Because a territorial army is nearby, more easily mobilized and more obedient, it is better than an organized militia. Because the militia is part of the population of the country, the members have a common objective, they are better than friendly non-native forces. Because friendly forces have interests like those of the King, they are better than alien forces. Alien troops and jungle tribal forces are equally untrustworthy, as both have plundered as their objective.

## 5.9 Organizational Structure

The officers of the armed forces were under the Commander - in - Chief. The organizational structure comprised of the Chief of Defense (Senapati), with chiefs of four wings (chariots, elephants, horses, and men) and Chief of Ordnance as subordinates. Under the Chief Commanders were Divisional Commanders. There were other officers who were given specific tasks during the march to battle. The army organization up to Division level is at figure 11.

The structure below the level of the divisional commander is specified as per the battle and is as given below:-

- (a) **Div Cdr (Nayaka)**. Has ten battalion commanders/ Senapatis under him.
- (b) **Bn Cdr (Senapati)**. Has ten company commanders (Patika) under him.
- (c) **Coy Cdr (Patika)**. Each unit (e.g., chariot unit with its own chariot, horses, and men)



*Figure 11: Organisation of Army*

*Source : Created by Author*

comes under a Patika. Divisional Commanders and the Battalion Commanders were responsible for mobilisation and de-mobilisation and responsible for the payment of wages and rations to the men under their command. Every division of the formation had its own distinguishing trumpet sound, flags, and banners to signal the commands to the division, dividing these into sections, joining together, halting, advancing, turning and attacking.

### 5.10 The Four Wings

The section deals with specific uses to which each of the four wings of the army can be applied. Labour did not comprise of the fighting arm but were a contingent of workers always accompanied the army to set up the camp and to do support jobs. When to use a particular type

of force in battle also depended on the nature of the opposing force. Lastly, the ground chosen for camping or for battle must also be suitable for the type of force used. The functions of four wings are as under:-

(a) **Chariots.** A King who has few horses may use bullocks, as well as horses, in his chariots.

Their functions are:-

- (i) Protecting the army.
- (ii) Repelling attacks by any of the four wings.
- (iii) Capturing and liberating battle positions.
- (iv) Reuniting one's own broken ranks and breaking up the enemy's unbroken ranks.
- (v) Causing terror in the enemy's army and adding magnificence to one's own.
- (vi) Making an awesome noise.

(b) **Elephants.** A King relies mainly on elephants for achieving victory in battles. With their exceptionally large bodies, they can do things in war which are dangerous for other arms of the forces. They can be used to crush the enemy's foot soldiers, battle arrays, forts, and encampments. Kautilya advises that an army composed mostly of elephants should be used only when the hot season is over, when it rains or in places where there is plenty of water. Their functions are as given below:-

- (i) Marching in front.
- (ii) Making new roads
- (iii) Camping grounds and fords.
- (iv) Protecting the flanks.
- (v) Helping to cross water and climb or descend from mountains.
- (vi) Entering difficult or crowded places.
- (vii) Starting or extinguishing fires.
- (viii) Using elephants alone for victory.
- (ix) Reuniting one's own broken ranks and breaking up the enemy's unbroken ranks.

- (x) Protecting against danger.
- (xi) Trampling the enemy's army.
- (xii) Frightening by mere presence.
- (xiii) Causing terror in the enemy's army by action, adding magnificence, capturing, and liberating battle positions.
- (xiv) Destroying ramparts, gates and towers.
- (xv) Bringing one's own and carrying away captured wealth.

(c) **Horses.** Their functions are as given below:-

- (i) Reconnoitering battle grounds, camping sites and forests.
- (ii) Securing level ground, water supply sources, fording places and positions favorable with regard to the sun and the wind.
- (iii) Destroying the enemy's or protecting one's own supplies and reinforcements.
- (iv) Maintaining the discipline of the army.
- (v) Extending the range of raids.
- (vi) Protecting the flanks, making the initial attack, penetrating, or breaking through enemy ranks, providing respite to one's own forces, capturing prisoners, liberating prisoners held by the enemy, diverting a pursuing army, carrying off the treasury and Princes (one's own or the enemy's), attacking the enemy in the rear or at the extremities, pursuing the weak, marching with one's own troops to guard them and rallying the troops.

(d) **Infantry.** The Infantry was to carry arms in all places and at all seasons and fight.

### 5.11 Training and Control

**Training.** Infantry, cavalry, chariots, and elephants shall have their training outside the city at sunrise every day except on days of conjunction of planets. The King shall take a personal interest in the training and make frequent inspections.

**Control.** Secret agents, prostitutes, artisans, entertainers, and military personnel with long service shall keep a diligent watch over the honesty and loyalty of soldiers.

**5.12 Employment of Force.** The suggested employment of forces is as given below:-

- (a) **Against Elephant Divisions.** Elephants, machines and wheeled vehicles at the centre, Infantry armed with lances, javelins, tridents, staves, maces, bows and arrows.
- (b) **Against Chariot Divisions, Cavalry, Armoured Elephants and Horses.** As above, infantry also equipped with stones, clubs, shields, and hooked weapons.
- (c) **Against an Army with All Four.** Armoured chariots and Infantry.

### **5.13 Battle and Camping Grounds**

The ground and time suitable for fighting for the following types of troops shall be chosen according to their special qualities:-

- (a) Infantry when fighting in deserts, forests, or water-logged areas.
- (b) Infantry when fighting from trenches or open ground.
- (c) Infantry when fighting by day or by night.
- (d) Elephants and horses according to where they were bred.
- (e) Land with rivers, mountains, marshes, and lakes.

**Chariots.** Ground suitable for chariots is that which gives them free unobstructed run, (i.e.) level, firm, clear, has nothing which will make wheels, hooves or axles get stuck, free of trees, plants, creepers, tree trunks, waterlogging, pits, anthills, sand, mud, and fissures. It is excellent if, in addition, the ground also has water-reservoirs and shelters and is suitable for chariots to turn around.

**Elephants.** Ground suitable for elephants is that which, though hilly, watery, or even, can be traversed by elephants, which has trees which can be easily uprooted and creepers that can be

torn out, and is muddy and free of fissures. It is excellent if, in addition the ground has dust, mud, water, reeds and rushes, is free of thorns and obstruction from branches of big trees.

**Horses.** Ground suitable for horses is that which has small stones and trees, small pits which horses can easily jump over, and is pitted with small fissures. It is excellent if, in addition the ground is also doubly wide for turning, free of mud, water, bogs and small pebbles.

**Infantry.** Ground suitable for infantry is that which may contain big tree trunks, stones, trees, creepers, anthills, and thickets. It is excellent if, in addition the ground is free of thorns, not too uneven and has room for the infantry to maneuver.

#### **5.14 Choice of Battle Ground**

The battle ground shall be surveyed for evenness in the front, on the flanks and in the rear. The army shall be arrayed in a favorable position, not facing the south, but with the sun behind its back and the wind favorable. If the ground is not suitable, cavalry shall be used to secure favorable ground. When the army is on ground that is neither suitable for standing firm nor for moving quickly, it will be defeated whether it stands and fights or moves away. On favorable ground, however, it can fight or change positions.

#### **5.15 The Base Camp**

The base camp was a fortified area set up near the war zone, but far away from the capital of the attacking force. It was a semi-permanent establishment, resembled the town plan of the capital city, with fortifications such as moat, towers, parapets, and gates. The site was chosen by experts in building and at a time chosen by astrologers. The camp may be circular, rectangular, or according to the shape of the terrain.

The camp was divided into concentric areas, from the center outwards and each succeeding sector was occupied by less important officials and less trustworthy troops. In the

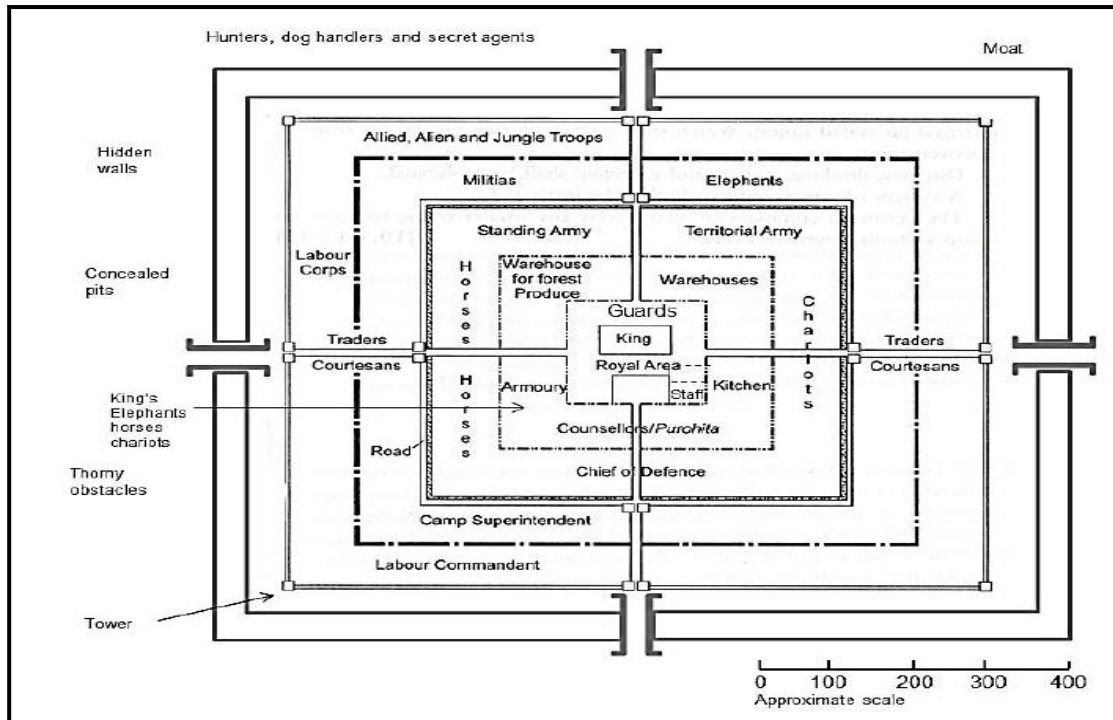


Figure 12 : Base Camp Disposition .

Source by : Kautilya. *The Arthashastra*. Translated by LN Rangrajan. New Delhi : Penguin Books India 1992.

innermost was the King's quarters, audience chamber, the treasury, the communication center and the King's personal elephant, horse, and chariot. The base camp disposition is at figure 12.

The following was ensured:-

- (a) Guards stationed at the designated points in the camp shall be changed at stated timings.
- (b) Watch shall be kept all day, to uncover the spies.
- (c) Disputes, drinking, parties, and gambling were prohibited.
- (d) A system of passes with seals was instituted.
- (e) Any soldier trying to leave the camp without written orders was arrested.

### 5.15 Base Camp to Battle Ground

The base camp was set up at some distance from the war zone since it had to be near a place of refuge in King's own territory, secure and capable of being provisioned and reinforced.



The actual war zone could still have been a few days or week march away. The following was considered for the march from the base camp to the battle ground:-

- (a) Rate of march.
- (b) Plan of extended stay/short stay.
- (c) Ability of villages and forests on the way to supply fodder, fuel, and water.
- (d) Twice the amount of the equipment and food will be carried. If not possible, the troops should themselves transport it or it was stored beforehand at intervals along the route.

**Choice of Routes.** Most suitable route for own army will be selected as those who fight from suitable terrain will be superior to those who fight from unsuitable terrain.

**Order of March.** The order of march will be, the Commander in front, the King and women in the middle, horses and bodyguards on the flanks, elephants, and reinforcements at the end and finally the Chief of Defense. The same shall be order of encampment.

**March Array.** The type of array will depend on the circumstances:-

- (a) If an attack is anticipated:-
  - (i) **In the Front.** - *Makara* (Crocodile).
  - (ii) **In the Rear.** - *Sakata* (Cart).
  - (iii) **On the Two Flanks.** - *Vajra* (Thunderbolt).
  - (iv) **On All Sides.** - *Sarvatobhadra* (Uniformly circular).
- (b) If the path is narrow permitting only single file - *Suchi* (Needle).

### **Rate of March**

The rate of march are as given below:-

- (a) **Slowest.** - 15 Kms per day (one yojana).

(b) **Middling**. - 22.5Kmsper day (one and half yojanas).

(c) **Best Rate**. - 30 Kms per day (two yojans).

Rate of march will be slowed down in the following cases:-

(a) When steps must be taken to counteract enemy action in the rear.

(b) When difficult path is to be cleared.

(c) When waiting for a suitable season, arrival of treasury, reinforcements, allied troops, alien troops or jungle forces.

(d) When expecting deterioration in enemy fortifications, morale of his mercenary or allied troops.

(e) When secret agent have been slow in their tasks.

(f) When enemy will himself do something to help the conqueror.

**5.16 Protection of the Army.** Arrangements will be made to protect the army against the following to ensure protection of its fighting strength:-

(a) A long march in waterless region.

(b) Running short on fuel / fodder.

(c) Marching over a difficult route.

(d) Harassment by enemy attacks.

(e) Hunger, thirst or the rigors of a long march.

(f) Crossing rivers in mud / deep water.

(g) Climbing or descending hills.

(h) Marching in single file through mountainous terrain or narrow path.

(j) Suffering from lack of equipment during the march or halts.

(k) Eating, exhausted or sleeping.

(l) Affected by diseases, epidemic or famine.

(m) The infantry, cavalry or elephants falling ill.

(n) Marching on unsuitable terrain.

### **5.17 Open and Deceptive Battles**

To be strictly in accordance with dharma the place and time of battle must be specified beforehand. The conditions for open fight are given below:-

- (a) When own army is superior.
- (b) Instigations in the enemy's camp have been successful.
- (c) All precautions against dangers have been taken.
- (d) The terrain is suitable for own army.

In case the above conditions are not satisfied, deception will be employed. Details of Deceptive Battles are as described below:-

- (a) The enemy shall be attacked when his forces are suffering from a calamity, his forces are unprotected, and he is on less suitable terrain compared to the attacker.
- (b) The enemy may be attacked even if he is on suitable terrain, provided that the attacker has the support of all the constituents of his state. The attacker shall lure the enemy on to unsuitable terrain by pretending that his own unreliable, alien or jungle forces have suffered a rout. He shall first break the compact battle array of the pursuing enemy using elephants and then attack with his own unbroken army.
- (c) The enemy's army may be attacked in the front with a part of the forces and when it is staggering or has turned its back, attacked in the rear with elephants and horses.
- (d) The enemy's army may be attacked in the rear with a part of the forces and when it is staggering or has turned its back, attacked with the best or the forces. Similar

tactics may also be employed for the two flanks. The attack may also be directed towards where the enemy's forces are weak or unreliable.

(e) If frontal attack is unfavorable, the attack shall be from the rear and vice versa, similarly if attack on one flank is unfavorable, it shall be made from the others.

(f) The enemy's forces shall be made tired by attacking with unreliable, alien or jungle troops and then attacked by the conqueror with his own fresh troops.

(g) The enemy may be made to believe that he has won by a seeming defeat of the conqueror's unreliable troops, then his forces shall be ambushed by the conqueror's reliable forces from safe positions.

(h) A vigilant conqueror may strike at an enemy who is negligent while his forces are plundering a caravan, animal herds, a camp or transport.

(j) The conqueror may conceal a strong force behind a weak force and when the weak force has penetrated the enemy ranks, reinforce the attack with strong one.

(k) The enemy's warriors may be lured into an ambush by tempting them with cattle for seizure or wild animals for hunting.

(l) The enemy's warriors may be kept awake by night forays and then attacked during the day when they are drowsy or asleep.

(m) The enemy's sleeping warriors can also be attacked with elephants, whose feet have been covered in leather to make their passage silent or as protection against dogs.

(n) If the enemy forces are tired after preparing for the battle in the forenoon, they shall be attacked in the afternoon.

(o) The ranks of the enemy's horses and elephants may be broken by letting loose frightened cattle, buffaloes, or camels, which are made to run helter-skelter with contraptions which make a lot of noise tied to their backs. The conqueror shall make sure his own ranks are not broken.

(p) Any force which has to fight facing the sun or wind shall be attacked.

(q) The conqueror shall attack the enemy when he suffers from any of the difficulties against which he should have taken appropriate protective measures.

### **5.18 Opportunities for an Ambush.**

A desert, forest narrow path, marsh, mountain, valley, uneven ground, boat, cattle, cart-array of the army, mist and night are suitable opportunities for ambushes.

### **5.19 Preparations for Battle**

Exhortation of troops will be carried out prior to the battle; the details are :-

(a) The conqueror will collect his forces together and say to them that I am as much a servant of the State as you are, we shall share the wealth of this state.

(b) Counsellors and the Purohit shall encourage the troops by pointing out the excellent qualities of the army and the chosen battle formation

(c) Astrologers and similar professionals shall inspire the troops by proclaiming the King to be omniscient and divinely aided and shall fill the enemy troops with dread.

**Night before the Battle.** The King shall observe a fast, the night before the battle and sleep beside his chariot and weapons. He should make oblations in the fire according to the Atharva Veda and have prayers said for victory in battle and for attainment of heaven by those who fall.

### **5.20 The Day of Battle**

Troops which are brave, skillful, of noble birth, loyal and not unhappy with the wealth and honors bestowed on them shall be placed in the center of the forces. Among them the King shall take his place, bare of flags and distinguishing features and surrounded by warrior kinsmen, paternal relatives, brothers, and sons. He shall normally ride a chariot or an elephant and be guarded by cavalry, or he may ride whatever is preponderant in his army or in which he is

proficient. A double shall impersonate the King at the head of the formation. Bards and praise singers shall describe the heaven that awaits the brave and the hell for cowards. The chief of defense shall make troops happy with wealth and honors and announce various rewards. The following shall be stationed in the rear:-

- (a) Physicians with surgical instruments, equipment, medicines, oils, and bandages.
- (b) Women with cooked food and beverages and women to encourage the men to fight.

### 5.21 Battle Arrays and Formations

Kautilya gives an exhaustive description of how to arrange the forces for a set piece battle. Basic unit for cavalry was a warrior as a horse accompanied by six soldiers and both chariot and elephant unit had five cavalry units surrounding it. The other characteristics are as under

- (a) **Close and Open Orders.** The forces could be arrayed in a densely packed close order or in a more spread-out open order, the choice of which depended on the nature of terrain, type of forces available and type of forces fielded by the enemy.
- (b) **Arrays.** Out of these basic units, arrays were formed. The arrays for chariots and elephants were identical with minimum number in arrays being nine arranged in three rows of three each. Since each chariot was supported by five cavalry units (each with one mounted warrior and six-foot soldiers), the minimum array consisted of nine chariots, forty-five mounted warriors and two hundred seventy-five Infantry soldiers.
- (c) **Formations.** Arrays were put together in a formation by placing one array in the center, two in the flanks and two in the wings. When five arrays of a formation are all equal size, it is called balance.
- (d) **Surpluses and Strengthening.** After allocating available forces to forming the units and arrays, some forces may still be available. Rules and orders for distributing them to strengthen the wings, flanks and Centre were prophesied.

(e) **Pure and Mixed Formation.** A battle formation, consisting of a center, two flanks and two wings can be formed using only one type of force (i.e.) only foot soldiers, only cavalry units or only chariot or elephants units. These are pure formations. However, a mixed formation consisting of more than one type of force; or even all four wings could be used depending on the battle situation.

(f) **Modes of Attack.** The different arrays in a formation could attack the enemy forces in a variety of ways as under:-

(i) **The Truncheon (Danda).** It is the one in which the wing, flank and center arrays advance evenly abreast.

(ii) **The Snake (Bhoga).** It is the one in which they advance unevenly in a sinuous manner, one after the other.

(iii) **The Circle (Mandala).** It is the one in which the wings, flanks and the centre become one and the advance is in all direction (simultaneously).

(iv) **The Dispersed (Asamhata).** It is the one in which the wings, flanks and the centre advance independently of each other, irrespective of their original positions in the formation.

(v) **Needle, Bracelet and Invincible.** If in the straight (truncheon) formation the array move one behind the other, then it is called the needle. If there are two such parallel columns, it is “the bracelet.” Four such formation is “the invincible”. An octagonal formation (a form of the circle) is also called the invincible. Any kind of formation of the enemy can be successfully countered by “the invincible”.

(g) **Order of the four constituents.** It is described as under:-

(i) **The benevolent.** Chariots at the center, elephants on the flanks, horses in the rear and Infantry on the wings.

(ii) **The Immovable.** Infantry, cavalry, chariots, and elephants in that order, one behind the other.

(iii) **The Unrefusable.** Elephants, horses, chariots, and infantry, one behind the other.

## 5.22 The Attack Battle

In attack, following is ensured:-

- (a) Conqueror shall not attack without having reinforcement in the rear.
- (b) After setting up battle formation enemy shall be attacked with one or two groups in the array and rest be kept in reserve to support the attack.
- (c) Best troops shall be used to attack weak enemy units.
- (d) When enemy army is strongest attack shall be made with twice number of best troops.
- (e) Part of attacking force which has few best troops shall be reinforced by a larger number.
- (f) Reinforcement shall be directed to where the enemy forces are weak or from where there is a danger of defeat or counter attack.
- (g) Infantry shall be attacked by horses, horses by chariots and chariots by elephants.
- (h) An enemy force weak in one constituent shall be attacked by a stronger force of the same constituents.
- (j) During the battle, the conqueror shall strike terror in the enemy forces by various means.

## 5.23 After the Battle

After routing the enemy's army, the conqueror shall:-

- (a) Sue for peace if enemy force was more powerful.
- (b) Agree to peace if sought by an enemy of equal power.
- (c) Destroy an enemy of inferior power, except when he has reached his own territory or is ready to sacrifice his life.



(d) A routed enemy army shall not be further harassed.

## 5.24 The Siege

When an enemy defeated in battle takes shelter in a fort, his overthrow must be achieved by besieging and capturing it. The siege was a costly exercise, in Kautilya's words, it entailed loss of men, heavy expenditure and long absence from home. The absence from home was as important as the other two, when the King was away, there was a greater likelihood in his own Kingdom of internal rebellion, palace coups, intrigue, and treachery. It was therefore essential for the aggressor to capture the fort in the shortest possible time at minimum cost to himself.

Kautilya describes a variety of methods as given below:-

(a) Before laying the siege, the aggressor may wage psychological war (Upajapa) with the aim of frightening the people inside the fort and boosting the morale of his own people, subverting the enemy's high officials or de-populating the territory of the enemy.

(b) If this fails, the aggressor shall try to draw out the enemy from the protections of the fort by various clandestine methods and kill him (Yogavamana). The presumption is that with the high officials subverted or the leader dead, the fort would fall into the aggressor's hands without a fight.

(c) If the enemy is intelligent and as much a student of Kautilya as the aggressor, it is unlikely that he will fall for any of the tricks. If the attempts at killing the enemy prove to be impracticable or if they fail, the conqueror shall set about weakening the enemy (Apasarpa). The methods suggested include a trusted subordinate of the conqueror gaining the enemy's confidence and then betraying him and using allies or the enemy's enemy.

(d) The next possibility is for the aggressor to infiltrate his own forces into the fort, so that it can be taken from the inside.

(e) Laying siege (Paryupasana) and taking the fort by direct assault (Avamardha) is the last resort. However, there are still some steps which could be taken to emasculate the enemy before the siege is laid. Removing the civilian population from around the siege and fort area is one, however, Kautilya is categorical that there shall be no permanent loss of population from the area which will, after victory, become that of the conqueror as, “there cannot be country without people and there is no Kingdom without a country”. Reducing the supplies available to the enemy for withstanding the siege is another precaution.

(f) The aggressor shall then strengthen his own siege camp and lay the siege at the right time. While carrying out activities like undermining ramparts and breaching the walls, the besieger shall try to avoid further bloodshed and get the enemy to surrender by using the four methods of conciliation, gifts, sowing dissension, and force. Setting fire to the fort by various means is a possibility but this is not recommended for there is little to be gained by conquering ashes.

(g) Even when the enemy’s strength is depleted, there are alternatives to direct assault. The enemy can be tricked into coming out of the fort by pretending to withdraw the siege and convincing him by using different types of people that it is safe for him to come out. He shall then be killed.

(h) When all else fails, there is no option but to take the fort by storming it. The rules for the assault also specify that those inside the fort who surrender or do not take part in its defense shall be spared.

(j) When the fort is taken, it shall be cleared of all supporters of enemy and suitable precautions taken to eliminate the possibility of secret attacks. For example, the defeated enemy may hide himself in the fort and try to assassinate the conqueror. Only when the conqueror is sure of security, shall he enter the fort as the victor.

(k) The five means of taking a fort are psychological warfare, enticing the enemy out, weakening him, besieging him, and taking the fort by direct assault.

### **5.25 Psychological Warfare**

The conqueror shall demonstrate his pervasive knowledge by:-

- (a) Letting his Chiefs know that he is aware of their domestic affairs and secret activities having found out about them through secret agents.
- (b) Unmasking traitors, having first found them out through secret agents employed for that purpose.
- (c) Revealing that someone was about to make a request for a favour having ascertained that through unnoticed contacts, prior knowledge or signals.
- (d) Revealing knowledge about foreign countries before it becomes public, having got from agents a secret sealed communication through homing pigeons.

**Demonstrating Association with Gods.** The conqueror shall make gullible people believe that he is in direct contact with gods by various tricks.

**Propaganda.** Soothsayers, readers of omens, astrologers, reciters of puranas, intuitionists and clandestine agents, those who helped the King perform the tricks and those who had witnessed them shall advertise them inside his own territory. In the enemy's territory, they shall advertise the appearance of Gods and his receiving army and treasury from divine sources. Whenever there is an opportunity e.g., when interpreting questions to Gods (devaprasna), omens, the cawing of crows, body-language, dreams, birdcalls, and animal noises, they shall proclaim the meaning to be victory for the conqueror and defeat for the enemy. Any appearance of a meteor in the constellation of stars of the enemy's birth shall be proclaimed by a beat of drums as an omen of the imminent defeat of the enemy.

**Against the Enemy's Chiefs.** Agents, in the guise of envoys pretending to be motivated by friendliness, shall tell the chief principals of the enemy of the high regard the conqueror has for them, of the strength of his side and of the deterioration in the enemy's side. The principals, both civilians and soldiers, shall be promised that they will not lose i.e. have the same rewards and honors when the conqueror absorbs the territory. The principals shall be looked after if they encounter calamities and be treated as a father would treat his children. An agent, in the guise of a holy man shall take refuge in a popular temple of the city and by his performances of magical tricks gradually win over the principals and use them to outmaneuver the enemy.

## **5.26 Weakening the Enemy.**

The methods for weakening the enemy are discussed below:-

(a) **Using One's Own Trusted Officers.** The following is resorted to:-

(i) A trustworthy counselor, jungle chief or militia chief, ostensibly dismissed from his post, shall seek shelter with the enemy and gradually bring over his own men on the grounds of protecting his people. He shall then, with the help of spies, attack a treacherous town of the conqueror, or an unreliable and weak force of the conqueror or an unreliable rear ally of the conqueror. Alternatively, the planted official may increase his own strength by winning over the militias or tribal forces in a part of the enemy's territory. When the traitor has earned the full confidence of the enemy, word shall be sent to the conqueror, who, pretending to go to catch elephants or put down tribal rebels, shall attack the enemy without warning, the planted official revealing his true colors at that time.

(ii) The conqueror shall first make peace with the enemy and then ostensibly dismiss some counsellors, who are then to appeal to the enemy for help in reconciling them with their master. Any envoy sent by the enemy for this purpose shall be insulted, whereupon one of the dismissed counsellors shall seek shelter with the enemy and

gain his confidence by recommending treacherous spies who have betrayed the conqueror, the disgruntled, the unreliable, the weak robbers or jungle chief who harass both. He shall then falsely betray important officers of the enemy, such as frontier officers, tribal chiefs or army chiefs accusing them of being in league with the conqueror so called proof shall be provided by letters carried by the concerned men. Thus, important officials providing valuable support shall be eliminated, thereby weakening the enemy.

(iii) The conqueror shall ostensibly banish a chief official of a fort province or army accusing him of treachery. The banished official shall take shelter with the enemy and use the opportunity of a battle, a sudden assault, a siege, or a calamity to outmaneuver the enemy. While waiting for an opportunity he shall set about sowing dissension among the supporters of the enemy. In this also they shall use letters carried by condemned men.

(b) **Weakening the Enemy by Using Other Kings of the Circle.** This series of methods makes use of the enemy's enemy, the conqueror's ally, or the enemy's ally. Some details of the same are discussed as under:-

(i) The enemy can also be destroyed with methods involving the use of armed forces. In this case the enemy's enemy (in theory, a friend) shall by secret methods be made to appear to do harm to the conqueror who shall then pretend to mount an attack against the ally in retaliation. The enemy shall then be invited to join in it on the promise of a share of land or gold captured on the expedition.

(ii) The conqueror shall contrive a situation whereby the enemy is invited to come with armed forces to his help. In this case the conqueror shall make a treaty with the ally for sharing the enemy's land. When the ally attacks the enemy, he shall appear to do harm to the conqueror who shall then pretend to mount an attack in retaliation

and invite the enemy to join in an attack on an ally of the conqueror promising a share of the land.

**5.27** The enemy may or may not trust the conqueror, the methods of destroying the enemy depends on his reactions.

(a) **If the Enemy Trusts the Conqueror and Agrees to a Joint Campaign.** The enemy shall be killed in an ambush or an open battle with the supposed target of the expedition. If this is not possible, the enemy shall be invited to the court of the conqueror on some possible pretext (i.e.) gift of land, installation of the crown Prince or grant of protection and then imprisoned. If this is also not possible, the enemy shall be done away with by secret means.

(b) **If the Enemy Only Provides His Army but Does Not Accompany it Himself.** The target of the campaign shall be made to destroy the enemy's enemies.

(c) **If the Enemy Leads his Forces Separately and Not with the Conqueror.** He shall be destroyed by being squeezed between the two forces of the conqueror and that of the King used as bait.

(d) **If the Enemy is Distrustful and Engages in the Campaign on His own or if He Wants to Attack a Different Part of the Territory.** He shall be killed by the target of the campaign or the conqueror shall do so mobilizing all his forces.

(e) **When the Enemy is Actually Fighting the Targeted King.** The conqueror shall seize the base of the enemy by sending a different force.

(f) **In Case of the Enemy Undertaking a Campaign Against the Conqueror's Ally.** The enemy will be first helped with the troops and when he is engaged in battle, he shall be outmaneuvered by the conqueror.

### 5.28 Time for Besieging

The enemy's fort shall be besieged when:-

- (a) The attacker's troops are supplied abundantly with high quality grains, forest produce, machines, army, armor, Labouré, ropes and other requirements.
- (b) The climate is favorable to the conqueror and unfavorable to the enemy.
- (c) The enemy suffers from diseases, famine, depletion of stores, deterioration of fortifications and the weariness of his mercenary and allied troops.

### 5.29 Storming the Fort

**The Right Conditions.** The best opportunities to storm the fort are as given below:-

- (a) The conqueror is fully equipped with all implements and labourer's.
- (b) The enemy is ill.
- (c) The enemy's principal officials are happy through being subjected to secret tests of loyalty.
- (d) Enemy's fortifications are incomplete, stores depleted and reinforcements unavailable.
- (e) The enemy is likely to make a treaty with all to provide reinforcements before the assault.

**The Right Time.** The right time to storm the fort is as given below:-

- (a) There has been a fire in the fort.
- (b) The people are participating in a festival or watching a show.
- (c) There is a drunken quarrel among the troops inside the fort.
- (d) The enemy troops are tired of constant fighting.
- (e) The enemy troops have suffered many casualties after heavy fighting.
- (f) The people are tired after being kept awake or when they are asleep.
- (g) It is cloudy, raining, flooded or foggy.

**The Assault.** Prior to the assault, conqueror will first mount a diversionary attack with his own unreliable troops or tribal forces to engage part of enemy forces. The attack shall be led by the conqueror's unreliable, alien, or tribal forces as well as by those who hate the enemy and deserters from the fort, who had been rewarded and honored by the conqueror. After capturing the fort, it shall be cleared of enemy's supporters and precautions shall be taken, both inside and out, against secret attackers or tricks. Only then shall a conqueror enter the fort.

### 5.30 Peaceful Rule of the Acquired Territory

Kautilya has mentioned three ways in which a conqueror can acquire territory:-

(a) **Inheritance.** In case of inherited territory, the conqueror shall avoid mistakes of his father and emulate his virtues. Only those customs and practice in vogue accordingly to the dharma shall be continued and only those confirming to the dharma shall be introduced.

(b) **Re-acquisition.** In case of territory, which was originally his and has been re-acquired, the conqueror shall avoid mistakes which led to the territory being lost and strengthen those qualities through which he regained it.

(c) **New Territory Acquired by Conquest.** Having acquired a new territory, the conqueror should ensure the following:-

(i) Substitute virtues of enemy vices and where enemy was good make them twice as good.

(ii) Shall follow policies which are pleasing and beneficial to the constituents by acting according to dharma and by granting favors, tax exemptions, giving gifts and bestowing honors.

(iii) He shall reward, as promised, those who were traitors to the enemy for his sake.

(iv) He shall adopt way of life, dress, language, and customs of the people of new territory.



- (v) He shall please the chiefs of the county, towns, castes, and guilds by looking after their customary rights.
- (vi) Shall ensure devotions are regularly held in all the temples and ashrams.
- (vii) All prisoners shall be released on special amnesty. Ill, helpless, and distressed shall be helped.
- (viii) All practices which are not according to the dharma or which affect the treasury or army shall be discontinued and replaced by those in accordance with the dharma.
- (ix) Thieves shall be removed from their usual places of residence and dispersed.
- (x) The posts previously occupied by the enemy's men shall be filled by the conquerors own people or those who were in disfavor with the enemy.

**5.32** This chapter has presented the Kautilya's defensive and offensive operation planning, preparation, conduct of the battle and post battle management and handling of the kingdom, government officials, army and most importantly its people. It discusses the types of defense and states that defense not only includes physical security but also prevention of treachery and so many other aspects of safety and security of people. It discusses the composition and control of the Army, ideal characteristics of the Army including the leadership. Calamities for the army has been described in detail and measures taken to keep a motivated and fighting fit army have been discussed. The chapter gives out in detail the six types of the soldiers and their skills, organization structure of the army, four wings of the Army and their employment and task, sequence of the mobilization to base camp organization and safety. It covers the battle arrays and formations, actions night prior to the battle, actual conduct of the battle and post war management. Psychological warfare, intelligence and use of priests for ensuring victory is all given out. All aspects of the war are covered in detail. An analysis of these details and Indian Army Principles of War, Chief of Army Staff guidelines for conduct of Counter Terrorist and

Insurgency operations imply that broad Kautilyan principles are as relevant today as in 4<sup>th</sup> Century BC. A detailed assessment of the issues will be done in Chapter 6.

## CHAPTER 6

# RELEVANCE OF MILITARY STRATEGY OF KAUTILYA IN 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

Kautilya is the DNA of India's Foreign Policy.

- Arndt Michael (Indian Strategic Expert)

Miraculous results can be achieved by practising the methods of subversion.

- Arthashastra

### 6.1 Introduction

In Chapters three, four and five, I have discussed the conduct of *Foreign Policy as an Extension of War*, *Covert Operations*, and the *Conduct of Defence and War*, respectively. In times of Kautilya, war was an essential and integral part of the statecraft. National aims and interests were to be achieved first by diplomacy, followed by combination of diplomacy and covert operations next and war was to be used as the last option in conjunction with combination of the first two (Therefore, the chapters has been arranged in that order in this dissertation). War Strategy was always a part of the Grand Strategy of the nations in Kautilyan strategy and it remains so even in 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

It is my firm belief that Kautilya's strategy of war and governance were, are and will always remain relevant. Though some concepts may have to be modified due to inherent changes in technology and its application in warfare. Degree of relevance and application of his teachings may differ depending on various factors. This research has further strengthened my belief based on empirical data and understanding of the historians, academia, and strategists.

This chapter endeavours to summarise the main components/ points of the chapters two to five and assess the relevance of Kautilya in three parts. In part one it brings out the relevance of Kautilya in ancient, medieval, and modern India. In part two of the Chapter, it assesses the relevance of Kautilya's War Strategy and in third part, visualises the 21<sup>st</sup> Century scenarios and assess Kautilya's relevance.

## **6.2 Relevance of Kautilya in Ancient, Medieval and Modern India**

Any debate on the relevance of Kautilya raises two questions and they have to be answered for meaningful and rational answer to the relevance question. First question is the usefulness of Kautilya's teachings in today's India which is so different from Maurya's time. Second question is 'Does Kautilya's impassive, cynical, and ruthless teachings have any sway in 21<sup>st</sup> Century India'? second question is raised mainly because India is considered to be land of Buddha, Ashoka and Gandhi, and its citizens are supposedly believers and practitioners of nonviolence. Also, because India's stated pillars of foreign policy are nonalignment, peaceful coexistence, disarmament, and the amicable settlement of disputes. Let me deal with the second question first.

India has an image of a peace-loving country whose inhabitants are influenced strongly by the concept of nonviolence and illustrious practitioners like Gautama Buddha, Ashoka (the third Mauryan emperor), and Mahatma Gandhi. But a critical observer of Indian history will notice that this idea of a nonviolent society that abhors war and bloodshed may be a kind of myth that has been carefully constructed and sustained throughout the ages. Let us begin the discussion with Ashoka.

Ashoka was the grandson of Chandragupta Maurya, the aforementioned royal protégé of Kautilya. Ashoka reigned from 268 to 233 BC and under him the empire reached its zenith. But it is not for ruling over such a vast polity that Ashoka is famous today. Rather, he is fondly

remembered for his espousal of Buddhism and nonviolence. In the seventh year of his reign (261 BC) Ashoka decided to make an addition to the conquests of his illustrious predecessors and attacked Kalinga. After seeing the result of his aggression against Kalinga, a war which brought the latter into the Mauryan empire at the cost of one hundred thousand deaths and the deportation of one hundred and fifty thousand people, Ashoka took up Buddhism, renounced war and bloodshed and decided to attain further conquests only through spiritual means. Among other method, he supports missionary activity and erected rock edicts and pillars which preached the importance of nonviolence. Among other achievements, Ashoka is credited with the spread of Buddhism in east and southeast Asia and rightly is honoured today as one of India's greatest rulers.

The benevolent acts of Ashoka should not be dismissed, but it emerges that the teachings of Kautilya were never far from the mind of the emperor. AL Basham tells us that Ashoka constantly was troubled by wild tribes living on his imperial frontiers and was quite ready to deal forcefully with them if they continued their ravages. While adhering to Buddhism and its creed of nonviolence, Ashoka did not demobilize his army. As for Kalinga, Ashoka did not give it up or restore it to its original rulers. Kalinga was governed as an integral part of the empire. It is true that there were no military conquests after Kalinga, but perhaps this was because Kalinga marked the end of Aryan India and the non-Aryan part was not to be conquered for religious and social reasons. It seems that Kautilya is operating very much in Ashokan India; AL Basham concludes that "Ashoka by no means gave up his imperial ambitions but modified them in accordance with the humanitarian ethics of Buddhism."

The Buddhist kings who later ruled over large parts of India were also no different from Ashoka; thus Harsha, Dharmapala, or Devapala were no less warlike than the Mauryas and Guptas. Nirad C. Chaudhuri observed that twenty-five words found in an Ashokan inscription

promoting nonviolence have succeeded in almost wholly suppressing the thousands in the rest of the epigraphy and the whole of Sanskrit literature which bear testimony to the incorrigible militarism of the Hindus and reminds us that few communities have been more warlike and fonder of bloodshed. So much for the myth of an ancient India practicing nonviolence and emphasizing the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Indian history students know that by the beginning of the first millennium AD a series of Muslim invasions of northern India commenced. The devastating raids between 1000 and 1027 AD by Mahmud of Ghazni were followed by those of the rulers of Ghori, and by 1192 AD Muslim rule was established in India. Why were these invaders able to continue their forays into India with impunity year after year? why were Indian kings and princes unwilling to join together and resist the invaders? Surely, the advantages possessed by the invaders could have been neutralized if the Indians had mobilized all their resources and coordinated their efforts to resist the invaders. One reason for this failure might be the teachings of Kautilya. Joel Larus forcefully argues this point. He asserts that the Rajput clans and kingdoms located in northern India, and thus directly in the path of the invaders, were influenced by Kautilya's philosophy of peace and war. Given Kautilya's advocacy of a highly utilitarian, pragmatic approach to interstate relations, exemplified by the Matsya - Nyaya, Mandala and Shadgunya concepts, aggression by Hindu kings was all but continuous. For all the Indian Kings, a neighbouring king, whether an ally or neutral, was likely to be an implacable enemy as soon as he acquired sufficient strength to upset the status quo. Aggrandizement was perceived to be a duty of the king and how he acquired power was not of much concern. As a result, conflict among them was the norm and a joint front against the enemy was never possible. Thus, Arthashastra not only stipulated political military behaviour in Medieval India, but Kautilyan philosophy became the model for relations among local states with disastrous consequences.

In modern times, role of Mahatma Gandhi in Independence of India does not in any way mean the total denial of violence as a tool in dealing with India's international relations. Believe that Gandhi was totally opposed to the idea of the use of force or violence is safely dispelled when we come to know that Gandhi was not averse to the use of violence to ensure India's territorial integrity, even if that is a contested one. W P S Sidhu reminds us that, speaking with Pakistan in mind, Gandhi firmly declared that if given the choice between cowardice and violence, the latter is to be preferred. Gandhi, the apostle of nonviolence, was willing to have India resort to the use of force to protect her honour rather than be dishonoured. The Gandhiji did advocate use of violence in Quit India Movement in 1942. "Do or Die" call by Mahatma Gandhi in August 1942 during Quit India Movement was responded by attack on 550 post offices, 250 railway stations, destroyed 70 Police Stations and damaged 85 government buildings and so on.

Even as we realize that far from being a country of peace loving and nonviolence, India has been a country whose political history has been of blood-stained pages; the question remains as to whether Arthashastra, written more than two thousand four hundred years ago has any relevance for India today. We will now try to see if Kautilya's thought influences present Indian Strategic Culture with empirical evidence.

Indians, being the proud inheritors to one of the world's oldest civilizations, are not exempted from the influence of history. The ideas present in political texts like the Arthashastra, and Dharma Shastra are important. It traces their origins to India's hierarchical social structure and the country's religious beliefs, both of which are very much present today and contends that it would be surprising if these ideas were totally at variance with contemporary beliefs and behaviour. This leads to the conclusion that contemporary Indians are more akin to their ancestors in many respects.

Coupled with the strong influences of societal structure and religious beliefs, yet another aspect of the Indian tradition also strengthens the chances of Kautilya's teachings playing an important role in present-day India. This is the oral tradition of dissemination of knowledge and is to be noted that this tradition plays a significant role in today's Indian society. Refuting the usual Western complaints that India lacks a clear strategic tradition, Sidhu points out that not only were traditions, norms, law books and military strategies passed on by word of mouth for several centuries but also that Indians knew their history well and lived it every day. Thus, ideas espoused by Kautilya, especially the concept of realism, not only were relevant for Chandragupta Maurya but also for people such as Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

In Independent India, we see the implementation of Kautilyan policies. We now will focus on independent India's foreign policy and try to discern the influence of Kautilyan tradition. It is interesting to note that in post 1947 India references to Kautilya's work are scant. Even though prime Minister Nehru did at one time write under the pseudonym "Chanakya," Kautilya was only occasionally mentioned in his speeches. However, Ashok Kapur has pointed out that Nehru did develop strategy similar to Kautilya's mandala or circle of states system. Given India's friendly relations with countries like Afghanistan, Vietnam and the Soviet Union, and its enmity with Pakistan and China, it seems that Nehru did understand the utility of Kautilyan ideas. Moreover, senior Indian diplomat, K.P.S. Menon noted in 1947 that the realism of Kautilya is a useful corrective to our idealism in international politics. This understanding of the utility of Kautilyan thinking becomes much more significant when one traces the rhetoric of Indian policies and their actual implementation.

From the very beginning, Nehru, who was dominant in formulating India's foreign and security policies, successfully presented to the world the image of a distinct Indian policy with regard to international relations. It was a policy where morality played a more prominent role than did the use of force. In this policy of nonalignment, peaceful coexistence, disarmament, and



the peaceful settlement of disputes were the key instruments by which world peace was to be attained. Even as late as 1960, Nehru reiterated that India's policy was rooted in these elements rather than purely realistic or military thinking. The traditional and widely accepted view is that it was Mahatma Gandhi's influence and legacy that propelled Nehru and India into this posture. But that proposition is difficult to accept, given that we have already seen how Gandhi himself was not always averse to "realist thinking". More significantly, it has been pointed out that Gandhi's philosophy and preferences had few adherents in India after his death in 1948. Hugh Tinker argues that though the philosophy of nonalignment, of positive neutralism, was derived directly from Gandhian teaching, in reality, neutralism has been most convincing in inverse ratio to the direct involvement of Indian interests. But it was in the policy of peaceful coexistence, or (nonviolence) in which the contradiction between policy announcements and actions taken by India comes out most strongly. Lorne Kavic points out that while the Gandhian creed of nonviolence was praised the Indian Prime Minister declared in the Lower House of the Parliament on 15 February 1956: "I am not aware of our government having ever said that they have adopted the doctrine of Ahimsa (Nonviolence) to our activities. We may respect it, we may honour the doctrine, but as a government it is patent that we do not consider ourselves capable of adopting the doctrine of Ahimsa." Thus, it is not surprising that while India took the high ground and urged other states to resolve disputes through negotiation, she herself resorted to the use of force and for example took military action against the princely states of Junagadh (1948) Hyderabad (1949) and the Portuguese colony of Goa (1961) besides fighting the 1947 war with Pakistan. The declaratory nature of the policy of nonviolence is further clarified by the fact that even though India faced crippling poverty and illiteracy, problems which were identified by Nehru as having a higher priority than defence, by 1962 India nonetheless possessed the largest navy and air force of any country in the Indian Ocean region and had one of the largest standing armies in the world.

The Kautilya's brand of realism appears to pervade the Indian policy of nonalignment which has been a cornerstone of Indian foreign and security policy since India's independence. Nonalignment policy was pursued by India at that period of time to ensure her security. Given India's inadequacy notably vis-à-vis China, nonalignment was to be a transitional phase in its foreign policy; nonalignment was to be pursued until India developed economic and military strength sufficient to protect her security. Nonalignment was a strategy to stay away from the bloc conflicts, but not global politics in its entirety. It was a strategy to use diplomatic or, when the situation permitted, military means to gain influence despite material weakness. Simply put, nonalignment was a low-risk strategy to gain influence without difficulty.

Nonalignment did not prevent Nehru from seeking military aid from United States and Great Britain during the Sino Indian War of 1962, nor did it restrain India from concluding the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation in August 1971. The latter assured, among other things that both the parties will come to each other's aid in the event of an attack by a third party. The treaty also ensured the transfer of a huge quantity of Soviet weapons, which helped India to pursue its military intervention in East Pakistan (subsequently Bangladesh) in December 1971. In fact, as India's military might increase over a period of time, Indian analysts started to have a different notion of nonalignment. Therefore Onkar Marwah (1978) argued that:-

*'In a separate development, Indian security managers now tend to view nonalignment with a military power as maintaining the benefits that existed earlier for their state without a basis in power. In this context, the substance of Indian nonalignment has become somewhat indistinguishable from the policies of other large states. That is, for a relatively weaker India, nonalignment in the short term was a balancing act that sought reductions in the "laws of political framework" and increases in the "Laws of reciprocity" across the conflicts of the international system. Today, in discounting the present for future gains and with the experience*

*of numerous wars, India's nonalignment appears to have become a search for an equal status with other large states, and hence a search for equal power.'*

Many scholars and strategists debate whether Indian security policies are still influenced by Kautilyan thinking. While it is true that India did exhibit certain traits reminiscent of Kautilyan during the Cold War era, one can ask how relevant those influences are today. The world has seen many changes since the collapse of the Soviet Union. India has opened her economy and it appears that this has paid off handsomely; India's rising economic and military power is a reality. Her somewhat ambiguous relationship with the sole superpower, the United States, has improved remarkably and today the two countries are closer than ever before. On July 18, 2006, U.S President George W. Bush and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh declared their resolve to transform the relationship between the two countries into a global partnership that will provide leadership in areas of mutual concern and interest. For the United States, India is an emerging great power and a key strategic partner. Since 2006 and particularly post change of the Government in India since 2014, India -USA relations have seen a new high. Today there is intelligence sharing between both the Countries besides signing of four bilateral agreements. Therefore, it makes sense to assert that Arthashastra is still truly relevant for of Indian strategic culture.

### **6.3 Relevance of Military Strategy in Conventional Operations**

War has always been a fundamental element of the human history. Recourse to violence has been widespread and almost universal, with little relationship of its frequency and severity to the characteristics of people and their geographic locations. Control of armed forces rests with the state as the sovereign territorial group. The state also has effective control within its territory and is able to limit the use of the armed forces when it controls violence. The margin of superiority is generally assumed to determine the degree to which violence can be limited. It is

also generally accepted that when a margin of superiority is predominant, the less is the likelihood of it being challenged through war. Also, if there is a challenge, the greater the margin of superiority, the more quickly can the challenge, in theory, be suppressed and the less sustained the violence. The rationale for having strong armed forces is, thus, axiomatic. Kautilya understood this and enunciated many military strategies in the *Arthashastra*. He does not make much distinction between military strategy and statecraft. He believed that warfare is an extension and an integral part of statecraft. In today's world it is relevant as we see nations achieving their national aims through diplomatic and economic means.

We have seen in chapter five that Military strategy is the manoeuvring of military forces to support political assertions and demands. It involves both the threat and the use of military force. The essence of strategy is the relationship between the two. This relationship is not a simple one, because of the reciprocal nature of the threat of force in battle. The problem of supporting political demands or goals through threats or implied use of force is complicated greatly by the implied use of force to resist the demand. When this occurs, the political problem is immediately complemented by a military problem which may, or may not, become paramount, depending upon the nature of the resistance. In any case, the mutual threat of force adds a military dimension, beyond the purely political aspects. It is the task of strategy to overcome the military threat, and, at the same time, establish the foundations for a political solution. In an increasingly complex world, the missions of the armed forces are correspondingly more diverse and complex than ever before. In times of peace and tension, the armed forces are a powerful instrument of the nation's foreign policy. In times of crisis and conflict, they are the foremost expression of the nation's will and intent. Thus, the expectations of a nation from its military are diverse and wide-ranging. The present century diverse employment of military in internal and external threats makes them more relevant in asserting nations will.

According to Kautilya, the most important factor in planning and decision-making for conducting a military campaign is power. This includes an analysis of the military and economic strength of the adversary, as well as his intellectual power. He stressed on the ability of the Army to carry out an objective analysis and not to be swayed by emotion. This is true even today that emotions should not govern the decision to go to war and intellectual and information warfare is being employed by nations to achieve their objectives.

Kautilya lists out the order of the three constituents of power - intellectual power, military strength, and morale in decreasing order of importance. He advised that, though the mightier King may have a better Army, the power of good analysis and judgement (which include intelligence and the knowledge of politics - the two eyes of the King) are superior to sheer military strength. Force in present-day warfare encompasses tangible (personnel, weapons, mobility, firepower, and logistics) and intangible elements (leadership, morale, discipline, training, doctrine, and motivation). The easiest aspects of military affairs to quantify are weapons and their effects. Weapons have well-known and easily measurable physical characteristics; they obey the standard laws of physics. It is the variables of combat which bring the intangible elements into play. The intangible human elements are difficult to quantify and tend to tilt the balance if not correctly assessed. Hence, to compare two opponents, as emphasized in the *Arthashastra*, their power in all aspects needs to be compared. Accordingly, the human element was given the very high importance by Kautilya. Even today, human element in war fighting remains the most important war winning factor. Another important point regarding human element which remains relevant even today is treatment of people within state and even in enemy or captured territory. Ensuring well-being of people and gaining their confidence in the state and the ruler as propagated by Kautilya remains totally relevant even today.

Operational factors in modern warfare give serious consideration to calculation and consideration of time, i.e., preparation time, warning time, reaction time, decision-cycle time,

etc. The duration of a campaign and the interval between two consecutive operations should be kept short for maintaining a high tempo. This is brought out by Kautilya when he recommends that “whenever the King is superior, he shall not waste any time and should proceed against the enemy whenever by doing so the enemy can be weakened or crushed”. If the military solution in war depends ultimately upon decisive victory, the optimum strategy is one which brings about a decisive battle under favourable conditions, with a minimum of delay. Due to the advent of new technologies, the pace of warfare is increasing, and new technologies are enlarging the area of combat. Consequently, the time factor is being compressed. The critical evaluation of time, and weather parameters and advice for planning a long, medium, and short war, as given in the *Arthashastra*, remain relevant even today.

Whatever the form of warfare, the *Arthashastra* is scrupulous about one principle: *not to cause harm to the subjects of the enemy King*. Thus, when laying a siege to the fort, the people inside must be assured of safety and allowed to leave the fort, after it is captured. If territory must be annexed it was usually not annexed only the King was forced to become an ally or a vassal, while the people were to be won over by other means. Their customs must be respected, and their gods must be revered. After the war, carrying away loot is forbidden. If the King was reduced to vassalage, he was still permitted to retain control of his territory and Army. India has followed it religiously and handing over of 95000 prisoners of war after 1971 war is an example of India’s concern for human rights and dignity of life.

The *Arthashastra* is not only concerned about making conquests. It also discusses the strategies and tactics for the prevention of conquest by others. Defence operations have been covered in detail in chapter five. Though the nature of defence operations has changed since the times of Mauryan Empire but most of the of the defence operations strategies remain relevant. Whether in conquering others or in preventing conquest, the *Arthashastra* takes a conflictual relationship between states as the norm. Therefore, management of these occupies an important

place in Kautilya's thinking. Kautilya does not indulge in any theory of a good society, good actions, etc. Kautilya argued that national interest should override moral principles as the moral order depends upon the continued existence of the state. This is why to the modern mind; he comes across as a totally pragmatic practitioner of war fighting strategies. This is relevant in modern times as nations relations are governed only by national interests.

Kautilya warns against calamities which adversely affect the functioning of the Army which include not giving due honour, insufficient salaries and emoluments, low morale, etc. He makes an incisive observation that an unhonoured Army, an unpaid Army, or an exhausted Army will fight if honoured, paid and allowed to relax but a dishonoured Army with resentment in its heart will not do so. As to leadership, he avers that an Army repulsed will fight if rallied by heroic men unlike an Army abandoned by its chief. A prerequisite for an effective leader is to keep in mind two fundamental elements: the mission and the people. This is relevant today as morale and motivation of troops is one of the main winning factor in all types of operations. Moreover, the balance between mission and people is also as relevant today as it was in Kautilyan era.

Kautilya emphasised the importance of intelligence in war and peace both. The secret service (*gudapurusha*) had three principal strategic objectives. It kept the ruler informed of developments within and outside the empire. Second, it conducted covert operations aimed at undermining both internal and external enemies. Third, it was mandated with the maintenance of the internal discipline and loyalty of the bureaucracy and military. A major operational principle that was not to be violated, except in cases of extreme emergency, was that intelligence reports from three different sources were needed for the state to authorise action. This has probably become more important in present times as intelligence is the key battle winning factor.

All the nine principles of war of Indian Conventional warfare appear to be an outcome of Kautilyan War Strategy. Selection and maintenance of aim, intelligence, economy of effort, maintenance of morale, offensive action, concentration of forces, flexibility, use of terrain, sound administration and security as propagated by Kautilya form the basis of principles of war across the globe. Four main elements of combat power of this century i.e., manoeuvre, firepower, protection, and leadership were also iterated by Kautilya. Kautilya has clearly laid down war strategies for strategic, operational, and tactical level operations. Though Kautilya war strategy was mainly limited to Army operations (land battles), as navy and airforce were not developed and nuclear, space and information wars were not known in present form, but the basic character of warfare has remained the same and therefore the Kautilya's Arthashastra remains relevant in this century. This validates the relevance of the Kautilya's military strategy in 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

#### **6.4 Relevance of Military Strategy in Non-Conventional Operations**

An analysis of most insurgencies in the world shows that Kautilya was accurate in his belief that the greatest cause of insurgencies was societal discontent, and he advocates that the state attach great importance to the well-being of the people—"if they become impoverished, they become greedy and rebellious". He also averred that "an internal rebellion is more dangerous than an external threat because it is like nurturing a viper in one's bosom". Rebellions (insurgencies) were classified based on the affected region and who their sponsors were. The similarities in the methods used today and those espoused by Kautilya are striking. Kautilya proposed the use of four instruments of state power — Conciliation (Diplomatic), Dissension (Informational), Force (Military) and Gifts (Economic), which are the instruments used by states even today (DIME).

Kautilya believed that offensive action is based on defensive power. His insistence for internal security clearly underlines the fact that before forces are committed to the main task all



own vital and vulnerable targets should be secured. In fact, he even advises the king to keep the treasury and army under his control. In case of a threat of revolt, Kautilya advises the king to remain behind in the capital and allow his Commander to lead a campaign. This, coupled with the fact that he attached great importance to controlling his army, brings out the fact that internal security must be the sound foundation for a successful campaign. This is totally relevant today as each conventional operational plan has a separate plan for the security of rear area (internal security).

Kautilya advised the king not to leave military matters entirely to others and be involved in it. He paid great importance to the training of the army and to the loyalty of the soldiers. Towards this end he advocated the use of spies especially from threat of coup. Kautilya recommended that secret agents, prostitutes, artisans, and actors as well as elders of the army should ascertain with diligence, the loyalty or disloyalty of soldiers. This is more applicable in modern times for local security personnel deployed in counter terrorist and insurgency operations.

A well governed state will have less to fear from subversion and revolt and be in a better position to disrupt the domestic stability of its adversaries. It would also be able to move with greater surety toward the execution of any foreign or defence policy related tasks that necessitate the large-scale mobilization of economic and military power. Faster, enthusiastic, professionally trained, and well remunerated bureaucracies reduce the friction inherent in converting the intention of the rulers into effects in the ground. Any state that neglects the quality of the administrative elite and institutions upon which the execution of policy depends is likely to have major issues in well-being of the state. For Kautilya, whose emphasis is on the integrated nature of state power, it would be the height of absurdity for the administrative, economic military and intelligence assets of a state to be deployed without a proper coherent vision and understanding of the common goals they seek to achieve. For, the individual components of state power to be

thus divided and operate at cross purposes would breed chaos and indiscipline within the state. This remains totally relevant today as it is being advocated as whole of the government approach in all governance issues. The synthesizing element is that of leadership political, bureaucratic military and intelligence. Without effective and synergised leadership, disorder will prevail within the state apparatus and gravely diminish the ability of the state to either control or effectively respond to challenges. The consequences of disharmony in leadership are likely to be disastrous for any state.

In situations of Urban Warfare (against a fortified enemy city), Kautilya explicitly stated that indiscriminate bombing (use of fire) would be counterproductive. He believed that fire is a divine calamity with unpredictable effects; it is a destroyer of uncountable number of people and wealth. Even when captured, such a fort would only give rise to further losses". Application of mechanized firepower and excessive airpower would almost never work in an urban insurgency environment, as a military victory would still leave the combat zone broken and the population distressed. Principle of use of minimum force as propagated by Kautilya is one of the main principles of conducting in Counter Insurgency/ terrorist operations particularly in India today.

The relevance of the Kautilya's thought in counter terrorist/ insurgent operations are in fact probably more relevant in 21<sup>st</sup> Century than in 4<sup>th</sup> Century due to human rights activism and media glare. Three main teachings of Kautilya ie. population must remain Centre of Gravity for all operations, minimum use of fire / collateral damage to civilian property and respect for local faith, customs and traditions form the basis for guidelines for all non - conventional operations across the globe. These three points and soldierly Conduct of troops as prophesied by Kautilya form the basis of guidelines for Indian soldiers operating in on conventional operations. Therefore, it can be concluded that most of the kautilya's military strategy for non – conventional remains relevant today.

## 6.5 Relevance of Kautilya in 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Disintegration of USSR, geopolitics and geo-economics have shaped the international relations and security environment in 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and it has its effect on present century. Therefore, evolution of Global Order in 21<sup>st</sup> century Classical alliances could be seen during initial period of 20<sup>th</sup> Century when the race for colonialism was at its peak. Tri-entente and Tri-alliances, both pre-WWI alliances were akin to Kautilya's *Mandala* concept. Also, the mismanagement of after-effects of WWI led to WWII, the major cause being the reparations and exploitation of the German people much against the teachings of Kautilya. WWII commenced with invasion of Poland, the weaker state sandwiched between the Allies and Germans. If we consider Germans seems to fall in place. During both WWI and WWII, one could see Italy changing equations based on the self-interest much like Sadgunya of Arthashastra. It can be assumed that when the nations with similar strength are in conflict zone, the development/management of allies as recommended by Kautilya seems pragmatic.

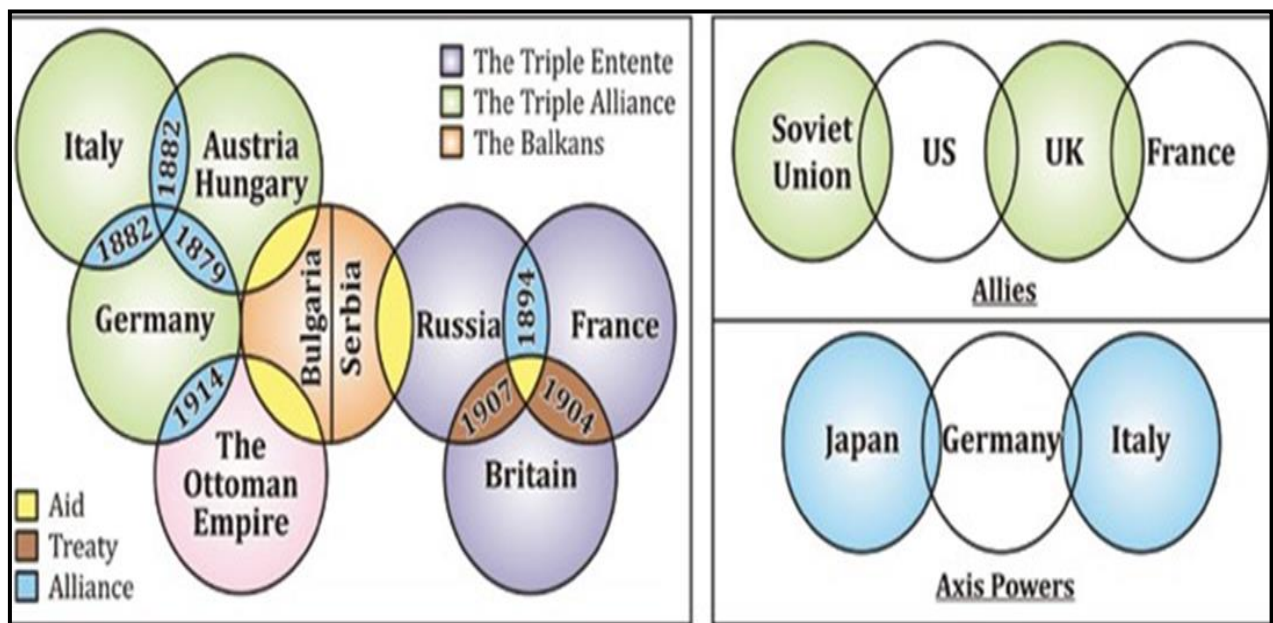


Figure 13: Schematic of Pre-WWI and pre-WWII Alliances

Source By: Palande, Col Deepak. *Kautilya's Arthashastra and its Relevance in 21<sup>st</sup> Century*; Centre for Land Warfare Study: Issue Brief, No169, Feb 2019.

Post WWII, much stronger alliances were formed in the form of NATO, leading to formation of two super blocs based on the US and the USSR. The cold war era saw development

of WMDs, arms race, overt and covert manoeuvres apart from contest for energy and global commons. The nations chose to align themselves based on their self-interest. Nehru was known to be an admirer of Kautilya, probably the Diplomatic Enclave the extension of Lutyens was therefore named Chanakypuri. The influence could be seen in the foreign policy during the formative stage of the nation when Nehru chose to be non-aligned with either of the super blocs till India grew in strength. However, to increase their respective strength in Indian subcontinent, both the US and the USSR made forays to cultivate allies in Pakistan by the US and in India by the USSR. This has been covered in initial part of this chapter.

The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century saw the disintegration of the USSR and the World emerging into a unipolar one dominated by the USA. The USA went into Gulf War I to prove its hegemony and later into Gulf War II inspite of opposition from many nations. Therefore, if the USA is compared to Kautilya's *Vijigishu* which had already emerged as strong power, the other states bow allegiance to its interests even though differences exist. The *Vijigishu* thus crushes weaker states at its will—examples being the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. If we analyse these wars further, both are militarily successful but strategically a stalemate since the populace (Janapada) in Kautilya's parlance was not given its due importance. *The Modern World is learning that population must remain the Centre of Gravity while tackling insurgencies. It was strongly put across and practised during Kautilyas time.*

With the advent of technology and beginning of information age in 21<sup>st</sup> Century dynamics of the World has changed substantially. The power of information has taken a form of force which all the nations across the globe need to reckon with. A major shift is seen from military alliances to economic cooperation, lately giant cooperation's like Apple, Google, Facebook, and Amazon have grown bigger than governments and can buy any of their competitors. *Therefore, the economics is governing the geopolitics as taught by Kautilya.*

## 6.6 Global Order in 21st Century

The global order portends the multipolar world, but the USA still remains the most powerful nation both economically and militarily. Locus of power is shifting from Euro-America to Asia with emerging China and India, resurgent Russia and Japan strengthening its military to tackle challenges posed by China and North Korea in East China Sea. Though the militaries across the world are shrinking in strength, the sophistication and military expenditure are increasing manifold.

WMD proliferation is a reality today and the world is yet to arrive at any consensus on NPT, CTBT or FMCT. This will remain a contentious issue for some time especially with the likelihood of these weapons falling in the hands of non-state actors. The nations are in the race of sophisticating the means of delivery by Land, Sea and Air for completing the Triad. Geo-economics is driving the Geo-politics world over and accordingly several global as well as regional cooperation's are emerging like QUAD, BRICS, SCO, and SAARC, ADB. BRICS have overtaken G7 countries as far as economic growth is concerned. The purchasing power GDP of BRICS (\$37.4 trillion) is more than of G7 (\$34.5 trillion). The race for energy will continue to drive geopolitics. This century is likely to see the emergence of a post-petroleum age within a decade. The knowledge century is emerging as information century with a number of innovations and inventions within the first two decades of the 21st Century

Non-state actors will continue to challenge the external as well as internal security means. These non-state actors can easily receive financial aid from external nations. The military wings of these groups do not move from the area of conflict; instead, they create conflicts right from their homes to controlled areas and then to areas where they desire to control. Contrary to the state funded troops, these non-state military wings continue to get extensive funds, financial and technical assistance from offshore accounts and undetectable fake organizations. This allows

the military Wings of these organizations to continue the fight. without any external or third front opinions thus diminishing the boundaries. National defense is no longer ensured only through maintaining the sanctity of one's borders but is also highly dependent upon the ability to navigate safely through the global commons. These commons – land, sea, air, space, and cyberspace enable militaries to protect national territory and interests, as well as facilitate the passage of goods, people, communication, and data upon which every member of the international community depends. Yet, several emerging trends are threatening this Freedom of action needing absolute actions to protect global commons.

### **6.7 Possible Scenarios**

Asia is likely to remain a theatre of Great Power Competition. China's economic and strategic footprint in Asia is enormous. Similarly, resurgent Russia has established its prowess in the Putin era. At the same time, many Asian powers are looking to avoid their stakes against excessive dependence on a particular power. U S will retain a significant role in global politics as well as in Asia. China, Russia, and the US will retain primacy owing to their economic and military strength. Therefore, the global dynamics will presage around the strategic triangle as shown in figure 14.

The triangle will not exist in a vacuum. There are other relationships, with countries like India, Iran, and Pakistan that will influence the triangular dynamics. Furthermore, each country in the triangle has other interests in a host of sectors and has a range of imperatives at sub-national national regional and global levels. These powers therefore are likely to increase their clout through other growing nations like India, Japan, Pakistan, or nations having considerable economic growth like Brazil and South Africa or neighbors within the region affecting each other. All these nations are like mandala of Kautilya with or without territorial boundaries and are likely to pursue their self-interests based on the Kautilya's Sadgunas to meet their economic

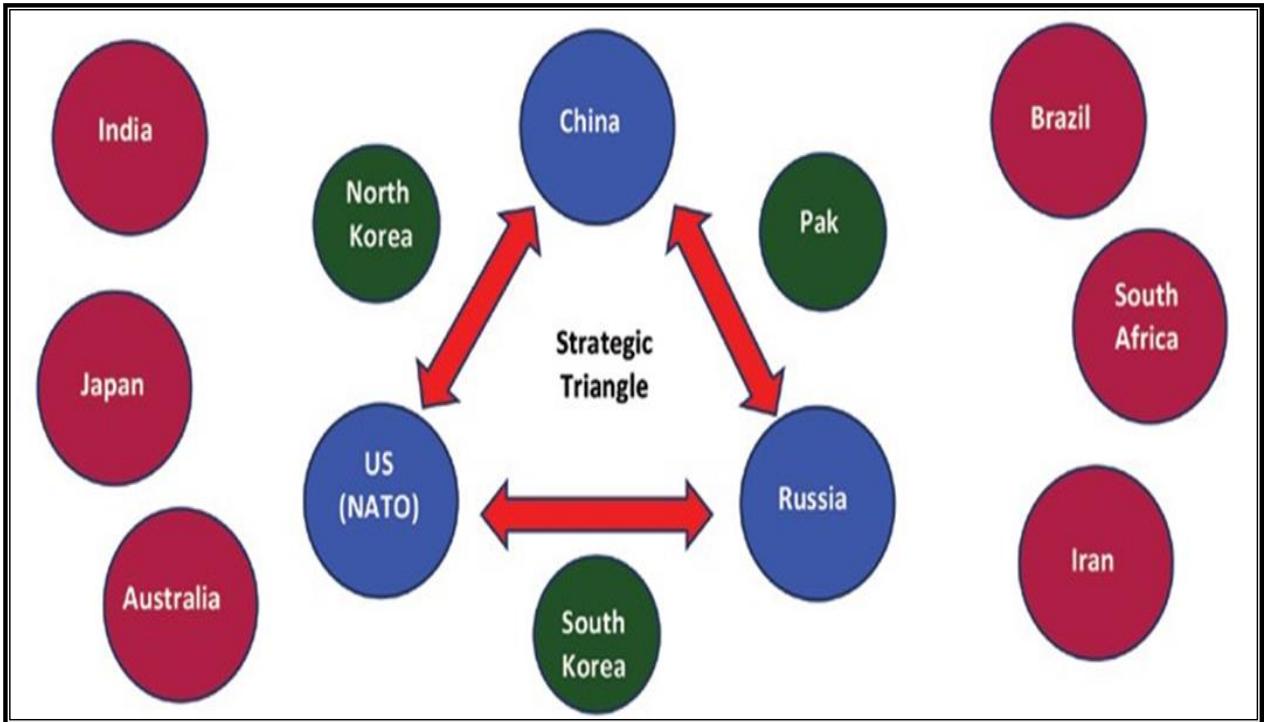


Figure 14 : Schematic representation of Possible Scenarios (No Permanent Allies)

Source By : Palande Col Deepak. *Kautilya's Arthashastra and its Relevance in 21<sup>st</sup> Century*; Centre for Land Warfare Studies, No169, Feb 2019.

and military objectives. Therefore, the theory of increasing one's own strength of the rivals is much applicable in the present context.

### 6.8 Asian Context—China as *Vijigishu*

China as a *Vijigishu* represents Kautilya's model of an aspiring power pursuing the objectives of "power" and "happiness." The concentration of China's internal power in the political leadership is like Kautilya's prioritization of *prakritis*. However, unlike Kautilya's king with his social contract, China does not exhibit an obligatory leader- population contract. China's *Mandala* or circle of states keeping Japan (*ari*) and India (*pushnigriha*) as an adversary provides a viewpoint for Japan and India subtleties. China's military modernization and diplomatic offensive strategy against the US and simultaneous bolstering of economic ties is in line with Kautilya's strategy against a superior state. China's foreign policies do

bear certain similarities to Kautilya's various options of the sadgunya concept. *China's Mandala model* indicates the importance of the US (Neutral King) role in Asian dynamics. US counterbalance strategy to China in Asia is centered around Developing alliances with India and Japan.

China's lack of allies creates vulnerability in China's policies. Repeated disruptive actions in the South China Sea have renewed tensions with US-led countries in the region. Both China and Russia (Middle King) are distrusted by the West for opposing US global dominance. As well both countries do not support the values of democracy distributed by the US, Japan, and India. Therefore, China has found mutually supportive alliances with Russia and Pakistan to form together a new bipolar global order and neutralize challenges posed by the US, Japan, and India.

The ideological drivers of China's growth are akin to the Arthashastra's objective of continued national progress through the pursuit of national power. Although the mandala theory oversimplifies China's international relationship shown in figure 14, it does not provide a cohesive picture of the international power system. But China's Mandala can identify potential regional alliances as well as strategic alliances for promoting Chinese interests and countering the threat. *Kautilya's Concepts of relative power and the six-fold policy also hold true for contemporary China*. Consistent with Kautilya's concept of relative power, China designs its foreign policy based on the relative power status of other nations. China adopts a different approach for interacting with the US or Russia, as opposed to interactions with weaker nations like Vietnam or the Philippines. *China's foreign policy choices are in line with Kautilya's sadgunya (sixfold) Policy and his advice for a weaker state challenging a stronger state*. China's policies of military modernization, peace treaties and dual policy resemble Kautilya's sixfold policy. Kautilya's policy of Yana (Preparing for war) is similar China's policy or military modernization. Similarly, as per Kautilya's concept of Sandhi (peace treaties), China used peace and peace treaties for progressively developing its national power. Kautilya's concept of undeclared warfare can describe China's cyber warfare against the US. With India, China adopts Kautilya's policy of Dvaidhibhava (Dual policy) by adopting



Pakistan as an ally and maintaining confrontational relations with India.

## 6.9 Mandala Theory in Indian Context

Applying Mandala Theory in the Indian Context as shown in Figure 15 and assuming India as a *Vijigishu*, Pakistan as *Ari*, China as *Parsanigraha* (Rearward Enemy), Russia as Middle King and the US as Neutral King, a number of options emerge for India. India is required to work on the *prakritis* prescribed by Kautilya. Therefore, there is a need for a stable and strong political leadership, diplomacy to work towards achieving national goals, optimum exploitation of national resources to include technology, skills and talent of the young population, secure national interests globally and protect territory against both internal subversion and external aggression, strengthen economy and emerge as economic power, maintain military to meet future challenges across the full spectrum of conflict continuum and lastly, multiply the strength by cultivating alliances and having strong allies. In present context, it is clearly indicative as far as foreign policy goes, India needs to shape the Indo–Russia and Indo–US relations by engaging across all elements as mentioned in Kautilya’s *prakritis*. This will enable India to strengthen its clout by having support of Middle and Neutral King in a crisis. Moreover, it emerges that (*Parsanigraha*) China needs to be controlled by developing military deterrence, overcoming trade imbalance, and increasing counterbalance by nurturing alliances. As also, countries like Japan, Afghanistan, and Iran need to be cultivated in support of India by engaging *prakritis* of these nations. Simultaneously, there is need of neutralizing Arab nations who favour Pakistan (*Ari*) economically and ideologically. Lastly, it is a prerequisite to keep Pakistan in check diplomatically, intellectually, militarily, economically, and ultimately weakening it vis-a-vis India. This is a simplistic application of Kautilya’s Mandala theory giving out various options for India to progress as *vijigishu*. But there is need to understand the interplay between different *prakritis*, overcoming the *vyasanas* affecting these *prakritis* and working out multiple models to arrive at comprehensive national strategy.

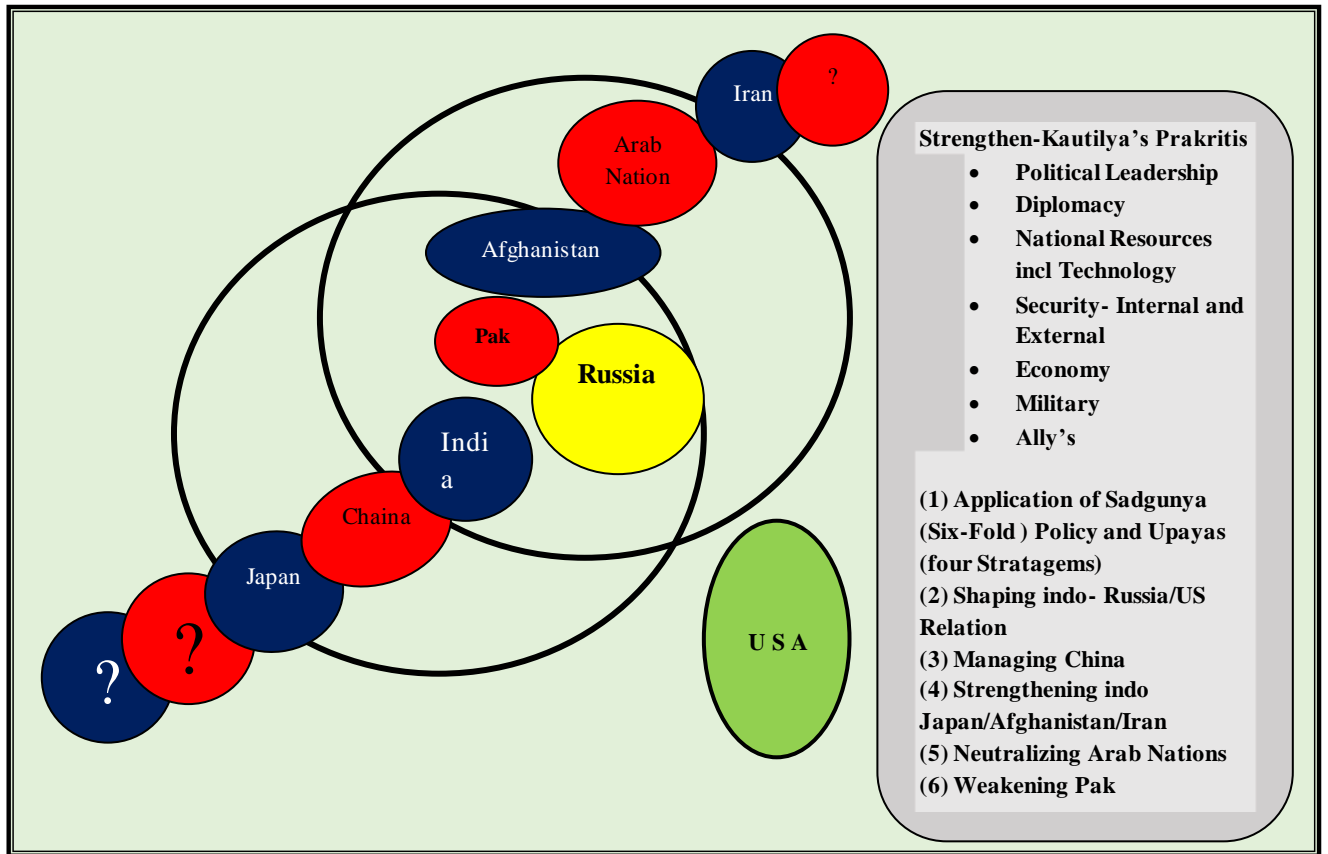


Figure 15 : India as Vijigishu

Source By : Palande, Col Deepak, Kautilya's Arthashastra and its Relevance in 21<sup>st</sup> Century; Centre for land warfare study no169, Feb 2019.

## 6.10 Way Ahead for India

Having gone through the *Arthashastra*, the question arises, Does India have a clear-cut National Strategy? Even though various National instruments are working towards achieving common goals, this may not be enough for an emerging power like India with national interests extending across the globe and global commons.

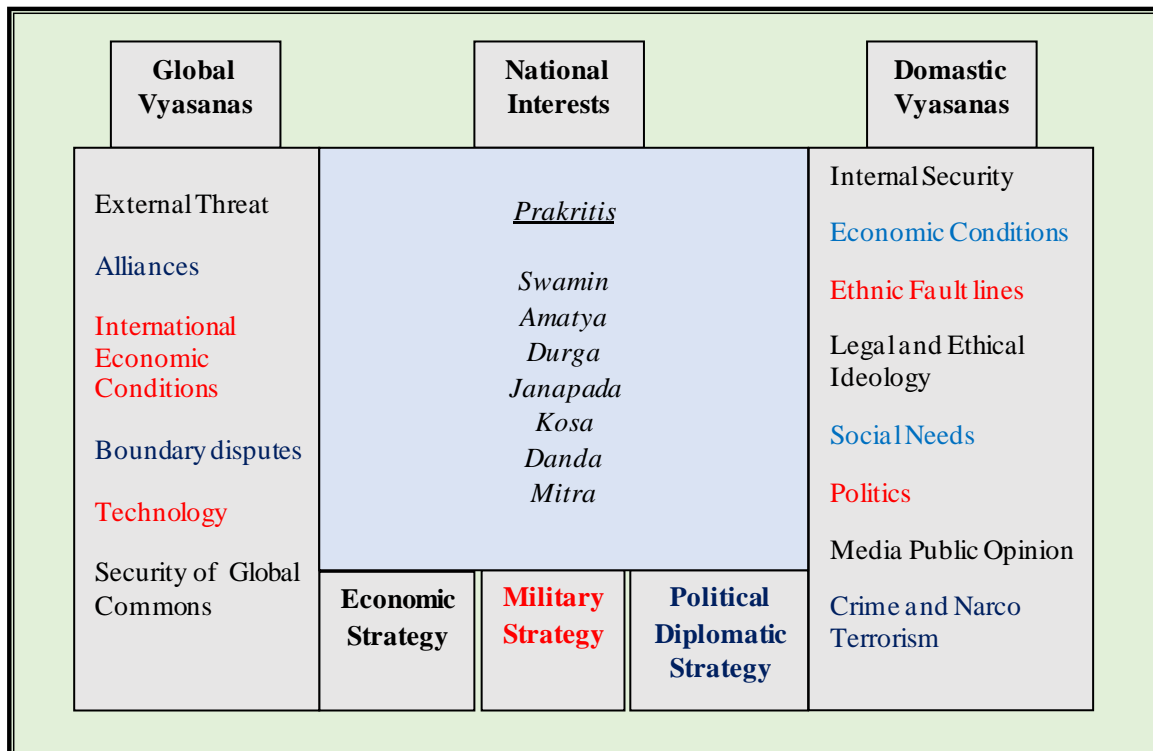


Figure 16 : Factors affecting National Priorities

Source by : Palande Col Deepak, Kautilya's Arthashastra and its Relevance in 21<sup>st</sup> Century; Centre for land warfare study no169, Feb 2019.

Even the allies or the nations closer to India would want her to lay down clear-cut strategic guidelines in the form of White Paper or National Strategy. Comprehensive National Strategy is a fundamental need especially when India is facing unbalanced external environment with china, Pakistan having developed Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNWs) for full spectrum deterrence keeping the nation at ransom with use of nuclear weapons and vitiated internal Security situation due to sponsored terrorism. Kautilya's Arthashastra is definitely a tool to derive Nation's Strategy and working out National Priorities. Kautilya advocated overcoming vyasanans within the nation state should take priority over other threats and strengthening prakriti's will enhance Comprehensive National Power (CNP). Hence observing nation's priorities through

Kautilya's prism as shown in figure 16 will aid to arrive at their inter se importance as under :-

- (a) Overcoming vyanas related to internal security, socio-economic and ethical fault lines.
- (b) Secondly, overcoming immediate external two-front threat posed by Pakistan and China through military modernization and developing credible deterrence capability.
- (c) Thirdly, incapacitating Sino-Pak growing nexus in the immediate future by cultivating alliances with the US, Russia and Japan.
- (d) Fourthly, ensuring security of global commons especially affecting nation's interests by developing appropriate force projection as well as Soft power capability to ensure sustained economic growth.
- (e) Fifthly, resolution of boundary disputes though important but waiting for opportune moment is pragmatic.
- (f) Lastly, tackling issues reacted to Jana pada, namely, ecological balance, keeping pace with technology, crime activities and narco-terrorism especially flourishing through Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent will form the priority of the nation.

To decide and achieve national priorities and formulating National Strategy, Kautilya remains relevant even today. Moreover, his Military teachings of development of allies, intelligence, planning, preparation and conduct of battle, psychological warfare, and population as centre of Gravity remain relevant even in 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Therefore, I conclude that Arthashastra remains relevant in 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*Since Thucydides in Greece and Kautilya in India, the use of force and the possibility of controlling it have been the preoccupation of international political studies.*

- Robert J. Art and Kenneth Waltz

#### 7.1 Conclusion

Kautilya's Arthashastra is one of the world's earliest examples of scholarly political and strategic affairs. Arthashastra (translated as "science of politics" or "treatise on polity") written in 4<sup>th</sup> Century BCE, is acknowledged by Indian scholars as the most important ancient Indian text on strategy. Kautilya is still an inspiration to modern Indian strategic and military thought. The Arthashastra is a complex and subtle work and is therefore susceptible to selective reading and interpretation, this results in many overlooking the subtle and not-so subtle warnings about the dangers of war and the need for prosperity, good governance, and legitimate rule to maintain power.

Kautilya argued that state is fragile organization, and the statesman does not have the moral right to risk its survival on ethical restraint. As prevalent during Kautilya times, we still have the same distrust of one nation by another, the same pursuit of its own interest by every nation tempered only by considerations of expediency, the same effort to secure alliances with the same disregard of them in self-interest, the same kind of intelligence service maintained by one nation in the territory of another as referred to in the Arthashastra. It is difficult to imagine how rivalry and the struggle for supremacy between the nations can be avoided and the teachings of the shastra which is based on these basic facts rendered altogether superfluous until some sort of a one-world government or an effective supranational authority is established. But until that happens, the teachings of Arthashastra would in actual practice be followed by nations, though

it may be unknown to them and though it may be openly condemned by those that know it. As far as the nature of human beings remains the same and states behave as they always have done, Kautilya will remain relevant.

A detailed analysis of the military lessons of Arthashastra brings forth amazing aspects for the scholar warrior mind and it can be easily related to present day circumstances. However, assumption that the picture of India given in the Arthashastra is true for all periods of ancient Indian history may not be true. Though Kautilya wrote long after the time of Buddha, who died in 486 BC, the state of society portrayed in the Arthashastra is mainly of pre-Buddhistic time. On the other hand, the norms under which Hindu society has functioned for the last two millennia are those of the Smritis; the earliest and most important of these, the Manu smriti was codified sometime in the first two centuries AD. The Smritis depict the ideal Hindu society as reconstructed and reformed after the influence of Buddhism has begun to decline in India. It is not merely the norms of Indian society which changed and evolved over the millennia but even the knowledge of gems and jewelry, the state of art of metallurgy, the weapons and armour used, the way horses and elephants were trained- all these were different at different periods. To an extent our society is significantly different from Kautilya's era, therefore some of the Kautilyan teachings will have to be viewed in the perspective or will have to be modified to be relevant in present times.

Today the international buzz words are hybrid war, new generation war, information war, war amongst the people etc., these have an overlap of military and non-military means. According to General Gerasimov of Russia, 'non-military measures are occurring at a ratio of 4:1 over military operation. It is remarkably interesting to see that a similar concept existed in the Arthashastra written 2400 years ago.

Kautilya's core concepts about war are a combination of warfare and diplomacy. The foreign policy operations discussed seem not to refer to a classical war. Even in present times, Nations appear to follow the Kautilyan combination of diplomatic pressure, political subversion, covert operations, and military threats in international relations and wars. Warcraft was then regarded as part of statecraft and so the various works on statecraft deal also with the art of war.

Main factors for the successful conduct of foreign policy are adequate intelligence of the adversary state, rapid information about the execution of one's own operations, collective deliberation and the ruler's decision-making based upon intelligence and execution of ops. In the above, three principles stand out. The first and central is intelligence. It is not only its collection but analyses in an era of 'humungous' overload of data. The second is akin to the well-known OODA (Observe, Orient, Decide and Act) loop – theorised by a fighter pilot in the Korean War in the 1950s. The third, there is a need for a feedback and collective deliberation. These kautilyan teachings are relevant even today.

Covert wars are seldom declared and continue to be part of statecraft in terms such as Hybrid Warfare, Generations of Warfare (4th, 5th, and 6th generation etc.), Asymmetrical Warfare, Proxy War and so on. What is important to note is that unlike in the case of these modern terminologies which are rooted in historical narratives, Kautilya's Arthashastra does not refer to any historical episodes or it is ahistorical. It deals with concepts and a vocabulary. There seems to be continuity in the ancient with the modern.

In today's world, the challenges of global security are no different from those that vexed the Mauryan Empire in 300 BC. A cogent and dispassionate analysis of the Arthashastra reveals stark similarities between the problems faced by Kautilya's ideal state and the modern scourge of terrorism and insurgencies. Present-day warfare adheres to ancient patterns. The truism that 'those who forget the lessons of history are condemned to repeat it', applies in military affairs.

It is widely believed that Kautilya's precepts are of universal applicability. His counsels on the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, on the role of the state for relations between neighboring states, on alliances and on the conduct of foreign policy based on the relative strengths of the participants are as applicable today as they were in his times.

The *Arthashastra* is testimony to the constant and unchanging nature of war. Studies of military history show that certain features of conflict and warfare constantly recur; that relationships between type of action and success often remain the same; that certain circumstances and moments have time and time again, proved decisive. The past being a prologue underscores the relevance and significance of studies of military history such as propagated by the *Arthashastra*.

## 7.2 Recommendations

**Recommendations for Further Research.** This paper recommends that further research work on Kautilya's *Arthashastra* should be along two avenues of research—a historical path and a general studies perspective. From a historical perspective, this paper did not compare Kautilya's thought with that of Thucydides, Machiavelli, or Sun Tzu. Hence, a comparative study from a historical perspective could provide evidence for the genesis of modern concepts of strategic thought. Such a study may confirm the pioneering nature of Kautilya's work in terms of contribution towards contemporary strategic thought. From the aspect of exploring specific strategic topics, future research could also look at designing a contemporary Mandala theory, which can successfully capture the ambiguity of current international relations and the diversity of actors.

Research could also explore the role of Vyasana (calamities) in a state's national power. Kautilya's options for peace, alliances, and strategic options for a weaker state, also need further



research. Studies in these aspects could do so using contemporary concepts of prevention, pre-emption, deterrence, coercion, and compliance.

Further research in Kautilya's treatise should add to the contemporary body of knowledge on strategic thought. It is clear that more multidisciplinary work with interpretation and commentaries is now required to update this literature.

**Recommendations for Awareness of kautilya's Arthashastra.** Indian scholars consider Arthashastra as the most important ancient Indian text on strategy. Kautilya is still an inspiration to modern Indian strategic and military thought. However, he is not well known and quoted adequately as compared to western strategic thinkers and Sun Tzu. Even today, the present military leaders quote other strategic thinkers more than Kautilya. Most of the books and articles do not cover the military thought of the Kautilya. Therefore, following is recommended:-

- (a) A comprehensive plan be devised at national level to include Kautilya's Arthashastra in School, College and University curriculum.
- (b) Arthashastra must be part of syllabus for all central and state public commissions competitive exams.
- (c) Indian Defence Forces must devise means to ensure that military strategy of Arthashastra is studied, understood, and practised in all schools of instructions at various stages of officers training.
- (d) Intelligence agencies must include Arthashastra in their departmental studies.
- (e) International and National seminars must be conducted every year on Arthashastra.

This paper finally concludes that the Arthashastra's strategic thought is relevant to contemporary military strategists. Moreover, the Kautilyan military teachings at operational and tactical level operations remain pertinent and applicable in conventional or non-conventional operations even in 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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