

INTRODUCTION

Kautilya is considered as the pioneer of economics and political science. In the Western world, he has been referred to as the Indian Machiavelli, although his works predate Machiavelli's by about 1800 years. Kautilya was a teacher in Takshila, an ancient centre of learning, and was responsible for the creation of the Mauryan Empire, the first of its kind on the Indian subcontinent.

His works were lost near the end of the Gupta dynasty and not rediscovered until the early twentieth century. Two classics that are said to be Kautilya's creations are the Arthashastra and the Neetishastra. The Arthashastra is also known as Chanakya Niti. It discusses monetary and fiscal policies, welfare, international relations and war strategies in detail. Neetishastra is a treatise on the ideal way of life, and shows Kautilya's in depth study of the Indian way of life.

In the Arthashastra, Kautilya specifically described the duties of the council of state and of the council of ministers. According to him, a state should completely dominate its economy and taxation and pricing policies. Kautilya developed a labour theory of value for determining 'just' wage for workers as he understood the concepts of demand and supply and their combined influence on price. He even wrote explicitly on foreign trade, interest and money.

Kautilya Arthashastra is not a theoretical treatise on political science. It is not directly concerned with the question of the origin of the state. Kautilya's Arthashastra essentially **a book on the art of administration gave only passing reference to the origin of the state.**

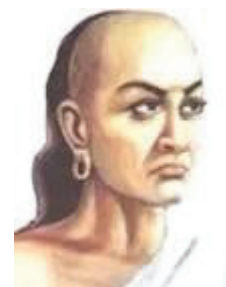
According to Kautilya the state originated when people got weary of the logic of the fish (Matsanayana) according to which bigger fish swallow the smaller ones. The state originated to fulfill the desire of the people to have a peaceful society. **King took upon themselves the responsibility of maintaining the safety and security of their subjects.**

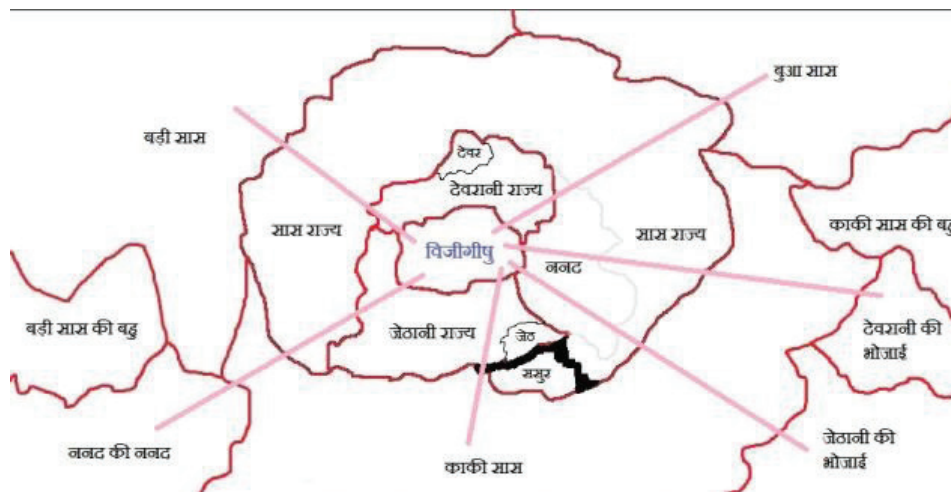
WORK: ARTHASHASTRA—TRADITION OF DANDA SHASTRA

- State craft is discussed
- Also contains dharma
- There is continuity between Manu and Kautilya in terms of laws.

MAIN IDEAS OF ARTHASHASTRA

- Kautilya defines statecraft as Arthashastra. Arth means material well being. According to him most important objective of king is to ensure material well being of his people. In his words, "Material well being is supreme, attainment of all goals like Dharma, Kama, and Moksha depends on material well being."
- In ancient time, land was the main source of securing material well being. So Arthashastra's main idea was how to acquire the land. It is natural for a state to go for acquiring land. First land to be acquire the land of the neighbour. Hence neighbour was also the natural enemy.
- Relation between two states was relation of war. Arthashastra contains art of war like Sun Tzu, the Chinese strategist. Hence main idea of Arthashastra was war, strategic planning, Balance of power and geopolitics.
- Arthashastra can be considered as the first text of geopolitics. Geopolitics is science of capturing land. According to concept of geopolitics, state is an organism. Like organism, state has to grow. If state doesn't grow/expand, state will perish/decay.
- Arthashastra challenges the western view that Indians lacked strategic culture. **George Tanham** rejected that Indians had any strategic wisdom. But Kautilya proved him wrong.
- It is unfortunate that policy makers in India overlooked the wisdom found in Arthashastra. However, in the beginning of 21st century, Hindu Rightist Party after coming to power changed in the approach of South Block. We are rediscovering Indian wisdom.





KAUTILYA'S LABOUR THEORY OF VALUE:

Two millennia before Adam Smith enunciated the labour theory of value, Kautilya in Arthashastra held that a 'just' wage to be paid to workers should be based on amount of time spent on the job, amount of the output created, and the skills necessary to perform the required tasks.

Kautilya explicitly recognizes three distinct components for determining market value of labour:

1. Level of skill required (the human capital element),
2. Labour hours worked, and
3. Unit of output produced (the labour productivity element).

PROMINENT IDEAS OF ARTHASHASTRA:

- State of relation between two countries
- Mandal Siddhant
- 4 Upaya
- Saptang Theory
- ShadgunyaNiti

STATE RELATION

Kautilya was a rightist. He believed that in a jungle of inter-state politics where strength of lion prevails. There is a relation of war between two states. The interstate relations were the struggle for power.

According to him interstate relation or politics is a state of war. States are either on war or in preparation of war. In such a way state has only option to rely on power. He belongs to "school of offensive realism". He believes in power realisation rather than defence. For them offence is the best defence.

MANDAL SIDDHANT

Raj Dharma:

It is connected to Kshatriya Dharma i.e. war. After coronation, king has to start expedition. In ancient India, there was tradition of different yagnas. Example: Ashwamedha yagna, Rajsuya yagna (after victory), etc. According to Kautilya, king should have desire to become "chakravarti Samrat". He addresses the king as **vijigishu**, one who aspires for victory.

Mandal Siddhant is based on geopolitics. According to geopolitics, state is an organism. Like organism, state has to grow. If state doesn't grow/expand, state will perish/decay. The states are expansionist by nature. Land is main source of material well being.

It is the compulsion on Kings to expand their state. The neighbour becomes natural enemy. Both try to expand their territory. He defined situation as follows:

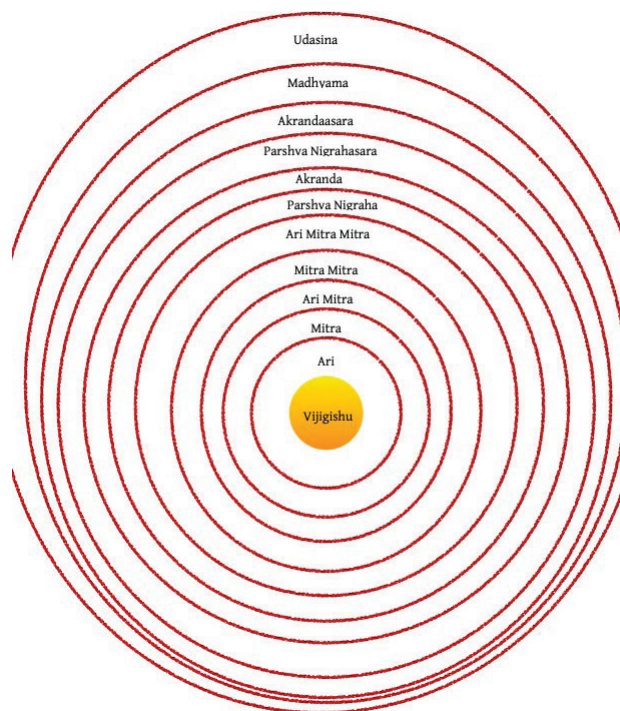
In forward direction:

1. King
2. Ari
3. Mitra
4. Ari mitra
5. Mitra mitra
6. Ari mitramitra

Backward direction

1. Parsnigraha
2. Akrandā
3. Parsnigrahasara
4. Akrandasara

- When Vijigishu prepares for expansion, he has to take care of Parsnigraha.
- Friend at back as Akrandā.
- In this way he gives sequence of kings.
- **Other kings:** Udasena, neutral e.g. Turkmenistan, Switzerland. Neutral status is in context of war. If other countries accept the status of any country as neutral then that country has to give equal access to its territories to both parties in war e.g. Nepal aspires for neutral status. Nepal's demand is against India's national interest. If Nepal becomes neutral, in case of India-china war, both will have access to its territory. At present only India can use its territory during war under agreement of 1950.
- According to Kautilya, king should try to bring neutrals in favour.



MADHYAMA (BUFFER STATE)

It is the smaller state between two major powers. The purpose is to avoid the powers coming into direct confrontation. For ex. Nepal is ideal buffer zone between India and china. According to Kautilya, king should try to bring buffer state to their control as Nepal by 1950 agreement but India lost strategic advantage when china occupied the Tibet.

Max Weber "Kautilya is more Machiavelli than Machiavelli. Machiavelli's prince is harmless when compared to Kautilya's vijigishu."

TYPES OF WAR:

1. Parakramyuddha – open war
2. Kootyuddha – gorilla war
3. Prakash yuddha
4. Tushnimyuddha – proxy war

SHADGUNYANITI (SIX FOLD POLICY)

1. Sandhi – If enemy is strong than go for it. e.g. Shimla agreement with Pakistan.
2. Vighraha – Break sandhi when you become strong.
3. Asana – Stationing of force near enemy's territory.
4. Yana – Exercises near enemy's territory.
5. Samsarya–Join hands to those who have same objectives e.g. QUAD.
6. Dwaidibahva – Friendship with one, enmity with other. Don't go for war at two fronts at same time instead make friendship with one enemy for the time being.

FOUR UPAYAS (4 FOLD POLICY)

- Sama (Peace)
- Dama or Dana (Economy)
- Danda(Force)
- Bheda

Saman or 'conciliation' can be achieved in five ways, praising merits, mention of relationships, pointing out of mutual benefits, showing advantages and placing oneself at the other's disposal.

Dana consists of conferring benefits of money.

Bheda or 'dissension' is creating apprehension and reprimanding.

Danda or 'force' is killing, tormenting and seizure of property.

KAUTILYA MENTIONED THREE TYPES OF VICTORIES:

- Dharm Vijay – By rightful means.
- Lobh Vijay – Economic inducements to enemy's Army.
- Asur Vijay – By unfair means

SAPTANG SIDDHANTH (SAPTA PRAKRITI)

It explains the seven limbs of the state, which also means seven elements of sovereignty. It is an example of organic theory of state. Kautilya takes systematic view of state.

- State is a system containing seven elements.

King:

King is the Nabhi of State (Centre). King plays the most important role. If King is strong and other elements of sovereignty are weak, the strong and the smart king can convert the elements of weakness into elements of strength. If other elements are strong but king is not strong and lacks courage, then also these elements will not be able to play the role of determinant of power. This shows importance of leadership. Though king is central, yet Kautilya writes **that a single wheel cannot run the chariot**. It means King alone cannot run the state, it will require help of others. Kautilya emphasises that king should not be arrogant and give adequate recognition to other elements. State is a system of interdependence. He also reminds the king that kingship is a duty - Dharma. In Kautilya's words, **"In the happiness of the subjects, lies the happiness of the King."**

When the king is powerful, he is also like a servant of the state. It is the duty of the king to maintain the state. The king is like a constitutional slave of the state. If required, he is supposed to give up even his family for the sake of the state. This is the ideal of Ramayana. That means, the king cannot always follow his personal likes and dislikes.

AMATYAS:

They are mostly Brahmins. The most important among them is the ambassador, who is the representative of king/state. King should choose them very carefully. He should be a trusted person and well-versed in shastras. He should be handsome. He suggests that king should have at least three Amatyas. If 2 conspire against King, then one will stay with the King.

King should have constant vigil on Amatyas.

- Amatyas can challenge the power of king. He even suggests, king should keep on testing integrity of Amatyas from time to time.
- He gave different suggestions, e.g – "King can send his spy to Amatya, who can tell that Queen is in love with Amatya and is waiting for him at Palace and in case Amatya plans to kill the king, queen will provide all help".

DURG (FORT)

Mauryan Empire is known for different type of forts. Kautilya mentions about forts on hill, water & deserts. Forts are symbol of defensive and offensive capabilities of state. Hence King should be constructing forts. For every **state it is necessary to have safety and protection system**. Therefore, Kautilya considered the forts as one of the main components of a state. He considers forts as powerful as people and land. **Because internal and external securities are important.**

Because without external security, no state can be stable. The security of the treasury and army depends of fortification. Kautilya advocates that there should be forts at all the four corners of the state so the security from all the sides can be ensured.

Kautilya has classified forts in four types.

1. **Audak fort**, where there should be trenches always filled with water.
2. **Parvat Fort** which should be surrounded with high mountains and rocks.
3. **Danvan fort** which should be surrounded with deserts and there should be no oasis nearby. It is almost impossible to reach such forts.
4. **Van Fort**, which are built in dense forest where it is very difficult to reach there.

Forts continued to play an important role in the stability and consolidation of states. Many functions like secret war, the readiness of the army and fighting the enemy are to be carried out from the fort.

JANPAD:

Janpad defined in the Arthashastra implies both territory and population because without the territory and the population a state cannot exist. It is a place where common men live, operate, conduct business & various activities. It is very important as it provides economic resources.

The territory should contain fertile lands, mines, timber, pasture grounds, forests and water ways etc. The Janpad should be prosperous and its lands fertile. The people should include men with good character and loyalty, intelligent, wise masters and slaves.

King has to ensure that his people are happy. Even in case of Janpad, Kautilya suggests to use the spies to remain in touch with public mood. Kautilya has given a detailed account of spies. He mentions different type of spies to be used both for external and internal purposes. Some of the types are – Kapatika Chatra (posed as students), Bhikshuks (beggars), women, Udasthita (Ascetics), Grihapaitika (Retired soldiers living a civilian life), Unsuccessful Trader/Businessman – A merchant (Vaidehaka), Religious Leaders.

Also, Kautilya advised the king to induce people from other countries to migrate and settle in new village on old sites or new sites or cause people from thickly populated areas of his own kingdom to settle down in such village with a view to securing that each village should consist of not less than one hundred and not more than five hundred families and contain a sufficient number of sudra cultivators. **The king was to protect agriculture and industry was also the responsibility of the king.**

BALA (MILITARY STRENGTH)

Without a sound defense system there cannot be the existence of state. And for the defense of the state there should be a strong army. Therefore, **it is very necessary that he constitute a strong army and use it for the internal and external threats. Army is used to control anti-social elements** in the society and disloyal people.

Army is also useful in defending the state from outside attacks. According to Kautilya, the **state army should be given the best training and they should be provided with the best weapons.** Soldiers should be fully satisfied especially when they are fighting in the field. For this purpose the king should try his best effort to meet soldier's needs. Army played an important role in the state. According to him, Army should be comprised of Ksatriyas.

He believes in hereditary basis of recruitment. However, if need arises, other varnas can also be incorporated. Even with respect to King, Kautilya is not particular about varna. He mentions that King can be of any varna but preferably kshatriya.

KOSHA (TREASURY)

Kosha or Treasury is an extremely important resource. A strong and well managed treasury is the heart of any organization. Kosha or Treasury is necessary for the protection and maintenance of the state in general and army in particular. Kautilya says that all undertakings depend upon Kosha. Income of the state was derived from taxes like export taxes, sales tax, village tax, etc. In his Arthashastra Kautilya has given utmost importance to public finance.

Because **without treasury even a family cannot run.** The **foremost duty of a king to keep the treasury full and prosperous.** The king should collect taxes and fill the treasury. According to Kautilya, the **treasury should be collected and maintained honestly** and religiously. The treasure should be such full that it may be helpful in the time of difficulty for a long time. It should be sufficient to the extent that King is able to fulfil his routine obligations; he is able to meet any sort of emergency (war or natural calamity).

MITRA (ALLY):

Friends only have symbolic importance. As there is no permanent friend or permanent enemy, it is difficult to identify who is real friend or who is pretending. Kautilya's concept of Mitra (ally) is based more on ethical considerations. It should be one with whom there is no possibility of rupture and one who is ready to come to help when occasion demands it.

The ideal ally is one who has the qualities like, a friend of the family for a long time, constant, amenable to control, powerful in his support, sharing a common interest, able to mobilise quickly and not a man who double crosses his friends. They are symbol of strength of the king. Everyone wants to be friend of the strong. Hence if a country starts losing friends to enemy, it is a serious concern. Example Maldives, Sri Lanka and Nepal going to China. In politics, perception of strength is crucial.

To conclude Saptanga theory as propounded by Kautilya is his monumental contribution to the science of politics and administration. This theory contains all the elements that can contribute to good governance. Kautilya says, it all depends on the king how he deals with the elements of the state. He can make even the poor and miserable elements of his sovereignty happy and prosperous but a wicked king will surely destroy the most prosperous element of the state. In Kautilya's Saptanga Theory the **king heads the list of seven constituent elements of the state.** These seven pillars are built into firm and strong sections can shoulder any responsibility and face any challenge.

Relevance of Saptang theory and Mandal Siddhant :

Before starting expedition, Vijigishu has to calculate the strength of enemies as well as of his own. The seven elements are the determinants of power. King has to make assessment of $12 \times 7 = 84$ elements sovereignty. 12 Kings multiply 7 elements of state to take calculated rate.

Kautilya's statecraft on internal administration:

Even in internal administration, king has to take care of seven elements of sovereignty. Even for internal administration, Kautilya advises the use of spies to check rebellion. Kautilya has given special emphasis on problem of corruption in administration.

Kautilya's view on corruption

Corruption is in evitable part of administration. According to him, "If honey is on the tongue – it is not possible not to taste it." Public officials handle so many resources that they themselves do not realise when they have committed the act of corruption i.e. embezzlement of public funds. In his words, "Fish swimming in water, will itself not realise when it has drink the water". Even when corruption is in evitable, yet it is not desirable.

Why?

Because it makes state weak internally and externally.

How?

Corruption weakens the capacity of the state to achieve the material welfare of its people. This weakens the moral of people. If moral is down, it is easy for enemy to win.

What is the problem in handling corruption?

The biggest problem is detection of corruption. According to him it is easy to detect the movement of birds flying in the sky but it is not easy to detect when the officials have committed corruption.

Kautilya mentioned different ways by which officials commit corruption. In his words, "there are 40 ways of embezzlement."

Example

- Officials can play with weights and measurements.
- Officials can take money out of the treasury but enter it later in the account book.
- They may sell resources at higher price but enter lower price in the accounts.
- They may take money from public fund for personal use without entering.

Though Kautilya recognises the difficulty, it does not mean that steps should not be taken for minimising corruption. He gives following suggestions:

Suggestions against corruption

1. Right sizing the bureaucracy.
2. Transfer officials before they understand the loopholes in office.
3. Give security and rewards to the whistleblowers.
4. He suggests punishing the entire chain and not just official.
5. Punish the person who gave bribe, person who receives bribe, who keeps the money.
6. He suggest for public humiliation of corrupt official.
7. Reward the honest officers.
8. Compensate the person who has suffered because of official's corruption.

According to Kautilya, there is a concept called Matsyanyaya. It means that, in the absence of a ruler, the strong person will destroy the weak; but under the protection of the ruler, the weak resist the strong. In Arthashastra, there is a concept called rájatva also. It means Sovereignty of a country.

COMPARISON BETWEEN KAUTILYA AND MACHIAVELLI

Nehru in his book *Discovery of India* has called Kautilya as “Indian Machiavelli”.

The customary comparison between Kautilya and Machiavelli has resulted in the portrayal of Kautilya as the Machiavelli of India by thinkers like G. B. Bottazi and Hillebrant. The portrayal, however, seems to be misplaced as Kautilya preceded Machiavelli, and thus he ought to be treated as the pioneer in the science of statecraft.

Not only this, a closer look at the two political thinkers impartially projects the difference in their philosophical and conceptual frameworks. However, notwithstanding the differences in the historical and cultural background of ancient India and 15th century Italy, the common points of focus for both the thinkers are preservation, acquisition and expansion of the state.

The differences in the political outlook of Kautilya and Machiavelli are essentially rooted in the long Indian tradition of culture and politics on which Kautilya drew and which, while conceding autonomy to different branches of knowledge, recommends an integrated view of life. Because of this tradition, Kautilya does not divorce political issues from the ethical ones.

As such, this prevents Kautilya’s political philosophy from degenerating into a ruthless device for acquiring power for its own sake. In spite of its emphasis on the need to consolidate political power, it does not treat this power as an end but as a means. On the other hand, Machiavelli views politics as a moral activity in pursuit of political power that is not aware of its social responsibility. In this sense, the differences between the two thinkers become fundamental.

The suggestions of Machiavelli depict shrewd insight. He believed that it was not necessary for the government to be human or ethical. What was necessary was that the government must maintain itself in power and provide the security of life and property to its citizens, thus confirming the government to play a particular role that of a police state, and thus reducing the origin or the base of the executive only to a limited purpose of proving its usefulness by remaining in power.

Machiavelli viewed an identity between the interest of the Prince and the subjects and he vested full authority in the prince to act as he likes in the best interest of the state. He failed to understand that the prince as a human being may try to promote selfish interests at the cost of public interest and may use all types of autocratic methods for this purpose.

Contrarily, the distinctiveness of Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* lies in its primary concern for practical utility in administration. Kautilya hardly speculated on the origin of the state. All the same, the high-handedness of the religious institutions in public life hardly made any provision for the interest of the state.

The *Arthashastra* refers to numerous previous teachers and claims to be a systematic compendium of the ancient teachings. Kautilya makes no pretence for the construction of any original system of political philosophy. He is not interested in presenting the architectonic of the rationally perfect and ideal polity. He only claims to have made an attempt to eliminate the discrepancies existing in the various schools. As a result, the *Arthashastra* appears to be a tremendously comprehensive work.

It succinctly deals with the major problems of political theory, law and administration as well as the conduct of foreign policy and warfare and, on occasions, becomes so specific as to advise the exact fines to be levied on various kinds of criminal acts. The work is characterized by its absolutely realistic philosophy and practical approach to the science of politics. Like Machiavelli, Kautilya has produced a theory of government in which the end justifies the means.

Upinder Kaur in her book *“Political Violence in Ancient India”* suggests that in terms of time, Machiavelli should be called as Italian Kautilya.

The two thinkers differ in time and space. Kautilya, – ancient India, Machiavelli – end of medieval Italy. Still there are remarkable similarities between their thoughts.

- Both are realist scholars.
- Both had similar concerns. Both were concerned about the then prevailing situation in motherland. The motherland of both was under threat of foreign invasion.
- Both wanted consolidation of motherland and well-being of people.
- Both gave similar advices to King/Prince.
- Kautilya like Machiavelli, allows king to use all sort of means.
- If Machiavelli makes separation between politics and ethics. Kautilya prescribes Sam, Dam, Danda, Bhed.
- Both support imperialist foreign policy. However, Kautilya has given more detailed views.
- Both talk about management of power, handling of corruption.

There are some differences also.

- For Machiavelli, Prince is above religion. For Kautilya, King remains under dharma.
- Machiavelli gave generic advices, whereas Kautilya gave precise advices.
- Any person looking for statecraft will find Arthashastra as better guide than Machiavelli's "Prince".
- For Machiavelli, Prince should be ruling with iron hand but Kautilya's king is generous and kind towards people.
- **Max Weber, in his book "Politics as a vocation"** has mentioned that Kautilya was more Machiavellian than Machiavelli i.e. more realist than Machiavelli.
- According to him, if we look at Kautilya's King, Machiavelli's Prince will look harmless. Thus, there are lot of similarities in aspirations, circumstances, ideas and prescriptions. Kautilya differs from Machiavelli in the sense that Kautilya got his king but unfortunately Machiavelli never got his Prince

ESTIMATE OF KAUTILYA

Kautilya was one who even defeated Alexander the Great. His statecraft was perfect and fool proof. It was based on philosophy as well as practical wisdom. When compared with the contemporary political thinkers elsewhere in the world, Kautilya was way ahead of all of them in almost all aspects of state craft. He was realistic, systematic and practical. He was able to convert idealism into practical realms with a touch of realism. For Kautilya, it was not just philosophy to create a utopian state.

For him it was the question of running a great empire, that made him all the more different from contemporary political thinkers or those who were to follow him for centuries. Kautilya was also able to blend the ancient religious traditions also into the art of government while keeping the subtle difference from affecting the secular environment of state craft. On any account, it can be stated that a meaningful appreciation of Kautilya as a political thinker will definitely place him at the zenith of the art and science of political thinking.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

- What do you understand by the notion of Statecraft ? Discuss the theory of statecraft as given by Kautilya.-2017
- Draw parallels between Arthashastra tradition and the 'Realist' tradition represented by Machiavelli.-2012
- Compare and contrast Dharma shastra and Arthashastra with reference to State power.- 2010
- Critically examine the Sapta Prakriti of the state as envisaged by Kautilya.-2007
- Comment on: Of those (officers) the ways of embezzlement are forty (Kautilya)

EXAM VITAMINS



TO BE FILLED BY THE STUDENTS

Sayings of Kautilya	Theory
"Material well-being alone is supreme. For, spiritual good and sensual pleasures depends upon material well-being."	
"The ways of embezzlement are forty."	
"In the happiness of his subjects, lies the happiness of the king; in the welfare of his subjects, lies his welfare."	
"When people are impoverished, they become greedy, when they are greedy, they become disaffected, when disaffected, they voluntarily go to the side of the enemy and destroy their own master."	
"One wheel alone does not turn and keep the Cart in motion."	
"A King should not hesitate to break any friendship or alliances that are later found to be disadvantageous."	

INTRODUCTION:

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (SSAK) remains a controversial personality, not only amongst Hindus but also among Muslims.

BACKGROUND:

- He belonged to the elite class among Muslims. His family had been in the service of Mughals. He witnessed the decline of the Mughal power in India. This was the time when Muslim community in India was passing through the phase of depression.
- Therefore, concerned about the state of his community, he believed that the upliftment of the community is possible only with modernization of Islam. He believed that Islam as a religion was the most compatible with science and rationality.



CONTRIBUTION:

- Published a magazine titled **TEHZEEB-UL-AKHLAQ**.
- Through this magazine, he started denouncing the outdated customs and traditions within Islam.
- He founded a society for scientific research in Gazipur (UP), which later shifted to Aligarh.
- He also founded a journal for the promotion of scientific research known as **INDIAN INSTITUTE GAZETTE**.
- He was convinced that the upliftment of the Muslims is possible only when they adopt scientific learning.
- He **used to say that "Muslim youth should hold book of science in one hand and Quran in the other hand"**
- He was criticized by 'orthodox sections' of the Muslim community because of his scientific and modernist approach.

SIR SYED AHMED KHAN AS SOCIAL REFORMER:

- He pushed for social reforms and was also called **champion of democratic ideals** and freedom of speech.
- He was **against religious intolerance, ignorance and irrationalism**.
- He **denounced purdah, polygamy and easy divorce**.
- Tehzeeb-ul-Akhlaq (Social Reformer in English), a magazine founded by him, tried to awaken **people's consciousness on social and religious issues** in a very expressive prose.

POLITICAL THOUGHT

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's political thought can be studied in two phases:

First phase: As a champion of Hindu-Muslim unity

- Expressing the need for Hindu-Muslim unity he said that **"centuries we have been living on the same soil, eating the same fruit on the same land breathing the air of the same country."** He also held that **Hindus and Muslims are the two eyes of the beautiful bride i.e., India**. He advised Muslims to avoid eating beef, respecting the sentiments of Hindu neighbors.
- In 1873, he declared that religion should not be an obstacle for nationalism.
- He advocated separation between religious and political matters. According to him the religious and spiritual matters were not linked with mundane affairs.
- As a member of the Viceroy's legislative council, he called for the welfare of both Hindus and Muslims. In 1884, he made it clear that **"by the word qaum, I mean both Hindus and Muslims. What we see is that all of us, whether Hindus or Muslims, lie on**

one soil, are governed by the one and the same ruler, have the same sources of benefit and equally share the hardships of a famine”.

- In this phase, he was not a religious bigot or Hindu baiter. He worked closely with the Hindus in the scientific society and the Aligarh British India Association. He sought donations from the Hindu Rajas and Zamindars for MAO College. Hindus were well represented in the management and the teaching community. In the initial years of the college, the Hindu students outnumbered the Muslims. Even cow slaughter was banned in the college.
- Along with Surendra Nath Banerjee, he demanded restoration of age for civil services examination from 18 to 21 years. He also revived the British Association at Aligarh for this purpose.

Second phase: As originator of two-nation theory:

- During the first phase, imperialist thought found expression in his writings. They were based on the “emancipatory”, “democratic” and “progressive” characterization of British rule. However, in the second phase, he **opposed the application of principles of representative and parliamentary government**. He held that the western form of democracy and nationalism would not operate in India.
- He said that in a country like India, which was complex and full of diversities of castes, religions and races, the system of **representative form of government would not satisfy the principles of equality**.
- As per him, democracy believes in the **rule of the majority**. In his opinion such a system would lead to the domination of the more educated and more numerous Hindus over the less educated and less numerous Muslims. Hence, he opined that the congress’ demand for a representative form of government would hurt Muslims the most.
- He said that so long as **religious, casteist and racial differences exist in India, the western model of democracy could not be established**. He felt that if the western model of democracy was adopted in India, **“the large community would totally override the interests of the smaller community.”** This argument was carried forward by the communalists who believed in the **two-nation theory**. According to them, Hindus and Muslims were two separate nations which had separate economic, political and social interests and different cultural and historical backgrounds, and cannot form a single nation.
- Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was **averse to the process of elections**. In 1888, he said that the system of election would, put the legislation into the hands of “Bengalis or Hindus of Bengali ‘type’, a condition of utmost degradation” and the Muslims would become slaves of Hindus.
- On similar grounds, he **rejected the applicability of the self-government** in India, which in his opinion would result in the “mistreatment” of Muslims.
- He even **opposed freedom of speech and the press**. He openly supported Lytton’s attack on the freedom of press.
- Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was **even opposed to political agitations**. He argued that they would amount to sedition or would at least arouse the suspicion of disloyalty in the official’s mind. He exhorted Hindus and Muslims to shun politics and remain non-political and non-agitational, politically passive. He asked them to rather focus on education.
- There was “complete breach” between the Muslims and the Bengali dominated Congress. He sought to establish Anglo-Muslim alliance to arouse the Muslim feelings against the Congress.

Reason for the change/transition:

- **Language controversy in Awadh province** – Till then, Urdu in Persian script had been the official language. However, with the growth of Hindi, the supporters of Hindi called to replace Urdu with Hindi as the official language as it had become the language of masses.
 - The controversy took ugly turn, neither Muslims were ready to accept Hindi nor Hindus were ready to continue Urdu as the official language. The entire controversy disappointed Sir Syed Ahmed Khan.
 - He came to the conclusion that neither Hindus will agree to what Muslims want, nor Muslims will agree to what Hindus want.
 - He even assumed that with the passing time, more and more controversial issues will emerge and hence coexistence will not be possible.

To fund his college:

He required the help of government for his college. Hence, the British officials took advantage of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan’s desperation. The MAO college principal, **Theodore Beck**, influenced him the most. Beck set out to counter the “evil” influence of Congress by counterposing Sir Syed Ahmed Khan against it.

Growth of Hindu revivalism:

The growth of Hindu revivalism and its links with the Congress intensified his anti-Congress feelings.

Hence, in the interest of peace, he held that it is better if both live as separate communities. It is because of such thinking he has been called as the **originator of two-nation theory**. However, due to his earlier liberal leanings, many orthodox Muslims opposed him even later.

Why is Sir Syed Ahmed Khan controversial among Hindus?

- Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was concerned about the state of frustration in his community. While it was true that Mughal power was in a state of decline, it was also true that Muslims were deliberately discriminated against by the British as they held Muslims responsible for the revolt of 1857.
- Hence, they discriminated against Muslims and followed preferential policy towards Hindus and Sikhs.
- Sir Syed Ahmed Khan saw British as the new dominant force emerging in India. He had the foresight to understand that British rule is going to stay for a long time, and hence there is no point in opposing the British.
- Therefore, in this background, he decided to join hands with the British. Since he believed that modernization and education was the only way to uplift the community, he saw British as the only power that could provide him the resources for the achievement of the goal.
- Therefore, in order to get favours from the British, in "**ASBAB I BAGAWATE HIND**" he wrote about the causes of the revolt of 1857. In this work, he argued how Muslims were not responsible for the revolt and instead it was the wrong policies of the British which forced people to revolt. He also highlighted a number of instances where Muslims supported the British, saving the lives of many British officials.
- Later, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, also wrote an article titled "**THE LOYAL MUHAMMADANS OF INDIA**" in which he expressed the loyalty of the Muslims towards the British.
- He advised Muslims to stay away from Indian National Congress. His main reason was not that congress was dominated by Hindus, rather he felt that British are going to stay in India for long and there is no point entering into confrontation with the rising power.
- Hence, for these reasons, he was criticized by Hindus as '**opportunist**', '**the leader of community**' rather than 'leader of nation' unlike other Muslim leaders like Badruddin Tayyabji (INC).

SIGNIFICANCE

- His status among Muslims is at par with Raja Ram Mohan Roy among Hindus.
- Though controversial, he still emerges as the tallest leader among Muslims in the sub-continent.
- Even currently, as per **Sachar committee report**, Muslim community continues to be the most backward community highlighting the need for modern education.
- Besides laying the platform for Aligarh Muslim University, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was the first Muslim public intellectual of the nineteenth century who propagated a way of life that drew on **cultural pluralism**. He deliberated upon the issues that kept Indians ignored for centuries.
- Sir Syed tried to eliminate the sectarian attitude that fostered a conservative point of view. He believed that sentimentalism was neither beneficial for the individual nor the country.
- Therefore, as per Sen, in this current era of radicalization with emergence of phenomenon like 'Islamic fundamentalism' (Samuel Huntington), a modernizer like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan is the need of the hour, one who can guide the Muslim community towards education and not politicization or radicalization.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

1. When a nation becomes devoid of art and learning, it invites poverty." (Sir Syed Ahmed Khan). In the light of this statement, assess the role of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan as a reformer in modern India. (20, 2021)
2. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan as a modernizer. (10, 2013)

SOURCES

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EXAM VITAMINS

TO BE FILLED BY THE STUDENTS



Saying of Syed Ahmed Khan

Theory

“For centuries we have been living on the same soil, eating the same fruit on the same land, breathing the air of the same country.”

“By the word qaum, I mean both Hindus and Muslims. What we see is that all of us, whether Hindus or Muslims, lie on one soil, are governed by the one and the same ruler, have the same sources of benefit and equally share the hardships of a famine”.