

1. National seminar on "*Reflections on Arthasastra And its Relevance in the 21st Century*" at IIAS (9-10 July 2019)

Concept Note:

Introduction

"Arthasastra is the science which provides the means of acquisition and protection of the earth. *Artha* has been regarded as one of the three goals of human existence, the other two being *dharma* and *kama*. Arthasastra has two main objectives. Firstly, it seeks to show how the ruler should protect his territory. This protection refers principally to the administration of the State. Secondly, it shows how a territory should be acquired. This acquisition refers principally to the conquest of a territory from others. Arthasastra is the science of dealing with state affairs in the internal as well as external sphere or it is the science of statecraft.

The content of Arthasastra includes; *Book one*, on *Science of Politics*, deals mainly with the training of the prince for arduous duties of ruler ship. It also discusses the question of the appointment of ministers and other officers necessary for the administration of a state. This prepares the ground for the establishment of a benevolent monarchy. The main sutra is "In the happiness of the subjects lies the happiness of the king and in what is beneficial to the subjects his own benefit. What is dear to himself is not beneficial to the king, but what is dear to the subjects is beneficial (to him)". *Book two*, is on *The Activity of the Heads of Departments*: this deals with the activities of various state departments and internal administration of a state. *Book three*, is *Concerning Judges*: This book deals with the administration of justice and lays down the duties of the judges and the law. *Book four*, examines *The Suppression of Criminals*: and it deals with the maintenance of law and order and punishments for various criminal offences. *Book five* is on *Secret Conduct*, *Book six* is on *The Circle (of Kings) as the Basis*: This deals with the circle of kings (*mandala*) and its seven constituents/*prakrits* (the king, the minister, the country, the fortified city, the treasury, the army and the ally). *Book seven*, is on *The Six Measures of Foreign Policy*: This deals with the use of the six measures that can be adopted by a state in its relations with foreign states (peace/treaty, war/injury, staying quiet/remaining indifferent, marching/ augmenting of power, seeking shelter/submitting to another and dual policy/restoring to peace (with one) and war (with another). *Book eight*, is concerning *Topic of Calamities of the Constituent*, *Book nine*, *The Activity of the King about to March*, *Book ten*, *Concerning War*: *Book eleven*, *Policy towards Oligarchies*, *Book twelve*, *Concerning the Weaker King*, *Book thirteen*, *Means of Taking a*

Fort, Book fourteen, Concerning Secret Practices, and Book fifteen, The Method of Science or tantra.

Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, composed around 321 BCE is the oldest and most exhaustive treatise on statecraft and on issues of diplomacy, war, peace, intelligence, security, and political economy. L.N. Rangarajan, a diplomat whose work on the *Arthashastra* has argued that in so far as the nature of human beings remained the same and states behaved in the manner as they always have done, Kautilya was relevant. Similarly, K M Panikkar highlighted the relevance of Kautilya's rules of conduct in diplomatic relations and his doctrine of *Sama-dana-behda-danda* (conciliation, gifts, rupture and force). Some of Kautilya's classical and enduring maxims are: "What produces unfavourable results is bad policy: that is a policy to be judged by the results it produces, and diplomacy is not concerned with ideals but with achieving practical results for the state" Another quotation by Kautilya which has a universal appeal is, "When the advantages to be derived from peace and war are equal one should prefer peace for disadvantages such as loss of power and wealth are ever attendant upon war. Similarly, if the advantage to be derived from neutrality and war are equal, one should prefer neutrality".

Relevance of Arthashastra

The importance of the ideas and the ways of thinking that the *Arthashastra* reveals is useful because in many ways the present world is similar to the world that Kautilya worked and built the Mauryan Empire to its greatness. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* was pitched to teach with the various intricacies of governance and politics to the ruler. The text also reveals ideas of a 'welfare state', in which the state controlled and contributed to all aspects of daily life, ensuring equality and fairness in distribution of the resources, benefits and wealth. Kautilay's premise was that it was in the ruler's self-interest to be generous to the people, provide employment, build roads, harbours and parks and to address the grievances of the people promptly.

Kautilya, was the Indian political philosopher, statesman, who helped Chandragupta Maurya to establish the first unified state in Indian History in fourth century B.C. His work *Arthashastra* lays the conceptual foundation for making India the first welfare state. He advocates welfare in all spheres. He did not talk only about human welfare but even paid attention to animal welfare also. He states, "In the happiness of his

subjects lies the king's happiness, in their welfare lays his welfare. He shall not consider as good as only that which pleases him but treat as beneficial to him whatever pleases his subjects". He advocates the protection of livelihood of weaker section, consumer protection and even the welfare of prisoners also. The King's dharma is to be just, fair and liberal in protecting his people. His attitude to his people should be like attitude of a father towards his children. Kautilya defined the ideal ruler as one "who is ever active in promoting the welfare of the people and who endears himself by enriching the public and doing good to them."

Again, in the present day world, the challenges to national security are no different from the challenges that annoyed the Mauryan Empire in 300 BC. The nontraditional threats to security of the nation states emanates from the non-state actors can be effectively addressed only with the support of the people. Thus in order to ensure national security people also have to work in tandem with the security agencies by sharing information about the terror network. This idea has been well incorporated in the coastal security scheme, as it considers the fishers as the 'eyes' and 'ears' of coastal the security matrix.

The organizers of this two day National Seminar consider that there are many discussions/publications on the wisdom lies in the ancient text, Arthasastra. However, a holistic perspective on Arthasastra is yet to be undertaken. Thus the main objective of the Seminar is to bring experts from all areas, including, Political Science, Economics, Commerce, Public Administration, Defence, Security Studies, and Philosophy to reflect on ideas ingrained in Arthasastra and to explore into its relevance in the 21st century. Though there are revolutionary changes in science and technology, there is no commensurate change visible in basic human nature. Therefore, many challenges in the field of social, economic, political and security are no different from the challenges that exasperated the Mauryan Empire. We earnestly hope that solution to many of our present day problems in the political, economic, social and security sphere, are well exposed in this ancient text."

The suggested broad Sub-themes for the Seminar

1. Arthasastra - a treatise on state craft

2. The doctrine of Mandala
3. Welfare state concept in Arthasastra
4. Foreign Policy and Foreign Relations
5. Internal Security and External Security including Maritime Security
6. Science of Economics and Commerce
7. Taxation system and public welfare
8. Art of Government and Good Governance

A National seminar on "*Reflections on Arthasastra and its Relevance in the 21st Century*" was organized at IIAS from 09-10 July, 2019. Professor Suresh Rangarajan, Professor & Hon. Director, V.K. Krishna Menon Study Centre for International Relations, Department of Political Science, University of Kerala was the Convener of this seminar. The Welcome address was given by Professor Kapil Kapoor, Chairman, Governing Body, IIAS. Professor Suresh Rangarajan, Convener of the seminar gave introductory remarks. Vice Admiral M.P. Murlidharan, Former Director General, ICG, Kochi delivered inaugural address. Vote of thanks was given by Col. Vijay K. Tiwari, Secretary, IIAS.

Participants:

- Professor Raj Kumar Singh, Department of Commerce, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla
- Professor Mamta Mokta, Department of Public Administration, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla
- Dr. Mousumi Ghosh, Department of Economics, Banwarilal Bhalotia College, Asansol, West Bengal
- Dr. Jayashree Vevekanandan, South Asian University, New Delhi
- Ms. G. Padmaja, Gitam School of Gandhian Studies, Gitam University, Visakhapatnam
- Professor Harish K. Thakur, Department of Political Science, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla
- Col. Pradeep Kumar Gautam (Retd.), Consultant to Indigenous Historical Knowledge Project, The Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi
- Ms. Medha Bisht, South Asian University, New Delhi
- Dr. Saurabh Mishra, Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi

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- Dr. Santosh Bharti, Assistant Professor (English), Delhi College of Arts and Commerce, University of Delhi, New Delhi
- Shri Yashvant Kumar Trivedi, Ph.D, Research scholar, School of Sanskrit and Indic Studies (SSIS), Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
- Professor Bhavatosh Indra Guru, Department of English and Other European Languages, Dr. H.S. Gour Central University, Sagar, M.P.
- Brig. J.S. Rajpurohit, Group HQ NCC, Kalepur, Gorakhpur, U.P.
- Dr. S. Venkata Krishnan, Assistant Professor of Politics and International Relations (SLS) & Managing CCE (Centre of Continuing Education), School of Liberal Studies, Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University, Gandhinagar, Gujarat
- Dr. Sudhir Kumar Singh, Dyal Singh College, University of Delhi, New Delhi
- Dr. Pavithran Nambiar, Fellow, IIAS
- Professor Rajvir Sharma, Fellow, IIAS