

Research Article**ARTHASASTRA: THE ANALYTICAL SCIENCE OF POLITICS****Dr. Jyoti Trehan Sharma**Associate Professor, Department of Political Science Indraprastha College for Women
University of Delhi, Delhi.Email: dr_jyotisharma29@yahoo.co.in**Received: 22 March 2017 Revised and Accepted: 22 April 2017****Abstract**

The greatest single contribution of the ancient Hindus to the science of polity was the detailed study of this science by the teachers of the school of *Arthashastra*. Their approach to the problem of Statecraft was remarkably objective, for they suggested policies that would help in the attainment and retention of power as well as the fullest development of the State's resources. The author of *Arthashastra* applied the empirical method, including, observation, analysis and deduction, that were based on the ingredients of reason and experience. *Arthashastra* stands different from all other ancient texts, both in its plan and purpose. The research paper is an attempt to analyse that Kautilya's scrutiny and analysis were based on a sound judgement and gives an evidence of his superior insight and practical wisdom. He was not merely a preserver of the old political ideas but also a creator of the new ones. He was impatient with the existing unsystematic and chaotic theories of polity and tried to remove the cobwebs in political thinking through his incisive logic and firm grasp of the realities of Statecraft, thus making an attempt to prove that eastern thought was not shrouded in mystery, superstition and myths, but based on rationalism and wisdom.

Keywords: *Diplomacy, Monarchy, Realism, State, Yogakshema***Introduction:**

The history of ancient Indian political thought is the remnant of our intellectual and spiritual ancestry. It is also a semblance of literature of considerable antiquity where lay the roots of Indian political thought. However, the commonly held view was that politics cannot be separated from the theological and metaphysical environment. Religious institutions controlled the character and development of the people, and the interest of the state seems to have been left out unintentionally. It would thus, be worthwhile to ponder in order to identify the distinct features of the Indian civilization, particularly in terms of political thought. The Indian situation is peculiar and the cleavages rampant, but there is definitely a pattern of thought that is common to all. For example the Indian languages may vary, but their approach, grammar and even vocabulary have striking resemblances throughout the country, especially with regard to the explanation of the concepts of caste, duty, justice, rights, etc.

Every view of the individual community relationship springs from a certain view of the individual and the over-arching cosmic process to which he belongs. According to most ancient Indian texts belonging to the dominant tradition, such as most ancient Indian texts belonging to the dominant tradition, such as *Manusmriti* and the *Mahabharata*, the correct view of life was based on a subtle combination of institution experience and reason. There is reason to believe that Indian thinkers were "seers and when they spoke they were describing what they experienced as a basic drive in Nature (*prakriti*) consisting of truth (*sattva*), energy (*rajas*) and necessity (*tamas*) and their desire and the will to cohere and transcend these in search of a permanent principle amidst all the diverse processes of existence (*jagat*). This line of thought was itself based on the assumption that there are levels of experience from gross (*sthula*) to subtle (*sukshama*) to causal or the most subtle (*karana*). According to this tradition, therefore each individual is an autonomous agent seeking fulfillment of his identity which alone can provide bliss (*ananda*) to his life.

The *Puranic* heritage is common to an overwhelming majority. There are cleavages between Hinduism and Islam, no doubt. But the *Bhakti* movement within Hinduism and Sufism in Islam tried to bridge them by emphasizing the similarities and creating points of contact in terms of which a common identity could emerge. There have been many leaps and setbacks in this process, but on the whole the Indian civilization has marched on from one crisis to another in search of a composite culture. As a rough generalization, one might say that most of our philosophical notions today come from the Sanskrit, ideas about justice and fair-play from Urdu and Persian, and the legal and the political words from English. The philosophical and social unity of the Indian civilization far preceded political unity. This philosophical unity assumed different forms in diverse customs and

cultural practices, structures, and languages and modes of social living, though all have an underlying unity as if they were different branches of the same tree. It has yet to find a meaningful expression in the political field.

This is being emphasized in order to question the commonly held view that there is no continuity in the development of Indian thought. Indeed, one can confidently assert that there is a remarkable continuity in the development of ideas about action, duty, caste, cosmic process and even justice and the state. Then there are breaks as and when Islam entered India or was an attempt to combine the earlier ideas with Islam, an effort to tide over the gaps so that the old threads were recovered, resurrected or reinterpreted in a new form. In another sense, there was an effort to preserve the dominant tradition through such epics as *Tulsidas' Ramcharitmanas*. While the civilization continued, politics assumed different forms.¹

Recently there has once again been some talk of the absence of unity in this tradition, or traditions in India thus discrediting the view of continuity in or cohesiveness of a social centre in society, such as, that emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. But on the whole Indian society has up to the time of Gandhi, worked and operated with a conviction of such unity in diversity. Throughout our history we have constantly referred to the past writers, habitually quoting or citing Manu, Valmiki or Vyasa, as though these people shared the same idiom of thought. Even AbulFazal undertook the translation of the *Mahabharata*, it is noted. The influence of earlier ideas is writ large in his writings. Similarly, writers like Aurbindo and Gandhi constantly referred to the past view; others like M.N.Roy refuted the dominant tradition but only to draw our attention to the materialist tradition in India. Mazumdar's and V.P.Varma's books have emphasized this historical continuity in the past or the present in which the older ideas are seen in terms of timeless and permanent trends which still have some relevance.

The attempt here is to look at philosophers in the context of special situations and specific audiences to which these writers were addressing them. It is believed that great writings do not always have 'forms'. One must, argues Skinner, go beyond the text and context and recover the authors' intentions. They persist across time. Otherwise Plato's *Republic* or Kautilya's *Arthashastra* would be simply incommunicable to generations to come. The dilemma which haunted Arjun on the battled field still confronts us. The context is important because it helps us in two ways. First, it throws a new light on some hidden meaning in the book which would not otherwise be revealed. Secondly, it is important insofar as it emphasizes the totality of social process in which the world is integrally related to consciousness as a part of this process. Political thought cannot be divorced from political experience. Therefore it is incumbent on us to understand the context of ideas and issues in their age if one wishes to properly appreciate Aristotle or Kautilya.

A word must be said about the study of context in the classics in ancient India. Historians differ widely and almost acrimoniously about the dates of different books. The Indians find it almost exasperating. However it is our belief that while these classics bristle with inconsistencies and incoherencies, there is a philosophical core which can be disentangled once we take into account their linkage with the general development of philosophical and religious thought. Similarly, each classic has a certain historical sequence of events within it, which may not be authentic from the view of exact dates but, nonetheless provide us with sufficient insight to reconstruct the context in which these classics were written.

The actual origins of Indian philosophical and political thought are shrouded in mystery. It certainly emerged from the political experience of various kingdoms which were diverse and free, spanning the entire land peninsula from the Himalayas in the north to the Indian Ocean in the south, the Persian Empire in the west to the land of enchantment and mystery, now known as Assam, in the east. The first known formulation came to surface in the *Vedas* and the next during the legendary wars of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* when presumably one era of history merged into another. The vision which was more in the nature of a foundation experience, became the bedrock of all subsequent thought, was perfected by Kautilya to suit the needs of a pan-Indian kingdom, found its echo in the writings of Kalidasa, Kamandaka, Brihaspati, Sukra, and Somedeva, in Buddhist and Jain thought, and was replaced in the end by the emergence of medieval sects. Although the formulation of political thought in the *Mahabharata* and later of Kautilya was an exciting departure, it was the product of a long process of development, both in ideas and social life in the Indian society.

A revolution dawned on the Indian political thought, with the discovery of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* in 1904. a manuscript of the text, and with it one of a commentary on a small part of it by a writer named Bhattasvamin, was handed over by a Pandit of the Tanjore District to R.Shamasastri, Librarian, Mysore Government Oriental Library². Shamasastri first published a report of his finding in the *Indian Antiquary* (Bombay) in January 1905. Indian and Occidental experts closely scrutinized the original documents over the years, and Shamasastri's English translation was successively revised until it met the most rigorous criticisms of qualified experts. Subsequently, the authenticity of the *Arthashastra* as the work of primary significance in Hindu politics was completely established.

But the issue of the exact authorship of the *Arthashastra* is still in doubt even after continuing examination, analysis and debate. Several questions remain open:

(i) Was the Kautilya who wrote the *Arthashastra* the same Kautilya who ruled the Mauryan Empire with Chandragupta? ;

- (ii) (ii) Or was the *Arthashastra* produced by aides and disciples to the minister – statesman Kautilya?;
- (iii) (iii) Or is Kautilya only a name given, as the name Manu is given to the *Manusamhita*, to represent a mythical author when actually the *Arthashastra* was the work of numerous scholars?;
- (iv) Finally, was the *Arthashastra* written in the fourth-century B.C or was it written sometime between the fourth-century B.C. and the third-century A.D.?

These questions have never been precisely resolved and renowned authorities who have investigated the above questions in details, have differed in their opinions and results.

The fact is that only little reliable knowledge has been acquired about the author of the *Arthashastra*. The Author subscribes himself as Kautilya at the end of each of the hundred and fifty chapters of the work, and re-asserts his vow to destroy the Nanda dynasty. The two other names used by the author are Vishnugupta and Chanakya³. Dr. Ganapati Sastri hold the view that the venerable *acharya* had been born in the *Kutala gotra* and hence his name was Kautalya, not Kautilya; he was born at Chanaka and was therefore called Chanakya; and his parents baptized him as Vishnugupta and he came to know by this name also⁴.

However, despite varied views as regards the authorship, the *Arthashastra* is, all are agreed, and the most important work in Hindu politics. Its air is of intense political realism and concern for practical problems of administration, adjudication, and governmental control that distinguish it from the more highly theoretic works of the earlier Brahmanical schools. Moreover, acute insights are given to an analysis of the politics of the Mauryan Empire if the Brahman statesman is credited as being if not the author of the entire *Arthashastra*, at least the guiding spirit behind its compilation and thesis.

However, for all purposes, the most important element to be considered is that the Indian tradition credits Chanakya as the author of the *Arthashastra*. Modern Indian scholars, almost without exception, hold that this tradition is correct; and the leasers of Indian nationalism so far as they have recorded their position, maintain that Kautilya was the minister and the Shastra writer, and that the *Arthashastra* is a true product of the political thought and practical politics of Chandragupta's Empire. The Indian tradition thus considers that Chanakya, the statesman was Kautilya the author and/or the guiding spirit of the "art of politics". The Kautilya *Arthashastra*, as the name indicates is a treatise on *Arthashastra*. "Artha is the sustenance or livelihood (*vrttih*) of men; in other words it means 'the earth inhabited by men'. *Arthashastra* is the science which is the means of the acquisition and protection of the earth⁵." Since very early times, Artha has stood for material well-being, and as such, *Arthashastra* is primarily concerned with the general well being on earth, which can be possible by state activity alone. *Arthashastra* is thus a science dealing with state affairs. It is the science of statecraft or of politics and administration.

The *Arthashastra* literature, divorced itself from the moral philosophical order and instead devoted itself to practical political and administrative matters within the greater moral order. Since the Hindu tradition makes no distinction between economics and politics, both are somewhat merged in the *Arthashastra*⁶. An important figure that confronts Kautilya is that of Manu. Kautilya, it is believed, did not break away altogether from the moorings of the ancient *Dharmasastras*, but he did not grant them their sacerdotal hold over the political institutions either⁷. Another prominent political thinker who has been compared to Kautilya is Aristotle. The two seem to complete the picture of political organization in a great way. They have been like the two outstanding representatives who discussed the logical basis of political existence, and the nature and end of many fundamental problems confronting the State.⁸ But an equally interesting point that has been constantly emerging, as in Timothoi J. Lomperis' work, Hindu Influence on Greek Thought, is that Hindu political thought has had a profound influence on Greek thought.

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 Hillebrandt. 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 fifteenth century Italy, the common points of focus for both the thinkers are preservation, acquisition and the 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 and a moral activity in pursuit of political power which is not aware of its social responsibility. In this sense, the differences between the two thinkers become fundamental.⁹

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. However, critics believe that his advocacy that ends justify the means pose serious exclamations to what is morally wrong, how it can be politically correct? Machiavelli saw 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, thus, 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. Prior to the discovery of the *Arthashastra*, the treatise of Kamandaka called *Nitisara* quoted the traditional view of the old authors of Hindu polity in regard to their idea of the State, that relates to the seven constituents or *Prakritis* of the State, namely, *Svamin* (Sovereign), *Amatya* (Officials), *Janapada* (*Rashtra* or the territory), *Durg* (Fort), *Kosa* (Treasury), *Dand* (*Bala* or Army), and *Mitra* (Allies).¹⁰ A closer look at the ancient Indian literature reveals that Monarchy was taken to be the normal form of government. There was a kind of a contract relationship between the ruler and the people, who paid revenue and enjoyed security and well-being – *Yogaksema*. This relation was more of a social compact than contract, and thus cannot be treated at par with the social contract theories of either Hobbes or Rousseau. While Hobbes expounded the notion of agreement by saying that absolute power was irrevocably transferred to the ruler, the ancient Indian literature maintained that the 'King was still the servant of the people.'¹¹ It is this systematic epitomization and constructive synthesis of such political ideas that has made the *Arthashastra* the most important work in Hindu political thought. Kautilya remains a traditionalist when he conceives of the State as a political organism. He also discussed the state in the traditional terms of *pratyangabhuta*, or the seven limbs of the state. "The king, the minister, the country, the fort, the treasury, the army and the friend and the enemy are the elements of sovereignty." He goes on to explain that "accepting the enemy, these seven elements, possessed of their excellent characteristics are said to be the limb-like elements of sovereignty." As such from this initial premise, Kautilya proceeds to analyze the inter-workings of the seven elements and the function of the state.¹²

The *Arthashastra* refers to numerous previous teachers and claims to be a systematic compendium of the ancient teachings. Kautilya make 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 upon occasion, 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. Kautilya has produced a theory of government in which the end justifies the means¹³.

Kautilya has an obvious preference for the monarchical state. However there is one passage in which he parenthetically deals with the conditions of clan-republics or *Kulas*, and admits that some of them possess the two fold merit of invincibility and permanence.¹⁴

The king being the first element of the organic state is dealt with, in general, along the lines of the earlier *Dharmasutras*. The canonical writers mentioned only the rudiments of public administration, and *Arthashastra* being secular, dealt with both the state and the king in more concerned with the ethical and moral aspects of sovereignty; and Kautilya must have assumed that the dharma of the king was fully understood from the sacred literature. Therefore, it was not necessary for him to deal overlong on this subject.

Since Kautilya's state could not rely upon any popular feeling of nationalism, it had to rely on the absolute personal loyalty of subjects for king. Kautilya urged that the Prince receive rigorous intellectual and moral discipline, the former involving the study of the four traditional sciences under the tutelage of specially qualified Brahmins and the latter centering on the control of the senses so as to develop royal character. The Prince should enjoy pleasures within the limits of his *svadharma* and must never disregard virtue and wealth. He makes clear that the king's education and self-control is the first requisite of successful government. Elsewhere, Kautilya addresses the prince: "The observance of one's own duty leads one to heaven (*Svarga*) and infinite bliss (*Anantya*). When it is violated, the world will come to an end owing to confusion of castes and duties. Hence the king shall never allow people to swerve from their duties; for whoever upholds his own duty, ever adhering to the customs of the Aryas and the following rules of caste and divisions of religious life, will surely be happy both here and thereafter. For the world, when maintained in accordance with injunction of the triple Vedas, will surely progress but never perish".¹⁶ Kautilya accepted the theory of *Matsya-nayaya*, the logic of the fish, for his is a science of politics for the *Kaliyuga*. He impressed on the monarch the fact that the king exists solely for the sake of righteousness and never for self-gratification.¹⁷

Since Kautilya accepted the organic social order which was based on *dharma*, *varna* and *asrama*, he teaches that it is the primary duty of the king to see that each caste and each *asrama* scrupulously observe their proper

dharmas and that the king allow no *samkara* or confusion to creep in, as happens when people fail to perform their *dharmas*. The king must, according to Kautilya, avoid those causes that produce evils among the people. If the king follows these injunctions, the state will be strong prosperous and victorious.¹⁸ Moreover, the king must act vigorously, the conscientious discharge of royal duties being his performance of sacrifice and his consecration of Brahma. His happiness must lie in the happiness of his subjects and their well-being must be their wellbeing. Kautilya obviously places greatest emphasis on the king's education, discipline and duties. The king in the Kautilyan state is by far the most important element of the seven limbs of the state. And *Dandaniti*, the science of punishment, is the most important tool of the king in the *Kaliyuga*. It is his dharma to enforce the just ordering of society through royal punishment and to bring to bear the power of the state against those who would disrupt the ordered life. Degenerated making must be elevated to dharma through the all-powerful monarch.

Kautilya also taught to the king the great lesson of the use of his royal power in saying, "Whoever imposes severe punishment becomes repulsive to the people; while he who awards mild punishment becomes contemptible. But whoever imposes punishment as deserved becomes respectable. For punishment(*danda*), when awarded with due consideration, makes the people devoted to righteousness and to the world productive of wealth and enjoyment; while punishment, when ill awarded under the influence of greed and anger owing to ignorance, excites fury even among hermits and ascetics adwelling in forests, not to speak of the householders.¹⁹ Though Kautilya always placed primary emphasis on the king and his functions, he did not omit a detailed analysis of the proper function of the other six elements of the state. The king, as befits traditional Hindu theory, was an absolute king, and yet his powers were to be guided and checked by the Brahmins through *rajadharmas*. Unlimited power was, no doubt, centered in one single individual but its arbitrary use could was never contemplated, or even tolerated. Kautilya advised the king that 'sovereignty is possible only with assistance. A single wheel can never move'. The Brahman minister adviser is the most important check upon the king's authority. Specifically, Kautilya insisted that the king must rule with the help of ministers (*mantrins*) and the state officials (*amatyas*).²⁰ However, he provided the king with a series of tests by which each minister and official is tested by fear, virtue, wealth and love to see that he is fit for his high position.

It is widely held view that the doctrine of the necessity for constant espionage in every branch of the administration pervades the whole of the *Arthashastra*.²¹ The vast civil service envisaged by Kautilya was continually under the scrutiny of overt and covert agents of the king whose duty was to prevent dishonesty, disloyalty, and maladministration. None could escape the scrutiny of the spies, and it must be assumed that the king himself was spied upon and tested. It is probable, though Kautilya does not give explicit evidence, that the vast spy system was controlled by the Brahman prime-minister. Since Kautilya was interested in checking the arbitrary power of the sovereign, it seems natural that this device of espionage on the royal household would be an extremely effective checking system.

Kautilya specifically also defined the duties of the Council of State and of the Council of Ministers. He insisted that these bodies (each having been security – cleared) actively participate in the management of state affairs. He further stated that these Councils deal with practical matters of administration and that their duty was to provide the best possible system of government and to strengthen the state in fulfilling its *dharma*.²²

It should be noted that while Kautilya insisted upon the divinity of the king, he seemed to place greatest emphasis on the divinity of the King's office. This relates the Kautilya's embryonic theory of contract which is conjoined with the doctrine of the king's quasi-divinity, though he insisted that the Kings should not slight.²³ Here Kautilya's object was evidently not to lay down a philosophical theory of kingship, but to justify on, as broad a basis as possible, the king's authority in the eyes of his subjects. The Kautilyan contract theory is identical with that of the *Santiparva* in which Manu accepts the position of the wealth of the people. Manu accepts the position of kind and, in turn, receives a portion of the wealth of the people. Manu is divinely appointed and, therefore the king's office is of divine origin.

The army and the conduct of war have been fully described in the *Arthashastra*. The army, according to Kautilya, is to be recruited from five classes, namely, *Choras* or *Pratirodhakas*(robbers and bandits); *Miechchhas* (foreigners); *Chorangansa* (organised gangs of brigands); *Atravikas* (foresters); and *Sastropajivi – Srenis* (warrior clans). They were to be led into battle by the king and officered by trusted Kshatriyas. The Kautilyan emphasis on recourse to war necessitated that he included rather detailed descriptions of the arts of war, the problems of armament and logistics, the strategy of campaigns, and other subjects which must have comprised part of the education of the monarch and which show the extensive knowledge of the brahman minister in such military matters.²⁴ Kautilya urged recourse to war only as a last resort, a tradition that continues in the contemporary times also, though may be easily challenged. Diplomacy is guided by expediency. Expediency becomes the golden rule of all international relations. Kautilya advised the king, who is restrained in the circle of states (*prakritimandala*), to utilize the six-fold policy in order for his state to pass from deterioration to stagnation and from stagnation to prosperity.²⁵ Depending upon the strength and condition of the state, Kautilya held that the forms of policy are six-

- agreement with pledges is peace;

- offensive operation is war;
- indifference is neutrality;
- making preparations is marching;
- seeking the protection of another is alliance; and
- making peace with one and waging war with another, is termed a double policy (dvaidhibhava).

These are the six forms.²⁶

What is so relevant to today's diplomacy was well taken care by Kautilya when he included the enemy as the eighth element of the state. He was acutely aware of the relation of other states to his State and the *Mandala*, or political circle of neighbors that brought him to devise a dynamic system of balance of power unequalled in ancient literature. Politics, thus treated, rises almost to the level of a fine art. Kautilya provided the first and the only original discussion of what may be termed as international power politics in the Hindu political tradition.

The techniques of statecraft that Kautilya offered in his *Arthashastra* are guidelines to a king for the administration of internal and external affairs. The author's treatment of the problems of internal governance, political, economic and social administration and of external affairs, is, indeed comprehensive and deep. In this respect, as in several others, lies the uniqueness of the *Arthashastra* which is a storehouse of political wisdom and a text book of the principles and techniques of statecraft. Undoubtedly, it would not be wrong to say that Kautilya's *Arthashastra* was the last important original work in the literature of traditional Hindu political thought. Whether or not its author was the Brahmin Prime minister of Chandragupta and the leader of the first great Brahmanical political reaction, the work represents the apex of the practical science of politics, government and administration. To some extent, it has to be admitted that the policies of the *Arthashastra* were not applied in the Maurya Empire, and that it was revered and probably followed in the Sunga and the Gupta Empires, and that it has continued to play an important part in the Indian tradition of politics and statecraft. The intensely realistic approach of the *Arthashastra* argues for the contention that its author was widely familiar with the practical problems of government. Realism may be said to be the keynote of the volume and one of the major contributions to the Hindu political tradition.

Kautilya's practical statesmanship led him to discuss the basic problems of social control, local administration, military affairs, taxation and revenue collection, and foreign affairs as well as the major problems of political theory. His contributions, which he called only a revival and a reinterpretation of an older tradition, have preserved a heritage of Machiavellian policies alongside of the more moralistic and idealized theories of the Sutras. The *Arthashastra* is not only a compendium of dharmas, but also a manual of practical politics. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is different from the rest of the ancient works both in its plan and purpose. Whenever, Kautilya refers to the views of his predecessors, his scrutiny and analysis are based on a sound judgment and gives an evidence of his superior might and practical wisdom. He is not merely a preserver of the old political ideas but a creator of new ones. He is impatient with the existing unsystematic and chaotic theories of polity and removes the cobwebs in political thinking through his incisive logic and firm grasp of the realities of Statecraft. The immense number of details dealt by Kautilya are more of pragmatic maxims and precepts, and less of actual descriptions of concrete institutional politics.²⁷

In the western political tradition, one of the most important developments in modern times is the emergence of the State as an overarching regulatory order which acquires an objectivity of its own. There is a reason to believe that Kautilya, who was a thorough matter-of-the-fact statesman, promulgated regulations that were designed to meet the needs of a State, and that his State was not of the impracticable and universal type as conceived of by Alexander the Great, or of an ideal condition like that visualized by Plato, but was exclusively meant for the people amidst whom he lived. Kautilya, in his usual cryptic manner had given the object of his great work by saying, 'This science has been made by him who from intolerance (of misrule) quickly rescued the scriptures and the science of weapons and the earth which had passed to the Nanda king'. In fact, Kautilya's founding of a school provided the institutional basis for the study of polity and prevented it from becoming completely destitute.

Manu, Vyasa and Kautilya are perhaps exception to this. In their writings, the state becomes autonomous of civil society. Indian thought develops both the concepts of authority and that of office; the king claims the right of final interpretation of scriptures. The state becomes a focus of political power of which the king is perhaps the most important element but not the sole element. In the state, the king is distinguished from six other elements i.e., the people the minister, the army, the treasury, the system, of justice and his friends and enemies. The elements are regarded as limbs of the body which are mutually interdependent. This was indeed a great leap forward towards the conceptualization of the state which becomes an institution distinct from both ruler and subjects. That is why the king is not permitted to use treasury for his personal pleasure.

The king should show utmost compassion to his people who constitute, "the most impregnable fort". However, for most part the tradition failed to develop the idea of an objective sovereign authority existing outside civil society. The idea of kingship remained always bound up with the idea office with very few institutional checks. In the absence of proper institutional checks on the powers of the king, the subjectivity of the civil society is replaced by the subjective will of the king and his advisers. This largely explains both why the absence of

political authority did not materially disturb Hindu social organization and why the weakness of political centre made India vulnerable in the face of conquerors. It also made the state unable to prevent or impede the ascendancy of powerful rural, ethnic and caste divisions. The aspiration of Modern India to consolidate itself into a modern state is being thwarted by the absence, except in the most ancient texts, of the idea of the state standing outside the civil society and yet regulating, or more appropriately, bridging all cleavages within it.

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10. D.R. Bhandarkar, Some Aspects of Ancient Hindu Polity, Patna: Eastern Book House, 1988 pg. 57-58.
11. Ibid., pg.122-124.
12. R. Shamasastri, supra n.2,Bk. VI, Ch.I,pg. 287.
13. Ibid., pg. 289
14. Ibid.,Bk. I, Ch.XVII, pg. 34-35.
15. Ibid., Ch.V-VII, pg. 9-12.
16. Ibid.,Ch. III, pg.7.
17. Ibid., Bk.VI, Ch.I, pg.289.
18. Ibid., Bk.VIII, Ch.V, pg.363-366.
19. Ibid., Bk.I, Ch.IV, pg.8.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid. Ch. VII, pg.12.
22. Ibid, Ch.VIII, pg. 13.
23. Ibid, Ch.XIII, pg.22-24.
24. Ibid., Bk.X, Ch.III, pg.395-396.
25. Ibid., Bk.VII, Ch.I, pg.293.
26. Ibid.
27. V.P.Varma, Studies in Hindu Political Thought and its Metaphysical Foundations, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1974, pg. 82-84.

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