

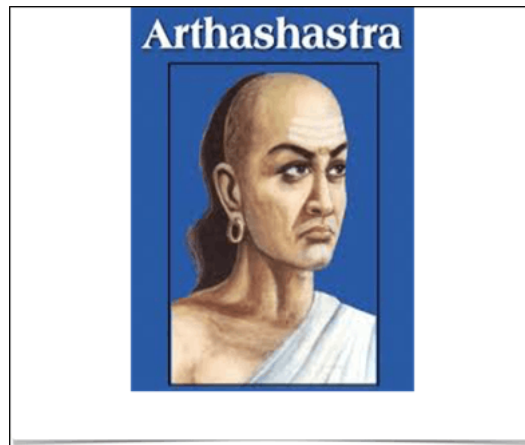
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Introduction and Concept of Sovereignty: Kautilya-Social Political Philosophy for Competitive Exams (2021)

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Introduction



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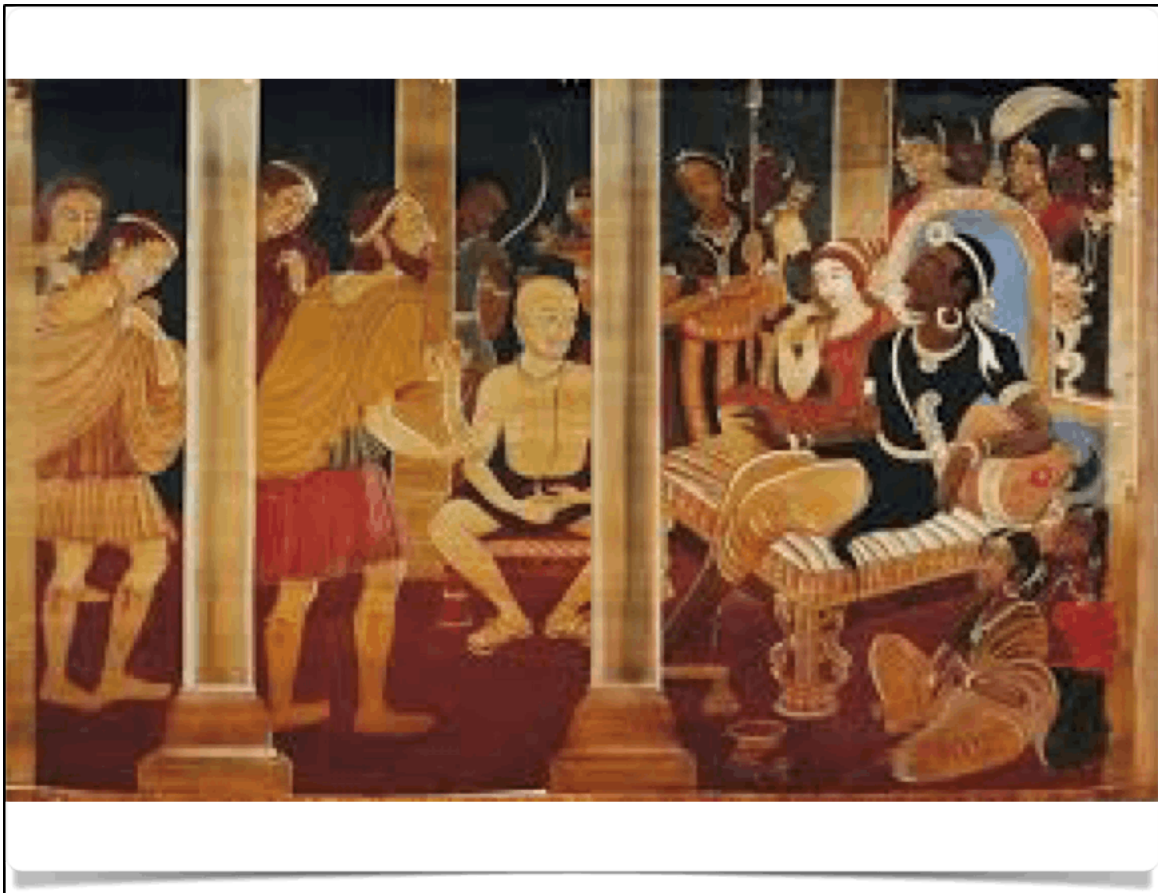
- Kautilya was an ancient Indian social political philosopher.
- He is most famous for his work Artha-sastra or the science of Polity.
- Kautilya was the pen name of Chanakya. He is also known as Vishnu Gupta.
- He was the Prime Minister of Chandra Gupta Maurya in the four century B. C.
- Literature:
 - Chanakya Sutrani (Maxims of Chanakya)
 - Rajaniti Shastram (Guide to Politics)
- It is important to note that the basic premise or the central theme of all the writings of Kautilya is politics.
- Kautilya gave importance to social-political philosophy.
- He focuses on polity in social life.
- In other words, he challenged the supremacy of religion and other metaphysical concepts by introducing the concept of state sovereignty.

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The Concept of Sovereignty

- Sovereignty is the element of supreme legal authority in a state.
- It means the sovereign by virtue of its position and authority can make laws for the state, command obedience from the subjects of the state and also at the same time punish those who fail to abide by the laws or the orders of the state.
- A sovereign is a ruler, the supreme head of the state. Or, the monarch.

- Hence, Kautilya believed in the concept of monarchy and advocated for the stable imperialist state.



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Artha-Sastra

- Artha-sastra is divided into sixteen books dealing with virtually every topic concerned with the running of a state - taxation, law, diplomacy, military strategy, economics, bureaucracy, etc.
- The text highlights the supremacy of politics and the importance of social life and welfare.

- According to Kautilya, Arthashastra deals with the guidance of the kings on the art of administration.
- As a result, out of the four purusharthas or the pointers of life; artha, dharma, kama and moksha. According to Kautilya, the most important purushartha or the objective of life is Artha or material welfare and prosperity.
- With the Arthashastra, Kautilya sought to raise the second objective of life (artha) to the level of the first objective of life (dharma) .
- He declared the independent status of the polity and focused on the importance of well-being in the social life.
- According to him, if artha maintained, all the other three purusharthas can be accomplished.
- Hence, before Kautilya, the knowledge concerning the science of polity was scattered in several works. Artha-sastra is the first comprehensive and complete manual on guiding the kings or the statesmen on the science of polity or the art of administration.
- In other words, it is the first manual on statecraft.
- Kautilya avers, “This Arthashastra is made as a compendium of almost all the Arthashastras, which, in view of acquisition and maintenance of the earth, have been composed of ancient teachers ... This science of polity has been made as a compendium of all those Arthashastras which, as a guidance to kings in acquiring and maintaining the earth.”
- Note: In this way, Arthashastra can be seen taking a departure from the typical Indian tradition which only shows the importance of the supremacy of religion or dharma in all spheres of life, for example, dharma-sastra which only put emphasis on the supremacy of dharma or virtues imposed by religion.

The Four Kinds of Science

- Kautilya accepted four sciences. They are;
 - Anvikshaki: it is known as the science of philosophy.
 - Trayi: it deals with the study of three Vedas; Rig, Sama and Yajur. These three deal with the duties a man must perform in accordance with one's caste. Atharva Veda was not accepted.
 - Varta: it is known as the science of wealth.
 - Danda-niti: it is known as the science of Government. Kautilya focuses on this in his Artha-sastra.

Danda-Niti

- Danda-niti means the science of Government.
- It also means the art of using force to control the errant elements or the disturbing elements in the society.
- As the name suggests, danda means rod or stick- a symbol of force or state power.
- According to Kautilya, danda-niti should form the basis of purusharthas or the goals of life.
- He identified four purposes for the Danda-niti, they are;
 - Acquisition of the un-acquired
 - Preservation of the preserved
 - Augmentation or Increasing the preserved
 - Fair distribution of the preserved.

Saptanga Theory

- Sapta means seven and anga means organs.
- According to Kautilya, a state has seven elements or constituents, namely,
 - Swamin — the King
 - Amatya — the Minister
 - Janapada — the Land, and the People
 - Durga — the Fortress
 - Kosha — the Treasury
 - Danda or Bala — the Army (for protection against the enemy or alien state)
 - Surhit or mitra — the Allies.
- The entire set-up of the kingdom was described as *Saptanga* theory in *Artha-sastra* by Kautilya.
- According to him, a state is composed of these seven elements.
- These seven elements are also known as *prakriti* or *anga* (organs) .
- All of these are equally important and like in a human body, if one organ is missing, the entire body suffers.

- Similarly, in the case of state, if one element does not perform the function well, the entire state suffers.
- According to him, Swami and the amatya are the two important elements of the states. The head of the state, swam is the head who controls the whole body (state) and the amatya are the eyes.
- He also believed that kosha or treasury is the backbone of the state. For example, when the state's treasuries are prospering, the Danda or the Bala or the military, army will be equipped with the best equipments, they will be paid on time, similarly, better forts or durga can be build when the treasuries are filled with gems, gold, etc. With prospering treasuries, the state will be able to survive and sustain the calamities for a long time.
- Therefore, according to Kautilya, kosha is the backbone of the state.

Sadguna-Siddhanta

The doctrine of *Sadguna-siddhanta* is proposed by Kautilya in the *Arthashastra*. It is also known as the theory of six-fold diplomatic policy.

(1) *Sandhi*: means to make peace with the enemy

(2) *Vigraha*: means the situation of hostility between the two states

(3) *Asana*: means keeping it quiet or keeping it low with the enemy state

(4) *Yana*: means march to fight against the enemy state

(5) *Sansraya*: means joining hands with another king

(6) *Dvaidhibhava*: means joining hands with an ally in-order to fight the enemy at the same time.

1. Arthasastra is a work of

- A. Kamandaka
- B. Kautilya
- C. Chandra Gupta Maurya
- D. None of these

Answer: B

2. Sutrani (Maxims) and Rajaniti Shastram (Guide to Politics) are the works of

- A. Kamandaka
- B. Kautilya
- C. Chandra Gupta Maurya
- D. None of these

Answer: B

3. According to Kautilya _____ is the backbone of the state

- A. Kosha
- B. Danda
- C. Surhit
- D. Swamin

Answer: A

4. According to Kautilya the state has _____ major elements or constituents

- A. Seven
- B. Six
- C. Eight
- D. Nine

Answer: A

5. Which of the following statements are false in relation to Kautilya's Artha-sastra?

- A. He advocated the saptanga theory
- B. He advocated the importance of all four Purusarthas
- C. Arthasastra is known to be the first comprehensive manual on statecraft
- D. He accepted four sciences

Answer: B

#kautilya

#Statecraft

#arthasastra

#polity

✉ Mayank

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