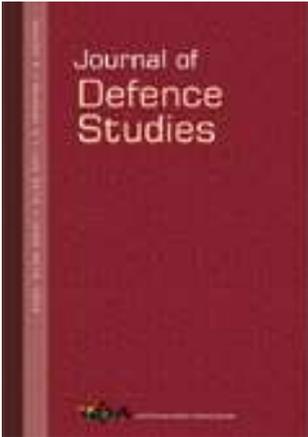# Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses

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# Kautilya's *Arthashastra*
## Restoring its Rightful Place in the Field of International Relations

*Malay Mishra**

*India's rise in the twenty-first century has resulted in renewed attention on the country, especially in the sphere of strategic thought. This focus has brought into limelight ancient India's pioneering text on polity called Kautilya's Arthashastra (KA).Contingent with that is a growing interest in exploring the relevance of KA in the contemporary world. Arthashastra, a masterpiece in its own right, is a comprehensive compendium on all matters concerning a state, including administration, law and order, economics, diplomacy, military, war, intelligence and, above all, unmissable ethics or dharma. This article is an attempt to reveal the tenets of Arthashastra in a simple form and establish their contemporary relevance, both theoretically and practically, thus restoring a rightful place to KA in the field of International Relations (IR) studies.*

India's rise in the twenty-first century has resulted in renewed attention on the country, especially in the sphere of strategic thought. Researchers across the world are constantly confronted with a lingering question as to how India would behave in the international arena in times to come when it amasses sufficient power to decisively influence world affairs. This is all the more pertinent when few of the world leaders have started calling India a rising superpower. To foreign academics, India has been a puzzle, specifically with regards to its strategic culture. The view which is widely accepted worldwide is that in fact India lacks the substance of what can be called a 'strategic culture', which in turn acts as a roadblock

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in its ambition to be a force in the world.[1] This raises some questions which need a deeper analysis.

A deeper inquiry is bound to take the reader to an ancient Indian text on state administration which has had a great, latent or implicit, influence on its strategic culture.[2] Four hundred years were remaining for Christ to be born when the *Arthashastra*—regarded as pioneering masterpiece on polity by many—was written in ancient India by a scholar named Kautilya. Now is an interesting time to (re-)invent *Arthashastra* when India is said to be 'rising', as it was during the times when Kautilya wrote this text: India was then witness to the largest-ever empire, the Mauryan Empire, in the Indian subcontinent in its entire history.[3] With a population of about 50 million people, the Mauryan Empire—extending all the way to the border of Persia and from Afghanistan to Bengal—was larger than both the Mughal and the British Empires appearing in medieval and modern history of India.[4] *Arthashastra*, written 2,300 years ago, finds both theoretical as well as practical relevance today.

## ARTHASHASTRA: A LOST TREASURE

*Arthashastra* is a comprehensive manual for a ruler or king to administer his state. It is a compendium of 15 books comprising 6,000 Sanskrit sutras covering a variety of subjects, including statecraft, law and order, economics, foreign policy, intelligence operations and war. Its comprehensiveness lies basically in two things: first, its scope which covers almost all the subjects of statecraft that a ruler can confront while entrusted with the responsibility of running a state; and second, the aspect of interconnectivity of the content which provides a wholesomeness to the approach of dealing with a state. This also means that any random reading of a concept in isolation, without juxtaposing it against the inherent values of the text, will be an injustice to the mastery with which the text was written. The first five books discuss *tantra* or internal administration; the next eight discuss *avapa* or state's foreign relations; and the balance books discuss other miscellaneous topics. It is important to understand that the first book forms the foundation of all concepts, and all later expositions should be seen in the light of it.

Further, Kautilya wrote in precise Sanskrit sutras, meaning of which becomes contingent on interpretations, at times leading to errors, especially when few sutras are highly complex having cross-references. For example, the famous saying, 'enemy's enemy is a friend'—which is attributed to Kautilya and quoted quite generously in the Western academic circles—

is only a partial, incomplete and misleading extrapolation if not revealed in connection with other references spread across Kautilya's *Arthashastra* (KA). In fact, contrary to this common saying, Kautilya expounds in the 29th sutra of the 18th chapter of the seventh book of KA that every neighbouring state is not, and cannot be, an enemy; and enemy's enemy is not always a friend:

> *Satyapamitrabhāvetasya-anātmavānnitya.apakārīśatruḥśatru.*
> *saṁhitaḥpārṣṇi.grāhovāvyasanīyātavyovyasanevāneturabhiyoktāityari.*
> *bhāvinaḥ, eka.artha.abhiprayātaḥpṛthag.artha.abhiprayātaḥsambhūya.*
> *yātrikaḥsaṁhita.prayāṇikaḥsva.artha.abhiprayātaḥsāmutthāyikaḥkośa.*
> *daṇḍayoranyatarasyakretāvikretāvādvaidhi.bhāvikaitimitra.bhāvinaḥ*[5]

The sutra exemplifies that every neighbouring state is not an enemy. For determining enemy, Kautilya says that geography is only one of the three dimensions; the other determinants being *bhavin* and *prakriti*s. Neighbouring states thus fall in three categories, *ari-bhavin*, *mitra-bhavin and bhrtya-bhavin*, where *bhavin* means 'intention/inclination' and *ari, mitra* and *bhrtya* mean hostile intent, friendly intent and being subservient, respectively.[6] Generally, neighbouring states of equal power may normally be believed to be hostile, but it is possible that some may have a friendly inclination towards the *vijigishu*—the term invented by Kautilya to refer to the ruler of the state who wants to be the conqueror—while others may be subservient, depending upon the combined power of the elements of the state which Kautilya elaborates in his theory of state. Hence, interpreting that 'enemy's enemy is friend' is wrong. Argumentatively, had the reverse been true, all the South Asian countries around India would have been her enemies/rivals.

The above-mentioned error is not restricted to the Western scholars only, many of whom may be less acquainted with the context or language of the text, but also is noticed amongst many Indian writers, mostly when there is a tendency of making references to secondary sources without holistically connecting the dots existing in *Arthashastra*. Hence, as a starting point, it can be agreed that there certainly exists a gap between what Kautilya wanted to say and what is generally interpreted.

The problem gets compounded, especially amongst the Western scholars, due to the inescapable need of translating and then contextualising the text within socio-political milieu prevalent in the fourth century BC when Kautilya wrote *Arthashastra*. This gets exemplified

when Olivelle, an Indologist, recognises KA as his toughest translational project and submits that even after a century of modern scholarship on KA, many parts of the masterpiece remain opaque.[7]

Indeed, KA is one of the most misunderstood texts in the academic circles. Numerous sutras lose their authenticity through translation, owing to various reasons: first, there is an expertise barrier between Sanskritists, who merely translate, and Western political scientists, who mainly rely on translated texts and find themselves handicapped in terms of locating the context in light of the ancient Indian political traditions. Ancient Indian political traditions in Sanskrit literature are contained in the elucidations of works like *Shantiparva* in Mahabharat, *Shookra-neeti* and Manu's *Dharamsutra*, which together make a cohesive picture of ancient India's political traditions. It also goes without saying that the translated texts, howsoever accurate they may be, remain mere 'translations'.

The KA, further, is highly theoretical and uses great amount of abstraction, which makes interpretation even tougher. Finally, KA is extensively cross-referenced, sometimes too subtly, which if missed may lead a researcher to definitely err on final inferences. This resultant 'gap' may cause incomplete, and sometimes inaccurate, commentary, which, if referenced repeatedly in subsequent scholarly works, results in vicious cycle of imprecise secondary references. Therefore, understanding KA in the right perspective forms the first step.

**Understanding *Arthashastra***

To fully understand the import of *Arthashastra*, three Sanskrit words need to be distinctly understood: *artha*, *shastra* and *arthashastra*. *Artha* in Sanskrit can have different meanings, including material well-being, goal, meaning, money, purpose, pursuit, reason, wealth, legal case, profit, self-interest and also, one of the goals of human life in Indian traditions as *artha*, dharma, *kama* and *moksha*.[8] *Shastra* in Sanskrit means science or, more precisely, 'an expert tradition of knowledge'. Hence, *arthashastra* is interpreted differently by various scholars: Kangle called it 'science of politics'; Boesche named it 'science of political economy'; Basham preferred calling it a 'treatise on polity'; Kosambi called it 'science of material gain'; and Dutt chose to call it 'science of practical life'.[9] Interestingly, the modern Indian academic discipline of economics is also referred to as *arthashastra*. In the KA, the key economic activities— 'agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade'—are covered by the term *vartta*,

which is why translating *arthashastra* as pure economics would not be appropriate.[10]

To understand Kautilya's mind on *arthashastra*, it is pertinent to contextualise it with the ancient Indian political traditions. *Dharmashastra*, the main prevalent political text of the time preceding Kautilya, prioritised dharma as the supreme goal amongst the three life goals—*artha*–dharma–*kama*—to attain *moksha*. Kautilya later forwarded a theory which made *artha* and dharma complementary. Kautilya went on to say:

> *Artha-eva pradhānah artha-mūlau dharma-kāmau*.[11]

Kautilya thus emphasised that *artha* is primary as well as material well-being, which paves the way for dharma or spiritual well-being, and both dharma and *kama* depend on the acquisition of *artha*. In the texts preceding Kautilya, like *Dharmashastra*—the supreme socio-political directive in ancient India—dharma was the foremost path, and also the gateway to *moksha*. Kautilya brought, in his classic, a sense of interdependence of *artha* with other goals of socio-political life.

It is here that the cultural understanding of the socio-political milieu will count a lot in making rightful interpretation of the *Arthashastra*. Kautilya did not relegate dharma below *artha*. He elucidated the primacy of dharma repeatedly throughout the text:

> Wealth is like a tree; its roots are dharma and the fruit is pleasure. Achieving that kind of wealth which further promotes dharma, produces more wealth and gives more pleasure is the achievement of all gains (*sarvarthasiddhi*).[12]
>
> Government by Rule of Law, which alone can guarantee security of life and welfare of the people, is, in turn, dependent on the self-discipline [dharma] of the king. According to Kautilya, security and welfare depended on rule of law and that in turn depended on dharma—the self-discipline (ethical conduct) of the king.[13]
>
> For the world, when maintained in accordance with the Vedas, will ever prosper and not perish. Therefore, the king shall never allow the people to swerve from their dharma.[14]
>
> Ever victorious and never conquered shall be that Kshatriya, who is nurtured by elite who are repository of knowledge, made prosperous by the counsels of able ministers and has, as his weapons, the precepts of the shastras.[15]
>
> For, when a dharma overwhelms dharma, the King himself will be destroyed.[16]

A king, who flouts the teachings of the Dharamshastras and the Arthashastra, ruins the kingdom by his own injustice.[17]

Therefore, in *Arthashastra*, dharma and *artha* are inherently intertwined, and the supreme 'ethical' goal of the ruler of the state is securing the well-being and economic prosperity of the kingdom and his people. He assigned the aim of attaining 'prosperity and well-being of the subject' as the dharma of the king, thereby necessitating the king to devote more time to the activities related to *artha*, the prime concern of his work, *Arthashastra*. Kautilya expected his king to be a *Raja-rishi*. This goal would become an overriding factor for his entire theory of statecraft. The discussion so far makes a suitable foundation to understand what Kautilya wrote to define *arthashastra*. According to Kautilya:

> *Manusyānam vrttirarthah manusyavatī bhūmirityarthah.*
> *Tasyāh prithivyā lābha-pālanopayah śastramarthśāstramiti.*[18]

The sutra means that the source of material well-being of man is earth, or the territory inhabited by them, thus *arthashastra* is the science concerned with the earth, wherein its protection (*palana*) and acquisition (*labha*) are essential activities. *Arthashastra*, thus, is a comprehensive practical manual for a ruler or king to administer his state.

## The 'Eigenvalue' of *Arthashastra*

Kautilya begins his work by calling his ruler as the 'sage-likeking' and outlines his aim as:

> In the happiness of the subjects, lies happiness of the king, and in what is beneficial to the subjects, his own benefit. What is dear to him is not beneficial to the king, but what is dear to the subjects is beneficial (to him).[19]

'Sage-like king' is the king who should: acquire self-control by overcoming his six enemies, namely, *kama* (lust), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *mana* (vanity), *mada* (haughtiness) and *harsha* (overjoy); cultivate his intellect by association with elders; keep a watchful eye by means of spies; bring about security and well-being by (energetic) activity; maintain the observance of their special duties (by the subjects) by carrying out his own duties; acquire discipline by receiving instruction in the sciences; attain popularity by association with what is of material advantage; and maintain proper behaviour by doing what is beneficial to them.

Thus, there emerges a set of duties of a ruler in *Arthashashtra* which includes: *rakhshan* or protection of the state from external aggression; *palana* or maintenance of order within the state; and *yogakshema* of the state or safeguarding people's welfare, prosperity, protection and peace.[20] These nuances of *yogakshema* are clearly missing in the Western discourse while defining a state and its relations in the international arena.[21] This differentiation puts KA at a much higher ethical pedestal among all the textual works dealing with the theory of state.

*Yogakshema,* as the primary duty of the king as expected by Kautilya in *Arthashastra*, should never be lost sight of while reading or interpreting *Arthashastra*. It is important to mention here one such example of misinterpretation of *Arthashastra*. This is also to elaborate how this single misinterpretation, through its repeated references in the scholarly circle, can do unwanted as well as misplaced damage to the genuine import of the text. Boesche in his research work termed Kautilya more 'Machiavellian' than Machiavelli.[22] As a layman that means that Kautilya was unethical in guiding his king who could stoop to greater degree of 'violence', which could make Machiavelli's prince look more moderate in comparison with Kautilya's king. However, this view has been strongly contested by many scholars, including those who are not Indians. One such disapproval comes from Liebig. He rejects the selective picking of isolated text from one chapter of *Arthashastra* by Boesche and juxtaposing it against the narrower prism of Machiavellian realism, thus missing Kautilyan 'eigenvalue' in Weberian terms.[23] Kautilyan 'eigenvalue' lay in its strong sense of economy and well-being of the subject.

Many see *Arthashastra* from the narrow lens of realism, a dominant theory of international relations (IR) in Western circle, which also is a wrong approach. In no way can *Arthashastra* be equated with realism, as the concept of *yogakshema*—the eigenvalue of *Arthashastra*—makes it a unique piece of work, exclusively credited to Kautilya. This uniqueness is further augmented by Kautilya's emphasis on dharma in all dealings, by not only all individuals but also by the king and high appointment holders in the state. In simple terms, Kautilya calls for a high sense of, and also high demand of, 'ethics' in all personal and professional conduct aimed at collective, all-inclusive prosperity of the kingdom. This idea of Kautilyan 'eigenvalue' makes *Arthashastra* really an exceptional piece of work, situated much beyond realism of IR theories.

For the elaborate articulation of this Kautilyan 'eigenvalue' into highly evolved and pragmatic economic guidelines for a state, Sihag calls Kautilya the true founder of economics.[24] Sihag establishes, with evidences, that what Kautilya wrote on economics is much fuller than Adam Smith's book, *The Wealth of Nations*, written 2,000 years later. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* was much more sophisticated in method, content and in carving out economics as a separate dharma-based discipline of a ruler. The *Arthashastra* makes an inquiry not only into sources of economic growth but also how to engineer them, thus leading the state to peaceful enjoyment of prosperity. Sihag argues that Adam Smith is found wanting in all these respect.

### Exploring Contemporary Relevance of *Arthashastra*

Two Kautilyan theories amongst many others will be under scrutiny: the *Saptanga* theory or Kautilya's theory of state; and the *Raja Mandala* theory on position of state in international arena, in conjunction with the concept of *shadgunya* on determining state's foreign policy.

Superficially, it may appear that since the ancient text, KA, belonged to the Kautilyan age of incessant hostilities, it no longer fits the modern realities. However, this would be an incorrect argument. In the contemporary times, technologies, capabilities and skills may have changed drastically since Kautilyan times, but human nature, politics and state behaviour do not appear to have changed.[25] The state politics and statecraft have not changed much. Menon argues that, in numerous ways, the world which we face today is akin to Kautilya's—of multiple states, of several major actors and of an uneven distribution of power. The KA is a timeless text. It does not refer to any historical geography or ruler. Interestingly, the international scene today involves similar collection of numerous states with jagged power matrix, with each striving to adjust, outrace, dominate or survive. Kangle adds that there exists today the same distrust amongst states, the same pursuit of own interests, the same efforts to secure alliances with similar cynical disregard, and also the similar kinds of state institutions.[26] Hence, KA is as relevant today as it was many years ago.

However, to establish KA's relevance, a critical analysis vis-à-vis contemporary strategic thought is also warranted. Normally, the easy and instant reaction to establish relevance of KA impels the reader/ researcher of IR to compare it with the modern IR theories of 'realism'. A random attempt is also made to see it through the lens of theory of

'social constructivism'. However, applying this lens is totally unjustified. There are reasons for such an argument: first, no knowledge is 'absolute knowledge' or 'complete truth'. The IR theory is the study of IR from a theoretical perspective; it attempts to provide a conceptual framework upon which IR can be analysed. Ole Holsti describes IR theories as acting like pairs of coloured sunglasses that allow the wearer to see only salient events relevant to the theory; for example, an adherent of realism may completely disregard an event that a constructivist might pounce upon as crucial, and vice versa.[27] The 'coloured' sunglasses do not represent 'absolute knowledge'. Hence, judging the relevance of one knowledge through the other is meaningful only when the latter is the absolute knowledge, which incidentally is not the case with modern IR theories. The same also does not find merit in the true spirit of scholarly circle. Second, the modern theories of IR, due to their 'coloured' lenses, become deficient theories, and thus do not explain all in the field of IR. Hence, this unfounded urge to 'compare-to-establish' relevance may not be a totally sound idea. The business of drawing parallel with 'deficient' theories is flawed in principle. The other way to establish relevance is by examining how well the realities of modern-day IR get explained by the Kautilyan sutras. The holistic explanation, if achieved, will make a better case for finding relevance of KA.

However, this article will cover both the approaches in establishing the relevance of KA: first, it will establish that KA is a 'unique' text on IR and its 'uniqueness' precludes it from getting equated to, and bracketed with, the modern IR theories; and second, it will explain the events as well as the modern-day 'strategic thought' in light of the KA. The article, thus, will make an attempt to restore the place that KA deserves in the scholarly field of IR.

## Contemporary Analysis of Kautilya's Theory on State: *Saptanga* Theory

Though Kautilya is best known in the Western world for his *Mandala/ Raja Mandala* theory—the theory of circle of states—which deals with the state's relations with other states, Kautilya's genius lay, first, in setting foundation of *Mandala* theory in form of *Saptanga* theory or 'doctrine of *prakriti*(s)'—the seven interrelated constituent elements of the state—and second, scientifically relating it to the concept of *shadgunya* (six fold foreign policy) and *shakti* (power) of a state to operate in international environment, which Kautilya names as *Raja Mandala* or simply

*Mandala*.[28] *Yogakshema* perpetually remains the central driving force among all these theories and concepts.

In *saptanga, sapta* means seven in Sanskrit and *anga* means body parts; hence, *saptanga* means seven body parts. As an analogy, a state can be equated to a growing organism and *prakritis* as its body parts.[29] As body parts, all seven elements are necessary for the holistic growth of a state. All play an important role; however, Kautilya, in case of handling calamities in/of statecraft, prioritised the seven *prakritis*. These *prakritis*, in their descending order of importance, are: *swamin* signifying the king or the ruler, which in modern sense can be the leadership of the state; *amatya* (councillors) representing state institutions; *janapada* signifying state resources, including territory and populace; *durg* signifying well-fortified sovereign entity; *kosa* representing treasury; *danda* signifying military and order keeping; and *mitra* representing state's allies.[30] Each preceding *prakriti* is not only more important than the succeeding one but also strengthens the latter. From the analogy, it is clear that the state's power depends upon the sound, cumulative health of interactive *prakriti*s.

It is important to note that Kautilya would never recommend following this ranking among state elements blindly. He does not take anything for granted. For him, prudence is more important than rules. Kautilya wrote: '[Lastly] a calamity which threatens to destroy all other elements shall be considered as [the most] serious, irrespective of what position the element occupies in the list of priorities.'[31]

Few more insights emerge from this interrelation of seven elements. Kautilya prioritises *kosa* (treasury)just above the *danda* (military). The subtle meaning of placing them together indicates that Kautilya was very clear, first, that they are closely interrelated and, second, that the treasury is not only more important for a state but also an enabler of the military force. If carefully studied, *yogakshema* means peaceful enjoyment of prosperity, that is, enjoying both prosperity and security together. According to Kautilya, an insecure state may be subjugated easily, and thus would be at the mercy of a foreign ruler and face exploitation. Kautilya wrote, 'Harassment by the enemy's army not only affects the whole country but also ruins it by plunder, slaughter, burning and destruction.'[32] Clearly, Kautilya believed that national security is essential to prosperity and having a good army is an important factor in the provision of national security. He also understood that prosperity is essential to national security since an impoverished country cannot have

the resources to defend its security. Thus, he believed that prosperity and national security are interdependent, that is, one could not have one without the other. India's humiliating defeat in 1962 against China is an apt example to clarify that point.

However, *danda* is not only military in Kautilayn terms. The Sanskrit word *danda* has numerous meanings which include: order keeping, royal sceptre, rod of punishment, discipline enforcer, punishment, fine, force and army.[33] In return of the social contract between ruler and the subject, Kautilya authorises to the ruler a tool called *danda*—a legitimate, measured and 'just' coercive authority—to rule the state. Use of *danda* in *prakriti* has a similar meaning. Kautilya's sutra further explains that

> administration of Danda constitutes the science of politics, having for its purpose the acquisition of (things) not possessed, the preservation of (things) possessed, the augmentation of (things) preserved and the bestowal of (things) augmented on a worthy recipient. On it (danda) is dependent the orderly maintenance of worldly life.[34]

Further, a unique insight is obtained from Kautilya incorporating *mitra* or ally as an integral element of a state. This is an amazing inclusion by any standard and is not seen in any modern definition of a state. Consideration of an ally as a source of state power is exclusive to Kautilya's theory. Interestingly, making allies is so pragmatic and relevant in modern-day international environment that it can be vividly noticed in initiatives by even the most powerful nations of the world today who are vying for building allies in places even far-off. Example of the United States (US) reaching out to make new allies in Asia-Pacific and similar exercise by other nations in the Gulf region aptly exemplify the importance of allies in contributing to the initiator's national power. This insight on ally makes KA a timeless masterpiece on polity.

Kautilya's mastery lies not only in just enumerating the *prakriti*s but also in devising ways for their fruitful manifestation in building state power. In pursuit of the same, Kautilya first proposes the desired 'excellences' to be possessed by each *prakriti* for attaining a healthy 'organic state', and then discusses means to facilitate augmentation of each *prakriti* to reach its respective 'excellences'. As Kautilya does not take anything for granted, it can be argued that one could have the most qualified *prakritis* but may not funnel their energies to attain meaningful power. Kautilya provides means to do that and describes how to

motivate them to do their best, or in other words, how to transform ideal *prakritis* into *shakti*. It is in this exploration where one of the most original contributions of Kautilya lies. He never recommends use of force or coercion. He has devised various incentives to elicit the best out of each element: both financial and non-financial ones; the former includes decent compensation and fairness in giving awards and the latter includes persuasion and emphasis on moral duty or dharma, which is quintessential in all Kautilyan invoking. He puts emphasis on qualifications as well as motivation to achieve the highest possible efficiency.

Kautilya is pragmatic in his approach in calculating the cumulative national power. If, on the one hand, he defines the excellences of each *prakriti*, on the other, he warns the king about the *vyasana(s)*—the nemesis of each *prakriti*.[35] *Vyasana* translates as calamity in English. Kautilya discusses *vyasana* for each *prakriti* in detail, and also fixes the priorities of *vyasanas*. *Vyasanas* have been identified as of two kinds: divine and man-made. Kautilyan sutra expounds that in the interests of the prosperity of the country, a king should be vigilant in foreseeing the possibility of calamities, try to avert them before they arise, overcome those which happen, remove all obstructions to economic activity and prevent loss of revenue to the state. Priority of saving *prakritis* from *vyasanas* is the same as that of *prakritis* enumerated earlier, that is, save treasury before army; fortifications before treasury; resources before fortifications; and so on. Kautilya expounds that *vyasanas* cause decay of the state, and therefore advises the ruler toforesee and obviate them in order to augment his power matrix.

It is the cumulative product of *prakritis* which provides *shakti* or power to a state. Talking of power of a state, or 'national power' in other words, KA identifies three *shaktis*: *utsahashakti*, *prabhavashakti* and *mantrashakti*. *Utsahashakti* stands for the power to provide drive, energy and direction to the state and its elements, and mainly relates to the ruler or the king. In modern day, it can be equated to the leadership of a state. *Prabhavashakti* stands for the power to generate 'effects' in favour of state, and relates to economy and military power of a state. Finally, *mantrashakti* stands for the power to influence, attract and induce co-opting. In contemporary sense, it relates to good counsel and diplomacy.[36] Interestingly, Kautilya rates *mantrashakti* as the strongest and the most important of the three. Thus, his proclivity to employ the power to counsel, influence, attract and co-opt other states in international affairs should not be lost sight of. Kautilya elaborates on this *shakti* and says that

an arrow discharged by an archer may kill one person, or maynot kill, but intellect operated by a wise man would kill even child in the womb.[37] However, Kautilyan powers do not act in isolation. The three powers together are applied in varying manner to produce the comprehensive national power (CNP).

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**CONTEMPORARY ANALYSIS OF *RAJAMANDALA*: NEITHER 'SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM' NOR 'REALISM'**

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Armed with these powers, emanating from seven *prakritis*, the organic body of the state is now positioned by Kautilya in the midst of its neighbouring states to make choices for foreign policies, which should be chosen rationally and not constructed on the whims of the ruler. If the policy is wisely chosen in accordance with the Kautilyan sutras, giving due weight to the 'calculation' of the relative standing of the *prakritis* of the states—better acknowledged as the cumulative power—coupled with consideration of their position and intention (*bhavin*), Kautilya claims that the policy would succeed, the state would progress and would further facilitate augmentation of the *prakritis* of the state. This intertwined cycle, thus, continues. This dynamic relationship between *shakti* or power and progress when extended to neighbouring states through application of right foreign policy is called *Mandala* or *Raja Mandala* or theory of 'circle of the states'.

The theory of 'circle of the states', as it is widely known, is actually a misnomer and leads *Mandala* theory to be misunderstood. It is often explained with the lens of the IR theory of realism and sometimes, cursorily, with that of 'social constructivism'. Both need to be analysed. However, understanding *Mandala* in the right perspective is the first essential.

### Understanding *Mandala* Theory

*Mandala* concerns a state's ever-changing interaction with 12 different categories of neighbouring states. It is not fixed or rigid as commonly believed. It is always in flux and dynamic. The relations are not dictated solely by the geography, but also by the cumulative state of *prakritis* and the *bhavin* of the state, as pronounced in the Kautilyan theory of the state.

Therefore, as product of the three dynamic factors, the neighbouring states around *vijigishu*—the would-be-conqueror—fall in either of the 12 categories defined by Kautilya, but at the origin lies the *vijigishu*.

The *vijigishu* is a Kautilyan invention. *Vijigishu* means the seeker-after-conquest or the aspiring and ambitious one. Every king is not *vijigishu*. The king endowed with personal 'excellences' and those of his material constituents, having seat of a good policy, would be able to qualify to be a *vijigishu*. *Vijigishu* emerges if the Kautilyan calculations, including that of *prakritis*, their excellences and *vyasanas*, so dictate.

Therefore, based on these Kautilyan 'calculations', the forms which the neighbouring states can acquire are: *ari* (adversary); *mitra* (friend/ally); *ari-mitra* (adversary's ally); *mitra-mitra* (ally's ally); *ari-mitra-mitra* (friend of adversary's ally); *parshnigraha* (adversary-in-the-rear); *aakranda* (ally-in-the-rear); *parshnigraha-asara* (ally of *parshnigraha*); *aakranda-asara* (ally of *aakranda*); *madhyama* (middle king); and *udasina* (neutral king).[38] The 12th one is the *vijigishu* himself, around which these forms can take place.

**Not Social Constructivism**

Recently, there has been an attempt to term this identity creation of neighbours as a product of 'social constructivism'. This needs a closer scrutiny. Kautilya is clear with his 'calculations' on state and thus, in accordance with his theory, emergence of *vijigishu* and all other 12 identities of the neighbours around him cannot happen unless so dictated by Kautilyan 'calculations'. It cannot be 'constructed', neither on whims nor ideationally nor even through social discourse. The identity of the state evolves from a sound methodological framework. This methodological framework, Liebig argues, is provided by Kautilya by submitting key methodological and theoretical ideas and concepts for intelligence analysis, assessment, estimates and strategic planning.[39] This rational methodology, and not the whims and fancy of the ruler, sets the stage for making a rational correlation vis-à-vis seven *prakritis*, and hence the aggregate power, of the neighbouring states. Thus, based on a methodological framework, one ascertains the twelve kinds of 'relational identities' to the neighbours in the Mandala theory by Kautilya. Hence, the notion of so-called 'identity creation' of *vijigishu* and its relational identity with the neighbouring states in 12 forms as a form of 'social constructivism theory' of Western school of IR would be a fallacy and a naïve attempt to interpret Kautilyan concepts, as is argued by Shahi.[40] Hence, by no means is the identity construction a 'social constructivism' as there is neither any place for personal 'whims' of the ruler nor any

contribution of ideational 'social discourse' in Kautilyan calculations in deriving identities of states in *Mandala*.

A finer scrutiny reveals more of this interpretation. A lot lies in the names given by Kautilya, and thus these distinct forms, though having similar meanings, cannot be equated with each other or clubbed together as single category of *ari* or *mitra* or something else, as argued by Shahi.[41] The point of great subtlety is that the qualities, and the utility of, for example, *ari-mitra* is different from *mitra* and that of *ari-mitra-mitra*. Kautilya takes due care of not clubbing all *mitra*(s) as one single category. Further, another kind of ally, *aakranda*, in Sanskrit means 'crying out for help' (from *vijigishu)* and *asara* means 'moving forward' to helping someone, and consequently, a*akranda* and *aakranda-asara* have different undertones than *mitra*.[42] Therefore, any superficial clubbing of categories will be a reflection of incomplete application of Kautilyan thought that arises out of ignorance.

Moreover, in KA, the friends/allies are of two kinds: natural and acquired; the former being the better.[43] Kautilyan sutra (KA 7:8–9) expounds that the ruler whose territory was separated from that of another ruler by the territory of an enemy and whose friendship had come down from father and grandfather was a natural friend. The best kind of friend, according to Kautilya, was he who was constant, noble, straightforward, and whose friendship had been inherited from father and grandfather. A ruler whose friendship was courted for the sake of the protection of life and property was an acquired friend.

Similarly, the *parshnigraha*, *madhyama and udasina* represent products of deep Kautilyan calculations and, again, cannot be 'constructed'. *Parshnigraha* in Sanskrit means the 'heel-catcher' and represents the neighbour state who opportunistically would assault on *vijigishu's* state once *vijigishu* undertakes an expedition. Thus, Kautilya lays emphasis on identifying such a state based on his methodology of analysing the seven *prakritis* of the neighbouring states. *Madhyama* is the one which has equal cumulative state powers of seven *prakritis*, and also borders both the *vijigishu* and the *ari*. The middle king is powerful enough to handle either of them singly and therefore, maintains a middling policy with the two. The neutral king, *udasina*, is essentially too powerful or far-located to be bothered, and thus remains indifferent. This concludes that these identity creations are not 'social constructivism'.

**Nor Realism**

Kautilya interprets *Mandala* as an eternal flux of interaction of the12 primary kings, each distinctly with their fluid 'complex of states'— involving 72constituent elements in total, with each element striving for its defined 'excellences'.[44] By what fathomable means this state of flux can be called a 'circle' interposed against the realist notions remains a question.

In fact, *Mandala* is neither about 'fixed' circles of states nor about neighbours being enemies and their enemies being friends. This notion together wrongly conjures up an image of perpetual enmity, which suits realists to make their point. What this misplaced use of words misses out is the Kautilyan strategic thought. This misperceived idea of *Mandala* focuses more on the physical arrangement of the states in circle and overlooks completely the background content of Kautilya's theories: first, the eigenvalue of *yogakshema*; the emphasis on organic structure of a state; interrelated *prakritis* with their strive for the defined 'excellences'; the emphasis on economic prosperity; and all-pervading binding of Kautilyan ethics—the dharma. Second, it misses the Kautilyan methodology for 'pre-selected' choice of foreign policies rationally derived on the basis of Kautilyan 'calculations'.[45] Third, it further misses the primacy of *mantrashakti* and, fourth, but most noticeably, the place of *mitra*— the ally—as an inherent element of the state. The original Kautilyan message, thus, is left to be misconstrued only as an image of 'balance of power', which readily fits into the already existing designs of modern-day realism. Resultantly, though inaccurately, *Mandala* becomes labelled as a strand of realism.

A holistic perspective would dispel the idea of bracketing KA as realist. One such example to make a holistic picture lies in understanding the Kautilyan concept of *sham* (peace) and *vyayam* (activity/industriousness). Actually, Kautilya identifies *sham* and *vyayam* of a state as the foundation for its foreign policies while acting in *Mandala*. Kautilya expects his king to utilise, as well as produce, *sham* and *vyayam* (he also lays down, in detail, the ways and means to achieve it) for augmentation of *prakritis* so that the selected policy leads to *yogakshema*. The policy that achieves *yogakshema* is a desirable policy; the one that does not is not desirable and should be abandoned, argues Kautilya.[46]

The second example lies in illustration of the 'place' of *mitra*. A *mitra* or ally is generally regarded in the modern realist definition, focusing on the balance of power, only as an outside actor with whom the state has

allied to adjust the power dynamics. In the 'anarchical' world of realism, every state, even an ally, is a different unit and seen as a competitor. However, a *mitra* in Kautilyan definition finds place within *saptanga*—constituents of a state—well before Kautilya initiates his discussion on devising the definition on foreign policies.

Speaking of *shaktis* provides another illustration in building a holistic picture. It is the *mantrashakti*—the highest *shakti*—which plays an important role in getting a *mitra*. Furthermore, the relegation of *balashakti* below *mantrashakti* before theorising foreign policies is yet another exclusive insight. *Bala* or army in *Saptanga* theory is also placed below *kosa* or treasury, which highlights the strong sense of Kautilyan eigenvalue. Thus, if holistically examined, his emphasis for *yogakshema,* inclusion of *mitra*/ally as an integral element of state, placing *danda*/army below *kosa*/treasury and proclivity for *mantrashakti* goes beyond the lens of modern IR theory of realism.

Furthermore, the definition of 'power' of a state in Kautilyan sense is also totally different than 'power' in the realist sense. Modern realist power includes primarily military and economic powers, while with *Saptanga* theory, Kautilya transcends the idea of such realist state power. He states that beside *danda*, the state has six distinct power factors at its disposal, which together as seven *prakritis* decide how much 'power' the state has.[47] Kautilya counts each *prakriti* as a good contributor to building CNP.

Lastly, the realist interpretations of *Mandala* become further untenable in the light of Kautilya's concluding remarks on *Mandala* wherein he outlines the aim of the 'power' of a state by saying:

> *Balam śakti; sukhamsiddhi*

which means that *shakti* needs to be applied to attain the 'success' called *sukham* (happiness) of the subjects of the state, signifying strong overtones of *yogakshema*.[48] The realist aim of 'balance of power' is virtually absent from the aim outlined by Kautilya. Therefore, judging KA through the pre-set lens of realism is unfounded.

### Contemporary Analysis of *Shadgunyas*

*Shadgunya* attaches newer dimension to the *Mandala* theory and takes it further away from realms of modern IR theories. Since *Mandala* is characterised by eternal flux, it changes dynamically, producing opportunities for some, while exposing some others. The 'power

equation'—as in Kautilyan terms and not in the typical realist sense—among the states keeps fluctuating: foes become allies, allies become foes; middle/neutral kings may disappear or diffuse to take new forms; and fluidity rules dynamism. To exploit this fluidity, Kautilya introduces '*Shadgunyas*: The Sixfold Foreign Policy'. Kautilya decrees: 'He who sees the six measures of policy as being interdependent in this manner (as detailed by Kautilya in his book No 7), plays, as he pleases, with the rival kings tied by the chains of his intellect.'[49]

*Shadgunya* proposes six measures for dealing with the neighbouring states. Most simplistically, though not fully, they stand for the following: *sandhi* symbolises 'making peace'; *vigraha* denotes 'hostilities'; *asana* represents 'remaining stationary'; *yana* implies 'marching/preparing for war'; *samshraya* entails 'seeking protection/coalitions'; and *dvaidibhava* embodies 'dual policy', which few also interpret as 'collaboration despite competition'.[50]

In the light of *shadgunya*, Kautilyan *Mandala* can now be defined as the dynamic application of *shakti*/powers of a state emanating from its *prakritis* by *vijigishu* (would-be-conqueror) on 12 ever-changing types of neighbouring states, utilising *shadgunya* (six-fold foreign policy) to acquire the status of a universal authority, which is named by Kautilya as *chakravartin*.[51] Thus, there is a strong connection between *prakritis* and *shadgunyas*, as 'correlation between cumulative powers of *prakritis* of states *preselects, if not determines*, which of the six *shadgunyas* is to be chosen in foreign policy of a state', argues Liebig.[52]

However, *shadgunya* is not that easy to be understood as it looks. For example, the first *shadgunya*, *sandhi*, is not all about 'making peace'. Mark McClish argues that *sandhi* essentially signifies non-aggression pacts and strategic partnerships.[53] Both are given due importance by Kautilya in providing manoeuvring space to a state to augment its own strategic interests and thus optimise its own *prakritis*. Further distinguishing between the two, McClish identifies sutra KA 7:4.19 to be the 'transition point' as that is where Kautilya leaves discussing non-aggression pacts and starts exploring strategic partnerships or alliances (*samvaya*) elaborately, and continues so for the next 10 chapters. Kautilya also incorporates the power of ethics or morality while discussing alliance building. Out of various kinds of alliance making, he ranks the alliances based solely on 'word/honour' as the most preferred.[54] This unique invoking of morality with a prolonged focus on 'alliance-making' form of *sandhi* is of greater interest to modern interpreters such

as Olivelle and McClish. It is this uniqueness that takes KA further away from the modern-day IR theories. It is difficult to imagine the realist concept of 'balance of power' with 'honour-bound' Kautilyan morality.

To assist execution of *shadgunya*, Kautilya introduces four *upayas* (tactics). These, in increasing order of difficulty, are *sama*, *dana*, *bheda* and *danda*. *Sama* stands for conciliatory approach, *dana* for placating with rewards and gifts, *bheda* means sowing dissension, and *danda* involves using 'force', including its various forms like coercion or sanctions.[55] Dikshitar explains that *upayas* can be used singly or in combination: a total of 30 different combinations.[56] He explains that it is easier to employ an *upaya* earlier in order than a later one. For example, placating with gifts is twice as hard as conciliation, sowing dissension three times as hard and use of 'force' four times. 'Force' also signifies waging wars, on which Kautilya brings greater theoretical uniqueness.

## Kautilya on Wars

Kautilya is very clear in his 'calculations' vis-à-vis wars and states:

> 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.[57]

However, Kautilyan genius, writing about 2,300 years ago, comes in categorising 'wars' and 'victories' in three categories each.

First, according to Kautilya, wars are of three types: *prakashyuddha*, *kutayuddha,* and *tusnimyuddha*.[58] Kautilya set general rules for them. When the *vijigishu* is superior in strength, and the season and terrain are favourable, he should resort to *prakashyuddha* or 'open warfare'. If the *vijigishu* is not superior to enemy, and the terrain and season are unfavourable, *kutayuddha* is recommended. *Kutayuddha* is 'concealed warfare' fought using *kuta* or intellect. *Kutayuddha* also means fighting psychologically so as to induce submission of enemy's will to one's own. This also includes tactical endeavours like attacking when the enemy is vulnerable and feigning retreat and drawing him into battle. *Tusnimyuddha* is described as 'silent war' using discreet means even when there is no noticeable conflict between states.

Second, as regards to 'victories' in wars, Kautilya proposes three kinds of conquests, based on the intent of the aggressor. They are *dharmavijay*,

*lobhavijay* and *asuravijay*. In *dharmavijay* (conquest with righteousness), the aggressor, in pursuit of victory, contends with mere obeisance by the vanquished. In *lobhavijay* (conquest with greed, for profit), one satisfies by looting/acquiring material, land and wealth. And in *asuravijay* (demoniacal conquest, of annihilation), one satisfies himself only by being demoniacal and slaughtering inhabitants.[59] A cursory scan over world events today reflects them all, in small or great measures. Hence, Kautilya warns the king to identify the aggressor's intent of conquest and then wisely chose his policy of *shadgunya* in response.

Overall, it can be said that in KA, *Saptanga* theory is fundamental to state and statecraft. Other important import from KA can be summarised in the following points:first, the capacity of state is defined by seven *prakritis*; raisond'état of a state is optimisation of *prakritis*; and aggregate of *prakritis* is state's power that determines which foreign policy (*shadgunya*) is appropriate policy. Second, by inference, an appropriate policy is the one which helps consolidate *saptanga/prakritis*. Finally, it can be inferred from the said rule that any violation of this Kautilyan rule means a faulty foreign policy or *shadgunya*, which means violation of *prakriti* model, which means deterioration of *prakritis* of a state, which, finally, means decline of a state. How modern world reflects the similar behaviour would be no surprise to Kautilya, had he been alive today!

## EXPLORING KA's RELEVANCE BEYONDTHE MODERNIR THEORIES

The root of Kautilyan model is the *Saptanga* theory of seven *prakritis*. With *saptanga* or seven *prakriti*s, Kautilya provides a much fuller explanation of what constitute a state as compared with what is prevalent otherwise. The most widely accepted formulation of the criteria of statehood in international law, Shaw argues, is laid out in:

> Article 1 of the Montevideo Convention on Rights and Duties of States which states that the state as an international person should possess the following qualifications: (a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory;(c) government; and (d) capacity to enter into relations with other states.[60]

According to Buzan, a state has three interlinked components: physical base; institutional expression; and a binding idea to sustain competition.[61] If compared cursorily, it is evident that Kautilya's *janapada* (territory, inhabitants and resources) and *durg* (well-fortified entity)

provide the physical base; *amatya* (ministers) and *danda* (order-keeping sceptre) provide the institutional expression; and *swamin* (leadership), with its legitimacy and powers, provides the binding idea to sustain the competition of the states. However, as said, this remains a cursory event.

On the other hand, *Saptanga* model is much more complete and effectively pragmatic in expression of state. The inclusion of economic and ethical eigenvalue, welfare value of *yogakshema*, provision of directionality to the state being guided by *swamin's* self-ethics, the importance attached to the *utsahashakti* of leadership, the defined 'excellences' of each element/*prakriti*, the pronounced place of *kosa* (treasury) as an element of state with its priority fixed in Kautilyan order, all together make the Kautilyan definition of state much more comprehensive. Enumeration of *mitra* as a distinct element—the seventh *prakriti*—of state takes the Kautilyan definition of state to even much greater depths from the angle of pragmatism.

Further, the Kautilyan model also provides a holistic as well as comprehensive approach to assess the 'power of state', which in modern day is framed as the concept of CNP.[62] Most fundamentally, the Kautilyan CNP emerges from the good health of seven *prakritis* of state. The ruler is advised to optimise each *prakriti* to strive to attain respective 'excellences'. This manifests in Kautilya's three *shaktis*, which, Coates and Caton argue, bears a striking similarity with Nye's 'soft/hard power' concept: *mantrashakti* is nothing but soft power; *prabhavashakti* is hard power; and over and above it, Kautilya caters for yet another dimension of *utsahashakti* to provide the driving force to direct the other two together with a firm, focused energy.[63] The original thought of *shakti* constructed 2,300 years ago, including *utsahashakti's* driving force, finds relevance even today. The genre of present-day national leaders like that of China, India and Japan represent Kautilyan *swamins*, and their *utsahashakti's* manifestation is the hallmark of rising China, India and Japan respectively.[64]

Further, Kautilya, by including *mitra* as the seventh *prakriti*, could see the viability of alliances as an extension of inherently produced national power. Great powers of the world cannot think of extending their influence/powers across the globe without having *mitra*(s) even in the contemporary world. However, having *mitra*—an asset so important externally—as an integral element of state as one of the seven *prakritis* is the unique invention of Kautilya. This kind of insight is absent in

all parallel demonstrations in the modern definition of state, and thus makes Kautilyan definition much fuller and more pragmatic.

Similarly, the *Mandala* theory too explains the modern strategic thought much more pragmatically. Modern-day *vijigishu* too, generally, demandsno physical annexation of territory; what is rather more desired is subservience or allegiance by other states; what he wishes to expand is his sphere of influence—the power circle. As Kautilya's *vijigishu* limited his expansion to his *chakravartinkshetra* (area), today's rising *vijigishus* are also more inclined to keep themselves as regional *vijigishu*s and dominate their regions. *Chakravartinkshetra* for Kautilya's *vijigishu* in KA was Indian subcontinent. Chandragupta Maurya restricted his expansion only to his *chakravartinkshetra*. If seen with a critical eye, KA's concept was more of uniting the subcontinent than expanding, but was 'regional' in approach.[65] *Mandala* thus, in one way, is 'regional' in approach, where the 'regions' bear some kind of pre-existing uniting sentiment within. Comparatively, Buzan's 'regional security complexes'—based on the hypotheses that 'security' does not travel far in distance and 'security complexes' are restricted by geography—thence become modern *mandala*(s).[66] The endeavour for geopolitical dominance in South China Sea by China, in South Asia by India, in East China Sea by both Japan and China and in the Middle East by Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia are examples of regional *vijigishus*.

All *vijigishus*, in this dynamic world politics, are increasingly courting newer *mitra/*ally—or *mitra-mitra/*ally's ally—to form alliances and partnerships using the tenets of *shadgunya* theory. Few resort to *samshraya* (coalition/alliance), like in the case of Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); few embrace *sandhi* (peace alliances/treaty) like China–Japan and China–Russia; and few are playing *dvaidibhava* (dual policy), like Pakistan seeking China's support to counter India; while most interestingly, in all these cases, the US fits the role of being a *udasina* by Kautilyan standards.

Kautilyan *shadgunya* of *dvaidibhava* or dual policy is seen in more than one manifestation in the contemporary world. More commonly, it is agreed to be seeking help of one state to act against another, which means peace with one to initiate hostilities against another. But here comes a need to dissect the Sanskrit word. *Dvaidibhava* has two Sanskrit words in it, *dvaidi* + *bhava*, which means two + intentions. So, it can also mean having a twofold aim beneath outwardly pretentions by state: demonstrating feeling of friendship 'overtly' but harbouring 'covert'

feeling of hostility against the same state. In another manifestation of *dvaidibhava*, this two-intention theory can also be interpreted in a positive way, which means a policy that aims for 'collaboration despite competition'. For example, today, China and India both engage each other collaboratively, despite being competitors in various fields in the region. China and India thus are bound in a state of 'collaboration despite competition'. Policy of 'collaboration despite competition' between India and China is *dvaidibhava*. These manifestations are not surprising to any keen reader of world affairs.

Further, a look at the world affairs indicates that the world has become a web of influence circles of *vijigishus*, where status of actors is perpetually in flux: friends turn foes; foes turn friends; bystanders become participants; and participants may turn neutral or antagonists. This contemporary flux dynamics shows that Kautilya's *shadgunya*s are very much active even in the contemporary world.

As regards to the relevance of the four *upayas*, there is a remarkable resemblance of it with Morgenthau's model for balancing power which talks of four methods: first, 'divide and rule' equates with sowing dissension or *bheda*; second, 'giving compensation' equates to placating with rewards and gifts or *dana*; third, 'making alliances' equates to adopting a conciliatory approach or *sama*; and lastly, 'using armaments' equates to using force or *danda*.[67] Whether Morgenthau came first or Kautilya is not the real question; the real question is the applicability of *upayas*. There exist many contemporary examples of the four *upayas*, like all four *upayas* have been utilised by the world actors in dealing with North Korea: conciliation process (*sama*); monetary incentives (*dana*); dissensions (*bheda*); and economic sanctions (*danda*). *Danda* in the form of blockades or sanctions has also been implemented. A successful application of *upayas* is also evident in the latest resolving of the case of Iran imbroglio, where careful use of *sama–dama–bheda–danda* has seemingly led to an amicable solution, thus to the fruition of policy methods in application.

Similar analogy for relevance can be drawn between the modern definitions of wars and Kautilya's categories of wars. Asymmetric warfare may be a new term in modern studies of warfare, but its tenets can easily be identified as 'subset' of Kautilyan definition of *kuta yuddha*. *Kutayuddha* involves a war where emphasis is not on the muscle power of the army, as in *prakashyuddha*, but on *kuta*, the intellect. The *kuta* may be employed in various manners in defeating even a militarily powerful

enemy. It aims to overpower the opponent by using 'mind against minds'. Hence, modern terms like 'indirect approach' by Liddell Hart, manoeuvre warfare, asymmetric warfare and guerrilla warfare form subsets of *kuta yuddha*.

However, it is the third category of Kautilyan wars—*tusnimyuddha*—which is the unique contribution of Kautilya to the theory of warfare. Largely, *tusnimyuddha* remains a puzzle for the interpreters, though many interpret it as 'silent war'. Interestingly, *tusnimyuddha* is finding theoretical acknowledgement in the contemporary world due to the experiences of the real world in what saboteurs do, what intelligence operatives do and what is contained in wars like Pakistan's proxy war against India.[68] Arguably, cyberwars also are no different from silent wars. Kautilya distinctly recognised the use of (mis-)information too as an organised toll of war; hence, it would not be wrong to see Kautilya as the father of information warfare.[69] The KA under the operations of *tusnimyuddha* vividly covers propaganda, disinformation, deception and use of secret intelligence machinery.

For tusnim-yuddha, Kautilya provides for a highly evolved intelligence system as an arm of the state. The brilliance of this intelligence system is acknowledged by Liebig, and he, for the same reason, goes on to recognize KA as the pioneering text on intelligence.[70] He elaborates that the ideas underlying modern intelligence are very much present in KA as Kautilya provides key methodologies and theoretical concepts for intelligence analysis, assessment, estimates and strategic planning. Kautilya's work and Sherman Kent's work bear 'structural homology', though the latter is regarded as the father of modern intelligence.[71] Kautilyan intelligence structure has elaborate, scientific system of intelligence collection, analysis and assessment—based only on discursive deliberation—and leads directly into strategic planning relevant at grand strategy level, if seen from the contemporary eye. It bears noticeable similarity with that of the modern intelligence tools. Thus, Kautilya's 'intelligence'—which he refers to as 'pre-knowledge'—is highly relevant in the modern-day grand strategising.

According to Kautilya, 'pre-knowledge' forms the foundation of grand strategy. In fact, KA's chapter called, 'Pacification of the Conquered Territory', has great relevance in terms of appropriating grand strategy based on pre-knowledge. In the contemporary world, for example, it gets amply demonstrated in the case of Iraq post 2003. Iraq War of 2003 was a success, but the post-war strategy at large has been a failure.

Kautilya said, 'When people are impoverished, they become greedy; when they are greedy, they become disaffected; when disaffected, they either go to the enemy or kill their ruler themselves.'[72] Further, Kautilya provides many insights with contemporary relevance, applicable in post-war scenario, like Iraq/Afghanistan, through the following stratagems:[73]

> After gaining new territory, the king should cover the enemy's faults with his own virtues, his virtues with double-virtues; he should carry out what is agreeable and beneficial to the subjects by doing his own duty as laid down; he should do as promised, for, he who does not keep his promise becomes unworthy of trust for his own and other people, as also he whose behaviour is contrary to that of the subjects, hence he should adopt a similar character, dress, language and behaviour as the subjects; he should further show the same devotion in festivals in honour of the deities of the country, festive-gatherings and sportive amusements as do his subjects; and he should honour all hermitages, and make grants to men distinguished in learning, speech and piety, and render help to the distressed, the helpless and the diseased.

These stratagems reverberate in form of modern-day concepts like 'conflict resolution', 'conflict termination' and 'stability operations', with equal, if not more, importance as they were to Kautilya's generation.

### KA in Indian Strategic Thought

As far as Indian strategic thought is concerned, Liebig argues that there persists a latent influence of 'Kautilyan thought' in modern India.[74] Liebig supports his argument by using Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' and its connection with 'strategic culture'.[75] He also argues that there is a perceptible 'comeback', in re-energised form, of Kuatilyan thought in the Indian think tanks now. Former National Security Advisor, Menon, also credits the roots of Indian political rationalism to Kautilya.[76] Kautilya's *shadgunya*-based foreign policy has manifested in various forms in modern India. Not long ago, India's response to terrorist attack on its Parliament in 2001, by mobilisation of troops on border under code name 'Operation PARAKRAM', reflected *yana* of *shadgunya*.[77] India launched Operation PARAKRAM in which the entire military machinery was mobilised—in *yana* posture—to the border and kept on a short notice to launch attack. The operation lasted for approximately one year and the military was pulled back later backed by diplomatic manoeuvres. Non-alignment movement (NAM)—and many a times, current Indian

international predispositions for strategic autonomy—reflects *asana/* remaining uninvolved. *Asana* is a well-thought policy decision in which, after weighing merits and demerits, a state makes a conscious decision not to get involved (remaining stationary). It is a kind of wait-and-watch policy, which ultimately, in some ways, ensures unaffected development of own *prakritis*, and hence augmentation of state's power.

Talking of *mandala*, there emerges an interesting insight. India's ostensible disinterest beyond the Indian subcontinent bears striking similarity with Kautilya's *chakravartin kshetra*. India's disinterested outlook beyond mainland generally invites a label of being called a 'reluctant power'. However, it has within it an underlying effect of Kautilyan thought of *vijigishu*'s *chakravartin kshetra*, which limits itself to the geographical boundaries of the Indian subcontinent.[78] Will it be right to call it a 'regional' *vijigishu*? Whatever name it may assume, but curiously it is nothing but the latent influence of India's ancient strategic culture—the 'habitus'.

To add to it further, interestingly, a new term called 'maritime *mandala*' to describe strategic transactions in Southeast Asia has appeared recently.[79] It discusses India's three maritime *mandala*s: first, the immediate *mandala* (China and Pakistan); followed by intermediate *mandala* comprising East Africa, the Persian Gulf, Central Asia and Southeast Asia; and the outer *mandala* comprising Japan, Russia and the US. Though this invention remains debatable, the reflection of Kautilyan thought in strategic discourse cannot be ignored.[80]

Lastly, an example of applying Kautilyan thought to a strategic discourse concerning India's neighbourhood amply demonstrates the extended influence of KA in the strategic thought obtaining in the Indian subcontinent. Kautilyan constructs in contemporary South Asia have been applied empirically by Sachin More in determining how 'acting in violation' of Kautilyan methodology in choosing policies results in deterioration of *prakritis* of a state.[81] Sachin More, in his study, places Pakistan as *vijigishu* and explains how Pakistan's choice of inappropriate *shadgunya*—placing inordinately high emphasis on *vigraha* and *dvaidibhava* towards India, and thus increasing its military strength—resulted in 'predictable' decline, as calculable by Kautilyan methodology. He argues that Pakistan may seem to have accomplished the geostrategic goal which it defined for itself, while making a wrong choice of 'outward' policy—of parity with India—but what ensued has been the deterioration of the state of *prakritis* of Pakistan internally,

which spirals to make her a much weaker state, holistically. Primacy of *danda* (military) over other *prakritis*—which is in violation of *Saptanga* theory—is now costing Pakistan prosperity.

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CONCLUSION

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In conclusion, it can be said that KA is a timeless masterpiece in the field of IR and deserves to be restored to its rightful place in history. Talking of prevalent dominant theories of IR, Amitav Acharya argues that the dominant Western source of IR thinking is not just Westphalian, but also classical Mediterranean, and the world is yet to be exposed to the theorising from Sumerian, Egyptian, Chinese or Indian pasts, stuck as one is with the idea of Kautilya being an Indian Machiavelli, rather than Machiavelli being a Euro-Mediterranean Kautilya.[82]

The rightful place is not merely about reversing the idea of Kautilya being an Indian Machiavelli, but more about the holistic appreciation of KA, without missing its 'eigenvalue'. Kautilya's emphasis on *yogakshema*, economy, *prakritis* as foundation of *mandala*, power of *mitra*/allies and holistic interpretation of *shadgunyas* in foreign policy cannot be ignored for long.

Kautilya's field was grand strategy. This article establishes the relevance of his concepts in the contemporary world. It also establishes that KA is beyond the modern IR theories of realism, or social constructivism, and cannot be equated with either. Further, many modern concepts are found to be more sophisticatedly organised in the 2,300-years-old text of KA. The modern concept of CNP is a replica/version of *prakritis* model; three *shaktis* model exemplifies present-day model of soft/hard power. Kautilya's analysis of which states are natural allies and which are inevitable enemies reverberates even today. *Mandala* theory elaborately explains the behaviour of many regional *vijigishus*. The patterns observed in plethora of alliances and peace treaties reflect the use of *shadgunyas*, while the four *upayas* model echoes what Morgenthau suggested for balance of power. Modern-day asymmetric wars too mirror war theories of KA. For India's contemporary strategic thought too, the article establishes KA's relevance not only in spirit but also in practice.

Kautilya was not only a theorist but also a practitioner, who mentored the making of the biggest-ever empire in the Indian subcontinent. Hence, his masterpiece, if correctly interpreted, can be of considerable use in the IR world, as Brown argues:

The extraordinary thoroughness of Kautilya's work, its eminent inductiveness and practical character, its unflinching logic and heedlessness of adventitious moral or religious standards, and its wide range of subjects and interest...give it a unique combination of features that, in European literature, we can find only separately in an Aristotle, a Machiavelli, and a Bacon...[83]

The need is to correctly comprehend, and then appropriately contextualise, Kautilya's sutras—temporally, culturally and geopolitically—without any nitpicking. That would be the first step towards restoring rightful place to KA, which it deserves.

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   *Total 72 elements:* Kautilyan sutras (KA 6:2.24–28) expound that the conqueror, his friend and his friend's friend are the three primary kings constituting a circle of states. As each of these possesses the six elements of state, such as the king, minister, the country, the fort, the treasury and the army, a circle of states consists of 18 elements. Thus, three circles of states having the enemy (of the conqueror), the *madhyama* or the neutral king are around the conqueror's circle. Thus, there are four primary circles of states, 12 kings, and 72 elements of states.

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