

Class: FY BSc

Subject : IKS

Chapter Name: Seven elements of the state by Kautilya

Today's Agenda

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2. Relevance of the elements

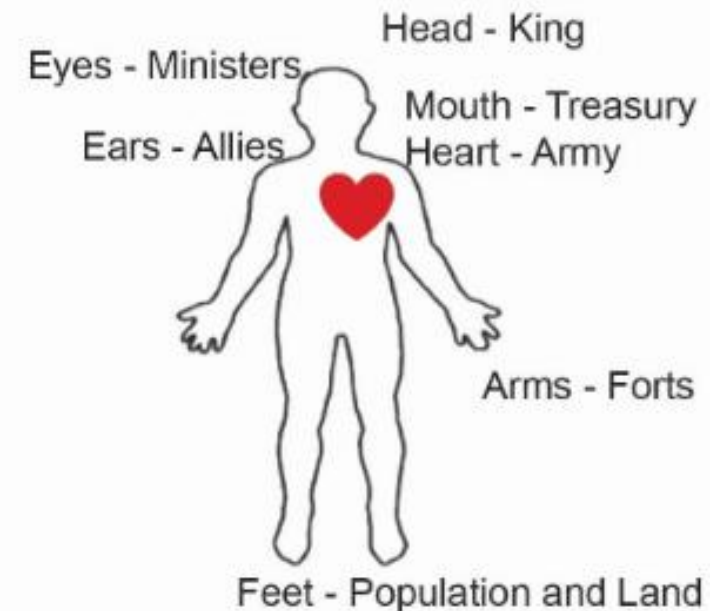
1 SAPTANGA THEORY OF STATE

The word “Saptang” indicates seven limbs, constituents or elements. Together, they constitute the State as an organism, “like a chariot composed of seven parts fitted and subservient to one another”. To an extent; the Saptanga theory of State finds elaboration in the Ancient Greek Political Philosophy.

For instance: while comparing the State with the human body, Plato had argued that just as a cut in the finger causes pain in the body, similarly injury of one organ creates problems for the other organs of the body politic. Seven Angas, Prakritis, or elements were enumerated and elucidated by Kautilya for describing “the nature of the State” in its totality.

1 Seven elements of the state

- Kautilya describes the state as an organic 'body politik' comprising various organs that must function in harmony for the whole (body politik) to remain healthy.
- There are seven prakritis or elements of state as shown in the diagram.
- These seven prakritis are hierarchically placed as per their precedence in the overall health of the state.



Prakritis as organs of the body

1.1 Swami – King

- The ruler is equivalent to the head in a human body. For Kautilya, the king is the first and foremost important factor as he is the independent variable while the other six elements of the state are dependent variables.
- As the dandadhar (wielder of the rod) he has been entrusted with the authority of the sovereign decision maker responsible for curtailing matsya nyaya (law of the jungle) within the empire.
- The king must also ensure the security of the state from external aggression as well as embark on conquests for acquisition of more land and resources.
- Primacy has been granted to selection and training of the king. He must possess highest standards of self-discipline and must be free from the six follies of human nature – lust, greed, anger, pride, arrogance and foolhardiness.
- After selecting the suitable candidate with the above mentioned qualities, he must be thoroughly trained in the four sciences of statecraft – philosophy, vedas, economics, and political science.

1.2 Amatya – Minister

- The king is closely followed by the ministers (*amatyas*) who serve as the eyes of the organic state. It is the duty of the ministers to keep themselves aware of the situation on ground and project the correct picture to the king.
- They must be trained in all the arts and should be far sighted. He should be firmly loyal and endure adversaries through qualities like boldness, bravery, intelligence and should be energetic. The council of ministers is needed to provide stable and systematic administration.
- Apart from the king, there are three top positions in the council of ministers –
 1. the mantri or the prime minister (closest political advisor of the king),
 2. the commander-in-chief (involved in military planning and conduct of foreign policy)
 3. the crown prince who alternates between political and military assignments.These four posts form the supreme body of political deliberations.
- After them, there are posts like minister of finance, the chief justice, the head of public administration etc.
- Kautilya did not fix the number of ministers which depends on requirement.

1.3 Janapada – Territory & population

- Janpada represents the legs of the state and includes both, territory and population of the state.
- The people should be prosperous while the territory should have fertile lands, mines, forests and water bodies etc.
- The demographic and economic base of the Kautilyan state is the rural population. Vast majority of the population lives in the countryside engaged in agriculture and crafts. Small farmers from shudra caste are the main agriculturalists in Kautilya's state who have their own land or are tenants. Under land reclamation policy, Kautilya favours allotment of land to shudra peasants for cultivation. More land under cultivation would increase state's economic capacity.
- Forests are located in the countryside which has economic and strategic significance. Forests provide timber, charcoal, dyes, medicines and bamboo leaves etc. Forests also serve as habitats for elephants which are used for civilian and military purposes. A state should have well-trained war elephants.
- Kautilya believed that the rural population has a stronger physical and mental make-up than the urban population and that is why; he did not approve of the urban style entertainment like alcohol consumption and gambling for the countryside.

1.4 Durga - the Fort

- Durga represents the arms of a state. Security of treasury and army would depend on fortification of the state. Kautilya says that on the frontiers of the country, every quarter will have a fort well equipped to defend against the enemies.
- In total, four forts shall be constructed in places that are naturally suited for defence.
- Kautilya has detailed many types of forts in Arthashastra.
 1. Audak fort is surrounded by water body.
 2. Parvat fort is built amidst high mountains. These forts play an important part while defending against an external attack.
 3. Dhanvan fort is surrounded by desert.
 4. Van fort is situated amidst dense forest.
- Kautilya further says that the capital should be built at the centre of the kingdom and it should be divided in four districts, one for each caste.

1.4 Durga - the Fort

- According to Kautilya, the fort should be built with mud ramparts and parapets made of brick and stone, and it should be well-stocked with provisions for a siege, including food and other requirements.
- The Saptanga theory of Kautilya also proposed placing soldiers at strategic points along the fort's approaches. He speaks of a permanent army composed of the infantry, cavalry, chariots, and elephants as its four main divisions. We can infer from Ashoka's edicts that following the Kalinga war, he tried to practice nonviolence and dedicated himself to dhamma-Vijaya rather than fighting. Yet, it is noteworthy that he left the army intact.

1.5 Kosha - Treasury

- Kosha is considered as the mouth of the state. Kautilya opined that the wealth of the state shall be acquired lawfully, either by inheritance or by king's own efforts consisting of gold, gems and silver.
- Though Kautilya wanted a prosperous treasury, he specifically directed the king to earn the wealth of nation only by legitimate and righteous means and in no way by unfair and immoral means.
- For the collection of revenues, Kautilya suggested the following legitimate sources:
 - (i) various forms of land tax;
 - (ii) duty levied on the sale of commodities in the market;
 - (iii) tax on imports and exports and
 - (iv) miscellaneous taxes.
- The wealth should be enough to allow the country to withstand a calamity, even if the calamity is of longer duration in which there is no income generated.
- Treasury is located in the fortified capital which is used to finance the army, the royal court and the state apparatus. Good financial resources can improve the poor status of armed forces, but a powerful army cannot survive without money.

1.5 Kosha - Treasury

- The main tax of Kautilyan state is the tax in kind, one-sixth of agricultural production output goes to the state. Kautilya also recommends special levies to be charged on alcohol, gambling, road tolls, sale of jewelery, commercial sexual services etc.
- He also cautioned that excessive taxation is economically and politically counterproductive which would lower economic output and pauperise the people.

1.6 Danda - Army

Army is equivalent to brain in a human body. The soldiers should be strong, obedient, not averse to long expeditions, with powers of endurance, skill in handling all weapons and experience of many battles. They should have no interest other than that of the king and should share his prosperity and adversity.

A strong army is required to ward off internal and external threats to a country. Kautilya has described six types of army.

- Clan army: Constitutes of hereditary soldiers like kshatriyas, as son of a soldier becomes a soldier. Kautilya gives maximum importance to this type of army. Such soldiers are loyal to the king and know different types of war strategies.
- Hired soldiers or militia army. Mobilisation of militia army is time consuming compared to a standing army.
- An army constituted by the corporations.
- An army raised by recruiting the assistance of friendly countries.
- A fighting unit made up of prisoners of war i.e. enemy soldiers caught during a war.
- An army made up of tribal people.

1.6 Danda - Army

- Coercive power of state includes the army, secret service and the police. The commander-in-chief or senapati belongs to the inner most circle of the king and is responsible for military strategic planning and conduct of military operations during a war.
- Kautilya did not comment on naval warfare as he did not say anything about a sea-going navy.
- Army, according to Kautilya, is divided in four services – infantry, cavalry, chariots and war elephants.
- Kautilya has highlighted four basic forms of warfare.
 1. Mantra-yuddha: war by counsel or use of diplomacy by a weaker king who finds it unwise to fight against a strong adversary.
 2. Prakash-yuddha: regular warfare where opposing armies fight according to established rules and regulations.
 3. Kuta-yuddha: irregular warfare including ambushes and raids in enemy territory.
 4. Tusnim-yuddha: includes covert operations like sabotage and targeted killings.

1.6 Danda - Army

- Kautilya advises that if the war becomes inevitable, efforts should be made to avoid a prolonged war and offensive is recommended in case there is overwhelming superiority over an already weakened opponent.
- He favored tusnim-yuddha or covert war where mental faculties like intelligence, foresight, psychological skills and ingenuity matter.
- Kautilya had also given due importance to elaborate system of spies in the kingdom. They would keep an eye on the working of ministers and any type of adverse public opinion against the king and also information about other kingdoms.
- A spy could be in a disguise of kapatik (disciple), udasthita (recluse), griha paitik (house holder), vaidehak (merchant), tapas (ascetic), satri (classmate or a colleague), tikshana (firebrand), rasada (a poison specialist) and bhikshuki (a mendicant woman).

1.7 Mitra - Ally/Friend

- A mitra represents ears of a state. According to Kautilya, an ideal ally is one who is a friend of the family for a long time, constant and powerful in support, amenable to control, shares a common interest, can mobilise his army quickly and is not someone who would double cross his friends.
- Kautilya says that the king should focus on strengthening first six elements of the state. In the modern international relations lexicon, it would mean internal balancing, as the state tries to gain strength purely on its internal resources.
- If a state's resources are underdeveloped compared to other states, Kautilya advises that state to have external alliances in order to have time for internal development.
- The alliance can be terminated if the state has reached a position where it is not weak in comparison to other states or if the alliance hampers internal development of the state.
- In Kautilya's scheme of things, a best friend is the state that gives up its own sovereignty and becomes a vassal state. Like this, the external ally effectively becomes an internal factor by accepting the status of a vassal state.

2 The relevance of the elements now

- How much is clear from these discussions a) Ancient Indian state thinkers have almost all blamed pre-state anarchy on the origin of the state. Kautilya has said the same thing. According to Kautilya, the state was not created by God, but the state originated through a special condition. For this the people had to pay a tax to the state which can be seen even today. Kautilya was very much aware of the state of chaos or anarchy (fishlike condition) of the state among the ancient Indian statesmen. For this reason, he always wanted to form a strong state. To him the king excelled as the bearer of sovereignty, in which he gained allegiance so that the internal affairs of the state were disciplined and at the same time they got good governance. Introducing a coherent politics for the sake of reality. Even today, this state theory is very relevant. Even today we follow this theory of Kautilya.
- Although the king was at the top of the whole state system and the source of all authority, he was responsible and accountable to the people, that is, the power of the king was controlled with many restrictions. In this context, it can be said that both the king and the subjects insist on more duties than rights which are tools of social welfare. The religion of both the king and the subjects depends on the duty.

2 The relevance of the elements now

- At present we see that in order to establish good governance, it is necessary to bring welfare to the citizens of the country. At the heart of this good governance is the responsibility and duty of the state or the king and the administrative department to meet all the needs of the common people. The administration was always aware of various strategies to maintain transparency and dynamism, which were essential for good governance and the king had to be held accountable for the work of the departments. From this it is clear that Kautilya is very skilled in establishing good governance.
- The seeds of the welfare state that we find in modern state thought are contained in Kautilya's state theory or Saptanga theory. According to modern political scientists, the two main aspects of a welfare state are social work and social security work which are found in the state theory of Kautilya. In this context, it can be said that Kautilya developed a beautiful economic policy theory for the management of the state system. It was the king's duty to secure the market system. At the same time, one of the duties was to provide welfare to the people. For example, it is the duty of the state to provide money or materials to the elderly, infirm, orphaned children, widows and widowers. At present this issue has spread all over India and the world.

2 The relevance of the elements now

- Kautilya created his politics completely secular. In ancient India, the secular character of this state bears the hallmark of modernity. Although Kautilya had a prominent role as a political priest and was merely a consultant, the main role of the state was played by the king. Even today, almost 75 years after India's independence, the way in which secular politics is conducted is extremely endangered as an Indian nation, so one of the tools to get rid of it is to separate religion from secular politics. Kautilya has been able to do this work in a skillful way for a long time which carries the identity of modernity.
- Kautilya has beautifully explained the need for huge skilled staff or bureaucracy to run various aspects of the state. Although there are differences in the external field, the bureaucracy is not materially different from the current bureaucracy, that is, the bureaucracy he is talking about can still be noticed. He spoke in support of eligibility instead of caste-based consideration in recruiting bureaucrats. From that point of view, it can be said that Kautilya was very pragmatic
- In his description of Kautilya Mitra and Amitra, he has beautifully highlighted the issue of international relations. At present there is talk of international recognition as one of the elements of the state. However, he puts a lot of emphasis on Amitra, so it would not be an exaggeration to call it (Amitra's) eighth element.