

MODULE-3
MAURYAS AD MUVENTAR
TOPIC-SOURCES OF MAURYAN HISTORY-
ARTHASASTRA

PRIYANKA.E.K
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
LITTLE FLOWER COLLEGE, GURUVAYOOR

- Treatise on statecraft
- 'Artha' – one of Purushasukta & stands for material wellbeing
- Arthashastra – place Artha above Dharma & Kama
- Science of statescraft
- Consists of 15 Adhikaranas
- First 5 deal with internal administration
- Next 8 with interstate relations
- Last 2 with miscellaneous topics

- Major problem in using Arthashastra as a source of history is the differences in opinion among scholars regarding its date & authorship
- Traditional view- it is a work of 4th C BCE- Kautilya/ Chanakya, who became Chief minister of Chandragupta Maurya
- Questioned by scholars- argued that the name of Kautilya in book is mentioned 'as taught or held by Kautilya'
- Also argue that Patanjali's "Mahabhashya" & Megasthenes "Indica" did not mention Kautilya

- G.H.Ojha- name Vishnugupta for Kautilya was a later fabrication, which came into use after the 6th or 7th C CE
- Romila Thapar- agrees with it & says that Vishnugupta was not the original author of the text but an editor
- Dating- 4th-3rd C BCE debated
- Dates ranged from Mauryan to Gupta period
- Indian scholars – Mauryan period
- Western scholars- 4/5 centuries later
- R.Shyamasastri, Krishna Rao & K.P.Jayaswal- Mauryan period- Kautilya as the author

- J.Jolly- oppose Mauryan origin- 3rd C CE
- A.Winternitz- agree with Jolly & questions authorship of Kautilya
- H.C.Raychaudhari- after 300 CE
- Thomas Trautmann- conducted computer-aided statistical analysis & suggests different word frequencies point to different authors
- Says that 3/4 authors contributed to the composition & text in present shape is not earlier than 1st or 2nd C CE
- Argues that Arthashastra is like Dharmashastra & would have antecedent texts

- S.N.Mital- criticised Trautman's view & say it as the work of a single author
- It discusses inter-state relations to a small or moderate –sized state not a large empire of the Mauryan type
- Other group- entire discussion on statecraft is from the point of view of would-be conqueror(Vijigishu) of the entire subcontinent
- Outline of an elaborate administrative structure & the generous salaries for officials suggest that the author had a large well-established polity in mind
- Does not contain any reference to Mauryan empire & Chandragupta, Pataliputra

- Treatise on statecraft discusses a potential not an actual state
- R.P.Kangle- Kautilya & Arthashastra in Mauryan period- Vishnugupta seems to be a personal name of the author, Kautilya his gotra name, Chanakya a patronym
- Thapar – it was written during or about the time of Chandragupta Maurya , though it was edited & rewritten during ensuing period
- Thapar – similarities b/w terms used in Arthashastra & Asokan Edicts suggests Mauryan rulers were acquainted with the book

- Recently scholars- generally agreed text was composed Mauryan period by a person named Kautilya or Chanakya, with later interpolations in 3rd & 4th C CE
- Nationalist historiography- discovery of Arthasastra vindicated Indian civilization as having a rational & practical side
- Inclusion of topics parallel to Arthasastra in other texts such as Manusmriti, Mahabharata indicates that rational & practical side was more widespread than was thought earlier
- R.S.Sharma- political organisation outlined by Kautilya is different from system indicated in Asoka's inscription

- Kautilya – centralisation
- Asoka- decentralisation
- R.S.Sharma- typical Asokan officials such as mahamatra, rajuka, pradesika, pratedaka not mentioned in Arthasastra
- Sharma- epigraphic evidence suggests that Arthasastra was finally 1st C CE
- Was not a document describing the govt associated with a single period
- Constantly revised & updated

- Language- Asokan Prakrit & Kautilyan Sanskrit is obvious-
valid reason to assign a late origin of Arthasastra
- Thapar- Asoka intended a particular purpose through his
edicts & this intention would not have been met by the use of
Sanskrit- Arthasastra Written in Sanskrit & has very different
function & belong to sastra tradition
- Dandin in Dasakumaracharita – Vishnugupta composed 6000
slokas for the Mauryas to learn Dandaniti
- Thapar- Arthasastra was remembered even after many
centuries as a text associated with Mauryas