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“Chanakya's Wisdom: Mastering Statecraft and Diplomacy in a Complicated World.”

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Abstract-- After independence, the behaviour of India has been literally different in the international community and scholarly exploration is still needed for analysing foreign policy. India became a great power as part of the non-aligned movement during the cold war and claimed permanent status in the United Nations. India has adopted certain policies after decolonization, which are supposed to be highly influenced by Chanakya's principles and grabbed the attention of scholars to analyse the discourse in detail.

This study is aimed to determine the relevance of Kautilya's philosophy in 21st century foreign relations of the country. Chanakya has written six foreign policies in “Arthashastra” which are analysed in this paper.

This research can be understood well with the theoretical study of secondary data collected from various research papers relevant to this topic. It is well understood that Kautilya's philosophy has always influenced India's foreign policies. Chanakya's techniques deliver a strong intellectual base by revisiting the past and exposing both weaknesses and strengths of a country.

Foreign policy of a country includes objectives, principles, and interests of a country while dealing and interacting with other countries. Foreign policy of India is aimed to ensure security and sovereignty, while playing a vital role in its influence, growth, and stature on the world. India has rich political, traditional, and cultural history and Arthshastra is one of the popular scriptures by Chanakya which has the well-established concept of ancient India based on robust external affairs and sovereignty when it comes to deal with foreign countries.

Keywords-- foreign policies, sovereignty, Chanakya, Kautilya, Arthshastra, India, 21st century

I. INTRODUCTION

Chanakya's teachings consist of different subjects like economics, foreign policy, and political science to specify different elements of administration of state, qualities of rulers, social pearls of religion and wisdom, which has, hence, regarded him as “Pandit Kautilya” (Goswami, 2013). Chanakya was the leading strategic thinker and philosopher in India. Also known as “Vishnu Gupta” and “Kautilya”, Chanakya was solely responsible for the coronation of Chandragupta Maurya, the king of Maurya Dynasty (first Indian empire) and the fall of last Nandu Dynasty ruler (Subramanian, 1980).

By caste, Chanakya was a Brahmin and lived from 350 to 275 B.C. approximately. There is still a lack of information available on the biography of Chanakya. Hence, academia relies solely on traditional, Jain and Buddhist texts of succeeding periods. This way, the birthplace of Chanakya is also a matter of debate. According to a Buddhist worker, Tika Mahavamsa, he was born in Takshashila. According to the book “Abhidhanachintamani”, written by a Jain author Hemachandra, Chanakya belonged to South India and he was a Dramila and son of Chanaka (Subramanian, 1980).

There are several places in India named after him and mentioned as his native places, for example, Chanakya in Punjab. Various historians agree that his birthplace is Takshshila in Punjab because Alexander had his campaigns in Punjab and he had allegedly met Chandragupta when he was young, according to Plutarch records. Chandragupta and Chanakya had spent several years in his hometown together. Hence, Takshila is widely accepted as his place of birth and historians have universally accepted the fact that Kautilya and Chanakya are the same person (Rashid & Farooq, 2019).

A. Background

It is important to follow and interpret the foreign relation policies of Chanakya in 21st century India. The way the ceasefire agreement of 2003 was restored in February 2021 between Pakistan and India shows warming signs in the years of tensions between two neighbouring countries. It is speculated to be the outcome of backchannel discussions between the officials and external pressure from the UAE. It is important to understand the reason behind this normalisation in the context of the current Galwan Valley clash in 2020 in the relationship between India and China, its northern neighbour. This scenario is a great lesson about the approach of existing foreign policy adopted by India. It clearly reflects the influence of Chanakya's foreign policy (Mate, 2021).

Chanakya was the advisor of the Maurya Empire ruled by Chandragupta Maurya and played a vital role in building this empire. His strategies and ideas enabled the king to defeat the undefeated Alexander (Singh, 2016). The Book “Maxims of Kautilya” mentions an interesting tale when Chandragupta Maurya and Chanakya met for the first time. This meeting wrote the history of power in India due to their collaboration (Subramanian, 1980).

Chandragupta was once fired from the Nanda army. One day, he was walking past the jungle and came across a Brahmin who was pouring sugary syrup on the kusa grass roots. Chandragupta became curious and asked the reason. Chanakya said, "My leg was hurting because of this kusa grass. Hence, I wanted to destroy it by pouring the sugar syrup. Hence, an army of ants was attracted towards him and chewed and destroyed the grass and root." According to him, ants finished the grass within minutes. He adopted this strategy against enemies. After seeking lessons from him, Chandragupta bowed to him and asked him a favour against Nanda.

The Maurya empire became more powerful and raised well all because of Chanakya. He was the strategic planner, author, professor, and advisor for the king. Arthashastra was the brainchild of Chanakya and there are 15 books derived from this text on various topics like law and order, administration, revenue, taxation, foreign policy, expenditure, and war and defence. This paper is based on foreign policy which was founded especially from 11th, 12th, and 7th books. This study is based on economic aggression with arms race, efforts to limit development, impediments to trade, and mobilisation of resources, adopted by India to affect the economy of its neighbouring arch-rival, Pakistan. This paper focuses on Chanakya's philosophies about foreign policy in the 21st century and implementation of existing foreign policy.

B. Research Gap

In international politics, realism is the most significant theory which assumes that the states have an anarchical system without higher authority to balance. The state is highly responsible for its security and integrity (Falode, 2009). This study fills the gap between Chanakya's techniques of foreign policymaking with 21st century foreign relations of modern India.

C. Research Questions

- What are the 6-fold foreign policies suggested by Chanakya in "Arthashastra"?
- What makes Chanakya's philosophy significant for today's foreign relations of India?

D. Research Objectives

- To understand the significance of Chanakya's Philosophy
- To find out the relevance of Chanakya's 6-fold policy "Shadgunya Siddhant" with 21st century foreign relations of India

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to fulfil the above research objectives, this study is based on secondary data collected from relevant sources related to Chanakya's Arthashastra and his 6-fold policy to find its relevance with existing foreign relations of the Indian subcontinent. We have collected data from various research papers, articles, and journals.

III. ANALYSIS OF STUDY

Chanakya was also known as Machiavelli of India in the 20th century. In "Discovery of India", Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru has referred to Chanakya as "Indian Machiavelli" and this comparison is worth to some extent. It is especially true because most of the thoughts of Chanakya are similar to realism. According to him, "One should save his money against hard times and save his wife for the sacrifice of riches, but one should keep his soul above his riches and wife" (Davis, 2014). The country is a soul. One should leave everything behind to save her.

When it comes to alliances, he said, "A friendship always has some self-interests. It is a harsh reality." It is also relatable with the assumption of realism. When countries are helping one another, they always have self-interest behind the scenes. He also described the way of ruling and qualities of a ruler. He wrote "Arthashastra" and was known as "kingmaker" by people (Pillalamarri, 2015). According to him, "if the ruler is righteous, people are righteous. If the ruler is sinner, people are sinners too. Like rulers, like people."

His text is full of intellectual quotes and wisdom. Discussing other aspects about his strategies, Arthashastra is the work that defines the dominant reality of politics in ancient Indian treatise, as referred by Henry Kissinger. The Arthashastra has a realistic view of politics which combines Clausewitz and Machiavelli. His philosophy is adopted by both western and Indian authors.

A. What are the 6-fold foreign policies suggested by Chanakya in "Arthashastra"?

It is the main analytical aspect of the paper which focuses on 6-fold policies of Chanakya, his ways of war and the relevance to existing foreign policy of India. Chanakya suggested the following ways of making foreign policies:

- 1) *Sandhi*: Treaty,
- 2) *Asana*: Deploying forces around the enemy,
- 3) *Vigraha*: To break treaty and strike the first blow,
- 4) *Yaan*: To mobilise the troops,
- 5) *Samashraya*: Alliance with states having similar interests, and finally,

6) *Dwaidbhava*: Also known as “Dual Policy”. It refers to befriending an enemy once and being hostile next time.

1) *Sandhi*: According to Chanakya, the state should prefer a peace treaty with specific conditions for a while. When a state is declining against other states, this method is ideal. For example, states entered several collations to battle against Napoleon but this contract ended due to their defeat after Waterloo. According to Chanakya, “When the king is in relative decline against the enemy, it is the only time he can make peace” (Shamasastri, 1995). India applied this policy when China defeated it in 1962. India built peace with China after realising that they cannot defeat them. Japan is China’s rival and they can have a good relationship with other countries. They can make peace for a certain period. India still follows his principles to defeat their enemies and protect their interest (Khattak, 2011).

2) *Asana*: It refers to being neutral where there is no benefit of being either at peace or at war. According to Kautilya, “If a king feels that his state and his enemy are similar and neither can ruin another state nor harm the other, they may prefer doing nothing.” A state may wait for a long time when they cannot do anything. Jawaharlal Nehru brought non-alignment policy as per Chanakya’s vision.

3) *Vigraha*: It refers to declaring war against another state. It is especially true when a country is stronger than others in terms of military power, internal conditions, and tactics. According to Kautilya, “when a king is in a superior position as compared to his enemy, he will attack and declare war” (Shamasastri, 1995). It was a clear prediction that both India and Pakistan may wage war against one another following the parliament attack in the year 2001. India also deployed over 8,00,000 troops, heavy arms, and 2-strike corps on western border but the war never happened (Bender, 2013).

4) *Yaan*: It refers to marching or preparing for battle. It includes building military strength of the state and using sources which are helpful to defeat the enemy. If the nation is not prepared for war for the time being, the state can be destroyed and the enemy can take away the benefit (Proportion, 1995). A fear is ultimately built up against the enemies when the state's power increases and the enemy state is unable to build up his attack. This kind of behaviour is clearly seen in the current situation of India. India follows modernization and spending more on defence strategies (Bender, 2013).

5) *Samashraya*: It refers to alliances or protection. When it comes to preparing for battle, if the group of states has a stronger state, other states can ally with it for their own protection.

According to Chanakya, “A king seeking an alliance must ensure that he finds a king more powerful than the enemy” (Shamasastri, 1995). India has made alliances with the most powerful countries in the world for its own security, such as Russia, France, Japan, Israel, and the US. Along with the bases of pacts, these alliances are also helpful with trade of arms, space initiatives, and nuclear deals. (Khattak, 2011).

6) *Dwaidbhava*: Dual policy addresses various states at the same time. It combines various states to form an alliance against enemy countries. While declaring war against the other state, it refers to making peace with one state. Chanakya said, “Enemy of my enemy is my friend” (Davis, 2014). India made peace with China after defeat. However, India also made an alliance with Japan, which is also the enemy of China. According to Chanakya, “a mismanaged assembly, disgrace from one’s people, separation from the wife, and an enemy surviving the battle are the evils, if afflicting a person burns him even without fire.” (Proportion, 1995). The survival of the enemy from the battle leads to misery for the opponent. When India enters in alliance with Afghanistan, which is an old enemy of Pakistan. Hence, India attempts to make a serious situation for Pakistan by making peace with Afghanistan.

India has also followed the ways of war as described by Kautilya. First way is “Open War”, which refers to declaring war and attacking openly. In 1965, India defeated Pakistan when it opened a war against her. Next is “Secret War”, which refers to a surprise attack. It means attacking one country from one side and terrorizing from another side. India makes the situation worse for Pakistan through Afghanistan in Balochistan, Fata, and other tribal regions. On the eastern border, India leads to a critical situation against Pakistan when it faces threats from either side. Another one is “undeclared war” using secret services, women, religion, and agencies. India’s support for Hindu Tamils in Sri Lanka, being involved in Balochistan, and other initiatives.

B. What makes Chanakya’s philosophy significant for today’s foreign relations of India?

To analyse the trend of India’s foreign policy, we need to look at the present timeline when India has border tensions with Pakistan. India tried to have a peaceful relationship with China and other neighbours. Even during the time when Chinese and Indian troops faced off, i.e., during the stand-off of Doklam valley, no one was allowed to worsen the conflict on both sides. To ensure peace and relieve border conflicts, PM Modi made an informal visit himself to China.



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Xi Jinping, the President of China, also visited India and brought the relations forward. The relation with Pakistan was also at the base at the same time, followed by Balakot airstrike and Pulwama attack. India adopted Chanakya's Dual policy "Dwaibhava", i.e. enmity with one enemy and bond with other at the same time.

The same can be thought of the existing thaw in relation between India and Pakistan and rising tensions with eastern neighbours. India applied "Shadgunya Siddhant" by Chanakya in foreign policy with its regime at one point. The Indo-Pacific area has centrality in the existing geopolitical scenario. Its importance is because of changes in geoeconomics and geopolitics. The aggression is rising from China's end, whether it is in claiming the 9-Dash line in South China Sea, manoeuvring the region in the Indian Ocean or building an artificial island. India preferred Chanakya's Samashraya approach because of its asymmetry in traditional battle against China. India collaborated with other countries in Southeast Asia, such as the Philippines, Vietnam, Japan, etc. (Mate, 2021).

There are various key features of existing foreign policy adopted by PM Modi. First of all, foreign policy is treated as a tool for national interest and he doesn't worry about his own orientations of policy and he approaches them with his own objective. India no longer hesitates because of unwillingness to hurt others' sentiments and rivalry among countries. India has a clear stand that its relations are for mutual benefits. Modi had a clear vision for common goals and security while joining the "Quad for Indo-Pacific" with Japan, US and Australia. He joined another Quad with UAE, Israel and the US for West Asia for economic growth.

Meanwhile, he keeps meeting with RIC, BRICS and Russia. India has built close relations with Central Asian nations for "International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC)". India is also looking forward to having a substitute for the TAPI gas line. Russia is also willing to make India part of its "Far Eastern economic strategy" by inviting PM Modi at the "Eastern Economic Forum" as a chief guest in September 2019. Putin agreed for talks on the Pacific and Indian oceans, while India is acquiring "S-400" Russian missiles, without caring about the pressure from the US.

In addition, the strategic and economic needs are based on his concept "Security and Growth for All Regions (SAGAR)". This strategy is not just aimed to meet domestic needs, but also to make closer relations in the long run. The way he managed complex foreign relations with Israel, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the UAE makes him a master diplomat. Previously, India couldn't make the most of its potential of foreign relations due to hesitancy. Third, he built effective "multilateralism" that claims that voices of many nations should make the global agenda.

India started building relations with other countries on the basis of this concept, which were once getting less attention because of policy paralysis.

PM Modi is the first who made Strategic Partnership by visiting Mongolia in 2015. He built relations with Vietnam in 2016 as part of "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership". He made first historic visit to Israel in the year 2017 as a PM and upgraded the relationship at strategic level. In 1986, he emerged as the first PM to visit UAE and Canada. He renewed his efforts and developed better relations with neighbours as "Neighbourhood First" tagline. The "Land Border Agreement" has been ratified with Bangladesh. Fourth, Modi has pushed to integrate domestic interests with foreign policy and invited FDI to India. With foreign agreements, he pushed "Atmanirbhar Bharat" and "Make in India" campaigns on the basis of pragmatism in order to propagate interdependence. India has trade alliances with more than 50 countries and FTAs with EU, UAE and Australia.

He develops leverages with Indian diaspora in foreign lands boldly. It increases their presence to political aspects in host nations. Sixth, he made it clear that India had gone through restraint that affected India's position for national security in the past and punished Pakistan for its misconducts by Balakot air strike and surgical strikes (Pradhan, 2022).

IV. RESULTS

The process has been through a great change to achieve goals under PM Modi, though the objectives still remain the same. His diplomacy covers the whole world and he has adopted an energetic foreign policy. When it comes to achieving goals, India has been more assertive while avoiding the use of power against rivals as much as possible. It has improved its global presence and achieved a central position in Russia while working with Central Asian countries and Afghanistan. India sits on equal footing with China and Russia in BRICS and RIC.

Small groupings are nothing new. But India has great influence in all groups. PM Modi, as a chief diplomat, is shaping the global environment, rather than having merely a ring-side view of proceedings. Economy of India is also improving thanks to foreign policymaking for the economy. Kautilya added the internal dimension while defining the above policies. He envisioned to challenge foreign aggression by building "Akhand Bharat", i.e. uniting India. It becomes important to follow and implement his policy in 21st century India.

Den Xiaoping had the policy of taking time to strengthen China and hiding its strength till the time Xi Jinping became the President in 2013.

Once China became socially, economically, politically, and militarily powerful, it started showing its aggression to the world. India should adopt the same approach to defend itself, instead of invading other nations. The present situation of India and China is not so great. China is all set to become a \$15 trillion economy, while India is still approaching \$3 trillion (Pradhan, 2022). With its unsurpassed growth, China is about to beat the US. India is also weakened by distressed agriculture, poverty, lack of skills, unemployment, communal politics, and divided society. India needs to become stronger from within to battle against external forces. India's elephants need to unleash more powerful fire against their dragon's fire to save its existence.

V. CONCLUSION

India still needs to overcome some tough challenges. The Sino-Pak axis in the neighbourhood is causing trouble and dealing with them is a tiresome job. Negotiations are needed to resolve these contentious issues. India is striving hard to maintain integrity but all its efforts are going in vain because of their sinister plans. They are posing two-sided pressure and deepening the divisions in India. Hence, innovative efforts are needed to change this situation. Chanakya's opinion, "we should pick the enemy's weak point" should be followed. India has to defend and protect themselves. India needs allies without compromising its sovereignty. India has to strengthen its fundamentals in all aspects. India needs holistic foreign and domestic policy to emerge as the strongest and most powerful country which can promote its interests and defend itself.

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Bio note-Prof Raji Ramesh is currently working as head of Department of English, S.K Somaiya college of Arts, Science and Commerce Mumbai. She has vast teaching experience at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. She believes in the holistic progress of students with special impetus to research. Prof Raji has been a member of various Academic and Administrative committees. She has published many research papers in various National and International journals. She has also presented research papers in various conferences and chaired thematic sessions. Prof Raji has been bestowed with the Best teacher award by Research India foundation in 2023 and Best Researcher award by Somaiya Vidyavihar.