

Chanakya Neeti and Chhatrapati Shivaji`s Vision and Mission of Swarajya in 17th century

Ms. Varsha Muley

Associate Professor, Department of History
SIES College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Sion, West.

Abstract: Chanakya alias Kautilya, a king maker and visionary has left behind for us, a treasure of guidelines for the administration and the governance of the Kingdom or the state or, the 'Rashtra' as he always refers to. Kautilya Chanakya's Principles of Rajneeti laid down the systematic foundation of Mauryan Empire in the 3rd century B.C. This great Historic event was definitely, the idea of Chanakya's far sighted vision that came true under the leadership of able and worthy ruler Chandragupta Maurya.

Such an attempt was made successful once more, in the hard circumstances and difficult situations under the accomplished leader and the visionary ruler, Chhatrapati Shivaji, in Maharashtra, later, in the 17th century A.D.

While looking deeply in to the strategies and battle field planning, dealing with enemy, aiming for the welfare state brings us to the state of thinking, whether Shivaji`s Neeti was a reflection of Chanakya`s Neeti? Was it matching perfectly with the principles of Kautilya in a real sense? If yes where were the similarities seen when we look in to the series of the events and challenges faced and handled by Chhatrapati Shivaji? Besides all these aspects, this paper will also observe whether Chhatrapati Shivaji connected any other principle of his Neeti, Shivaji`s Neeti in particular, to his vision and Mission of an ideal independent state and how did it reflect in his efforts of strengthening the swarajya? This paper is an attempt, to understand whether there is any direct connection the relation between Chanakya neeti and chhatrapati Shivaji`s vision to create an independent and his mission towards the welfare state, the concept of lok kalyankari Rajjya.

Chanakya, a great scholar, a king maker and a Prime Minister of the Maurya kings is known equally a great teacher, a visionary and a Philosopher of 2nd Century B.C and a pioneer in the field of economics and political science, has left a mark on the governance and the statecraft of Ancient India. Before Chanakya could actually gave an effect to his mission of establishing a fair state against the corrupt and indifferent, insensitive Nanda Dynasty, the circumstances and the urge of the bigger role of Magadh Mahajanapada in the strong and sound state, Chanakya had been in search of a suitable strongwilled king for the accomplishment of this vision.

It is said that, Chanakya and Chandragupta, together tried to win back the able ministers of the Nandas and could persuade after great strategy to bring back Rakshasa, the able minister of the Nandas back to administration as his minister. This was because the last of the Nandas was probably a morally degenerate person yet the administration was probably a good one and the ministers were capable and loyal.ⁱ We do not know the age of Kautilya`s Arthashastra for although tradition ascribes it to Chanakya, yet looking in to the language, text and all it must have been written by Chanakya before he engaged himself in teaching and developing his ideas about administration and public finance. Thus Arthashastra is counted among the great works of this period. Many great contributors of niti-shastras such as Brihaspati, Shukracharya, Bhartrihari and Vishnusharma have echoed many of these instructions in their own celebrated works; it is perhaps the way that Chanakya applied his teachings of niti-sastra that has made him stand out as a significant historical figure.ⁱⁱ Chanakya believes that the ideas can become concrete, if they are intellectually planned and worked out for achieving a goal determinately with practical grasp of the resources and situations.

It is interesting to note that Kautilya refers to his own work as a critical compendium based on Arthashastra prevalent in his time and refers to works of many writers. This intern indicates that there were large number

of works of polity probably inspired by the intense political activity of the times which were full of janapadas, sanghas of different descriptions and numerous monarchies. Chanakya probably saw the danger of these numerous small free states, communities and kingships, especially in view of threat to India from the west because of the association with Taxila, and set forth the scheme of the detailed working of a huge centralized authority in a new empire embracing whole India in his Arthashastra and later set about bringing to reality his dream of empire in which he was eminently successful with the help of Chandragupta Maurya.ⁱⁱⁱ It's a known fact that Chanakya Vishnugupta's scholarly planning and strategy which gave a way to the greatest Indian empire in history, by putting an end to the Nandas rule. When Chanakya wrote Arthashastra, the country was under the characteristics of feudalism and closed self-sufficient economy. Covering various topics on administration, politics and economy, it is a book of law and treatise on running a country which is relevant even today. Looking in to the era of 17th century and the political circumstances prevailing during the time, a highly successful attempt was made by Chhatrapati Shivaji to establish a strong and organised independent state on the determinant will power and with tremendous self confidence, termed as 'swarajya', an independent kingdom amidst of the mighty Adilshahi and Mughal rule. Swarajya established by Chhatrapati Shivaji emerged as the Great Maratha Empire in 18th century.

In this entire endeavour of swarajya foundation, Shivaji's neeti became a grand strategy of his master planning to bring about a political change on a very positive political note. The swarajya was a well organized mission with a transformative leader at its helm. The courage and far sighted vision laid down in shivaji's neeti and his fearless drive to achieve the impossible was aided by profound commandership and dynamism of this great leader.

Almost every episodes and the varied events in Chhatrapati Shivaji's mission towards swarajya provides an independent subject matter in understanding the implementation of a peculiar diplomacy and a multi dimensional strategy, called *Rajneeti*, alias shivaji's neeti in accordance with Chanakya Neeti. While seeing the political upheaval in the region of *Bara maval*, The entire canvas of industrious and intellectual endeavour of the establishment and strengthening of *swarajya* makes us to see that in shivaji's neeti and in there appear a reflection of Acharya Chanakya's teaching and political philosophy.

When he was trained to undertake a political experiment of the establishment of an independent state, whether Chhatrapati Shivaji knew about Chanakya neeti that was known to the ancient Indian polity evolved by Acharya Chanakya for the Great Mauryas? There is no straight answer to the question whether Shivaji had read the neeti of Chanakya or does anybody read it to him or explained it to him at his very young age while being trained for the state craft and administration.^{iv} Chhatrapati Shivaji was encouraged for undertaking a foundation of 'Dream State' with a systematic training in a particular war strategy is well known technique of The Guerrilla warfare. This warfare is undertaken with a perfect dream and a goal to achieve in a targeted time with limited resources by giving a maximum damage to the enemy. Besides, in the system of governance whether Shivaji followed only Chanakya Neeti is indeed difficult to express as he had mastered the various aspects of the state craft. Thus a strategy followed by Chhatrapati Shivaji mostly

could be long accepted lessons from ancient smriti's and shruti's, knowledge of political philosophy explained in texts, available in those days or an experience and observations in Adilshahi and Mughal polity and the European traders.^v Still if we imagine for a while that he had studied or read Kautilya's works, then to provide the ideal kingship or to be kautilya's ideal king was the purpose of his entire mission. Kautilya believes, to achieve the material comfort and equally the metaphysical progress of subjects is the duty of king. His duty does not complete by giving a protection to his subjects against the external aggressions or maintaining the peace and security. Seeing ahead of time he must provide to his people, the security of food, control over resources, revenue and taxation which also is a part of *Praja Rakshan* and a way to safeguard human resource needed for the construction of *rashtra/ rajya*. Kautilya's emphasise is the public welfare work as the major task of the Kings responsibility. He also states, that the harsh and corporal punishment for bribe and corruption will not reduce the offences in the country, what it will reduce is, the guarantee, the trust in the determination of the king that, the accuse will surely be punished. Nothing will save the accuse from getting it.^{vi}

1) For Example, the order given to provide the material for the construction of Sindhu Durg fort was deviated by one of the kulkarni and Shivaji held him responsible for the delay in making the provision.

2) The cavalry or infantry soldiers were on the strict warning that none will touch the resources and the comodities of lively hood belonging to *Rayat*, means the subjects of the kingdom and if needed, in the scarcity of food to soldiers the forces shall by the same at a regular rate and not by using force or compulsion.

Shahaji's political strategy as a systematic goal oriented training to his son Shivaji:

Shahaji's role as a mentor to Shivaji involves, the training of *Shastra* the art of weaponry and *Astra*- the technique or a method of warfare...

The *Astra* taught to shivaji by shahaji does`nt mean any mantra but a tantra to fight. That refers to guerilla warfare. A goal oriented plan which indicates the complete defeat by inflicting the maximum damage and destruction of enemy forces with minimum available strength and resources, in the minimum period of time. This technique was used by chanakya in the destruction of mighty Nanda's, thoroughly implemented by shahaji against the last episodes of the struggle for the survival of Nizamshahi, Adilshahi and lately in his political career, against the Mughals. This technique was used by shivaji thoroughly against the similar powers, in various ways according to the need of the time and situation.

In Some other strategies applied by Chhatrapati Shivaji can be included

1) Spreading rumours in enemy camps..... , Afzal khan episode and Siddi Jauhar episode.

2) psychology of the people, story of *Drushtanta*, or an enlightenment regarding the support of the divine power of Goddess Bhawani in the divine task of the security of swarajya.

3) Attack on wealth strongholds of the enemy... two sacks of Surat as a *vasuly*, a recovery and not loot from Mughal stronghold of trade and commerce, Surat. it was a recovery against the damage of the resources and food by shaista kahan`s Deccan army stationed for three years near Pune.

4) After the Purandar Treaty he refused to reduce the strength as the army was to give a salary. One imp reason is that every single person was to be kept together in the difficult times. The neeti of Shivaji also expresses through the act of protection and avoid the migration of people due to the enemy land for employment and livelihood.

Additions in to the six organs of the state by Chhatrapati...

The Seven Organs of State... in Chanakya neeti...raja, Amatya, janapad, Durg, kosha, sainya/ army, and Mitra or friend^{vii}

In addition to the seven organs stated by Chanakya in Maharaj`s defence administration we can trace an added wing with Navy as the 8th organ.

End of Feudal structure, The Vatandari...

As chankaya felt that feudalism as a reason for the challenge to the integrity of the Nation/ Rashtra. Chhatrapati Shivaji also reduced the Watandari as a damaging factor to the upholding of Swaraj.

The foundation of swarajya had strong base of civic administration though the structure of strength was army in a typical medieval context. Chhatrapati Shivaji saw to it that the military administration should not over power the civic administration. He is the only king and the ruler of the medieval times who places the civic administration above the military administration^{viii}.

6) Use of espionage system. One of the finest and super quick org of Chhatrapati shivaji. Chanakya emphises in his text Arthashastra, the espionage system.

Rajmudra. A Royal Seal

Chhatrapati Shivaji had inherent qualities of an ideal king in the Chanakya`s tradition and principles. His personal qualities were described perfectly in the verse by Samarth Ramdas, the political Guru.

Discipline, justice and the affection/love are the principles of the swarajya founded by Chhatrapati Shivaji. Ramdas Swami, Praising his qualities in the words, '*Nischayacha Mahameru Bahut Janasi adharu, Akhand Sthiticha Nirdharu Shrimant Yogi*'.

This expression resembels the context of Rajarshi of Chanakya Neeti. The king must keep himself away from pleasure seeking attitude, and act upon, spiritual aspirations.

The Royal Seal gives a perfect nature of the Swarajya as a vision and mission of Chhatrapati Shivaji. It reflects the entire purpose of the foundation of swarajya as, A public welfare state referring the term,

'Mudra Bhadraya Rajate'. Bhadra indicates the well being of people which is also constantly been emphasised by Chanakya. The Royal Seal provides a complete nature of Swarajy of Chhatrapati Shivaji, and his prime mission behind the vision of Swarajya.

ⁱ Gyan Swarup Gupta, 'India from Indus Valley Civilization to Mauryas', Concept publishing Company, New Delhi, 1999, P. 186,187.

ⁱⁱ Ibid, P. 232.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid, P.233

- The three books are attributed to Chanakya, Arthashastra, Nitishastra and Chanakya Neeti.

Arthashastra- The science of material Gain, Chanakya Neeti- in which, many of the State Policies have been compiled,

Nitishastra- A treatise on the ideal way of life.

^{iv} Ranjeet Desai, 'Shriman Yogi', introduction by Narahar Kurundkar, Mehta publishing house, pune, 26th edi, P. 37.

^v B.V. Bhat, *Shivajichi Rajneeti*, Itihasacharya V.K. Rajwade Samshodhan Mandal, Dhule, First ed. 1941, publication, 2010, P. 5

^{vi} Ibid

^{vii} Prof. R.P. Kangle, *Kautiliya Arthashastra, satip Marathi Bhashantar*, reprinted, Maharashtra Government publication, Pune, 1995. P.364.

^{viii} Bharatiya sanskriti Kosha, Volume 9, P. 348

