

Project Udbhav: Integrating Ancient Wisdom with Modern Indian Military Pedagogy

Madhu Kumari and Shubhangi Rathore¹

Abstract

Throughout history, humanity has seen many destructive wars, especially in India. Early wars in India were fought by the people of the Indus Valley civilization, who were skilled in building forts for defense. Hindu civilization had a rich knowledge of warfare, military strategies, and martial arts. Ancient political thinkers considered War as an extension of politics, a fallout of interstate relations. Strategies were both offensive and defensive. The ancient Indian thinkers instated war as a means of increasing royal glory and outright conquest. The battles depicted in the epics of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* provide valuable information about the warfare mechanism of the ancient period. 'Project UDBHAV,' a collaborative effort between the Indian Army and the United Services Institution of India (USI), and the government of India, emphasized the project's significance, aiming to revisit India's ancient military thoughts. The initiative seeks to synthesize ancient knowledge, particularly from texts like Chanakya's *Arthashastra* and *Thirukkural*, with modern military practices. Examining historical campaigns, leaders, and examples like the Naval Battle of Saraighat, the paper highlights the enduring relevance of ancient Indian military strategies. The paper will also focus on contemporary military practices addressing modern challenges and the importance of Indian historical strategies in tackling diplomatic complexities.

Keywords: Arthashastra, Civilization, Indian Military, Government, Warfare, Project Udbhav, Tirukkural

Introduction

India's development is built through the ideologies and strategies of ancient philosophers and great rulers. Indian scriptures are considered the oldest forms of texts, efficiently solving problems faced by humankind. From medicines to war, everything is discussed and shared in the work of past leaders and scholars of India. Chanakya's strategies and philosophies are still considered useful in tackling any national or international economic, war, or financial

¹ Madhu Kumari is an Assistant Professor and Shubhangi Rathore is an Undergraduate Student at the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan, India.

problems. In his text, he talks about how to win strategically in conventional war. He spent his entire life establishing the Mauryan Empire and guiding great leaders like Chandragupta Maurya and Ashoka. His way of managing administration was unconquerable.

Janapada: Territory as a priority

Janapada, derived from "*jana*" (people) and "*pada*" (land), essentially means territory or land. In nationalist discussions, territory holds a pivotal symbolic role in shaping national identity. It encompasses various dimensions, including economic, social, geopolitical, institutional, and emotional aspects (Punia, 2019). These diverse values associated with territory highlight its significance as a representation of the state. Throughout history and even today, territory remains a primary cause of conflicts and a crucial element of warfare strategies. Simultaneously, it serves to establish borders, identity, and sovereignty, thus fostering both division and unity among populations. In essence, Janapada, or territory, is a complex concept intertwined with economic, social, and political facets. Its evolution in India from a socio-economic entity to a symbol of statehood reflects its multifaceted nature. This evolution underscores its role as a driver of conflict and a cornerstone of state strategies. Despite extensive research on modern Indian warfare doctrines, there remains an inadequacy in addressing certain aspects of territorial significance.

While extensive research has explored the doctrine and methodology of modern Indian warfare, a crucial aspect remains insufficiently addressed: the temporal evolution of India's warfare strategies. Examining the past can illuminate the present and inform future approaches more effectively. Key ancient texts like Kautilya's Arthashastra, along with others such as Mahabharata, Ramayana, and Dharmashastra, serve as foundational sources. A case study focusing on the ancient Indian janapada of Magadh, situated in present-day Eastern India, provides valuable spatial context. This study aims to discern the enduring significance of "janapada" in Indian warfare, both historically and presently. In ancient India, as depicted in Arthashastra, the state was perceived as a living entity with a fundamental need to grow through territorial acquisition. Kings were obliged, both by religious dictates and societal norms, to not only defend their lands but also to expand them. Rituals like "*ashwamedha*" and "*rajasuya*" were significant for establishing imperial sovereignty through conquest. Kautilya emphasized in Arthashastra that the prosperity of the state depended on acquiring new territory, whether through settlement, alliance, or conquest, making warfare an essential state activity (Punia, 2019). In contemporary times, territorial disputes remain a primary cause of conflict and war

globally. Examples include China's construction of artificial islands to expand its strategic reach, as seen in initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan and Russia's annexation of Crimea both underscore the importance of land in national consciousness and state expansionist agendas. International borders are still subject to forceful revision. For states to thrive, territorial expansion remains crucial, and warfare continues to be the means through which this expansion is pursued. Arthashastra outlines ethical guidelines for warfare, emphasizing the humane treatment of both territories (janapada) and its inhabitants (Jana). Troops were instructed to act as liberators rather than conquerors, and a policy of non-devastation was upheld, recognizing the importance of civilian populations. Dharmashastra underscores the necessity of people for the existence of a kingdom, advocating for the preservation of civilian life and livelihoods during conflicts. However, in contemporary warfare, the advent of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and nuclear capabilities has blurred moral lines, extending beyond traditional enemy force destruction (Punia, 2019). Sub-conventional warfare often deliberately targets both populations and territories, complicating ethical considerations in both war and peace.

Yogakshema: Welfare of the people

Kautilya emphasizes the concept of a welfare state, known as "Yogakshema," where the ruler's duties encompass protecting the state from external threats, maintaining internal order, and ensuring the well-being of the populace (Kamal, K., & Sahni, G). The protection of territory was crucial for fulfilling these responsibilities. Defensive measures for territory included water fortifications, forest fortifications, and mountainous fortifications. The strategic positioning of the capital city, like Patliputra in Magadha, was vital for defence and economic advantages due to its location on trade routes. Even today, the strategic location of a capital city remains significant for connectivity, defense systems, critical infrastructure protection, and cyber-security. Waterways, historically used as defence barriers, continue to play a role in modern times, such as the Indira Gandhi Canal serving as a water boundary and defense line on the Indo-Pakistan border. Kautilya emphasizes that a successful foreign policy should enable a state to progress through cycles of decline, status-quo, and advancement (Punia, 2019). Kautilya's model of Yogakshema aims at the all-round development, both material and spiritual, of society and individuals. It involves the well-being of all citizens, including the poorest of the poor, and demands a higher moral consciousness from both the elites and the

common people. The concept of *Yogakshema* is rooted in the idea of good governance, where the ruler's duties are to serve the citizens and uphold obligations and duties rather than entitlements. This model stresses personal duties, ethics, and the importance of *Dharma* (righteousness) in governance, setting it apart from modern welfare state models by emphasizing duties over rights and self-employment over state employment. India's foreign policy objectives are centered on safeguarding territory and ensuring economic well-being, with Pakistan and China's potential roles crucial in shaping India's approach. India's national interest is defined by "*yogakshema*" - security and welfare in a globalized world. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his keynote address at the Shangri La Dialogue, linked India's future economic prospects to not just the scale of the country's economy but also to the depth of its global engagement (Kamal & Saini, 2021). Emphasizing cooperation over conflict is vital due to the interconnectedness of states in the region. India's pursuit of a rules-based international order aims at enhancing security and prosperity.

Cloaked Warfare

Kautilya introduced the concept of three distinct types of warfare: open, concealed, and silent. While open warfare involves confrontation, concealed warfare, akin to guerrilla tactics, operates covertly (Kautilya, *Arthashastra*, 7.6.17: 339). Silent warfare, however, is a unique strategy where outwardly peaceful relations are maintained with an adversary kingdom while clandestine actions, such as assassinations, propaganda dissemination, and subversion, are carried out to weaken it internally. Kautilya emphasizes the importance of secrecy in silent warfare, recognizing it as an original concept attributed to him. Despite considering open warfare as the most righteous, Kautilya advocates utilizing any means necessary to ensure the consolidation and expansion of a kingdom, devoid of moral considerations beyond the welfare of one's realm. He advises kings to engage in open combat when advantageous and resort to concealed methods when circumstances are unfavorable. This pragmatic approach stands in contrast to the heroic depictions of war found in Hindu epics like the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*.

Kautilya addresses the predicament of rulers facing aggression from stronger adversaries. He categorizes conquerors into three types: righteous, greedy, and demoniacal. While submission may suffice for a righteous conqueror, appeasing a greedy conqueror requires surrendering land, goods, and wealth. The demoniacal conqueror, however, demands complete subjugation, sparing nothing. Kautilya advises weaker rulers to prioritize survival over material possessions,

suggesting diplomatic negotiations, appeasement through gifts, and covert operations to undermine adversaries. Kautilya presents a comprehensive approach to foreign affairs and warfare, encompassing diverse tactics ranging from overt military actions to covert operations and psychological warfare. His pragmatic insights into power dynamics, strategic alliances, and the exploitation of vulnerabilities remain influential in the study of statecraft and diplomacy.

India's rich historical legacy, abbreviated in the wisdom of ancient philosophers and statesmen like Chanakya, continues to shape contemporary national strategies and foreign policies. Rooted in the principles of governance and warfare elucidated in texts like Arthashastra, these insights offer enduring relevance in navigating modern geopolitical challenges. The concept of Janapada underscores the multifaceted significance of territory, serving as a symbol of national identity, economic prosperity, and strategic imperative. While modern warfare doctrines acknowledge territorial importance, there persists a need to comprehensively understand its evolution across time to inform present-day strategies effectively.

Kautilya's Mandala theory, with its intricate network of alliances and rivalries, elucidates the intricacies of interstate relations and the pursuit of national interests. This framework, while originating in ancient times, finds resonance in contemporary geopolitics, particularly in India's engagements with neighboring states like Pakistan and China. Furthermore, Kautilya's emphasis on Yogakshema elucidates the holistic vision of governance, integrating economic prosperity with societal well-being and security. This paradigm underscores the enduring relevance of good governance principles in fostering sustainable development and fostering resilience in the face of external challenges. Additionally, Kautilya's nuanced understanding of warfare, encompassing open, concealed, and silent strategies, offers valuable insights into the dynamics of conflict and diplomacy. His pragmatic approach, emphasizing the pursuit of national interests while recognizing the complexities of power dynamics, continues to inform statecraft and diplomatic engagements. As India navigates the complexities of a rapidly evolving global landscape, the timeless wisdom of ancient Indian thinkers like Kautilya serves as a guiding beacon, offering invaluable lessons in diplomacy, governance, and strategic foresight.

The time of marching, the consequences, the loss of men and money, and profit and danger, he should march with his full force, otherwise one should keep quiet – Kautilya, Arthashastra.

An arrow shot by an archer may or may not kill a single person; but skillful intrigue, devised by a wise man, may kill even those who are in the womb – Kautilya, Arthashastra.

Adaptation of strategies in the contemporary world

Chanakya's 'Arthashastra', with its focus on espionage and intelligence, provides an ancient but relevant framework for understanding the complexities of modern corporate intelligence. While the methods of intelligence gathering have evolved, the underlying strategies of Chanakya remain pertinent. The Arthashastra mentions using artists as spies to target another state. During the Cold War era, Indira Gandhi aligned India with the Soviet Union, while the US backed Pakistan. R&AW agents orchestrated regime changes in Bangladesh and Fiji, countering ISI and CIA influence. They facilitated protests against Ershad and ousted Rabuka through diplomatic maneuvers. R&AW earned global goodwill by aiding Afghan leaders and thwarting terrorist attacks (Yadav, 2020).

“अनुलोमेनबलिनंप्रतिलोमेनदुर्जनम्। आत्मतुल्यबलंशत्रुः विनयेनबलेनवा।।”

According to Chanakya, if an enemy is powerful and affluent, one should try to defeat them by adopting a strategy that aligns with their interests. However, if the enemy is powerful and malicious, one should strive to defeat them by acting contrary to their expectations. If the enemy is as powerful as you, then one should try to defeat them either with humility or with strength. In 1999's Operation Vijay, India tactically triumphed in Kargil despite its pledge not to cross the LoC. Utilizing airpower and Bofors guns, India outmanoeuvred Pakistan, prompting reflection on alternative strategies. Captain Sir BH Liddell Hart's "indirect approach" suggests options beyond frontal assaults on steep terrain (Cheema, 2021). Given Pakistan's maritime vulnerability, India could have targeted logistical bases and blockaded Karachi port, compelling Pakistan to withdraw. The lesson from Kargil underscores the necessity of exploiting an adversary's weaknesses rather than adhering to their tactics. India's victory in Vijay came at a high cost, emphasizing the importance of strategic innovation in warfare.

“अवाप्तार्थःकालंनतिक्रामयेत्”

Kautilya Arthashastra 1.15.45

This principle advises that the Leader should only handle urgent matters, delegating everything else. When faced with urgent issues, the Leader must act promptly, as split-second decisions can greatly impact the organization. However, the Leader should consult at least 2-3 trusted deputies before making important decisions, as suggested by Chanakya. The presence of emergency provisions in the Indian Constitution underscores the nation's preparedness to address diverse crises. National Emergencies, governed by Article 352, cater to threats like external aggression or internal turmoil, as demonstrated during the 1962-1968 conflict with China and subsequent internal disturbances under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. State Emergencies, outlined in Article 356, empower the President to intervene in states facing governance breakdowns, evident in numerous instances of the President's rule during Indira Gandhi's era. Meanwhile, Financial Emergencies, as per Article 360, equip the President to tackle economic crises, reflecting India's comprehensive approach to crisis management across various domains.

Kautilya viewed neighbors as inherent adversaries, prescribing the *Shadgunya Siddhant*, a strategy adaptable to circumstances. It encompasses treaty-making (*Sandhi*), initiating war (*Vigraha*), troop deployment (*Asan*), mobilization (*Yaan*), forming alliances (*Samashraya*), and a dual policy (*Dwaidbhava*) of temporary friendship with one enemy while opposing another (TOI, 2021).

India's foreign policy reflects Kautilya's principles, evident during tense relations with Pakistan (2015-2020). Despite this, India maintained peace with China, exemplified during the Doklam standoff, emphasizing diplomacy. Conversely, relations with Pakistan soured, leading to events like the Pulwama attack and the Balakot airstrike, aligning with *Dwaidbhava*. Presently, while relations with Pakistan thaw, tensions with China escalate, illustrating the dynamic application of Kautilya's doctrine. India's actions, like military exercises in Arunachal Pradesh, demonstrate adherence to *Shadgunya Siddhant*.

Chanakya or Kautilya have realist thought, diplomacy is another weapon used in the ongoing or planned battle of the prolonged warfare that was always occurring or being planned for. This is because Chanakya assumes that the country lives in a world of international relations where there are only two choices, conquering or being conquered. So, he no longer says "Get ready to fight but still hope for peace". Chanakya says otherwise, "prepare for war and plan to conquer" (Chati, Avalokitesvari, & Surpi, 2018).

Thirukkural: Thirukkural, authored by Thiruvalluvar, is a classical Tamil text advocating ethical conduct across various aspects of life, including warfare. Comprising 133 chapters, each containing 10 couplets, Thirukkural covers themes of *Dharma* (Virtues), *Artha* (Wealth and Statecraft), and *Kama* (Love). Its universal principles, devoid of religious bias, have been embraced across different faiths.

Chapter 49 – ON KNOWING THE TIME (Verses 481- 490) (Nagalinkam,2008)

481. *“pakal vellum, kūkaiyaik kākkai; - ikal vellum*

vēntarkku vēṅṭum, poḷutu.”

During the day the crow conquers the owl. So, the monarch who wishes to defeat the enemy must choose the proper time.

482. *“paruvattoṭu oṭṭa oḷukal-tiruvinaṭ*

tīrāmai ārkkum kayiṟu.”

Action at the appropriate hour is the rope that holds forever the Goddess of Fortune to the King.

483. *“aru viṇai eṇpa uḷavō-karuviyāṇ*

kālam aṟintu ceyiṇ.”

Is there anything impossible if one acts at the right time and with the proper equipment?

...

485. *“kālam karuti iruppar-kalaṅkātu*

ñālam karutupavar.”

He who without any fear aims at the conquest of the world will await the season for it.

...

487. *“poḷḷeṇa āṅkē puṟam vēṛār; kālam pārṭtu,*

uḷ vēṛppar, oḷḷiyavar”

The wise will not fly into a passion when assailed; they allow their anger to smoulder within till the right time comes.

...

488. “*cerunaraik kāṇiṅ cumakka; iruvarai*

kāṇiṅ kiḷakkām talai.”

Bow before the enemy till the time of his destruction. When the hour comes, strike him down.

489. “*eytarṅku ariyatu iyaintakkāl, an nilaiyē*

ceytarṅku ariya ceyal.”

Do not let slip a golden opportunity; when the hour dawns, attempt the impossible.

490. “*kokku okka, kūmpum paruvattu; marṅgu atan*

kuttu okka, cīrtta iṭattu.”

When the time is not ripe, be still as a heron. But at the ripe hour, attack the enemy without missing your aim.

Explanation:

Success hinges on factors like surprise, timeliness, and patience. It involves appearing passive while internally maintaining resolve for offensive actions. Just as a heron remains motionless before swiftly striking its prey, strategic action should be taken when favorable opportunities arise.

CHAPTER 59— ON SPIES (Verses 581-589) (Nagalinkam,2008)

581. “*orṅrum, urai cāṅṅra nūlum, ivai iraṅṅum*

terreṅka, maṅṅavaṅ kaṅ”

Verily the two eyes of a king are espionage and the celebrated code of laws.

...

583. “*orriṅṅāṅ orri, poruḷ teriyā maṅṅavaṅ*

korram koḷak kiṅtantatu il.”

The sure way of achieving success for a king is to get correct information from spies.

...

588. *“orru orrit tanta poruḷaiyum, marrum ḍr*

orriṇāl orri, koḷal.”

One must confirm the information supplied by one spy, by that of another.

589. *“orru orru uṇarāmai āḷka; uṭaṇ mūvar*

col tokka tērappaṭum.”

Let the engagement of one spy be not known to another. Accept the information supplied independently by three spies.

Explanation

Thirukkural underscores the significance of espionage and intelligence gathering for governance and statecraft. Verses highlight the role of spies in providing accurate information to rulers, stressing the need for discretion and cross-verification. Thiruvalluvar's counsel on maintaining separate spy networks and validating intelligence from multiple sources resonates with contemporary practices of intelligence gathering and analysis.

CHAPTER 64 - ON MINISTER (Verses 633-695) (Nagalinkam,2008)

633. *“pirittalum, pēṇikkoḷalum, pirintārp*

poruttalum, vallatu-amaiccu”

A minister must be able to separate a foe from his ally, befriend allies, and reunite separated allies.

...

673. *“ollum vāy ellām viṇai nanrē; ollākkāl,*

cellum vāy nōkkic ceyal.”

Achieve a thing wherever possible; if it were not possible adopt a cautious policy.

...

675. *“poruḷ, karuvi, kālam, viṇai, iṭaṇoṭu aintum*

iruḷ tīra eṇṇic ceyal!.”

Do a thing after carefully deliberating on five things; resources, means, the time, the nature of the deed, and the place.

...

695. “*ep poruḷum ḍrār, toṭarār, marru ap poruḷai*

viṭṭakkāl kēṭka, marai!.”

Let not the minister lend ear to the king’s secret or be inquisitive to know it. But let him listen to it when the king reveals it.

Explanation

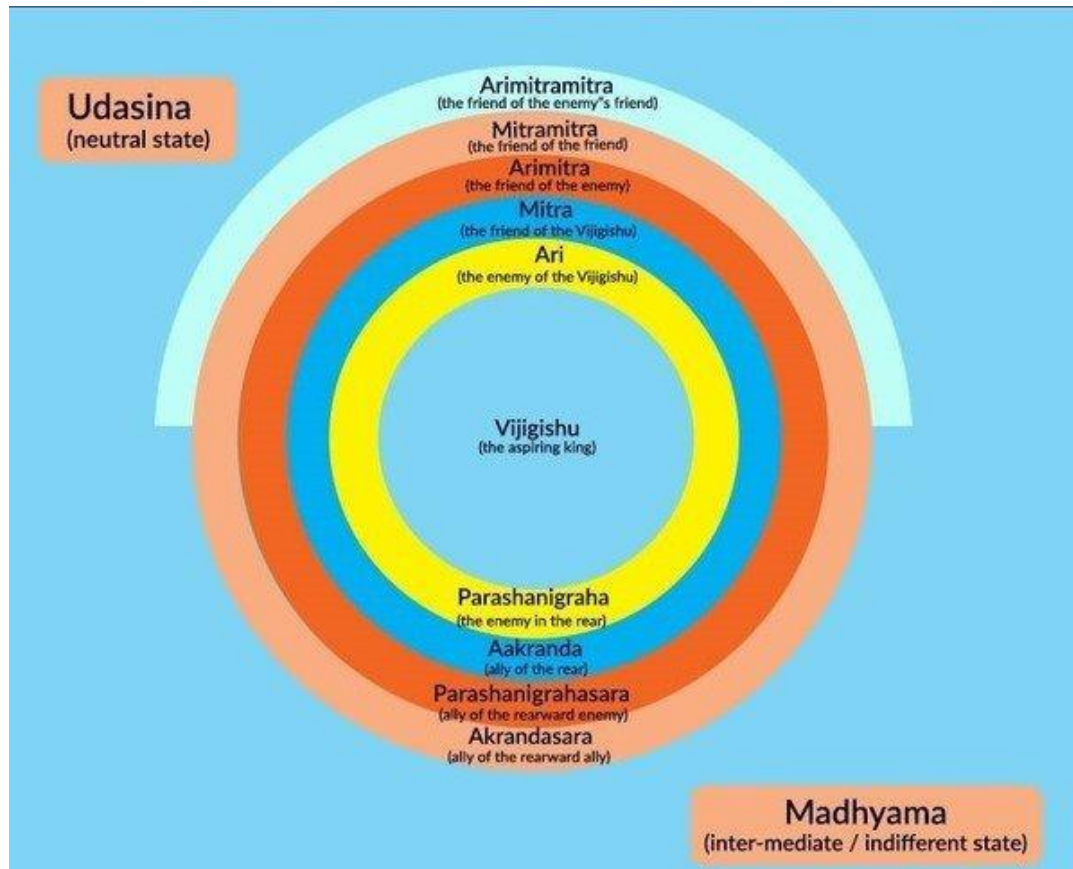
Thirukkural delves into the attributes and responsibilities of ministers in governance. Verses advocate for ministers adept at diplomacy, resource management, and strategic decision-making. Thiruvalluvar emphasizes the importance of deliberation, cautiousness, and informed action in governance, aligning with modern principles of effective leadership and administration.

Tiruvalluvar, the renowned author of Thirukkural, receives comparatively less recognition despite his emphasis on ethics, with certain sections delving into matters of statecraft and defense. Composed originally in Tamil around 200 BCE (or potentially 200 CE), Tirukural holds the distinction of being translated into more than 30 languages, placing it among the most globally translated and widely circulated books, second only to the Bible. Tiruvalluvar is traditionally believed to have been a weaver of modest means from Mylapore, Chennai, residing during the ascendancy of the formidable Chola Empire in South India, following the era of King Ashoka. Despite his humble origins, Tiruvalluvar's literary masterpiece transcended geographical boundaries, gaining particular acclaim with its French translation by Gnanou Diagou in the 19th century, a fact that brought pride to the people of Pondicherry, as Diagou hailed from their region (Nagarajan, 2005).

Kautilya's Mandala Theory encapsulated in the famous dictum "*Your neighbor is your natural enemy and the neighbor's neighbor is your friend*," (Mishra,2012), offers a profound insight into interstate relations, particularly in the context of statecraft and foreign policy. This foundational principle underscores the complex dynamics of regional power struggles and diplomatic maneuvers as outlined in Kautilya's seminal work, the Arthashastra. The Mandala Theory, as elucidated by Kautilya, revolves around the concept of "mandalas" or circles of

states, wherein a ruler seeks to expand and secure their dominion amidst a web of alliances and rivalries. Kautilya's strategic framework posits a hierarchy of relationships among neighboring states, each defined by its proximity to the central power and its stance towards other states within the mandala. Central to the Mandala Theory are the roles assigned to various states within the geopolitical landscape.

Fig 1: Kautilya's Mandala Theory



Source: www.thetruepicture.org

Ari Mitra: Kautilya refers to a state as Ari Mitra if it's a friend of the Ari state. Situated next to Mitra's front border, Ari Mitra becomes a natural ally of Ari and hence an adversary to Vijigishu.

Mitra Mitra: The state facing Ari Mitra is termed as Mitra Mitra state, signifying its friendship with Mitra. Consequently, it aligns with Vijigishu as well, being Mitra's ally.

Ari Mitra-Mitra: This state is the ally of the enemy's friend adjacent to Mitra Mitra. Hence, Ari Mitra is friendly with Ari, thus opposing Vijigishu.

Parshnigraha: Known as the state behind Vijigishu, Parshnigraha is considered adversarial, akin to Ari.

Akranda: Positioned behind Parshnigraha, Akranda is a friend of Vijigishu.

Parshnigrahasara: This state, identified by Kautilya, supports the enemy state (Parshnigraha) behind Vijigishu.

Akrandsara: Found behind Parshnigraha, Akrandsara aligns with Akranda, hence supporting Vijigishu.

Madhyama: Kautilya introduces the concept of a middle state, situated amidst aspiring Ari states, belonging to both. It's envisaged to be sufficiently powerful to influence both states positively.

Udasina: A neutral state positioned between Vijigishu and its allies, remaining neutral during conflicts and ideally more potent than the Vijigishu, Ari, and Madhyama trio.

The Mandala Theory underscores the imperative for rulers to navigate these complexities adeptly, forging alliances with potential adversaries while leveraging divisions among competing powers. Moreover, Kautilya prescribes a range of diplomatic strategies for rulers to pursue within the mandala system, including conciliation, bribery, deception, and outright military intervention. His pragmatic approach to foreign policy emphasizes the pursuit of power and security above moral considerations, urging rulers to prioritize the interests of their kingdom above all else. Despite its antiquity, Kautilya's Mandala Theory retains contemporary relevance, offering valuable insights into the intricacies of interstate relations in a globalized world. In the modern context, where geopolitical dynamics are shaped by diverse factors including technology, economics, and ideology, the principles of the Mandala Theory continue to inform strategic thinking and foreign policy formulation. In the Indian context, where the nation grapples with complex security challenges posed by neighbouring states such as Pakistan, China, and Bangladesh, Kautilya's emphasis on strategic foresight and real politics assumes particular significance. While technological advancements and changing global dynamics may necessitate adaptations to traditional theories of statecraft, the enduring relevance of the Mandala Theory lies in its emphasis on vigilance, strategic calculation, and the pursuit of national interests in a competitive international arena.

Kautilya on the question of treaty and alliance suggested “*A king should not hesitate to break any friendship or alliance that are later found to be disadvantageous*” (Mishra, 2012).

The **Saptanga Theory**, (see Fig 2) attributed to the eminent Chanakya, presents a comprehensive framework for state governance. According to Chanakya's perspective, the state consists of seven essential elements, known as the Saptanga Theory (Prabha, 2019-2021). These seven elements are:

Swami (The Ruler): The monarch, who holds the most crucial position in the state. The ruler should be native, brave, well-educated, virtuous, and treat his subjects like his own children.

Amatya (The Minister): The council of ministers, supporting officials, and subordinate staff who assist the monarch in governing the state. They provide suggestions to the king, collect taxes, develop new settlements, ensure defence, and carry out tasks assigned by the king.

Janapada (The Population): Refers to the territory and people of the state. The territory should be fertile, with abundant natural resources, and the people should be loyal, hardworking, disciplined, religious, and ready to defend their homeland.

Durga (The Fortified Capital): Represents the forts strategically located across the state to defend against foreign invasions. Forts serve as defensive structures, garrison soldiers, store provisions, and provide a safe haven for the king during emergencies.

Kosha (The Treasury): The state treasury, essential for the state's self-sufficiency and development. A rich treasury is crucial for the state's growth, filled with gold, silver, and other valuable assets obtained through agriculture, industry, trade, and commerce.

Bala (The Army): The standing army of the state, vital for preserving the state. Chanakya outlines different types of armies, including hereditary forces, hired forces, and troops from allied or enemy states, emphasizing the importance of a strong military for state security.

Mitra (Ally and Friend): The last element of the state, necessary for the state's preservation and development. Chanakya distinguishes between Sahaja Mitra (natural ally) and Kritrima Mitra (artificial ally), highlighting the significance of alliances in state affairs.

Fig 2: Saptanga Theory

Source: www.politicsforindia.com

Chanakya's Saptanga Theory provides a structured categorization of the essential components that constitute a kingdom, emphasizing the roles and characteristics of each element in effective state governance and administration. The text provided discusses the perspective of Kautilya, a political realist, who believed that nations act to maximize power and self-interest, giving little importance to moral principles in international relations. According to Kautilya, alliances are based on mutual self-interest, where allies remain friendly as long as it benefits them. War and peace are determined by the profitability and advantage to one's kingdom. The core principle is that nations act in their self-interest, leading to shifting dynamics where allies can become enemies and vice versa. Kautilya's approach emphasizes the pragmatic and strategic nature of international relations, focusing on power dynamics and self-preservation rather than moral considerations (Testbook, 2023).

Project Udbhav

Project Udbhav, initiated by the Indian Army, endeavors to unearth the profound Indic heritage of statecraft and strategic wisdom embedded within ancient Indian texts on statecraft, warfare,

diplomacy, and grand strategy. Spanning a comprehensive spectrum including Indigenous Military Systems, Historical Texts, Regional Texts and Kingdoms, Thematic Studies, and intricate Kautilya Studies, this endeavor seeks to bridge the gap between historical legacies and contemporary military practices. At its essence, Project Udbhav aims not only to rediscover historical narratives but also to cultivate an indigenous strategic vocabulary deeply rooted in India's rich philosophical and cultural heritage. With a vision to integrate ancient wisdom into modern military pedagogy, the project strives to equip the Indian Army with insights drawn from centuries-old principles to navigate today's intricate strategic landscape. Collaborating with the United Service Institution of India (USI), a leading defense services think tank, Project Udbhav endeavors to synthesize ancient wisdom with contemporary military practices, offering a unique and holistic approach to address modern security challenges. Since 2021, under the aegis of the Indian Army, there has been a project in progress on the compilation of Indian stratagems based on ancient texts. A book has been released under this project which lists 75 aphorisms selected from ancient texts. However, the first scholarly outcome of the initiative is the 2022 publication titled *Paramparik Bhartiya Darshan... Ranniti aur Netriyta ke Shashwat Niyam* (PIB, 2023) meant to be read by all ranks of the Indian Army. English translation of the title being Traditional Indian Philosophy...Eternal Rules of Warfare and Leadership.

Aim

To revive and develop an indigenous strategic vocabulary, that is deeply rooted in India's multifaceted philosophical and cultural tapestry. The overall aim is to integrate age-old wisdom with modern military pedagogy and integrate India's ancient military wisdom with contemporary military practices.

Objectives of Project Udbhav

- Exploring ancient military structures and India's native military heritage.
- Analyzing the progression of the Indian military framework and strategic ideologies.
- Instructing both novice and experienced military commanders on principles found in classical literature.
- Establishing a repository of information for scholars and members of the defense forces.
- Contemplating the integration of historical military principles into contemporary methodologies.

The recent hybrid-panel discussion, focusing on the evolution of Indian military systems and strategic thought, serves as a testament to the project's commitment to knowledge creation and dissemination. Chaired by eminent personalities and featuring scholars, veterans, and serving officers, the discussion has ignited interest and engagement in India's traditional strategic thought, laying the groundwork for future endeavors. Moving forward, Project Udbhav sets the stage for a series of engagements, including the eagerly anticipated Military Heritage Festival and academic presentations, which promise to delve deeper into the intricacies of strategic texts and their contemporary relevance. By integrating ancient wisdom into modern scenarios, the Indian Army aims to equip its officers with a nuanced understanding of international relations and strategic challenges, ensuring a more informed and effective approach to national security (Peri, 2023). Through these concerted efforts, Project Udbhav not only honors India's rich strategic heritage but also positions it as a beacon of wisdom in navigating the complexities of the modern world.

A step towards “Atmanirbhar Bharat”

Project Udbhav' has illuminated the resonance between Indian and Western scholarly perspectives, showcasing India's diverse military traditions from tribal legacies to the strategic brilliance of ancient dynasties. The exhibition and the launch of the 'Udbhav Compendium' exemplify its commitment to preserving and disseminating this invaluable knowledge for future generations. The 'Udbhav Compendium (2023-2024)' is designed to be a record for future scholarship and education on India's ancient wisdom for military affairs in particular and statecraft in general. It comprises six chapters & multiple appendices encompassing the key findings and takeaways from the activities & events organized as part of Project Udbhav. It also gives out the way forward for future research and deliberations to provide a base for subsequent studies (PIB, 2024). The Raksha Rajya Mantri, Ajay Bhatt, as the chief guest, described Project Udbhav as a guiding light for the future. He also emphasized that the spirit of *Atmanirbhar Bharat* (Self-reliant India) is not merely limited production and consumption of goods but also to make sincere endeavours to imbibe the essence of Indian thought and values in current scenarios (Singh, 2024).

Sri. Ajay Bhatt, Union Minister, aptly remarked that the ancient principle of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'... has transcended cultural boundaries and become a guiding light in international diplomacy (PTI, 2024). Acknowledging its historical heritage is crucial for India's future, a principle that Project Udbhav aims to embody. India demonstrates its

capability to enhance both diplomatic and military prowess independently. The project seeks to influence both the physical and psychological aspects of warfare. India anticipated such a scenario several years ago when it embarked on a comprehensive initiative to indigenize its defense production. Numerous smaller entities across India are now actively involved in designing and developing defense solutions. The sector has witnessed significant growth with a surge in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and startups participating in defense production. By December 2023, the Department of Defence Production and Ministry of Defence reported about 433 startups, MSMEs, and individual innovators engaged in this sector (ET, 2024).

Vipin Narang, an American political scientist, and Paul Stainland, a political science professor, assert that the insistence on ‘autonomy, flexibility, and desire to avoid dependence on stronger power’ is the core principle of Indian Foreign Policy (Bajpai, 2017). Project Udbhav represents a concerted effort to draw from India's rich historical wisdom and integrate it into contemporary defense strategies. By leveraging indigenous capabilities, India not only aims to strengthen its defense infrastructure but also enhance its strategic autonomy on the global stage. This initiative aligns with broader national goals of fostering innovation, promoting economic growth, and bolstering national security. Moreover, the emphasis on indigenization reflects a deeper commitment to reducing dependency on foreign defense technologies and fostering a robust indigenous defense industrial base. The growth of startups and MSMEs in this domain highlights their pivotal role in driving innovation and technological advancements in defense production. These developments not only contribute to job creation and economic development but also enhance India's resilience and self-reliance in defense capabilities. Project Udbhav symbolizes India's journey towards embracing its historical wisdom to build a stronger and more self-reliant future. By nurturing indigenous defense capabilities and fostering innovation, India aims to not only meet its current defense needs but also position itself as a global leader in defense technology and strategy. Project Udbhav has uncovered significant intellectual commonalities among distinguished scholars from India and the West, underscoring the alignment in their ideas, philosophies, and viewpoints. It has also spurred exploration into fresh domains by shedding light on India's tribal traditions, the historical legacy of the Maratha Navy, and the remarkable achievements of military figures, notably women.

Observation and futuristic recommendation

1. **Collaborative approach:** Project Udbhav represents a significant collaboration between the Indian army and the United Service Institute of India (USI), focusing on exploring India's ancient strategic thought and military heritage. It integrates insights from texts like Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, and Arthashastra with contemporary military practices.
2. **Inaugural Launch and Initial Impact:** Launched during the Military Heritage Festival, the project has gathered momentum under the leadership of key military and academic figures, including General Manoj Pande and various retired officers and scholars. Initial activities include workshops, seminars, and discussions on topics ranging from ancient Indian military ethics to strategic thought evolution.
3. **Research and Scholarly Engagement:** Various scholars and experts have contributed to discussions on ancient Indian traditions, military systems, and strategic ethics. Topics explored include parallels between Indian and Hellenic mythologies, the relevance of Kautilya's Arthashastra, and insights from epics like the Mahabharata.

Recommendation

To maximize its impact, Project Udbhav should expand its interdisciplinary approach beyond military strategy to include governance, diplomacy, and economic dimensions influenced by ancient Indian wisdom. This broader perspective enhances understanding and enables innovative solutions to contemporary security challenges. Additionally, the project should intensify its outreach efforts and forge collaborative partnerships with international scholars and practitioners. This collaborative engagement will foster a global dialogue on India's strategic heritage and bolster the project's credibility and effectiveness. Moreover, integrating these insights into military education and doctrine over the long term will equip future military leaders with a nuanced understanding of India's rich strategic legacy, enabling them to navigate evolving security landscapes adeptly and promote continuous learning and adaptation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Project Udbhav is a testament to the Indian Army's commitment to harnessing India's rich cultural-strategic heritage in contemporary military practices. Recognizing the limitations of current global military paradigms, heavily influenced by Western ideologies, the initiative aims to develop locally relevant concepts that draw from India's wealth of ancient

texts and manuscripts (PIB,2023). By integrating historical wisdom into modern strategies, Project Udbhav envisions an Indian Army that is both progressive and adaptable, rooted in the ethos of its philosophical and cultural legacy. Through extensive research, discussions, and studies, the project serves as a platform for the exploration and dissemination of India's often-overlooked treasures of strategic thought and military history. As exemplified by ancient treatises like Arthashastra and Thirukkural, Project Udbhav seeks to bridge the gap between past wisdom and present needs, ensuring a strategic approach that is both effective and ethically grounded.

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