



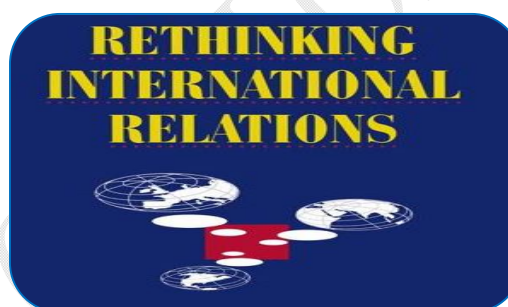
RETHINKING INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: CASE FOR EXPANSION AND ADAPTATION

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ABSTRACT :

There is a great diversity in the field of International relations regarding the basic principles that shape the International World. The continual outpouring of new theories, thoughts, research methods and areas of intense importance is testimony to the heterogeneity of the field as well as the fertility of academic pens. Because of the diverse intellectual commitments of International Relations professors, a number of approaches have emerged concerning the relations of political communities. This paper studies these approaches and tries to make a case for adaptation as well as expansion in the field of International relations.



KEYWORDS : *continual outpouring , International Relations professors , relations of political communities.*

INTRODUCTION:

The major international theory is basically west dominated, be it realism, liberalism, constructivism, critical theory or any other, there is very less contribution available by the non western scholars. The western Nation-State system has thus become the sole source of empirical data in the field. This orientation has caused International Relations to become an exceedingly parochial and one sided discipline.

As a result of this self imposed restriction, almost no attention has been paid to the political patterns, state behaviours, and ancient histories of the non western states. It is very rare when the International relations publicists have depicted Asia or Middle East or to even China relatively, as areas in which prior to the arrival of the Europeans, there were distinct modes of handling external affairs. It is disappointing when the rich cultural traditions of the non western states are ignored on the basis of their so called cultural or political or social inferiority which is so not the case. The result of such exclusion is that many students have the impression that these non western states were unacquainted with the problems of power politics before the Europeans came and settled here. Whereas the fact is that centuries before the age of the nation state, each in its own way had become a great power, dominated a significant area of the world and developed a distinctive pattern of state behaviour that reflected its own unique civilization, its geographical conditions and the political pressures to which it was exposed.

Barry Buzan and Amitav Acharya's famous article, '*why there is no non western international theory*' makes the argument more precise that the politics of non western states have been ignored may

be not willingly but out of ignorance. A more connected history of the political evolution of the Hindus involving a thorough study of all available resources is yet to be done. This paper draws a comparison between the Hindu and western realism which may throw a beam of light over the state system, diplomatic experience, the problems of statecraft, power politics, duties of the ruler, and the role morality and religion played in the society of the Hindu states which will be helpful in drawing a more precise picture of the states in ancient India and their foreign policies and thus have a better insight of these non western states by which new analysis could be constructed from their perspective.

It is quite baffling when we see the lack of attention given to the Hindu system of inter-state relations before the coming of the Muslim invaders or the advent of the British. Most of the authors today write about the India that was under British rule or that existed after the achievement of independence, but as a student of international relations, we should look at it from its very own history, we must take under consideration the period that existed between the Mauryan and the Gupta dynasties which were considered to be the Golden Age of the subcontinent to investigate the inter-state system because as historian K.M. Panikkar has noted, "If Indian administration of today is analysed to its bases, the doctrines and practices of Chanakya will be found to be still in force. A study of the ancient Indian history reveals that Hindu statecraft is far from being the least sophisticated".

Although a number of impressive political treatises were written during the 3rd and 6th century B.C. the one generally ascribed is KAUTILYA'S ARTHASHASTRA. Kautilya, the political adviser and personal confidant of Chandragupta Maurya authored the masterpiece of ancient Hindu statecraft, he described and analysed in considerable detail, a wide range of political problem that confronted the Hindu state. In the sections devoted to inter-state relations, he established his reputation as being "the greatest Indian exponent of the art of government, the duties of kings, ministers and officials and the methods of diplomacy" (Palmer, 1955).

From the days of Plato and Aristotle, western thinkers have emphasised on matters related to ideal and just form of governments, origin of state, causes and reasons for war. India thought on such questions but she had no schools in the western sense. Though India had no political philosophy, the science of statecraft was much cultivated and numerous works have been done regarding that. The literature in Later Vedic period tells us about the political life, thought, social customs, and religion in that era. The most important textbook as described earlier, is the Kautilya's Arthashastra. The next most important source being that of Ved Vyas's Mahabharata, of which the twelfth volume, known as 'Santiparvan', "is a collection of many disparate passages on statecraft and human conduct" (Basham, 1963). From the Gupta period the main sources of political studies are: Nitisara of Kamandaka, the Nitivakyamrita by Somadev Suri and the Nitisara attributed to the ancient sage Sukra. In a section from Mahabharata, Kanika, who is described as the 'foremost of ministers' in the science of politics, offers his King advice on how best to deal with his allies and enemies. 'Kings' he says 'should sometimes feign blindness and deafness, for if important to chastise, they should pretend not to notice the faults that call for chastisement' (Ganguly, 2003). He also cautions in the same speech that, "In speech thou shouldst ever be humble, but let thy heart be ever sharp as razor and when thou art engaged in doing even a very cruel and terrible act, thou shouldst talk with smiles on thy lips" (Chandra, 1883; Ganguly, 2003). Another similar verse from Mahabharata explains the role of politics in following words:

"When politics becomes lifeless the triple Veda sinks, all the dharmas [i.e. the basics of civilization] howsoever, developed, completely decay. When traditional state-ethics are departed from, all the basis of the individual life are shattered"
(Mahabharata, Santi - 63.28.29).

"In politics are realised all the forms of renunciation in politics are united all the sacraments, in politics are combined all knowledge: in politics are concerned all the Worlds" (Jayaswal, 1967). Thus it can be argued that such texts of high nobility that relates to political realism so closely, deserves to be more widely known. Richard Rosecrance has aptly mentioned that, 'Political realism is best viewed as an attitude regarding the human condition' (Rosecrance, 1986).

Roger Boesche acknowledges that, "Max Weber was the first to see that the writings of Machiavelli, when contrasted with the brutal realism of other cultural and political traditions, were not as extreme as they appear to some critics" (Boesche, 2002). Max Weber opines that "Truly radical 'Machiavellianism' in the popular sense of that word is classically expressed in Indian literature in the Arthashastra of Kautilya and compared to it, Machiavelli's 'The Prince' is harmless (Boesche, 2002). Machiavelli's *The Prince* has provided countless generations with a powerful explanation of the main sources of state action. If political actions are judged by consequences then, Machiavelli in 'The Prince' suggested, "one must be willing sometimes to use political means that are violent, cruel or commonly thought as immoral" (Machiavelli, 1532). As, Quentin Skinner has noted, Machiavelli agreed that the proper political goals are 'honour, fame and glory'. Machiavelli in respect to his advices to the king opines that a prince, "Must acquire the power to be not good, and understand when to use it and when not to use it, in accord with necessity" (Boesche, 2002). When compared to this, Kautilya as the key adviser to the emperor Chandragupta Maurya, was willing to use harsh means to seize power from the unjust and evil Nanda kings in order to protect India from foreign invaders, similar to how Machiavelli justified violence to bring a lawful order to unify Italy. Not to misunderstand that, Kautilya ever encouraged the ruler for war. As K.M. Panikkar quotes Chanakya saying: "When the advantages to be derived from peace and war are equal one should prefer peace for disadvantages such as loss of power and wealth are ever attendant upon war" (Panikkar, 1953). Thus it is quite noticeable that in the time of mutual distrust and warfare as was all the state systems, Indian thinkers always resorted to peace not war.

Kautilya also prescribed all sorts of duties for a king, and divided his day in an 18-hr day. According to which he should:

"Have self-control, having conquered the inimical temptations of the senses, cultivate the association with elders; keep his eyes open through his spies; be ever active in promoting the security and welfare of the people; ensure the observance (by the people) of their dharma by authority and example; improve his own discipline by (continuing his) learning in all branches of knowledge" (Rangarajan, 1992). In words of Machiavelli, "It is not necessary for a ruler to have good qualities, but it is very necessary to seem to be having them. It is well to seem merciful, faithful, humane, sincere, and religious but it must be understood that a ruler cannot observe all those things which are good in men, being often obliged, in order to maintain the state, to act against faith, charity, against humanity and against religion" (Machiavelli, *The Prince*).

We find a similar comparison drawn by Kautilya: "A ruler who is situated between two powerful rulers may seek protection from the stronger of the two, or he may make peace with both of them on equal terms. Then he may begin to set one of them against the other by telling each that the other is tyrant and thus cause dissension between them" (Rangarajan, 1995). This was probably the policy used by the British against the Hindu rulers when they came to India. At yet at another place Kautilya describes that, "one should bear one's foe on one's shoulders as long as time is favourable. When however, the opportunity has come one should break him into fragments like an earthen pot or stone" (Kangle, 1986). Thus we can say that Kautilya's work as Machiavelli's pursues the same values. Thus, both opine that a ruler must maintain his power and further spread his influence without being subject to standards of public morality. Both value intrigue and adopt on the whole a unrelenting and merciless approach to politics, valuing power, influence and success in the world of politics above all other considerations. They study problems of conquering states, dilemmas in political morality and do not really accept the rationale and the necessary limitations of a system of states of equal power. These theories are relevant even today as; the Realist school maintains that personal standards of right and wrong are inapplicable when deciding the questions of international society. The national interest of the state as argued should be of paramount importance.

Thus as distinguished scholar Dr. C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar of Annamalai University opines, "Throughout the rich heritage of Indian literature, there are innumerable passages illustrating every known theory of government and temporal power. But it should not be forgotten that political thought is an integral aspect of Indian philosophy, except in relation to such doctrines as rebirth and Karma, the

meaning of the Indian heritage and the traditional Indian approach to world problems cannot be understood" (Brown, 1953).

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