

Anvikshaki- Understanding through Arthsastra Perspective

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Abstract— Kautilya’s Arthasatra has been the most referred and discussed text ever since it was composed. In the very initial chapters, Chanakya has used the term Anvikshaki while discussing about the four branches of education. One among the four is Anvikshaki and the other three are Trayi, Vartha and Danda Niti. The present paper explores the syllabus or features of Anvikshaki in Arthasatra. Anvikshaki is like a capsule that comprises of Samkhya, Yoga and Lokayata. Samkhya enumerates twenty five Tattvas or true principles to understand the universe and human behaviour. Yoga darshan teaches to master over temporal senses by enhancing the Satva quality to achieve harmony in the human life. Lokayata is about pragmatic understanding of the temporal activities around human life. As per Kautilya, the Anvikshaki type of education is essential in making the ruler and other all administrative personnel. The present paper also tries to explore Anvikshaki in the contextual significance in the NEP 2020.

Key words: Anvikshaki, Samkhya, Yoga, Lokayat.

I. INTRODUCTION

Any education policy comprises of purpose, strategy and tools. Thus Anvikshaki and New Education policy may be analysed on the basis of purpose and curriculum. The aim of Arthasatra was to acquire, consolidate and expand the land. Land (Arth) word can be interpreted in different spheres such as agriculture, trade, political entity etc. Responsibility of nurturing the environmental and natural rules and values along with professional skills among the young generation has been kept in the hands of teachers in Arthsastra. Kautilya emphasizes on the content of the teaching and learning.

National Education Policy, 2020 (NEP) envisions a massive transformation in education through– “an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high quality

education to all, thereby making India a global knowledge superpower.” It will prepare Indian youth to meet the diverse national and global challenges of the present and the future.

II.OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

The present paper adopts an exploratory methodology to find out two objectives. They are

1. To analyse the education content mentioned in Anvikshaki of Kautilya’s Arthasatra
2. To examine the NEP-2020 that claims the incorporation of Anvikshaki in the content to protect the Indian knowledge Tradition and Indian ethos in research.

III.METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for the current paper is completely exploratory and analytical. The sources for the exploratory method were primarily Kautilya’s Arthasatra and its interpretation by Pullela Sriramachandrudu, R Shamasastri and R P Kangle. The secondary sources include interpretations of samkhya, yoga and Lokayata philosophies from various platforms such as internet and textual sources. The strategy is to examine the connections between the Jnan – Trayi veda, Varta; Pragya- Samkhya and Wisdom; and Satya- Lokayata the key features in the Anvikshaki. The journey of ancient education starts with teacher centric and culminates in to student centric basing on the incremental growth in the intellect of the student.

IV.ARTHASASTRA – ANVIKSHAKI

Kautilya’s Arthsastra is the oldest and comprehensive treatise on the art of governance. It begins with the

nurturing the young prince and administrative personnel through education, appointment of ministers, structure and functioning procedure of the departments of state, mentions the civil and criminal law, foreign policy, and the measures to be taken at all levels from personal forts to courts and in and outside of the territory of the state.

Arthasastra is not an independent text on ancient Indian governance but a systematic compiled text based on the earlier scripts, traditions and principles. Indian Political Philosophy has unique feature of continuity and inclusivity, where all earlier philosophy and perspectives are envisaged and added with updated illustrations. Similarly, Arthasastra was referred by the later authors as well. To mention few among them include Kamandaka, Kalidas, Bharavi and Dandi. According to R Shamsastry, This seminal text Arthasastra was written somewhere between 321 to 300 BCE. The text Arthasatra consists of 15 adhikaranas. Each Adhikarana is classified in to chapters. There are total 150 chapters. Arthasatra is written in a dialogue form, where the earlier perspectives are discussed and the conclusion is followed with Kautilya's proclamations on the matters of the subject of Adhikarana. The first chapter titled VINAYADHIKARIKAM contains 18 chapters. It consists of the following subjects in the each chapter. Chapter 1- Introduction to all Adhikaranas of the Arthasastra; Chapter 2- Education and Anvikshaki; Chapter 3- Education and Trayi; Chapter 4- Education and Varta Dandaniti; Chapter 5- Service to and training under the old experts; Chapters 6&7- Winning over of senses with illustrations; Chapter 8&9 - Appointment of Ministers & Secretaries, Chapter 10 – Purity and Integrity tests; Chapter 11& 12 – Appointment to secret services; Chapter 13 – Public opinion; Chapter 14 – Control over opponent groups; Chapter 15 – Secret consultations; Chapter 16 – execution of diplomacy; Chapter 17& 18 – Protecting the prince Chapter 19 – Functions of the King; Chapter 20 – Construction of the Royal fort; Chapter 21- Self-protection.

V. EDUCATION

What is education as per Kautilya?

According to Kautilya “ಅನ್ವಿಕ್ಷಕಿ ತ್ರಯಿ ವಾರ್ತಾ ದಂಧನಿ

ಶಿಕ್ಷೈತಿ ವಿದ್ಯಾ ಃ”

“Education is comprised of Anvikshaki, three Vedas, business and state apparatus”

The followers of Brihaspati's Arthasastra (Barhaspathyulu) believe that business and state craft comprise education; Trayi Vedas are mere shield of display to get respect from the society without which society treats them as atheists. Barhaspathya school believes that thrayee does not have any role to play for those who expertise in temporal deals (loka vyavahar). Ousanas (followers of Sukracharya) believe that Dandaneeti (state craft) alone is education, as it is the beginning and base for wellbeing of the society.

The three Vedas that are considered the "threefold knowledge" are the Rigveda, Yajurveda, and Samaveda. Rigveda contains hymns about mythology; Yajurveda contains instructions for religious rituals; and Samaveda contains hymns about religious rituals. The fourth Veda is the Atharvaveda, which contains spells against enemies, sorcerers, and diseases. This is implied in the Trayi Veda when Kautilya mentions about Vedas.

Samkhya and Yoga are two of the six classical schools of Indian philosophy that share a close relationship. Samkhya is the dualistic philosophy that views reality as made up of two principles: purusha (consciousness) and prakriti (nature). Samkhya emphasizes self-knowledge, detachment from the material world, and the importance of discipline and focus. It also describes the universe as the result of combinations of various principles, including the five gross elements, the five fine elements, and the five organs of perception and activity.

Yoga philosophy emphasizes asanas, breathing, and ascetic practices. Yoga offers practical methods to achieve the goals outlined by Samkhya. The Samkhya provides the theoretical foundation, while Yoga offers the practical methods. Together, they form a comprehensive system for understanding the universe and attaining spiritual liberation.

Lokayata philosophy emerged in India around 600 BCE as a reaction against the religious worldview based on the Vedas. Lokayata philosophy, also known as Charvaka, emphasizes on Materialism. It believes that all things in the universe, including consciousness, come from the four fundamental elements: earth, water, fire, and air. It adopts empiricism through sensory perception is the only reliable source of knowledge. It promotes hedonism, the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain are the ultimate goals

of life. It rejects scriptures and inference while understanding the reason behind the occurrence of anything. It is based on the individuality alone and avoids spiritualism and ritualism.

Danda Niti is a concept in ancient Indian political philosophy that refers to the use of force and punishment to maintain order and achieve political goals. The purpose of Danda Niti includes the acquisition of power, preservation of power, and fair distribution of resources and benefits. The king is embodied as *daṇḍa*, or control, and is the centre of control. The king is bound by the same ethical principles as his subjects. Punishment is used to deter people from committing crimes or re-offending. For example, the Mahabharata recommends that prisons be placed near a high road so that offenders' suffering can be seen as a deterrent. The danda is a weapon made from sacred wood, such as Palash, Nyagrodha, or Asvattha. The wood should be of a specific length, free of knots and burn marks, and should look good.

Varta was a significant subject of knowledge in ancient India that referred to the national economy, or economics. It included the following aspects:

1. Agriculture: The creation of economic surpluses through agriculture was a key part of Varta.
2. Animal husbandry: Domesticating animals was a key part of Varta.
3. Commerce: Commerce was a key part of Varta.
4. Money lending: Money lending was later included in Varta.
5. Artisanry: Sculpting and handicrafts were later included in Varta.

According to Kautilya's Arthashastra, Varta was one of four types of knowledge needed to run a state. The other three types of knowledge were the Vedas, the science of government, and the science of reasoning. Kautilya believed that all other knowledge, wealth, and human prosperity came from these four types of knowledge.

VI. ANVIKSHAKI

Kautilya considers education as the tool to know any particular subject or concept. He says "Sankhyam yogah lokayatam chetya Anvikshaki"- 'Anvikshaki is comprises Samkhya, Yoga and Lokayata'.

While three Vedas teach righteous (Dharmadharmas); business teaches profit and loss; Dandaneeti teaches rules of adherence and punishment; Anvikshaki helps

in understanding the core subject/concepts through rational/logical thought and adoption of strategies to estimate the strengths and weakness of the concepts. Anvikshaki teaches to get psychological strength during the occasions of bad habits and development process as well. It promotes the expansion of the wisdom in terms of intellect and thinking faculties, skills in communication and capacities in work execution.

Samkhya and Yoga are in vogue in India since times immemorial. Both are inter connected and provide knowledge about nature and features of the temporal and spiritual worlds.

Lokayata is presently considered as atheism, as it promotes temporal aspects and discards the existence of any other world. In ancient period Lokayata School received equal respect and honour among intellectuals. It is said that 'Anvikshaki is the lamp to all knowledge, solution to all actions, and shelter to all beliefs'.

Anvikshaki is the combination of Samkhya, Yoga and Lokayata. Samkhya explains the evolution of the universe and human interaction with nature from number perspective. Yoga explains the techniques to deal with nature to achieve an ideal balance with nature. Lokayata trains the logical understanding of the happenings from an empirical perspective. Reasoning and temporal growth are the outcomes of Lokayata.

From Pallela Sriramachandrudu's point of view Kautilya believed that Lokayata balances the human behaviour even in the absence of Vedic knowledge on Trayi.

Samkhya

Samkhya philosophy explains the constitution of nature from number perspective. It says that nature is driven by Purusha (Consciousness) and Prakriti (Matter). Prakriti consists of Pancha jnendriyas – Five sense organs; Pancha Karmendriyas- 5 organs of work/action; Pancha bhuta- five components of nature; and Pancha Tathvas- five elements of nature's components. Their number altogether sum up in to twenty (20). They are cognized by the Mahat/Buddhi; Ahamkara and Manas, which compound together Three (3). 20 + 3 act upon Prakriti (1). Thus they are 24 elements. When they join with Purusha (Consciousness) they represent in to evolution. Thus Samkhya explains the evolution of interaction of the

nature with any living being. The major tenets in the Samkhya philosophy are:

- Theory of causation (satkaryavada)
- Concept of duality, two independent entities: Purusha (the consciousness principle) and Prakriti (non-conscious principle)
- The theory of evolution of the material universe (25 elements, called “tattwas” – Purusha, Prakriti and 23 evolutes)
- The concept of liberation (moksha, kaivalya)
- Theory of knowledge (pramana)
- Concept of the three gunas – sattva, rajas and tamas.

1. Theory of causation (Satkaryavada/Parinamavada): This theory states that the effect pre-exists in the cause. Evolution is a real, literal transformation (Parinama) of Prakriti into the material universe. Radhakrishnan praises this for establishing a law of continuity in nature, closely mirroring modern evolutionary science. Vivekananda, in his seminal 1895–1896 New York lectures compiled in Raja Yoga, explicitly establishes Samkhya as the scientific framework that validates the practical psychology of Yoga. In his lecture "A Study of the Sankhya Philosophy," he proclaims Kapila (the founder of Samkhya) as the "father of all philosophy" and uses Samkhya's evolutionary models to explain the physics and mechanics of the mind.

2. Concept of duality: Prakriti(matter) and Purusha(consciousness) are two independent entities, which cause the evolution. The evolution is simply the unfolding of what was previously folded up (involution). A seed can only evolve into a tree because the tree was already involved in the seed.

3. 25 elements of the Universe:

The Two Eternal Foundations:

1. Purusha: Pure and infinite consciousness;
2. Prakriti: The unmanifest, raw material cause of the entire universe.

The Internal Organs (Antahkarana)

3. Mahat / Buddhi: The cosmic and individual intellect; responsible for judgment and discrimination;
4. Ahamkara: The ego-sense; "I-awareness.";
5. Manas: The central coordinating mind; synthesizes raw sensory data and coordinates actions.

The Five Senses of Knowledge (Jnanendriyas)

6. Chakrus: Sight (Eyes);
7. Srotra: Hearing (Ears);
8. Ghrana: Smell (Nose);
9. Rasana: Taste (Tongue);
10. Tvak: Touch (Skin)

The Five Organs of Action (Karmendriyas)

11. Vak: Speech (Vocal organs);
12. Pani: Grasping (Hands);
13. Pada: Locomotion (Feet);
14. Payu: Excretion (Anus);
15. Upastha: Generation (Genitals)

The Five Subtle Elements (Tanmatras)

16. Shabda: Sound-potential;
17. Sparsha: Touch-potential;
18. Rupa: Color/Form-potential;
19. Rasa: Taste-potential;
20. Gandha: Smell-potential

The Five Gross Physical Elements (Mahabhutas)

21. Akasha: Ether / Space (Evolved from Sound-potential);
22. Vayu: Air (Evolved from Touch-potential);
23. Agni / Tejas: Fire (Evolved from Color/Form-potential);
24. Apas / Jala: Water (Evolved from Taste-potential);
25. Prithvi: Earth (Evolved from Smell-potential)

The Transmission Chain: External instruments (eyes) send data to the internal organs (brain centers), which flash it to the mind (Manas). The mind passes it to the ego (Ahamkara), which then presents it to the intellect (Buddhi). Finally, Buddhi reflects it onto the ultimate Spirit (Purusha).

4. The concept of liberation (moksha, kaivalya): Samkhya states that Purusha never actually becomes bound by matter. The False Identification: Bondage is caused by Avidya (ignorance) or Aviveka (lack of discrimination). The Purusha reflects its light onto the intellect (Buddhi) and mistakenly identifies with the changing states, pains, and pleasures of the mind and body.

5. Theory of knowledge (pramana): In classical Samkhya, knowledge is not a passive reception of data, but a dynamic transformation of the intellect (Buddhi) that reflects pure consciousness (Purusha). Samkhya epistemology is highly rational, accepting exactly three valid means of knowledge (Pramanas) out of the various methods used in Indian philosophy. It acknowledges three sources of valid knowledge- direct perception (drishtam); inference (anumana); and valid testimony (apta-vachana).

6. Concept of the three gunas: Sattva, rajas and tamas —are not mere attributes or qualities of matter. They are the actual substance, components, and interwoven forces that make up Prakriti (Nature). Every physical object, mental state, and emotional experience in the universe is a unique combination of these three cosmic strands.

Samkhya asserts that the human intellect is entirely capable of discovering truth on its own. In Kautilya's Arthashastra, Samkhya is repositioned away from its traditional goal of spiritual liberation (Moksha) and used instead as a vital tool for applied rationalism, material science, and strategic inquiry.

VII.YOGA

Yoga is intimately paired with Samkhya philosophy. It accepts the entire evolutionary framework of Samkhya but adds a practical methodology and a cosmological element. Theoretical vs. Practical: If Samkhya is the theoretical science and psychology of the mind, Yoga is the practical manual and experimental therapy. The 26th Tattva (Theistic Yoga): While classical Samkhya recognizes 25 elements and rejects a creator God, Yoga introduces a 26th element: Ishvara (a personal God).

In Yoga Darshana, Ishvara is not a creator who judges, but a unique, perfect Purusha who serves as an ideal archetype and a practical object of meditation to help the seeker steady the mind. Patanjali defines the absolute purpose of the system in the second verse of the Yoga Sutras: "Yogash Chitta Vritti Nirodhah"

Chitta (The Mind Complex): Comprises the intellect (buddhi), ego (ahamkara), and lower mind (manas).

Vrittis (Mental Whirlpools): The constant modifications, thoughts, desires, and fluctuations that ripple through the mind.

Nirodha (Cessation): The deliberate stilling, silencing, and mastery over these mental waves. The Goal: When the lake of the mind (Chitta) becomes perfectly still, the true Self (Purusha) stops misidentifying with the ripples and rests in its own pristine nature. This final state of absolute isolation and freedom is called Kaivalya To achieve this mental stillness, Yoga Darshana outlines a highly structured, sequential Eightfold Path (Ashtanga Yoga). It progresses from external social ethics to internal states of deep absorption: External Disciplines (Bahiranga) Yama (Social Ethics): Restraints to harmonize social

relationships. These include non-violence (ahimsa), truthfulness (satya), non-stealing (asteya), continence (brahmacharya), and non-possessiveness (aparigraha). Niyama (Personal Disciplines): Practices to purify the individual. These include cleanliness (saucha), contentment (santosha), austerity (tapas), self-study (svadhyaya), and surrender to a higher power (ishvara pranidhana). Asana (Posture): Patanjali defines this simply as a steady and comfortable sitting position (sthira sukham asanam) to prepare the physical body for long periods of meditation. Pranayama (Breath Control): Regulation of the vital life force (prana) through the breath to calm the nervous system and steady the mind. Pratyahara (Sensory Withdrawal): Checking and turning the five senses inward, cutting off the mind from external distractions. Internal Disciplines (Antaranga) Dharana (Concentration): Fixing the mind's attention onto a single point or object without wandering. Dhyana (Meditation): An uninterrupted, continuous flow of awareness toward that chosen object of concentration. Samadhi (Absorption): The culmination where the meditator's ego dissolves entirely, leaving only the object of meditation shining forth.

Kautilya uniquely repurposes Yoga to serve two foundational pillars of statecraft: Ruler Discipline and Socio-Economic Welfare. It equips the king with a sharp, disciplined intellect to analyze good versus bad state policies (naya and anaya) objectively. Kautilya stresses that a king who cannot govern his own mind cannot govern a kingdom. He heavily adopts Yogic psychology to outline the process of Indriya-Jaya—the absolute conquest over the senses and mental afflictions. Kautilya points out that a ruler who yields to emotional over-reactions will destroy their own strategic judgment (Buddhi). The self-discipline taught by Yoga ensures that the king remains level-headed, emotionally resilient, and intellectually steady in both crisis (vyasane) and triumph (abhyudaye).

VIII.LOKAYATA

Lokayata's philosophy asserts that the physical world is the only reality that matters. This directly justifies Kautilya's core thesis: Material Wealth (Artha) is the supreme human pursuit, because both spiritual duty (Dharma) and sensory pleasure (Kama) depend entirely on economic security. This worldview serves as the philosophical engine for the Arthashastra's

massive chapters on manufacturing, state monopolies, agricultural expansion, and aggressive tax collection. Kautilya extracts the radical realism of Lokayata to build a pragmatic, data-driven framework for state governance. Lokayata teaches the king to view the world through pure physical cause and effect. A king trained in this mindset does not rely on prayers, stars, or religious omens to fix a famine or win a war. Instead, he focuses entirely on human effort, physical engineering, and economic strategy. While Kautilya allows public religious rituals to maintain social order and morale, his internal administrative choices are completely secular, pragmatic, and unburdened by religious sentimentality.

IX. SIGNIFICANCE OF ANVIKSHAKI – NEP 2020

The National Education Policy places significant emphasis on the development of the creative potential inherent in every individual. Its foundation rests on the principle that education must cultivate not only cognitive capacities, including the foundational abilities of literacy and numeracy and higher-level cognitive skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving, but also social, ethical, and emotional capacities and orientations.

The philosophy of NEP-2020 says that the rich legacy of ancient and perpetual Indian knowledge and philosophy has been a guiding light for this Policy. Pursuing knowledge (Jnan), wisdom (Pragyaa), and truth (Satya) has always been regarded in Indian thought and philosophy as the ultimate human objective. In ancient India, education aimed not only at acquiring knowledge for life in this world or in life beyond schooling, but for achieving complete realization and liberation of the self.

The Indian education system has produced illustrious scholars who have made seminal contributions to the world's knowledge in numerous fields such as mathematics, astronomy, metallurgy, medical science and surgery, civil engineering, architecture, shipbuilding and navigation, yoga, fine arts, chess, and more. Indian culture and philosophy have had a profound impact on the world. These invaluable legacies to humanity's heritage must be preserved for posterity, nurtured, researched, enhanced, and put to new uses through our education system.

The teacher is at the core of fundamental reforms in the education system. The new education policy must

support the re-establishment of teachers, at all levels, as the most valued and indispensable members of our society, as they genuinely shape the next generation of citizens. The new policy must do everything possible to empower teachers, enabling them to perform their jobs as efficiently as possible. By ensuring livelihood, respect, dignity, and autonomy while instilling in the system basic methods of quality control and accountability, the new education policy must assist in recruiting the very best and brightest into the teaching profession at all levels.

The NEP 2020 aims to create conducive learning environment with a focus on experiential learning. It also aims to reduce curricular content to enhance critical thinking and essential learning. Logical thinking and a perfect clarity on the cultural and social practices are inclusive part of Kautilya's content of education. Anvikshiki (the ancient Science of Inquiry and Critical Reasoning) serves as a foundational philosophical pillar. Originally codified by Kautilya as the premier science that illuminates all other disciplines, Anvikshiki is actively leveraged by the NEP to shift India's educational paradigm away from rote memorisation and toward critical thinking, logical analysis, and holistic, multidisciplinary inquiry.

Kautilya famously stated that Anvikshiki is the lamp of all sciences because it sits at the intersection of logic, ethics, and material realism. NEP 2020 directly mimics this by eliminating strict boundaries between arts, commerce, and STEM fields. By applying Anvikshiki, an engineering student can naturally evaluate the philosophical and ethical impacts of AI, while a humanities student can utilize algorithmic and scientific reasoning. For decades, mainstream education treated critical reasoning as a purely Western invention.

X. CONCLUSION

The NEP-2020 aims self-sustenance, which had been part of Arthashastra. Kautilya discusses the education part in his treatise from second chapter to eighth chapters and Kautilya mentions the apprenticeship under elderly experienced personnel.

The inclusion of Anvikshiki unveils that India has its own highly advanced, indigenous tradition of scientific inquiry, logic, and rational debate. It proves to contemporary students that ancient Indian thought

was not strictly mystical, but deeply anchored in empirical observation and algorithmic mathematics.

In statecraft, Anvikshiki was historically used to subdue the ego (Ahamkara) and vices (Shadripus) of rulers so they could make unbiased decisions based on real-world facts.

NEP 2020 uses this principle to integrate ethics, humanism, and emotional intelligence into the core curriculum. It aims to graduate students who possess stable intellectual judgment, enabling them to navigate complex social, political, and economic crises objectively.

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