POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE IDEAS OF MANU AND KAUTILYA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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The present study is a comparative analysis of the major political and administrative ideas of Manu and Kautilya, such as, their views on state, king and kingship, administration of justice, inter-state relations and diplomacy. A comparative relevance of ideas of Manu and Kautilya in modern times has also been dealt with. Kautilya's administrative and judicial structure was hierarchical in nature. As for justice, he emphasized on the principle of equity and immediacy. As for law and order, he believed that law was a royal command enforced by sanctions. Both Manu and Kautilya had conceived the state as a seven-limbed. Both had defined the various qualifications an ideal king should possess, duties of the king in administrative, legal, financial, religious and military fields. They had dealt with minor issues like the education of princes, marriage, style of living, their safety and the like. To them, state was to serve a definite purpose with a specific end and they accepted it as a positive good. They conceived the state in its definite form. Both Manu and Kautilya accepted the importance of the king and his sovereignty.

Both Manu and Kautilya recognized the importance of dharma both as the end of the state and as a source of law. Whereas Manu attached great importance to the sacred character of the laws, consistent with the rational outlook adopted by him, Kautilya laid greater stress on the state-law than on the sacred law.

The maintenance of foreign relations formed a very important department of the public activity of every state, and, naturally foreign
policy was regarded as an extremely useful art. Both Manu and Kautilya had offered wide-ranging and truly fascinating discussions on war and diplomacy. They had analysed the methods of diplomacy, principles determining the foreign policy, role of the diplomats and spies.

What prevented the king from becoming despotic and autocratic was their acceptance of Dharma as the supreme authority to which they were as much subject as the ordinary citizen. Both had agreed on the important role played by the ministers in the administration of the state.

They regarded impartial administration of justice as one of the main duties of king. The king was considered to be the fountain of justice. Like Manu, Kautilya permitted the privileges of caste system in the administration of justice; still he was more considerate towards the lower castes than his predecessors.

Both Manu and Kautilya had provided an exhaustive and illustrative description of the duties, responsibilities and role of the king, prince(s), ministers, and other state officials. As far the state’s political administration, they provided a full-fledged commentary as to how this should be effectively undertaken.

Current times make prominent the present applicability of this because the need for a sound and comprehensive state administration has been accentuated by the tendency of the powerful to flout the law and do so repeatedly.

Thus Manu and Kautilya are still relevant for political and administrative purposes, although there are certain changes in the political and administrative set up according to the changed environment.