PREFACE

Human life cannot sustain without labour. Right from the beginning of the known history humans are engaged in different types of vocations. The history of labour in ancient India is still an area to be unearthed well. Numerous works in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali provide ample materials for the study of the history of ancient Indian labour. Arthasastra of Kautilya is the foremost significant source in this regard. The present work entitled ‘PROFESSIONS AND LABOUR SYSTEMS IN ARTHASAstra’ is an inquiry of the history of labour and systems of labour prevalent in early India, in the light of the information supplied by Arthasastra.

The entire thesis is divided into six chapters including introduction and conclusion. The Introduction of the thesis explains the relevance of the present study and also the source and method of the research. As the date of Arthasastra is a significant factor in a historical approach to the topic to be analysed a general outline of the discussions on the date and authorship of Arthasastra has also been given in this portion. The second chapter Nature of Labours and Sections of Labourers in Early India is a prelude for the study intended to be carried out in the thesis. It examines the nature of labour and the categories of the populace engaged in different professions. The third chapter Professions and Sections of Labourers in Arthasastra is an interrogation into the different professions and their nature, in the context of ancient India, based on Arthasastra. Arthasastra speaks of different systems of employments. The fourth chapter Labour Systems in Arthasastra analyses the systems of labour which have been in vogue in the period of Kautilya. Social Status of Professions and Labourers in Arthasastra, the fifth chapter in the thesis, is a close examination of the social and economic status of different categories of labourers revealed
through the descriptions of Kauṭilya. The sixth chapter is the Conclusion of
the study, in which the important aspects pertaining to the topic of research
have been enumerated and the main observations derived through the study
are presented.

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