CHAPTER VI

SALARIES AND EMOLUMENTS
Salaries or emoluments paid to persons in the employ of the State, form an important aspect in the running of a governmental machinery. Since numerous dynasties flourished in Northern India till 300 A.D. it is neither easy nor possible to suggest any fixed pattern which might have been followed in this regard. Kautilya has devoted an entire chapter to this very essential aspect of administration in his Arthasastra. He presents an interesting account of the salaries which were to be paid to officers at all levels of administration along with certain outlines which were to be used as guidelines by monarchical governments. That salaries should be commensurate with the status and office of a person, was the first principle advocated by Kautilya. In other words the salary should be sufficient to allow a person to maintain the standard of his office and also his own personal dignity. Kautilya believed that if an officer was unable to maintain himself with dignity on the meagre salary he received from the State, he would be more susceptible to the lure of lucre and ultimate corruption. For persons closely and intimately connected with the King and his court, Kautilya recommends very high salaries as he believed that low salaries would tempt a person to look for alternate avenues of

2. Ibid., V.
3. Ibid., V. 3.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
income thereby falling prey to dishonesty.\textsuperscript{1} Kautilya has assigned fixed amounts for even the Crown-Prince, the Chief-Queen and members of the royal entourage and has not regarded them as dignitaries with special privileges, prerogatives and even access to the royal treasury.

The salaries were to be fixed according to the nature of the work done by the officials concerned. An example is Kautilya's recommendation that the Superintendents and Doorkeepers of the Royal Harem were to draw salaries equal to those drawn by the Collector-General and the Provincial Governors.\textsuperscript{2}

Another principle laid down by Kautilya was that, the expenditure on the salaries of all the employees of the State was not to exceed one-fourth of the total income of the State.\textsuperscript{3} This gave the State an opportunity to build up large reserves of funds from the rest of the income. But we must keep in mind the fact that expenses incurred on defence, fortifications etc. had to be paid from these very reserve funds, mentioned above. From the detailed scheme of salaries given by Kautilya it becomes clear that his scheme refers to a very large empire or State. An example would

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{A.S.,} V.3.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid.
\end{enumerate}
elaborate the point at hand. Not more than eight persons could draw 48,000 panas per annum,\textsuperscript{1} which would mean an expenditure of 3,84,000 panas per year on eight persons alone, implying that the State in question was indeed a very large one.

Yet another guideline put down by Kautilya was that the facilities and comforts provided by the State to its employees should be at par with those enjoyed by their peers in society.\textsuperscript{2}

Usually as a routine, posts were transferable and so the State provided facilities and payment to meet the necessary expenses incurred when moving from one place to another.\textsuperscript{3}

In this context we need to mention that even in those days there were certain posts which were deemed non-transferable.\textsuperscript{4} Many officers belonging to different cadres were allowed to stay on permanently in certain places.\textsuperscript{5} Unfortunately, we have no details to render on this interesting aspect of the services. But it would be safe to

\textsuperscript{1} A.S., V. 3.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., II. 16.
\textsuperscript{4} Basak, R.G., Asokan Inscriptions, p. 120; Mookerji, R.K., Asoka, p. 51 ff.; Majumdar, R.C., A.I.U., pp. 73, 79, 81.
\textsuperscript{5} A.S., II. 16; V. 3.
assume that such non-transferable officers must have been persons holding key positions in the State and enjoying the King's confidence, the transfer of whom might have been detrimental to the interests of the State.¹

Certain allowances were given to officers who had to make tours on official business of the State.² This reminds us of Asoka's injunction to his officers to make tours of inspection every five years.³ These expenses were to be paid from the exchequer of the State. Officers in distant provinces were instructed to make tours after every three years.⁴

Another interesting feature of the Mauryan administration was the bonus given to the officers by the State.⁵ Allowances were also given in case of sickness, child-birth etc.⁶ It is not very clear from the Arthasastra whether the families of the officers serving abroad were looked after and cared for by the State or not. It is possible that a part of their salaries were given to

4. Ibid.
their dependents here in the homeland while the remaining was handed over to these officers working abroad.

The employees of the State were entitled to receive pension from the State. These pensions were of several types as detailed by Kautilya. The wives and sons of officers who died in the service of the State, especially while performing military duties, were looked after by the State and given fixed pensions. Supposed when officers of the State died in a foreign land during a spell of service abroad, their dependents received adequate grants till the time they were able to fend for themselves. Kautilya went on to suggest that in the case of the accidental death of an officer while in service, the family of the deceased was entitled to an adequate compensation from the State.

Considerable incentive and impetus was given to officers to encourage them to work diligently in the services of the State but there was a provision of fines too for officers who were guilty of negligence in their duties. This practice was popular even in the early days of Bimbisara who offered rich rewards to persons who

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., II. 9.
performed their task competently and heavy punishment to those guilty of dereliction of duty.  

Another aspect regarding the salaries of the employees of the State was that they were paid in cash or kind or both.  

There were certain services, the details of which are not given in the Arthasastra, where salaries were paid in cash and kind with the specification that a certain part of the salary was to be compulsorily paid in cash.  

The ratio of one adhaka in kind being equal to 60 panas in cash, is not understood very clearly but this much is certain that when salaries were paid in kind, then in principle, a certain part had to be paid in cash too.

We hear of certain types of honoraria paid to persons employed on a regular or irregular basis by the State for certain specific purposes. A courier carrying a message was paid 10 panas for every yojana (roughly four and a half miles) he covered.  

If in case the courier had to go between 45 to 100 yojanas, he was to be paid double the

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., V.3.
amount for each yojana he traversed.¹ The extra payment must have been in view of the hazards and difficulties encountered during the course of such an extensive journey.

Minor officers who were responsible for shifting the population of villages from one place to another were also provided for by the State. These were regular officers who were paid from 500 to 1000 panas after they had been successful in relocating the entire population in a new village which had all the facilities deemed necessary.² Kautilya suggests guidelines for the prevention of overcrowding in villages by advocating that not more than 100 families of higher castes and 500 to 1000 families of lower caste agriculturists should be settled in a single village.³ If the families exceeded these numerical norms they were to be settled elsewhere in a place which had agricultural and pasture land, water for irrigation and trees for fruit and timber; in other words a place suitable for habitation, survival and development.⁴ Officers responsible for settling such families were paid 500 to 1000 panas or according to the difficulty of the task assigned to them.

The heavily centralized Mauryan scheme of administration did not provide for State officers to receive land-grants but

2. Ibid., p. 87.
4. Ibid.
later epigraphical evidence reveals that land-grants were made to officers in lieu of cash salaries in ancient times.\textsuperscript{1} For a few centuries after the Mauryas cash payments were in vogue but in the subsequent period of Indian history dynasties did give land-grants in lieu of services. There is a possibility that this practice was started by the Kushanas in the first or second century A.D.\textsuperscript{2} The Satrapal system was introduced in Northern India by the Kushanas and epigraphic evidence confirms the appointment of Satraps in their far-flung empire\textsuperscript{3}. Being foreigners they were not fully conversant with the system prevailing in India and so they began to utilize the services of Indian officers by issuing them land-grants in return for services rendered. This practice was based on certain other considerations, some of which are noted in brief, below.

We have already seen that the Mauryan scheme envisaged payment of salaries both in cash and in kind. As has been noted earlier, revenue too was realized in both. This meant that the State had enough in foodgrains or kind to partly disburse to its servants salaries in kind, the rest however was paid in cash. The foreign rulers would have found such a system unfavourable and must have been anxious to make all realizations from their subjects in cash. The granting of land charters to the State

\textsuperscript{1} Cf. Sircar, D.C., \textit{L.T.A.M.I.}, p. 31.
\textsuperscript{2} Majumdar, R.C., \textit{A.I.U.}, pp. 146, 327.
\textsuperscript{3} Sircar, D.C., \textit{Sel. Ins.}, pp. 137, 141.
servants was a convenient adjustment by which the employees in the service of the State were remunerated and the State treasury saved its cash too.

But the practice of land-grants did not mean that the system of cash payment was done away with, altogether. Persons from distant places and employed in the higher services were paid in cash. Similar was the case of employees in armed and foreign services.\(^1\) There is no specific evidence of later times when persons sent out of the State were paid an allowance (\textit{Bhatta}) as was the case under the Mauryas.\(^2\)

It appears that in the early times there was a graded system by which salaries were paid in cash which was later gradually replaced by land-grants. It would be difficult to suggest at what particular stage the Mauryan system was given up, but in all probability it was changed to land-grants with the advent of the Kushanas. Since the dynasties in subsequent periods found it convenient they continued it along with the older system of cash payments. Thus we see that all three systems of cash, kind, and land-grants were in use, as far as payment of salaries were concerned. The gradation of salaries in the Mauryan times is detailed to us by the \textit{Arthasastra}, but unfortunately we do not have similar evidence for any other period of our study.

\begin{enumerate}
\item A.S., V. 3.
\item Ibid.
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