CHAPTER- III

Organisation of Army
[The Four-fold and the Six-fold Divisions : Recruitment and Training etc.]

Ancient India bequeathed to us a good number of works (śāstras) on statecraft as well as warcraft. The warcraft or military science, called Dhanurveda, provides enough information in this discipline. Even the kāvyas and dramas among the creative literature throw much light in this area. Mahākavi Māgha, by way of exhibiting his scholastic feat, has betrayed his knowledge to statecraft as well as warcraft in his famous work, the Śiśupālavadha.

Ancient Indian authorities held that a state had seven prakṛtis (constituents elements), viz., the king, the minister, the treasury, the territory, the fortified city, the army and the ally.1 Mahāgha regarded the seven elements as the limbs of a vijigīṣu (prakṛtyāṅgo pārthivalī).2 Out of the seven constituents mentioned above, svāmi (the king) and amātyas (the ministers) constituted the Central

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1. cf. svāmyamātyayajānapadadurgakośādaṇḍamitrāṇi prakṛtayāḥ /
   -Āṣ. VI.1.1.
2. cf. buddhiśastraḥ prakṛtyaṅgo ghanasāṅṛtīkācukāḥ /
   cāreksaṇo duṭamukhaḥ puruṣaḥ ko’pi pārthivāḥ //
   -Śiśu. II. 82.
Government, which exercised the sovereign powers and imparted the central unity. The rāṣṭra (territory), durga (forts), bala (army) and kośa (treasury) constituted the resources of the state.

The Indian thinkers further regarded the seven constituents of the state as the limbs (anāgas) of the body politic. As in human body, some limbs like the brain and the eyes are more important than the others, like the ears or hands, similarly, the king and the ministers may be more prominent than others, like the forts and the allies of the constituents. No doubt, each limb by itself may look less important than the first two, but it is actually indispensable to the human body, for its functions cannot be efficiently discharged by any other.3 In the same way, the state can exist and function properly only if all the limbs of its body politic become mutually integrated and co-operate with each other.4

The army (bala or đaṇḍa) occupies a very significant position in the state-organism. The authorities on statecraft, however, seem to have place the prakṛtis (the seven elements) of state organism in order of relative importance, and thus army (bala or đaṇḍa), is

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3. teṣu teṣu tu kṛtyeṣu tattadaṅgaiṁ viśisyate /
yena yatsādhyaṁ kāryaṁ tattasmiṁśreṣṭhamucyate //
   -MS., IX, 297.

4. ātmavāṁstvalpadeso 'pi yuktāḥ prakṛtisampaḍā /
   nayajīnāḥ prthivīṁ kṛtsnāṁ jāyatyeva na hiyate //
   -As. VI. 1. 18.
placed sixth in the order, after kośa (the treasury). Kauṭilya, in his Arthaśāstra, holds a discussion on this, and preferred kośa to bala or daṇḍa when he says, “The army indeed is rooted in the treasury. In the absence of a treasury, the army goes over to the enemy or kills the king. And the treasury, ensuring the success of all endeavours, is the means of observing virtuous acts and of enjoying desires."⁵ In the Kāmandakīya Nītiśāra, however, one may find a more positive inclination to idolise the army. As for instance, Kāmandaka says that, “even the foes of a king, possessing an efficient army, are turned into friends; a king with a strong army rules the earth unhindered.”⁶

Four-fold Army (caturaṅgabala):

There are evidence to show that army was organised even in the Vedic period as may culled from the Vedic literature. In the Vedic period the army appears to have consisted of two divisions, viz., foot-soldiers (patti) and car-warriors (rathīn). During the post Vedic period, however, two more corps, viz., of horse and elephants, were incorporated, and thus there came into vogue a new category,

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⁵. kośamūlo hi daṇḍah kośābhāve daṇḍah param gacchati, svāmināṁ vā hanti sarvābhīyogakaraśca kośo dharmakāmahetuḥ. // -As. VIII. 1.47-49.

⁶. arayo'pi hi mitratvaṁ yānti daṇḍavato dhruvaṁ / daṇḍaprayo hi nṛpatirbhumaktyākramya medinīṁ // -Nītisāra, XIII. 37.
i.e. the four-fold army (*caturaṅgabala* or *caturaṅgacamu*).\(^7\) The expression *caturaṅgabala* implies that the army consisted of four types of fighting units, viz., infantry, cavalry, chariot and elephant divisions. Māgha in his Śiśupālavadha mentioned *caturaṅgabala* when he depicts the *dvanda-yuddha* of Śiśupāla and Airāvata, the elephant of Indra; as Śiśupāla himself was very strong and brave, he even leaves behind the *caturaṅgabala* while fighting with Indra.\(^8\)

By *caturaṅgabala* Māgha perhaps indicated the four types of fighting units, stated above. And by *caturdanta* he meant the elephant Airāvata which is known to have four tusks.

Kauṭilya in his *Arthasastra* mentioned that each of the four divisions of fighting units has an Adhyakṣa, who is concerned with the equipment and training of his unit as well as recruiting efficient men into it. Kauṭilya offered a discussion in the *Arthasastra*\(^9\) as to the duties of the Āsvādhyakṣa, Hastyādhyakṣa, Rathādhyakṣa and Pattyādhyakṣa. Māgha, in his Śiśupālavadham makes mention of *caturaṅgavāhini*.\(^10\) In the speech of the

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8. *svabhujadvayakevalāyudhaścaturaṅgāmapahāya vāhinīmiḥ / bahuśaḥ saha śakradantinā sa caturdantamacchadāhavaṁ // -Śīśu. XVI. 69.*
9. *Aś. II. Chaps. 30-33.*
ambassador of Śiśupāla it has been stated that although Cedirāja Śiśupāla possessed caturaṅgabala, he used to fight with caturdantina (Airāvata) with his two arms alone. He regards his two arms (bhujādvayam) as his weapons. This verse as a whole, however, indicates the prowess of Śiśupāla who fought several times with Indra.

It is to be noted here that this four-fold division of the army is often mentioned in early Sanskrit and Pāli-Prākṛt literature. In course of time, it is transformed into a literary convention, and the convention outlasted the extinction of one of the arms. It is also to be noted here that the relative position of the four ‘arms’ differed from age to age. Both the Vedic and the Epic testimony show that in the earliest period of our history, the chariots constituted the most important arm. From the fourth century B.C. onwards, however, the elephant came to occupy the first rank in the military service. The infantry and the cavalry always remained in a subsidiary position in the military system of the country. The judicious distribution of work and responsibilities of the different constituents of the army makes interesting study which is briefly discussed in the following few paragraphs.

Chariot:

The chariot constituted one of the most important and
indispensable instruments of war in the days of the Vedas. In the Rgveda we have a hymn addressed to the war chariot. It goes:

“Lord of the wood, be firm and strong in body; be bearing as a brave victorious hero. Show forth thy strength, compact with straps of leather and let thy rider win all spoils of battle.”

The importance and value of chariot in warfare may be found in the epics also. In the Mahābhārata it is found that Kṛṣṇa was the charioteer of Arjuna in the Kurukṣetra war and earned the appropriate sobriquet of pārthasārathi.

Kauṭilya in his Arthaśāstra makes mention of a special officer, called the Superintendent of Chariot (rathaḍhyakṣa) and lays detailed rules regarding the sphere of his duties. Regarding functions of chariots Kauṭilya stated that guarding one’s own troops, repelling the four-fold army in battle, capturing, setting free, reuniting broken ranks, breaking up unbroken ranks, causing terror, showing magnificence, and making a frightful din,—these were the functions of chariots. According to Kauṭilya, the normal height of a chariot was ten puruṣas while the width ranged from six to

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12. As. II. 33.1-6.
13. svabalaraksā caturāṅgalavapraśedhah saṅgrāme grahaṇāṁ mokṣaṇāṁ bhinnasandhāmabhinnabhedanāṁ trāsanāmāṁ dāryāṁ bhūmaghoṣaśceti rathakarmanī / -As. X. 4. 15.
twelve puruṣas.\textsuperscript{14}

Gradually, however, the use of chariots in war declined, and the final disappearance of chariots from India’s military system probably came about in the eighth century A.D.\textsuperscript{15}

There is no mention of the use of chariot in the Harṣacharita, considered the seventh century’s most sensational work by Bāṇa, court poet of emperor Harṣavarddhana of Kaṇauj. Kauṭilya in his Arthaśāstra,\textsuperscript{16} while holding a discussion on the subject, recommends suitable grounds desirable for chariots to move. Perhaps lacking of such grounds as well as restricted employment might have reduced their utility as instruments of war.

Elephantry:

The next important force of war consisted of elephants. There is, however, no reference in any of the Vedas regarding the use of elephants in war. The initial steps of utilising the elephants for

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\item \textit{daśapurūṣo dvādaśāntaro rathāḥ /} -\textit{Aś. II. 33. 3.}
\item 10 \textit{vitasti} in height and 12 \textit{vitasti} in length. The width would not vary to any great extent in the case of different \textit{rathas}. puruṣa seems to be used in the sense of \textit{puruṣa}.
\item cf. “\textit{dvādaśaṅgulī vitastiḥ chāyāpuruṣāṁ ca /}” -\textit{Aś. II. 20.10.}
\item vide, The Art of War in Ancient India, p. 26.
\item Level, clear, not causing jolting, not causing wheels to get stuck, not obstructing axles, not broken with trees, thickets, creepers, treestems, fields under water, pits, ant-hills, sand and mud, and free from cLEFTs are grounds for chariots for fighting. Thus, the chariots needed dry and plain soil for their use, that they could not be employed in hilly tracts or morasses, nor in the rainy season. And these restrictions perhaps led to the disappearance of war-chariots gradually. -\textit{Aś. X. 4. 1-3.}
\end{itemize}
military purposes were probably taken in the post-Vedic period. In both the Jātakas and the Epics, elephants are represented as taking part in military/army operations. In the *Arthaśāstra* Kauṭilya provides us with some hints about the military thinking of his age, when he states that, "the victory of kings in battles depends mainly upon elephants; for elephants having large bodily frame, are able not only to destroy the arrayed army of the enemy, his fortifications and encampments, but also to undertake works that are dangerous to life."\(^1\) Kāmandaka also gives importance to elephant, when he says, "the kingdoms of kings depend on elephants and that one elephant, duly equipped and trained in the methods of war, is capable of slaying six thousand well caparisoned horses."\(^2\) Kauṭilya makes mention of a special officer of the state for the care of elephants and lays down the *hastyādhyakṣa*'s duties and other particulars connected with the office. According to him, "the superintendent of elephants should carry out the guarding of elephant-forests, and look after the stables, stalls, places for lying down and the amount of work, food and fodder for male and female elephants and cubs, that are being trained or are competent

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18. yuddhayogyo mahādanti sannaddhaḥ sādhvadiśṭhitaḥ / tiṣṭhennarapaterdvāri vegavāñgśca turāṅgamaḥ / -Nitisāra. XVI. 10.
for work, the assignment of tasks to them, the straps and implements and the accoutrements of war, and physicians, trainers and group of attendants.”

The services of elephants in wars in ancient times were undoubtedly great. They marched in front of the army clearing the way of trees and shrubs. On account of their importance in battle, only animals possessing distinct characteristics are recommended to kings for their stud. The elephantry fought with both missile and short arm weapons during the war. From the Gupta period onwards, their principal weapons appear to have been bows and arrows. Māgha, in his Śiśupālavadha speaks of bowmen discharging their arrows from the back of elephants. Besides the warriors, the elephant carries a driver, called aṅkuśadhara, because he always carries an aṅkuśa or hook to guide and direct the elephant. Māgha in his Śiśupālavadha mentioned aṅkuśa. Kauṭilya also makes mention of aṅkuśa.

The training of elephants for war must have involved a more

19.  
hastyadhyakṣo hastivanarakṣāṁ damyakarmakṣaṁtānāṁ hastihastini- 
kalabhanāṁ śālāsthānasavyākarmavidhāyasapramāṇāṁ 
karmasvāyogāṁ bandhanopakaraṇāṁ saṅgrāmikalamāṁkāraṁ 
cikitsakānīkasthaupasthāyī kavargāṁ cānūtīṣṭhet / -As. II. 31.1.
20.  śīśu. XVII. 9, 24, 39.
21.  pracoḍitāḥ paricitayantarābhirmiśādhibhirviditayatāṅgkaśakriyāīh / 
gajaḥ sakṛtkaratalalolanālikāhatā muหuḥ praṇadiaghantamāyayuḥ // 
-Śīśu. XVII. 35.
22.  aṅgkuśaveṇyuṇyatraṅḍikamupakaraṇāṁ / -As. II. 32. 13.
laborious process than the training of horses. As discussed in the *Arthaśāstra*, the training of elephants consisted of several clearly marked stages. It may further be noted that elephant trainers developed a code of technical terms in various parts of the country. Māgha in his *Śīṣupālavadha* has made mention of drivers speaking words of encouragement to the elephant.

**Camels:**

It is noteworthy that besides horses and elephants, sometime camels are also found to be constituting a part of the army. Kautilya makes mention of camel-army in his *Arthaśāstra*; the camels are probably employed when the theatre of hostilities lay in deserts.

**Cavalry:**

Cavalry constituite the third division of the army common to both east and west. It is difficult to say when cavalry, in the proper sense of the term, came to be used in war in India. Horse riding was known as early as in the Vedic age, but there is no convincing evidence of the use of cavalry in battles during that period. In the epics also, the cavalry is recognised as a separate unit of the army, but it is of no real value and is wholly unorganised. The cavalry as an organised force may be traced to the post-Vedic period. The
classical chronicles show that the Indian cavalry in the age of the Mauryas was no longer remained inefficient and unskilful. The gradual emergence of the cavalry as an efficient unit of the army further attested by the nature and variety of functions assigned to it in the *Arthasastra*. In one place, Kauṭilya says that, “investigation of the ground, the halting place and forests, securing land without unevenness, water, ford, wind and sun’s rays, destruction of supplies and reserves or their protection, cleansing and steadying the army, extension of raids, repelling as with arms, making the first attack, penetration, breaking through, confronting, capturing, setting free, causing a change in the path of pursuit, carrying off the treasury or the prince, assault on the rear and tips, pursuit of the weak, accompanying, and the work of rallying,—all these are the functions of cavalry.”

Nevertheless, it must be noted that in ancient India, the cavalry did never come to occupy the front rank in the army organisation. As in the time of Purus, so also in the time of Prthvirāja much greater reliance appears to have been placed upon the elephant than upon the horse.

The riders themselves generally appear as wearing ordinary tunics, but sometimes they wore breast-plates or coats of mail and

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strong helmets. Kauṭilya in his *Arthasastra* says that, "horse-array is a centre of armoured horses, flanks and wings of unarmoured." Thus he contemplates an array of pure cavalry, in which the centre is to be occupied by heavy armoured horsemen, and the flanks and wings by those without armour. Concerning the weapons, the *Mahābhārata* usually describes them as armed with spears (*śakti*), lances (*prāśa*) and short swords (*ṛṣṭi*). In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, besides the above, they are assigned battle-axes (*paraśvadha*), maces (*gada*) and hammers (*mudgada*). Māgha in his *Śīṣupālavadha* speaks of mounted troops as armed with *kuntas* (spears).

Most of the ancient writers dealing with the art of war have emphasised the careful selection of horses for the army. Kauṭilya was very much conscious on this point, as it appears from his observation: "...the breed of Kāmboja, Sindhu, Āraṭṭa and Vānāyu countries are the best; those of Bāhlika, Pāpeya, Sauvīra and Taitala are of middle quality; and the rest ordinary (*avarāḥ*). Māgha, in his *Śīṣupālavadha*, also refers to the horses belonging to Āraṭṭa and Bāhli. Sometimes horses were classified by means of their

27. *-aśvavyūho-varmiṇāmurasyaṁ śuddhānāṁ kakṣapakṣāviti* / *-Aś. X. 5. 35.*

28. cf. *Mbh.*, Bhīṣmaparvan, 57. 11, 19 etc.
29. cf. *Rāmāyaṇa*, Yuddha-kāṇḍa, 52. 11.
30. *Śīṣu*. XVIII. 23
31. *Aś. II. 30. 29*
physical proportions also. The *Arthasastra* provides us with a detailed account of various movements employed for the training of horses. "Moving at a gallop, moving at slow, leaping, moving at a trot (*dhārā*), and responding to signals are movements of riding horses." The style 'dhārā' is well known to the horse-trainers of later epochs. In the *Śiśupālavadha*, we can read of a horse being actually taken out to practise these movements. Out of the five kinds of movements, Māgha refers to *dhārā* only.

Kauṭilya makes mention of a special officer, called the Superintendent of Horses (*aśvādhakṣaḥ*), and lays down rules regarding the sphere of his duties.

**Infantry:**

The last, but not the least important division of the army, is the infantry or foot-soldiers. As everywhere else in the world, so in India, the original fightingman was the foot-soldier. In Vedic times, the infantry (*patti*) fought alongwith the car-warriors. Kauṭilya speaks of the infantry as a separate army department

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33. *Aś. II 30. 32.*
34. cf. *avyākularā prakṛtamuttaradheyakarma- dhārāḥ prasādhayitumavyatikārṇarupāḥ / siddhatānu ṃukhe navasu vithīṣu kaścidaśvam- valgāvibhāgakusalo gamayāṃbabhūva // -Śiśu. V. 60.*
    also, cf.
    *arvāṇāṁ tu gatirdhārā vibhinṇā sa ca paṇiḍadāḥ / āśkanditaṁ recitaṁ valgitaṁ plutaraṁ* iti *Vaiśayanti //*
35. *Aś. II. 30. 1-2.*
under the charge of a special officer of the State. According to him, "armoured infantrymen are a counter-force against the fourfold troops."  

Again, "bearing arms in all places and seasons, and military activity are the functions of infantrymen."  

All the classes of infantry, archers, swordsmen and javelin bearers had shields to protect themselves. Kauṭilya is also of the opinion that an array of pure infantry may be formed with the men with shields in front and archers in the rear. Māgha in his Śiśupālavadha describes the infantry as armed with swords and shields.

Kauṭilya recommends that there should be a Superintendent of the foot-soldiers (pattyādhyakṣa), and who "should be conversant with the strength or weakness of hereditary, hired, bonded, allied, alien and forest troops, with military operations in water or on high ground, with open or tactical fighting, in trenches or in the open, by day or by night, and with the employment or absence of employment of the foot-soldiers in different types of work."  

The Six-fold division of the Army:

Besides the above classification of the army into four divisions, there was also in vogue a six-fold (śadaṅga) division, presumably

36. Aś. IX. 2. 29.  
37. Aś. X. 4. 16.  
38. Aś. X. 5. 36.  
39. Śiśu. XVIII. 4, 19, 21; XIX. 55.  
40. Aś. 2. 33. 7-8.
based on the area or source of recruitment. In the *Raghuvarṇiśa* of Kālidāsa there is reference to six-fold army (*śaṅgabala*). While he proceeds for conquest, Raghu was accompanied by six types of forces.\(^41\) The earliest reference to this six-fold division of the army may be traced in the *Arthaśāstra*. This six-fold army was classified as follows: the hereditary troops (*maula*), the mercenaries (*bhṛta*), the guild levies (*śrenī*), the soldiers supplied by feudatory chiefs or allies (*suhṛdabala*), the troops captured or won over from the enemy (*dviṣad-bala*), and the one composed of the forest tribes (*aṭavibala*).\(^42\) In the *Nītīprakāśa* we are told of nine-fold division of the army. These nine *āṅgas* of the army are *patti, senāmukha, gulma, gana, vāhinī, pṛtanā, cāmū, anikini* and *aṇṣauhiṇī*. cf.

\[
\text{pattissenāmukham gulmarī gano vai vāhinī tataḥ} / \\
pṛṭanā cāmvanikinyau tataścāṇṣauhiṇī smṛtāḥ //}\(^43\)

Gustav Opert in his introduction to his edition of the *Nītīprakāśikā* (p. 9) quotes/cites a verse (source not mentioned) containing names of eight components of the army in connection with the four-fold divisions, *viz., maula, maitra, bhṛtya* and *aṭavīka*. cf.

\(^{41}\) *Raghu*. IV. 26.  
\(^{42}\) *Āś*. X. 2. 1-9.  
\(^{43}\) The strength of these nine divisions of the army are depicted in the first thirty one verses of Chapter seven.
rathanāgahayā yodhāh pattayah karmakārakāh /
cārā daiśikamukhyāśca dhvajanyastāṅgikā matā //
i.e. chariot, elephant, horses, warriors, footsoldiers, artisans, spies and persons who know foreign countries and languages form the army.

Of the different classes or kinds of troops stated above, the early authors on warcraft seem to have attached the greatest importance to the maulas or hereditary troops. Graded qualitatively, the merceneries come after the maulas, which is followed by the guild levies, and then the allied troops, while the troops composed of the forest tribes were placed at the bottom of the scale. Kauṭilya furnishes elaborate reasons in support of the above gradation. According to him, “a maula force is more important than the bhṛta force inasmuch as it is dependant on the king for its existence, and is the receipient of constant favour from the latter. Being always proximate to the king, quick in rising for action, and under control, hired troops are better than banded troops. Again, banded troops are better than allied troops for the reason that they belong to the same country as the king, have the same objects in view and have the same rivalry, resentment, success and gain as the king himself. Being not restricted as to place and time, and because of having a common purpose, allied troops are better than alien troops.
Being under the command of Āryas, alien troops are better than the forest troops.  

However, both of them (the army of the enemy and that of the forest tribes) have plunder as their objectives and in fact they were professional plunderer. In the absence of plunder and in times of difficulty, they proved as dangerous as lurking snakes.

It may be noted here that the same practice of associating predatory tribes with the army continued in later ages among the Marathas and the Moghuls. It is well known that the Piṇḍāries often accompanied the Maratha army in its expeditions, and were employed not so much for fighting as for plundering the country through which they passed. In the same way, privileged and recognised theives, called ‘Bederia’ were also known for their march with the Moghul army. These were the first to invade the enemy’s territory, where they plunder everything they find.

The Recruitment and Training of the Armed-Forces:

As in today, recruitment and training of personnel of the services are two important aspects of militarism for all times and climes, and ancient India could not be an exception to this. However, we have no reliable concrete evidence as regards the recruitment and training of the troops in the early Vedic times, 44. As. IX. 2. 14-18.
nor we have any reliable evidence to show whether rulers or the states concerned of the time of the early periods had maintained any sort of a regular or standing army. A regular army means a class of fighting men devoted to the services of the state and a proper army means that it must be efficient. Army in ancient India consisted of different categories of which the standing or regular army of the state constituted the basic force (*maulabala*), “recruited from families of hereditary soldiers, loyal to the ruling dynasty,” and who are said to be “inspired by the same feelings and interests as the king himself.” (*tadbhāva-bhāvin* - *Ās*. IX.2.14).

The king is advised to raise troops of other categories (*sapra*), apart from the *maula*, keeping in mind the categories of troops raised by his enemies (*Ās*. IX. 2. 23).

Coming to the matter of recruitment, the early Indian authorities on statecraft, held that of the troops of four *varṇas*, —Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra,— the troops composed of “each earlier one is better for equipping for war than each later ones on account of superiority of spirit.” This implies that the troops composed of men of the Brāhmaṇa-*varṇa* are superior to those of the Kṣatriya-*varṇa*, and in that order, the troops composed of men of the Kṣatriya-*varṇa* are superior to those composed of men of the Vaiśya-*varṇa*, and so on and so forth. In the early history of India,
we do not come across such troops composed purely of the Brāmaṇas, even though we find the names of many high ranked military commanders belonging to the Brāhmaṇa-varṇa.

The above view of the earlier authorities, Kauṭilya rejected it summarily (9.2.25) and said that the Brāhmaṇas are more pliant and are prone to gratification. Kauṭilya observes that, “A Kṣatriya army, when trained in the art of weapons is better, or a Vaiśya or a Śūdra army, when possessed of great strength.” Kauṭilya, thereby suggested that men from all four varṇas could be recruited to the army, subject to proper training in the use of weapons.

Kauṭilya in his Arthaśāstra held that the army which was composed purely of kṣatriyas,45 of noble birth, strong bodied, trained in the art of using weapons, and well-disciplined might be called the best army. Kauṭilya approves the employment of not only the kṣatriyas, but also vaiśya and śūdra troops in the army.46

No doubt, regular and proper organisation and training are the life and soul of an army.

45. The Nīṭiprakāśikā records that Pṛthu, the son of Veṇa, is called a kṣatriya by his subjects as he saved them from destruction. cf. kṣatratrāṇāt prajāstvarāṁ tu kṣatriyarāṁ cābruvaṁstathā / -I. 30. Kālidāsa, in his Raghuvaiśā gives the derivative meaning of the word kṣatriya as - kṣatātkila trāyata ityudanāḥ kṣatrasya śabdo bhuvaneṣu rudhaḥ // -Raghu., II. 53. 11.

46. cf. praharaṇāvidyāvinītaṁ tu kṣatriya-balair śreyāḥ, bahulasārāṁ vā vaiśya śūdrabalamīti / -Aś. IX. 2. 24.
As regards the training of the army in ancient India, the information are not only very scanty, but also scattered. Details about training, rules connected with the maintenance of discipline in the army are lacking. Whatever information are there, it can be gleaned from scattered references noticed here and there. However, the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya may be of some help in this respect. Kauṭilya holds that in respect of the maintenance of discipline in the army, the Commander-in-Chief should pay special attention. “The Commandant of the Army, trained in the science of all types of fight and the use of weapons, and renowned for riding on elephants, horses or in chariots, should be conversant with the same, and with the direction of the work carried out by the four-fold troops.”

The importance of drill and exercises during the training of army seems to have been realised from very early times. In one place, Kauṭilya stated, “infantry, cavalry, chariots, and elephants should carry out practice in their arts outside the city at sun-rise, except on juncture days. The king should constantly attend to that and should frequently inspect their arts.” Thus, Kauṭilya holds that it is possible to infuse spirit and enthusiasm even in the timid by means of discipline and training.

47. As. II. 33. 9.
48. As. V. 3. 35-36.
Arthasastra throws some light on the methods followed in the training of troops. In one place, he says, "with drumbeats, flags and banners, the commandant should establish signals for the divisions of the array, for dividing themselves into sections, for joining together, for halting, for marching, for turning back and for attacking." It is thus, quite reasonable to conclude that troops were trained at times of peace the technique of movements according to signs and sounds.

From the foregoing discussion it may be concluded that there was a system, a method and a plan in the organisation and training of army in ancient India, and to this extent they deserve commendation. However, it appears that the training of the troops might have confined in respect of the regular army of the state only, while the casual fighters, like the mercenaries, the forest army etc., got trained, accept at the time of war, by their private efforts.

49. As. X. 6. 46.