CHAPTER- IX
Conclusion

The popular belief that the two great epics, *viz.*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* were composed on the basis of the themes of the two great wars and the causes of those wars were analysed as abduction of women and usurpation of provinces. These two great wars and other practical experiences of almost continuous warfare in the history of ancient India tally with the observations of Kāmandaka, e.g. the usurpation of the kingdom, abduction of women, seizure of provinces and portions of territory, carrying away of vehicles and treasures (Rāvaṇa and Kūbera), arrogance (Śiśupāla and Kṛṣṇa), morbid sense of honour, molestation of dominions, extinction of learning, destruction of property, violation of laws, prostration of the regal powers, influence of evil destiny, necessity of helping friends and allies, disrespectful demeanour, destruction of friends, want of compassion of creatures, disaffection of the *prakṛtimandala* and common eagerness for possession of the same object, - these and many such others have been said to be the sources of war.

*rājyastrīsthānadesānāṁ yānasya ca dhanasya ca / apahāro mado*
The war of Trajan was also based on the abduction of woman. Our poet Māgha expressed in clear terms that the abduction of woman is one of the causes of war. In the Śiśupālavadha it is stated that abduction of Rukmiṇī, who was supposed to be married to Śiśupāla, by Kṛṣṇa is the cause of enmity between Śiśupāla and Kṛṣṇa inspite of being a natural friend of the latter (son of a paternal aunt). Balaraṁa explains to Kṛṣṇa that Śiśupāla became hostile towards him due to the cause already mentioned:

\[ \text{tvayā viprakṛtaścaidyo rukmiṇī haratā hare /} \]

\[ \text{baddhamūlasya mūlam hi mahadvairatarohaḥ striyaḥ // (II. 38).} \]

Besides the Kurukṣetra war, the Mahābhārata contains description of several battles occurred between two hostile groups. Poets belonging to the post-epic period used to dwell on those events and composed poems with the height of their talent. Bharāivi and Māgha seem to creat battles as good as the Kurukṣetra war. For example, the event of the annihilation of Śiśupāla by Kṛṣṇa is found in the Sabhāparvan wherein Kṛṣṇa killed Śiśupāla in the Yudhiṣṭhira’s court itself.
But in Māgha’s work an arranged battle in an arranged locality between yādavas and their allies with Śiśupāla depicted vividly. In doing so all the principles, policies and tactics, etc. of war as formulated by the authorities on statecraft are found to be delineated.

The present study is based on the theoretical aspects of the works written by the different authorities on warcraft. Thus, being a student of Sanskrit literature, an endeavour is made here to coordinate the theories propounded by the ancient authorities and their utilisation in the literary works.

While speaking of the ancient authorities, generally it implies the great Kauṭilya, and his predecessors like Bṛhaspati, Śukra, Prācetasa, Vedavyāsa, Vaiśampāyana etc., Kamandaka, and others. Kauṭilya, however in his Arthaśāstra, mentioned the opinions of some other earlier teachers, such as Parāśara (I.8.7), Bharadvāja (I.15.14), Viśalākṣa (I.15.18) etc. on various aspects of statecraft. He himself acknowledges that his work is based on similar treatises of the past authorities. Unfortunately, however, all the earlier works are lost and Kauṭilya’s is the earliest text that has come down to us.
In our present study, we are mainly concerned with Kautilya and Mahakavi Magha. Here in the above pages of the present study, an endeavour is made to find out how Kautilya’s theoretical concepts of internal administration in terms of the six constituent elements of the state and analysis of the relations between states in terms of the theory of the ‘circle of states’ are set out and how theories etc. on warcraft are postulated by the earlier authorities on statecraft. It has been found that the authorities evolved various principles of war strategy and tactics, ethics and expediences, etc. as guidelines to the aspiring, vijigisu kings in the conduct of warfare.

It has also been found that matters relating to statecraft as well as warcraft are profusely referred to and quoted in some Sanskrit mahakavyas like those of Kalidasa, Bharavi, Magha, Bhatti and other literary texts. As in our study, we are mainly concerned with Mahakavi Magha, endeavours are made to find out as to how much he was influenced by the earlier authorities, like Kautilya and others.

The Śisupālavadha is a creation of Magha on the model of Bharavi’s the ‘Kiratarjuniyam’. It appears that he attempts to surpass Bharavi in respect of every device and the dramatic effect of subtlity. As for instance, it may be cited that while Bharavi devotes one whole canto of his Kiratarjuniyam (canto XV) to the description of the battle, and shows artificiality, alliteration and
play of words at a large, Māgha also shows his skill and introduces in his *mahākāvyā* (canto XIX) more and more similar complicated devices. This canto is devoted to the description of the battle.

In canto XVI of the *Śiśupālavadha*, there appears a messenger of Śiśupāla and delivers to Kṛṣṇa his message which is so purposely worded as to bear two meanings, - the same stanzas offering an humble apology expressed in courteous words as well constituting an impudent declaration of war at the same time. He describes a campaign and a military camp in canto V.

No doubt that Kauṭilya’s *Arthaśāstra* is a work on the art of government in its widest sense. The subjects covered include here are, administration, law and order and justice; taxation, revenue and expenditure; foreign policy; defence and war.

In the guiding principles which govern the Kauṭilyan theory of foreign policy, peace is preferred to war, for in war, there are many disadvantages such as loss of troops, expenditure and absence from home (VII. 2 1-2).

It may be said that the general principles of war basically are almost the same in all ages, *viz.*, how to get at the enemy’s armed forces, crush it, and thus destroy the people’s will to continue the war. In fact, success in war depends on moral qualities, organisation and equipment, as well as one’s leadership. Moral qualities meant
virtues like courage, energy and determination. Preparing oneself for the battle, and building up the morale of the troops were the tasks for the night before the battle (XI.7). The battle tactics are designed then, particularly such as the choice of battle arrays and formations.

Māgha’s description of war in the Śiṣupālavadha indicates his awareness regarding types of war, organisation of army, arms and armours, battle tactics, the six methods of foreign policy, use of ambassadors / spies, use of musical instruments during war period and so on and so forth.

It is to be noticed that wars in ancient India did not usually lead to any great political changes. The chiefs of war were considerate of each others rights. Moreover, it also appears that the wars seldom involved any grave disturbance either to the social equilibrium or the economic life of the people.

In conclusion of our study shows that for knowing the character of military system in ancient India, the study of the writings of Kautilya, Manu, Kāmandaka, Vaiśampāyana, the two great epics, the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata and later Sanskrit literary kāvyas like the Raghuvamśa, the Śiṣupālavadha, the Kirātarjuniya etc. is a must; otherwise, observations and comments on the development of warcraft would remain incomplete.