



## Mains Practice Questions

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**Q.** Examine Kautilya's ideas on governance and corruption. How far are these ideas relevant in today's Indian society. (250 words)

23 Mar, 2019 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

### **Approach**

- Discuss Kautilya's ideas on governance and corruption.
- Discuss their relevance in contemporary times.

### **Introduction:**

- The Kautilya's in his work Arthashastra discussed issues of governance and corruption.
- Arthashastra sets the conceptual groundwork for making India the first welfare state.

### **Body**

#### **Kautilya's Idea on Governance**

- According to Kautilya, to ensure good governance there must be a properly guided public administration, where the ruler should surrender his likes and dislikes in the interest of his subjects, and the personnel running the Government should be responsive and responsible.
- He states that "In the happiness of his subjects lies the king's happiness, in their welfare lays his welfare. He shall not consider as good as only that which pleases him but treat as beneficial to him whatever pleases his subjects". This view of Kautilya,s displays his emphasis on Good Governance
- Kautilya further emphasized that for citizen friendly good governance there should be uniformity in the administrative practices as well as competent ministers and officials possessing qualities of leadership, accountability, intellect, energy, good moral conduct, and physical fitness, capable of taking prompt decision.
- A ruler who administers justice on the basis of four principles: righteousness, evidence, history of the case, and the prevalent law, shall conquer the earth.
- According to him, there is stability if rulers are responsive, responsible, accountable, removable and recallable, otherwise there would be instability.
- For good governance, all administrators, including the King, were considered servants of the people. They were paid for the services rendered and not for their ownership of anything.

#### **Views on Corruption:**

His views on corruption in public services were remarkably realist and underlines his emphasis on practice rather than theory.

- According to him corruption can be difficult to avoid as Kautilya said that it is impossible to tell that, “just as fish moving under water cannot be possibly be found either as drinking or not drinking water”.
- He recommends strictest punishment, both material and corporal, as a disincentive to cheat.
- Kautilya was well-versed with the characteristics of bureaucrats and statesmen and laid down rules to prevent misuse of power.
- He emphasized the importance of accounting methods in economic enterprises to properly measure economic performance.

### **Relevance of his ideas in present Indian society**

- Good governance and stability are even more applicable in the present democratic system. These values remain relevant in present context as accountability; responsibility of government towards citizen is paramount in parliamentary system of democracy adopted by India.
- Social welfare is the main focal point of Kautilya's economic notions. The State was required to help the poor and helpless and to be proactive in contributing to the welfare of its citizens. In India, the emphasis on marginalized is important, as from 1990's economic reforms inequalities of income are increasing in India.
- His emphasis on ethical standards for public servants and king remain still relevant e.g. 2nd ARC suggested code of ethics for civil servants as well as political executives.
- Kautilya's ideas on corruption are still relevant in modern day India as corruption in public life remains big problem. India is ranked 78 out of 180 countries in global corruption index by Transparency International. Issues of corruption in public services, electoral funding, cronyism etc. are widely debated in India.

### **Conclusion:**

- The Arthashastra provides broad coverage on the overall economy, which includes: infrastructure (roadwork, irrigation, forestry, and fortification), weights and measurements, labour and employment, commerce and trade, commodities and agriculture, land use and property laws, money and coinage, interest rates and loan markets, tariffs and taxes etc.
- It is of much significance to modern time and can be useful to exemplify several contemporary economic thoughts.