

Inside Chanakya's Mind: Aanvikshiki and the Art of Thinking

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📝 NOTE	Only covered the part where I have read. The rest of the part will be covered after I will finish reading the book.

Kautilya's Arthashastra

1. Process of thinking is called aanvikshiki.
2. Bhisma the great grandsire, is considered as the science of politics, economics, warfare, and a text that relates to governance, leadership and strategy. It is also a book on law, foreign policy, international relations and how to rule a territory.
3. The first step in knowledge creation is research.

Aanvikshiki

1. Aanvikshiki is the process of enquiring and right thinking, or the science of thinking.
2. Four subjects that students have to learn:
 - a. Aanvikshiki = Science of thinking
 - b. Trai = The three Veda's

- c. Vaarta = Economics
- d. Dandaniti = Political science
- 3. Aanvikshiki includes three other philosophy,
 - a. Sankhya = Mentioned and described in Bhagwat Gita
 - b. Yoga
 - c. Lokayata = Materialistic philosophy
- 4. One need to investigate with reasons.
- 5. Practising aanvikshiki requires one to consider three things:
- 6. While thinking about something, we need to carefully measure it's pros and cons. Is it spiritually good? Will it give any material gain? Is it a right policy decision?
- 7. Aanvikshiki brings proficiency in:
 - a. Thought = It gives clear thinking
 - b. Speech = Verbal communication
 - c. Action = There is perfection in all activities
- 8. Aanvikshiki is the guiding principle for everything in life.

Types of thinking

- 1. The process of controlling one's thoughts and calming one's mind is called meditation.
- 2. Mind power can create anything in this world, for a person whose mind is fully under control is a superman.
- ▼ Both side thinking
 - 1. When we choose right kind of thinking, we can create wonders. The wrong type of thinking can destroy us completely.
 - 2. Look at both positive and negative sides as we start journey.
 - 3. Look at the counterview first and then towards the good side.
 - 4. Good people will anyway give you good advice, but the wicked will show you loopholes in your thoughts. You can consider both arguments before making your move.

▼ Alternative thinking

1. Sama, Dana, Bheda, Danda

- a. Sama = The first step is to never start war. Most problems can be solved amicably.
- b. Dana = Giving gifts
- c. Bheda = Division (Divide and Rule)
- d. Danda = Force/War. It is the last and final alternative

2. The sequence of four steps can be changed according to the requirement and demand of the situation.

3. For friendly people sama and dana works.

For unfriendly people bheda and danda works.

▼ Leadership thinking

1. A king shouldn't have any personal agenda.

2. Those who don't have any personal agenda and work selfishly go on to become great leaders.

3. Sometimes a person's well-being may take precedence over their happiness.

4. Leadership thinking is not just about making people happy and accepting whatever the popular feeling is. A king should listen to every person who comes to meet him, and consider every idea deeply. If required, the king should also consult some experts. Then what is right must be done.

5. A leader should set a standard where a standard doesn't exist.

6. For a leader, the whole country or organization is his family.

7. King has to take care of not only human beings but also animals, birds, plants, minerals, water bodies and all else that is part of his kingdom.

8. Leadership thinking is as all-inclusive thinking. It encompasses the living and non-living.

9. Leader is responsible for anything and everything that is part of his kingdom.

▼ Creative thinking

1. Creativity works only if we are at the right place at the right time.

2. There are two concepts in creative execution: Right time and Right timing
3. Creativity doesn't mean destruction. Some people believe in disruptive creativity It means creating by destroying something. You never look good by making someone look bad.
4. Creativity is about what to do. Creativity is also about what not to do.
5. The biggest cure for any disease is 'love'.
6. While creativity should be our focus, let us not be inhuman. Let us not be destructive. Let us not go against nature. Instead, let us all tune in to nature and work in accordance with it's laws.
7. Let nature be our guide and our best teacher of creativity.

▼ Lateral thinking

1. Thinking out of the box is often required to tackle a situation and get a desired result.
2. Sometimes, you have to check whether the box even exists. You might just have been imagining that you were stuck in a box, while the fact was that you were always free.
3. All things remain the same, a few people succeed while others fail.
4. Through careful, well-planned strategies, we develop lateral thinking.

▼ Game of Chess

1. CHESS stands for,
C = Chariots
H = Horses
E = Elephants
SS = Soldiers
2. What makes one winner and the other a loser? The way they use their resources. The moves and the strategy used make all the difference. This is when lateral thinking comes in.
3. It is important to plan how we position ourselves in our life and workplaces.
4. We should change our strategy to account for enemy's array.

5. To develop lateral thinking, we need to understand the moves made by the enemy. At times, you flow with the moves of the enemy. At other times, you move to surprise the enemy.
6. First we need to understand our own thinking. Next we need to understand the thinking of others. When we combine both, success in anything we take up is guaranteed.

▼ Spiritual thinking

1. Common misconception about spirituality is that it is meant for old and useless people, and that you become spiritual only when you have nothing left to do in life.
2. Another misconception is that spirituality is for the other world, to gain benefits after we die and to some place called heaven.
3. In reality, it is the other way around. The really spiritual people are always active and dynamic.
4. With the foundation of spirituality, even the ordinary will become extraordinary.
5. There are four aspects one should be aware of life:
 - a. Dharma = Spiritual good
 - b. Artha = Material well-being
 - c. Kama = Sensual or worldly desire
 - d. Moksha = enlightenment
6. The first three should be balanced in our lives.
7. Krishna says, an enlightenment person is *sthitha-prajna*. A *sthitha-prajna* is a person who is established in knowledge and wisdom.
8. If we can understand spiritual principles that govern everything around us, we will never fail in anything.
9. Only spiritual thinking without worldly thinking is also not good.

Different models of thinking

1. Never depend on anyone to solve your problems. Yes, you should take advice and guidance. But if none is available, take a call on your own. You have to take

decisions.

▼ Leadership Model

1. Our primary enemies are a group of six: Lust, anger, greed, pride, arrogance and foolhardiness.
 - a. Overindulgence in anything is lust.
 - b. Losing our temper is anger.
 - c. Wanting more than what is required is greed.
 - d. Over possessiveness is pride.
 - e. One who gives too much importance to oneself is arrogant.
 - f. One who is reckless is fool hardy.
2. Control over one's senses: sound, touch, sight, taste and smell.
3. By controlling five sense organs (ear, skin, eye, tongue & nose), we will restrict the entry of unwanted things into us.
4. A leader will become a better leader if he associates with wise people.
5. One of the ways to become intelligent is to associate with those who are more intelligent than us.
6. Information is the key to success.
7. Enthusiasm is the key to success in any activity.
8. A leader can order others to fulfill their duties. But what about himself?
9. The leader shouldn't shun his duties. This is first step towards successful leadership.
10. If I do my work properly, I automatically gain the power to tell others to follow their duties properly.
11. A leader should be self-disciplined person.
12. Self-discipline leads to success.
13. The right way to attain popularity is to ensure development and wealth creation.
14. One has to ensure proper behaviour at all time.

15. The character of a person is judged by how they act not only in front of others, but also when they are in dark all alone.

▼ Administrative Model

1. Framework is required to be created before we start any work. So, we need to mentally design the models.
2. Mental frameworks need to be ready structurally in our minds.
3. Without strong and efficient administrative and secretarial support, a leader cannot be effective.
4. Efficient leadership includes an efficient administration. To administer effectively is the secret of good leadership.
5. Three key principles to create good administrators:
 - a. The selection of administrators
 - b. Testing the integrity of administrators
 - c. Supervision - Key to administrative success
6. Good administration leads to good governance - the key to make people happy.

▼ The selection of Administrators

1. Who your administrators are going to be must be carefully decided.
2. The ability of an administrator is judged by his capacity to do work.
3. If there are people who can manage multiple projects, select them as administrators.
4. The right person should be given the right amount of work.
5. Our time in this world is limited. We all have to find a purpose in our lives. When that purpose becomes our priority, we become creators of a legacy, giants who have great ideals to achieve and who create institutions that last.
6. A single ideal can transform a listless soul into a towering leader among men.
7. While looking for an ideal administrator, find people with purpose. If not, you should give them a purpose.

▼ Testing the Integrity of Administrators

1. Corruption is directly linked to leadership and administrators.
2. If the administration is corrupted, there are bound to be leakages in the system. There will be financial problems.
3. Financial corruption is only one among the many forms of corruptions. There is corruption at moral level, corruption in the form of supporting the wrong person and, the most dangerous one of all, corruption in the form of wanting to be known as a good person.
4. Even the most capable administrator could be a biggest danger to the country.
5. A leader should never appoint as administrator on his whims and fancies.
6. There are four test of integrity:
 - a. The test of loyalty
 - b. The test of material gain
 - c. The test of lust
 - d. The test of fear

These are conducted without the knowledge of the person who is being tested.

7. Details in Arthashastra - 'Ascertainment of the Integrity of Ministers by Means of Secret Tests'

▼ The test of loyalty

A colleague of his (sent by the system) says something along the lines of 'The king is bad, and if we destroy him, both of us can rise to power immediately.' If the person agrees, it means he is not loyal. However, if he rejects such an offer, he has passed the test of loyalty.

▼ The test of material gain

Another person is sent who will try to bribe the person. 'You are in such a big organization in such a high post. Kindly do this work for me and you will get this benefit in return.' If the person takes the bribe, it is understood that he is potential threat to the organization. If he disagrees immediately, he can be trusted with financial transactions.

▼ The test of lust

Sexual harassment at the workplace is a serious concern to the leaders, and an administrator is a powerful person, who may misuse his power in return for sexual favours. Send someone to offer such a favour. If the person agrees, then he has failed the test of lust. If not, he can be trusted in his aspect.

▼ The test of fear

It is the test whether the person fears death or not. How would he behave when death approaches? The real integrity of a person is decided here. A situation is created where the newly appointed administrator is caught and threatened with death. Then he is told, 'The only way to escape death is to kill the king. We have a plan. Join us.' If he agrees, he is disloyal. If he disagrees, it is guaranteed that even in the worst situation, he will not go against the king or his country.

▼ Supervision - Key of Administrative Success

1. Nothing is constant. But the mind is the most inconstant thing we can ever imagine.
2. We don't work with people, we work with people's mind.
3. The mind is your friend and enemy.
4. Life is nothing but a mental game. Understand the mind and enjoy the game.
5. Constantly hold inspection to their works: If regular inspection and reviews are not carried out, the person working under you may slip up.
6. Men being inconstant to their mind: Administrator requires direction from time to time.
7. Men being of a nature similar to that of horses, change when employed: When told to do something, everyone initially resists. But then, if the mind is tamed and brought under control, it can do wonders.
8. One should be cognizant of the worker, the office, the place, the time, the work to be done, the outlay: Leader should keep an eye on the office, the place of work, the timing of work, the work to be completed and also the expenditure.
9. Profit of these undertakings: Financial success is an important indicator of success. A leader should understand the financial excellence along with people excellence.

10. Knowledge is important, organized knowledge is even more important - it is the next step to success. So, organize your thinking. The aanvikshiki way. The Chanakya way.

The Seven Dimensions of Thinking

1. Experiences change our thinking and also our personality

▼ Saptanga - The Seven Parts of a Kingdom

1. The seven part of a kingdom are also called prakritis. Prakriti means 'nature'. So these seven parts of the kingdom are natural parts of the state or nation.
2. The seven parts of the kingdom are: The king, the minister, the country (people), the fortified city, the treasury, the army and the ally.
3. Details in Arthashastra titled 'Excellences of the Constituent Elements'.
4. Understanding these seven parts of kingdom will give us seven dimensions in which to think about it.
5. Saptanga model consists of:
 - a. Swami (The king)
 - b. Amatya (The minister)
 - c. Janapada (The country)
 - d. Durga (The fortified city)
 - e. Kosh (The treasury)
 - f. Danda (The army)
 - g. Mitra (The ally)
6. King is the leader of nation.
7. Minister are the eyes and the ears of the king.
8. Managing the treasury properly is very much a key role of leader.
9. A good leader, guided by good ministers, working for the happiness of the people, with good infrastructure, a full treasury, a strong and well-disciplined army and good foreign relations makes a great kingdom.

▼ The First Dimension of Thinking: Swami

1. Excellence are the qualities that a person should have. If not, these can be identified and developed.

2. Chanakya says:

The excellence of the king are: born into a high family, endowed with good fortune, intelligence and spirit, given to seeing elders, pious, truthful in speech, doesn't break promises, resolute, not having a mean council of ministers, desirous of training. These are the qualities of one-easily approachable.

▼ Born into a high family:

- Born in family with noble qualities.
- People born in such high families think many times before making a mistake.

▼ Endowed with good fortune:

- 'Luck' or 'good fortune' is important in leadership.
- Person who is at right place at the right time indeed finds success very easily. The right person at the wrong place feels dejected.
- Good fortune is not only a matter of luck alone - it is the hard work of the past that suddenly bears fruit.
- Fortunate people attract all good things easily towards them.

▼ Intelligence and spirit:

- Leader has to be intelligent and also dynamic.
- Plan our work and workout your plan.
- If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.
- We need to have an ideal mix of planning and execution.

▼ Given to seeing elders:

- Great leaders surround themselves with people greater than themselves.
- The true leaders keep getting guidance from their elders. These elders include the parents, the teachers and other noble people

they come across.

▼ Pious, truthfulness in speech and doesn't break promises:

- A pious person is virtuous and well-behaved. They have excellent moral character essential in a leader.
- They will fulfill their promise even at their cost of life. It is better to under-promise and over-deliver, rather than to over-promise and under-deliver.
- They speak the truth, but they also demonstrate truth in action.

▼ Grateful, liberal, of great energy and not dilatory:

- They are humble by nature.
- They are free thinkers and appreciate original ideas. They believe in innovation and creativity and also have great energy.
- They are enthusiastic and make others around them also enthusiastic. They are not dilatory, slow or lazy. They take quick decision and move ahead very fast.

▼ With weak neighbouring princes, resolute, not having a mean council of ministers:

- The weakness of others can become our strength.
- The leader has to be firm and resolute.
- The person at the top should be unwavering once the decision is taken.
- The leader should be selfless but also make sure his teams of ministers are also selfless; otherwise, they will give him the wrong advice.

▼ Desirous of training, one easily approachable:

- Ever ready to learn in the quality of leadership.
- Leaders are large-hearted enough to accommodate everyone in their busy schedules.

▼ The Second Dimension of Thinking: Amatya

1. Chanakya looks out for these qualities in identifying capable ministers:

A native of the country, of noble birth, easy to hold in check, trained in the arts, possessed of the eye (of science), intelligent, persevering, dexterous, eloquent, bold, possessed of a ready wit, endowed with energy and power, able to bear troubles, upright, friendly, firmly devoted, endowed with character, strength, health and spirit, devoid of stiffness and fickleness, amiable (and) not given to creating animosities—these are the excellences of a minister.

2. A native of the country, of noble birth:
 - a. Amatya has to be from the same place; then only will he understand the problems at the grass-roots level.
 - b. They will always be more patriotic.
 - c. Noble birth means that the value systems in the family are good.
3. Easy to hold in check, trained in the arts, possessed of the eye (of science):
 - a. Keeping amatya on check is important as they have a lot of power.
 - b. Ministers has to be very well trained, in various arts which gives them a broader perspective.
 - c. Should also be good thinkers with an eye of detail; and the science of politics should be part of their mental make-up.
4. Intelligent, persevering, dexterous, eloquent:
 - a. Intelligence is needed to guide the king.
 - b. Ministers need to be persistent; they should not give up easily.
 - c. They should be dexterous-that is, agile and skilful.
 - d. They should be good communicators.
5. Bold, possessed of a ready with, endowed with energy and power:
 - a. Minister has to have the courage to take necessary risks.
 - b. Should be witty by nature-clever and sharp.
 - c. Should be able to radiate energy and power.
6. Able to bear troubles, upright, friendly, firmly devoted:

- a. Minister should not be arrogant and unapproachable, but has to be friendly towards others.
 - b. Ministers should be firmly devoted to the king and the country they represent.
- 7. Endowed with character, strength, health and spirit:
 - a. Minister should be healthy; healthy people think better.
 - b. They should be of high spirit-ever ready to leap into action.
- 8. Devoid of stiffness and fickleness, amiable (and) not given to creating animosities:
 - a. Minister should be flexible but not fickle.
 - b. Should not be given to creating animosities.
 - c. Should be likable and good natured.
 - d. Should have the ability to attract others.

▼ The Third Dimension of Thinking: Janapada

- 1. The most attention should be given to the lower strata of society.
- 2. Praja (citizens) of a kingdom include not just human beings, but also animals, birds, trees, waterbodies and the mineral world.
- 3. Chanaka tells the excellence of a country:

Possessed of strong positions in the centre and at the frontiers, capable of sustaining itself and others in the times of distress, easy to protect, providing excellent means of livelihood, malevolent towards enemies, with weak neighbouring princes, devoid of mud, stones, salty grounds, uneven land, thorns, bands, wild animals, deer and forest tribes, charming, endowed with agricultural land, mines, material forests and elephant forests, beneficial to cattle, beneficial to men, with protected pastures, rich in animals, not depending on rain for water, provided with water routes and land routes, with valuable, manifold commodities available in plenty, capable of bearing fines and taxes, with farmers devoted to work, with a wise master, inhabited mostly by lower varnas, with men loyal and honest—these are the excellences of a country.

4. Possessed of strong positions in the centre and all frontiers:
 - a. Those villages which are centrally located and free from attacks prosper, and the people there are happier.
5. Capable of sustaining itself and others in the times of distress, easy to protect:
 - a. There should also be internal mechanisms to tackle disasters.
When a disaster strikes, can the village protect itself?
6. Providing excellent means of livelihood:
 - a. Providing people with opportunities to earn by working hard is essential.
7. Not depending on rain for water:
 - a. If the rainfall is inadequate, efforts are wasted.
 - b. A janapada should not rely on the rains for water, Irrigation systems, water canals and rainwater harvesting all help.
8. With farmers devoted to work, with a wise master, with men loyal and honest:
 - a. Those who are farmers are devoted to their works.
 - b. There should be a wise men in the villages. These are the personals guides and counsellors of the people; they ensure the men are loyal and honest.

▼ The Fourth Dimension of Thinking : Durga