

### 3.0 Analysing the Relevance of Kautilya's Six-Fold Ways (Shadgun Siddhant) with Respect to Ongoing Global Information Warfare: A Study on Indian News Media Coverage of Ukraine-Russia Crisis

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#### ABSTRACT

*The knowledge system has always been the base of any questions that have been raised in any arena of conflict. In the recent global scenario of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and ongoing conflict, news media has served as a battle ground for the news industry to spread competing narratives about the war and portray the scenario by professionals with the power of words. Future is not just about conventional warfare but is also about information and perception warfare. Impacts of the latter are more severe yet covert for a long period of time. This research paper attempts to find out the preparedness and understanding of strategic thinking with reference to the Shadgun Siddhant (six-fold Siddhant) of Kautilya in the Indian News Media outlets with respect to the Ukraine-Russia crisis. News media has an important role to play in shaping, formulating, and manipulating public opinion which is necessary for any such struggle. With respect to Ukraine- Russia war this seems more evident hence considering the ever-evolving nature of the crisis, researchers in this paper would adopt a qualitative methodology and descriptively study using rhetorical analysis of the news media content and their potential adaptation of the 6-Fold Policy while dealing with the global information warfare and manipulative perceptions. The researchers' findings have analyzed the position of India and the news (information) unfolded by the experts to give a rhetorical perspective on the war. The paper draws the conclusion of how authors/experts strategically tweak the news, control perception, and protect its national interest.*

**Keywords:** Indian knowledge system, Global warfare, Kautilya's 6-fold policy, Rhetorical textual analysis, Strategic planning, Information Warfare, Ukraine- Russia war, Perception.

#### Introduction

Indian Knowledge System has a greater contribution not just to the Indian society but to the rest of the world as well. There has hardly been a sphere of study area where ancient Indian thinkers or thought process doesn't have anything to contribute. Any stream of study proliferates on the research that is been undertaken to multiply the knowledge base. These knowledge bases have always stood as well-versed literature that can be studied and implemented. The concept of literature stands as a pillar at any given initiation of knowledge. As given in the oxford dictionary meaning of literature is given as "written works, especially those considered of superior or lasting artistic merit". India has always been believed to be a land of oral tales that have passed on the knowledge and fed the generations on stories. To confirm this knowledge Chanakya in his book Arthashastra classifies knowledge that one needs to know into four types:

- **Anvīkṣikī** – used in the general sense of (contemporary) science, encompassing logic and philosophy

- Trayī – used to refer to traditional knowledge, to the Vedas in particular
- Vārttā – used to represent wealth creation (agriculture and commerce)
- Daṇḍanīti – used to represent politics and public administration

Each of these classified knowledge types covers the arenas of literature in various fields in India as a country is enriched with. Such resources have openly credited Indian literature and modern-day findings to streams right from science, social science, anthropology, psychology, etc. Adapting this knowledge-based literature and utilizing them in modern times are crucial phenomena that Indian needs to learn. Modern times demand a fresh look at such resources irrespective of the political debate associated with the credibility of such resources. A modern-day adaptation of such texts is required in many such areas and the potential of such a study is definitely useful in the field of strategy and communication since potential media and perception warfares are on the card.

Thinkers like Kautilya, Kamandaka, Banabhatta, and Kalhana have given tremendous contributions in this domain and are a source of study for many think tanks and strategic minds across the globe. This paper is based on Kautilya's Arthashastra which has been a source of many studies when it comes to strategic affairs, warfare, and diplomacy. His Shadgunya Siddhanta and Mandala Theory have applications in all spheres of life. However, the dimensions and structure of warfare have now changed. Conflicts are no longer traditional and the impact is deep-rooted and long-lasting than ever before. One such domain of warfare that has gained attention these days is Information warfare. Some scholars have used Information warfare as an umbrella term to define the new elements of communication technology. On a similar line, the use of propaganda is an idea that has its origin in warfare itself. Propaganda as a tool was used by many but misinformation and disinformation campaigns, formulating deliberative info war, fake news and rumors are not only causing menace but if used as a weapon, they have a catastrophic impact. Such tools have the power to cognize various political events and processes for the masses. Even though the application is modern, Chanakya's ideas are still relevant if applied correctly in the context of information warfare, especially with reference to the news media business. Considering the alterations in the technology and easy availability of news media the definition of journalism is now changing with the elimination of geographic boundaries. Historical references to Kautilya's policy may be limited to the tales and books written to denote the war strategies unlike in the contemporary media format news media and technology are integral in shaping the live event but from the perspective of the news writer.

News media has an important role to play in any country's prospects. Indoctrination, opinion formation, manipulation, and agenda setting are various tools used by those who are information disseminators. To understand such strategies systematic study is necessary in order to find out the target audience, their age group, writing style, and purpose of writing. Hence in the context of a potential perception battle, it is necessary to decode the message and understand whether our news media platforms are ready to face up to the challenge. This paper attempts to focus on the capabilities of news media platforms with respect to the recent Ukraine-Russia crisis concentrating on the articles written by the experts, which stand as a classic case of actual war and a war that is being fought in the media. The objective is to analyze indigenous attempts to gauge the global media pressure and respond strategically in

order to cater to our national interests.

To emphasize the scenario and the state of Indian studies and references, dwelling on the contemporary relevance of the Ancient Indian Knowledge System to National Security, former General of Indian Army Naravane said “unlike the past, where warfare was well defined, in terms of boundaries, battle spaces, timings, combatants and non-combatants, today’s conflicts are immensely complex. Targeting the mind and the will of the adversary is gaining greater eminence in warfare, characterized by Grey Zone, non-contact, and Information-Cyber-Space domains, across a multitude of flexible warfare strategies”.

### **Kautilya’s Six-Fold Policy and its Relevance in Brief**

Kautilya has a very significant position in Indian strategic thought. The idea of ruthlessness, no moral considerations, and no reference to any divinity makes him purely practical and his theory stands workable. The policy holds relevance because documented six-fold ways and Mandala Siddhanta are far away from the utopia and have always been actually practiced by some or other countries. However, as far as modern warfare is concerned the dimensions are not just traditional but they have now become multifaceted.

To begin with, Kautilya proposes the concept of Sandhi which talks about making peace with a strong enemy. The idea appears to be a defensive move when it comes to dealing with much stronger enemies and may be hard to follow. But purely this idea is based on opportunism so that you can bargain time to gain some strength or the same period can be used to wait and watch your enemy get weaker. The concept of ceasefire in modern-day conflicts can be attributed to this principle. Political parties are also known to sometimes surrender themselves when an opponent is stronger in order to get the right opportunity to strike back.

The concept of Vighraha which is a second fold advocates hostility. A stronger player can choose to be either on defensive or offensive mode since the chances of winning are either way knowing your enemy is in a weaker condition. This idea is purely based on the cost-benefit analysis and whenever it seems that the benefit is more than the cost one remains in a position of his/her choice or else they can go for Sandhi.

The concept of Asana is basically remaining neutral. It is to wait for the enemy to get weaker by not being directly involved in the conflict. Modern-day situations have explored a concept of proxy war where you can engage your opponent with non-state actors and then claim neutrality just to wait for the perfect opportunity to hit. This concept is applicable not only in traditional warfare but in psychological and perception battles also nowadays.

The next step of Yana is a direct manifestation of a policy of Vighraha. It refers to direct action. The present-day Ukraine-Russia conflict and Russian actions can be attributed to this principle where Russia gathered its forces and marched ahead in Ukraine.

The policy of Sansraya means seeking shelter and being someone’s junior partner when the potential of fighting a solo war is very grim. When your enemy is much stronger you tend to be an ally of the relatively stronger enemy of your enemy. Ukraine’s bid to join the NATO grouping in the present-day conflict appears to be in sync with this concept irrespective of the outcomes.

The policy of Dvaidhibhav refers to the double policy of Sandhi with one and Vighraha with another at the same time. By doing a cost-benefit analysis one could choose to fight his own

battle and also the front where he could be assured of getting a favorable outcome. This policy in the modern-day context appears to be more practical since global interests are entangled and fear of prolonged and multi-front battles are constantly hovering around.

Evolution of human society, sovereign nation-states, and globalization, the world has never been so integrated yet divided at the very same time. Hence the battlegrounds are intertwined and concealed. Above stated principles cannot be separated and then applied to a particular situation. They now appear to be in a mixed format. In the same text Arthashastra, Kautilya has spoken about the concepts like Mantrayuddha which talks about diplomacy, Prakasayuddha which is specifically associated with open warfare, and Kuttayuddha which refers to psychological warfare along with a mention of clandestine war which is termed as Gudayuddha which focuses on using covert methods. The strategy stands ahead of its time and is still relevant because modern-day conflicts are going to be multi-front.

One such aspect is information warfare or a perception battle. Be it news media or social media constant engagements are carried out and covertly or overtly propaganda is carried out.

The reason behind the rise of such kind of warfare is a low-cost entry, blurred traditional boundaries, no direct physical confrontations, and expanded role of perception management. Countries with relatively no understanding of this domain are likely to fall prey to such strategies carried out by countries with vested interests who may not be your traditional enemies. Hence Kautilya's Siddhanta stands relevant since the parameters laid down for conventional warfare can also be applied to ever-evolving concepts of war.

### **Research Questions**

RQ 1: What contemporary news dissemination strategies used by Indian News Media outlets strategically unfolds Kautilya's 6-fold theory?

RQ 2: Do the findings of the analysis propagates possible solutions in the strategy making using 6-fold ways in order to pose a challenge to the global disinformation campaign for Indian News Media Outlets?

### **Methodology**

To approach the question of strategic planning and information warfare, we first identified the news publication articles that have centered around the information on Ukraine-Russia war updates. The study attempts to examine the news articles and editorials written to inform or persuade audiences to form a view about warfare. Kuypers (2005) defines rhetoric as "the strategic use of communication, oral or written, to achieve specific goals" (p.5). Hence a details analysis of carefully chosen words by journalists stands to be a crucial point in how the audience perceives reality. The main aim of this qualitative research is to determine how news paper articles use rhetoric (the art of effective communication) to logically unfold the reality and strategic plans of the countries in war, while still contending India's role in positive spheres. For the purpose of this paper, the researchers randomly selected 5 news publications, Wion, Hindustan Times, Times of India, and The Hindu, for the rhetoric analysis. Five articles of each publication were been selected on the basis of the coverage given of the Ukraine-Russia war. All the selected 15 newspaper articles were analyzed by using the elements/appeals of Ethos, Logos, and Pathos of the rhetorical structure and concluding the take aways of the articles.

The selected articles were curated on the basis of the timeline initiating from 20<sup>th</sup> February 2022 (the beginning of the crisis) to date. The random selection of the articles was purely based on the subjectivity of the availability of hard copies and soft copies of the articles. The research paper studies the history of Kautilya's Shastra 6-Fold Theory using rhetorical analysis.

### **Rhetorical Analysis– Phases**

Rhetorical Analysis is the art of writing in a manner that would influence its readers and help in creating a perception. It refers generally to how language is employed but it has come to mean the insincere or even manipulative use of words. Technically, it includes the arts of persuasion and decoration or elaboration in literature (Frye, 1957). Rhetorical analysis is concerned with the construction of the discourse, giving priority to the communicative purpose of each genre (Azaustre& Casas, 1997). Rhetoric aims at discourse from its intentional (purpose-driven) and instrumental (means of fulfilling the purpose) perspectives. Thus, rhetorical discourse organization is an approach where textual structures are employed to achieve the desired effect (Connor, 1996). These structures provide a framework for articulating diverse discourses in a particular manner and textually constituting their relations.

While examining the news articles the Rhetorical analysis usage of Roman philosopher Cicero's five canon rhetoric were been utilized by the researcher. Every article was analyzed based on these tenets:

- **Invention:** Understanding the intention of covering the information gathered for the article and informing the audience with some pre-decided agenda. What are the materials that were fetched to write the article and give a complete scenario of the given warfare?
- **Arrangement:** In this process, the researchers have understood the aspect of how the order of the material in a text was arranged. In writing, this is still part of the prewriting stage.
- **Style:** This process concerns the curation of actual words that will be used in a text. In writing, this canon is first approached in the drafting stage and continues in the rewriting stage. Since the research has selected the final stage of the article copy understanding the rewriting and alterations made was not possible. Also, this stage stands to be very crucial as the selection of the words would decide upon the perception of the scenario of the warfare that any reader/audience would have.
- **Memory:** This tenant of the canon is the process of committing a text to memory. Application of this tenet had to be omitted as it was not applicable to writing as it is to oratory; there are still occasions when writers must memorize their texts in order to make the delivery more effective.
- **Delivery:** This tenet predominantly fixates on the process of presenting the text to its audience. The researcher has read the text and conceptually understood its stance in the given war scenario. The study that the author/expert has exercised to make the article make eloquent and

Further, each article was critically seen from the perspective of Aristotle's consideration of writings. As stated by Aristotle any written material appeals to that audience in three different areas: logos, ethos, and pathos. To answer the first research question stated in this research



paper these appeals were also adopted. Lutzke, Jaclyn, and F. Henggeler, Mary (2009), have compiled the working of the three appeals with the description that positions:

- i. Logos appeals to reason. Logos can also be thought of as the text of the argument, as well as how well a writer has argued his/her point. Ethos appeals to the writer's character.
- ii. Ethos can also be thought of as the role of the writer in the argument, and how credible his/her argument is.
- iii. Pathos appeals to emotions and sympathetic imagination, as well as to beliefs and values. Pathos can also be thought of as the role of the audience in the argument.

### **Analysis – Findings**

#### **Article 1: Ukraine war: Six months that shook the world (WION)**

This article is an overview of the crisis which erupted after the Russian Invasion of Ukraine over the past 6 months. The author has gathered information majorly from the agency sources complimented by a few additions of on-ground reporting in a chronological manner. The article also uses a few technical abbreviations, (HIMARS) and photographs in order to bring in a logical sequence. The article is written by following all the journalistic ethics by giving due credit to the source and remained moreover factual. The key take away would eventually be informing the world about the repercussions of the war by giving it a human touch to galvanize global efforts to end this conflict.

#### **Article 2: Game of spheres of influence – during which India should not sit on the bench (WION)**

This article is an opinion piece carefully drafted after gathering several sources right from the happenings associated with the Ukraine-Russia crisis, the China-Taiwan conflict, and a reference made to an official release by the Ministry of External Affairs of India. The article follows a systematic sequence and connects dots so that it will be easy for the reader to comprehend. The mentions of events are not made up and they are based on true events. A key take away from this article would be letting the viewers know about the global crisis and how it indirectly affects India on a larger scale. The article also speaks about the role India has played so far and possible actions one should take in order to counter the negative impacts of the tensions across the globe.

#### **Article 3: Impact of the Russian War on India (WION)**

This opinion piece talks about the course of the war by throwing some light on specific events. The author has also referred to some agency copies as a secondary source and explains the horrifying impact of the war in a logically sound argument. The writing style is based on the cause-and-effect principle and the points are arranged in a sequence from higher intensity to lower. The crux of this article hints at the potential threats to India and also gives some suggestions based on the present geopolitical scenarios. The Principle of Dvaiddhava can be applied here as per the tone of the article.

#### **Article 4: India emerging as 'influencing power' in new world order (WION)**

The author principally has listed down all the global conflicts in a systematic order and has logically tried to link issues for India based on real situations. The style is convincing and the

arrangement of the facts is interlinked able to derive a connection for a reader who is new to this area. The author while providing a takeaway highlighted India's stance so far on these matters and concluded that India is emerging as an influencing power in the new world order. The highlighted trajectory shows a follow-up of several principles adopted by India in sync with Kautilya's theory regarding diplomacy and presented a solid case justifying India's stand to the world.

**Article 5: Imran Khan plays Jaishankar's clip at the rally, lauds India for resisting US pressure on Russian oil (WION)**

This report talks about the growing importance of India by quoting Imran Khan who recently praised the Indian Foreign minister for his defense of India in the Ukraine-Russia crisis. This is a pure news report which follows all the journalistic parameters and gives correct attributions. The takeaway is to justify India's National Interest by giving a reference to a hostile country's leader. The text also highlights a careful diplomatic strategy carried out by India in order to counter the global propaganda narrative. The story is based on facts but presented in a sequence so that the audience could get a sense of the issue.

**Article 6: Ukraine and the anatomy of India's Neutrality (The Hindu)**

This opinion piece is a classic case of referring to the past and decoding the history in the present context. The collection of facts is based on some historical references and the arrangement of the arguments is made chronologically. Since this is an opinion piece it is based on the interpretation rather than the original facts. However, the take away justifies India's neutrality (policy of Asana) in the modern strategic context by pointing at our stand as an Indian diplomatic character rather than just based on a single event.

**Article 7: Ukraine expects India to participate actively in post-war construction (The Hindu)**

A staff member of the outlet has penned this article on the basis of available news coming from a diplomatic source. This article first focused on the source and their statement and later it emphasizes the potential need of Ukraine where India could help. The article also uses an emotional appeal to highlight grave concerns in Ukraine and suggested India play a humanitarian role in this case. The article logically tries to explain the efforts that can be taken by India and also highlights our present policy of helping the 'vulnerable' despite the ongoing crisis. It informs readers to maintain diplomatic restraint and yet play an active moral role.

**Article 8: Losing steam: On faltering economic recovery (The Hindu)**

This is an editorial article of the paper that is based on the latest GDP numbers and showed how the Ukraine crisis has affected India economically. The narration is based on fact and the conclusion is based on logical derivation by drawing parallels between the crisis and the survey. Journalistic ethics are also followed since an argument here has been substantiated with available facts and a sequence since to be rational. The focus seems to be on educating the audience to understand this economic impact and the reason for the war behind this crisis. If one has to put the article in Kautilya's communication design, it serves as a perfect introspection which is necessary to draft any policy further.

**Article 9: End the war: On the Russia-Ukraine conflict (The Hindu)**

To conclude in a few lines this article focuses on underlining the stakeholders and their role in the conflict. The author here has gathered these insights from secondary sources and has also put the onus on the parties directly involved in the war in the initial few lines. On the basis of the observations of events, the author has attempted to draw logical conclusions and pinpointed stakeholders and their double policy. The style used in this article is hard-hitting and has exposed the multiple stakes involved which otherwise would have been difficult to gauge by plain hard news reading.

**Article 10: Why the world needs peace in Ukraine (The Hindu)**

The title has moral considerations. But the author has tried to give logical conclusions to highlight the cause of war. This article is purely an opinion piece and has focussed on the causality principle and highlighted the impact on the global stake if the war continues. A key takeaway from the article is would be a diplomatic principle of leading the baton even though India isn't directly involved in the crisis. The article is a blend of Panchashil and Kautilya's six-fold path if one has to put these arguments from the strategic and diplomatic communication perspective.

**Article 11: Ukraine: Opportunities for India in new world order (Hindustan Times)**

This opinion piece is an example of pragmatism based on logical assumptions substantiated by the current events associated with the Ukraine – Russia crisis. The author in this case has tried to highlight opportunities for India with a chronological sequence of events with their associated weightage in the crisis. All the presumptions are based on the incidents and not speculations however this article is a guideline for readers as well as policymakers. While bringing in optimism, the author hasn't forgotten to do the rest of the SWOT which gives a clearer view of the topic to readers.

**Article 12: Why India must rethink its stance on Ukraine (Hindustan Times)**

This opinion piece can be decoded as a strategic document based on the conclusions it derives by logical sequencing of facts. The style used by the author is detailed and explanatory. To decode it in the context of Shadguna Siddhanta, the author has given pros and cons and has hinted at how to double policy is necessary in order to maintain a balanced stand in this war. This Principle of Asana first then Dvaiddhibhav is the key to carefully calibrating our policy in this crisis. This article also highlights an unavoidable role for India and how India should exploit this situation since the circumstances are favorable.

**Article 13: The USA distinguishes between India and China on the Russia-Ukraine stance. Minister's reply**

This article is based on the quotes of foreign ministers and also by news agencies (ANI). The author has followed a pattern by mentioning quotes reiterating the argument. This article also focuses on the strategic positioning of India. Write up is arranged as per the questions asked to Foreign Minister in a press conference. Giving attributions and stating facts have made this article ethically compliant from the journalistic perspective. However, a deliberate choice to highlight this shows an attempt to present India's case in front of the domestic as well as global readership.

**Article 14: Blood, oil, security: Ukraine's foreign minister's critique of India misses some obvious geopolitical realities (Times of India)**



This editorial can be purely termed as a defense of India's actions in the Ukraine-Russia crisis with reference to the statement made by the Ukrainian foreign minister. The author has tried to draw parallels by comparing India's actions to those EU countries and has logically justified it by exposing double standards in the case. This article hence guides readers by confronting Ukrainian propaganda with a systematic presentation of facts using compare and contrast methodology. Though it is an opinion piece, the author has also given numbers to substantiate his argument. Writing style appears to be more direct and fierier with references to the present as well as the past.

**Article15: Get used to it: Ukraine war may last long. The policy should adapt to the new normal (Times of India)**

As the title says, the author has suggested a fresh look at India's policy towards the Ukraine crisis as the war's end is in no sight. The article is written in brief but finds mention of upcoming issues which India may face along with the Ukraine war. The author has carefully used the numbers (\$532 billion) to add intensity to his argument. A key takeaway from this article could be the need for constant updates in the strategy with several permutations and combinations as the crisis is ever-evolving and long-lasting. The author also has tried to grab attention at upcoming conflicts based on logical speculations and opined that India should be ready to face any such issues.

**Conclusion**

A systematic analysis of news articles based on 5 canons of rhetoric and LOGOS, ETHOS, and PATHOS has given some interesting findings. The majority of the articles were either balanced or tilted towards advocating India's stand in front of the world showing a brief understanding of strategic thoughts. The study could also relate the usage of Chanakya's six-fold Siddhanta and the rest of his directions are being followed by the media outlets if we apply conventional warfare principles to information manipulation. While there is a clear distinction between the articles chosen for the study, articles from publications like The Hindu and Hindustan Times have somehow taken a balanced narrative whereas referring to similar situations, platforms like WION and Times of India have taken an aggressive stand in support of Indian interests. Researchers have carefully guised the positioning of such platforms, which shows a difference in the readership structure of these platforms even though the language is English. A niche global issues follower would find more news on WION than the rest of the others who have to domestically cover regional issues leading to changes in tone, language, and narrative strategies of them.

Every news article followed a rational path while substantiating its arguments by giving attribution, facts, and logical references hence also qualified journalistic ethics and not merely remaining a propaganda piece. However, the presentation of facts had few variations. Some were aggressive while some were moderate.

One highlighting factor which was however common in all of them was that they all kept India's national interest as a common issue while covering an overseas matter and also suggested possible solutions which after decoding could find resemblance with Chanakya's Shadguna Siddhanta and other diplomatic proponents. This analysis gives a scope to consider that strategic thinking has found some space in the information and news dissemination

business which is necessary to counter the global perception battle where battlegrounds are blurred.

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