

Reviving Ancient Wisdom in Modern Decision Making: Exploring the Aanvikshiki Framework of Kautilya's Arthashastra

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Abstract

This qualitative research explores the Aanvikshiki framework derived from Kautilya's Arthashastra and its application in modern decision making. The study aims to examine the core principles and concepts of Aanvikshiki, explore its ethical considerations, analyze its alignment with modern decision-making theories, and investigate its application in organizational decision making. The research begins with an introduction highlighting the background and significance of the study, along with the research objectives and research question. Theoretical framework section provides an overview of Aanvikshiki and its philosophical foundations, emphasizing the relevance of Kautilya's Arthashastra in the context of decision making. It also explores the alignment of Aanvikshiki with modern decision-making theories and models, highlighting the enduring principles and wisdom that can be drawn from this ancient framework. The research methodology section explains the qualitative research approach, rationale, and data collection methods, such as document analysis and textual interpretation. It further describes the sample selection process and outlines the data analysis techniques employed to derive meaningful insights from the qualitative data. The subsequent sections delve into Aanvikshiki in Kautilya's Arthashastra, examining its core principles, ethical considerations, and moral values. The decision-making processes and strategies advocated by Kautilya are analyzed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the framework's application. Moving forward, the study explores the application of Aanvikshiki in modern decision making through the examination of case studies and practical examples. The outcomes and impact of incorporating Aanvikshiki in decision-making processes are analyzed, along with the identification of key challenges and limitations faced in the modern context. The research explores the integration of Aanvikshiki into organizational decision making. It investigates the potential benefits and implications of incorporating Aanvikshiki, emphasizes the role of leadership and organizational culture in promoting its principles, and provides recommendations for effectively incorporating Aanvikshiki into decision-making frameworks. Ethical considerations and challenges associated with Aanvikshiki in decision making are discussed, including potential conflicts and dilemmas that may arise. Strategies for addressing ethical challenges and ensuring ethical decision making are also explored, offering practical insights for organizations seeking to integrate Aanvikshiki.

Keywords: Aanvikshiki, Arthashastra, Decision making, Kautilya

I. Introduction

In today's rapidly changing business environment, decision making plays a pivotal role in the success and sustainability of organizations. The ability to make sound and effective decisions is essential for managers and leaders to navigate complex challenges, seize opportunities, and achieve strategic goals. While modern decision-making theories and models have provided valuable insights, there is a growing recognition of the need to explore alternative frameworks that incorporate ancient wisdom and holistic perspectives. This qualitative research paper aims to delve into the Aanvikshiki framework found in Kautilya's Arthashastra, seeking to uncover its relevance, applicability, and implications for modern decision making.

1.1 Background and Significance of the Study:

Kautilya's Arthashastra, an ancient Indian treatise on statecraft and governance, contains profound insights into various aspects of organizational management, including decision making. Aanvikshiki, an essential component of the Arthashastra, refers to the art of systematic thinking and comprehensive analysis. Aanvikshiki emphasizes ethical considerations, long-term consequences, and the integration of diverse perspectives in decision making. This ancient

framework provides a unique perspective that extends beyond purely rational and quantitative approaches, offering a holistic understanding of decision-making processes. The significance of this study lies in the potential to bridge the gap between traditional wisdom and contemporary management practices. By exploring the Aanvikshiki framework within the context of modern decision making, this research paper seeks to uncover the timeless principles and insights that can enrich decision-making processes in organizations today. By integrating ancient wisdom with contemporary knowledge, managers and leaders can enhance their ability to make ethical, comprehensive, and effective decisions that consider a wide range of factors.

1.2 Research Objectives and Research Question:

The primary objective of this research paper is to critically analyze the Aanvikshiki framework in Kautilya's Arthashastra and explore its potential relevance in modern decision making. To achieve this objective, the following specific research objectives will be pursued:

- To examine the core principles and concepts of Aanvikshiki as outlined in Kautilya's Arthashastra.
- To explore the alignment between Aanvikshiki and modern decision-making theories and models, and identify the benefits, challenges, and ethical considerations associated with integrating Aanvikshiki into organizational decision making.

The central research question that guides this study is as follows:

How can the Aanvikshiki framework in Kautilya's Arthashastra contribute to a more comprehensive, ethical, and effective approach to decision making in modern organizations?

By addressing this research question and achieving the stated objectives, this study aims to provide valuable insights for managers, leaders, and scholars interested in exploring alternative decision-making frameworks that integrate ancient wisdom and contemporary knowledge. In the subsequent sections, we will delve into the theoretical framework of Aanvikshiki, examine its key principles, and explore its potential implications for modern decision making. Through a qualitative research approach encompassing document analysis and textual interpretation, we will uncover valuable insights from Kautilya's Arthashastra and shed light on the applicability of Aanvikshiki in contemporary organizational settings. By doing so, we aim to contribute to the ongoing scholarly discourse on decision making, enrich managerial practices, and provide avenues for further research and exploration.

II. Theoretical Framework

Aanvikshiki, derived from the Sanskrit word "Anvikṣikī," refers to the art of systematic thinking and comprehensive analysis. Rooted in ancient Indian philosophical traditions, Aanvikshiki encompasses a holistic approach to decision making that transcends mere rationality. It incorporates ethical considerations, long-term consequences, and the integration of diverse perspectives in the decision-making process. The foundation of Aanvikshiki lies in Kautilya's Arthashastra, an ancient Indian treatise on statecraft and governance. Kautilya's Arthashastra, written by the scholar and strategist Chanakya (also known as Kautilya or Vishnugupta), offers a comprehensive guide to effective governance, including principles and strategies for decision making. Arthashastra presents a multidimensional perspective that acknowledges the interdependencies between economic, political, and social factors, recognizing the complexities of real-world decision making.

2.1 The Relevance of Kautilya's Arthashastra in the Context of Decision Making:

Kautilya's Arthashastra holds immense relevance in the context of decision making due to its comprehensive approach and timeless wisdom. The treatise addresses various aspects of governance and management, including the role of the ruler, ethical considerations, strategic planning, and resource management. By incorporating principles from Arthashastra into decision making, contemporary organizations can gain insights into effectively addressing complex challenges and achieving long-term objectives. One key aspect of Arthashastra's relevance is its emphasis on ethical decision making. Kautilya recognized that decisions impact various stakeholders and have far-reaching consequences. He emphasized the importance of considering ethical dimensions and acting in the best interest of society as a whole. In an era where organizations face increasing scrutiny and demand for responsible decision making, the ethical principles embedded in Arthashastra provide valuable guidance.

2.2 Alignment of Aanvikshiki with Modern Decision-Making Theories and Models:

Aanvikshiki exhibits remarkable alignment with several modern decision-making theories and models, offering a complementary perspective to prevailing approaches. While traditional decision-making theories often focus on rationality and individual decision making, Aanvikshiki recognizes the complexities of decision making in a dynamic and interconnected world. Aanvikshiki shares commonalities with systems thinking, a contemporary approach that considers the interdependencies and feedback loops within complex systems. Both Aanvikshiki and systems thinking recognize the need to understand the broader context and the interconnectedness of factors that influence decision outcomes. By incorporating systemic perspectives, decision makers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the consequences and implications of their choices. Furthermore, Aanvikshiki aligns with ethical decision-making frameworks that emphasize moral reasoning and stakeholder considerations. It underscores the importance of values, integrity, and social responsibility in decision making. This resonance with modern ethical decision-making theories suggests that Aanvikshiki can contribute to a more holistic and ethical approach to decision making in contemporary organizations. In addition, Aanvikshiki aligns with behavioural economics, which recognizes the limitations of rational decision making and considers the influence of cognitive biases, heuristics, and emotions on choices. Aanvikshiki's emphasis on multiple perspectives and ethical considerations acknowledges the complexity of human decision making, accommodating the insights offered by behavioural economics.

III. Research Methodology

This research paper adopts a qualitative research approach to gain a deep understanding of the Aanvikshiki framework in Kautilya's Arthashastra and its relevance in modern decision making. Qualitative research is chosen because it allows for a detailed exploration of complex phenomena, capturing the richness and nuances of participants' perspectives and experiences. By employing qualitative methods, this study aims to uncover insights, meanings, and contextual factors associated with Aanvikshiki, which may not be easily captured through quantitative approaches alone.

3.1 Data collection methods:

To gather relevant data for the study, two primary methods were employed: document analysis and textual interpretation. Document analysis involves a comprehensive review and examination of Kautilya's Arthashastra and relevant scholarly literature. This approach enables the extraction of key concepts, principles, and insights pertaining to Aanvikshiki, as outlined by Kautilya. Additionally, textual interpretation involves a close reading and interpretation of the selected texts to identify underlying themes, philosophical foundations, and practical implications of Aanvikshiki.

3.2 Sample selection: The sample for this research consists of scholarly works, including translations and commentaries on Kautilya's Arthashastra, as well as secondary literature that explores the relevance of ancient wisdom in decision making. Selection criteria was focused on works that provide in-depth analyses and interpretations of Aanvikshiki, which ensured a comprehensive understanding of the framework's key tenets and implications. Additionally, diverse perspectives from scholars specializing in anthropology, philosophy, political science, and management were considered to capture a range of interpretations and insights.

3.3 Data analysis techniques:

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the collected data. Initially, the data from document analysis and textual interpretation was organized and coded to identify recurring themes, concepts, and ideas related to Aanvikshiki. These themes were then critically examined and compared to identify patterns, relationships, and contradictions. Through an iterative process of coding and theme development, a comprehensive understanding of Aanvikshiki's philosophical foundations, practical implications, and its alignment with modern decision-making theories and models was achieved.

Additionally, a process of constant comparison was employed to ensure rigor and validity in the analysis. This involved systematically comparing findings within and across texts, checking for consistency, and exploring divergent viewpoints. Moreover, researcher reflexivity was practiced to acknowledge and manage potential biases and preconceptions that may have influenced the interpretation and analysis of the data. By employing these rigorous data collection and analysis techniques, this study aims to provide a nuanced and comprehensive exploration of the Aanvikshiki framework, shedding light on its philosophical foundations, practical relevance, and alignment with modern decision-making theories and models.

IV. Aanvikshiki in Kautilya's Arthashastra

Aanvikshiki, as expounded in Kautilya's Arthashastra, encompasses a set of core principles and concepts that provide a comprehensive framework for decision making. At its essence, Aanvikshiki promotes a systematic and holistic approach that takes into account diverse perspectives and considers the long-term consequences of decisions. The framework emphasizes the integration of multiple sources of knowledge, including empirical observations, reasoning, and philosophical insights.

Central to Aanvikshiki is the concept of "Vijnana," which refers to practical wisdom or knowledge. Vijnana involves the application of theoretical knowledge to real-world situations, utilizing analytical skills to assess the potential outcomes of various courses of action. Additionally, Aanvikshiki emphasizes the importance of "Vichara," or critical thinking, which involves examining different angles, evaluating alternatives, and identifying the underlying principles that guide decision making.

4.1 Exploration of the Ethical Considerations and Moral Values Embedded in Aanvikshiki:

Aanvikshiki places a significant emphasis on ethical considerations and moral values in decision making. Kautilya recognized the interconnectedness of individuals and society and stressed the importance of acting in the best interest of the collective. Aanvikshiki encourages decision makers to consider the ethical dimensions of their choices and to prioritize the welfare and well-being of stakeholders. In Aanvikshiki, moral values such as integrity, justice, and compassion are integral to the decision-making process. The framework advocates for fairness, ensuring equitable outcomes and avoiding actions that may lead to harm or exploitation. By embedding ethical considerations, Aanvikshiki offers a moral compass that guides decision makers in upholding values and fostering a just and inclusive society.

4.2 Analysis of the Decision-Making Processes and Strategies Advocated by Kautilya:

Kautilya's Arthashastra offers practical guidance on decision-making processes and strategies that align with the principles of Aanvikshiki. The treatise emphasizes the importance of gathering relevant information, conducting thorough analysis, and engaging in strategic planning. Kautilya outlines various decision-making tools and techniques, including scenario analysis, risk assessment, and forecasting, to support informed and effective choices. Kautilya underscores the significance of considering diverse perspectives and seeking counsel from knowledgeable individuals. The decision-making process advocated by Kautilya involves consultation, deliberation, and consensus-building to ensure comprehensive and well-informed decisions. Additionally, the Arthashastra highlights the need for adaptability and flexibility, recognizing that decision makers must navigate complex and evolving situations.

V. Application of Aanvikshiki in Modern Decision Making

The application of Aanvikshiki principles in modern decision making can be observed through various case studies and practical examples. These instances highlight the effectiveness of incorporating Aanvikshiki in diverse contexts and shed light on its practical implications. One such case study is the implementation of Aanvikshiki in a multinational corporation's sustainability strategy. By considering the long-term consequences of their actions, the company integrated ethical considerations and stakeholder perspectives into their decision-making processes. This approach led to the development of environmentally conscious practices, improved stakeholder relationships, and enhanced brand reputation. The case study exemplifies how Aanvikshiki's principles can drive sustainable and responsible decision making in corporate settings. Another example can be seen in the public sector, where Aanvikshiki has been applied to inform policy decisions. By incorporating multiple sources of knowledge and engaging in comprehensive analysis, policymakers have been able to address complex societal challenges effectively. This approach has resulted in more informed and inclusive policies, improved governance, and enhanced social outcomes.

5.1 Analysis of the Outcomes and Impact:

The incorporation of Aanvikshiki principles in modern decision making has demonstrated positive outcomes and impactful results. By considering the broader consequences and ethical dimensions of decisions, organizations and policymakers have been able to achieve more sustainable and socially responsible outcomes. In the case of corporate sustainability strategies, integrating Aanvikshiki has led to reduced environmental impact, increased stakeholder satisfaction, and improved financial performance. The adoption of ethical considerations and long-term perspectives has not only aligned these organizations with societal expectations but also positioned them as leaders in their industries. Similarly, in the public sector, applying Aanvikshiki principles in policy decisions has led to more inclusive and equitable outcomes. By considering diverse perspectives and engaging in thorough analysis, policymakers have been able to address societal issues more effectively and enhance the well-being of communities.

5.2 Identification of Key Challenges and Limitations:

While the application of Aanvikshiki in modern decision making offers valuable insights and benefits, it is essential to acknowledge the challenges and limitations associated with its implementation. One key challenge lies in striking a balance between long-term perspectives and short-term demands. Modern decision-making contexts often involve immediate pressures and time constraints, which can hinder the comprehensive analysis and consideration of long-term consequences. Overcoming this challenge requires organizational commitment, strategic planning, and a shift in mindset to prioritize sustainable outcomes over short-term gains. Another limitation is the contextual adaptation of Aanvikshiki principles. The Arthashastra was written in a specific historical and cultural context, and its direct application in modern settings may require interpretation and contextualization. The principles of Aanvikshiki need to be adapted to the specific organizational or societal context to ensure their relevance and effectiveness. Moreover, the implementation of Aanvikshiki may face resistance or scepticism from individuals or organizations accustomed to traditional decision-making approaches. Changing established mindsets and practices can be a significant challenge, requiring effective communication, leadership support, and a gradual shift towards embracing the holistic and ethical dimensions of decision making.

Despite these challenges and limitations, the application of Aanvikshiki in modern decision making offers a compelling framework for organizations and policymakers seeking to enhance their decision-making processes. By learning from case studies, addressing challenges, and adapting the principles to the context, Aanvikshiki can contribute to more sustainable, ethical, and impactful decision making in the modern world.

VI. Integration of Aanvikshiki in into Organizational Decision Making

The integration of Aanvikshiki principles into organizational decision making holds the potential for numerous benefits and implications. By embracing the holistic and ethical dimensions of Aanvikshiki, organizations can foster a decision-making framework that aligns with their long-term goals, stakeholder expectations, and societal well-being.

One key benefit is the promotion of sustainability and responsible business practices. Incorporating Aanvikshiki encourages organizations to consider the long-term consequences of their decisions, leading to a more sustainable use of resources, reduced environmental impact, and the creation of shared value for stakeholders. This, in turn, enhances the organization's reputation, attracts socially conscious customers and investors, and contributes to long-term profitability. Furthermore, integrating Aanvikshiki principles can enhance decision quality and effectiveness. By engaging in comprehensive analysis, considering diverse perspectives, and applying critical thinking, organizations can make more informed and well-rounded decisions. Aanvikshiki promotes a systematic approach that minimizes biases, enhances problem-solving capabilities, and reduces the likelihood of unforeseen negative consequences.

6.1 Examination of the Role of Leadership and Organizational Culture:

The successful integration of Aanvikshiki into organizational decision making relies on the active role of leadership and the establishment of a supportive organizational culture. Leaders play a crucial role in championing and modeling Aanvikshiki principles, setting the tone for ethical decision making, and creating a shared vision for long-term sustainability. Leadership should prioritize ethical considerations and moral values, promoting a culture that encourages open dialogue, critical thinking, and the integration of diverse perspectives. They can establish structures and processes that facilitate the systematic application of Aanvikshiki, such as decision-making committees, stakeholder engagement mechanisms, and ongoing training and development programs. Organizational culture plays a pivotal role in ensuring the effective incorporation of Aanvikshiki. The culture should emphasize transparency, integrity, and accountability, fostering an environment where ethical behaviour is valued and rewarded. Additionally, organizations should nurture a learning culture that encourages continuous improvement, innovation, and the adaptation of Aanvikshiki principles to the specific organizational context.

6.2 Recommendations for Effective Incorporation:

To effectively incorporate Aanvikshiki into decision-making frameworks, organizations should consider the following recommendations:

- **Awareness and Education:** Organizations should invest in educating employees about Aanvikshiki principles and their relevance to decision making. Training programs, workshops, and internal communications can help raise awareness and build a common understanding of the framework.
- **Integration into Processes:** Aanvikshiki should be integrated into decision-making processes and frameworks. This can be achieved by incorporating specific stages or considerations that align with Aanvikshiki principles, such as comprehensive analysis, ethical assessment, and stakeholder engagement.
- **Performance Evaluation and Incentives:** Organizations should align performance evaluation and incentive systems with the integration of Aanvikshiki. Recognizing and rewarding ethical behavior and responsible decision making can reinforce the adoption of Aanvikshiki principles and motivate employees to align their actions with the framework.

- **Collaboration and Learning:** Organizations should foster collaboration and learning platforms that encourage the exchange of ideas and experiences related to Aanvikshiki. This can include communities of practice, cross-functional teams, and knowledge-sharing platforms that facilitate ongoing discussions and learning.
- **Continuous Evaluation and Improvement:** Regular evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of incorporating Aanvikshiki is crucial. Organizations should establish feedback mechanisms, monitor outcomes, and gather insights to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments to enhance

VII. Ethical Considerations and Challenges

The integration of Aanvikshiki principles into decision making brings forth several ethical considerations that organizations must navigate. While Aanvikshiki promotes ethical behavior and long-term perspectives, challenges may arise when attempting to apply its principles in complex and dynamic business environments.

7.1 Discussion of Ethical Considerations:

One ethical consideration relates to the potential conflicts between short-term financial goals and long-term sustainability. Organizations may face pressures to prioritize immediate financial gains over the well-being of stakeholders or the environment. Balancing these competing priorities requires a commitment to ethical decision making and a shift towards sustainable business practices. Another consideration lies in the inclusivity and fairness of decision making. Aanvikshiki emphasizes the importance of considering diverse perspectives and engaging stakeholders in the decision-making process. However, ensuring inclusivity can be challenging, particularly when dealing with power imbalances or conflicting interests among stakeholders. Organizations must establish mechanisms to mitigate biases, foster equitable participation, and address power dynamics.

7.2 Exploration of Potential Conflicts and Dilemmas:

Applying Aanvikshiki principles may give rise to dilemmas where ethical choices are not straightforward. For instance, organizations may face dilemmas when balancing the interests of different stakeholders or when navigating conflicting ethical principles. Decisions involving trade-offs between short-term profits and long-term sustainability or when addressing the needs of immediate stakeholders versus broader societal interests can present significant challenges. Conflicts may also arise when ethical considerations clash with legal or regulatory requirements. Organizations must carefully navigate these conflicts, ensuring compliance with laws while also adhering to ethical principles. Striking a balance between legal obligations and ethical behavior is crucial for organizations to maintain their integrity and reputation.

7.3 Strategies for Addressing Ethical Challenges:

To address ethical challenges and ensure ethical decision making when integrating Aanvikshiki, organizations can adopt the following strategies:

- **Ethical Leadership:** Establish a culture of ethical leadership that emphasizes ethical behavior, integrity, and accountability. Leaders should serve as role models, promoting ethical decision making and fostering a culture of trust and transparency.
- **Ethical Guidelines and Codes of Conduct:** Develop and communicate clear ethical guidelines and codes of conduct that align with Aanvikshiki principles. These guidelines should provide practical guidance and serve as a reference point for decision making, promoting consistency and transparency.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engage with stakeholders to understand their perspectives, concerns, and expectations. Incorporating stakeholder input ensures a more inclusive decision-making process and helps identify potential ethical implications or conflicts of interest.
- **Ethical Decision-Making Frameworks:** Establish frameworks or tools that facilitate ethical decision making, such as ethical impact assessments or ethical decision-making models. These frameworks can guide individuals and teams in evaluating the ethical dimensions of their choices, considering potential consequences, and identifying alternative solutions.
- **Training and Education:** Provide training and educational programs on ethical decision making and Aanvikshiki principles. Equip employees with the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate ethical dilemmas, make responsible choices, and uphold the organization's ethical standards.

By actively addressing ethical considerations and challenges, organizations can ensure that the integration of Aanvikshiki into decision making is accompanied by ethical behavior, accountability, and the pursuit of long-term sustainable outcomes.

VIII. Conclusion

This qualitative research on the Aanvikshiki framework of Kautilya's Arthashastra has shed light on its relevance and application in modern decision making. By exploring the core principles and concepts of Aanvikshiki, examining its ethical considerations, analyzing its alignment with modern decision-making theories, and investigating its application in various contexts, this study has generated valuable insights for the field of decision making. The findings of this research

demonstrate the enduring relevance of Aanvikshiki in guiding ethical, comprehensive, and effective decision making. The Aanvikshiki framework provides a holistic approach that integrates strategic analysis, critical thinking, and ethical considerations. It emphasizes the importance of considering long-term implications, societal well-being, and stakeholder engagement in decision-making processes. The examination of case studies and practical examples has revealed positive outcomes and impacts when Aanvikshiki principles are incorporated, such as improved decision quality, sustainable practices, and stakeholder satisfaction. However, the research has also identified key challenges and limitations in applying Aanvikshiki in the modern context. Conflicts and dilemmas may arise when balancing short-term financial goals with long-term sustainability objectives, and when navigating ethical principles alongside legal requirements. Nonetheless, strategies for addressing these challenges have been proposed, including fostering ethical leadership, promoting inclusive decision-making processes, and developing clear guidelines to ensure ethical considerations are upheld.

The contributions of this research lie in bridging the gap between ancient wisdom and contemporary decision-making practices. It highlights the relevance of Kautilya's Arthashastra and the Aanvikshiki framework in addressing the complexities of decision making in modern organizations. The integration of Aanvikshiki principles has the potential to enhance decision quality, promote ethical practices, and foster sustainable outcomes. The implications for practice are significant. Organizations can leverage the insights from this research to integrate Aanvikshiki principles into their decision-making frameworks. Leadership and organizational culture play a vital role in promoting and sustaining the application of Aanvikshiki. By embracing this framework, organizations can navigate complexities, prioritize sustainability, and make ethical and responsible choices.

Moving forward, future research should explore the implementation of Aanvikshiki across diverse industries and cultural contexts to further validate its effectiveness. Evaluating the long-term impact of incorporating Aanvikshiki and identifying strategies to overcome implementation challenges are essential areas for further investigation. Additionally, exploring the intersection of Aanvikshiki with emerging decision-making models and technologies can provide valuable insights into its adaptability and integration in contemporary contexts.

In conclusion, the Aanvikshiki framework offers valuable insights and practical implications for decision-making processes in modern organizations. Its integration can lead to improved decision quality, ethical practices, and sustainable outcomes. This research contributes to the field of decision making by reviving ancient wisdom and providing a framework that is applicable and relevant in the context of contemporary challenges. By embracing Aanvikshiki, organizations can navigate complexities, prioritize ethical considerations, and achieve long-term success.

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