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EVOLUTION OF INDIAN ADMINISTRATION

Our sources of information regarding the systems of which prevailed in India in the ancient times and the political ideas and administration ideals which moulded and shaped those systems are various. Briefly speaking, they are: the Vedas, the Hindu Epics, the Smritis, the Puranas, the religious books of the Buddhists and the Jains, historical and dramatic literature, accounts of foreign travellers, epigraphic records and lastly, a few treatises which deal specially with politics.

KAUTILYA'S ARTHSHAstra AND THE NATURE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Of the works which treat specially of the subject of Public Administration, the most important is the Kautilya's *Arthshastra*. *Arthshastra* literally means the science of secular welfare, as distinguished from *Dharmashastra*, or the science of moral and spiritual well-being. But this work treats only of politics, for in Kautilya's opinion Public Administration was the chief means of promoting the welfare of the people. Kautilya, the greatest political philosopher of India, was the contemporary of Aristotle, the most political theorist of ancient Greece and perhaps also a junior contemporary of Aristotle's predecessor and teacher, Plato. Kautilya appears in Sanskrit literature under various names such as Chanakya, Kautilya, Vishnugupt etc. He himself was a great practical statesman and his *Arthshastra* bears on every one of its pages the impress of a great mind. It evinces a thorough grasp of essential principles as well as a mastery of minute details.

Kautilya says in his preface to *Arthshastra* that it is founded on all the ancient books written on the subject by the ancient teachers, and in the body of the work he criticises the views of many political theorists, such as Usanas, Brihaspati, Bharadvaja, Parasara, Visalaksha, and Pisuna and of the schools founded by the teachers.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

During the Vedic and Brahmanic periods the country was divided into a large number of independent states, some of them exceedingly small, others of a moderate bulk but none having any considerable size. The systems of