

BOOK REVIEW

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Title of the book: Chanakya Neeti, strategies for success; **Author :** Radhakrishnan Pillai;

Publication: Jaico Publishing House, Mumbai; **Year:** 2020, **ISBN:** 978-93-88423-57-1

“Chanakya Neeti” by Radhakrishnan Pillai is a modern interpretation of the ancient Indian text attributed to Chanakya, the renowned philosopher and strategist. Pillai skillfully delves into Chanakya’s teachings, offering insightful perspectives on leadership, politics and life management.

The book is divided into 12 chapters, each focusing on a specific aspect of life, leadership, ethics and governance. Pillai very nicely explained Chanakya’s verses. He bridged the historical and cultural context of Chanakya’s time with today’s scenario, making his teachings applicable to modern life. In the last two chapters Chanakya gave Do’s and Dont’s of life. In Do’s he emphasizes on generosity, simplicity, courage, knowledge, politeness, health and good deeds. In Dont’s he said not to change your nature even when circumstances change. Don’t offend others for no reason. Chanakya advises to never trust anyone with our secrets, share only what is necessary. Be careful with bad company. Do not act mindlessly, don’t poke your nose to something that is not relevant to you. Chanakya says avoid lust, anger and greed. Don’t show off and avoid excessive sleep.

The strength of the book lies in the practical approach of explaining Chanakya’s teaching. Author supplements Chanakya’s verses with anecdotes, stories and real world examples, enhancing the reader’s engagement and comprehension. This story telling technique not only brings Chanakya’s teaching to life. But also illustrates their practical applications in various situations. I selected the book because I was curious to know about Chanakya’s strategies. The language of the book is very easy to understand some of the Sanskrit words also translated very well by the author. I found the book very interesting. Through this book I got to know about Chanakya’s life and about his book Kautilya’s Arthshashtra.

The verse of Chanakya which I liked the most in which he emphasizes on education.

He says in this verse, Education is the best gift parent can give to their children. Knowledge is valued around the world. Aim to be a scholar rather than a millionaire. Wealth doesn’t guarantee respect but knowledge certainly does.

Things I don't appreciate about the book when Chanakya says verses for the women. He said women should be loved and respected like a goddess but can't be given education and she will be inferior to man. And she is obliged to the permissions of her husband for doing anything, even fasting require permission from husband. Though during his time discrimination against women was considered normal, this verse should not be included in the book. One more verse which I don't like where he advocates suicide. In today's scenario both these verses are very much objectionable.

In conclusion, Chanakya Neeti by Radhakrishnan Pillai is a commendable work with positive aspects like practical wisdom, relevance, clear interpretation with real world examples and an emphasis on ethics. However it may be subject to individual preferences, with potential limitations related to subjectivity, simplicity and cultural bias.

