1. **Question: Discuss critically the Mandala theory of Kautilya.To what extent is it relevant in present-day situation? (2014)**

**Mandala Theory**

Mandala is a Sanskrit word and in his texts kautilya used Mandela as ‘circles. Kautilya classified the states into several categories – Vijigisha (Conqueror), the Ari (Enemies), Mitra (Friends), Madhyama (Mediators), and Udashini (Neutral). ‘The basic thought behind Kautilya’s Mandala Theory is “Your neighbor is your natural enemy and the neighbor’s neighbor is your friend”. Kautilya viewed in his Mandala theory of foreign policy that the immediate neighbor state of the conqueror which is in the middle of the circle is most likely to be a natural enemy. To understand it easily, imagine a series of states to one's west, and then numbering them as 1, 3, 5, 7, and so on will likely be enemy states, whereas states 2, 4, 6, 8, and so on will be friendly states. According Kautilya, the immediate neighbor is the natural enemy of the king and the enemy’s friends are artificial enemies where there is no any reasonable cause to trouble the conqueror.

He also believes that the states which are his neighbors and are also neighbors of his enemies are neutral and should always be treated with respect. According to Kautilya, the mediator state always situated between the two rival states. There is no sharp distinction between the mediator and neutral state in his theory. He believes that this circle is dynamic and the King should strive to be expanding his central position and reduce the power of the other kings in the vicinity.

The Mandala, as comprising 12 types of kings/states, it is classified as follows:

1. The conqueror at the centre of the Mandala. (Vijigisha)
2. Ari, the enemy whose territory borders on that of the conqueror, i.e., the hostile neighbor.
3. Mitra, ally’s whose territory lies immediately beyond that of the hostile neighbor.
4. Ari - Mitra, enemy’s ally who is the neighbor of one’s won ally.
5. Mitra- Mitra, ally’s ally who is territorially distant. (Vijigishu)
6. Ari - Mitra, ally of the enemy’s ally who is also territorially distant.
7. The rear of the would-be conqueror, i.e., rearward enemy
8. Rearward friend.
9. Friend of the rearward enemy.
10. Friend of friend is the rearward friend
11. A neutral king/state neighboring both the would-be conqueror and his/its enemy but is stronger than both.
12. The king is very indifferent towards all other kings/states but is more powerful than the would-be conqueror, his enemy and the neutral king/ state.

**Six-fold Policy to Maintain International Relation**

In a system of Mandala, Kautilya advocated six-fold policy to interact with the neighbors, which included co-existence, neutrality, alliance, double policy, march and war. To achieve this he advised the king to resort to five tactics: conciliation, gift and bribery, dissention, deceit and pretence, open attack or war. In the whole spectrum of Mandal, the Vijigishu functions as a sort of balance of power by asserting his own supremacy. It is assumed that the two adjacent states are normally hostile and consequently two states with another intervening between them would be friendly, being common enemies of the latter.

**Criticism**

1. Kautilya said in his Mandala theory that immediate neighboring state is always enemy state of the conqueror. But this view of Kautilya is not acceptable. In international relations there are many immediate friendly state and instead of being enemy they become friends to each other. The nice example is the co-existence of USA and Canada.
2. Kautilya said that the state which belongs next of neighbor state is friendly state. This view of Kautilya is also not acceptable. England is not neighbor to the USA. There are so many geographical boundaries between the two countries. But these two states are mostly friendly states.
3. Kautilya’s views regarding the Neutral and Mediator are not clear. He did not show any sharp distinction between the these two types of states.
4. Acoording to Kautilya, the neighboring state is friendly state and leaving consecutively one by one are the enemy states. His formula of arranging state in that manner is not scientific. Friendship among the states depends upon only on the existing political situation, not merely on geographical location.
5. Kautilya classified the friends and enemies into two categories – the front enemy- friends and rear enemy-friends. But, he did m[not show any distinction between the two types of categories. He also did not say anything about the importance of this classification.

**Relevant of Mandala Theory in present-day situation**

Kautilya’s Mandala theory of foreign policies and interstate relationships though cannot be said to be completely applicable in the present context, though one cannot ignore its relevance. His concept stands as barrier against the idea of integration, both at regional and global level. But unfortunately in the present day, knowingly or unknowingly, Kautilya dominates in regional and international relations. His warfare technique even in the present day helps a lot. He has actually very accurately had given his theories. Moreover, even to understand the ancient Indian political thought, it is very important to understand the inter-state relationships and hence kautilya’s contribution is immensely important when we look back at the Indian History and how under his guidance India reunited by the Mauryan Umpire.