

# The Profit-Margin Siddhanta

Mudrarakshas

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From scholars Mathuradas has learned that India’s capitalist system, which is beneficial to the country, looks out for the welfare of the people and is the source of our development and prosperity, is based on the margin of profit, which in Hindi we call *paṛtā*. At first, Mathuradas slightly misunderstood the concept. That is, he would buy a pair of shoes, take them home in a box with a string tied around it, and his wife would ask, “How much did they cost?” (*kitne mem paṛa?*) About ten years ago the very same shoes would have cost Mathuradas only Rs. 25 that today cost at least Rs. 150. Such an increase in the cost, in the *paṛnā*, has for its direct effect that much more difficulty in making ends meet, and that is what Mathuradas used to think was the profit margin, the *paṛtā*. Not only that, Mathuradas used to extrapolate this idea from the price of shoes to the price of other things, too. For example, when he went to buy flour, he would still ask how much these shoes cost. And ghee seemed never to cost less than the boots of a Police Superintendent.

That, though, is not the economic theory that lies at the heart of capitalism. The margin of profit is something quite different. So, having learned the truth of the matter, and having made a thorough study of this grand siddhant of economics, Mathuradas, for the sake of providing a profit to all the sutras of the world, has composed a new shastra on the profit-margin siddhant, which begins thus: *atha śrīpaṛatāsiddhāntakaumudī mathurādāsena viracitā ....*

Since I have called this shastra *Paṛtāsiddhāntakaumudī* I must warn ignorant troublemakers that this is not a *kaumudī* they might associate with a play, that is, a “comedy”. I had originally decided to give it the name *Paṛtāpurāṇ*, but as you know, a great outrage recently occurred in

the world of letters. Mrinal Pande found out about my work and its title, and like a literary pirate he quickly dashed off his *Paṭrangpurapurāṇ*. Now you tell me, if he did not fabricate the word *paṭrang* from *partā*, then on a detailed map why can't he show me where Patrangpur is? Because it does not exist. So what could I do? I changed the name of my work to *Paratāsiddhāntakaumudī*.

Now, an explanation of the siddhant.

In the *Paratāsiddhānta* not everyone is capable of getting a margin of profit. To get any benefit out of this grand theory one has to be the swami of a factory, that is, its owner. The *Paratāsiddhānta* applies only to the swamis of industry. It is just as good in the hands of a poor man as a mirror is in the hands of a monkey. While a monkey can look at himself in the mirror, he is unable to shave himself.

Being the swami of a factory, you must deduce how much it costs per unit to have people produce your goods. If it is two rupees, then you should not sell your goods at two rupees per unit. What profit would there be? You would instead suffer a loss. Whenever there is no profit, it is called a loss. To get a full profit you should sell a two-rupee item at two hundred rupees. The 118 rupee difference is the margin of profit, and that is a good one.

To get an even better margin of profit half of your products should leave by the factory's front door, and the other half should go out through a tunnel in the back. To reach an even greater level of profit margin, for a long time you should prevent any of your products from leaving the factory, via the front or the back. The people will suffer such hardship that instead of two hundred rupees for a two-rupee item, they will give you four hundred for it as happily as if it were free.

For their own profit scoundrels will sometimes put obstacles between you and your margin of profit. Always be on guard for that. If it does happen, then with a little forethought you will be able to turn the situation to your own profit.

Example. Once, in a city called Kampilya the fat of donkeys, pigs, cows, dogs and jackals began to be sold in great quantities and at low prices. Since the price of peanut and other vegetable oils was higher, Kampilya's makers of vanaspati, an "oleomargarine" type of substitute for ghee, began using the cheaper animal fats in their product and thereby increasing their profit.

A vile journalist, jealous of the prosperity of the wealthy, discov-

ered what had happened and revealed it. He wrote in his article that the vanaspati people were eating, thinking it was made only of vegetable oils, was actually made from the fat of donkeys, pigs, cows, dogs and jackals. Many people were horrified, and the sales of vanaspati tumbled.

Some shrewd industrialists then increased the price of their pure mustard oil from Rs. 13 to Rs. 30, thus increasing their margin of profit. When that shoe fell, soaked with expensive mustard oil, the consumers were outraged and began buying the animal-fat vanaspati again, the price of which, by then, had become Rs. 30. That is how smart industrialists are able to maintain, or even increase, their profit margin in the face of the mischief such despicable journalists can do.

Intelligent individuals will know how to apply this Profit-Margin Siddhant profitably in other areas as well.

Now and then a bunch of do-gooders will set out to help the masses, and occasionally they actually do help them. They never get any margin of profit out of that, however. They whine and fret their entire lives, and to everyone who will listen they complain about how evil the times are. If someone wants to be involved in volunteer work, then he should become a Program Director or the Head of a Commission, then he'll start to see some profit. In real terms, however, even if one spends one's entire life as the Head of the Committee for the Uplift of Harijans, one will never see a profit, as such. For that, you have to strive to become a Member of the Legislative Assembly or a Member of Parliament. Even then, however, you will get a good margin of profit only when you become a Cabinet Minister. Not only will you start seeing a profit then, but your entire family will too. As one of your aides, your long-lived son will become an expert at determining the proper fees for business licences and in collecting them, his wife will set the high rates that must be paid for transfers, and all your nephews can fulfill their moral obligation of taking over the best land and residences. Then you will get a good margin of profit.

Or, suppose you've made a "gift" of Rs. 20,000 and have had yourself assigned as Sub-Inspector to the Fatehpuri Police Station. All you have to do then is start cases against all the scooters parked in no parking zones, and you can imagine how much profit you will realize. A real profitable sub-inspectorship, however, can only occur once you've made friends with a dacoit or a smuggler.

This wonderful Profit-Margin Siddhant has even been applied in the

fields of Art and Literature. The writer who spends his whole life writing Literature never sees any profit for his trouble, nor does Literature. In fact, all he gets is curses.

A smart individual becomes an IAS Officer or a Cabinet Minister before becoming a writer. That provides Literature an immediate benefit. There was a time when the literary field had in it only characters like Nirala, who were so dreadful that not only did they not become Cabinet Ministers, they didn't even become Secretaries to Cabinet Ministers. All they did was sit around and write poetry all day! The result of such a situation was exactly what should have happened. Nirala whined and fretted, and like a grocer crying because his time had been wasted, he wrote:

But the wretched editors returned my work  
Hardly having read it  
What a bunch of jerks.

What else could the editors do? And they didn't even demand a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Nirala said,

True, I was no good at earning money,  
Nor providing for a family with poetry.

That was what had to happen. Just look at Vishvanath Pratap Singh. In the midst of its darkest night the world of Literature woke up to see that the sun had risen. As long as he remained Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, only two things were talked about—Phoolan Devi's pistol and Vishvanath Pratap Singh's poetry.

Then there is Atal Bihari Vajpayee, whom I used to think of as a full-time servant of Mother India. I thought he could give speeches only about the Emergency. Then he became Foreign Minister, Manohar Shyam Joshi's dormant literary talents awoke from their hibernation, and then somehow, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, too, began dashing off poems, which were printed in huge numbers. Doesn't it make sense now why there was a movement during that period for the return of Poetry to Literature?

You will have noticed recently that the fashion in Literature now is a series of long discussions. Why? In the previous generation scribblers like Ram Candra Shukla would tax their brains for years writing a book

which they would then put in a bag and take with them as they made the rounds of the publishers. Literary criticism makes no profit. Besides, there is always the danger of being arrested. What you need to do is get hold of a devoted fan who has a tape recorder, stick your muzzle up against it and start talking. Keep on talking. When the tape runs out, you stop too. That way, you minimize the effort of writing while maximizing all its benefits. If the occasion arises, you can say with complete innocence, all the while chewing tobacco, (he didn't say this, friend), "That's not the meaning of what I said."

That will realize a margin of profit.