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Aristotle

Introduction of Aristotle as a thinker.

- Aristotle is treated as 'Father of Political Science'
- If Plato is for an ideal state, Aristotle is for the best practicable state.
- Aristotle is treated as a functionalist, one who looks into the functional importance of the institutions.
- Aristotle does not believe in radical solutions or extremes. According to him "Golden mean is a Golden rule". One should not sacrifice good for the sake of best, because best is unachievable.
- Aristotle's approach is more practical based on common sense.
- According to him it is important for rulers to be worldly wise, rather than wise in the world of ideas.
- Aristotle is also elitist and ethnocentric in his approach. He believes in natural inequality. He justifies slavery & does not give equal opportunity to women in public sphere.
- Aristotle is also critic of sophists.
- Aristotle can be treated as the 'Father of Constitutionalism' & 'Rule of Law'

Key Ideas

- Theory of State
- Theory of Citizenship
- Theory of Property
- Theory of Slavery
- Theory of Justice & Equality
- Theory of Constitution

- Aristotle belongs to the schools of Teleology destiny
He supports his argument on teleological ground.
- He supports Natural Law.

Aristotle's Theory of State

- Man is by nature a political animal.
- A state comes into existence for the sake of life
but continues for the sake of good life.
- A state is highest of all associations.
- A state is prior to man.

Aristotle belongs to the school of Political Idealism (for idealists a state is more important than individual).

We see a continuity of thought in Aristotle, Socrates & Plato.

Context of Theory of State

- Criticism of sophist view of the state
For sophists, individual is prior to state.
Individual is an end and state is a means.

Man is by nature a political animal.

- He establishes the importance of state by suggesting that a state is a natural institution. It is implanted in the human nature.
- Aristotle has to prove that man is political by nature. He uses following logics to support his view.

1) On the basis of needs:

• He traces the origin of states to the natural needs of man. Man has various types of needs. There are very few needs which man can fulfill on his own. Man forms different associations to fulfill his needs. The first association is family. However family can not fulfill all of his needs. The second institution, he mentions is village or neighbourhood. The reason is man has a need for social recognition. Even village can not fulfill all the needs of man. Hence man creates state. Man can fulfill his highest ordered needs only in the state.

Since a state is originating in the needs of man, a state is natural & man by nature is political animal.

2) He further supports his position by suggesting that chronologically man is prior to state but logically state is prior to man. The reason is the life can not be considered as the life of a man or a human being in the absence of a state. In the absence of state, human life is not going to be very different from that of animals.

3) He also proves the importance of state teleologically. It is in the destiny of man to be a member of a political community. Nature has given certain qualities to man to think and to organize their lives. These qualities are not given to the animals. Thus it is in the destiny of man or nature has designed man in such a way that he has to be a member of state.

According to Aristotle a person can be either a beast or god, but he can not be a man if he can live without state.

Critical Evaluation of Aristotle's Idea.

- How far a state is essential for a good life remains a matter of debate. For Anarchists a state is a "unnecessary evil". For Gandhians

a state is incompatible to the concept of Swaraj & Non-violence. For Marxist a state is an instrument of exploitation. For classical liberals a state is a necessary evil. On the other hand for idealist, a state is a source of virtue. Fascist leaders like Mussolini held that there is nothing outside the state or nothing against the state.

A state is highest of all associations

- He mentions institutions that are emerging before state like family and village but gives highest importance to the state because other institutions can not fulfill all the needs of man. Only state is capable of fulfilling all of his needs. Hence states deserves highest obedience from man.
- A state comes into existence for the sake of life, implies that the state is a natural need of man. Aristotle believes that good life is not possible without state.

Difference in Plato & Aristotle's views of state.

- Plato's view is extreme. For Plato only state is important. Plato is eliminating the institutions like family for the sake of the state.

- For Aristotle, though a state is important and supreme, but it does not mean that man sacrifices his family. ^{Rather} ~~Rather~~ than elimination of one for the other, it is important to establish a balance.

- For Plato a state has to be organized on the basis of ultimate knowledge to be discovered by the Philosopher King by the use of Reason.

- For Aristotle, Political life is to be organized on the principle of common sense. He believes in conventional wisdom, rather than specialised knowledge. According to him, there is nothing left to be discovered. The only thing is that few things are in practice & few things are not in practice.

- Plato focusses on extreme unity in the state.

Plato expects supreme sacrifice by individual for the state. Plato actually views a state as a family & expects a person to sacrifice in same manner for the state as he will do it for his family.

- Whereas Aristotle maintains the distinctiveness of the two institutions.

The authority of statesman is different from that of a master.

- The context of the statement is criticism of Plato's view on the state. Plato treats state as a family. He applies the principles of family for the state.

The features of family (traditional) are

- sacrifice for the members of family.

Family represents unity. Conventional family represents hierarchy & patriarchy. The authority of husband is supposed to be absolute on his wife & master is to have absolute authority on his slaves.

- A state differs from family. A state is collective living. A state is diversity. Interest and aspirations of different people have to be taken into consideration. The Law governing state should emerge out of active deliberation. The authority of a statesman is different from that of a master. Master can have absolute power whereas the authority of statesman is constitutional. He has to act as per the law.

Theory of Slavery

- He considers slavery as natural. Not only natural but also desirable. He was criticised for providing justification to the institution of slavery.

His perspective towards Slavery

- He has a functionalist approach towards slavery.
- Slavery was practiced in ancient Greece & as a functionalist he views it as an institution which has a utility for master, for state as well as for the slave itself.

Who were Slaves?

- Slaves of that times can be classified into 2 types
 1. slaves
 2. prisoners of war.

Aristotle's view on slavery

- does not deal with prisoners of war made slaves.
- He deals with those whom he considers as slave as by nature.
- According to him nature has created 2 types of persons: Masters and Slaves.

Who are destined to be Slaves?

- According to him, those who do not possess reason & courage cannot be made masters.
- Slaves are those who cannot take decision.
- They do not have courage to face the consequences of the decision. Such persons are naturally dependent on someone else & expect that they take decisions for them. 3

We can see a continuity betⁿ thoughts
of Plato & Aristotle. Plato also considers
reason & courage are the essential characteristics
of guardian class.

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Features of Masters

- Master has reason & courage

Grounds on which he establishes that

Slavery is natural.

- Like Plato he believes in natural inequality.

According to him nature has created 2 types of persons.

1. Those who are mentally strong
(fit to be the rulers)
2. Those who are physically strong
(fit to perform manual jobs)

Grounds to consider Slavery as useful

- It is useful for the state as state is governed by those who are naturally fit to be rulers.

- Good for economic system as those who are physically strong are involved in the task of production. They can work for longer period.

- Good for master as his slave is working for him so that master can have free time to devote himself to the tasks of city state.

- Good for the slave also.

There is a natural requirement of the slave of someone who can take better decisions for him.

In the company of a master slave will develop virtues

Implication of the theory:

- The theory can be stretched to justify myths like "Benevolent Despotism" or "white men's burden"

Critical Evaluation of the Theory of Slavery

- The theory needs to be criticised as it goes against the values of human rights & human dignity.

- According to ^{Immanuel} ~~Emmanuelle~~ Kant, each man is an end in itself. No one ought to treat the other person as a means to an end.

- Karl Marx has criticised both Plato & Aristotle for giving disproportionate importance to the intellectual work & undermining the significance of manual jobs.

book
"Politics"

~~Reforma~~

Reformative aspect of his Theory.

- While justifying Slavery Aristotle does mention that
 - Master ought to treat his slave properly, look after his interest
 - To set the slave free if he develops virtues in the company of good master.

Aristotle's Theory of Citizenship.

His theory of Citizenship is known as Theory of Active Citizenship. Only those persons who perform their duties towards the state by participating in deliberative structures and judicial structures are treated as citizens.

Who are to be treated as citizens?

Aristotle excludes

i) women

ii) children

iii) old persons

iv) slaves

from his ^(conceptions) Theory of Citizens.

Who are citizens?

- Adult Greek males possessing property will be treated as citizens

Why he excludes women, children, etc?

- Citizenship is a duty towards the state.

Person should be capable of performing that duty.

Regarding women:

They are too much involved in affairs of the family that they do not have spare time for qualitative participation.

Regarding Children:

They are not mature enough. Rational faculty is not completely developed to participate in

compulsory voting: non serious voters will dilute the 'better' votes.

affairs of city states.

Old persons: may not be physically in a ^{active} position for participation.

slave: They do not have reason & courage.

Critical evaluation

- His theory of citizenship is very narrow & against gender inequality. It can't be accepted in contemporary times of democracy/universal adult franchise.
- However we will have to appreciate his view that citizen should play an active role in the affairs of the state.

Similar views have been expressed by Hannah Arendt when she advocates for active participation in civic affairs.

Aristotle's Theory of Property

Context of the Theory:

Criticism of Plato's Communism of Property.

Perspective of Aristotle towards property:

- He takes functionalist approach
- Property is a time tested institution coming down to us from ages.
- Property gives motivation & sense of achievement.
- It provides scope for charity.

Aristotle has analysed different systems of property & proposed his own system.

X Collective ownership	Collective ownership x	Individual ownership
✓ & collective use	& individual use x	Collective use
	(exploitative)	

- He is against collective ownership.

He rejects system of collective ownership as he believes that everyone's property is no one's responsibility.

- He supports collective use.

Since man is a social animal, there is a role of society in his achievement. Hence he should share his wealth with society.

Individual ownership, collective use.

- He supports this system.

Individual ownership will result into greater productivity, better maintenance & so on.

Collective use will help in addressing economic inequalities or state can perform welfare functions.

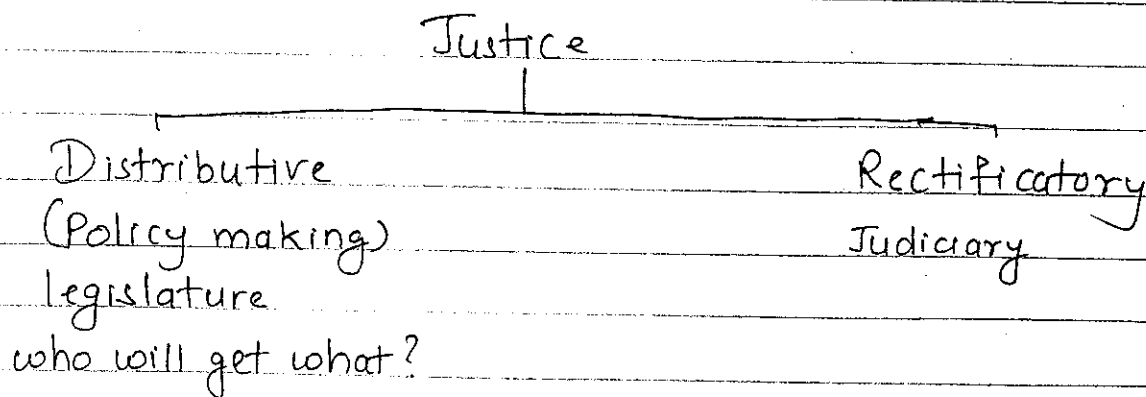
He justifies his theory on the principle of Golden Mean.

The system will avoid the extremes & would be a better approach. He lays down the foundation of welfare state.

There is also a similarity in Aristotle's Theory of Property & Gandhi's Theory of trusteeship.

Aristotle's Theory of Justice & Theory of Equality

- His theory of justice is known as the Theory of Proportionate justice. His approach is more practical than Plato's approach with respect to the system of justice.



Proportion:
merit, work

He proposes the criteria of Proportionate Justice for both distributive as well as rectificatory aspect.

Proportionate justice in distributive aspect.

- Reward a person in proportion of importance of his task or the contribution he makes to the society.
- Reward a person according to his merit.

He is a supporter of meritocratic society.

Aristotle suggests that "It is unjust to treat equals unequally but it is also unjust to treat unequals equally."

According to Aristotle, it is unjust to treat unequals equally by which he means to say that a person who is more hardworking & meritorious should be rewarded more. Thus he justifies a system of differential rewards based on the concept of merit.

Critical evaluation:

- Merit alone may not be the best & the only criteria in the real world, as suggested by John Rawls in his Theory of Justice. A person's achievements are not entirely because of ~~the~~ his merit though he may think so. It is a matter of chance that he got an opportunity for getting better education. Hence those who are more privileged should contribute for "the least advantaged" (This is Rawls' Difference Principle).

From the perspective of Marxist, scholars like Plato & Aristotle are responsible for undermining the value of manual labour. Gandhi in his theory of Bread Labour has suggested to give equal respect to all types of works.

In contemporary times & in a society like India, merit alone may not be the best criteria for justice in all contexts.

military
bureaucratic : Pakistan.
oligarchy.

Aristotle's Theory of Constitutions.

o Polity is the best practicable form of government.

He makes no difference in constitution, a state & government. He has given classification of governments or constitutions.

Objective of Rule.

# persons Ruling.	Self Interest of people (normal)	Self Interest. corrupt/perverted/abnormal
One	Monarchy	Tyranny
Few	Aristocracy	Oligarchy
Many	Polity	Democracy

Tyranny → worst

Aristocracy - Rule of few/rich

Democracy - Rule of many ignorant poor

Polity - Rule of many but not so many means the rule of middle class (those who possess moderate wealth).

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Polity mean of oligarchy & democracy.

Polity is best form of govt.

Context of the Theory

Criticism of Plato's Theory of Philosopher King.

In Aristotle's scheme of ideal state classification

the rule of philosopher king (Monarchy) tops the

list. However he feels that it is not possible to

find a philosopher king. He is concerned about

the danger that if all powers are vested in 1

person he will become tyrant.

He gives his own idea of best practicable state

He prefers rule of Law over rule of philosopher king.

○ Law is a reason without passion.

Context of the statement:

Criticism of Philosopher King & establishing

the superiority of Rule of Law.

- According to Aristotle, Rule of Law & Rule of Reason are 1 & the same thing.

- The purpose of law as well as reason is to guide man what is right & what is wrong.

- Law & Reason is same. One is the inward manifestation & other is outward manifestation.

- Not only Law & Reason are same but Rule of Law has additional benefits.

- In Rule of ~~one~~ person, there is always a possibility that passions or appetite dominate his reason.

Every person has reason, courage & appetite. In Philosopher King though reason dominates but sometimes appetite may also dominate. In this situation it will become tyranny.

- Law is a result of collective deliberation. Wisdom of many is preferable to the wisdom of 1 person.
- Law represents wisdom of ages.

Thus Rule of Law serves the same purpose with additional safeguards & is a better alternative.

o Polity is a best practicable form of government

- Rule of Philosopher King may be best but not best practicable.

- Polity fulfills the principle of Golden Mean

Polity is a mean of 2 extreme forms of governments.

- In his scheme of constitutions, Polity is placed betⁿ Oligarchy & Democracy.

Polity avoids the negative features of these 2 extreme forms of governance. He gives the benefits of the Rule of Middle Class.

- Middle class possesses average wealth.
- Middle class also possesses necessary education to form reasonable laws.
- Neither rich nor poor are in the habit of obeying law, One out of arrogance the other out of ignorance.
- Rich hate poor, poor hate rich & both are more comfortable with the middle class.

Thus Polity balances the Rule of Rich

& the rule of poor.

Thus Polity is the best practicable form of govt. based on Rule of Law and a mixed constitution.

Polity is more conducive for stability and stability is more important for the political system rather than excellence.

Aristotle's Theory of Revolution

Meaning of Revolution in the work of Aristotle.

- Aristotelian understanding of revolution is very different from the contemporary understanding of revolution.

- Aristotle regards any change big or small, peaceful or violent as a revolution. Even a peaceful change in the no. of ruling class is considered as revolution.

Why he has studied revolution.

- He has given an exhaustive treatment to the issue of revolution. He has studied around 158 constitutions of his time & previous times.

He has observed the causes of revolution very closely during his time. Aristotle believes that the most common cause behind all revolutions is the feeling of inequality real or apparent.

Aristotle considers political stability as a virtue.

He is conservative in his approach.

equality: justice

He has also analyzed causes of revolutions in different forms of govt.

In Monarchy, the cause can be tyranny.

In Oligarchy, the cause of revolution can be concentration of wealth in the hands of small section.

In Democracy, it can be because of ignorance of the people. They may elect demagogic (pretend to be democratic) leaders who later on become tyrannical.

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He has also given general causes of revolution.

- Corruption among the ruling class
- Too much influx of foreigners.
- Polarisation of society.

People have a natural preference for change.

Evaluation of Aristotle as a thinker.

→ He has ^{been} accorded as the status of "Father of Political Science".

- Plato is known as "Father of Political Philosophy", whereas Aristotle is known as "Father of Political Science".
- In Plato we find primarily the concern for philosophy of governance understanding the idea of governance.
- In Aristotle we see, greater concern for practicality. He is more concerned with best practicable state.
- We do find continuity betⁿ Plato & Aristotle. However Aristotle has critically examined the thoughts of his teacher & modified his thoughts so that

book deals
name of book showing entire focus on politics.

it becomes more practical.

- Plato has given primacy to the world of ideas.

He is deriving the laws of politics not from this world but from the World of God, i.e., outside this material world.

- Aristotle's views on state are not based on

outside world but from a deeper analysis of this

world only. He has gone for empirical observation

of existing constitutions. He preferred conventional

wisdom over a specific knowledge. His methodology

can be treated as more scientific, Rather than

contemplation, he preferred observation. His father

was a Physician. He applied the approach of

biology as he has gone for classification of the

types of constitution. On the

On the basis of above we can say that

he should be regarded as the "Father of

Political Science". As a father of Political

Science, many significant ideas have emerged

from his thinking like, Rule of Law, Welfare

state, theory of revolution. He is the first

person in whom we find the application of

inductive approach, whereas Plato's approach

has been primarily deductive.

inductive

deductive.

particular to general

general to particular.

conclusions are arrived before hand. → Philosophy.