

Chapter -2

Introduction

Aristotle was prominent Western thinker who was disciple of Plato and teacher of Alexander. He was student of Plato's institution 'Academy' and was profoundly influenced by him. He was a pragmatic thinker who believed in **path of golden mean** or **middle path**. He was born at Stagira, Greece in 384 BCE. He was influenced with Greek culture and tradition.

Approach

He adopted **teleological method** which means each and every thing is driven by some purpose in life. He applied comparative approach in which he made **comparative study** of 158 Constitution. He believes in **inductive method** of study.

Comparing Aristotle with Plato

Aristotle is pragmatic, scientific and empirical thinker. Therefore Maxey calls him '**first political scientist**.' Plato, on the other hand is romantic, idealistic, utopian and his ideas are far away from ground reality.

- Aristotle said that, it is unfeasible to separate family and property from individual. He believes that Institution of family was natural and criticized Plato's ideas about 'communism of family' as extremist. Family is essential to fulfill needs of society. Aristotle rejected Plato's contention of unifying ancient city-states through communism of family.
 - Aristotle called Plato's ideas of 'Philosopher King' as 'imaginary' and 'utopian'. He believed that it was impossible to imagine such intellectual and virtuous individual in real life.
 - According to Aristotle, man is social being but idea of 'common ownership' would be difficult to concede. Therefore, he believes common ownership of property or communism of property unpragmatic.
 - Aristotle says, human beings are emotionally attached to their children and therefore, he refused to accept Plato's theory communism of family.
 - Aristotle undertook comparative study of constitution of 158 States and analysed actual behaviour of human beings in state. He laid emphasis on **rule of law over rule of individual**.
- **Nature of State** –Plato says, state is **natural** and **organic institution** which helps individual to lead virtuous life. Aristotle has accepted this idea. Aristotle said that, human beings have ability of communication which helps individual to lead social life. This differentiates human life from animal life. The ultimate objective of **human life is to fulfill moral needs**.

Autonomy of Politics - Plato said that politics is a part of ethics. But Aristotle treats politics as an autonomous activity. Further he said that politics is a **master science** because politics deals with the study of moral, virtuous being.

“State is natural and moral institution” - By adopting **teleological method**, Aristotle considered state as natural and organic institution. Both Plato and Aristotle have recognised that social life is driven by fulfilling individual’s materialistic needs of society, which is fulfilled by family.

Making behavioral analysis of human being, Aristotle has considered human beings as nature's best creation. Like animals, human beings too have some physical needs to fulfil like hunger, thirst etc. But human beings are endowed with reason and have some moral needs which helps them to differentiate between right and wrong and helps them to lead virtuous life. According to Aristotle moral development can be attained through -

1. Nature
2. Experience
3. Reasoning

According to Aristotle, moral development through experience is an art but, moral development is impossible without state. Although, seeds of moral development is sown by family and Society but its complete development is possible only through state. Thus state fulfills both physical and moral needs.

“State is highest of all Institutions”- According to Aristotle, ‘**state is association of associations**’, the state fulfills moral development need in following ways: - State is association of associations.

1. Education.
2. Participation legislative and judicial activities.
3. Participation in other political activities.

Moral-Virtuous Human Being

- According to Aristotle, the ultimate objective of individual is happiness. Happiness can be attained by exercising one’s reasoning ability. Thus real happiness can be attained by living ‘virtuous life’. An individual can attain maximum happiness in living social life because ‘human beings is social animal.’ Aristotle has considered friendship or amity as an end in itself for attaining happiness. He emphasized that importance of friendship or cordiality is greater than acquiring physical wealth. In his work ‘Politics’, Aristotle has accepted principle of ownership of property but he considered it as means to fulfill objective of living virtuous life. Ultimate happiness can be attained only by developing reasoning and logical abilities.

Aristotle has considered human beings as nature’s best creature, different from both animal and God because animals have only physical needs. Gods do not have any physical need therefore they do not need society or State. For human beings physical needs are necessary but its ultimate objective is to live virtuous life. **“One who can live without state is either beast or God, but can't be a man.”**

Function of State

“**Man is by nature a political animal**”- According to Aristotle, state is natural, organic institution and it comes into existence prior to individual. According to teleological method, study of whole is more important than part. Similarly, body is more important than organ of a body. Therefore, state comes into existence before individual and it proves that one who doesn't live in state is either **beast** or **God**. According to Aristotle, state performs following functions-

- i. Food production
- ii. Training in art
- iii. Military training
- iv. Performing religious duties
- v. Performing religious and judicial functions

Theory of family:-

Aristotle said that family is an important institution which helps in moral development of individual and living virtuous life. For Aristotle, family consists of son, husband, wife and slave. Master is endowed with wisdom. The women possess lesser wisdom than their male counterpart. Whereas in children wisdom is less developed. According to Aristotle, everyone does not have same abilities to regulate and direct all other member of family.

According to Dunning, Aristotle gave following arguments about importance of family-

- It educates children to become citizen of state.
- It educates the head of family with art of managing/directing that will serve the purpose of state.
- Family helps slave to become virtuous.

- Plato neglected the family. He believes in the concept of **state-family**. Therefore head of **family and head of state is same for Plato**. Aristotle accepted the importance of family. Thus head of family is different from head of state.
- Major objective of family is to fulfill materialistic objectives whereas major objectives of state are to fulfill moral objectives.
- The head of family exercises unequal treatment a family members whereas head of state treats all its citizens equally.

Conclusion

According to Barker, Plato's idea is an example of abstract universalism because he ignored the Institution of family. Whereas Aristotle's theory of family is concrete universalism because he has recognised institution of family and state. He has considered family as an important means to fulfill physical need and character development of citizens.

Theory of slavery

Slave means reasonless person. They are living property of masters. Slavery was practiced in an ancient Greek society and was part of its economic system. According to Aristotle, there are two kinds of human beings **superior and inferior**. The superior human beings are the ones who have wisdom, courage and knowledge are eligible to rule/govern. Whereas inferior human beings are physically strong but lacks wisdom and ability to rule. Plato has not mentioned 'slavery' in his work 'Republic' but Aristotle has supported slavery and cited following Grounds in its favour:-

- Aristotle used teleological method to prove his idea about slavery which implies that everything in nature is driven by **some purpose**. Individuals who are endowed with wisdom will participate in administration and those who lacks wisdom will serve as slave and provide assistance to his master in his **domestic work**. Because nature has made him physically strong. Aristotle has kept slaves away from administrative duties.
- Aristotle utilised analogy of biology and said that some people are physically stronger and they are more suitable to become slave. Human body comprises of two parts: (a) **Integral part**, like heart (b) **contributory part**, example blood. Two organs of body are not having same worth. Thus slavery lies in nature. Superior ruler over inferior in natural world. For example mind control over body. Similarly master control over slaves. There is natural relationship between the two and they are mutually beneficial to each other.
- Slavery, according to Barker, is like instrument required for development of art. Since slaves relieves Masters from **domestic activities**, master will get **Leisure** to participate in the affairs of the state. This helps masters to perform their due legislative and judicial functions for sake of its citizens.
- Slavery is useful for slaves as well as for masters because Aristotle believes that company of 'virtuous master' will help them to 'develop virtue'.

DIFFERENT FROM MODERN SLAVERY

- Aristotle has kept prisoners of war away from category of slaves because they are not lacking wisdom.
- He refused to acknowledge slavery on the basis of inheritance and made strong case for their freedom.
- He said that children of slaves are not supposed to be slaves.
- Aristotle believes that duties of slaves shall be confined to domestic activities of master and not for production purpose.
- If any slave develops wisdom should be freed from slavery.
- The slaves should be given humane and cordial treatment.

Modern slaves was in the 18th and 19th century in Africa were subjected to inhuman treatment and exploitation and they were used as commodities for sale and purchase.

Criticism:

- Slavery is form of inequality in society. He justified social inequality on the natural inequality.
- Aristotle has justified slavery on the basis of nature whereas slavery is imposed by society. Natural differences in individual cannot be altered but social differences could be altered.

Form of Government

Aristotle made no difference between constitution and state. Nature of state is determined by nature of constitution Aristotle called 'state as association of associations.' The main purpose of state is to develop virtue in individual. In his work 'Politics' he refused to acknowledge Plato's concept of 'philosopher king' and endorsed 'rule of law'. According to Aristotle, constitution has following advantages-

1. Separation of powers.
2. Deciding delegation of power.
3. Deciding objectives of state

Classification of Constitution

Aristotle has classified forms of government into six categories. They can be brought under two headings: -

- (a) Pure form of government
- (b) Perverted form of government

For Aristotle, monarchy and Aristotle and polity forms of government are pure forms of governance which keeps into mind interest of people whereas tyranny, oligarchy and democracy are examples of perverted form of government which are driven by self- interest or selfish interest. Best virtue lies in monarchy which governs by one person. Aristocracy means government by few. Medium virtue found in Aristocracy polity means government by many and least virtue associated with it. Tyranny is government by one person and run on the basis of France. Oligarchy is the rule of few, rest upon interest of property less. Democracy is the rule of many and liberty is essential feature of democracy. Aristotle said that monarchy is the best form of government. However polity is the best practicable form of government.

Importance

Aristotle has particularly emphasized two forms of government: -

- i. Oligarchy
- ii. Democracy

- Aristotle said that democracy is the worst form of government among the best. But it is the best form of government among the worst.
- He said that best practicable state is important for protecting state against revolution.
- He said that best practicable form of government is mixed form of Government having components of the both oligarchy and democracy.
- Aristotle said that oligarchy form of governance is governance by few. Whereas democracy is rule by many ignorant poor.
- Aristotle has advocated rule of 'golden mean.' Which is between oligarchy and democracy? Therefore, he supported 'polity' which is 'rule of many'.
- Aristotle has considered constitutional government as best form of government because features of democracy and oligarchy are harmonized in it. Aristotle gave practical arguments in favour of constitutional government. According to him, government run on majority will reduce number of enemies in state.

Importance of middle class

According to Aristotle, there should be equal participation of both rich and poor in governance. The rich people have enormous wealth but are few in number whereas poor people have moderate wealth but are large in numbers Aristotle has classified society into three classes:-

1. Rich section—Rich hate towards poor, however poor sections have jealousy to rich section.
- 1) Middle class
- 2) Poor section

Aristotle has emphasized best form of Government can prevail under middle class. The rich people have immense wealth but are arrogant by nature and tend to disobey law whereas poor people are ignorant, immature and they do not have any understanding of law. This creates conflict and mistrust between rich and the poor. Thus, the opinion of middle class is more reasonable and practicable. There is sense of justice and equality in middle class as they try to obtain maximum consensus/consent in the discourse they tend to intrude. This will help in building virtuous society.

Aristotle has accepted the principle of 'rule of law.' According to him, rule of law is 'passionless reason'. In his work 'politics' he wrote, 'a person filled with justice and law is superior of all beings'. This Law is 'objective' in nature. He said that collective reason is more importance than reason of a person.

- The 'rule of law' is equally amenable to ruler and subjects.
- The ruler rules in accordance with law rather than his free will.
- The government is based on consent of the subjects.

He is advocate of realistic and middle path. However, he also considered traditions, conventions and precedents in society are important. Even modern thinker, Edmond Burke has also endorsed importance of traditions, conventions and precedents.

Aristotle's theory of Revolution

Aristotle has given his idea about State, Law, Property, Revolution, Justice etc in his work 'Politics'. According to him, change in form of government or change in constitution is done through revolution. For instance, transition from monarchy to tyranny is a change. According to him, 'treating equals unequally and an unequal's equally was major cause of revolution where rich people pleads for defending inequality and poor people craves for equality. According to him equality is of two types: -

1. Absolute equality
2. Proportional equality

Rich section of society demands for proportional equality. But poor section of society wants absolute equality. Thus aspiration of equality being about revolution. Aristotle believes major cause of revolution is demand for absolute equality (arithmetic equality) by poor and proportional equality (geometrical equality) by rich. Polity is the best practicable state which minimize the possibility of revolution.

Apart from this other causes of revolution are as follows: -

- (a) Corruption in ruling class.
- (b) Cravings for respect/dignity. Rewarding incompetent and punishing competent.
- (c) Incompetency of ruler
- (d) Mistrust and conspiracy amongst various classes also cause of revolution.
- (e) Usurpation of power by any one organ of government.

Revolution in democracy

- When popular leader conspires against rich people.
- When popular leader tries to accumulate all the powers of state.
- Democracy is run by poor sections of society. Therefore, rich revolts against state.

Revolution under monarchy

- Internal differences/conflict among the ruling class.
- Instigation of masses by popular leader.
- Lethargies of ruler King.

Measures to stop Revolution

- Respecting and obeying law by people.
- Maintaining good relationship between ruler and subjects.
- Removing inequality prevalent in society.
- Preventing accumulation of wealth by few people.
- Creating educational system which helps in developing virtue in individual.

- The sense of justice in society reduces chances of revolution.

Conclusion

According to Aristotle, Revolution is consistent phenomenon and its major objective is to attain equality. This is why he advises to adopt constitutional government as it will ensure greater stability and Justice. It will also help bridging inequality in society.

JUSTICE

Like Plato, Aristotle too emphasized importance of justice in state. According to Aristotle, 'virtue in action is justice.' Substantive meaning of justice is virtue in action. Here justice involves moral action of individuals obeying ones own duty is justice. But same time he also propounded particular meaning of justice. It is associated with law therefore regulative in nature. He believed that obeying of law and awarding and punishing individual as per one's abilities is justice. Aristotle theory of justice can be divided into two parts:

- (a) **Distributive justice:** - State will distribute office, awards, resources according to ones Capability and contribution towards society.
- (b) **Corrective justice:** - Along with distributive justice, Aristotle has paid due- importance to corrective justice. Penalizing and punishing one who disobeys law is justice.

Aristotle believes that virtuous and justfullife is synonymous to each other. Aristotle has considered that there is organic relationship between state and society and virtue of justice is necessary to ensure harmony in society.

- Aristotle applies teleological method to explain that everything is driven by some purpose or objective.
- Justice can be brought about by maintaining cordiality and harmony in society which will bring happiness.
- Performing one's duties and engaging in moral and virtuous activity is justice. This is Aristotle's endorsement of Plato's concept of substantive justice.
- His concept of Justice is based on concept of rule of law with provision of Justice.
- According to Barker, 'law, Justice and education are basis for spiritual state.'

Citizenship

Aristotle believes that only those people are eligible to become citizen of state. Who are active participants in affairs of state. Residence should not be ground for getting citizenship status.

1. Aristotle said good human being means virtues human being. Therefore good human being is same and universal. But good citizen may not be same. It changes according to changing form of government. A Good citizen may not be a good human being. But Good human being shall be good citizen.

2. Barker said that citizenship of Aristotle is like a shareholders. Who participate in deliberative and judicial functions of state. His notion of citizenship is unlike the concept of tax-payer of the contemporary world.

According to Aristotle, the abilities and capacity among is individual residing in state varies but their objectives remains same i.e, 'holistic development of state.'

It is not necessary to be good human beings to become citizen. It is possible that some citizen could have good qualities of human being but good human beings might not be good citizen.

- The best quality of good citizen is that he must possess all the good qualities to become a ruler and subjects.
- Thus Aristotle made no distinction between a good ruler and good citizen.
 - a) According to Aristotle, a good citizen might not have all qualities of human being but good ruler should possess.
 - b) A good ruler must possess practical knowledge and wisdom but a citizen may not.

Criticism

Aristotle has deprived one large section of people from citizenship. Aristotle believe that concept of citizenship varies in different forms of government. For instance, in aristocratic form of government, labourers and artisans are denied of citizenship. Capitalist state only rich people are eligible for citizenship.

Aristotle's theory of citizenship is very narrow and prejudicial. Children, slaves and old people are denied of citizenship. He believes that child is immature to participate in state affairs, old people are incompetent to participate in state affairs. He has discarded residence as criteria to grant citizenship.