

## **ARISTOTLE (384-322 BC)**

Aristotle was born in 384 BC in Stagira in Greece. Macedon was governed by a monarch and that it was not a democracy. His father was a physician to the King of Macedon. He had first-hand knowledge about the activities of the royal government. He is known as the father of Political Science. He was a disciple of Plato. He joined Plato's Academy at the age of 17. He was very impressed by his master Plato. He studied there for twenty long years. He was to become the head of the Academy after the death of Plato. But he left Athens soon. For thirteen years, he travelled all over the world and studied different political systems. He came back to Macedon to teach the young Alexander (the Great). Later, Aristotle established his own academy called Lyceum with the help of Alexander. 'The Politics' is his great work.

Aristotle's basic ideas were about origin, nature and purpose of state, best form of government, best form of state, revolution and slavery.

### **Aristotle on State and Government:**

#### **Evolutionary Theory of State:**

According to Aristotle, man is a social and political animal. Man lives a political life. Politics cannot be separated from life of man. Formation of the State was a gradual process. To meet his needs, he first formed the family. In the family, there are the master, slave, male, and the female members. All of them come together in the family. However, the family cannot meet all his economic needs. Therefore, he forms a village. In the village, there are many families. But, the village cannot meet all his needs. Therefore, man formed the state. The state is a kind of community. But the state is the highest form of community. It is above all communities. The aim of state is goodness. It aims at the highest good. It is the perfect form of organisation. It came into being for the sake of life and continues for the sake of good life. Man is a man only when he lives in a state.

Without the state, man cannot realise his destiny. Thus it can be seen that Aristotle presented an Evolutionary Theory of State. The state is the result of an evolution. Family and village have developed into the state.

**Natural formation of State:-** Formation of State is natural. Family is based on human nature. Just as family is natural, the state also is natural. State is the final development of the family. State is the highest form of social organisation. State is the highest organisation because it aims at the highest goodness. It is the supreme association. It is an association of associations. It covers all individuals and associations. Individuals and associations have meaning only when they are parts of the state.

**Organic Theory of State:-** The state is organic in nature. The state is the result of a growth. Just like an organism, state consists of many parts. The parts form the state. The parts cannot separate from the whole. The parts have no meaning without the whole. Thus, the state embraces all the other human associations.

**Functions of State:-** Function of the state is the moral perfection of the individual. It is like an educational institution. State has the positive function of promoting good life. It is an instrument of training the citizen in intellectual, moral, and physical goodness.

**State and Government:-** Aristotle made a difference between State and Government. According to him, the Government is only an instrument of the State. The Government and the people in government can be changed easily. But, the State cannot be changed easily. It can be changed only with the change in the constitution, which is not easy. According to him, the Government consisted of only a few citizens while the State consisted of all the citizens.

**Bases of formation of government:-** According to Aristotle, a government can be formed on the basis of birth, Wealth and Number. A Monarch is an example of a Government based on birth. If the successor of a Monarch is bad, it is not good for the State. A government based on Wealth may not be politically and morally

good. A Government based on number is good because many people work on the government. But it may not be able to solve difficult problems because many people are involved to solve a problem. Moreover, the power will come to concentrate in few hands.

**Aristotle on Constitutional Government:**-According to Aristotle, Constitution is the arrangement of the offices of the state. But it is not just arrangement of offices. It also means who should hold these offices. The nature of the ruling class determines the nature of the constitution. The nature of the constitution determines nature of the state. The constitution is not just a part of the state. It is the state itself. The constitution is the way of life of its citizens. It is the inner character of the people. Change in the constitution means change in the way of life of the people. According to Aristotle, citizenship means participation in the functions of the state. These are sovereign functions.

**There were three kinds of governments:** The classification is based on the number of people having power. The power may be vested in a single person, in a few people or many people. Thus, there are:

1. Monarchy
2. Aristocracy
3. Polity.

If power was vested in a single person, it is called a Monarchy. If power was vested in few people, it is called an Aristocracy. If power was vested in people, it is called a Polity. These were the normal forms of government.

**The perverted forms of these governments were:**

1. Tyranny
2. Oligarchy
3. Democracy

Monarchy becomes tyranny when the rule is for him.

Aristocracy becomes oligarchy when the rule is for a few people.

Polity becomes Democracy when it benefits only the poor.

Of all the different types of government, Monarchy is the best form of government. Monarchy has the highest virtue. Out of the perverted forms of government, the democracy is the best. Democracy has social equality. There are many problems with Polity or Democracy. If only the rich is given power, they will oppress the poor. If only the poor is given power, they will plunder the rich. Therefore, there should be a formula. Important offices should be given to the rich and the meritorious. The poor should be given only some participation in the government. They should be selected through elections, selections and commissions.

#### **Aristotle on Best Possible State:**

According to Aristotle, a good state should have the following characteristics:

1. It should be stable. It means that the constitution is balanced.
2. It should be moderate. It means that the provisions of the constitution should not be too harsh or too soft. It should not particularly favor a certain class of people.

According to Aristotle Polity is most stable and most moderate. In Polity, there is stability because the middle class dominated the other two classes. So there is a balance. Stability is also determined by the following factors.

**i) Population:** The number of population should not be too high or too low. The quality of the population also should be good. The people should be well developed and healthy. He did not specify any particular number of people.

**ii) Size and location of State:** The size and location should particularly help foreign trade. The location is such that it must help to prevent aggression from enemies.

**iii) Character of the people:** The people should be patriotic and intelligent. They should possess wisdom.

**iv) Different classes in the State:** In an ideal state there should be artisans, agriculturists, warriors, well to do people, priests and administrators. According to Aristotle, Artisans and agriculturists should not be given any citizenship. Slaves should be separated from the citizens.

**v) Education:** Good education is essential for the good foundation of the State. It will make men moral and good.

### **Aristotle on Revolution**

Aristotle had put forward a detailed theory on Revolution and change in government. According to him, there are various kinds of revolutions. They are as follows:

1. A revolution that may change the constitution.
2. A revolution that may change the ruling people.
3. A revolution that may make an oligarchy more oligarchic or change democracy into more democracy.
4. A revolution that may change just an institution in the government like an office.
5. A revolution that may change just a set of people in the government.

**Causes of Revolution:** There are many causes for Revolution also. The most general cause of revolution is men's desire for equality. The particular causes of revolution are the love for gain, love for honor, fear, undue prominence of some individuals in public life, carelessness in granting office, and neglect of changes.

### **Causes of revolution can be summarised as follows:-**

1. Unequal distribution of offices: when the various offices of the State are distributed unequally, it will lead to Revolution.
2. Misuse of Authority: When authority is misused, it causes revolution.
3. Injustice: If injustice is caused to the people, it will lead to Revolution.
4. Careless recruitment: if the recruitment to the offices of the state is proper, it will lead to revolution.
5. Unwanted expenditure: unwanted and callous expenditure will cause revolution.
6. Jealousy: Jealousy towards those in power can cause revolution.
7. Neglect of minor changes: if small changes are neglected, they will grow out of proportion.
8. Immigration from outside: if there is no control of immigrants from outside the state, gradually it will cause revolution.
9. Use of force without reason: if the power of the state is used irrationally, it might lead to revolution.
10. In democracies, the excesses of demagogues may cause revolution.
11. In Oligarchies, excessive rule of oligarchs may cause revolution.
12. In aristocracies, jealousy towards aristocrats may cause revolution.

**Methods to prevent Revolution:-** There are many methods to prevent Revolutions. Aristotle suggests a number of useful methods to prevent revolution. They can be summarised as follows:

1. The most important method to prevent revolution is to develop the spirit of obedience to law. The people of the state should be educated on the spirit of the constitution.
2. Small changes in the constitution should be carefully observed. There shall be no sudden changes. The government should take care not to change the existing system all of a sudden.

3. Too much power should not concentrate in a person or group of persons. Excessive authority should not concentrate on anyone.

4. Everyone should be considered while allotting public offices. No man or class of men should be left out. There shall be proper selection system.

The offices of the state should be filled by a proper selection system.

5. There should be public control over financial administration. It should be open to public scrutiny

6. Offices and honours should be awarded based on justice.

7. Minor events in the state should not be ignored. Minor issues can turn into bigger problems.

8. Avoid outsiders: People from outside should not be entertained much in the State. They should be carefully watched. It should be seen that they will mix well with the population.

9. Gain confidence of the people: The most important method to prevent revolution is to gain the confidence of the people.

### **Aristotle on Slavery**

According to Aristotle, men want good life. To lead a good virtuous life, man should have all necessary things. There are animate and inanimate instruments that help to lead a good life. Property is inanimate instrument. Utensils and furniture are examples of inanimate property. Slaves are animate instruments. Slave is a domestic servant to do all the menial type of works in a family.

There is a basis for slavery. In the universe, there are superior beings and inferior beings. Superior people are men of Soul. They are the men of reason. The inferior people are men of body or material. They are the men of appetite. According to Aristotle, the superior must rule the inferior. The soul must rule the body. Reason must rule over appetite. The masters possess intellectual strength. The slaves possess physical strength only. The combination of both is necessary for the survival of the household and the state. It is necessary for the intellectual and moral development of the

householder and the citizen. It is not possible for the householder to live a good life without the slaves.

The slave also benefits from this arrangement. With his attachment to the master, the slave also gets moral and intellectual virtues. But it is only in a second hand manner. This virtue is inferior also. If the Slave is with the Master, he gets virtue in a second hand manner. If the Slave is without Master, he gets no virtue. The choice for him is between no virtue or second hand virtue. Thus, slavery is good for the slave. He gets some virtue by his attachment with the Master. It enables him to share the virtuous life of the master. The Slave becomes part of the Household. Thus the Slave becomes part of the state also. Aristotle suggested certain conditions for slavery. which can be summarised as follows:-

1. In the society, the inferior should always be subordinate to the superior. In the State, the Master is superior to the slave.
2. Inequality is a reality. Man is born superior and inferior. In the natural way. Man must accept it. All are not born equal.
3. Just like human body, in the society also, there are different functions. Each function should be performed by different people. Some functions are superior and some other functions are inferior.
4. Slavery provides leisure for the Master. It helps him to lead a good life. He shares his good life with the Slave.
5. Without slavery, the Greek social system will come down.
6. Human perfection can be attained only with the help of Slaves. Those with strong mind have only weak physical abilities. Those with strong physical abilities have weak minds.
7. Slaves should never be used for power or wealth.
8. Slaves are saved because of slavery. They can also lead a virtuous life in a second hand manner. It is a question of virtue in a second hand manner or no virtue at all.



## **Aristotle on Family**

According to Aristotle, Family is a natural institution. It existed even before the State. Without family, there is no State. It is the centre point of the state. According to Aristotle, there are three kinds of relationships in a family. Firstly, between husband and wife. Secondly, between parents and children. Thirdly between slave and master. A head of family has three kinds of relationships within the household. But a ruler has only one kind of relationship within the State. It is between the ruler and the subjects. Therefore, the family is different from state, not only in degree, but also in nature. Family does not include the State. But the State includes the Family. Family is mainly to meet elementary, physical and intellectual needs. The State is mainly to meet the intellectual needs. The State can control the Family. But the Family cannot control the State. The family is not a biological contract. But it is a friendship forever. It is a unconditional friendship. According to Aristotle, the eldest male member must rule the family.

Aristotle is known as the father of Political Science. His systematic thinking and presentation has made Politics a master science. Aristotle was an original thinker. He influenced many political thinkers. Even in the middle ages in Europe, his theories and principles were taught in the Universities. The study of Political Science is incomplete without the study of the philosophy of Aristotle.

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