

# Aristotle

"Aristotle was the unimpeachable authority on every science and art known to his day." (Maxey)

Aristotle was born in 384 BC. His father was Physician. He studied in Plato's Academy for about 17 years. He was attached to Plato's Academy for two reasons:

1. It was the cradle of education in Greece for advanced studies.
2. He was so much influenced by Plato's teaching.

He served as tutor of Alexander the Great in 343 BC and kept his school in the Lyceum for 12 years. After the death of Alexander the Great, the Athenians revolted and prosecuted the accused persons of whom Aristotle was one of the many. He was charged for impiety but he fled to avoid punishment.

During the middle Ages, he was simply considered "the Philosopher". The recovery of his manuscripts in the thirteenth century marks a turning point in the history of philosophy. According to Dunning, "the capital significance of Aristotle in the history of political theories lies in the fact that he gave to politics the character of an independent science."

He is founder of science of logic. His monumental treatise "Politics" is the most valuable works on Political Science. The "Politics" is a chief work on the science and art of Government giving full justification for existing of the institution like the state, slavery and family is calculated to suggest the remedies for the ill of the body-politic of the city-state. Though it is generally said that "Politics" is an unfinished treatise and often obscure but the half understood words of Aristotle have become laws of thoughts to other ages.

Zeller says, "Politics of Aristotle is the richest treasure that has come down to us from antiquity, it is the greatest contribution to the field of political science that we possess."

### **Aristotle as Father of Political Science**

The title of fatherhood of Political Science bestowed upon Aristotle is not without justification. He was brought up in the order of medicine as his father was a physician of the king of Macedonia. Since his childhood he got every opportunity and encouragement to develop a scientific bent of mind. Instead of turning towards literature like his great master Plato, he built the terminology of science and philosophy.

In the words of Renan, "Socrates gave philosophy to mankind and Aristotle gave science to it."

Aristotle gives us definite and clear-cut dogmas, instead of groping in illusions and imaginations. He does not believe in abstract notions of justice and virtue, but has a concrete approach. He discarded utopian philosophy of Plato and advocated logical and scientific theories based upon realism. Aristotle supported the principle of unity through diversity. He was of the view that reality lay in the concrete manifestation of things. He separated ethics from politics.

We can say that Aristotle laid the foundation of a real political science by his keen and practical political approach and systematic treatment of the subject. He may be called the "Scientist of Politics" because of his empirical study. He collected his data with care and minuteness, clarifies and defines it and draws logical conclusions which deserve nothing but admiration and praise.

### **Aristotle's Views on Origin of State**

"Man is a political animal, destined by nature for state life."

"State exists for the sake of good life and not for the sake of life only."  
(Aristotle)

Aristotle was of the view that the origin of the state is present in the inherent desire of man to satisfy his economic needs and racial instincts. The family is formed by male and female on the one hand and master and slave on the other hand. Then they work for achievement of their desires. They live together and form a such family in household which has its moral and social unity and value.

Aristotle said, "Family is the association established by nature for the supply of man's everyday wants. But when several families are united and the association aims at something more than the supply of daily need, then come into existence the village. When several villages are united in a single community, perfect and large enough to be quite self-sufficing, the state comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life and continuing in existence for the sake of good life."

Three elements are essential to build the state on perfect lines i.e., fellowship, practical organization and justice. A man without state is either a beast or a God. According to Aristotle, "he who by nature and not be mere accident is without a state is either above humanity or below it, he is tribeless, lawless and heartless one."

The family is natural and inborn instinct, similarly the state is also natural for individuals. Baker said, "The state is the natural home of the fully grown and

natural man. It is an institution for the moral perfection of man to which his whole nature moves.”

Aristotle was of the view that state is a “Political Koimonia”, an association which represents a functional unity of varied and reciprocal parts made by the pursuit of a common aim in which their nature, their habits and their training lead them all to join. MacLwain said, “The state is a kind of Koimonia which is a supreme over all others, and embraces them all.” State is an association of human being and the highest form of association existing for the sake of perfect and healthier life.

### **Functions of the State**

- 1.The state is not merely an association of associations but it is a highest natural association for pursuits of spiritual class of common life of virtue.
- 2.The state is based on the element of justice
- 3.It also aims at the highest good of the community for its proper realization of demands and needs in it.
- 4.The state functions to ensure a perfect and self-sufficing life of all its components members.
- 5.The state also ensures to fulfill all the natural needs of its members and to provide opportunities to the individuals for the attainment of moral, intellectual and physical excellence.
- 6.According to Aristotle, “Man is essentially good and the function of the state is to develop his good faculties into a habit of good actions.”

### **Rule of Law**

Aristotle believed in natural laws but not the natural rights. The absence of law is the negation of good laws and this meant lack of constitutional laws.

Law was superior to the Government because it checked the latter's irregularities. Rule by law was better than personal rule because law had as impersonal quality which the rules lacked.

Sabine paid tribute to Aristotle in these words, "the supremacy of law is accepted by Aristotle as a mark of a good state and not merely as an unfortunate necessity."

Justice means that every citizen in the state should abide by the dictates of law and fulfill its moral obligation towards community members. According to Aristotle there should be two kind of justice:

### **1. Distributive Justice**

It is mainly concerned with voluntary commercial transaction like sale, hire, furnishing of security, acquisition of property etc.

### **2. Corrective Justice**

It deals with proper allocation to each person according to his capacity and worth.

Aristotle emphasis that reward and honors should not be offered to the virtuous few but to others as who collectively contribute in the welfare of the state and should be proportionately rewarded.

## **Theory of Revolution**

Decay and disturbance in political life brought crucial changes in the Governments of the city-state in Greece, made Aristotle to contemplate deeply and to stress the causes of the Revolution and its remedies. Aristotle's theory is divided into two parts:

1. First part is a practical manual of conduct advising democrats, aristocrats, monarchs and oligarchs and even tyrants as how to keep themselves in power.
2. Second part is a treatise on the philosophical basis of the good and stable governments.

### **What is Revolution?**

To Aristotle, if any change occurs in the existing system or constitution of the state, it means revolution. For example, if in the state the constitution has changed from monarchy to democracy, it is a revolution. Aristotle was of the view that if the constitution remains the same, but the ruling party has been transferred from one man to another, it is also a revolution.

### **General Causes of Revolution:**

1. The main feature of revolution is to be the craving of men for equality. Equality has two characters-absolute and proportional. The proletariat are passionate to secure absolute equality for the availability of the same rights that are possessed by few. The few struggle for proportional equality for perpetual upgrading superiority in power and privilege.
2. Strong desire for justice becomes another feature of revolution. Aristotle was of the view that men turn to revolution when they think they have not got their dues.

### **Particular Causes of Revolution:**

1. Desire for gain and profit.
2. Universal desire for honor and prestige
3. The possession of sovereign power by an individual or group so as to create fear and apprehension in the minds of the subject
4. Undue priority and prominence of individuals caused great stir in the heart of the subdued people
5. Disproportionate increase of power and wealth in any part of the state
6. Elections intrigues and moral degradation kept up in the selection of some people
7. Carelessness shown in granting public offices to disloyal citizens and undue favoritism shown to the individuals
8. Too much power concentrated in one man or class of men for political gains
9. Dissimilarity of different elements in the state
10. The rivalries of people of different races in the state
11. Dynastic quarrels and conflicts
12. Free immigration of outside races with different notions of justice and law

## **Revolutions in Particular kind of State:**

### 1. Democracy

In democracies, revolutions are led by the dogmatic policies of demagogues in attacking the rich.

### 2. Tyranny or Oligarchy

In oligarchies, revolutions take place due to two reasons:

- a) Oppressive or Totalitarian rule
- b) Rivalry among the ruling dictators

### 3. Aristocracy

In aristocracies, revolution held to the policy of narrowing down the circle of the Government. Aristocracy tends to become oligarchy, through the undue encroachment of the richer classes polity to become democracy, through the undue aspiration of the poorer class. According to Dunning "Stability can be maintained only by proportionate equality and by giving to each his own." Aristotle was of the view that democracy is more secure and stable than oligarchy.

## **Remedies for Revolution:**

- 1. Abundant political power should not be concentrated in the hands of one man or one class of men.
- 2. The various classes in the state without any discrimination of color and creed should be treated alike and with proper consideration
- 3. Honors and rewards should be distributed as fairly as possible only to deserving ones because inequalities of offices and honors drive men to revolt.



4. Political offices should be within reach of every individual who is able of performing his functions best.

5. The Government should be so vigilantly organized that the political office-holders cannot make money out of their offices. Bribes and other kinds of illegal gratification should be made quite impossible to accept.

6. A Government would gain popularity and political stability if it so arranges things that the internal details of the administration, particularly the administration of public finances is open to public scrutiny.

7. Proper education should be imparted to the citizens in the spirit of constitution.

8. Political stability and internal solidarity can be gained by maintaining proportionate equality.

9. The habit of obedience and submission to law should be instilled. Lawlessness and anarchy should not be allowed to creep in even in small and trifling matter.

10. In oligarchy and aristocracy, the inferior class must be well treated and the principles of democratic equality must be followed among the privileged classes. In democracy, the poor and the rich should be encouraged to take part in the state administration which does not affect the sovereign power.

Aristotle also suggested various methods in making oligarchies and tyrannies-stable which are to be followed by a tyrant.

a) A tyrant must employ spies particularly females to trace out disloyal persons to gallows the concerned.

b) He should follow an aggressive policy abroad

c) He should always warn people about constant fear of invasion from outside

d) He should keep the people busy and never allow them to remain in vertigo and lethargy.

e) He must extend enthusiasm in religion

f) He should punish the guilty so that crimes must be ended for the peaceful order in the state.

g) He should increase the material well-being of the citizens.

h) He should perish the intellectual life of the citizens to perish revolutionary tendencies.

i) He should adorn his city and must work for its glory

j) He must have respect for the good.

Aristotle put the security of the state above everything else. He even permitted interference in the privacy of individual's life when necessary in the interests of the state. According to Aristotle "A revolution constitutes more a political than a legal change. It had the effect of reversing ethical, social and economic standard."