

Welcome students to Unit 2 on Aristotle. The module

today for discussion will be **Views on state**.

In this session we will cover introduction, the **views on state**

and will also look at the criticisms of the theory. At the

end of the session, the student will be able to explain

Aristotle's theory of state.

Aristotle was one of the greatest intellectual figures of

Western history of polymath, who dominated the vast spectrum of

human thoughts for centuries. He is commonly referred to as the

father of Political Science. Aristotle was born in the Greek

city state of Stagira in an affluent family. His father Nico

Marcus was the court physician to King Amytas third of

Macedon. After his parents died at age 17 in 367 BC, he joined

Plato's Academy. There he spent 20 years, first as a student and

later as a faculty. After Plato's death, he was unable to

succeed Plato, so he left the Academy in 348 BC.

343 BC Aristotle was called to the court of Macedon to tutor the

13 year old Prince Alexander the son of King Philip of Macedon.

He continued there till Alexander succeeded the throne.

After the assassination of his

father. He later returned to Athens to establish his own

school. The Lyceum in 335 BC, where he devoted himself to teaching and research. He wrote extensively, over 150 books and in almost every field. Some of his well-known works are the politics, Nicomachean Ethics, Rhetoric, Justice, Poetics.

Finally, at the age of 62, he died at Chelsea in 322 BC.

Today our focus is on his **views on state**. Aristotle believed that the state is a natural institution and its origin is to be found in the evolution of human society. According to him, man is a political animal and he said that anyone who by nature and not by mere accident was not part of the state was either above humanity or like God-like or he was below humanity as in beast-like. The evolution of nature takes place in stages.

The simplest and the most primitive comes in first, later the more complete and perfect, but after growth has taken place. For example a seed, discloses its true nature only after it germinates, and the plant grows. Similarly, man's nature is political and thus fully seen and realized in the development of the state.

Even the growth of the State goes through stages.

The first stage is the family which is the household which comes into existence to satisfy basic

biological needs and material wants.

But the family is not able to fulfill all of man's desires and as such some families come together to form a village. the village fulfills the social needs, desires for companionship and community. Further still, cluster of villages joined together to form a single community large enough to be self sufficient, called the state.

Therefore, the state comes into existence to fulfill the ordinary needs of life and continues in existence for the sake of good life. According to Aristotle, the state was the highest form of political union. It represented the pinnacle of social evolution.

The nature of the state. The state is a natural form of organization and by Nature Man has become a member of the state. The state is natural because it emerges from associations like family or village, which itself are natural. The state is natural, not simply because it is the final stage of historical evolution, but because it alone meets all the needs of man. For Aristotle, the state is a product of reason. It is the culmination of the evolution of

his nature. Nature has endowed man alone with the power of reasoned speech. Only man can distinguish between right and wrong, just and unjust.

Aristotle regards the state as an Organism like consisting of parts- associations and individuals, so the whole state is by logic prior to the parts.

The individual have importance only as members of the state.

The end of the state. To Understand the end of the state, one has to understand its origin.

To Aristotle, everything has a primary natural potential which later becomes the finished product. Everything moves from potential to ultimate. The Judgment is essential at the finished product stage. So for example, the family evolves into a village and finally evolves into a state.

Aristotle took the sociability of man for granted. Said man is a social animal believes all men have a use to come together and form an Association for Aristotle. All things move towards a pre- determined end (Telos.)

The state's telos is " eudaimonia", happiness or good life. Every state exists to establish goodlife and it is the collective

responsibility to ensure individual good. The state exists not merely to satisfy material needs of citizens, but to promote a life of virtue and morality.

Finally coming to the criticism of the theory of state, this theory is totalitarian in character because it's organic nature results in complete merger of the individual with the state. Associations, and communities have no separate importance. The state embraces all these associations and has complete control over them. Moreover, Aristotle's assumption that the state or the polis is the greatest manifestation of Supreme good is not completely true.

So we've come to the end of the session. For your further reference, you may read through Mukherjee and Ramaswamy.

Shefali Jha and George Sabine. Thank you.