

**SELF-LEARNING  
MATERIAL**



# MA POLITICAL SCIENCE

## MPS 201- WESTERN POLITICAL THOUGHT

w.e.f Academic Session: 2023-24



**CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION**  
**UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY MEGHALAYA**

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## CHAPTER 1

# WESTERN POLITICAL THOUGHT

**LEARNING OUTCOME:** After going through this lesson, students will be able to-

- Understand the history and background about Socrates
- Know about the concept of Philosopher King, Ideal State, Theory of Justice, Concept of Education propagated by Plato
- Know about the Aristotle and his Classification of State, Revolution

### 1.1 SOCRATESE

*Socrates* of Athens (l. c. 470/469-399 BCE) is among the most famous figures in world history for his contributions to the development of ancient **Greek philosophy** which provided the foundation for all of Western **Philosophy**. He is, in fact, known as the "Father of Western Philosophy" for this reason.

He was originally a sculptor who seems to have also had a number of other occupations, including soldier, before he was told by the Oracle at **Delphi** that he was the wisest man in the world. In an effort to prove the oracle wrong, he embarked on a new career of questioning those who were said to be wise and, in doing so, proved the oracle correct: Socrates was the wisest man in the world because he did not claim to know anything of importance.

His most famous student was **Plato** (l. c. 424/423-348/347 BCE) who would honor his name through the establishment of a school in Athens (Plato's Academy) and, more so, through the philosophical dialogues he wrote featuring Socrates as the central character. Whether Plato's dialogues accurately represent Socrates' teachings continues to be debated but a definitive answer is unlikely to be reached. Plato's best known student was **Aristotle** of Stagira (l. 384-322 BCE) who would then tutor **Alexander the Great** (l. 356-323 BCE) and establish his own school. By this progression, **Greek** philosophy, as first developed by Socrates, was spread throughout the known world during, and after, **Alexander's** conquests.

Socrates' historicity has never been challenged but what, precisely, he taught is as elusive as the philosophical tenets of **Pythagoras** or the later teachings of **Jesus** in that none of these figures wrote anything themselves. Although Socrates is generally regarded as initiating the discipline of philosophy in the West, most of what we know of him comes from Plato and, less so, from another of his students, **Xenophon** (l. 430-c.354 BCE). There have also been efforts made to reconstruct his philosophic vision based on the many other schools, besides Plato's, which his students founded but these are too varied to define the original teachings which inspired them.

The "Socrates" who has come down to the present day from antiquity could largely be a philosophical construct of Plato and, according to the historian Diogenes Laertius (l. c. 180 - 240 CE), many of Plato's contemporaries accused him of re-imagining Socrates in his own image in order to further Plato's own interpretation of his master's message. However that may be, Socrates' influence would establish the schools which led to the formulation of Western Philosophy and the underlying cultural understanding of Western **civilization**.

## **Early Life and Career**

Socrates was born c. 469/470 BCE to the sculptor Sophroniscus and the mid-wife Phaenarete. He studied **music**, gymnastics, and grammar in his youth (the common subjects of study for a young Greek) and followed his father's profession as a sculptor. Tradition holds that he was an exceptional artist and his statue of the **Graces**, on the road to the **Acropolis**, is said to have been admired into the 2nd century CE. Socrates served with distinction in the army and, at the **Battle** of Potidaea, saved the life of the General **Alcibiades**.

He married Xanthippe, an upper-class woman, around the age of fifty and had three sons by her. According to contemporary writers such as Xenophon, these boys were incredibly dull and nothing like their father. Socrates seems to have lived a fairly normal life until he was told by the Oracle at Delphi that he was the wisest of men. His challenge to the oracle's claim set him the course that would establish him as a philosopher and the founder of Western Philosophy.

## **The Oracle and Socrates**

When he was middle-aged, Socrates' friend Chaerephon asked the famous Oracle at Delphi if there was anyone wiser than Socrates, to which the Oracle answered, "None." Bewildered by this answer and hoping to prove the Oracle wrong, Socrates went about questioning people who were held to be 'wise' in their own estimation and that of others. He found, to his dismay, "that the men whose reputation for wisdom stood highest were nearly the most lacking in it, while others who were looked down on as common people were much more intelligent" (Plato, *Apology*, 22).

The youth of Athens delighted in watching Socrates question their elders in the market and, soon, he had a following of young men who, because of his example and his teachings, would go on to abandon their early aspirations and devote themselves to philosophy (from the Greek 'Philo', love, and 'Sophia', wisdom - literally 'the love of wisdom'). Among these were **Antisthenes of Athens** (l. c. 445-365 BCE), founder of the Cynic school, **Aristippus of Cyrene** (l. c. 435-356 BCE), founder of the Cyrenaic school), Xenophon, whose writings would influence **Zeno of Citium**, (l.c. 336-265 BCE) founder of the Stoic school, and, most famously, Plato (the main source of our information of Socrates in his *Dialogues*) among many others. Every major philosophical school mentioned by ancient writers following Socrates' **death** was founded by one of his followers.

## **Socratic Schools**

The diversity of these schools is testimony to Socrates' wide ranging influence and, more importantly, the diversity of interpretations of his teachings. The philosophical concepts taught by Antisthenes and Aristippus could not be more different, in that the former taught that the good life was only realized by self-control and self-abnegation, while the latter claimed a life of pleasure was the only path worth pursuing.

It has been said that Socrates' greatest contribution to philosophy was to move intellectual pursuits away from the focus on 'physical **science**' (as pursued by the so-called **Pre-Socratic Philosophers** such as **Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes**, and others) and into the abstract realm of ethics and morality. No matter the diversity of the schools which claimed to carry on his teachings, they all emphasized some form of morality as their foundational tenet. That the

'morality' espoused by one school was often condemned by another, again bears witness to the very different interpretations of Socrates' central message.

While scholars have traditionally relied upon Plato's *Dialogues* as a source of information on the historical Socrates, Plato's contemporaries claimed he used a character he called 'Socrates' as a mouth-piece for his own philosophical views. Notable among these critics was, allegedly, Phaedo, a fellow student of Plato whose name is famous from one of Plato's most influential dialogues (and whose writings are now lost) and Xenophon, whose *Memorabilia* presents a different view of Socrates than that presented by Plato.

## **Socrates and his Vision**

However his teachings were interpreted, it seems clear that Socrates' main focus was on how to live a good and virtuous life. The claim attributed to him by Plato that "an unexamined life is not worth living" (*Apology*, 38b) seems historically accurate, in that it is clear he inspired his followers to think for themselves instead of following the dictates of society and the accepted superstitions concerning the gods and how one should behave.

While there are differences between Plato's and Xenophon's depictions of Socrates, both present a man who cared nothing for class distinctions or 'proper behavior' and who spoke as easily with **women**, servants, and slaves as with those of the higher classes.

In ancient Athens, individual behavior was maintained by a concept known as 'Eusebia' which is often translated into English as 'piety' but more closely resembles 'duty' or 'loyalty to a cause'. In refusing to conform to the social proprieties proscribed by Eusebia, Socrates angered many of the more important men of the **city** who could, rightly, accuse him of breaking the **law** by violating these customs.

## **Socrates' Trial**

In 399 BCE Socrates was charged with impiety by Meletus the poet, Anytus the tanner, and Lycon the orator who sought the death penalty in the case. The accusation read: "Socrates is guilty, firstly, of denying the gods recognized by the state and introducing new divinities, and,



secondly, of corrupting the young.” It has been suggested that this charge was both personally and politically motivated as Athens was trying to purge itself of those associated with the scourge of **the Thirty Tyrants** of Athens who had only recently been overthrown.

Socrates' relationship to this regime was through his former student, **Critias**, who was considered the worst of the tyrants and was thought to have been corrupted by Socrates. It has also been suggested, based in part on interpretations of Plato's dialogue of the *Meno*, that Anytus blamed Socrates for corrupting his son. Anytus, it seems, had been grooming his son for a life in politics until the boy became interested in Socrates' teachings and abandoned political pursuits. As Socrates' accusers had Critias as an example of how the philosopher corrupted youth, even if they never used that evidence in court, the precedent appears to have been known to the jury.

Ignoring the counsel of his friends and refusing the help of the gifted speechwriter Lysias, Socrates chose to defend himself in court. There were no lawyers in ancient Athens and, instead of a solicitor, one would hire a speechwriter. Lysias was among the most highly paid but, as he admired Socrates, he offered his services free of charge.

The speechwriter usually presented the defendant as a good man who had been wronged by a false accusation, and this is the sort of defense the court would have expected from Socrates. Instead of the defense filled with self-justification and pleas for his life, however, Socrates defied the Athenian court, proclaiming his innocence and casting himself in the role of Athens' 'gadfly' - a benefactor to them all who, at his own expense, kept them awake and aware. In his Apology, Plato has Socrates say:

If you put me to death, you will not easily find another who, if I may use a ludicrous comparison, clings to the state as a sort of gadfly to a horse that is large and well-bred but rather sluggish because of its size, so that it needs to be aroused. It seems to me that the **god** has attached me like that to the state, for I am constantly alighting upon you at every point to arouse, persuade, and reproach each of you all day long. (Apology 30e)

Plato makes it clear in his work that the charges against Socrates hold little weight but also emphasizes Socrates' disregard for the feelings of the jury and court protocol. Socrates is presented as refusing professional counsel in the form of a speech-writer and, further, refusing to

conform to the expected behavior of a defendant on trial for a capital crime. Socrates, according to Plato, had no fear of death, proclaiming to the court:

To fear death, my friends, is only to think ourselves wise without really being wise, for it is to think that we know what we do not know. For no one knows whether death may not be the greatest good that can happen to man. But men fear it as if they knew quite well that it was the greatest of evils.

Following this passage, Plato gives Socrates' famous philosophical stand in which the old master defiantly states that he must choose service to the divine over conformity to his society and its expectations. Socrates famously confronts his fellow citizens with honesty, saying:

Men of Athens, I honor and love you; but I shall obey God rather than you and, while I have life and strength, I shall never cease from the practice and teaching of philosophy, exhorting anyone whom I meet after my manner, and convincing him saying: O my friend, why do you who are a citizen of the great and mighty and wise city of Athens care so much about laying up the greatest amount of money and honor and reputation and so little about wisdom and truth and the greatest improvement of the soul, which you never regard or heed at all? Are you not Ashamed of this? And if the person with whom I am arguing says: Yes, but I do care; I do not depart or let him go at once; I interrogate and examine and cross-examine him, and if I think that he has no virtue, but only says that he has, I reproach him with undervaluing the greater, and overvaluing the less. And this I should say to everyone whom I meet, young and old, citizen and alien, but especially to the citizens, inasmuch as they are my brethren. For this is the command of God, as I would have you know: and I believe that to this day no greater good has ever happened in the state than my service to the God. For I do nothing but go about persuading you all, old and young alike, not to take thought for your persons and your properties, but first and chiefly to care about the greatest improvement of the soul. I tell you that virtue is not given by money, but that from virtue come money and every other good of man, public as well as private. This is my teaching, and if this is the doctrine which corrupts the youth, my influence is ruinous indeed. But if anyone says that this is not my teaching, he is speaking an untruth. Wherefore, O men of Athens, I say to you, do as Anytus bids or not as Anytus bids, and either acquit me or not; but whatever you do, know that I shall never alter my ways, not even if I have to die many times. (29d-30c)

When it came time for Socrates to suggest a penalty to be imposed rather than death, he suggested he should be maintained in honor with free meals in the Prytaneum, a place reserved for heroes of the **Olympic games**. This would have been considered a serious insult to the honor of the Prytaneum and that of the city of Athens. Accused criminals on trial for their life were expected to beg for the mercy of the court, not presume to heroic accolades.

## **Conviction and Aftermath**

Socrates was convicted and sentenced to death (Xenophon tells us that he wished for such an outcome and Plato's account of the trial in his *Apology* would seem to confirm this). The last days of Socrates are chronicled in Plato's *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito* and *Phaedo*, the last dialogue depicting the day of his death (by drinking hemlock) surrounded by his friends in his jail cell in Athens and, as Plato puts it, "Such was the end of our friend, a man, I think, who was the wisest and justest, and the best man I have ever known" (*Phaedo*, 118).

Socrates' influence was felt immediately in the actions of his disciples as they formed their own interpretations of his life, teachings, and death, and set about forming their own philosophical schools and **writing** about their experiences with their teacher. Of all these writings we have only the works of Plato, Xenophon, a comic image by **Aristophanes**, and later works by Aristotle to tell us anything about Socrates' life. He, himself, wrote nothing, but his words and actions in the search for and defense of Truth changed the world and his example still inspires people today.

## **1.2 PLATO: PHILOSOPHER KING, IDEAL STATE, THEORY OF JUSTICE, CONCEPT OF EDUCATION**

The Greek school has produced eminent thinkers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. In the entire history of political thought no thinker evoked the admiration, reverence and criticism that Plato did- Plato has left behind many important works out of which three **the Republic**, (380-370 BC) **the States man** (360 BC) and **the Laws** (350BC), were of perennial interest to all those interested in the history of political ideas. Plato has been generally regarded as the founder of philosophical idealism by virtues of his conviction that there is a universal idea in the world of eternal reality beyond the world of the senses. He was concerned about human life and human

soul or human nature, and the real question in it is how to live best in the state within the European intellectual traditions. He conceptualized the disorders and crises of the actual world and presented to his readers a vision of a desirable political order, which till today has fascinated his admirers and detractors.

Plato, along with his disciple Aristotle has been credited for laying the foundations of Greek political theory on which the western political tradition rests. These two thinkers between themselves have explored, stated, analyzed and covered a wide range of philosophical perspectives and issues. Plato was born in May-June 428/27 BC in Athens in an aristocratic though not affluent, family. His father, Ariston, traced his ancestry to the early kings of Athens. His mother, Perictione, was a descendant of Solon, the famous law giver of Athens. Plato's original name was Aristocles, which meant the "best and renowned". He was given the nickname 'Plato', derived from *platys*, because of his broad and strong shoulders. He was known for his good looks and charming disposition. He excelled in the study of music, mathematics and poetry. He fought in three wars and won an award for bravery. He met Socrates in 407 BC at the age of 20 and since then was under his hypnotic spell. The trial and execution of Socrates in 399 BC proved to be a turning point in Plato's life. In 386 BC on returning to Athens, Plato's friends gifted him a recreation spot named after its local hero Academus. It was here that Plato established his Academy which became a seat of higher learning and intellectual pursuits in Greece for the next one hundred years. The academy was initially a religious group School of Distance Education Western Political Thought 6 dedicated to the worship of Muses and its leader Apollo. The academy concretised the possibility of a science of knowledge with which one could reform the world. Plato saw in the academy a training school for future philosophic rulers'.

## **THEORY OF JUSTICE**

The concept of justice is the most important principle of Plato's political philosophy. The subtitle of the Republic, 'Concerning Justice' shows the extraordinary importance which Plato attached to justice. Plato saw in justice the only practical remedy of saving his beloved Athens from decay and ruin. The main argument in the republic is a sustained search after the location and nature of justice. He discovers and locates the principle of justice with the help of his ideal state. An ideal state for Plato possessed the four cardinal virtues of **wisdom, courage, discipline and justice**. It would have wisdom because its rulers were persons of knowledge, courage

because its warriors were brave, self discipline because of the harmony that pervaded the societal matrix due to a common agreement as to who ought to rule, and finally, justice of doing one's job for which one was naturally filled without interfering with others. For Plato, the state was ideal, of which justice was the reality. Justice was the principle on which the state had to be founded and a contribution made towards the excellence of the city. According to Plato, justice does not consist in mere adherence to the laws, for it is based on the inner nature of human spirit, it is also to the triumph of the stronger over the weaker, for it protects School of Distance Education Western Political Thought 7 the weaker against the stronger. A just state, Plato argues, is achieved with an eye to the good of the whole. In a just state or society, the rulers and military, the producers all do what they ought to do. In such a society the rulers are wise, the soldiers are brave, and the producers exercise self- control or temperance. For Plato, justice is a moral concept. As Prof: Ernest Barker has rightly pointed out; justice for Plato is at once a part of human virtue and the bond which joins men together in the states. It makes man good and make him social" A similar view has been expressed by a Prof. Sabine when he wrote that for Plato' "Justice is a bound which holds the society together".

Platonic justice has two aspects - **individual and social**. According to Plato, every individual was a functional unit, assigned a particular task with clear cut obligations and privileges, which one was expected to perform diligently and meticulously. William Bernstein wrote in the discussion of justice, all elements of Plato's political philosophy are contained, In his theory of justice the relations of man to nature, to the polis, and to his fellow men from an architectonic whole. Plato explained his arguments for differing individual capabilities with the help of the theory of three classes and three souls, an idea borrowed from Pythagoros. He pointed out that every human soul had three qualities: **rational, `spirit and appetite with justice as the fourth virtue** balancing and harmonizing the other three qualities. In each soul one of these qualities would be the predominant faculties. Individuals in whom the **rational faculty** was predominant would constitute the **ruling class** and the virtue of such a soul was **wisdom**. This soul, a lover of learning had the power to comprehend the idea of good. Those in whom **spirit** was the predominant quality were the **auxiliaries or warriors** and the virtue of such souls was **courage**, implying the ability to hold on to one's convictions and beliefs in adverse times. **Together the rulers and soldiers would constitute the guardian class**. Individuals whose souls were **appetitive** exhibited a fondness for material things. They were lovers of gain and money. They

were the artisans, the **producing class**. The quality of such an appetitive soul was **temperance**, though Plato did not see temperance as an exclusive quality of the artisan class. Though Plato took into account the role of spirit and appetite in human behavior, he was convinced that reason must ultimately control and direct emotions and passions. Thus **justice in the state meant that the three social classes (rulers, warriors and producers) performed the deliberative and governing, defense and production without interfering with the functions of others**. Justice was **“one class, one duty; every man, one work**. Prof. Ernest Barker has defined the Platonic theory of justice when he wrote that justice means ‘will to concentrate on one's own sphere of duty and not to meddle with the sphere of others’. According to Plato, the justice of the state is the citizen's sense of duty. This conception of justice goes against individualism because a man must not think of himself as an isolated unit with personal desire. Plato's justice does not embody a conception of rights but of duties though it is identical with true liberty. It is the true condition the individual and of the state and the ideal state is the embodiment of justice. The state is the reality of which justice is the idea. According to Prof: Sabine, Plato visualized society as a system of services in which each member both gives and receives. What the state takes cognizance, of is this mutual exchange and what it tries to arrange is the most adequate satisfaction of needs and the most harmonious inter change of services Platonic justice leads to functional specialization. From the point of view of society justice means self control on the of various classes of society which makes each class mind its own function and not interfere with the functions of others. It also makes various members of each class stick to their own allotted functions and responsibilities within the calls and not interferes with the function of other individuals in the some class.

**CRITICISMS**-Several criticisms have been levelled against Platonic theory of justice. Platonic doctrine of justice is based on self - control and self abnegation of the individual in the interest of society. It leads to functional specialization. It ignores the evils of functional specialization which does not sufficiently realize and properly provide for the whole of human personality.It stunts the growth of the individual and there - by impoverished the society. Platonic theory of justice divides the state into three separate classes and is not applicable to modern states with large population and numerous interests and sections of society. His division of society into separate classes would lead to a class state with class consciousness and privileges. Further, concentration of political power in the hands of philosophers is likely to lead to totalitarianism.

## **IDEAL STATE**

**EDUCATION-** Plato's republic is not merely an essay on Justice. It is one of the greatest treatises on education to be ever written. The main objective of Plato's philosophy was to bring about reforms in the Greek city – states. The object of the Republic was to locate and thereafter establish justice in the ideal state and his scheme of education is the spiritual remedy for the realization of justice. According to Plato, social education is a means to social justice. It is; therefore, correct to say that education for Plato has been a solution to all the important questions during his period. The ideal state ruled by the philosopher king was made possible through an elaborate and rigorous scheme of education. The state was wholly constructed around the scheme of education, in the belief that if the state performed its task of conducting and supervising education properly, Plato looked to education as an instrument of moral reform, for it would mould and transform human souls. Education inculcated the right values of selfless duty towards all, and was therefore positive. It helped in the performance of one's functions in society and in attaining fulfillment. Thus, education was the key to the realisation of the new social order. As Prof.: Ernest Barker has rightly pointed out; Plato's scheme of education brings the soul into that environment which in each stage of its growth is best suited for its development. Plato attached more importance to education than either Aristotle or other Greek thinkers did. He clearly saw that education was more than acquiring of basic facts and ideas in one's childhood and adolescence but he was the first to propose an elaborate system of adult training and education. Following his teacher Socrates, Plato had a belief in the dictum that virtue is knowledge and for making people virtuous, he made education a very powerful instrument. Plato believed that education builds man's character and it is therefore a necessary condition for extracting man's natural faculties in order to develop his personalities. According to Plato, education promotes justice and enables a man to fulfill his duties. Education has the twin aim of enabling the individual to realize himself and of adjusting him harmoniously and usefully to society. In his masterpiece, The Republic, Plato has recommended a state controlled compulsory and comprehensive scheme of education meant for both men and women. He wants that education must itself provide the needed means, must see that citizens must actually get the training they require and must be sure that the education supplied is consonant with the harmony and well being of the state. As Prof.: Sabine has rightly pointed out Plato's plan is, therefore, for a state controlled system of compulsory education. His educational scheme falls naturally into two

parts, the elementary education, which includes the training of the young person's up to the age of 20 and culminating in the beginning of military services and the higher education intended for those selected persons of both sexes who are to be members of the two ruling classes and extending from the age of 20 to 35. Plato considered the state as an educational institution capable of providing the benefits of education to each and every student in his ideal state. Plato's scheme of education had both the Athenian and the Spartan influence. Impressed by the result of state - controlled education in Sparta, Plato duplicated the same for Athens. An important drawback in the Athenian curriculum was the lack of training in martial arts that would prepare the individual from childhood to the service of the interests of the state. Plato attempted to balance the two contrasting models. The education system drew from Athens values of creativity, excellence and individual achievement, which it tried to integrate with that of Sparta, namely civic training. Its content was typically Athenian and its purpose was dominated by the end of moral and intellectual cultivation. The curriculum of the elementary education was divided into two parts, gymnastics for training the body and music for training the mind, The elementary education was to be imparted to all the three classes. But after the age of twenty, those selected for higher positions in the guardian class between twenty and thirty five. The guardians were to be constituted of the auxiliary class, and the ruling class. These two classes were to have a higher doze of gymnasium and music, greater doze of gymnastics or the auxiliaries, and greater doze of music for the rulers. The higher education of the two classes was, in purpose, professional and for his curriculum Plato chose the only scientific studies – **mathematics, astronomy and logic**. Before the two classes could get on to their jobs, Plato suggested a further education till the age of about fifty, mostly practical in nature. **Platonic scheme of education was progressive and systematic. Its characteristics can be summarized as follows.** 1. His educational scheme was state controlled compulsory and graded one moving from lower to higher levels of learning process. 2. It aimed at attaining the physical, moral, mental and intellectual development of human personality. 3. It is a graded process which consisted of different levels and stages starting from 6 to 50 years. 4. His scheme was particularly aimed at producing philosopher kings, the rulers in his ideal state; 5. His educational plan aimed at preparing the rulers for administrative statesmanship, soldiers for military skill, and producers for material productivity and finally. 6. His educational plans sought to bring a balance between the individual needs and social requirements. Plato's scheme of education was undemocratically devised in so far as it



ignored the producing class completely .It was limited in nature and was restrictive in extent by laying more emphasis on mathematics and logic than on literature. The whole plan was unexpectedly and unduly expensive . It is further criticized that Platonic scheme of education will create an ideal philosopher more than an ideal man of action. Plato does not sufficiently realize that education should be relative to the character of the individual.

**COMMUNISM** According to Plato, justice could be achieved by spiritual and material means. While education is the remedial measure for the achievement of justice through spiritual means communism is the solution through material means. While education was designed to create the proper environment for the nurturing and development of the human soul, the communism tried to eliminate all the negativities that obstructed the proper growth of the individual. Platonic theory of communism has two parts - **communism of family** otherwise known as communism of wives and children, and **communism of property**.

Plato's ideal state consisted of three classes, those of the rulers, of the auxiliaries, and of the producers, each class doing its own assigned duties and responsibilities with utmost sincerity and devotion. The guardians are to live a life very different from that of the producers, one in which they must forgo all that makes life for the ordinary man worth living. Plato believed that justice would be ushered in if the ruling class does away with property, for property represents the elements of appetite, and to do away with property demands the communism of families. Plato abolished private family life and property for the ruling class for they encouraged nepotism, favoritism particularism, factionalism and other corrupt practices commonly found among the rulers. Politics was to promote common food and interest of the state. Plato thereby established a high standard for the rulers. He proposed that the members of the guardian class live together in a common barrack. The life of the guardian class would be in accordance with the rule followed among the Greeks that friends have all things in common. In the Republic Plato devoted greater space and consideration to communism of family than to property. This was mainly because he had perturbed by the negative emotions of hatred, selfishness and the envy that the family encouraged. Plato believed that conventional marriage led to women's subordination, subjugation and seclusion. He rejected the idea of marriage as a spiritual union based on love and mutual respect. However, marriage was necessary to ensure the reproduction and continuation of the human race. He, therefore, advocated temporary sexual union for the purpose of bearing the

children. He relieved women of child caring responsibilities. Once children were born, they would be taken care of by the School of Distance Education Western Political Thought 12 state controlled unserious, which would be equipped with well trained nurses. Except for the philosopher ruler, none would know the parentage of these children. Plato's argument for communism of property and family was that the unity of the state demands their abolition.

### **Criticism**

1.It is doubtful if communism of families would bring greater degree of unity by making the guardians a single family. 2. Communism of wives and children was found to create confusion if not disorder - one female would be wife of all the guardians and one male, the husband of all the females 3. Common children would tend to be neglected, for every body's child would be nobody's baby. 4. It is also doubtful if the state controlled mating would ever be workable; it would rather reduce men and women to the levels of mere animals by suggesting temporary marital relationship. 5. Plato's communism of family suggests a system of marriage which is neither monogamy nor bigamy, nor polygamy, nor polyandry; and finally. 6. Plato's theory of communism is too idealistic, too utopian, too imaginary and accordingly far away from the realities of life. Some critics have gone to the extent of criticizing Platonic communism as half communism'.

**STATE AND GOVERNMENT** According to Plato, it is the duty of the state or govt. to help people live a complete life. The problem which Plato addressed was not having best a govt. could be created but how best a govt. could be installed. His model state is an Ideal state ruled by an ideal ruler known as Philosopher King. In his masterpiece, namely the Republic, Plato constructs his ideal state on the analogy between the individual and the state. According to Plato, human soul consists of three elements of **reason, spirit and appetite**, functioning within proper bounds. The state must reflect such a constitution, for the state was a magnified individual, the virtues and the constitution of the two being the same. This identification for the state with the individual makes Plato present a number of false analogies between the two. Plato's Ideal state comprises or three classes, namely the **ruling class, the warriors and the producing class**. The main objective of his ideal state is good life and Plato let his imagination pursue this good which results in the portrayal of a utopia. Plato's portrayal of an ideal state may be compared to an artist's portrayal of an ideal landscape. His ideal state is an ideal in the sense that it is an

exhibition of what a state ought to be. The ideal state was a reflection of man's best and noblest self and provided the medium in which a man found his best self. **Plato believed that man found his perfection only in the ideal state. Plato builds his ideal state in three successive stages.**

1. In the first stage, Plato believes that men and women are different in degree only and not in kind. Hence they should be given same educational facilities and should partake in the same public functions.
2. In the second stage Plato advocates the abolition of the family on the basis of communism of property and wives among the two upper classes.
3. In the third stage he introduced the rule of philosophy. Plato's ideal state is hierarchical in composition and functions. At the head of the ideal state is a philosopher ruler highly qualified people capable of ruling the country either fear or favour.

In order to ensure a steady supply of philosopher rulers, Plato advocated a state controlled compulsory scheme of education meant for the children belonging to all the three classes of people. The communism of family and property among the two upper classes was meant to keep them out of economic and world temptations and ambitions so that they could concentrate on their duty to the state. The other features of the ideal state were **functional specialization, equality of men and women** and **ensorship of art**. Having outlined the details of an ideal state, Plato examined other types of regimes, accounting for their decline and decay. He listed four types of governments namely **timocracy, oligarchy, democracy and despotism or tyranny**. The first of these forms of state is timocracy "based on ambition and love of honor and war as represented by Crete and Sparta "so commonly admired". The second is oligarchy or Plutocracy the rule of the wealthy, the third is democracy, the rule of the people, the fourth, and most important imperfect is despotism or tyranny, which develops inevitably out of the anarchy of the democratic state. In his classification of forms of state, Plato considered democracy the second worst type of government. His description of life in a democratic society may be overdrawn, but remains to this day the most incisive critique of democracy. Democracy was characterized by license, wastefulness, insolence, anarchy and democratic man gave more importance to his desire and appetites. Quantity rather than quality was the main criterion honoring all values on an equal basis. In the Statesman, **Plato divided the states into lawful**

**and unlawful states**, a classification that Aristotle adopted when he spoke of good and perverted forms of government in his Politics. For Plato, there were three law abiding states, and their corresponding corrupt and lawless states. **The rule of one yielding monarchy and tyranny, the rule of a few, aristocracy and oligarchy,** and the **rule of many** included **moderate and extreme democracy**. For the first time, Plato conceded two kinds of democracy, and made it the best of the lawless states, though the best of law-abiding states. Both forms of democracy were better than oligarchy and even monarchy, tacitly admitting the importance of popular participation and consent in the polity.

**An assessment of Plato's Political Philosophy** Plato's political philosophy, which emerges from his writings, has its special importance in the history of western political theory. Plato was the first systematic political theorist and a study of the western philosophy of tradition begins with his masterpiece, the Republic. Jowett rightly describes Plato as father of philosophy, politics and literary idealism. Plato's contribution to the western political thought is without any parallel. He was given it a direction, a basis and a vision. Political idealism is Plato's gift to western political philosophy. He innovated novel ideas and integrated them skillfully in a political scheme. His radicalism lies in the fact that his rulers are rulers without comforts and luxuries possessed by men of property. Plato's attempt in the Republic is to portray a perfect model of an ideal order. Plato was the first to allow women to become rulers and legislators. His scheme of **collective households, temporary marriages** and **common childcare** were accepted as necessary condition for the emancipation of women by the socialist of the 18th and 19th centuries. The whole bent of Plato's Political thought was the welfare and development of the community.

### **1.3 ARISTOTLE: CLASSIFICATION OF STATE, REVOLUTION**

#### **Origin of State:**

According to Aristotle, life manifests through several forms—vegetation, animals and men. The vegetative soul performs only two functions, viz., nutrition and growth. As regards the animal, it can walk, resist and fight; while man can think. This division is evolutionary in nature.

The animal soul is vegetative soul and passion; the human soul, on the other hand, is vegetative soul (**appetite**) coupled with the animal soul (**passion**) and **reason**. These principles are

followed even in the society. The vegetative soul manifests in the family, the animal soul in the village and the human soul in the state. Just as the human soul retains the attributes of the vegetative as well as the animal soul; the state retains family and villages. Thus, family expands into villages and villages into state.

Further, as life becomes good with the emergence of the human soul, the state continues to grow from family through the village for the sake of good life. Thus, according to Aristotle, **state comes into existence for the sake of life, it continues for the sake of good life.** The state, according to him, is an organism. The following example explains the concept of state as an organism. Hand is a part of the human body, and if the body is destroyed, there is nothing called a hand. A hand, so to say, is recognized by its functions or end or purpose, that is, to grasp things. This function can be performed only if it is a part of the human body. Similarly, individuals in the state are like hands of the body. The purpose of these individuals is to lead a good life and this is not possible unless they are a part of the state. To make the state healthy, individuals must also be healthy.

It is for this reason that **Aristotle looks upon state as the supreme manifestation of man's essential nature.** He once stated that, he who is unable to live in a society, or who has no need because he is self-sufficient must be either a beast or God. **Aristotle also believed that a man when perfected is the best of animals, but when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all. Thus, a man in a state without law and justice, according to Aristotle, is the worst of all animals.** Law is the breath of the state and the courts of justice are the lungs and nostrils. The state according to Aristotle is not a mere society of exchange of goods and prevention of crime, but the one that ensures a happy and honorable life to individuals in the state. **In the end, state, according to Aristotle, is a perfect community that has reached a stage of self-sufficiency. It is also economically self-sufficient. He used the term 'autarkeia', which means self-sufficiency.** This term, in a broader sense, refers to all-round independence in both ethical and psychic terms. This means that the individuals involvement in public affairs, a sense of participation that prevents alienation. The concept of self-sufficiency is against the thesis of alienated man. It is by participating in the affairs of the state or the polis that a man can become self-sufficient and this is the end of the state.

## **Concept of an Ideal State:**

Aristotle always strived to attain an ideal state. According to him, in every state there are three classes, viz., the very rich, the very poor and the middle class (the mean). Those who are rich excel in strength, beauty; birth or wealth and they grow arrogant, violent and criminal.

The poor, on the other hand, are ugly, weak and often become victims of jealousies, intriguing, rogues and petty rascals. While the former do not obey laws, the latter tend to break the laws. The government, therefore, by the former would be despotic and that formed by the latter would be despicable. In either situation, the state remains divided by conflicts, bitterness, jealousies and frictions. The state can never be one as there is an eternal war with each other. So, Aristotle suggested that the best way is to follow the **law of the golden mean**. In other words, governments must be run by middle class citizens who favour neither class. They neither covet nor plot but only command acceptance for their power is transformed into authority.

Therefore, Aristotle suggested that the legislators must always ensure the association of the middle class with the government. If it is numerically stronger than the other two classes, then it is definitely a source of stability. Aristotle opined that the continuous rule by either the rich or the poor is worst calamity, that can ever happen to a state and for this reason; he supported the rule of middle class, as the best rule—it is the golden mean. Aristotle believed that middle class rule ensures not only stability but also liberty and equality. Liberty is not necessarily doing what one likes to do, but it is also to live by the rule of the constitution. Liberty also refers to the ability to rule as well as be ruled. This is justice. Thus, liberty, according to Aristotle, is based on justice, which is distributive, and rests on the basis of proportionate equality.

## **Elements of an Ideal State:**

Aristotle strongly believed that the best form of government is the one headed by the middle class. And for this form of government to function efficiently, there is a need for coordination between three elements as it is this relation that determines the nature and efficiency of the government.

### **These three elements are as follows:**

1. The deliberative (legislature)

2. The magistracy (executive)

3. The judicial

Aristotle suggested that those who deliberate or those who make laws, must be elected by votes by all the members of the different classes. As far as the magistracy or the executive is concerned, he recommended that some should be elected out of all and some out of some, or again some by vote and others by lot.

According to Aristotle, this mixed form of government is the best. Similarly, as regards the judicial system, Aristotle suggested that some judges should be recruited from all classes and some courts should represent only a specific class.

In other words, Aristotle made it very clear that golden mean is the best state. Monarchy though happens to be the best form from a theoretical perspective, it is not possible, because one man absolutely virtuous and perfect will be God and untraceable. Tyranny is a perversion and the worst form of government and a tyrant is a monster and is unjust to everyone.

Further, a tyrant is never virtuous and he is only powerful. Aristocracy though appears to be practically the best form of government as it is the rule of capable, the excellent and the informed, it lacks an economic base. In no time, it degenerates into oligarchy and political office is placed at the disposal of the highest bidder. This situation in all probability make the state avaricious and over a period of time citizens follow the example set by the rulers.

The masses would be strengthened and over a short period, establish their rule. Such a government is ruled by crowd and is based on the false assumption of equality, that is, those who are equal in one respect are equal in all respects, because men are equally free and they claim to be absolutely equal. Therefore, such a government is contrary to good life. Aristotle was also not in favor of democracy. He was actually in favors of a mix of aristocracy and democracy as it would denote a system wherein there is a combination of excellence in number, ability and efficiency with responsibility. Polity or constitutional republic is the outcome of such a happy fusion.

The economic basis of such a government is found in the middle class who are considered to be the natural elements of the state. They ensure security and stability that makes any polity work

efficiently. Such a state is certainly more democratic as it is open to all and quite aristocratic too because anybody who is not able, trained, educated and fully prepared for the art of governance can be admitted to any public office of importance.

### **Necessary Conditions for an Ideal State:**

According to Aristotle, there are certain material conditions that are necessary to make an ideal state.

### **These conditions can be described as follows:**

#### **Population:**

Aristotle was of the opinion that just as good citizens are identifiable, a state also needs an identity or, in other words, certain distinct features to it like the rivers, mountains, etc. He was also of the view that the population of the state must be neither too large nor too small. It should be just enough for achieving a life of self-sufficiency. In order to ensure that the population does not exceed, he stated that the rate of reproduction must be fixed and infertility must be encouraged among married couples.

These restrictions are important because, excessive population is likely to lead to poverty, which reduces into civic dissension and wrongdoing. Aristotle linked this with the regulation of property without which the regulation of the population is meaningless.

He strongly stated that as the number of children increases in the family, there are greater chances of discomforts and eventually poverty. It is, therefore, necessary that population be checked. Aristotle was not in favor of infant mortality as a means to check population growth. He, however, approved of prevention of growth of deformed children.

If a family happens to exceed the fixed size, then Aristotle suggested that birth control measures have to be initiated by the state. According to him, unlimited population not only brings economic ruin, but also leads to democracy whose backbone is the mass of people.

As regards the quality of population, he compared the population of Greeks to that of the Europeans and the Asians. He believed that Europeans have high spirits but less intelligence and skills, while Asians are highly skilled and intelligent but lack spirit. The Greeks, in the



meanwhile, are a blend of the two, and this combination is the best for the ideal state for it induces freedom and highest political development.

### **Territory:**

In Aristotle's view, the size of the territory must also be fixed like that of the population. The territory should enable a citizen to live a life of leisure, combining temperance and liberality. The citizens should be able to take it in a single view and be able to defend it, plan and relate properly to the neighbours.

He also stated that the state must have such a geographical location that it has all the advantages of being near to the sea. The state climate must be suitable to grow more kinds of fruits and other food crops and also timber and many other products. Thus, Aristotle laid down certain rules that would make the state self-sufficient, united, viable, economically and commercially prosperous, and militarily secure.

### **Social Structure:**

Aristotle perceived a well-knit social structure that coordinates all the integral parts and with necessary conditions. The term 'integral part' refers to citizens, artisans, slaves and women and they are all necessary conditions.

The objective of a social structure in an ideal state is to provide the services of food and agriculture, tools, arts and crafts, arms and defense, property and land ownership, service of gods and public worship, political deliberations and settlement of disputes. Thus, there are a number of classes in a state like farmers, artisans, soldiers, traders, priests and the statesmen and others.

Aristotle further classified the works to be undertaken by the young, middle aged and old people in a society. For instance, defense, public worship and political deliberations are considered ideal and legitimate, and defending the society is the responsibility of young men, politics is the responsibility of the middle aged, and public worship to the old and the aged. This classification of work was made to provide leisure in one life at some time or the other, and also a chance to interact with the other three classes. The remaining services like property, trade and land ownership should be assigned to the entire body of full citizens. By this categorization of classes, the state is able to attain the greatest happiness. He also expressed that land should not be

entirely owned in common—some should be publicly owned and some privately owned. The private owners may have two plots—one nears the polis and other at the frontier. Finally, the slaves or the barbarian serfs must cultivate the land. Ownership of the land should be vested in the soldiers and the statesmen.

## **Political thought of Aristotle**

Aristotle was greatly influenced by the ideas of his teacher Plato. Aristotle begins his political thought with Plato's Second Best State. In Plato's second State, he talked about a mixture of democratic and monarchic elements, supremacy of Law, Popular assembly has the electoral authority, structure of government and class structure of the citizen is based on Property held by them. Hence Aristotle's Politics open with a consideration of the origin of the State.

Aristotle gives his argument about the State. He also starts with rejection of the Sophists view that political society is the product of convention. He treats State as a natural institution possessing moral authority.. According to Aristotle man is political and social animal, hence State is natural- as it reflects both the aspects. Aristotle gives his three main arguments to prove that State is a natural institution. These arguments are as follows:

### ***Two natural instincts of individual:***

The first argument put forward by Aristotle is one of the most valuable analyses of the State in the whole realm of the political speculation. There are two primary natural instincts which compel human being to associate themselves together- the reproductive instinct which brings man and woman together and the instincts of self-preservation which bring together master and slave. The family is a natural association concerned with its members' everyday needs. The next stage in man's social development is the village (home), an association of families. The village aims at a higher level of self-sufficiency (**autarkeia**) in maintaining human existence. Finally the polis emerges.

### ***Teleological Argument:***

Aristotle says "the nature of the thing is its end." This is argument based on teleological; everywhere things are regarded as determined towards their end. Everything realizes its true nature when it reaches its end. The State shows the real nature of man. Man can get perfect

development of his nature in the State only. And since man was a rational being the State was a rational institution.

***State is an organization which has grown:*** The third argument which Aristotle gives in order to prove that the is natural institution is that the is an organism which has developed and grown. The State is a whole of which the individuals are the parts. He is the father of all organisms' theories of State. According to him "the State is natural community; an organism with all the power attributes of human being". It is clear from the preceding account of the State, the end fulfillment of earlier forms of human associations like the family and village that Aristotle views as a growing or developing thing.

This proposition that State is a natural institution is one of the greatest contributions made by Aristotle to the history of political speculation. As professor Ross points out "Aristotle did good service to Political Thought by insisting that the State doesn't exist merely by convention but it is rooted in human nature. The State is natural in the sense that it is rooted in the nature of things and not in man's caprice"

### ***Theory of Property –***

Aristotle has as strong defence in favour of private property system. Human nature is, in his opinion, so intimately associated with property for its personality development and so if there is a system of state property system, then the human nature should have to brought under state authoritarianism which, no doubt, produces evil and not good and hence the destruction of the very purpose for which the state is formed. Therefore, Aristotle says that property is an instrument and a necessary instrument to good life. He strongly pleads that the citizens must ne owners of property for such a status enable them to develop their personality and good life. To Aristotle labour is enimical to virtue and so a curse. Besides, men is after all happy while kind to and doing service to his friends, guests and others. This he can do so when he has his own property.

Plato defends the abolition of private property and introduction of system of communism which looks beneficial because the cases such as suits about contract and flatteries of the rich which are inherent in the private property system may not arise. Can we say that these evils are due to the assistance of the private property? In fact it is because of the wickedness of human nature. Communism is advocated for the sake of unity. Unity is a must for the state. But if it is carried

too far the state can no longer be a state. The state is plurality of various kinds of men. It should be united and made into a community. This can be achieved by education. Here it is strange to note that Aristotle, who denounces communism of any kind, proposes the regulation of character in the line vogue in Sparta respecting the common meal system instead of philosophy, the guardians, proposed by Plato cannot be happy for they are deprived the chance of possessing the landed property and of doing anything expecting their specialised work. Free man presupposes a certain amount of freedom allowed in his personal choice of the means of realising his bet life. But Platonic free men are permitted to do only the specific work assigned and depended on others for their subsistence. This, of course face them in their endeavour to realise their best self and discharge satisfactorily the work expected from them.

It is thus we understand the significance of property in making or marring personality “If guardians are not happy the whole state is not happy.”<sup>[11]</sup>

However, Aristotle advises that each of his citizens should possess property of a mean or optimum size. He says that each citizen should have that much property which enables him to live temperately as envisaged by Plato in the ‘Laws’; and liberality and temperance are the virtues which have to do with property. So Aristotle, while suggesting equalization of property, insists of the equalization of the desires of mankind by education to avoid crimes emanating from poverty and love of honour. “Herein lies” say Chance “The real force of Aristotle attack of Plato’s radicalism. He maintains that the unity of the city is depended on its character and not on external uniformity...”

While advocating the equalisation or property Aristotle says that each citizen should have to lord – one near the border and other near the city – which alone in his opinion involves all citizens in wars if the break out.

Aristotle is carefully in saying the continuance of the fixed amount of property for generations. This he wants to achieve by fixing the number of children least the law governing the fixed amount of property has got to broken. To quote Aristotle “the limit must be fixed by calculating the chances of morality in children and of sterility in married persons. The neglect of this limit is a never – failing cause of poverty.” No doubt Aristotle is one of the advocates of the birth control which the present day’s politicians and economist are bent open propagating; but unfortunately

he fails to think that even if the children are fixed as expected by the philosopher, the two lots as recommended by him would hardly suffice at least after the second generation.

Aristotle like a good moralist distinguishes between the natural and un-natural acquisition of property. He says that the acquisition of wealth from land – crops or animals – is natural by the wealth by the exchange of commodities for profit or interest or usury is unnatural. He, of course, condemns usury for the emphasis that money is “intended to be used in exchange but not to increase in interest.” So he maintains that agriculture is the proper and natural function of citizen.

Despite his preference to the system of private property, Aristotle like his master is in favour of common meal system. He expresses that all citizen – rich and poor- must attend to the common meal except the state whose income, in his opinion from land is to be send partially on the common meal and partially on the maintenance of the state religion. He prefers the system because it will enable the citizens to understand each other, there by fostering unity to be a great extent in the state.

### ***Theory of Slavery:-***

Aristotle, talking of slavery, which has become a cause of American civil war, justifies it from the point of view of the master and slave without minding the heat generating to the extent of exploding a social and constitutional structure. He says that a slave belongs to another, a free man and as such he exists only for the sake of good of another. Free man exists for their own sake. While moralising the existence of slavery as an “institution of nature,” he emphatic on pointing out that there are ‘some who are intended by nature to be slaves.’

Each citizen (free man) needs private properties and slaves. These two are like instruments necessary to achieve and practise good life since manual labour is incompatible with virtue, a must for good life, a citizen, whose end of life is virtue, cannot live a good life of virtue. He is like a musician who cannot produce an instrumental music without an instrument, cannot produce a good life. Here although, property is also an instrument, he gives a stress on the slaves, because the slaves are living instruments of action producing good not wealth getting but for immediate consumption while property is the lifeless instrument of production. So Aristotle justifies the existence and use of slaves by free men for the sake of attaining a good life of virtue.

Nevertheless he wants the free man not to convert a slave a factory slave who, by feature, is instrument of production of wealth.

While justifying the slavery in the name of nature Aristotle says, “from the hour of birth some me are marked out for subjection and other for rule.” By way of explanation he says that men of “capacity, for sight, self – reliance and the life of virtue are intended by nature to work with their mind.” Persons lacking such character are intended by nature to work with the body. He again, explains it that just as by nature the soul ruling the body, the mind the passionate, and the male and the female so also a man working with mind is empowered to rule those who do by body and so masters and slaves respectively. Aristotle does not say that the slaves are machine without having any capacity to employ reason; but he admits that they have capacity to discharge intelligently their own duties only.

Aristotle justifies slavery from the point of slave also. He becomes a slave because he is born for that. Naturally he should be placed under the control of master who possesses that which he lacks. Temperance is a quality needed for a good life. The slaves have no temperance but they acquire derivative temperance by submitting themselves to temperate master. Since the slaves have derivative temperance, like the moon having the derivative life, the choice for them is not between the inferior and the perfect form human virtue; but it is between the inferior form and none. It is on this core that Aristotle has a preference to the slave to a mechanical labour to artisan attains excellence in proportion as he becomes a slave because he less closely connected with master whose help for the slave to develop a clause, nay closer, contact enables the slaves to first become more or less a member of the masters family and to attain “self – control of a servant subordinating himself to his superior.”

Aristotle defends only the household slavery and not the industrial slavery. His justification of it is same as Plato’s justification of the permanent subjection of the producing classes. He does not say that all Greeks are masters and the non- Greeks are slaves. On the other hand, the people devoid of the capacity needed for the good life of virtue are deemed slaves. However, he insists on the humanitarian treatment of the slaves. But he modern thinker in unison denounce the theory of slavery as it is a blot on human civilisation denounce a natural superiority of a race over other as Aristotle has pointed out. Montesquieu says that slavery is against nature which has create all the equals and hence condemnable. Nevertheless the existence of slavery in the form of

domestic service or racial discrimination on the basis of reasons advocated by Aristotle is still a common feature.

### ***Classification of State:***

No scientific classification of states is possible because all the states are alike in as much as all are supposed to have population, territory, government and sovereignty.

All enjoy equal status in the eyes of international law. As governments are the only tangible manifestations of the existence of states the classification of governments is, in essence the classification of states. The government existed in the past and exists at present in various forms. Monarchy, aristocracy and pure democracy are its old forms. In the present age, representative democracy is an accepted form. It is further distinguished as the parliamentary, presidential, unitary and federal types.

Aristotle, classified states on the basis of two principles:-

(1) In whom the sovereign powers are vested?

(2) Whether it is exercised for the good of the community or for the good of the ruler?

If the supreme power is vested in the hands of the one man and is exercised for the good of community, it is monarchy. If the power is exercised by the monarch for his self-aggrandizement it becomes tyranny—a perverted form of monarchy.

If power is vested in the hands of a few and is exercised for the good of the community, it is aristocracy. If it is exercised for the good of the rulers, it becomes oligarchy—a perverted form of aristocracy. If power is vested in the hands of all citizens and is exercised for common good, it is polity. If the power is exercised by mobs and demagogues it becomes democracy—perverted form of polity. Aristotle's democracy is likely to surprise the modern man, but this surprise will disappear if one bears in mind that Aristotle used the term in a sense different from what we use today. What Aristotle called polity, we designate as democracy; what he named democracy, we call as mobocracy.

This six-fold classification sets the stage for Aristotle's inquiry into the best constitution, although it is modified in various ways throughout the *Politics*. For example, he observes that the dominant class in oligarchy (literally rule of the *oligoi*, i.e., few) is typically the wealthy,

whereas in democracy (literally rule of the *demos*, i.e., people) it is the poor, so that these economic classes should be included in the definition of these form. Also, polity is later characterized as a kind of “mixed” constitution typified by rule of the “middle” group of citizens, a moderately wealthy class between the rich and poor.

### **Cycle of State:**

Aristotle further believes that all the states go through a cycle of revolutions. The state began with the establishment of monarchy which was the virtuous rule of a single man. Though after some time such a virtuous man could no longer be produced yet the rule of one man remained and his power was maintained by force.

It was tyranny or despotism. It was replaced by aristocracy by means of a revolution. The spirit of aristocracy also began to degenerate and was replaced by oligarchy. By a popular uprising, oligarchy was turned into polity which soon degenerated into democracy, a sort of mob-rule.

Out of darkness, then, again arises the supremely virtuous man, who restores law and order. The cycle is completed and begins all over again.

This six-fold classification sets the stage for Aristotle's inquiry into the best constitution, although it is modified in various ways throughout the *Politics*. For example, he observes that the dominant class in oligarchy (literally rule of the *oligoi*, i.e., few) is typically the wealthy, whereas in democracy (literally rule of the *demos*, i.e., people) it is the poor, so that these economic classes should be included in the definition of these form. Also, polity is later characterized as a kind of “mixed” constitution typified by rule of the “middle” group of citizens, a moderately wealthy class between the rich and poor. Though the classification given by Aristotle does not fit in the modern conditions, yet it has emphasized the ethical element in judging a state. The purpose of the state, whatever its forms be, is the common good. Aristotle thus lays emphasis on an ethical or qualitative test of the state.

### ***Certain important aspects:-***

- a. Aristotle classifies states on quantitative and qualitative principles. Monarchy, aristocracy and polity are normal states whereas tyranny, oligarchy and democracy are abnormal ones.
- b. Aristotle further believes that all these move in a cycle. The theory is criticized on the following grounds:



Aristotle never distinguished a state from a government. The state, in fact, cannot be classified. The terms oligarchy and democracy do not correspond to the modern usage of these words. The classification is too mechanical. The classification is in-exhaustive and does not take within its fold various forms of government which exist in the modern world.

***Criticism of Aristotle's Classification of States:***

**I. No Distinction between State and Government:**

In the first place, it is pointed out that Aristotle did not make the distinction between the state and government. He identified government with state. His classification is a classification of governments rather than that of states. In fact, states remain an entity whatever be the form of government.

**II. Distinction between Aristocracy and Oligarchy misleading:**

Aristotle brings out a distinction between aristocracy and oligarchy. But the modern usage of these words does not admit of any difference. Even if we recognize the fine distinction between the two, it is difficult to determine where one ends and the other begins.

**III. Term Democracy differently used:**

The word democracy is used in the sense of mobocracy. Modern writers, however, do not regard democracy as a perverted form of people's rule. In fact, according to Aristotle, polity is the rule of citizens. His conception of citizenship did not include traders, farmers, artisans and slaves. It was thus in reality a rule of owners or aristocrats. He disliked real democracy where all people ruled and called it a perverted form of government.

**IV. No place for Mixed Government:**

The classification does not fit in with modern political conditions and with governmental organizations which are of mixed nature and combine all the three elements of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. This combination of all the three elements can be seen in the form of the present British Government which is a combination of Monarchy, Aristocracy and Democracy. The monarchy is represented by the King or Queen. House of Lords represents the Aristocracy and the House of Commons represents Democracy.

**V. In exhaustive Classification:**

According to Seeley and Leacock, Aristotle's classification is not exhaustive. Aristotle was a philosopher of the city-states and, therefore, could not anticipate the vastness and complexity of a modern state.

Hence, his classification is out of date and cannot apply to the forms of government which obtain in the modern era.

VI. Classification unscientific:

Aristotle's classification of states is unscientific as it is based on number of persons in whom the powers are vested and then it lays too much emphasis on ethics which is a matter of individual judgement.

As for example, whether a particular Monarch is good or bad is a matter of subjective judgment. One may say, he is bad yet another may say he is good, so is the case with Aristocracy and Oligarchy; Polity and Democracy.

VII. States are classified differently:

Aristotle obliterates the distinction between state and Governments. He classifies only governments of his own time while he talked of state. In fact, states can be classified as National States or Multi-national States; Secular States or Theocratic States; Unitary or Federal States.

### **Theory of Revolution**

Revolutions arise from inequalities, numerical or qualitative--from a numerical mass claiming equality denied them, or from a minority claiming superiority denied them. A revolution may result either in a complete change of polity, or only in a modification of the existing one. An oligarchy is less permanent than a democracy, owing to factions within the oligarchical body. In all revolutions, the conditions which leads up to them is the desire of the many for equality, and the desire of the minority for effective superiority. The purposes with which they are set on foot are profit, honour, or avoidance of loss or dishonour. The inciting occasions are many; jealousy of those who have wealth and honour, official arrogance, fear of the law or of its abuse, personal rivalries, failure of the middle class to maintain a balance, race antagonisms, antagonism of localities, and others.

In democracies, revolutions are due mainly to demagogic attacks on wealth, leading the wealthy of combine, and they result in the establishment of an oligarchy or of a tyranny, a 'popular'

military chief seizing the power for himself; or sometimes in replacing a moderate by an extreme democracy.

In oligarchies they spring from the oppressive conduct of the oligarchy, or from dissensions among the oligarchical body--e.g. exclusion of those who think themselves entitled to membership; attraction of the role of demagogue for individual members of the oligarchy; employment of mercenary troops, whose captain seizes power.

In aristocracies they arise from the jealousy of those excluded from power, personal ambitions, great inequality of wealth. In these, and in constitutional governments--the most stable of all--the main cause is the incomplete fusion of the three criteria, wealth, numbers and merit. The comparative stability of constitutions comes from the greater relative weight of numbers. They are, however, more liable to be revolutionised by external pressure. Equality in proportion to merit and security of rights are the true conditions of permanence. For the preservation of polities, minor illegalities must be particularly guarded against: in oligarchies, personal rivalries, abuse of power by individuals (making short tenures of office advisable), insolence of privilege, tricks to deceive the masses; in oligarchies and constitutional states, excessive concentration of power in individuals or classes; oppression of the wealthy minority in democracies, and of the poor majority in oligarchies. OF monarchy, the two types are the regal and the tyrannic. The king is the protector of the wealthy against spoliation, of the poor against arrogance. His own or his family's virtues or services have given him the kingship; his aim is excellence, and his authority is maintained by a citizen bodyguard. The tyrant is not a protector; his aim is his personal gratification. Under monarchies, injustice and arrogance are the causes of insurrection, or fear, or contempt for incompetence, coupled with ambition. Tyrannies are overthrown by collision with external forces, or by private intrigues in the tyrant's entourage, and generally in the same sort of way as extreme oligarchies or extreme democracies. Kingships are endangered by intrigues in the royal family, by the King's personal incompetence, or by his developing tyrannical attributes. Hereditary monarchies are in particular danger from incompetents succeeding. But in a complex society, kingship proper is all but impossible.

A kingship is maintained by the royal self-restraint. The tyrant relies on the material and moral degradation, incapacity and lack of mutual confidence among his subjects, which he fosters by

espionage, executions, taxation and the encouragement of licence. Occasionally, the tyrant will seek to secure his position by playing the part and assuming the attributes of a king proper. The shrewd tyrant sees to it that he has the favour of the rich or of the poor. Neither tyrannies nor oligarchies have proved long-lived. 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.

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

***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:*

- i. 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.
- ii. 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 evolution:*

- i. Desire for gain and profit.
- ii. Universal desire for honor and prestige
- iii. The possession of sovereign power by an individual or group so as to create fear and apprehension in the minds of the subject

- iv. Undue priority and prominence of individuals caused great stir in the heart of the subdued people
- v. Disproportionate increase of power and wealth in any part of the state
- vi. Elections intrigues and moral degradation kept up in the selection of some people
- vii. Carelessness shown in granting public offices to disloyal citizens and undue favoritism shown to the individuals
- viii. Too much power concentrated in one man or class of men for political gains
- ix. Dissimilarity of different elements in the state
- x. The rivalries of people of different races in the state
- xi. Dynastic quarrels and conflicts
- xii. Free immigration of outside races with different notions of justice and law

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

**i. Democracy**

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

**ii. Tyranny or Oligarchy**

In oligarchies, revolutions take place due to two reasons:

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

**iii. 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:***

i. Abundant political power should not be concentrated in the hands of one man or one class of men.

ii. The various classes in the state without any discrimination of color and creed should be treated alike and with proper consideration Honors and rewards should be distributed as fairly as possible only to deserving ones because inequalities of offices and honors drive men to revolt. Political offices should be within reach of every individual who is able of performing his functions best.

iii. 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

iv. 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.

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

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

vii. 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.

viii. 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."

### **Comparison of Aristotle & Plato**

Plato and Aristotle are the two greatest stars in the universe of political philosophy. The former is known as the first poetic philosopher in the history of political thought. His disciple and successor, Aristotle is the father of political science. Both are the greatest apostles of the great culture. Almost all the thinkers till the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century dark deep from this rich fountain of knowledge of wisdom.

Aristotle and Plato had same view point on several things but they too differ also. Aristotle fully subscribes to the view of Plato that the only life which is worthy of man is a life of virtue and that it is made possible for individual in and through membership of the State. Aristotle further agrees with his master in regarding the view that State as a moral and spiritual entity and in holding that Ethics and Politics constitute a single and indivisible science. Both of them approach the problem of the city-state from a moral point of view; their political thought is ethical in character. In the hands of both of them it has a practical bias. The *Politics* of Aristotle is no less a manual for the statesman than the *Republic* of the laws of Plato. Aristotle has a genuine Platonist in so far as he believed that the greatest need of the times was the proper education of the ruler.

Plato was the father of the “Utopian” idea in which several features were essential. He broke down the human soul in three parts; Desire spiritual and rational. Plato addresses the three features as being key to the establishment of the perfect society. If every person counterweights with the whole of society and these features than society can understand each other and progress and work towards the advancement of the society. Aristotle takes the same concept but more clearly defines it and takes it to the next level that goes beyond the perfect state and allows its applications to influence the whole system rather than purely serve as its basis. Aristotle has a perfect society but is not as nearly exaggerated as that of a utopia. Aristotle takes a more lenient attitude in his philosophy in general, in which its application is easier to real life. Aristotle sees only two parts to the human soul; the philosophical/ theoretical and the rational. Superficially one may derive from this that the human soul is far deeper than that of Plato’s partitions. In fact Aristotle regards human individual more than Plato does. Aristotle believes that each and every human has the philosophical/ theoretical dimension to him or her but the distinguishing feature is the ability to be rational. Plato uses the analogy of golden, silver and iron souls to distinguish the differences.

***Points of difference Plato and Aristotle-*** Though Aristotle was permeated by Platonism to a very high degree and may rightly be regarded as a true Platonist but he also criticized the Plato’s various theories. Plato is a perfect idealist in his philosophy, whereas Aristotle is not an idealist in his philosophy. Substance is the most crucial of the ten categories according to Aristotle. The primary substance is nothing but the individual thing only according to him, whereas Plato sets out a scheme to describe particular things by identifying them according to their characteristics and properties. Aristotle, on the other hand, tried to develop a universal method of reasoning. He wanted to learn everything about reality. According to Aristotle any individual substance is distinguished from the other substances in a particular category based on features or the characteristics which they inherit. This only proves the fact that substances can be different.

The main focus of Plato is a perfect society. He creates a blueprint for a utopian society, in his book *The Republic*, out of his disdain for the tension of political life. This blueprint was a sketch of a society in which the problems he thought were present in his society would be eased. Plato sought to cure the afflictions of both human society and human personality. Essentially what Plato wants to achieve is a perfect society. Aristotle, unlike Plato, is not concerned with perfecting society. He just wants to improve on the existing one. Rather than produce a blueprint



for the perfect society, Aristotle suggested, in his work, *The Politics*, the society itself should reach for the best possible system that could be attained. Aristotle relied on the deductive approach, while Aristotle is an example of an inductive approach. Utopia is a solution in abstract, a solution that has no concrete problem. There is no solid evidence that all societies are in need of such drastic reformation as Plato suggests. Aristotle discovers that the best possible has already been obtained. All that can be done is to try to improve on the existing one.

Aristotle criticized various theories of Plato such as communism of wife, communism of property etc. Aristotle says that communism of wives will create great confusion and disharmony in the social order. He says it is absurd to use the analogy of animals in support of community of wives. He says that state controlled mating will be unworkable and will not bring the best males and females together. Plato's conception of the state as unity is mistaken. The very nature of the state is polarity and not uniformity. To Aristotle the state is or ought to be "a polarity which should be united and made into the community by education."

Plato's utopia consists of three distinct, non-hereditary class systems. The Guardians consist of non-ruling Guardians and ruling Guardians. The non-rulers are a higher level of civil servants and the ruling is the society's policy maker. Auxiliaries are soldiers and minor civil servants. Finally the Workers, are composed of farmers and artisans, most commonly unskilled laborers. The Guardians are to be wise and good rulers. It is important that the rulers who emerge must be a class of craftsmen who are public-spirited in temperament and skilled in the arts of government areas. The guardians are to be placed in a position in which they are absolute rulers. They are supposed to be the select few who know what is best for society. Aristotle disagrees with the idea of one class holding discontinuing political power. The failure to allow circulation between classes excludes those men who may be ambitious, and wise, but are not in the right class of society to hold any type of political power. Aristotle looks upon this ruling class system as an ill-conceived political structure. He quotes "It is a further objection that he deprives his Guardians even of happiness, maintaining that happiness of the whole state which should be the object of legislation," ultimately he is saying that Guardians sacrifice their happiness for power and control. Guardians who lead such a strict life will also think it necessary to impose the same strict lifestyle on the society it governs.

Plato and Aristotle alike were two men who had ideas on ways to improve existing society. Plato, a political philosopher, was in the pursuit of philosophical truth. Aristotle was concerned

with the citizen and the design of political institutions. They both had well thought out ideas and plans on how to build a better society. Both Aristotle and Plato have had a tremendous impact on political scientists of today. Aristotle helped to developed some democratic ideas. In conclusion these men were great thinkers. Their opinions on society and its functions were quite different, but they both had the same intention, to build a better way of life for the societies they lived in and for the societies that would come to be in the future. We can conclude with the remarks of Maxey “as Plato is father to the idealists, romanticists, revolutionists and utopians of political philosophy so Aristotle is father to the realists, scientists, pragmatists and utilitarians. All who believe in new world for old are disciples of Plato; all who believe in old words made by the tedious and toilsome use of science are disciples of Aristotle.”