

Aristotle's Views on the State.

Aristotle, the father of political science, he says that man is a social animal and is different from the other animals because of his civilized nature. He states that human progress is impossible without interrelations. So, man prefers to live with the others to get various basic needs that cannot be achieved otherwise. To get the very basic needs, man and women, roaster and slaves came together and as a result, the first institution of human civilization, family, was formed. When families increased, they made villages and tribes to solve some greater needs. Due to some other greater problems and needs, the tribes and villages united in a single and greater institution, the state.

Aristotle seems to believe in the organic theory that means state is like an individual and individual has a body which is made of certain organs like head, arms, legs and face etc. In the same way, state is a body and individuals are its organs. Aristotle does not like too much state interference in the affairs of its citizens and gives certain liberties and rights to individuals. The civilized life of individuals start from the family reaches its top in the form of state. Therefore family is the starting point and state is the last point of human development. Although most of the needs are fulfilled in family, villages and tribes but the super sufficient life is not possible without state.

If the state is a natural development there are definitely several stages. Aristotle begins his argument by saying that the first stage of the state is the household. **The household** is the simplest form of association and meets the simplest necessities. But man's necessities are various and naturally it is beyond the capacity of the family to meet those demands. Several families have formed a **village** to fulfil the greater demands and necessities. The village, although higher than the family, cannot cope with the growing demands of its members, hence group of villages form a **State**.

Aristotle's state major aims are the economic development, protection of rights and liberties, formation of government and civil service structure to enable its citizens to use their capabilities for collective happy life. The territory of the state should be all-producing, so that the state has all things to be in need of nothing, which is called sufficiency. It should enable the residents to live liberally so that they can enjoy leisure.

Aristotle states certain other things which an ideal state must have, such as food, arts, arms etc. It should have a good amount of revenue so that it can take care of its internal needs as well as protect itself from any external aggression. The state should also take care of the religion of the people so that they can practice their respective religion fearlessly. The last and the most important thing is that the authority in the state must have the power to decide what is good and in favor of the public. A state should have farmers to produce food, artists and artisans to promote art, soldiers to protect the boundaries of the state, the priests to carry out religious practices etc.

Aristotle admits that not all those who are necessary for the functioning of the ideal state can be deemed as citizens of that state. For example, children cannot be termed as citizens of the state even though they are an integral part of the state as they do not participate in any political process. Under some governments, mechanics and laborers will not be citizens while under other, they might be included.

A person who is exiled from the state will cease to be a citizen of the state. A person, who has the authority to participate in the judicial administration of the state, is termed as a citizen of that state. He should be able to take part in the process of administration of justice and legislation as a member of the deliberative assembly which can enable him to be a citizen. Hence, it can be observed that all those people who are permitted to take part in the political process of that state, for example, casting a vote or contesting elections, and all those who are eligible to be the members of the executive or the legislative branch of the government can be termed as citizens. With respect to who 'ought' to be citizens, Aristotle opines that all those who are trained and are capable of becoming either the ruler or the ruled, ought to be citizens. Also, a person who does not have property lacks experience in management skills as he is not accustomed to managing any kind of property. Such a person, according to Aristotle, cannot be expected to actively participate in the political affairs of the state and thus, in turn cannot 'manage' the state.

But the state according to Aristotle is not an ordinary community. It is the highest of all communities and naturally its purpose shall be the highest or supreme. It is thus evident that like all associations the state is an association. But its purpose is different from that of other associations. Again, it is not an ordinary association. It enjoys the highest rank or position in the society or social structure.

Nature has inspired and encouraged man to be a part of the state. Aristotle believed that it was not possible for man to live outside the state. Although he acknowledged the separate existence of the individual, he did not think that the individual would not have separate ideal, morality and goodness from those of the state. The individual, according to Aristotle, can achieve these qualities only through the membership of and subordination to the state. He cannot have rights and liberties apart from the state or against the state. He must sacrifice himself for the sake of the common good embodied in the state.

In this respect we may say that Aristotle subordinates individuals to the state, if we mean that, in balancing the claims of the individuals and the state, he favours the state more and individuals less.

Conclusion

Critics have called Aristotle's theory of state simply totalitarian. If we look at the Aristotelian theory of state, we shall find that there is hardly any scope for the individual to think in his own way and to do something independently. The state, according to Aristotle, is all-embracing and it leaves no room for the individual's freedom. That is, the state-controlled education and state-sponsored laws are the only weapons of attaining happiness. The state is the only authority of all the enterprises and the individual has no choice. There is no alternative but subordination.

Secondly, in Aristotle's theory of state, associations or communities have no separate importance or position. The state or polis embraces all other communities. They owe their existence to the state. It means that all the communities are merged in the body of the state.

Though Aristotle's theory of state has been heavily criticized his concept of state remains an important aspect in modern political theory.

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