**Nature of State**

**ANCIENT VIEW**

Ancient Greeks regarded the state as a different kind of association. According to them, State (which they used to refer as ***polis***) is an ethical institution performing an ethical function. According to Aristotle, the state has evolved out of the household and the village community but it is different in kind, because it serves a different purpose. It is to be noted here that Greeks had a particular obsession with the analysis of existing society with an avowed purpose. The purpose for which state exists is to bring common good. The household and the village community satisfy the physical needs of man and do not enable him to realise self-sufficiency. This self-sufficiency is moral and implies the realisation of the good life. Thus the state, though it has grown out of the family and the village community, is different from those primary institutions for it is political in nature and enables man to realise self-sufficiency implicit in the good life. This is what Aristotle means when he says that the polis has come for the sake of life and continues to exist for the sake of the good life.

**Philosophic View**

It is the state viewed as an abstract idea from the practice of actual states. Also know as an idealist view of the state where the justification of state as maintain the external conditions necessary to the best life.The individual submits to the authority of the State, because it promotes the well being of the society in which its own well being is bound up.This theory has a lot of abstraction attached with it and has been criticized by the liberal.

**Liberal View**

The Liberal regards the state as harmoniser of diverse interests. Human society is a complex of competing interests and the duty of the state is to harmonize all interests in a manner to maintain peace and order in society.A society has multiple institutions such as churches, workers, farmers, capitalists etc.These different groups of persons represent different, often clashing, interests. As a result of it a conflict situation may prevail in the society. For example, workers belonging to a trade union come into conflict with the management over wages, the workers threaten to go on strike and management decides on a lock out. The state intervenes to reconcile the two opposing interests and finds a best possible solution. Thus the State maintains a balance between different competing interests.

A group of philosophers have maintained that the State is the promoter of universal or common interests. It is the guardian of the general interest of the community. The various associations existing in the society want state to serve their particular interests chiefly whereas in reality they try to promote their narrow interests and do not bother about the general interests of the community. When the industrialists demand higher price for their products, their intention is to earn profits. But the state has to view their action from the point of its effect on the general welfare of the community. It controls the action of the industrialists from the point of view of the general interest of the community. The state protects individual’s life and property. It does so by maintaining law and order. Life will be intolerable if the state does not enforce law and order. By promoting such universal interests, the state promotes the general welfare of the community.

**Marxist View**

Karl Marx, the founder of modern communism, views the nature of the state from the point of Historical materialism. He views society not as political community animated by harmony, as liberals held, rather as one structurally affected by the collision of opposing economic interests. Economic interests being the chief criterion, the society has been divided into opposing classes, that the one who posses property and that which does not. The class which controls the means of production is the dominant class. The state, repository of organized power of society, has always been the instrument of the dominant class which uses it for the purpose of exploiting the weak class of workers. The state therefore reflects the ideology of, and protects the interests of dominant class. The state is not an agency that harmonises the different interests and promotes the common good of the community by standing above the collision of opposing interests, but as matter of fact, represents the dominant class.

Tomorrow we will discuss the role and function of state in detail.