



Q

Give a critical analysis of Aristotle's classification of Government. How are these classifications relevant in present day political system.

Answer:-

### Introduction

"Aristotle was an authority of every science."

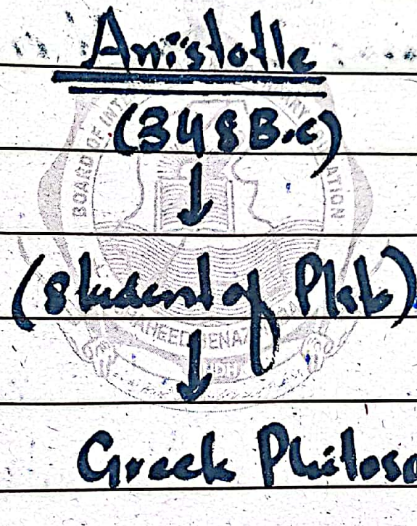
(- Midway)

Aristotle was a great philosopher. He gave the classification of different forms of the state. However, Aristotle's classification of government is quite relevant in today's political system. Therefore, Aristotle's classification of government was a modern form of the state.

2- life of Aristotle: a brief account

"Aristotle was a great student of Plato." (Meckey)

Aristotle was born in 348 B.C. He was a student of Plato. In fact, he was inspired by teachings of Plato. Therefore, Aristotle was a great Greek philosopher.



### 3- Aristotle's classification of the government

"Aristotle presented separate categories of different forms of government" (Meckey)



Aristotle's classification of government was as follows:

| Number of rulers | Good form   | Bad form  |
|------------------|-------------|-----------|
| One              | monarchy    | tyranny   |
| few              | aristocracy | oligarchy |
| many             | polity      | democracy |

a) Good versus bad: Monarchy versus tyranny

A government by one person can be as good or as bad. In fact, when there is lack of self-interest, it is monarchy. But with the passage of time with inclusion of self-interest monarchy was changed into tyranny.

Without self-interest, good form of government is known as monarchy

and with self-interest,  
 'it turns as bad  
 form, tyranny.'  
 (-Aristotle)

Therefore, government by one  
 person can be good or bad.

b) Good versus bad: Aristocracy versus  
 oligarchy

A government with few  
 people can also be as good  
 or as bad. With the passage of  
 time self-interested tyranny is  
 changed into aristocracy.

"Government by few people  
 without self-interest  
 can be termed as  
 aristocracy."

(-Aristotle)

Later, aristocracy is converted into  
 oligarchy as:

"But, with self-interest  
 aristocracy is changed



... into oligarchy." (-Aristotle)

Therefore, a government with few people can also be as good or as bad.

c) Good versus bad: Polity versus democracy

A government is also formed by as many people as good or as a best form.

Similarly above, oligarchy lose its shape into polity.

"Oligarchy when led by many people without self-interest, termed as polity."

(-Aristotle)

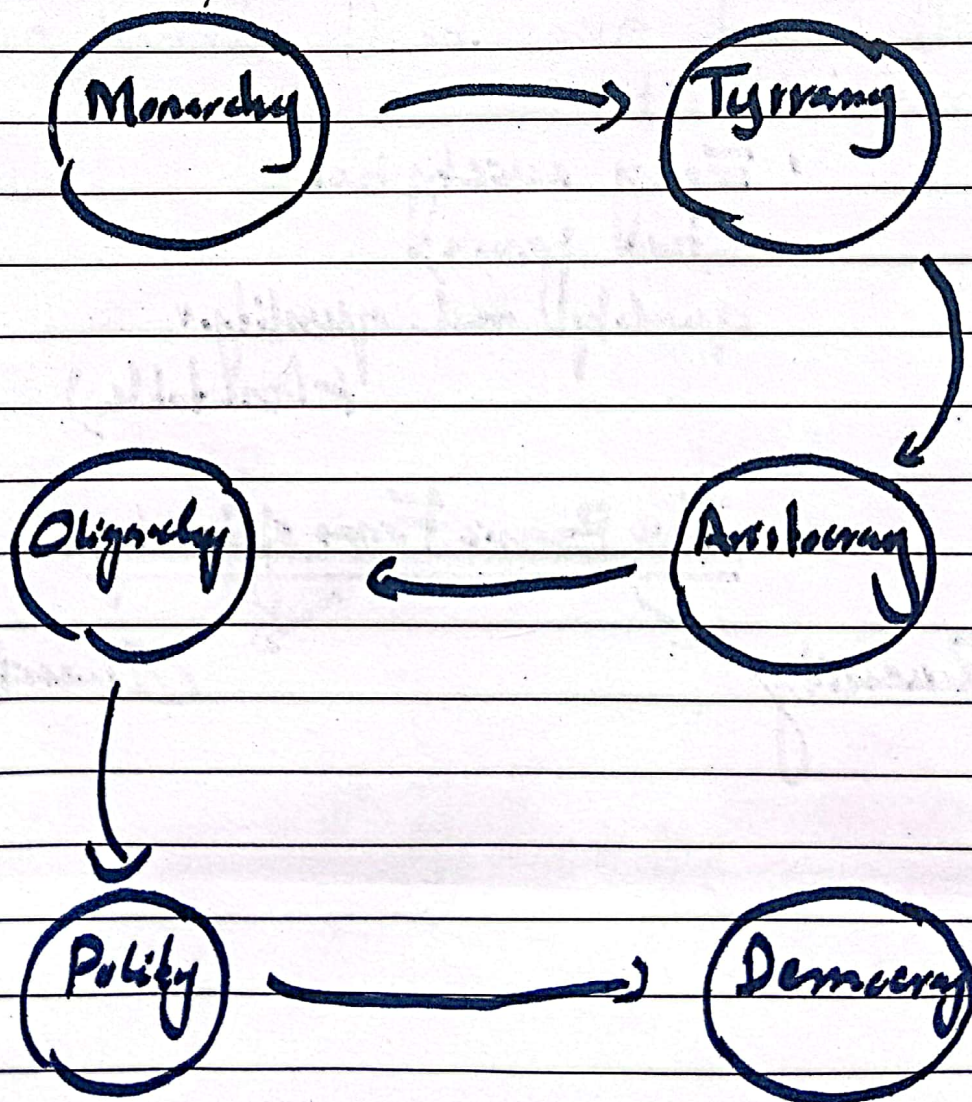
But, polity can also become democracy as.

"The government by many people with self-interest, termed

as democracy." (- Aristotle)

Therefore, Aristotle classified government into good and bad forms.

Flow Chart of Aristotle's Classification of Government

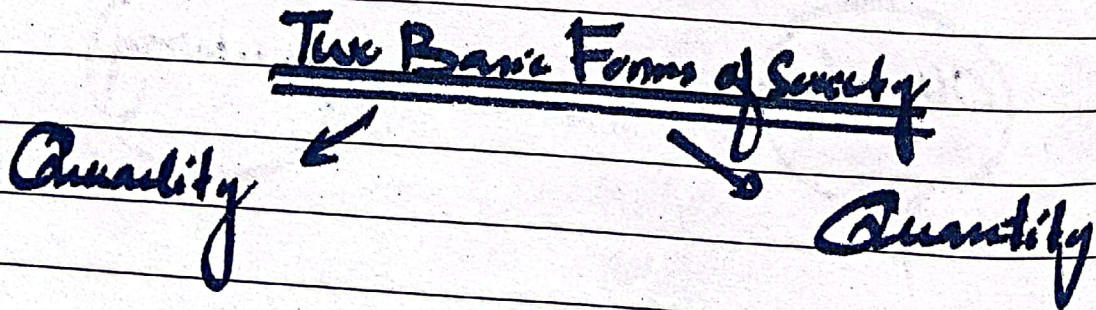


4- Aristotle's classification references with present day political system

"Society is always divided into groups."  
(-Aristotle)

Aristotle's classification begins with the order of division of society. In fact, present day political system can also be divided as Aristotle's state.

'Every society has two forms, quality and quantity.'  
(Aristotle)



a) **Social Quality** : essence of political system

Quality represents the upper class in political system formation. In fact, elites are responsible to rule.

"Quality is termed as elite group. wisdom of leaders."

(Aristotle)

Therefore, Quality has power to rule.

b) **Social Quantity** : essence as a pillar of political system

Quantity is as a pillar of political system. In fact, Quantity represents the poor

"Quantity is termed as lower class, forces framework of the state."

(-Aristotle)



Therefore, quantity drives political system.

c) Transition between Quality and quantity, Polity

Polity maintains balance between quality and quantity. In fact, it is led by the middle class who does not have influence over both.

"Polity is the balance between upper and lower class."

(- Aristotle)

Therefore, according to Aristotle, there must be balance between classes of political system.

Oligarchy  $\rightleftharpoons$  Polity  $\rightleftharpoons$  Democracy

5- Criticism on Aristotle's classification of the state  
 "Polity is the best form of government."  
 (- Aristotle)

According to Aristotle, polity is the best form of government. But, such form of government does not exist in history. Therefore, Aristotle's classification of government is unusual cyclic form.

6- Conclusion

"Aristotle was a great, but not the greatest student of Plato."

Aristotle gave a classified form of government. In fact, Aristotle's classification of government can affect today's political system. Thus, Aristotle's classification of the state was a cyclic process.