Question #2

Discuss Aristotle's classification of Constitutions. How relevant is his framework in Contemporary political system

{Solution}

Introduction

Aristotle was born in Macedonnia. His father was a physician to the King of Macedonnia. At the age of 18 he came to Athens and joined Plato's Academy. He studied there for 20 years. He was a brilliant student of Plato. He opened his own school "The lyceum".

Aristotle's classification of Constitutions

Aristotle studied the constitutions of more than 150 states before giving his concept of classification of state. He used emperical method in his study. Unlike Plato who confined himself to the ideal state, Aristotle also provided for bad states

and the art of governing them.
Aristotle classified the states
on two basis.

1) Number of people who govern
2) The manner in which they
govern.

Types of government

Aristotle provided for
following types of governments

a) Monarchy

If the government consist
of a single person who
works for the welfare of the
people, then the form of
government is Monarchy

b) Tyranny

If the government consist
of a single person who
works for his selfish
interest then the form of
government is Tyranny

c) Aristocracy

If the government consist
of few people who work
for the welfare of the masses

then the form of government is Aristocracy

Oligarchy

If the government consist of few who works for their own selfish purpose. then the form of government is oligarchy.

Polity

If the government consist of many who works for the welfare of the masses, then the form of government is polity.
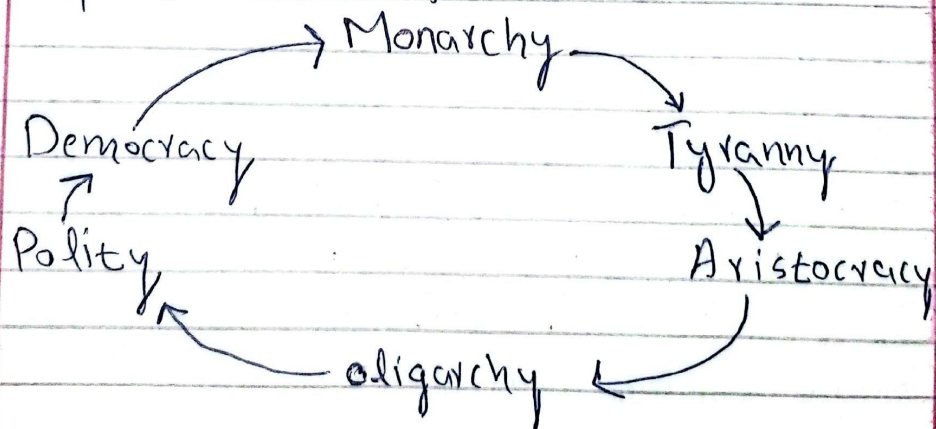
Democracy

If the government consist of many who work for their own selfish interest, then the form of government is Democracy. It may be noted that Aristotle's concept of democracy is different from our modern concept of democracy.

Aristotle's classification of government can be summarized in the table as follows:-

Number of People who rule	Pure form	Corrupted forms
a) A single Person	Monarchy	Tyranny
b) A few	Aristocracy	Oligarchy
c) Many	Polity	Democracy

Aristotle believes that a single monarch rules. When that monarch becomes corrupt, he is overthrown by a few people and aristocracy is established. When these few people become corrupt, they are overthrown by many and the form of government becomes polity. These many people are overthrown and a single person comes to power, thus again establishing monarchy. This whole cycle repeats itself

Relevance in Contemporary Political System

In today's political system Monarchy is still present in countries like Saudia Arabia. Aristocracy is present in countries like China with one party rule. However, Aristotle's concept of democracy is inconsistent with modern democracy. His classification of States is relevant to some extend in our Contemporary political system.

Criticism of the philosophy?
Conclusion?