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(POLITICAL SCIENCE)

Q. Explain Bentham's greatest happiness of the greatest number. (20 marks)

Ans

1)

INTRODUCTION

Bentham was a British philosopher, economist, and jurist. He was the proponent and founder of the concept of Utilitarianism, which means the greatest happiness of the greatest number. His concept of Utilitarianism is described in his book 'Introduction to the Principle of morals and legislation.' He built his idea of utility through getting influenced by David Hume and Priestley. His utility concept although has numerous significance but has certain limitations as well.

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2) BACKGROUND; BENTHAM; A PROponent OF THE UTILITARIANISM

Bentham was the founder and proponent of utilitarianism. It means the actions of humans are justified if they promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number of the people. He was influenced by David Hume and Priestley and consequently, they led him to build his own concept of utility.

3) BENTHAM'S THEORY OF UTILITY; THE GREATEST HAPPINESS OF THE GREATEST NUMBER

3.1; Pleasure and Pain as sovereign masters;

Bentham said that the pleasure and pain are two sovereign masters. They govern the actions of all human beings. All actions of humans either being pain or pleasure.

3.2) Measurement of pleasure and Pain;

Furthermore, he believes that the pleasure and pain can be measured by using Felicific calculus. According to him, the pleasure and pain can be measured by following seven factors (1) Intensity, (2) Duration, (3) Nearness, (4) Fecundity, (5) purity, (6) Extensiveness and (7) certainty.

3.3) Object of human actions;

According to him Bentham, the object of human actions is to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. Thus good and bad are the products of pleasure and pain. An action is good if it adds up the sum total of pleasure and it is bad if it adds up the sum total of pain.

3.4) Bentham's theory of utilitarianism on State and Government.

(i) Formation of state; The state is formed if some members of the

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group habitually obey others due to utility, and form political societies.

Thus the purpose of the state is to promote and maintain the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

(ii) Rejection of social contract; Bentham rejected that state is formed by the social contract. Rather he argued that it is formed due to habit born of utility. Thus, people obey state due to their interests not due to the contract.

(iii) End of the State; He says that the end of the state is to promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number of its people. Therefore, the purpose of state is not to develop personality of its people but to promote interests of its people.

(iv) He supported the democratic state; It entailed that the purpose of the state is to promote individuals interests.

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Thus, an state should be democratic where all should be equal and have access direct access in state's affairs for to promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

(v) Right to revolt: Furthermore, he says that the citizens can revolt if the state does not perform its functions to promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

(vi) Legislation and utility: He supports the idea that the legislators must know about the principle of utility. They must adopt a legislation if it maximize the pleasure of the people and vice versa.

(vii) Reconciliation between individual's interest and community's interests: He believes that human by nature is selfish. Thus sometimes, the individual interests come in conflict with community's interests.

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Thus it is necessary to balance between these two.

- (viii) Ignorance of the public opinion;
It says that the duty of the government should be to promote public interests i.e. the greatest happiness of the greatest number. And it has to ignore public opinion for that reason.

4)

CRITICISM

Bentham's concept of utility is criticized as it supports materialism and neglects the moral sense. Because his bad and good are calculable values. Moreover, happiness is not dependent on state. His concept is the theoretical one because there is no practical mechanism to attain these happiness.

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Bentham's theory of utilitarianism

- Pain and pleasure as masters
object of human actions
to maximize pleasure
and minimize pain.
- utilitarianism as the
greatest happiness of the
greatest number.
- End of state and
government is to promote
individual interests.
- He supported democratic
form of state and
government.
- He rejected social
contract as the basis
for state's formation.

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5)

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the concept of utilitarianism which is supported by Bentham supports the utility of the actions. It means all the actions of humans are supposed to maximize good and pleasure and to minimize pain. Despite its significance, Bentham's theory of utility is criticized for several reasons.
