

INTRODUCTION

From Greek philosophy to Renaissance all philosophers and thinkers dealt with the end of the state. They thought that the political power of the state would be used as a means to achieve further end. All political thinkers from Plato, Aristotle to the Middle age (till 16th century) had concerned itself with the central question of the end of the state and had considered state-power as a means to a higher end conceived in moral terms. But Machiavelli adopted a quite different line. To him the power of the state is the end of the state. i.e. Every state must aim at maximizing its power. The failure of the state in this enterprise will throw it into great turmoil. Consequently, he confined his attention to the means best suited to the acquisition, retention and expansion of power.

MACHIAVELLI'S THEORY OF POLITICAL POWER

State is highest form of human association. It is indispensable for the promotion of human welfare. State is to be worshipped even by sacrificing the individual for the interest of the state. A ruler must remember that whatever brings success is due to power. For acquiring political power he can use any type of means. Political statesman plays important role in organizing state, and providing it with safety and security. Hence the major theme of the „Prince“ is the process of acquiring power. Modern power politics cannot be thought of without any reference to Machiavelli and his book „The Prince“.

1.4 “THE PRINCE” AND THE CENTRAL THEME OF PRINCE

“The discourses” and “The art of war” were Machiavelli's famous books. It contains analysis of body politics. “The Prince” is a handbook on the “Art of government” and “State craft”. Hence it is said that „The Prince“ is not an academic work on political-science but it is a book on the art of governance. It is in the form of advice and addressed to any ruler.

1.5 WHY MACHIAVELLI JUSTIFIED FOR A POWERFUL STATE

1) He acquired practical experience of politics of his time. He was born in Florence, Italy in 1469 in a well-to-do family, when Prince Medici was at the height of his power. At the age of 25, he entered the government service as a clerk chancery. Within a very short period he was appointed as an ambassador, After that he became secretary of the king. Thus he acquired practical experience of politics. His administrative and political experience determined his views about politics.

2) Machiavelli lived in Renaissance Italy and was greatly influenced by the new spirit of Renaissance. The intellectual awakening injected rational scientific approach in every sphere of human life, renaissance replaced the faith by reason. Italy was the leader of Renaissance, the most modern and urbanized country of Europe. But in Italy the wealth, intellect and artistic achievements were accompanied by moral degradation and political chaos. The worst aspect of the period during which Machiavelli lived was the rampant corruption and selfishness among the Italian rulers and the church officials Machiavelli represents the culture which was undergoing a period of deep political crisis. Italy consisted of a very large number of small but independent states. Some of these states like Florence and Venice were republics, while others were ruled by despots. Internally these states were the home of fierce political rivalries and personal ambition and externally they were involved in a constant struggle with one another. This political division of Italy and the struggle between the states made the country weak and a prey for the ambitions of the powerful neighbouring states of France, Prussia and Spain. France invaded Italy and defeated the Medici rulers. Machiavelli was witness to this tragedy. It was out of this traumatic experience, that made Machiavelli conclude that unless Italy was united under a strong central government, the country would always remain under the threat of conquest and annexation by neighbouring countries.

3.) Suggested remedies on the plight of Italy Machiavelli was a true patriot, thinking on the plight of Italy and to find remedies for this. He suggested a strong and unscrupulous prince for the Italy. He did not recommend the republican form of government for Italy, as it presupposes virtuous, honest and patriotic citizens, whereas the sixteenth century Italians were corrupt and selfish. Hence Machiavelli suggested a strong and powerful ruler for Italy.

4.) Machiavelli was not interested in idealistic conception of the state. His chief interest was concentrated in the unity of body politic and power. He adopted an empirical method. He seriously studied the past-from 4th century to 15th century of the medieval age. This age was characterized by the Feudal state. In this order king divided his dominions into many parts. Each part granted to a noble or tenant chief. There were no common laws and central authority. In short feudal system was a confusion. Out of this confusion church emerged as the superior authority. Result was continuous conflict between the spiritual and temporal authorities. Pope claimed superiority over all the princes. State (civil authority) was merely the police department of the church. Thus a true national life could not grow in such a

system. He X-rayed the entire Italian society. The feudalism and the church not only destroyed the identity and importance of the state, but the state was considered sub-ordinate. But Machiavelli completely divorced religion from politics. He broke the medieval tradition that the political authority is under the control of church. He made the state totally independent of the church by saying that the state has its own rules of conduct to follow, state is highest, supreme and autonomous. He said the state is superior to all associations in the human society. He rejected the feudal system and propounded all powerful central authority, who is supreme over all institutions. The central theme of Machiavelli's as an essential ingredient of politics. According to him moral code of individual prescribed by the church cannot provide guidelines to the ruler. According to Machiavelli a ruler must remember that whatever brings success is due to power. For acquiring political power he can use any type of Means. He said politics is a constant struggle for power. All politics is power politics.

6.) For Machiavelli absolute state was the End; and for this Means was power. He said the sole aim of the „Prince“ was to make the country strong and united, establish peace and order and expel the foreign invader. To achieve this end any means would be satisfactory.

ADVISE TO THE PRINCE ABOUT STATECRAFT

Thus from above reasons Machiavelli's "The Prince" is in the form of advice given to a ruler on the state craft. Some significant aspects of the advise to the ruler are as follows:

1. Machiavelli elaborates the doctrine of „Raison D "Etat".
2. End justifies the Means.
3. State is sovereign, autonomus and non-religious.
4. A prince must combine the qualities of a lion and a fox.
5. Use a double standard of morality.
6. Favour despotic rule.
7. Maintain strong army.
8. Human nature is low and ungrateful, so Prince must consider this nature of man.
9. He should win the popularity of his people must not touch the property of the people.
10. A prince must have council of wise men and not of flatterers.
11. Separate politics from religion.
12. Remain free from emotions

1. Machiavelli elaborates the doctrine of Raison D "Etat":
It means „Reason of state“. It implies actions and policies promoting safety and security of the state. Because the state must preserve itself before it promotes the welfare of its people. For preserving and safeguarding itself all means adopted by the state are justified by Machiavelli. According to him in politics, one is guided by the harsh realities of political life which is a struggle for power and survival. The actions of the state must be judged only on the basis of „Raison D „Etat“. i.e. the prince in preserving and safeguarding this type of state all means adopted by the state are justified. Prince should give priority to power. Morality and ethics have different spheres. It cannot be mingled with the reason of the state. To a prince power of state is of supreme importance. Self sufficiency of the state means the state will have its own army, a strong and unified government, unity and integrity among the people and solid economic foundation.

2. End justifies the Means:

It is a very famous statement of Machiavelli which he justified for the “Reason of state”. He assumed that state is highest form of human association. State is to be worshipped like a deity even by sacrificing the individual. A ruler must remember that whatever brings success and power is virtuous even cunningness, shuredness is justified.

Politics is the most precarious game. It can never be played in a decent and orderly manner.

The state has some primary objectives and responsibilities like protection of life, maintenance of law and order and looking after wellbeing of its members. Hence state must have adequate means at its disposal.

3. State is sovereign, autonomus and non-religious:

Machiavelli said the state is superior to all associations in the human society. It is sovereign and is autonomous, Moral and religious considerations cannot bind the prince. He is above and outside the morality. He can use religion to realize his ends. Religion cannot influence politics and the church cannot control the state. In fact sovereign state enjoys absolute power over all individuals and institutions. State is must necessary of all institutions. It stands on a wholly different footing and therefore be judged by different standards. State power is the end and religion is its organ and instrument. Nothing is unearthy in the state, State came into being to satisfy material interests of the people. He divorced politics from theology and government from religion. He

did not view the state as having a moral end and purpose but gave importance to man's worldly life. He said politics is an independent activity with its own principles and laws.

4. A prince must combine the qualities of a lion and a fox: Machiavelli advised the prince he should imitate the qualities of fox and lion. The imitation of the fox (cunningness, foresight) will enable him to visualize his goal and means to achieve it. The fact that he had witnessed anarchy, lawlessness, corruption and misrule that prevailed in Italy of his times. He had witnessed how king Charles VIII of France had captured Florence without being offered resistance. Therefore Machiavelli advocated a well-organised, ordered and militarily strong state. Without a strong state, any country had no hope of survival in international politics. He believed that an ordered state was the only security against forces of external aggression and internal chaos.

1.7 EVALUATION OF MACHIAVELLI'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

1.7.1 Merits or Contributions:

- 1) Laid the foundation of modern political thought – Machiavelli is regarded as the founder of modern political thought-
- 1) He is the first exponent of power-politics.
- 2) He is the first who put the theory of nation states.
- 3) He was the first thinker who separated religion from politics and justified secular state.
- 4) He is responsible for the growth of modern nationalism.
- 5) He was the first advocate of autonomy for the state.
- 6) Put forward the concept of supreme, sovereign state and justified all powerful central authority.
- 7) State is an end i.e. survival of the state is the central theme.
- 8) Gave a great insight for Art of Government and modern diplomacy.

Machiavelli contributed new political thoughts to political theory and brought a new awakening in political field. He is called the child of renaissance or child of his time. Hence modern power politics cannot be thought of without any reference to Machiavelli and his book „Prince“.

- 2) Guide for the Rulers:
Machiavelli's advice was followed by Cromwell and

Napoleon. Machiavelli's emphasis upon absolute power and authoritarian rule is the source of fascist movement. „Prince“ was a textbook for authoritarian rulers. It is like a guide for the rulers for ruling the state or statecraft.

3) The most revolutionary aspect of the prince:

From Greek philosophy to renaissance all philosophers and thinkers dealt with the „End“ of the state. They thought that the political power of the state would be used as „Means“ to achieve further „End“. But Machiavelli adopted a quite different line to him the power of the state is the „End“ of the state. i.e. every state must aim at maximizing its power. The failure of the state in this enterprise will throw it into great turmoil.

1.7.2 Criticism:

1) Machiavelli suggested power politics is the Means and authoritarian absolute state is the End. This thought of Machiavelli leads to absolutism and narrow nationalism. Power politics cannot be End, it will lead to autocracy and war.

2) Machiavelli ignored individualism i.e. individual liberty, equality, justice etc. He sacrificed individual at the alter of the state

3) One sided views of human nature – In view of Machiavelli men are universally bad. This is really a very one sided view of human nature. He ignores the fact that much of civilization is based on the social and co-operative instincts of men.

4) Materialism is the product of Renaissance and politics. Power and wealth are its central concepts. Morality and idealism became less important. According to Machiavelli politics and power are instruments for strengthening and unifying a state. Hence Machiavelli separated politics from religion. Traditionally aim was salvation. According to Machiavellian thought sole aim of prince is the unification and welfare of the state showed reality of practical politics stressed on Rationality Machiavelli's thought was based on empirical reality. It looks at and treats political problems in a realistic manner. He explained the practical aspects of politics. He keenly observed the affairs of the state and interstate rivalries. From his observation he deduced that the powerful government and internal unity were the essential of any state. Hence, he recommended constant military preparedness for the preservation of the state. Thus Machiavelli's writings were free from the abstract ideals and based on facts. He inspired scientific study of politics. Modern scientificism of the American political scientists and empirical

studies based on facts bear a close relationship to the pragmatism of Machiavelli.

5) Utility of war: The sole aim of the prince is to be an expert in managing and organizing a war. Because it is the only way of increasing power. Power is the only reason of the state. Thus Machiavelli justified utility of wa

MACHIAVELLI ON ETHICS, RELIGION AND POLITICS

Till the 15th century i.e. in medieval period state was working under the dominance of church and religion. There were conflict between the state and the church for power. In that church was aggressive.

Before Machiavelli Aristotle separated politics from philosophy and gave a separate status to political science as a subject.

But Machiavelli completely divorced religion from politics and tried to subordinate religion to the state. He repudiated the theory of Aquinas that man needs the guidance of the divine law. Machiavelli said that only end which man can place before himself is the pursuit of his wellbeing in his life i.e. material values. State came into being to satisfy material needs.

He differentiated between public and private morality- Plato and Aristotle believed in moral nature and ethical ends of the state but Machiavelli completely disregarded this view of the state.

According to him there is vital difference between the ruler and the citizens. He insisted that morality is essential for people. Only moral citizens willingly obey laws of the state and sacrifice their lives for their nation. But morality is not necessary for the ruler. He is the creator of law and morality hence he is above the both. A ruler has primary duty of preserving the state. He may use instruments of lie, conspiracy, killings, etc. for the state. He said absolute morality is neither possible nor desirable in politics. e.g. A corrupt state cannot be reformed without heavy dose of violence. Must corrupt and degenerated people need a shock therapy to revive it.

Machiavelli does not ignore religion and morality. He wants to use the religion and church as an instrument for creating national customs and habits for creating national thought which will help the state in preserving peace and order and maintaining the stability of society. Prince must preserve the purity of all religious observances and treat them with proper reverence. Common religion creates a sense of unity among people. Decline of respect for religion among the people is a sign of ruin for the state