
UNIT 4 THEORIES OF STATE

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

The state, being the basic concept of Political Science, has its own significance. Numerous definitions of the state have appeared since the days of the ancient Greeks. There are, in fact, as many meanings of the state as there are theorists who venture to define it. That the state is an association with population, definite territory, administration/government and sovereignty is a meaning which all liberals give to the state. That it is an instrument in the hands of the economically dominant class which exploits the have-nots, an executive committee, as Marx had said of the capitalistic system, of the bourgeoisie to oppress the proletariat. The anarchists, the social democrat, the Gandhians have their own different perspectives of the state. Thus, different meanings have been given to **state** by different political philosophies. There also are different theories with regard to the origin of the state; so also are different theories with regard to its nature and functions. To understand the concept of state in its totality is to know it from all perspectives.

4.2 MEANING OF THE CONCEPT OF STATE

4.2.1 Etymology of the concept 'State'

The fact of the existence of the state is older than its name. The state as a word 'Stato' appeared in Italy in the early part of the sixteenth century, in the writings of Machiavelli

(1469-1527). The meaning of the state in the sense of body-politics became common in England and France in the later part of the sixteenth century. The word *staatnkunst* became the German equivalent of *ragione de state* during the seventeenth century and a little later the word *staatsrecht* got the meaning of *jus publiceem*. Thus came the use of the word *State*.

The word 'State' has its origin in the Latin word 'Statue' which means 'standing' or 'position' of a person or a body of persons. The Latin 'status', Ernest Barker tells us, gave three English words: (i) 'estate', in the sense of a 'standing' or 'position' in regard to some form of property (ii) 'Estate', using the word in the primary sense of a grade or rank in the system of the social standing or position belonging to such grade or rank and (iii) 'State', i.e., stateliness vested in one person or some body of persons ... primarily a peculiar standing, of a kind which was political and of a degree in that kind which was superior or supreme. The word 'State' came to be understood, during the 16th-17th centuries and even down to the last days of the 18th century, some what identical with the terms 'sovereign', or/and 'king'. No wonder if Louis XIV said, 'I am the State'. And to this context, Barker adds, "Was he (Louis XIV) not in his own view, as in that of his subjects, the person who enjoyed the 'State' and position of being the supreme political authority, and was he not therefore 'the state'?"

The use of the word *polis* in ancient Greece or the word '*res publica*' in ancient Rome or the word 'commonwealth', 'Commonweal' during the medieval age in the West do not clearly and definitely contain in themselves the idea of *stateliness*, i.e., sovereign political position of a person or a body of persons. This is why these words '*polis*', '*res publica*', 'commonweal' meant much more than the pressure of the rulers. These meant, in fact, the whole body of people living on a territory, the rulers forming only one part, though prominent indeed. *It was only in the writings of Machiavelli and the theorists after him that the word 'state' came in vogue, defining not only the position of the ruler in regard to his subjects, but also the degree of the position the ruler eventually came to obtain.* During the later part of the 18th century and the larger part of the 19th century, emphasis came to be laid, owing largely due to the efforts of the jurists in England and France on the internal supremacy and external independence of the sovereign authority. As democracy, in the form of franchise, came to be associated with liberal-capitalistsystem, the concept of the State was itself liberalised to include the great body of people residing in it. Barker pointed out, "*The State is now whole community; the whole legal association; the whole of the juridical organisation. This is democracy, or a result of democracy; we must henceforth think of the state as ourselves; and we must henceforth give the name of 'government' to the authority before called 'state'.*"

4.2.2 State as the political Ptilosophers know it

A glance at the various definitions of the State by thinkers of the past and present shows as to how they have looked at this concept. Plato (428/17 – 348/7 B.C.) found the state as a system of relationship in which everyone does one's own business and where the rulers seek to maintain these relationships. Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), Plato's disciple, defines the state as an 'association of households and villages sharing a life of virtue, and aiming at an end which consists in perfect and self-completeexistence'. Cicero (106-43 B.C.), a jurist of ancient Rome, speaks of the state as 'the people' affairs ... who are united by a common agreement about law and rights and by the desire to participate in mutual advantage'. With the beginning of the modern age, we have Machiavelli (1469-1527) who regards the state as an end in itself existing for its own preservation and for its own advantage. Jean Bodin (1530-1596) defines the state as a 'lawful' government of several households, and of their common possessions, with sovereign powers. Thomas Hobbes

(1588-1679) speaks of the state as a power which gives people 'their own preservation and a more contented life thereby'. John Locke (1632-1704) says: 'The great and chief end, therefore, of men's uniting into commonwealth, and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property'. Bentham (1748-1832) considers the state as a means for attaining the greatest happiness of the greatest number' and for this, he specifies four subordinate ends of the government: abundance, subsistence, equality and security. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) regards the state as a committee of management which has no intrinsic authority beyond the ethical sanction bestowed on it by the consent of the citizens. Rousseau (1712-1778) speaks of the State, saying: 'This public person, so formed by the union of all other persons, formerly took the name of *city* and now takes that of *Republic* or *'body-politics'*'; it is called by its members *State* when passive, *sovereign* when active, and *Power* when compared with others like itself'. Edmond Burke (1729-1793) defines the state as 'a partnership in all science, a partnership in all arts, a partnership in every virtue and in all perfection... a partnership not only between those who are living, but those who are dead, and those who are to be born.' Hegel (1770-1831) considers the state "as a divine and moral entity which alone is capable of bestowing all spiritual reality." John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) regards the state a "positive instrument which helps the individual achieve progress and enjoy liberty." Thomas Hill Green (1836-1882) defines the state as 'a body of persons, recognized by each other as having rights, and possessing certain institutions for the maintenance of those rights.' Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Frederick Engels (1820-1895) regard the state as the political organisation of the class dominant in economy whose purpose is to safeguard the existing order. The elitists emphasise the rule of the few over many as the only fact of history whereas the pluralists regard the state as a political association responsible for the establishment of social order in the society. The fascists idealise the state and believe that through it any glory can be achieved. The syndicalists and the anarchists doubt the very worth of the state and the latter aspire a free order without political enslavement and economic exploitation. Evolutionary socialism seeks to introduce socialism through the state, regarding the state as an agency for bringing about reforms.

4.2.3 What constitutes a State?

The state has included, from the beginning, a reference to a land and a people. Reference of these, to the terms such as 'country', 'nation', 'society', 'any association', are also very common. The state, one must be sure, is neither a 'country' nor a 'nation' nor even a 'society'. The territorial state is a country in the same sense as is the independent country, a state. When we speak of the country we enter into the domains of soil, seasons, climate, boundaries, in short all geography. So we find the word 'country' in a typically geographical sense. The word 'state' and the country is essentially a political concept. Every state is a country, but unless a country is not independent, it is not a state. A people living on a territory with a high degree of unity among the people may or may not be a state. If that body of people is sovereign, it is a state and if it is under the control of any people, it is not. Unity in the state is sought on grounds of emotional feelings and their oneness while in the state unity is sought through laws. A nation is an external and eternal unity; a state is an external union. There may be more than one state in a nation. Sabine says, '*... nation refers to a unity of culture; a feeling of loyalty for a common land, common language and literature, identity of history and common heroes and common religion... State, on the other hand, refers to a unity of legal and political authority.*' The state is not a society, not even the form of society as MacIver says: it is, according to him, an association which regulates the outstanding external relationship of men in society. The state Barker points out, is a political association, possesses the legal right of using

force. So considered, the state would imply: (a) that it is a politico-legal body responsible for the enforcement and maintenance of law and order (b) that it is supreme over all associations from within and is independent of any control from outside and (c) that it alone has the monopoly of exercising coercive force.

The state is found in its elaborate system. It is found in those institutions which create laws and which enforce them, i.e., legislative, executive and judicial institutions: the government. It is found in the bureaucratic institutions which are attached to every executive ministry. It is found in the institutions which are called into operations when its will is threatened, i.e., in military and police. The state is what the sum-total of these institutions is. Ralph Miliband writes: *"These are the institutions: the government, the administration, the military and the police, the judicial branch, sub-central government and parliamentary assemblies – which make up the state."* In these institutions lies the state power; through these institutions comes the law of the state and from them spring the legal right of using the physical force.

That is what the state is today. It is a system rightly called as the political system by the post-war Americans, David Easton, Almond and Powell, and Dahl. It is a system which has in it formal and informal political institutions; small and large industrial houses; cultural and religious organisations etc. It is a system of interactions through which, as Easton had said, 'authoritative allocation of values' is made.

From the hour of its birth, the state has acted as a means, favouring some and frightening others, remaining always in the hands of those who control it. Laski writes: 'That there is a bias in state operations will be denied by no one who scrutinizes the historical evidence. The Greek city-state was biased against the slave. The Roman Empire was biased against the slave and the poor. States in the medieval world were biased in favour of the owners of landed property. Since the Industrial Revolution, the state has been biased in favour of the instruments of production as against those who have nothing but their labour power to sell.' To complete Laski's argument, one may add that the socialist state is biased in favour of the workers. The justification of the state, one should remember, lies in its capacity as an attendant. If the state operates in the interests of its masters, it is a sufficient testimony that the servant is faithful.

4.3 THEORIES REGARDING THE ORIGIN OF THE STATE

Numerous theories with regard to the origin of the state are offered. These include the divine origin theory, the force theory, the patriarchal/materialistic theories, the social contract theory, the evolutionary/historical theory, and the Marxian theory. Notable among these and ones which are being discussed are the social contract theory, the historical/evolutionary theory and the Marxian theory relating to the origin of the State.

4.3.1 The Social Contract Theory

A clear-cut and elaborate expression of the social contract theory of the origin of the state is associated with Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, both from England of the 17th century and Rousseau, from France of the 18th century. The theory holds that the state is the result of man's deliberate intentions expressed through a contract/agreement concluded in a pre-civil and pre-political period, called the state of nature. The theory, therefore, assumes that there existed a time when there was no state and that people lived in the state of nature, meaning thereby a

situation when people lived without law, without authority and without government. Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau classified the human society living in two eras: the era of the state of nature, and the era of political society/state. They all say that the contract for having the state was concluded by the people in the state of nature. It was after the conclusion of the contract that people left the state of nature and entered into political society. Contract, therefore, is the dividing line. What the three philosophers, i.e., the contractualists, convey to us is that in the state of nature, men lived without authority and that in that state of nature, they felt the need of the state, state's necessity and, therefore, the contract among them and state's appearance after the contract. It is after the appearance of the state that the distinction between the ruler and the ruled could be made; and the emphasis on state authority or powers of the state came to be laid. There is no agreement among the contractualists on various issues. For example, what was the state of nature, how was the condition of man, why the contract was made, what was the nature of contract, what type of state appeared after the contract – are questions on which the contractualists differed drastically. On what they were to agree is that there was a kind of law in the state of nature, called the natural law; men did possess natural rights. *But with regard to the outcome of the contract, Hobbes propounded an omnipotent state, i.e., absolute sovereignty; Locke advocated a limited state, i.e., political sovereignty; Rousseau talked about a democratic state based on his theory of general will, i.e., popular sovereignty,*

The social contract theory has been condemned by critics on grounds of bad history, bad law and bad philosophy. It was a bad history in so far as there is no proof of the conclusion of the contract ever been made. It was a bad law in so far as the contract once made was irrevocable – permitted entrance and prohibited exit. A one-way traffic sort of contract and therefore, legally invalid. It was a bad philosophy in so far as political consciousness can never be the result of any one moment as the contractualists make us believe so.

The importance of the social contract theory however, cannot be overlooked, at least on two grounds: (1) it served as the basis for modern democracy by declaring the state as the product of people's consent (2) it condemned the divine origin theory as obsolete and provided an alternative theory of the origin of the state.

4.3.2 The Historical/Evolutionary Theory

The historical/evolutionary theory of the origin of the state, also the liberal theory of the origin of the state, is more or less a correct explanation as to how the state originated. According to it, the state is a historical growth or the result of gradual evolution. It is a continuous development, always in the process of evolution. Burgers rightly puts the point: *"It (the state) is the gradual realization ... of the universal principles of the human nature. It is futile to seek to discover just one cause which will explain the origin of all states. The state must have come into existence owing to a variety of causes, some operating in one place and some in other places. Whatever it is, the State is not the deliberate creation of man any more than language is a conscious invention. Political consciousness must have taken a very long time to develop and the primitive state must have grown with the development of this consciousness."* Garner also argued: "The state is neither the handiwork of God, nor the result of superior physical force, nor the creation of the compact, or a mere expansion of the families. It is the product of a gradual process of social development out of grossly imperfect beginnings.' 'Like every other social institution', Gettell says, 'the state arose from many sources and under various conditions and it emerged almost imperceptibly.'

The factors responsible for the gradual formation of the state include: (i) social instinct, the instinct which compels man to live in the society, without which he is either a beast or a god, and the one through which man is able to develop his faculties (ii) kinship or blood relationship. MacIver said: 'Kinship creates society, and society, in turn, creates state'. It was the most important bond of union. But it alone was not the factor which led to the formation of the state. People had developed a common consciousness, common interest and common purpose, kin-relationship, must have, with great difficulty, given place to social relationship (iii) Religion is said to be another important factor in the creation of social consciousness. Gettell says that kinship and religion were simply two aspects of the same thing. Common worship was even more essential than kinship in accustoming early man to authority and discipline and in developing a keen sense of social solidarity and cohesion. (iv) Force might not have been the sole factor in the making of a state, but it cannot be denied that it must have contributed its worth in making and expanding the state as one factor. Force translates weakness into subjugation; subjugation into unity, and unity into strength (v) Economic activities too played an important role in the formation of the state as another factor. These led to the rules and procedures relating to production, exchange, distribution and consumption together with the property rights as enacted through laws at a subsequent stage of development. (vi) Another potent factor in the development of the state is political consciousness. As a term, political consciousness means many things put together. Love for the land where people reside; desire to protect the land; need for order and protection; social relationship; promoting political relationship; feeling that the territory be expanded; wars and conquests; powers and struggles for power, the triumph of the political idea of power; and loyalty towards the system. All these grow and evolve with time: the political organisation, the state's roots gaining strength and the beginnings, shaping and reshaping into the complex and creating sort of the state.

Gettell's argument can be put as a conclusion: *the state is 'a gradual and natural historic evolution. It is neither the gift of divine power nor the deliberate work of man. Its beginnings are lost in that shadow of past in which social institutions were consciously arising, and its development has followed the general laws of evolutionary growth.'*

4.3.3 The Marxian Theory

The best exposition of the Marxian theory of the origin of the state is given by Frederick Engels in his book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and State*. Engels says: 'The State is, therefore, by no means a power forced in society from without, just as little is it the reality of 'the ethical idea', 'the image and reality' of reason', as Hegel maintains. Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of social development: it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that is cleft into irreconcilable antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, might not continue themselves and society in sterile struggle, a power seemingly standing above society became necessary for the purpose of moderating the conflict, if keeping it within the bounds of 'older' and this power, arisen out of society, but placing itself above it and increasingly alienating itself from it, is the state.'

Engels tells us that the state is not a natural organisation. It has, he says, not existed from all eternity and there have been societies that did without it. The state became a necessity at a certain stage of social development that was a consequence of the cleavage of society into two contending classes. Accordingly, the state is the product of antagonistic classes and it is of the

economically dominant class, for its welfare and against the interests of those without means of production. The **Marxian** thesis is that with the emergence and growth of the private ownership of the means of production, antagonistic classes arose, and the state emerged for the possessing class and against the non-possessing class. Engels, therefore, concludes: *'The state is, as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class*. Thus the state of antiquity was above all, the state of the slave-owners for the purposes of holding down the slaves, as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasants, serfs and lordsmen, and the modern representative state is the instrument of exploitation of wage labour by capital'.

The major aspects of the **Marxian** theory of the origin of the state can be, briefly, summed up as under:

- 1) The state appears because the antagonistic classes appear; these classes appear because the private ownership of means of production appears.
- 2) The state is the **result of the** class society and came at a definite stage of social development.
- 3) The state, as a class institution, is of the economically dominant class, of the slave-owners, or later of the feudal lords and at present is of the capitalists.
- 4) The state means public power, the legal right to use force.
- 5) The state power works through its apparatus: bureaucracy, police, **army**, courts, jails and the like.
- 6) For the public power to work effectively and **efficiently**, the state obtains the right to tax people, raise loans, and possess property.

The **Marxian** theory of the origin of the state suffers from over simplification. That the state should have arisen as a result of class society and class antagonism and that these classes arose because of the private ownership. The means of production are not as much an explanation of the origin of the state as is an effort to project the state as a class institution and, therefore, a partisan one, exploiting the non-possessing class. That the state has been an oppressive institution, always so, is too much to believe.

4.4 DOMINANT PERSPECTIVES OF THE STATE

4.4.1 Liberal-Individualistic Perspective

The liberal-individualistic perspective of state is what can be clearly seen in the writings of political philosophers such as Locke, **Bentham**, Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, and down to those of the beginning of the twentieth century West. According to them, the general features of the state would include the following:

- I) The individual is the focal point of all activities. Being rational, he has to be the end for which all associations, including the **state**, exist. Everything exists for the individual.

- 2) Individual, being the judge of what is in his interests, should have all the rights and liberties: nothing is more important than his autonomy; his rights are inalienable; his liberties, sacred.
- 3) The state is a means to the end of the individual. Its powers are in proportion to its functions. As a means of individual's ends, it is limited, and limited in its functions and powers. It possesses powers granted to it by the individuals. The liberal individualistic state may be evil; it is a necessary evil; it exists to the extent individuals want. Its powers are not absolute and can never be absolute in the face of individual's autonomy. Through the passage of time and introduction of democracy, the liberals have expanded functions (the welfare state) and, therefore, the powers, but they have not voted for a Hobbesian Leviathan.
- 4) The state, in the liberal-individualistic perspective, is moved from its negative character to positive and from its positive institution to the welfare one, it is a reform-oriented institution. The liberals are not traditionalists to the point of conservatives, but they are also not radical to find the state afresh. They do realise the need of reforms to be made effective as and when required, they, in this sense, favour changes, incremental changes as suit the changing times.
- 5) The liberal-individualists were liberals primarily. They were liberals against the traditionalists and conservatives. Accordingly they welcomed the democratic principles as and when they made their entries. It is, in this sense that they advocated a state based on the consent of the people. There may not be much truth in the Lockean Social Contract theory, but his insistence on the contract being concluded by the society and the state (arising out of the society) clearly indicates that Locke, and after him all the liberals, thought of the state as the product of man's consent. Therefore, the liberal-democratic state is a consent state.
- 6) The liberal-individualistic perspective of state, in economic terms, being limited in its powers, was a state of the capitalists promoting trade and commerce, advocating free trade, removing tariff walls and encouraging competition. Liberalism is, as Laski once said, the political philosophy of the capitalists.

The liberal' individualistic perspective of the state overestimates the individual and conversely underestimates the potentials of the state. In its zeal to protect and promote individual in his rights, liberties and autonomy, it seeks to build a capitalistic system where the state is reduced to the position of an instrument serving the exploitative tendencies.

4.4.2 Contemporary Libertarian Perspective

The contemporary libertarian perspective of the state belongs to the period since the second world war and ranges from classical to pluralism to neo-pluralism on the one hand, and the new right liberalism to new-left liberalism on the other – all, in the broader framework of liberalism. The state's contemporary libertarian perspective can be summed up, briefly, as under.

The Classical pluralist perspective (Truman, Dahl) of the state has the following major features:

- i) The state is a place of group conflict and, therefore, is highly responsive to group pressures
- ii) Groups, with varying resources, exist in their relations of continual conflicts.
- iii) Power is an observable and dispersed phenomenon.
- iv) Groups are the bases of government, especially the potential groups and
- v) Society is not only distinct from state, but also largely non-potential.

The reformed pluralist perspective (Richardson and Jordan) of the state has the following major features:

- i) The state is fragmented and is responsive to groups but the access to the state (or government) is **differential**.
- ii) All the groups are not equal; only **privileged** groups participate in policy-making.
- iii) Power is both observable and dispersed and
- iv) Society and state get integrated into each other through potential groups.

The Pluralist elitist perspective (McFarland, McConnell, Lowi) of the state has the following features:

- i) The state is fragmented with highly resource potential groups, having a degree of access to the state. Hence, claiming a corresponding degree of state autonomy.
- ii) The potential elite group have easy access to the governmental positions, but different groups dominate in different areas.
- iii) Power is both observable as well as **unobservable**- a tendency towards the concentration of powers and
- iv) The civil society is distinct from the state but has a limited influence in it.

The neo-pluralist perspective (Lindblom) of the state has the following major features:

- i) The state is biased towards the business interests in economic policy
- ii) The business interests have a crucial role in policy-making, reducing, thus, the importance of group behaviour.
- iii) Power is **unobservable** – structural and ideological – concentrated in primary issues, dispersed in secondary ones.
- iv) There is no control over power which is concentrated in primary issues and
- v) The society is distinct from state but has a limited influence in it.

The new right libertarian (Hayek, Nozick and Rawls) has the following major features:

- i) Political life, like the economic life, is ought to be a matter of individual freedom and initiative.
- iii) There is a *laissez faire* market society with a minimal state.
- iii) The political programme of the new right libertarianism, according to David Held, includes:
 - (i) the extension of the market to more and more areas of life (ii) the creation of a state excessive involvement in economy; (iii) the curtailment of the power of certain groups and (iv) the erection of a strong government to enforce law and order.

The New left libertarian perspective (Pateman, Macpherson and Poulantzas) of the state has the following major features:

- i) All the key institutions of society, including the state, should be built on direct participation of the citizens.
- ii) The leaders of the political parties be made accountable to their respective members.
- iii) The open **institutional** system be maintained to ensure the possibility of making experiments in the system itself.
- iv) **The** poor be taken care of; open information system to be ensured.

The communitarian (Santal, Walzer, Taylor) perspective of the state ~~has~~ the following major features:

- i) The community is the source of all values. The **development** of the community depends on the values it cherishes.
- ii) Citizens, as members of the community, can obtain the higher levels of citizenship only in the state.
- iii) Politics is an on-going affair, a sort of business as usual, never ending, and is and around us.
- iv) Politics is both a source of conflict and a mode of activity.

4.4.3 Social-Democratic Perspective

The social-democratic perspective of state stands opposite to the Marxian-socialist perspective in **numerous** ways. Its various shades include evolutionary Socialism, Fabianism, Guild Socialism, Parliamentary Socialism and a type of socialism as has been propounded by Harold Laski.

We may summarise the general features, at least **major** ones, of the evolutionary-socialist perspective, briefly as under:

- 1) Complete abandonment of the idea of revolutionary methods-as a means of power, and the complete acceptance of parliamentary means.

- 2) The transformations of the socialist parties who speak only for the interests of the working class to people's parties which seek to establish general welfare.
- 3) The recognition that the definition of socialism as a social and economic ideal is inseparable from the idea of democracy; socialism has to be attained through democratic means and democratic polity has to bring about **socialism** through state legislation.
- 4) Respect for human freedom and human personality.
- 5) **A complete opposition to all types of totalitarian and authoritarian polity.**

Laski, as a social democrat, has his own perspective of the state whose major features can be stated as under:

- 1) The state, as any other association, is like other associations and as such has no special power to control them. It can, at best, coordinate their work, but it has no right to interfere in their internal functioning.
- 2) As a coordinator, the state gives leadership to other associations. Its role does not go against any other association. Like any other association, the state can also serve the people and can **become** an agency for seeking the welfare of the people.
- 3) **As a true follower of Fabianism, Laski is opposed to any change that is effected through revolution. He advocates changes in socio-political-economic structure through the laws of the democratically-constituted state.**
- 4) Laski's conception of democratic socialism is **one** where there is harmonisation of social control of economic processes with the liberty of the individual.
- 5) In his type of socialism, the state exists to fulfill the promise of socialism through a structure democratically established.
- 6) **Laski's** state is an instrument that exists for the individual. He is of the view that the state, however, important it may be, tends to exist for the protection of peoples' rights and for the promotion of a conducive atmosphere where the people can unfold their inner capacities to reach their possible heights.

4.4.4 The Marxian Perspective

The Marxian perspective of the state has the following major features:

- 1) **Societies and States are two distinct realities. The type of society explains the type of state it could have. Society furnishes the basis over which is built the superstructure, state including.**
- 2) The state is not independent of society. Those who make it, as **Hegel** really did, they create the myth of the state and make the state an illusion.

- 3) The state is a means for the fulfillment of the ends of those who control the society. The slave-owning state serves the masters; the feudal state serves the feudal lords; the capitalist state serves the capitalists, and in the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., the proletarian state serves the workers.
- 4) The state, being the product of class society and therefore, of the economically dominant class, is a partisan and a class institution. Being a partisan institution, it serves as an instrument of exploitation, exploits the economically weaker classes.
- 5) The state, being an engine of class-rule, would, in the transitional period of socialism, establish socialism and would abolish the roots of class antagonism, i.e., private property system as a means of production.
- 6) The dictatorship of proletariat is abolition of the opposing antagonistic classes; it is not the abolition of the state. The era of socialism is the era of the proletarian state which would be a bourgeois state, but without the bourgeoisie. The proletarian state is a means for establishing socialism and a means, which would end up in its own abolition, the withering away of the state.
- 7) Regarding the state as a 'parasite feeding upon and clogging the free movement of society, the state's destiny, as Marx says, is its own abolition: "The first step is the overthrow of the existing state, the bourgeois State, by revolution of the proletarian class. The next task, is the establishment of a transitional state, the proletarian dictatorship. This new state, however, is to be abolished not by the revolution, by force, but through its own withering away.

4.4.5 The Gandhian Perspective

The Gandhian (after the name of M.K. Gandhi: 1869-1948, the Father of Nation) perspective of state provides a unique blend of what it is and what it should be. Gandhiji **condemned** the state as he found it in the West and favoured a polity popularly called Ramrajya, the state he had wanted it to be.

Like all anarchists, Gandhiji nurtured distrust for all types of power, including the political power. Power, Gandhiji held, is by its very nature coercive and compulsive: it imposes, obstructs and spies; its existence means the absence of free will, of inner self and all that is eternal in the individual. In Gandhiji's own words: 'The state represents violence in **concentrated** and organised form. The individual has a soul but the state is a soulless machine; it can never wean from violence to which it owes its very existence.

But Gandhiji was not at all an anarchist. He was anarchist to the extent that he declared the state as an embodiment of force. He is, in a way, very close to the classical individualists or the New Right libertarians of our times. He advocated not a monolithic state, but a state with minimum functions, **Nozick's** minimal state. He is of the opinion that until the society becomes self-regulative and self-evolving and until the individual becomes perfect, the state would, so long, be necessary. He fully subscribes to what Theorem had advocated: that government is the best which governs the least.

To some extent, Gandhiji was nearer Marx in so far as he propounded a type of society which is **stateless** in character. Like any Marxist, Gandhiji **opposed the institution of the state as an**

instrument of oppression and exploitation; like all Marxists, he found all evils in private property; like all Marxists, he condemned the partisan state. But, at the same time, Gandhiji visualised in his Ramrajya a society without coercion and without force.

By conviction, Gandhiji was a spiritualist and to that extent, there is much what is non-materialist in Gandhiji. According to him, *real swarajya is not merely the attainment of political freedom, but much more than that. According to him, swarajya begins from the individual; it is the rule of the self, it is a matter of self-evolution and self-regulation. The real power lies with the individual; more the power advances up, more does it become 'decentralised'.* In Gandhiji's Ramrajya, the whole system, from individual to the central polity, works itself, without any imposition and without any compulsion. His Ramrajya is a state without coercion, and to that extent stateless; it is a state without the use of violence, and to that extent, free and emancipative.

4.5 SUMMARY

The concept of state is the very essence of Political Science. No wonder if some scholars regarded the State and Political Science as synonyms. As an institution, it is as old as we can go into the history. If the state, in ancient Greek, was less than the polis, and in ancient times, more than the mere government, it went into oblivion in Middle Ages and took a back seat then. With modern age, as in the West, it attained a re-birth and kept evolving to its natural heights. Vincent rightly observes: "Statehood not only represents a set of institution but also a body of attitudes, practices and codes of behaviours, in short, civility which we associate correctly with civilization".

The theories with regard to the origin of the state speak both about the origin and nature of the state with varying degrees. And in the process, highlight the views the political philosophers held. The evolutionary theory and the class-origin theory give an insight of the liberal and the Marxian views. Likewise the dominant perspectives of the state throw light as to how the concepts of the state have developed and how it is seen by the scholars.

4.6 EXERCISES

- 1) 'The social contract theory of the origin of the state is a bad history, a bad law and a bad philosophy'. Comment.
- 2) Explain and discuss the historical/evolutionary theory of the origin of the state.
- 3) Explain and discuss the Marxian Theory of the Origin of the State.
- 4) What are the dominant perspectives of the State? Explain any one such perspective.
- 5) Describe the Gandhian perspective of the modern State.