

BLOCK : I

FUNDAMENTALS OF

MODERN POLITICAL THINKERS

UNIT 1:
RENAISSANCE AND ITS IMPACT ON POLITICAL THEORY

Unit Structure :

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Meaning of Renaissance
- 1.4 Medieval period and Renaissance
- 1.5 Impact of Renaissance in different areas
- 1.6 Renaissance and Political theory
- 1.7 Summing Up
- 1.8 References and Suggested Readings

1.1 INTRODUCTION

We all are familiar with the common idea of renaissance that took place in the fields of art, culture, science and technology and literature in the 14th to 16th centuries. It brought changes in political and economic structure of Italy which resulted in major transformations in Europe. Literally renaissance stands for rebirth. Thus, renaissance that took place in Europe signifies revival and rediscovery of rational, secular, scientific spirit as well as thinking. It touched all the fields of knowledge and there was overall revival in different fields like philosophy, religion, art, literature, politics and science.

In Europe, renaissance brought major transformation in the socio-political lives too. By ending feudal order, renaissance laid the foundation for a new social order. In the political area, it helped in the rise of strong central governments while in the economic field it witnessed flourishing of economy based on commerce and agriculture. In this unit we are discussing about renaissance and its impact on political theory. Reading of this unit will help you to analyse impact of renaissance in different areas and renaissance and Political theory.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

Before the advent of modern period, there was Renaissance in Europe

which brought many changes in the social, cultural, political lives of the people. The Renaissance has brought unprecedented changes in the socio-political and cultural lives of the people. It is also known as ‘the awakening’. This unit discusses how renaissance marks a discontinuation from the Medieval period in all spheres of lives. Further this unit also attempts to discuss the meaning of renaissance and its impact on different spheres of lives. Moreover, this unit aims at analysing the process of renaissance of Europe and its impact on the political theory. After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the meaning of Renaissance
- describe reformations and revolutions brought by Renaissance in different areas
- examine the impact of Renaissance in Political theory

1.3 Meaning of Renaissance

We all know that renaissance was a transition period between the medieval era and the modern world and it stands for rebirth or revival. Thus, Renaissance signifies a rebirth of the human spirit in the attainment of liberty, self-confidence and optimism. It stands for the essential goodness of the individual, the beauty and the glory of the earth, the significance of the supernatural and the importance of the present etc.

During renaissance, Italy witnessed intense political turmoil affecting and involving the dominant city states of Florence, Milan, Venice etc. and the Holy Roman Empire. Affirming the dignity and excellence of the individuals, Humanism is the cornerstone of renaissance began in the later half of the 14th century. Thus, renaissance stands for a return to a pre-Christian attitude towards humans, God and nature and signals a breakdown of a unified Christian society. According to historian H. G wells, the renaissance actually emerged in the twelfth century and “there were many signs that the European intelligence was recovering courage and leisure.” As mentioned earlier, renaissance reformation has made the political, socio-cultural life upside down. Renaissance makes a drastic change in the whole thinking process of the individuals.

Here you must remember that renaissance is not merely revival. It also paved the way for new beginning, thinking, and discovery in the fields of art, literature, religion, philosophy, science and politics leading to new

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discoveries. Now let us have a look at the significant characteristics of Renaissance:

i). **Humanism:** The first characteristics of renaissance may be cited as emphasis on humanism. Concept of humanism stands for freedom of the individuals and his inalienable rights. Most importantly, it glorifies human beings. By urging man to seek joy on this earth rather than after life, it marked a significant departure from the Middle Age. It thus delimits the role of the divine body and emphasises on human capacity and reasoning. Thus, the idea of humanism taught mankind to believe in his worth and dignity and to have faith in his creative potential. It also stands for awakening of mind and freedom of thought and expression.

ii). **Secularism:** Renaissance inspired the artists to present their art in new forms by making it free from religious domain. We all know that the medieval period is dominated by religious thoughts. By incorporating the idea of Secular art and literature, the Renaissance brought about a revolutionary change in this field as well as instilled a secular outlook in the individuals.

iii). **Scientific thinking and discovery:** Scientific thinking and discovery are also the important features of Renaissance. There was intellectual rebirth, thirst for knowledge and development of scientific outlook. The people developed the spirit of discovery which paved the way for the modern era.

iv). **Reason and Rationality:** Renaissance created an atmosphere where everybody started questioning things and tried to justify everything with reason. Thus reason and rationality had replaced superstitions and conservativeness. There was a tendency to view everything from a scientific point of view and look into the world with inquisitiveness. People became critique of everything that did not have any scientific basis.

Thus, impact of Renaissance was huge in all sections of the society. There were revolutionary changes in the thinking process as well as outlook of all. We can say that scientists and reformers made significant contribution towards changing outlook and shedding the age old values and thoughts. These gradually led to the revival in the spirit of secular thoughts and scientific spirits. There was thirst for knowledge and discovery in Renaissance period. People developed curiosity and start questioning things. Man desired to know the unknown and see the unseen. People started exploring new areas and took up voyages. Because of such efforts, Columbus reached America and Vasco- da Gama reached India.

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Stop to Consider:**Renaissance in India:**

Renaissance in India started much later than Renaissance in Europe. In India it started in the mid of 19th century when there was social and cultural awakenings inspired by the Western concepts of reason, rationality, equality, liberty and secular beliefs. Many term this Renaissance as Bengal Renaissance. Raja Ram Mohan Roy is known as the father of this Renaissance. Roy who was the founder of Brahma Samaj fought against the social evils and malpractices prevailed at that time in India. The Brahma Samaj and Some other socio religious movements of that period mainly fought against practices like Child Marriage, Sati system, Purdah System etc. Moreover, they also encouraged widow remarriage and women education.

Indian Renaissance besides fighting against the social evils also tried to reinterpret Indian religious scriptures and rituals. Along with Raja Ram Mohan Roy, some other names closely associated with this renaissance were Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Annie Besant, Ram Manohar Lohia etc. Thus, Indian Renaissance resulted in socio-religious reforms mainly inspired by Western literature, thought and philosophy. It significantly contributed towards all round development of individuals as well as spreading the spirit of revivalism to all sections of the society. It sought to establish faith in India's glory and to instil a sense of self-respect and confidence among Indians. Indian Renaissance is closely related to Indian Nationalism too.

1.4 Medieval period and Renaissance

The Medieval period lasted for almost 1000 years from about 500 A.D. to 1450 A.D. This unit is an attempt to discuss revolutionary changes brought about by the Renaissance in the thoughts and beliefs of the individuals. However, without studying the medieval period and the prevailing system of that period we will not be in a position to understand the concept of Renaissance as well as the revivalism and reawakening associated with renaissance. Hence, in this section let us make an attempt to discuss Medieval period and how Renaissance makes a departure from this period and thinking.

From the discussions in the above sections, we have understood that

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‘Renaissance’ connotes ‘Rebirth’. Here rebirth marked revival of social non-political activities predominated and political thought did not make any progress. There was conflict between state and the Church. The medieval period is marked with superstitions, narrow minded-ness and religious conservatism. The scientific outlook was totally missing in such an environment. Hence, this period is known as Dark Phase of history where there was almost no progress in art, literature and science.

The term Middle Ages denotes the period which is a deviation from the path of classical learning supposed to be reconnected by Renaissance scholarship. Originally, the term characterizes the Middle Ages as a period of intellectual darkness existing between the extinguishing of the light of Rome and the Renaissance or rebirth from the 14th century onwards. Today it is frequently applied only to the earlier part of the era, the Early Middle Ages. The Early Middle Ages exemplifies the trend of depopulation, de-urbanisation and increased barbarian invasion. During this period, barbarian Goths, Vandals and Huns invaded Europe from the north and east. They destroyed many fine buildings and works of art existing during the Roman period. During this period, knowledge survived only in monasteries and there were very few schools. Many of the old arts and crafts were lost and the phase is called the dark ages.

This period witnessed the cultural and economic decline and disruption that took place in Western Europe following the decline of the Roman Empire. The concept of a dark age originated with the Italian scholar Petrarch in 1330’s and was originally intended as a criticism of the characteristics of Latin literature. Petrarch regarded the centuries since the fall of Rome as dark compared to the light of classical antiquity. Later, the historians restricted it between the Roman period and High Middle Ages. This period witnessed not only the lack of Latin literature but also the lack of contemporary written history, general demographic decline, limited building activity, and material cultural achievements in general. Christian writers including Petrarch himself used traditional metaphors of ‘Light versus Darkness’ to describe ‘Good versus Evil’.

Petrarch wrote that history could be divided into two periods- the classic period of the Greeks and Romans followed by a time of darkness, in which he saw himself as still living. In the conclusion to his epic Africa written around 1343 he opined “my fate is to live among varied and confusing storms. But for you perhaps, if as I hope and wish you will live long after me, there will follow a better age. This sleep of forgetfulness will not last for ever. When the darkness has been dispersed, our

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descendants can come again in the former pure radiance". (Petrarch, 134, Africa IX, 451-7).

By the late 14th and early 15th centuries, humanists such as Leonardo Bruni believed that they had sensed the beginning of a third modern age. When the modern scholarly study of Middle Ages arose in the 19th century, the term 'dark ages' was widely used by historians. However, the early 20th century saw a radical re-evaluation of the Middle Ages as well as the question of the terminology of darkness. However, many historians are of the view that the Medieval period often seems 'dark' to us because of the paucity of historical records compared with both earlier and later times.

The public idea of the Middle Ages as the dark ages also reflected misconceptions regarding the study of nature during that period. The contemporary historians of science David C. Lindberg and Ronald Numbers discuss the widespread popular belief that the Middle Ages are a time of ignorance and superstitions, the blame for which is to be laid on Christian Church for allegedly placing the word of religious authorities over personal experience and rational activity.

At first Renaissance began in Italy and later it influenced the whole of Europe. It marked the beginning of modern thinking guided by secular ideas, rational and scientific beliefs. Thus Renaissance makes a significant departure from Medieval period and opened a new horizon of ideas.

SAQ

According to you how far the negative features of the Medieval Age are responsible for the Renaissance in Europe? (80 words)

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1.5 Impact of Renaissance in different Areas of human lives:

From the definition of Renaissance, we have learnt that it touched all aspects of the lives of the individuals and thus there were revolutionary changes. In the political fields also there were marked differences from the Medieval period. Because of awakening and faith in rationality, people

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from all sections become more aware of their rights and obligations. Such consciousness had resulted in more and more demand for rights and privileges in the society. Renaissance paved the way for establishing a modern world free from superstitious beliefs and unscientific concepts and conservative outlooks. In this period, Scientists, Philosophers, Political theorists, economists, historians all started challenging the old ideas and contributed towards creating a modern world.

Now, there are different opinions regarding the areas where Renaissance took place. Most of the thinkers are of the opinion that Renaissance has taken place in art, literature, architecture, sciences. However, Ebenstein has given a broader concept of Renaissance. According to him, Renaissance took place in all the fields of social life. For him, Renaissance is the consequence of any single work of Art of any intellectual, rather it is the discovery of man. Thus, according to him, “Renaissance is not confined to any particular intellectual field, but in all fields of human knowledge and enquiry.”

Renaissance created a situation where people from different fields were inspired to search for new knowledge. It was believed that there was lack of intelligence among the rulers and education was neglected earlier. People were mainly guided by irrational and superstitious beliefs. However, Renaissance activated the minds of the people and they started challenging everything on the basis of rationality and secular beliefs. There are a number of thinkers whose ideas and thinking brought revolutionary changes in the Renaissance period. Here, we must mention the name of Leonardo Da Vinci who is considered an important figure of Renaissance period. He had made significant contribution in the fields of Art, Architecture, engineering, painting and human biology too.

Another important name of this period is Nicolaus Copernicus. He was born in 1473. He is known for his contribution in physics, astronomy, mathematics, economics and diplomacy. He challenged the established teachings of the Church that the Sun revolves around the Earth. Thus his views on the Universe and the solar system are the most important contributions to the Modern World.

F. Petrarca is another important figure of Renaissance period. Born in 1304, Petrarca who is also known as Petrarch contributed significantly with his ideas of humanism in the initial phase of Renaissance in Italy. He holds the idea that God has given humans their intellectual and creative

potential to be used to the fullest.

In the political field also, there were different developments in this period. The Renaissance is also a period of great geographical discoveries leading to the development of the concepts of nationalism and nations. Power becomes an important subject of study in this period. Machiavelli also emphasizes the concept of power in his writings. However, it needs to be mentioned that the political situation prevailing in Italy at that time has also influenced the writings of Machiavelli. As a child of Renaissance, Machiavelli's writings reflect a secular approach to politics. Thus, his writings make a departure from the medieval writings controlled by the church. Therefore, it can be said that Machiavelli's writings are free from the influences of theology and religion. The political turmoil in Italy due to the imperial domination of countries like France, Germany and Spain has been influential as Machiavelli values the freedom of his country most.

Thus, we can see Renaissance has paved the way for development in different fields which brought revolutionary changes in socio-political and cultural lives of human beings.

Check Your Progress :

1. Why medieval period is called 'Dark phase' of history?
2. What do you mean by Renaissance?
3. Write True or False
 - a). Renaissance brought changes in political field only.
 - b). Copernicus challenged the established teachings of the Church that the Sun revolves around the Earth.
4. Discuss briefly the impact of Renaissance in different areas.

1.6 Renaissance and Political theory:

From the discussions in the previous sections, we have learnt that one important characteristic of Renaissance is empiricism. Thinkers of the period emphasised on drawing conclusions after physical verifications. Thus, it is against superstitions and religious beliefs. The empirical approach towards different problems has also influenced in political analysis and formulation of political theory in the renaissance period.

Now, before discussing the impact of Renaissance in political philosophy

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and theory let us first understand the meaning of theory vis-à-vis political theory.

P. Jenkins is of the view that a theory about anything is an abstracted generalisation. In simple terms, theory is usually understood as a causal relationship between end and means. We often use the term 'political theory' in the study of political science. David Easton put emphasis on the study of political theory. According to some scholars, Political theory comprehends the political science as well as political philosophy. However, political thinkers like Sabine, Dunning have used the term 'political theory' as a synonym of 'political thought' which stands for ideas expressed by different political philosophers in chronological order.

According to Sabine, Political theory is, quite simply, man's attempts to consciously understand and solve the problems of his group life and organisation....(it) is the disciplined investigation of political problems...not only to show what a political practice is, but also to show what it means. In showing what a practice means, or what it ought to mean, political theory can alter what it is... (Sabine 1973).

David Held defines Political theory as "a network of concepts and generalisations about political life involving ideas, assumptions and statements about the nature, purpose and key features of government, state and society and about the political capabilities of human beings". (Political Theory Today, 1991)

We can say that political theory is concerned with analysis of issues/problems relating to state, sovereignty, rights, democracy, equality, justice etc.

In Political theory we usually find three types of statements:

1. Empirical statement: based on observation.
2. Logical statement: based on reasoning
3. Evaluative statement: based on value judgement

Scope of political theory ranges from statement on nature of state to sovereignty, political ideologies to different forms of government. It also includes different ideas like freedom, equality, justice to division of power in the society. Political theory thus sometimes paves the way for acquiring new knowledge.

Now, let us discuss about classification of Political Theory; Political theory

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may be divided into normative and empirical theory. The normative theory suggests the mode/means by which an imperfect political or social order can be made perfect. The advocates of normative theory suggest ways to reform different systems, institutions etc.

On the other hand, empirical and descriptive theory is concerned with things like state structure, political process etc. This type of study may be based upon observation. While discussing empirical theories we must mention about behaviouralists. The neo-empiricists are concerned in drawing generalisations from the data collected and also constructing models through which the interpretation of political process can be made with scientific accuracy.

Contemporary political theory focuses research on actualities, that is, on the disclosure of facts and their relationships. Modern political theory is considered as “the master discipline whereby the science of politics is to be unified, systematised and empirical investigation oriented and guided.”

The main concern of contemporary political theorists is to end political as an exercise in intellectual history and replace it by a search for the development of general principles which give meaning and life to political science. Modern political theory is growing and developing. Political theory now includes the study of circumstances and environments, individual and family. Contemporary theory puts emphasis on the inter-disciplinary approach. Modern political theory has very liberally borrowed not only from social sciences but from natural sciences.

Modern political theory is still in formulative stages. Political theory is needed by the public to know about a form of government and the legitimacy of the rulers.

As we have already learnt Renaissance brought revolutionary changes in different aspects of human lives. The political thinkers also tried to investigate political problems with a scientific look. As a result, different political theories emerged. It has paved the way for empiricism in different studies including social sciences. Francis Bacon is known as the father of empiricism in the renaissance period.

One important contribution of Renaissance to political philosophy has been to examine or analyse politics from a secular point of view. Such thinking emerged after about a century of political thought in Europe.

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We have already learnt that changes in the political and economic structure of Italy have brought larger transformations in Italy. Two important political thinkers of the Renaissance period are ---- Niccolo Machiavelli and Thomas More. Infact, Machiavelli is known as the father of modern political theory.

Here we must remember that Renaissance provided the platform for the rise of secular political philosophy after a century of theological political thought. While discussing about the emergence of secular political outlook we must mention the name of Machiavelli. Before that Medieval political philosophy in Europe was highly influenced by religious thinking and superstitious beliefs.

Again, the Renaissance signified a rebirth of the human spirit in the attainment of the liberty, self-confidence and optimism. In contradiction to the medieval view, which had envisaged the human being as fallen and depraved in an evil world with the devil at the centre, the Renaissance captured the Greek ideal of essential goodness of the individual, the beauty and glory of the earth, the joy of existence, the supernatural and the importance of the present (Mukherjee and Ramaswamy). It has thus emphasised on the concept of humanism which further contributed in shaping political theory in a different way.

Now, coming to classification of political theory, we have found that there are three categories. They are---- Classical, Modern and Contemporary Political Theory. Classical political theory originated in the ancient Greek culture and continued till the beginning of twentieth century. These theories are mostly dominated by philosophical, idealistic and normative approaches.

Modern Political theories emerged in 15th -16th centuries. It aimed at building a science of politics, which is empirical, objective based on observation, value-free and analytic. It is also process oriented rather than purpose oriented. As we all know, Renaissance marked a departure from medieval thinking and practice, it brought changes in to the different aspects of lives including politics. Impact of religion was reduced from the economy and politics of their societies. In regard to the development of political theory the influence of renaissance is significant. The reformations and awakening brought about by renaissance led to the growth of modern political theory.

Again, most of the important features of modern political theory can be attributed to renaissance. The features of modern political theory can be summed up as follows:

- Emphasis is on present rather than the past.
- Philosophical interpretation is replaced by analytical explanation
- Modern political theory is explanatory rather than descriptive
- It is process oriented rather than purpose oriented.
- Subjectivity is replaced by objectivity to a large extent.
- Normative approach is replaced by scientific approach.
- There is emphasis on separation of facts from values
- Adoption of inter-disciplinary approach

Hence, from the discussions above, we can conclude that Renaissance has significantly contributed towards political theory. It has given a new dimension to political theory by introducing new ideas and approaches to political issues and problems. Since renaissance brought reformations in every sphere of human lives peoples' approach to politics have also changed. The rational and scientific thinking of Renaissance thus paved the way for the growth of Modern Political theory.

SAQ

Make a list of similarities and dissimilarities between Renaissance in Europe and Renaissance in India. (80 words)

Ans :
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Check Your Progress:

1. Mention two characteristics of Modern political theory.
2. Write a note on classification of political theory.
3. Discuss briefly the impact of renaissance on Political theory.

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1.7 Summing Up:

After reading this unit we have learnt that the Renaissance has brought changes in scientific ideas and beliefs as well as outlook towards life. It touched almost all aspects of human lives. Because of that, Renaissance is considered as rebirth and reawakening. It marked a departure from the medieval period which was characterised by superstitious beliefs and unscientific approach. Renaissance created an atmosphere for empirical investigations. You have also learnt that renaissance gave importance on humanism, scientific temperament, secular outlook and rational thinking. All these have significantly contributed towards formulation of modern political theories too. Therefore, after reading this unit, now you have a clear idea about the impact of Renaissance in Political theory. In the next two units of this Block, we shall deal with the ideas of Machiavelli who is considered the child of Renaissance.

1.8 References and Suggested Readings

- 1 Sabine, G. H. What is Political Theory? Journal of Politics 1 , 1939
- 2 Sabine, G. H. History of Political Theory, 4th ed., revised by T.L. Thorson, New Delhi, Oxford and IBH, First published in 1937.
- 3 Mukharjee, Subrata and SushilaRamaswamy - A History of Political Thought, Plato To Marx, New Delhi, 2003
- 4 Gauba, O.P. An Introduction to Political Theory, Macmillan India Limited, New Delhi, 1995.

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Unit 2

Machiavelli: As a Child of Renaissance, Ideas of State

Contents :

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Objectives
- 2.3 Impact of Renaissance on Machiavelli
- 2.4 Machiavelli's idea on Human Nature
- 2.5 Machiavelli's idea of State
- 2.6 Summing up
- 2.7 Reference and Suggested Readings

2.1 Introduction:

The Florentine statesman and political philosopher, Niccolo Machiavelli is regarded as the founder of realist political philosophy. He was one of the greatest writers produced by Italy in the sixteenth century. Machiavelli is an advocate of Republican Government and supports citizen armies, division of power and restraint of government expenditure for the liberty of the republic. Machiavelli contributes to political theory through 'The Prince', a treatise on statecraft. Written in 1513, The Prince is famous as a practical guide which justifies the use of various expediencies in the ruling of a state.

Machiavelli's work helps the ruler to exercise political power and his ideas are relevant till today. In this book Machiavelli has argued that it is the skill of the leader that determines the success of a state. The second book The Art of War (1520) offers a detailed exploration of the acquisition, maintenance and use of military force in a state. Besides his contributions to the political philosophy, Machiavelli is also remembered for his historical writings, short stories as well as comedies. He is one of the first political philosophers to study Political Science on the basis of historical actions. This unit will focus on Machiavelli's ideas on human nature and state of nature.

2.2 Objectives :

Machiavelli, the noted political philosopher has contributed to the

political theory by advocating a secular approach to politics. During the Elizabethan period, his name is associated with treachery, murder, cruelty, atheism and Elizabethan literature is replete with the example of a character type called Machiavel who is often viewed as an embodiment of evil. However, one should always keep in mind that Machiavelli's ideas and thoughts were guided by prevailing situation of Italy. The contribution of Machiavelli in the form of the treatise on statecraft is considered to be one of the finest works. In this unit we shall discuss the relevance of Machiavelli's ideas as well as his contribution to political theory. After reading this unit you will be able to:

- Examine the impact of Renaissance on Machiavelli
- Discuss Machiavelli's ideas on Human Nature
- Analyse Machiavelli's ideas on State

2.3 Impact of Renaissance on Machiavelli:

Before discussing the ideas of Machiavelli, it is pertinent to know the circumstances and conditions that shaped the ideas of Machiavelli. The ideas of Renaissance have profoundly influenced Machiavelli to a large extent and he is regarded as the 'Child of Renaissance'. In the first unit of this block, we have discussed about Renaissance and its impact on political theory. From that we have learnt how reawakening and scientific and rational thinking has revolutionised the socio-political, cultural and economic lives of people in Europe during Renaissance. It brought an end to the medieval thinking and marked the beginning of the modern era. Among the scholars of Renaissance period, Machiavelli's name needs special mention. Machiavelli's writings deviate from medieval thinking marking a significant break and therefore he is also known as the 'first modern political thinker'.

The beginning of 16th century witnessed a revolution. As a result of which medieval institutions had to give place to new institutions in conformity with the spirit of time. Thus, darkness of medieval period is gradually removed with this spirit of revolution. This revolution has reduced the Church to the position of a voluntary association or a part of national government. Renaissance adopted the Greek ideal of essential goodness of the individual, the beauty and the glory of the earth, the joy of existence and the insignificance of the supernatural. It is also related to the conception of new human, the individual motivated by fame and glory, self-actualisation and happiness rather than self-denial and religious faith. Spirit of individualism led to optimum development of individual.

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It led to the development of modern Omni-potent state. Among the city states, Florence was the most flourishing state. As mentioned earlier, renaissance has witnessed the emergence of a number of artists, intellectuals and thinkers. Here we can mention the names of Alexander Botticelli, Leonardo Da Vinci, Raphael etc.

We have already learnt that Renaissance was a transition period between the medieval era and the modern world. Renaissance stands for rebirth or revival. Thus, Renaissance signifies a rebirth of the human spirit in the attainment of liberty, self-confidence and optimism. It stands for the essential goodness of the individual, the beauty and the glory of the earth, the significance of the supernatural and the importance of the present etc. Affirming the dignity and excellence of the individuals, Humanism is the cornerstone of Renaissance that began in the later half of the 14th century. Thus, Renaissance stands for a return to a pre-Christian attitude towards humans, God and nature and signals a breakdown of a unified Christian society. As a child of Renaissance, Machiavelli's writings reflect a secular approach to politics. Thus, his writings make a departure from the medieval writings controlled by the church. Therefore, it can be said that Machiavelli's writings are free from the influences of theology and religion.

During Renaissance, Italy witnessed intense political turmoil affecting and involving the dominant city states of Florence, Milan, Venice etc. and the Holy Roman Empire. Italy was culturally vibrant and creative but because of internal divisions there was every possibility that it would fall prey to the imperial ambitions of French, German and Spanish. According to Sabine, Italian society, "intellectually brilliant and artistically creative, more emancipated than many in Europe... was a prey to the worst political corruption and moral degradation." (Sabine 1973). However, there was a political vacuum as the old feudal order was vanishing but new nation state as a sovereign political entity was yet to be established. In such a scenario, the main objective of Machiavelli's writing was the unification of Italy so that the renaissance that were taking place in different areas of Art and culture of the country can be brought in political arena too. Through this process he wanted to establish a unified and glorious Italy. Hence, freedom of the country and the common good had been the major themes of Machiavelli's writings.

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Now, it is clear to us that Machiavelli was guided by the spirit of Renaissance for which his political philosophy was scientific and empirical. Further, he was not concerned whether ends are to be considered good or bad. Machiavelli had realised the importance of a ruler who could save Italy from the danger of internal strife and disunity. Again, you should remember here that though Machiavelli advocated for strong Prince, at the same time he also believed that the prince should patronise the distinguished ability in fine arts. For Machiavelli, Italy was facing a crisis period as there was vehement corruption in the society and necessary virtues were decaying. To build a strong and unified Italy, Machiavelli advocated for a strong Ruler. This revolutionary idea has impacted the process of Renaissance in Italy.

From the previous unit, we have learnt that the Renaissance is also a period of great geographical discoveries leading to the development of the concepts of nationalism and nations. Power becomes an important subject of study in this period. Machiavelli also emphasizes the concept of power in his writings. However, it needs to be mentioned that the political situation prevailing in Italy at that time has also influenced the writings of Machiavelli. The political turmoil in Italy due to the imperial domination of countries like France, Germany and Spain has been influential as Machiavelli values the freedom of his country most. Impact of Renaissance on Machiavelli is evident from his departure from medieval thinking and his effort to make his writing free from religious domination. Analysing the impact of Renaissance on Machiavelli, Laski has opined that “the whole of the Renaissance is in Machiavelli” (Laski 1936:31). In the later period also, many scholars are of the view that renaissance has produced one of the greatest political thinkers, viz., Niccolo Machiavelli.

Stop to Consider: Life Sketch of Machiavelli :

Machiavelli was born in Florence, Italy on May 3, 1469. His father’s name was Bernardo di Niccolo Machiavelli and his mother’s name was Bartolommea di Stefano Nelli. His father was a civil lawyer. Along with humanist education, He was also taught Grammar, Rhetoric and Latin. He entered Florentine government in its diplomatic service. At the age of 29, he became the Secretary to the Second Chancery with the responsibilities of handling foreign affairs – diplomatic, administrative and military. His service as a diplomat gave him insights into the actual working of politics. As a diplomat he travelled the major

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centres of Italy as well as the royal court of France. Machiavelli has been termed as 'The murderous Machiavel' by William Shakespeare as he sanctions the use of deception, cruelty, force, violence etc. for achieving the desired political ends. In 1512, with the change in government in Florence, Machiavelli becomes a direct victim of the regime and he is placed under the form of internal exile on the charge of conspiring against the ruling Medici family. At the later stage of his life, Machiavelli comes closer to Medici family. In 1520 he is assigned to compose a History of Florence. History of Florence is completed in 1525 and Machiavelli dies in June 1527.

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From the discussions above, it is clear to us that the Renaissance in Europe has greatly influenced Machiavelli. Now let us discuss the factors that influenced Machiavelli and shaped his political ideas:

- i). **Condition of Italy** : Italy was divided into a number of states which were involved in internal conflicts. The governments of those states were Republic or despotic. Besides, there were threats from outside too. Machiavelli wanted that these states should end war and try to make them self-sufficient. His works like Art of War, The Discourses on Living and the Prince mainly deals with those issues.
- ii). **Impact of Republic**: Renaissance brought consciousness of life, liberty etc. Its main thrust was on humanism. It has brought a revival which led to the revolt against Church.
- iii). **Strong Monarchies**: According to Machiavelli, strong Monarchies helped in the unification of Italy by suppressing the medieval feudal or religious institutions.

We must mention here that Machiavelli was influenced by Aristotle's idea of separation of ethics from politics and also his belief that the state is the highest organisation of human beings. But one should always remember that Machiavelli was highly influenced by his time and the surrounding circumstances. Sabine has correctly remarked that, "clear and broad as his visions of politics, was Machiavelli still in a peculiar sense an Italian of this first quarter of 16th century. Had he written in any other time and place, his conception of politics must have been significantly different."

Check Your Progress:

1. “Machiavelli is a Child of Renaissance”. Discuss.
2. Name two major works of Machiavelli.
3. Discuss the important factors that helped in shaping the political philosophy of Machiavelli.
4. Who termed Machiavelli as ‘Murderous Machiavel’ and why?

SAQ

Do you think Machiavelli exemplifies the Renaissance philosophy of humanism? Justify your view. (30+50 words)

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2.4 Machiavelli’s Idea on Human Nature

Machiavelli is regarded as one of the important political philosophers. However, he has also dealt with certain non-political problems. In the previous section, we have discussed Machiavelli’s view on state. He mainly discusses the human nature in his famous book *The Prince*. The following lines of Machiavelli offer an idea of his views on human nature. “Men in general...are ungrateful, voluble, dissemblers, anxious to avoid danger, and covetous of gain; as long as you benefit them, they are entirely yours,” but their “love is held by a chain of obligation which, men being selfish, is broken whenever it serves their purpose” (*The Prince*, p: 61, 1950). Now let us have a look at Machiavelli’s idea on human nature.

- Machiavelli has depicted a very dark picture of human nature. His idea of human nature contradicts the belief and thoughts of humanists. In some occasions, he has gone to the extent of equating human nature with animal nature.
- According to him, individuals are wicked, selfish and egoistic. For Machiavelli, man is self-centred and greedy and he seeks his own interest rather than anybody else. Hence, we can say that his idea of human nature is identical with that of Hobbes.

- Machiavelli believes that an individual is fundamentally weak, ungrateful, exhibitionist, artificial. Individuals do well only when they are under compulsion or there is some personal gain.
- Individuals also lack honesty and justice. He is ready to act in a manner which is detrimental to the community. Therefore, according to Machiavelli, government is founded upon the weakness and insufficiency of the individuals who cannot protect themselves against the attack of others without the power of the state.
- Again, Machiavelli is of the view that men are always in a condition of strife and competition. They are greedy who work for profit only. Therefore, he is prepared to work against collective interests provided their own interests clash with them.
- Regarding Human nature, Machiavelli further states that the individuals are timid and always try to follow established customs without opting for resistance. Thus, they always follow a middle path avoiding all kinds of dangers.
- Being very greedy, individuals love property more than their kiths and kins. Machiavelli states that an individual can easily forgive the murder of his father, but never forgives the seizure of property.
- The individuals remain dissatisfied and unsatisfied. They always desire power, glory and material well-being. Such ambitions make man dissatisfied and discontent.
- Machiavelli does not have high opinion of human intelligence or character. He believes that most people cannot judge a person's inner self. A Prince should appear to have all of the typical virtues such as mercy, sincerity. Many will not know whether he actually has those qualities or not.

Thus, in the view that Machiavelli, human beings are selfish, ungrateful, ambitious, anti-social and anarchical. Such nature of human beings gets reflected in politics too. Therefore, Machiavelli's views regarding politics, religion and morality are essentially based on his idea on human nature. According to him, 'men are ungrateful, fickle, deceitful, cowardly and avaricious'. He believes that people are fundamentally self-interested and unbearable. Men are greedy. A man will soon forget the death of his father than the loss of his inheritance. Further, All men want glory and wealth. They are ungrateful and unreliable. After putting forward such ideas Machiavelli is of the view that, 'men are in general bad, and that the wiser ruler will construct his policies on this assumption.

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Criticism :

Machiavelli is criticized for his views on human nature. We all know that human beings are not as bad as Machiavelli has portrayed. So, it can be said that Machiavelli's portrayal of human nature is only partial which fails to give us a complete picture. However, as we have already studied, Machiavelli is a product of his time. He belongs to a period when Italy is divided into small fragments. Therefore, he advocates for a strong ruler who is aware of the inherent bad qualities of human beings. Machiavelli points out the negative qualities of the human beings so that the ruler can check the wicked nature of the individuals and establish a strong and stable nation.

Stop To Consider:

Methods Adopted by Machiavelli :

Machiavelli was highly influenced by Aristotle. He believes that human nature and problems are similar irrespective of time and place. Therefore, through studying and analysing the past one can understand the present issues. Hence, Machiavelli emphasised on adopting historical method like Aristotle. Again, Machiavelli was concerned with the actual working of the Government. As a realist his aim was to develop the theory of the act of government rather than theory of the state. Therefore, Dunning is of the view that Machiavelli's study is "the study of the art of government rather than a theory of the State." Again, it is also said that his political writings are more of diplomatic literature than a theory of state. Before drawing any conclusion, Machiavelli minutely observed and analysed the prevailing situations of his time. Thus, he adopted a form and method of political philosophy which is mostly ancient Greek Roman philosophy. Moreover, he also depended on his empirical knowledge. Sabine has correctly remarked that 'Machiavelli used history exactly he used his own observation to illustrate or support a conclusion that he had reached without reference to history'.

2.5 Machiavelli's ideas on State :

Machiavelli is considered to be the first political thinker who formulates the modern concept of state. However, it needs to be mentioned here that Machiavelli does not try to define state. He does not even try to justify the

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existence of the state. Two major works of Machiavelli 'The Prince' and 'Discourses on Livy' mainly deal with government's role and functions.

The state of Machiavelli may be understood as an impersonal form of rule possessing a monopoly of coercive authority within a set of territorial boundary. Therefore, it can be said that Machiavelli's views on state can be found when he describes the functions of the rulers, or how a ruler retains and controls power. Moreover, Machiavelli has also dealt with the necessary qualities required for a strong republic. From these ideas of Machiavelli, we can get a picture of his idea of a state. We have already learnt that Machiavelli's approach to politics has been secular. Hence, he considers state as a secular entity that has no connection whatsoever with any religious authority. Thus, according to Machiavelli, the state is independent with no obligation. To Machiavelli, a state exists to fulfill the desire for security of the person and property and it should try and augment the territory and power for itself.

Machiavelli does not agree with the medieval thinking that the power of the state is a single whole and can be centrally controlled. As a believer in liberty, he prefers republic over monarchy. He does not believe in the rule of aristocracy since he considers it as an instrument to loot the ordinary and impoverished people by a few. Therefore, Machiavelli is of the view that a well-ordered state should not allow the rich to buy offices. However, he also believes that an independent and courageous group of people is required for a proper functioning of a republic. Again, it must be remembered here that while discussing State, Machiavelli is particularly concerned with the small Italian republic. He also believes that the major function of the state is the preservation of person and property. To him, the prince or the ruler controls the state as he is imposed with the power to rule. Hence, the character and performance of the government to a large extent depends on the personal qualities of the ruler or the prince. The state should always create the environment where the deserving gets the opportunity to flourish. He identified the state with government or with its personal head.

As mentioned earlier, Machiavelli deals with the state mainly in his celebrated work The Prince. He tries to identify the state with the government or the head of the state. In another work, L'Artedella Guerra (The Art of War), he offers extensive advice on the acquisition, management, and employment of the army for the war. Machiavelli emphasizes the importance of good laws, religion and a citizen army as the support structures for a stable and strong state. He further states

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that an army should consist of the citizens of the state between the ages of 17-40 having physical training in arms and military skills as well as the zeal to fight for the country. He defends war in the interest of the state as well as in the interest of the people for protecting their liberty and independence. We have already learnt that Machiavelli gives due importance to power and emphasizes the proper use of power by the ruler. However, he is against the use of violence for personal reasons. He considers violence necessary to rule in a successful state. As one of the formulators of the concept of modern nation state, Machiavelli strongly believes that common language and common culture play very important role in the development of a modern nation state. He opines that retention of the newly acquired territories becomes easy with one common language, tradition and culture.

Stop to Consider : Major Works of Machiavelli Machiavelli is regarded as the founder of modern political philosophy. His major works are as follows: *The Prince* (1513): In this book, Machiavelli has offered certain advices to the ruler. All these advices are meant for preserving the power of the ruler as well as to expand the territory. He has advised the prince for judicious use of violence by respecting the private property and traditions of the subjects. During Renaissance, Italy witnesses intense political conflicts and violence in larges scale. *The Prince* is written in this backdrop and therefore all the advices incorporated in the book are meant for strengthening the state and establishing a strong ruler. In the conclusion of the book, Machiavelli calls for Italian unity and end of foreign intervention. *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius* (1513-21): In this book, Machiavelli emphasizes that for the survival of a republic, a spirit of patriotism and civic virtue must foster among the citizens. Thus, this book imparts the lesson on the structure of a republic i.e. how a republic should be started and structured including the provisions of checks and balances. His other works include: *A Discourse About the Provision of Money* (1502) *Portrait of the Affairs of Germany* (1508-1512) *Portrait of the Affairs of France* (1510) *The Art of War*, (on high military science) (1519-1520) *The Mandrake* (a five-act prose comedy with a verse prologue) (1518) *A Discourse About the Reforming of Florence* (1520)

In *Prince* Machiavelli suggests two different codes of conduct --- one for the ruler and other for the ordinary people. According to him, the common people should follow normal understanding of morality while for the Prince the interest of his state is the main concern. For the interest of the state the ruler can go beyond the conventional morality of the

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state. Therefore, according to Machiavelli the ruler can even take resort of deception and hypocrisy for the interest of the state.

Leo Strauss criticised Machiavelli for motivating leaders and rulers to employ violence and fear and avoid the goodness of justice, love and compassion. Skinner, however defended Machiavelli by saying that the latter advises the king to do good if he can but must be prepared to commit evil if he must.

According to Machiavelli Politics is a way to acquire power. It is not an end of good life. He separated ethics from politics. According to him, government can be of ideal or practical form. To him, Republic is an ideal form of government but only the virtuous people can be ruled by that government. The second form of government is monarchy which he consider to be more practical since most of the people are vicious. In Prince Machiavelli writes, man sooner forgets the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony. Duty of the ruler is to protect the life, property and possessions of the citizens.

Now, let us discuss Machiavelli's idea on state. According to him State is supreme and all citizens should abide by the state. He was mainly concerned with establishing a strong national state. State/ruler should check the selfish ends of human and build a strong nation. He favoured Monarchy in the absence of a republican government only due to its people. The prevalence of corruption in Italy has made him to suggest for a strong Prince who can crush the selfish interest of the people and build a strong centre.

Machiavelli suggested some ideas to the Prince to ensure a strong state. He suggested a powerful army with soldiers. He further states strong state and a strong ruler should possess the tendency to expand and gain more power. For that, he should create strong and strict laws.

Thus, Machiavelli believed that 'end justify means'. Only when the people are virtuous, the ruler should be ethical and honest.

Check Your Progress:

1. Why is Machiavelli regarded as the 'Child of Renaissance'?
2. Discuss briefly Machiavelli's idea of state.
3. How does Machiavelli depict the human nature? Do you agree with Machiavellian idea of human nature?

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2.6 Summing up:

After reading this unit, you are now in a position to discuss Machiavelli's ideas on Human nature and State. We have also learnt from this unit that Machiavelli is hailed as the child of Renaissance which has brought changes in socio-cultural and scientific fields of Italy. Moreover, he has also witnessed the turmoil prevailing in Italy for which he advises the prince to follow certain rules. He characterizes man to be self-centred and not willing to act in the best interest of the state. Thus, from this unit we have learn that Machiavelli depicts a dark picture of human nature which goes against the thinking of humanists. Many political thinkers have criticised Machiavelli for his ideas, but we must conclude that he is the child of his time and therefore considering the prevailing situations he put forwarded his ideas. Hence, we can conclude that Machiavelli was mainly guided by the idea of freedom of the country and common good.

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Unit 3 :**Machiavelli: Morality and Politics, Attributes of a Ruler as advocated in The Prince**

Unit Structure :

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Objectives
- 3.3 Machiavelli on Morality and Politics
- 3.4 Machiavelli on Religion
- 3.5 Attributes of a Ruler as advocated by Machiavelli
- 3.6 Machiavelli's Suggestions to Prince
- 3.7 Summing up
- 3.8 References and Suggested Readings

3.1 Introduction

In the previous unit we have dealt with some of the ideas of Machiavelli. We have learnt how his ideas were shaped by the Renaissance that was taking place in Europe. Machiavelli was one of the important political philosophers of Italy. However, he was criticised for sanctioning the use of deception, cruelty, force, violence for achieving political ends. William Shakespeare had gone to the extent of calling him 'the murderous Machiavel' for putting forward these ideas. However, as we have already discussed, Machiavelli was the child of his time and therefore he was influenced by the political events that were occurring in his time in Italy.

In this unit we shall make an attempt to study Machiavelli's ideas on morality and politics as well as his suggestions to Prince. His ideas on Morality and religion are also discussed in this unit. Moreover, we will also discuss at length Machiavelli's advices to the prince which are relevant as the practical guide to the exercise of political power by any ruler.

3.2 Objectives:

The Florentine Scholar Niccolo Machiavelli adopted a secular approach

while discussing different political ideas. He was mainly concerned with making Italy strong and unified. For that he had advocated for a strong ruler who can demonstrate his strength whenever necessary. This unit will help you to comprehend these ideas of Machiavelli. After reading this unit you will be able to:

- Discuss Machiavelli's ideas on morality and politics
- Examine his views on Religion
- Explain attributes of a Rulers as advocated by Machiavelli

3.3 Machiavelli on Morality and Politics:

While discussing the concept of morality first of all we must remember that Machiavelli differentiates between public and private morality and assigns the former a preferential place and position over the latter. He is very seriously concerned with the display of high moral standards and qualities in public life. According to Machiavelli, a successful ruler should also aim at acquiring, maintaining, consolidating and increasing power. Therefore, to achieve that end Machiavelli even supports the use of immoral or wicked ways. He further states that a thing or action which is immoral for an individual in the interest of the state might be justifiable for the ruler. Machiavelli's idea of morality is mainly based on the ancient Greek assumption that the state is the highest form of human association necessary for the protection and welfare of the humanity. We can conclude here that Machiavelli analysed morality from the point of view of rulers and not of the ruled.

Thus, Machiavelli firmly believes that the end justifies the means. For achieving the ends, Machiavelli advocates two different sets of moralities for the rulers and subjects. According to him, an individual may follow different moral values like independence, purity, loyalty and trust. However, a ruler may follow different norms and values for conducting the affairs of the state successfully. Thus, we can see that Machiavelli distinguishes private morality from public morality. Again, according to Machiavelli the morality of the state is different from the morality of the individuals. According to Machiavelli, state morality can be termed as the morality of success while the private individuals should display the high moral standards. He again states that a ruler can be compassionate, humane, loyal, and honest and may conform to the high standards of morality like compassion, good faith and honesty in times of stability in

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the state. However, in times of strife, chaos and disorder, these high standards of moralities will lead to the destruction of the state. So, we can say that Machiavelli strongly promotes a secular society and feels that morality is not necessary but stands in the way of an effectively governed principality. The unstable condition of Italy is the major reason behind Machiavelli's belief.

Machiavelli's views on Politics can be mainly found in his discussions on the functions of the rulers. He had elaborately discussed how a ruler retains and controls power. In the following section we shall discuss in detail Machiavelli's idea regarding the attributes of a Ruler. For him, a ruler should emphasize on the consolidation and enhancement of power as well as betterment of his subjects. Therefore, he has advocated for a different perspective of morality for the rulers. In the words of Machiavelli: I will even venture to say that (the virtues) damage a prince who possesses them and always observes them, but if he seems to have them they are useful. I mean that he should seem compassionate, trustworthy, humane, honest and religious, and actually be so; but yet he should have his mind so trained that, when it is necessary not to practice these virtues, he can change to the opposite and do it skillfully. (Machiavelli 1950:85) Machiavelli has faced severe criticisms from various political thinkers for his views morality. Thinker like Strauss considers him as a teacher of evil.

Thus, we can conclude that Machiavelli's thinking is different from other medieval thinkers. He has made the first attempt to separate religion from politics. He keeps politics above everything and religion and morality are given a subordinate place to politics. Again, he does not believe in divine law and makes the church a part of state, but not independent of state. Again, according to him, perseveration of the state rather than excellence of its constitution were his main consideration. According to Sabine, "The purpose of Politics is to preserve and increase political power itself". It must be remembered here that the ideas of Machiavelli are shaped only by the time and situations where he lived. He is of the firm belief that religion and morality cannot play a significant role in the Italian politics of his time.

SAQ:

Do you think morality is necessary for the art of statecraft? Justify your argument with reference to Machiavelli's views on morality.

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3.4 Machiavelli on Religion

Machiavelli is born in the period of Renaissance. Before him, medieval thinkers emphasise on religion and consider it to be the basis of the state. Machiavelli makes a departure from his predecessors of medieval period by attacking the Church and the clergy for their failure to provide moral inspiration. He discusses on religion and its role in the formation and maintenance of political authority in his celebrated works, ‘The Prince and The Discourses’. In the medieval period the state is believed to serve as a department of the church and as such church fathers assume supremacy over the affairs of the state. They consider the sanction of the church as important for the functioning of the state. They compare the role of the church with that of the soul and say that as soul has the supremacy over the body so the church enjoys supremacy over the state.

Machiavelli has made an attempt to divorce religion from politics and speaks against the supremacy of church over the state. Therefore, he is seen as propagating anti-Church. However, we must remember that Machiavelli is not against religion. Contrary to medieval thinkers, he tries to subordinate religion to the state. He considers religion as necessary not only for the social life of man but also for the health and prosperity of the state. However, he does not consider religion to be the end in itself. Thus, to Machiavelli, state is always the end and religion should only serve the interest of the state. He thus differs from the views of Aristotle and Plato who consider state from the ethical points of view. Therefore, according to him, the actions of the state cannot be questioned by individuals or be judged by individual moral standards.

According to Machiavelli, religion is good only when it establishes peace. Thus, religion is a social force but not a spiritual force. He views religion from a utilitarian perspective. It plays a very significant role in the society through its concepts of rewards and punishment which in turn help in

inducing proper behaviour and good conduct necessary for the well-being of the society. He advises the prince to take steps to cultivate belief in religion, even if he is not a believer in religion. Thus, it can be said that Machiavelli is the first thinker to look upon religion as a coercive force. Thus, Machiavelli admires qualities like courage, self-assertiveness, ambition, intelligence and strength of the ruler. Because of his beliefs in such virtues he criticizes Christianity since it makes man charitable and weak, glorifies qualities like renunciation, humility, other worldliness, charity, etc. However, at the same time, he retained the basic Christian views on the differences between good and evil. He advocates for a religion in Italy that can serve the interests of the state. It can also be said here that the rulers should always endorse religion in order to maintain power.

SAQ

Why does Machiavelli think religion to be a coercive force? Elaborate the reasons given by Machiavelli to justify his view. (60+50 words)

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3.5 Attributes of a Ruler according to Machiavelli :

In his most celebrated work ‘The Prince’, Machiavelli has discussed in detail the nature and skills necessary for the rulers. “...a prince must not have any objective nor any thought, nor take any art, other than the art of war and its ordering and discipline; because it is only art that pertains to him who commands. And it is of such virtue that not only does it maintain those who were born princes, but many times makes men rise to that rank from private station; and conversely one sees that when princes have thought more of delicacies than of arms, they have lost their state.” (Machiavelli, Niccolo, Ed. Angelo M. Codevilla. 1997) Written in 1513-14, the book is published posthumously in 1532. Dedicated to Lorenzo de Medici, The Prince offers practical advice on how to rule a city like sixteenth century Florence. We all know that Machiavelli is of the strong belief that a state is literally owned by the ruler. Therefore, according to him the nature of the governance is determined by the qualities and skills of the rulers. Through the book

called 'The Prince' which consists of 26 chapters, he has criticized the moralistic view of authority. He differs from the various important political thinkers including Plato who try to draw a relationship between moral goodness and legitimate authority. According to Machiavelli, there is no moral basis to judge the legitimate and illegitimate uses of power. The real concern of a ruler is the acquisition and maintenance of power and goodness of the ruler does not ensure power.

Machiavelli believes that a state is identified as ruler. He has warned the prince against excessive generosity, strictness or kindness and stressed the need for moderate behaviour (Mukherjee and Ramaswamy, 2007). He strongly believes that it is necessary for a successful ruler to know how power is to be used. The Prince should be the perfect embodiment of shrewdness and self-control. Moreover, Machiavelli considers the relationship between the rulers and the ruled as similar to the one between father and the children. He also believes that the state is the highest association in the society and therefore, individuals should merge themselves for the interests of the state. Again, Machiavelli opines that those things are virtuous in a Prince which excelled in bringing success in power and that virtue lies in ruthlessness, cunningness, deceitfulness, boldness and shrewdness etc. Machiavelli considers the virtuous and stable state as the greatest moral good and therefore any action to protect the country is justified.

In his famous work *The Prince*, Machiavelli deals with the art of ruling state offering advice to the rulers to maintain and if possible enhance power. He considers sound law and strong military forces as the two strong pillars of a successful state. He states that '....a wise prince should establish himself on that which is his own control and not in that of others; he must endeavour to avoid hatred, and is noted.' He emphasizes strong military power and fortifications for the defence of the state. He believes that a self-sufficient prince should be able to win any enemy on the battlefield. Thus, the main concern of a prince is war.

Machiavelli also favours hunting by the prince for keeping his body fit. Again, for intellectual strength Machiavelli advises the prince to study the life of great military men to imitate their success and avoid their mistakes. Again, Machiavelli does not want the prince to be very generous towards his subjects. According to Machiavelli, such generosity will only increase the greed of the ruler. So, he believes that guarding against people's hatred is more important than building up a reputation for generosity. Therefore, the prince should carefully deal with the finance

without being more generous.

Again, Machiavelli says that it is better for the prince to be feared than loved. However, it is the duty of a prince to ensure that he is not feared to the point of hatred. He also believes that fear is necessary for uniting the troops also. For commanding the respect of the soldiers the prince can be cruel at times. "...a prince must not care about the infamy of cruelty in order to keep his subjects united and faithful; because with very few examples he will be more merciful than those who, because of too much mercy, allow disorders to go on, from which spring killings and depredations: because this normalcy offend a whole collectivity, while those executions which come from the prince offend an individual." (Pg. 61 Chapter 17, Machiavelli, Niccolò, Ed. Angelo M. Codevilla. 1997)

Stop to Consider:

Machiavelli on Forms of Government : While discussing his ideas of state, Machiavelli makes an attempt to classify the governments. Like his predecessor Aristotle, he also classifies government as normal and perverted. The normal forms of governments are monarchy, aristocracy and limited or constitutional democracy. On the other hand, the corresponding perverted forms of governments are tyranny, oligarchy and democracy. Again, Machiavelli considers a mixed form of government as the best attainable form of government. He also emphasizes a close relationship between the economic development and the political stability of a state. He does not prefer the rule of one on hereditary basis, i.e., monarchy. Machiavelli believes in a normal state, the citizens are law-abiding and patriots. Such a state can expand and grow and the citizens are always ready to defend their state.

The prince should also try to keep his words because a prince is praised for keeping words. However, he is also praised for the illusion of keeping words. Hence, according to Machiavelli a prince should not unnecessarily break the words. He must seem to be generous while spending money, appear to be compassionate while ruling the armies cruelly, and act with great cunning while cultivating a reputation for integrity.

Again, according to Machiavelli, the Prince should not interfere in the affairs of the property and women of his subjects for interference in these affairs may affect men's sensibilities leading to resistance by them.

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Besides, he should possess good leadership qualities. He should choose competent advisors to assist in the governance.

The first and foremost duty of a prince according to Machiavelli is to try and expand state's territory. According to him, either a state must expand or perish. He advised the Prince to keep force of arms for political aggrandisement as well as for the preservation of the state. However, he suggested that force be applied judiciously. He should also try to establish his image as the defender of weaker states. He has also advised the prince to play fox and lion. As a lion, he should be ready to act ruthlessly with courage. At the same time he should also handle the affairs with cunningness and shrewdness of a fox. Again, the prince should be cunning enough to detect the conspiracies of his enemies as well as courageous enough to fight against the enemies. A prince had to fight with the help of laws of civilized societies and force of the brutes.

Regarding human nature Machiavelli is very critical too. Therefore, according to him, force is necessary to control the people who are wretched and dishonourable. In the words of Machiavelli: "as (men) are bad, and would not observe their faith with you, so you are not bound to keep faith with them" (The Prince: 64) (Machiavelli 1950). For the purpose of defending the state against any conspiracy, the prince can spread the network of his intelligence and deception whenever necessary. He should also thoroughly and severely punish the conspirators. The prince has also to pay great deal of attention to the economic prosperity of his subjects. Because the prince can command respect of the people only when he can guarantee economic prosperity of his subjects. Thus, the success of a prince to a great extent is judged by the economic condition of the people living in the state. A prince should always aim at the glory of the state and his personal honours and dishonours are deeply associated with those of his state. Machiavelli places the prince above laws. The prince must be ready to protect the interest of the state at any cost. He is of the opinion that there should be two codes of conducts in the state, one for the individual and the other for the state. Both the conducts should not be combined at any stage. The prince should not follow any of these two conducts. In other words, the prince stands above all conducts. His major concern is to protect the interest of the state without bothering about the morality and immorality of the means to achieve those ends. Thus, we can see that Machiavelli has given tremendous power and authority to the prince. However, it must be remembered such power and authority is delegated

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to the prince for the protection of the state only. He has even gone to the extent of saying that the prince should exterminate the families of the rulers whose territories he wishes to possess. The members of the ruling families of such territories should be murdered so that they cannot plan any revenge in the future.

3.6 Machiavelli's Suggestions to Prince

‘A prudent ruler ... cannot, and should not, keep his word when keeping it is to his disadvantage, and when the reasons that made him promise no longer exist

From the above discussion we have learnt that Machiavelli wanted a strong ruler. According to him, the ruler should be merciful, faithful, humane to the extent these are needed but at the sometime should know how to act contrary to preserve his principedom. The Attributes of the Prince as advocated by Machiavelli can be summed up in the following way:

1. Machiavelli advises Prince not to be generous from economic point of view. He should not be extravagant and at the same time should not be a miser. The Prince should spend money wisely so that he could save them for crisis period. Thus, according to Machiavelli, the Prince should follow a middle path while spending money.
2. According to Machiavelli, the Prince should better be cruel than merciful. However, it does not mean that the ruler should act in a tyrannical way. Machiavelli had asked the rulers to adopt a policy of aggression so that the subjects could be controlled in a desired manner.
3. Another attribute of Prince according to Machiavelli is to break his promises in the interests of the subjects.
4. Again, the prince must avoid to be hated by the subjects. It becomes easy for the rulers to implement his policies if he is loved by the subjects.
5. Machiavelli again asked the Prince to engage himself in great projects for the welfare of the subjects.
6. The Prince should choose wise advisors and avoid flatterers.
7. According to Machiavelli, the Prince should always regard his neighbours as enemies and should remain prepared for attacking them.

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8. Machiavelli has advised the Prince to behave like fox and lion whenever necessary. According to him, integrity is good but cunningness and subtlety are often useful.

The Criticisms of Machiavelli's Suggestions to Prince :

We can say that The Prince which is regarded as the masterpiece of Machiavelli is the source of his political philosophy. It thoroughly prescribes the art of government. However, Machiavelli has been criticized severely for his advices to the prince. He is criticized for the effort to combine despotism and individualism. The criticisms against his advice to the prince can be listed as below:

- We have also noticed that Machiavelli has given absolute power to the prince and made him above laws. Thus, he has established absolutism of the prince with the power to use violence.
- Again, Machiavelli's idea goes against the idea of individualism. He has sacrificed individuals at the altar of the state and spoken about two different codes of conduct for the individuals and for the state. In such a situation, there is every possibility of the emergence of revolution.
- Machiavelli is also criticized for advocating narrow nationalism. In the present time, there is a call for internationalism. Therefore, his philosophy can not be termed as modern.
- Machiavelli has totally overlooked the moral principles. He has asked the prince to ignore morality for the interest of the state. At the same time he does not advise the prince to look after the moral progress of his subjects.
- Moreover, he has also depicted a very gloomy picture of the human nature.

It is also seen that Machiavelli has underestimated the intelligence of the common man when he says that man in the street can never be an effective political participant. Though Machiavelli has been criticized for his advices to the prince, one must remember the fact that while writing the book he is influenced by the prevailing conditions of Italy. The Prince is a book of practical interest as Machiavelli does not talk about an ideal ruler, but highlights the actions and qualities that enable a ruler to rule in the best possible way. For his practical ideas Machiavelli is also described as 'the murderous Machiavel' by William Shakespeare as he sanctions the use of deception, cruelty, force and violence for achieving political ends.

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SAQ

How far it is possible for a Ruler to rule a state following Machiavelli's advice in the contemporary time? Justify your view. (30+50 words).....

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Check Your Progress:

1. Assess the relevance of Machiavelli's masterpiece The Prince in contemporary politics.
2. According to Machiavelli, what is the first and foremost duty of a prince?
3. Write a note on the advices for a prince as given by Machiavelli.
4. How does Machiavelli differentiate between public and private morality?

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3.7 Summing up:

In this unit, we have discussed at length Machiavelli's ideas on Morality and Politics as well as his advice to the prince. As a child of Renaissance, Machiavelli's ideas were influenced by the changes in socio-cultural and scientific fields of Italy. At the same time, he was also influenced by the turmoil and internal disturbances that were taking place in the political arena. Moreover, as we have learnt in the previous unit Machiavelli had depicted the human nature in a negative way by describing human beings as selfish, egoistic and wicked who are and not willing to act in the best interest of the state. Therefore, he advocated for a strong ruler who could unify Italy with strong hand. For that he advises the prince to follow certain rules. It is interesting to note that he has even prescribed different type of morality for the prince. Machiavelli is concerned not with what makes a good human being, but what makes a good prince. He believes that the prince should be the sole authority determining every aspect of the state. He has also given certain advices to the prince to maintain his power and expand the territory of the state. Although Machiavelli has been criticized for his ideas, he is termed as the founder of the modern day secular politics.

3.8 Reference and Suggested Readings

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