

## **SEMESTER FOUR**

### **UNIT FOUR**

#### **TOPIC: SPENCER - ORGANIC THEORY**

- Spencer was the pioneer of the biological approach and viewed the state as an organism.
- The comparison of the state to a living organism goes back to the Greek period.
- For Plato ' State was the individual writ large ' and the three classes of society represented the human faculties of reason, courage and appetite.
- Likewise Cicero compared the head of state to the spirit that rules the human body.
- During the Middle Ages Marsiglio of Padua and John of Salisbury drew a comparison between state and individual.
- Althusias's theory of sovereignty was also based on the organic conception of state.
- Hobbes also described state as Leviathan, a superhuman.
- Rousseau also compared state legislatures with human heart and executive with the brain.
- Grotius based his theory of sovereignty on the conception of state as an organism or a moral person.
- The Social Contract theory had given it a setback but the idea of state having it's own personality was brought back by Idealists.

#### **COMPARISON BETWEEN SOCIAL AND BIOLOGICAL ORGANISM**

- Spencer first gave the comparison between social and biological organism in 'Social Statics' and explained it further in "Social Organism".
- In "Principles of Sociology" he gave some similarities between social and biological organisms:
  - I. Just as biological organism begins as a germ and evolves into complex structure society begins as a primitive group of hunters or warriors and grows into complex society.
  - II. Both have birth, youth, prime, old age and death.
  - III. In both parts are mutually dependent and overgrowth of one part limits growth of others.
  - IV. While tissue and blood corpuscles are continuously replaced, continuity of social life is maintained by deaths being made up for by births.
  - V. Both have sustaining, distributing and regulatory systems.

#### **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SOCIAL AND BIOLOGICAL ORGANISM**

- Units of biological organisms are closely bound together whereas in social organisms they are widely dispersed.
- Parts in social organisms are less dependent on each other and do not have an external form.
- Consciousness in biological organisms is concentrated in brain but diffused in biological organisms.

- Each unit in state is capable of independent action and existence to a degree but not in biological organisms.
- Evolution of biological organisms leads to greater coherence and subordination to the whole whereas in evolved society the characteristic is 'individuation'. Progress is from homogeneous to heterogeneous, undifferentiated to differentiated.

### **CONCLUSION**

- These differences lead to the conclusion that the welfare of the organism is not the end which is sought. The end is happiness of each unit.
- In contrast to the military society in an industrialized society the individual is the end.
- Spencer thus advocates individualistic theory and respect for personality of individual and his natural rights as indicators of a progressive society.
- His theory of social organism supports evolution whereas his individualism indicates the existence of a contract.
- These contradictory ideas prevail in the philosophy of Spencer