

## **SEMESTER TWO**

### **UNIT FOUR**

#### **TOPIC : MACHIAVELLI**

Machiavelli was perhaps the most universally reprobated figure in the history of political literature. His precepts are universally disavowed in principle, but regularly followed in practice.

#### **CHILD OF HIS TIMES**

- The brilliant Florentine was truly a child of his times. The era was that of the strong man in both secular and ecclesiastical politics.
- He was interested in the unification of the Peninsula and took France and Spain as his example.
- He conceived of Italian society and politics as illustrative of institutional decay and prey to corruption and moral degradation.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

- He advocated the empirical or historical method of investigation.
- It was different from the theological and authoritarian method which had characterized the medieval thought.
- His reference was restricted to histories of Greece and Rome.
- However, his method was historical more in appearance than in reality as he did not supplement by comparisons.

#### **HUMAN NATURE**

- His views on human nature made him responsible for establishing the relationship between politics and psychology.
- Aristotle's views on social nature of man is his basis but his views are thoroughly Hobbesian.

#### **THE PRINCE**

In 'The Prince' he describes man as:

- Ungrateful
- Fickle
- Deceitful
- Cowardly
- Avaricious
- Calculative
- Egoistic
- Aggressive

### **ADVICE TO PRINCE**

- He advised the ruler to construct his policies on the assumption that men are bad so he should aim to be feared rather than loved.
- Property and life are universal desires so governments should aim at security of these two
- As man judges by appearances crafty rulers should take advantage of it.
- The ruler should depend on his own judgment and never trust his counsellors.
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### **RELIGION AND MORALITY**

- Initiated the process of completely and deliberately separating politics from ethics and religion.
- This was practically involved in works of Aristotle but was not essential in his system.
- His concern was limited to the attainment and maintenance of power. In this he was a forerunner of Marx.
- He was not immoral but unmoral or amoral.
- In 'Discourses' he held that religion made men feeble and an easy prey to evil minded men.

### **STATE**

- His interest was in the practical state and his pragmatism led him 'to get back to the actual truth of things'.
- He repudiated the idea that the State is a part of the Divine order and could be understood only in the light of the Divine plan.
- This idea was later taken up by Marx on the basis of economic forces.
- He makes materialistic individualism the explanation of the love of independence and selfgovernment.
- People desire Republican government as it gives a chance of material gain to a majority of the people

### **SOVEREIGNTY**

- His idea of sovereignty and corresponding idea of the territorial national-state is an important contribution of Machiavelli according to Jones.
- His idea of a central authority which is supreme over other institutions was significant in separating ancient from modern theory.

### **NATIONAL STATE**

- He became the forerunner of the theory of national state when he laid down that a state should expand up to the limits of ethnic homogeneity.

- He did not use the term of nationality in the modern sense but indicated that common traditions , language and legal system were forces which made a state united against other states.
- He advocated the expansionist state like the Roman' expansionism and unlike that of Greek city state.

### **CONCLUSION**

- He was an extreme individualist
- He was pragmatic devoted to classical antiquity.
- He believed in hedonistic morality
- He was a sincere patriot.
- He was the 'Father of Modern Political Theory' who introduced new possibilities in political philosophy.
- He was the first exponent of 'power politics'

### **CRITICS**

- Dr. Murray: ' Machiavelli was clear -sighted,not far-sighted .'
- C J Fox: 'What is morally wrong can never be politically right.'
- His greatest weakness was the acceptance