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Subject: Civic

Grade & section: 12(A – D)

Unit: 1-4(from grade 11)

Main topic: Origin of state

Sub topic/s: Theory of state

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Theories on the Origin and Development of State

There are various theories developed by scholars on the origin and development of state. The following are the common one.

A. Divine Right Theory

This views state as an institution created by God and rulers as God's representatives on earth. It claims that it is of God's will that in human society some are born to rule while others are born to be ruled. This is the oldest theory concerning the primary origin of the state. Accordingly, the state is established and governed by God himself or by some superhuman power. God may rule the state directly or indirectly through some ruler who is regarded as the agent or vice-regent or vicar of God. Such a state is known as a theocratic or God-ruled state. It served as a justification for the power of feudal emperors.

B. Evolutionary Theory

This claims state's gradual evolution out of earlier communities. Here the argument is that state is an eventual extension of the family. The first group of collective human life is the family or the household, the last is the state. The earliest advocate of this theory is Aristotle in whose view a society of many families is called a village, and a village is most naturally composed of the descendants of one family, the children and the children's children for which reason states were originally governed by kings, as the barbarian states now are, which are composed of these who had before submitted to kingly government; for every family is governed by the elder, as are the branches thereof, on account of their relation there. And when many villages so entirely join themselves together as in every respect to form but one society, that society is state, and contains in itself... the end and perfection of government. This theory argues that state not a make, but a growth; and not one but many factors have played their part in state building. Consequently, this theory dwells on the fact that the state is a result of a very long process of

evolution and hence there many factors that have played pivotal role in their part in the origin and gradual development state.

C. Force theory

This associates states emergence to endemic wars of conquest and conflicts. State is created through a process of coercions and occupation of the weak by the strong.

Hence, military might or physical strength is considered to be of paramount importance for consolidation of state.

D. Social Contract theory

This was developed from 16th_18th centuries in revolutionary fight against absolute monarchs. Its major exponents were British political thinkers Thomas Hobbes (1588- 1679) & John Locke (1632-1704) and French scholar Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778).

It holds that state is an artificial creation based on voluntary consent of people and its purpose is to safeguard peoples' inalienable rights. However, it gives priority to individual over society. It is difficult to reconcile contradiction between its individualistic premises as individual is born in to and indefinitely tied to society.

Nevertheless, this theory is currently operational in international politics.

E. The Marxist Theory

According to this theory, historically, state originated from the split of society into social classes with sharp & polarized economic interests. The formation of social classes is associated with emergence of private property. It stands for the interests of the rich against the poor. Thus, proponents of this theory believe that with historical process of disappearance of private property and antagonistic social classes, state will wither away. Thus, an envisioned Social system, (communism) where everybody will be equal and all have whatever they want would prevail.