# UNIT : 3 ARISTOTLE: CRITIQUE OF THEORY OF IDEAS, CAUSATION

**Unit Structure:**


3.1 Learning objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Meaning of Causation

3.4 History of the theory of Causation

3.5 Aristotle : Theory of Causation

3.6 Critical discussion of the theory of Causation

3.7 Let us sum up

3.8 Answers to check your progress

3.9 Further Reading

3.10 Model questions.


## 3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES :

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- know the general meaning of Causation
- explain the theory of causation of Aristotle
- know about the history of Causation
- describe the objections against the theory of Causation

## 3.2 INTRODUCTION :

This unit will introduce you about the history of the concept of causality and Aristotle's view about this theory. Aristotle was one of the most influential and grpund breaking philosophers of his time. Causation was one of his primary focuses both that of the everyday events, physical beings and the universe in its entirety. Aristotle famously is thought to have said that causation all men desire to know. In the philosophical discussions, both western and Indian the doctrine of causation has a significant place and in this unit we will discuss about the theory of causation in both.

## 3.3 MEANING OF CAUSATION :

Generally 'causation' means a connection between two events or states such that one produces or brings about the other, here one is the cause and the other is its effect. In a simple way causation can be defined as if cause then effect or every event must have a cause. A cause has traditionally been through of that which produces something in terms of which that is produced, its effect can be explained. Accordingly causality is implicit in the logic and structure of ordinary language. Aristotle philosophy uses the word 'cause' to mean explanation or answer to a why question including Aristotle's material, formal, efficient and final causes. Then the cause is the explanans for the explanandum.

The emphasis on the concept of cause explains why Aristotle developed a theory of causality which is commonly known as the doctrine of the four causes. For Aristotle, a firm grasp of what a causes there are, is essential for a successful investigation of the world around us.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

1. What is causation?

## 3.4 HISTORY OF THE THEORY OF CAUSATION :

Theory of causation has a unique place in the philosophical discussions of both western and Indian. Hence in order to better understand the contemporary approaches to the complex issue of consusation, it is necessary to have a clear insight into the history evolution of the concept of cause.

Thought the concept of causation has emerged in pre socraric philosophy it was probably plato who first stated the principle of causality. He stated that everything that becomes or changes must do so owing to same cause as nothing can come to be without a cause But plato emphasized the causal importance of formal causes. However, since Aristotle was the first philosopher to give an extensive account of causes.

Aristotle discussed his theory of causation are to be found in his posterior analysis, his physics and his Metaphysics. The content always concerns both a certain being and the conditions of knowledge of that being. Aristotle developed a theory of causality which is commonly know as the doctrine of four causes.

The stoic cosmos is an organism inspired with divine reason and its entire development is providentially ordained by fate. The stoics were the first philosophers to systematically maintain in idea that every event is necessitated by certain causal conditions. They strictly held to the view that every has a cause. They rejected the idea that there could be any uncaused event because that would undermine their basic belief in the coherence of the universe. Moreover, they held that each particular event necessitates its effect.

In the thirteenth century, most christian philosophers tried to reconcile Aristotle's philosophy with the christion idea that God created the world out of nothing . As a consequence. Aristotle's 'unmoved mover' was transformed into a creating cause of existence. In the seventeenth century the development of the concept of cause involved a radical change. More specifically, in this century the idea took root that

(a) All causation refers exclusively to locomotion.

(b) That causation entails determinism and

(c) That efficient causes were just the inactive nodes in the chain of events, rather than the originators of a change.

Descartes was the founder of modern philosophy. His interpretation of efficient causes as mechanical causes was an important new development. Like Descartes, Thomas Hobbes presupposed causal determinism, rejected formal and final causation and thought that causation was only relevant to motion. He explained all phenomena, even psychological and sociological ones, in terns of causal relations between moving bodies. Spinaza made a distinction between 'free causes' and 'necessary causes'. According to him, causes logically necessitate their effects and conversely. They are themselves logically necessitated by their effects. The principle of sufficient reason in one of the foundations of the great metaphysical

system of leibnitz. It refers both to the logical ground and to the real cause of things 'There is nothing without a reason or no effect without a cause'.

Locke's approach to the concept of causation was the idea of power for him a cause is a particular substance putting its power to work. Apparently Locke conceived causes and effects as particulars. In hisentire discussion of power there is no reference to either uniformally or necessary connection. This view conflicts with the modern view of causation according to which causation innvolves uniformily or neceddary connection according to law. Hume explained that in order to clarify and justify our idea of cansation we must find the impression that has given rise to it. The idea of necessity cannot be derived from our experience of individual cases of causation.

Kant an analytic philosopher, in a preliminary section to the transcendental Analytic, has raised the problem of the transcendental deduction of the concept of cause for him, the concept of cause signifies a special kind of systhesis. Kant concluded that there were only two possible solutions to the problem of causation, either must the concept of cause be complitely abandoned an unrealistic idea, or it must be grounded completely a priori in the understanding.

Milk defined cause as the antecedent on which a given phenomenon is invariably and unconsitionally consequent. From the above discussion we will come to know that there are two decisive milestones mark the history of causality. They are

(i) Aristotle conception and

(ii) The scientific conception

This analysis of the concept of cause shows that each analysis of causation must start from the recognition that causal propositions are ambiguons and that mutnally exclusive meanings are to be distinguished. 1 state that 'A' is the cause of 'B'. It means 'A' is the initiator of a change in 'B'. According to II, 'A' is the cause of 'B' means given the occurrence of 'B', A must necessarily have occurred.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**2. State True or False -**

(a) Theory of causation has a long history.

(b) Descartes was the founder of modern philosophy.

3. What is Hume's view of causation?
4. State the concept of cause according to the seventeenth century philosophers?
5. How can Mill defines a cause?

## 3.5 ARISTOTLE : THEORY OF CAUSATION :

Aristotle was not the first person to engage in a causal investigation of the world around us. From the very beginning and independently of Aristotle, the investigation of the natural world consisted in the search for the relevant causes of a variety of natural phenomenon. In the tradition of investigation, the search for causes was a search for answers to the question why? Both in the physics and in the Metaphysics, Aritotle places himself in direct continuily with this tradition

Aristotle introduced a theory of causality for the first time in human thought. He introduced the theory as a way of understanding the human experience of physical nature. For him, the causal concept is much wider in its application for modern science. It is designated any condition requisite to the occurrence of something. Aristotle recognizes four principles operative in any process four varities of cause. In physics II 3 and Metaphysics V2, Aristotle offers his general account of the four cause. Aristotle theory of causality is commonly known as the doctine of the four causes. He recognizes four types of thing that can be given in answer to a why question. The four causes are

(I) Material cause by which Aristotle understands the crude and relatively undifferentiated stuff, that from which the thing in question is made, i.e. the bronze of a statue.

(II) Formal cause : It is the pattern or structure which to become embodied in the thing when it is fully realized. It is that which the thing essntially is, i.e. the shape of a statne.

(III) Efficient cause : It is the active agent which produces the thing as its effect. It is that through which the thing is produced, i.e. the artisan, the

art of bronze casting the statue, the man who gives advice, the future of the child.

(IV) Final cause : It is the end or purpose towards which the process is directed. It is that for the sake of which a thing is made. In sculpturing, It is the fully realized and completed statue.

We must not make the mistake of supposing that each individual thing has only one type of cause. Wheather it be a natural object a living plant or animal or a manufactured article, everything is explicable by means of all four types of cause. The four cases can be much more readily discriminated in a fabricated article or an artistic production. But aristotle insists that they can also be distinguished in natural processes and in the growth of lovong organisms.

Hence, Aristotle using the word 'cause' in a wide sense to include all that is concerned in the production of anything enumerates four classes. They are - material, formal, efficient and final. The efficient is that with which modern usage connects the name as the source. According to Aristotle, the first is the form proper to each thing. This is the quidditas of the schorlmen, the cause formalis, the second is the matter and the subject, cause materials. The third is the principle of movement which produces the thing, cause efficiens. The fourth is the end for the sake of which the thing is done the reason and good of all things, for the end of all phenomenon and of all movement is good, cause finals.

The four cause are four ways of answering different questions about why things are and how they are. Aristotle says that if we cannot answer these questions, we cannot really know the objects of which we speak, So Aristotle introduces the material, formal, efficient and final cames.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

6. What are the four causes according to Aristotle?

## 3.5.1 Critical discussion of the theory of Causation :

Aristotle four causes according to some philosophers are flawed. As he identifies the final cause as the most important, supposing that in the world is due to everything having a telos and alternating between actuality and potentiality. Numerous philosophers hold that it is easy to apply a purpose but as soon as it is applied to animals and humans, it becomes more complex.

Quention smith puts forward an argument against Aristotle's basic belief that nothing can be a cause on itself. Aristotle does not believe that something can come out of nothing, so explained how something was caused by something and that caused by something infinitum with his idea of God. Bertrand Rusell, a 20th century British philosoper, posited a parallel argument. He said that the universe is there. By saying this, he meant that the universe does not need a cause within our universe we sustain order on the basis of cause and effect. Yet we have no experience of before the universe where the laws of nature and physics could be completely different.

## 3.6 INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL VIEW OF CAUSATION:

In all branches of Indian philosophy the theory of causation has an important role. The conception of reality of every system of Indian philosophy depends upon the theory of consation. Both the heterodox and the othodox philosophers explain the cause and effect according to their own views, In Indian philosophical systems there are theories regarding cause and effect relation.

They are -

(1) Svabhāvavāda (2) Satkāryavāda (3) Asatkāryavāda

Satkāryavāda is of two type -

(a) Pariṇāmevāda (b) Vivartavāda.

Asatkāryavāda has also two divisions

(a) Arambhavāda (b) Pratityasamutpādavāda.

**(1) Svabhāvavāda :** This theory is emphasisedby the carvaka system. This view is very old and is found mentioned in the upanisads. It is also found in the svetasvāra upanisad that svabhāva or nature is the cause

of the world. Carv$\bar{a}$ka states that some entities are eternal, some are non-eternal and some are mixed. These particulars of the entities depend on their nature which is inherent in them.

**(2) Satkaryavada :** This theory is upheld by the samkhya-yoga and Advaita-Vedanta philosophers. According to Satkaryavada the effect already exists in the cause in a potential condition. So, it is not basically new creation and different from the material cause. But effect is only an explicit manifestation of that which are contained in its material cause. There are two divisions of Satk$\bar{a}$ryav$\bar{a}$da - Parinamavada and Vivartav$\bar{a}$da. Parin$\bar{a}$mavada believes that effect is a real transformation of its cause. On the other hand Vivartavadins believes that the effect is unreal. Sainkhya-Yogas view is known as Prakriti - Parinamavada, Ramanuja's view is known as Brahma - Parinamavada and sankara view is known as Vivartavada.

**(3) Asatkaryavada :** According to asatkaryavada, the effect is a new beginning (arambha), a new creation. It is different from its cause and it can never be the same with cause and the effect is not the transformation of the cause. The main point of this doctrine is that the effect is not exists in its matenrical cause before its production. If it pre-exists, then there will be no sense in saying that the effect is prodiced. Nyaya-Vaisesika Buddhists Materials and some flowers of mimainsa are asatkaryavadins. The Nyaya, vaisirika theory is known asarambhavada, i.e. production is a new beginning.

The Buddhists also donot accept the pre-existence of the effect in the cause. Their theory is known as pratityasamutpadavada. Causation according to them is dependent origination. Buddhists uphold that the effect is produced only after the cause is destroyed



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

7. Choose the correct option

(a) There are 4/5/3 theories of causation in Indian philosophy.

(b) Arambhavada is accepted by Nyaya/Advaita Vedanta/Buddha.

(c) According to Satkaryavada the effect is pre-exists/not exists in its material cause.



8. Define Svabhavavada.

## 3.7 LET US SUM UP :

- Causation theory is there in both of Indian and Western philosophy.
- Generally causation means a connection between two events or states.
- One produces about an event is the cause and the other is its effect.
- Causation theory has a long history. Almost all the philosophers of Western philosophy have their own view rogarding this theory.
- Aristotle introduced a theory of causality for the first time in human thought.
- He introduced the theory of causality as a way of understanding in human experience of physical nature. In physics and Metaphysics, Aristotle offers his general account of the four causes.
- Aristotle's theory of causality is commonly known as the doctrine of the four cause.
- They are - material cause, Formal cause, Efficient cause and Final cause.
- Theory of causation has a significant place in Indian philosophy also.



- Both the orthodox and the heterodox philosophers explain the cause and effect according to their own views.

## 3.8 FURTHER READING :

1. **Hankinson J.R. 'Cause and Explanation in ancient Greek thought. Oxford:** Oxford University Press; 1998.
2. **Copleston, Fredrick, A History of philosophy, Vol 1 :** Greece and Rome, New York, Image Books, 1993
3. **Thilly, Frank :** A History of philosophy - Central Publishing. Hence, Allahbad, 1984

4. **Datta D.M. & Chatlerjee Satischandra :** An Introduction to Indian Philosophy - University of Calcutta, 1960

5. **Radhakrishnan S. Indian Philosophy Vol - I & II :** Oxford University Press, 1923 (First Published)

## 3.9 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS :

**Ans to Q no 1.** Generally causation means a connection between two events or states such that one produces or brings about the other. Here one is the cause and the other is its effect.

**Ans to Q no 2.** (a) True

(b) False

**Ans to Q no 3.** According to Hume causation is a relation between objects that we employ in our reasoning in order to yield less than demonstrative knowledge of the world beyond our immediate impuessions.

**Ans to Q no 4.** According to the seventeenth century philosophers the idea of cause more specifically took root that

(i) All causation refers exclusively to locomotion

(ii) that causation entails determination and

(iii) that efficient causes were just the inactive nodes in the chain of events rather than the originators of a change.

**Ans to Q no 5.** For Mill, cause is an antecedent on which a given phenomenon is invariably and unconditionally consequent.

**Ans to Q no 6.**According to Aristotle there are four causes. They are Material cause, Formal cause, Efficient cause and Final cause.

**Ans to Q no 7.**(a) 3

(b) Nyaya

(c) Pre-exists

**Ans to Q no 8.** Svadharma is a cansation theory. In Indian philosophy this causation theory is upheld by the carvake system. According to this theory everything is produced by its own nature or svabhaba.

## 3.10 MODEL QUESTIONS :

**A. Very short questions:**

**Q 1.** Define cause

**Q 2.** In which book Aristotle discussed his theory of cousation?

**Q 3.** What is causation according to Descartes?

**Q 4.** Satkaryavada theory is accepted by which philosophical systems of Indian philosophy?

**B. Short questions (with in 150 words)**

**Q 1.** Explain causation according to Asatkaryavada.

**Q 2.** Write short notes on

(a) Hume's causatity

(b) Four causes of Aristotle

(c) Avambhavasa

**Q 3.** State Locke's view of causation.

**C. Long questions (Within 300 - 500 words)**

**Q 1.** Discuss the history of causality.

**Q 2.** How did Aristotle explained his theory of causation? Is there any objection against it?

**Q 3.** Explain causation theory according to the system of India philosophy.

**Q 4.** Discuss with example - 'Four causes of Aristotle'

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