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INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THEORY

B.P.S.C.- 131

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QUESTION PAPER

June – 2024

(Solved)

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THEORY **B.P.S.C-131**

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Attempt any **five** questions. Attempt at least **two** questions from each section. All questions carry **equal** marks.

SECTION-I

Q. 1. What is the state? Describe various forms of state.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 2, 'What is State' and Page No. 6, Q. No. 5.

Q. 2. Examine the Marxist critique of the idea of freedom.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 24, 'Marxist Critique and The Idea of Freedom'.

Q. 3. What is meant by rights? How are rights different from claims? Discuss.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-6, Page No. 48, 'Rights: Meaning and Nature' and Page No. 51, Q. No. 1.

Q. 4. Describe the advantages of democracy over other forms of government.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 62, Q. No. 1.

SECTION-II

Q. 5. Explain liberal-individualistic understanding of state.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-10, Page No. 96, 'Liberal-Individualist Understanding'.

Q. 6. Describe the general determining factors for entitlement of citizenship.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-9, Page No. 91, Q. No. 2.

Q. 7. Explain Feminist theory to understand inequality and politics.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-8, Page No. 76, 'Feminist Theory' and Page No. 74, 'Inequalities in Political Power (Access to decisionmaking, representation)'.

Q. 8. How can protective discrimination guard the interests of underprivileged sections in a society? Mention.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-13, Page No. 129, Q. No. 1.

QUESTION PAPER

December – 2023

(Solved)

INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THEORY **B.P.S.C-131**

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Attempt any **five** questions. Attempt at least **two** questions from each section. All questions carry equal marks.

SECTION-I

Q. 1. Explain what is politics.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 5, Q. No. 3 and Page No. 9, Q. No. 4.

Q. 2. Discuss the empirical approach in political theory.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 14, 'Towards A Definition of Political Theory' and Page No. 15, 'Empirical Approach' and Page No. 20, 'Empirical Approach'.

Q. 3. Write a note on Isaiah Berlin's two concepts of liberty.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 28, Q. No. 2.

Q. 4. How do feminists approach equality? Elaborate.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-4, Page No. 33, 'Equality of Feminism' and Page No. 37, Q. No. 3 (a).

SECTION-II

Q. 5. Write short notes on the following:

(a) Distributive and Economic Justice.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-5, Page No. 41, 'Distributive Justice and Economic Justice', Page No. 45, Q. No. 2.

(b) Theory of natural rights.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-6, Page No. 49, 'Theory of Natural Rights'.

Q. 6. (a) Procedural and Substantive dimensions of democracy.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 60, 'Procedural/Minimalist and Substantive/Maximalist Dimension'.

(b) Gender and politics.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-8, Page No. 73, 'Gender and Politics'.

Q. 7. Trace the evolution of the concept of citizenship.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-9, Page No. 86, 'Evolution of the Concept of Citizenship', 'Theories of Citizenship'.

Q. 8. Explain the concept of censorship.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-12, Page No. 117, 'Censorship: The Concept'.



Sample Preview of The Chapter

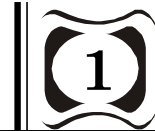
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INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL THEORY



What is Politics?

INTRODUCTION

The term politics is derived from the Greek word polis meaning both 'city' and 'state'. The ancient Greeks called it as a new way of thinking. Politics can be called as the activity specific to a citizen. The Greek political studies was concerned with the constitutions and made generalisations about the relations between human nature and political associations. In fact, its most powerful component was the theory of recurrent cycles. Also, Aristotle's believed that some element of democracy is essential to the best kind of balanced constitution, which he calls a polity. Ancient Rome is an example of politics as an activity performed by human beings holding offices that clearly limit the exercise of power.

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

POLITICS AS A PRACTICAL ACTIVITY

As a practical activity, politics is the discourse and the struggle over organization of human possibilities. It is about power and resources and is a phenomenon found in all groups, institutions and societies, cutting across private and public life. The conditions of all the areas of life are created in politics and it is the core of the development of collective problems and their resolutions.

Politics Difficult to Define Precisely

A very close definition of politics is that it is the activity by which groups reach binding collective decisions through attempting to reconcile differences among their members.

Nature of Politics: Politics involves people who accept a common membership or at least acknowledge

a shared fate. Politics assumes an initial diversity of views and involves reconciling such differences through discussion and persuasion. Politics is important for the collective character of human life. The society in which we live must reach collective decisions: about sharing resources, about relating to other groups and about planning for the future.

Politics: An Inescapable Feature of the Human Condition

Politics is an inescapable feature of the human condition. According to the Greek philosopher

Aristotle, 'Man is by nature a political animal' which meant that not just that politics is unavoidable, but rather that it is the essential human activity; political engagement is the feature which most sharply separates us from other species. He added that people can only express their true nature as reasoning, virtuous beings through participation in a political community. In all, politics consists in procedures for allowing a range of views to be expressed and then combined into an overall decision. According to Shively, 'Political action may be interpreted as a way to work out rationally the best common solution to a common problem – or at least a way to work out a reasonable common solution.' That is, politics consists of public choice.

WHAT IS POLITICS?

There are various ways in which people define politics. Some of these are:

- 'Politics' deals with the activities of the politicians, notably the leaders of political parties.
- In terms of the activities of politicians, one might say that politics concerns the rivalries of politicians in their struggle for power.
- Politics is about power and how it is distributed.

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- According to Max Weber, in his famous lecture of 1918, 'Politics as a Vocation', started by proposing that the concept of politics was 'Extremely broad-based and comprises any kind of independent leadership in action.'
- Politics is not necessarily a matter of government or concerned with the activities of politicians. It exists in any reference where there is a structure of power and struggle for power in an attempt to gain or maintain leadership positions.

In all, we can say that everything is politics, which affects our lives through the agency of those who exercise and control state power, and the purposes for which they use that control.

WHAT IS STATE?

There are various forms of the state which are different from one another in important ways. The Greek city-state is clearly different from the modern nation state, which has dominated world politics since the French Revolution. In the study of politics, there is the explanation of what is meant by those terms. The main objective is to discuss how each form distinguishes itself from the other and the significance of such distinction.

State: Differences on Account of Political Institutions/Social Context

There are differences in states in terms of their political institutions and in terms of the social context within which they are situated and which they try to maintain. The liberal-democratic state is characterized by representative institutions such as a parliament and an independent judiciary, the leader control the fascist state. The state is therefore, differently structured and operates in a social framework of a very different kind. The state is not the same as the government. In fact, it is a complex of various elements of which the government is only one.

Ralph Miliband's Views on State

Ralph Miliband talks about the different elements which together constitute the state in his book '*The State in Capitalist Society*'. First one is the government and the second is the administrative element, the civil service or the bureaucracy which is supposed to be neutral. In the list, the third is the military and the police, the 'order-maintaining' or the repressive arm of the state and the fourth is the judiciary. The fifth one is the local government. These units have considerable independence from the central government

in some federal systems which control their own sphere of power, where the government is constitutionally debarred from interfering. The final and the sixth element is the representative assemblies and the parliament in the British system. The political parties also perform role in the representative assembly and it is there that, at least partly, the competitive fight between the government and the opposition is enacted.

Various Forms of State

There are various forms of state. It is interplay of various factors like religion, kinship, war, property, political consciousness and technological advances. The various forms in the process of historical evolution of state are: Tribal State, Oriental Empire, Greek City State, Roman World Empire, Feudal State and the Modern Nation State.

In the year 1648, the Modern Nation state arose after the Treaty of Westphalia was signed which led to emergence of territorial state consolidating political authority within a particular territory excluding domestic from external. The liberal and Marxist perspectives dominates the modern concept of state and the liberal perspective is dynamic as it has changed with time depending on interests and needs of individuals and the society. According to the Marxist notion, the liberal idea of state is rejected calling the state as an instrument of class and seeks to establish a classless and stateless society through the proletarian revolution.

POLITICS AS A VOCATION

Weber quoted a lecture, 'Politics as a Vocation'. He said that the definition of the state could not be given in terms of the tasks which it undertakes or of the ends it pursues. A state should be defined in terms of the specific means, which it employed which were ultimately, physical force. According to Weber, state 'Is a human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory'. The different elements combined here are a given territory, or geographical area, which is controlled by the state and the use of physical force to maintain its control and last the monopoly of the legitimate use of such force or coercion. From all the above studies, Weber inferred that for him politics meant 'Striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power either among states or among groups within a state.' The study of politics includes relationship of state and society. A state can be viewed as a specialized apparatus of domination, the history

of modern times has been marked by the extension of its scale and grip. There is a need of larger and more sophisticated armed forces and more regulative welfare agencies which engages in a wider range of activities than was the case before in the modern state. In the book, *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx wrote about the growth of state power in France, which he saw as typical of the modern state. He believed how through socialism, eventually the state would be abolished and society would govern itself without a specialised apparatus of repression. On the other hand, according to Weber, the socialism would need even more officials to administer a collectivised economy and society.

THE LEGITIMATE USE OF POWER

The state does not rest on force totally. The power of the state can be exercised in different ways. One way is coercion which is easiest to understand, but not the only one. All those who possess power, try to get those who are subject to their rule to believe in the rightness and justness of the power they wield and this effort at justification in order to make people consent constitutes the process of legitimation. In this case of power or authority, people obey because they think it is right and they have the authority to command. According to the recent analyst of power, 'Legitimate authority is a power relation in which the power holder possesses an acknowledged right to command, and the power subject, an acknowledged obligation to obey.'

Max Weber on Legitimation

Weber said that there are three types of legitimation:

- The first type is the traditional domination in which the power is justified because the holders of power can appeal to tradition and habit and the authority has always been bestowed in them personally or in their families.
- The second type is charismatic legitimation in which people follow the power-holder because of the unique personal qualities of the leader.
- The third type is of the legal-rational kind in which people follow certain persons who are authorized by specific rules to command in strictly defined spheres of action.

The political system consists of those who comply with the rules only because non-compliance will be punished. A political system is considered as stable in which people obey the rules or laws on their own because they accept the legitimacy of the established order.

Legitimation: Central Concern of Political Science

According to C. Wright Mills, 'The idea of legitimation is one of the central conceptions of political science.' The main objective of the study of politics is mainly concerned with the methods by which holders of power try to get their power justified and with the extent to which they succeed. It is important in studying any political system to investigate the degree to which people accept the existing power structure as legitimate, and thus, how much the structure rests on consent as distinct from coercion. Another important concern of legitimacy is highly important in dealing with the topics of stability and change of political systems.

Process of 'Delegitimation'

The process of delegitimation includes the ideas, which justify the existing structure of power, come under attack. The ideas of Divine Right and of autocracy were ridiculed and refuted by the philosophers, the critics of the absolute state much before the fall of the ancient regime in France. This movement contributed to undermine the foundations of the old order. Thus, it can be said that a system loses its stability once it ceases to enjoy legitimacy in the eyes of its subjects. There are many legitimising ideas which are absorbed from the earliest stages of education and diffused through a variety of forms of social interaction. These are then spread through the influence of the press, television and other mass media.

Manipulated Consent

The power can help the capacity to affect and mould people's consciousness so that they will accept the existing state of affairs without ever becoming aware of alternative possibilities. According to C. Wright Mills, Manipulation is 'Power wielded unknown to the powerless'. Also Peter Worsley stated that 'The mechanisms by which consciousness is manipulated are of growing importance in modern society.' Marxist language said that such manipulated consent would eventually produce a 'False Consciousness'. Thus, it can be said that the importance of political choice and the ability to freely express that choice cannot be overrated.

Personnel of the State Machine: The Elite

The state is not a machine, it is a set of institutions staffed by people whose ideas and basic attitudes are largely influenced by their origin and social environment. From the various theoretical point of view there are different answers to the question as to how decisive the nature and composition of the state elite

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are. The nature of a political system is best explained by an analysis of its elite, that ruling minority, which controls the state apparatus. Thus, almost everything depends on the talents and abilities of the leaders and if leadership is low, it will have disastrous consequences. Max Weber was much concerned with the nature of Germany's political leadership and was in favour of a strong parliament. The emphasis of the structural theory is on the constraints on the government stemming from the social structures within which the government has to operate. The phrase, which Marx applied to the Bonapartist state, that its power was not 'Suspended mid-air', can be generalised to apply to all types of state systems.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q. 1. What is politics as a practical activity?

Ans. Politics can be defined as the activity by which groups reach binding collective decisions through attempting to reconcile differences among their members. Politics as a practical activity can be defined as the discourse and the struggle over organization of human possibilities. It is concerned with the power and the capacity of social agents, agencies and institutions to maintain or transform their social and physical environment. As a practical activity, politics is about the resources which underpin this capacity and about the forces that shape and influence its exercise. Politics is found in almost all the groups, institutions and societies. It creates and conditions all aspects of our lives and is at the core of the development of collective problems and the modes of their resolutions. As we all live in groups, it is important to reach the collective decisions and hence politics is a collective activity. Politics is an inescapable feature of the human condition. Aristotle believed that it is the essential human activity. In all, politics consists in procedures for allowing a range of views to be expressed and then combined into an overall decision.

Among the broadest ways of defining politics is to understand it as a 'Social Activity' – an activity we engage in together with others, or one through which we engage others. Politics, in this sense, is 'always a dialogue, and never a monologue' (Heywood, 2013, p. 1). A similarly broad (or perhaps even broader) definition is offered by Arendt (2005), who argues that politics does not have an 'essence' – it does not have an intrinsic nature, or an indispensable element

according to which we can definitively, and in all circumstances, identify something as political. Thus, there are no quintessentially political acts, subjects or places. Politics, rather, is the world that emerges between us – the world that emerges through our interactions with each other, or through the ways that our individual actions and perspectives are aggregated into collectivities.

However, the argument that politics is a public endeavour can also be understood more broadly. For something to be public, it need not take place in the public sphere, as defined above. Something can be public in its orientation; it can qualify as public if it is directed outward, into the world, so to speak. On this understanding of publicity, the political-ness of an action does not depend on its location in the public or private sphere, but on its public orientation. Take, for instance, the act of reading a book or watching a film that has been censored or banned by your government. Reading such a book in a coffee shop (a public space) would certainly qualify as a political activity. But so might reading it in your home (a private space), or, indeed, keeping it on your bookshelf. Though done in the privacy of your home, these acts are directed outward, into the world, in the sense of making a (political) statement against censorship. In fact, they might even be considered political in the narrower sense of the term – they do, after all, 'Concern the state' in the sense of directly challenging its laws.

Q. 2. Discuss the essential nature of politics.

Ans. There is no precise definition of politics as it is used with varied uses and nuances. It can be defined as the activity by which groups reach binding collective decisions through attempting to reconcile differences among their members. Politics is a collective activity which involves people who accept a common membership or at least acknowledge a shared fate. Politics presumes an initial diversity of views, if not about goals, then at least about means. Politics involves discussions, persuasion and communication. There is no politics if decisions are reached solely by violence, force or use of threat, undermining the process of reaching a collective decision. As we live in a group, therefore politics can be called as collective in nature. Politics is part of our fate and we have to practice it. Politics is an inescapable feature of the human condition which is an essential human activity. Politics consists in procedures for allowing a range of views to be expressed and then combined into an overall decision.