

1

SPHERE OF POLITICS : POWER, AUTHORITY, FREEDOM AND JUSTICE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Your course in Political Science begins with this lesson, which tries to explore the meaning of Political Science. It also explains the ever-widening scope of Political Science. In this lesson you will study some of the core concepts like Power and Authority, Freedom and Justice.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to :

- explain the meaning of the Political Science and its changing perceptions;
- describe the scope of Political Science in terms of role of the State, functions of government, its relationship with citizens and activities connected to them;
- distinguish between Political Science and Politics;
- describe the meaning of Power and distinguish it from Authority;
- explain the term Justice and recognise its social, political and economic aspects;
- recognise the relevance of Justice and bring out its relation with Freedom.

1.3 MEANING OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND ITS CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

As a social science, political science deals with those aspects of individuals in society which relate to their activities and organisations devoted to seeking of power, resolution of conflict and all these, within an overall framework of rule and laws laid down by the state

1.3.1 Meaning of Political Science

The term Politics is derived from the Greek word Polis which means a City State. For

the first time this term was used by Aristotle. He took a very broad view of it and called Political Science a 'master science'. He brought within its scope not only the Polis, which is the Political institution, but also family, the society and other social institutions, which today fall within the scope of Sociology or Ethics or other social sciences.

The ancient Greek view about Political Science was mainly Philosophical. In contrast, the ancient Romans considered the legal aspect of Politics more important for their governance.

Political Philosophy : It is the study of political ideas, often within the context of a given age.

During the Middle Ages, Political Science became branch of religious order of the Church. Political authority was subordinated to the authority of the Church

As the state grew in size and became more complex, Political Science, acquired a realistic, practical and secular approach. After the Industrial Revolution, the role of the State which was limited to maintenance of internal law and order and providing defence against external aggression, has undergone considerable changes with the emergence of a new economic system.

With the passage of time, social science was further subdivided into separate disciplines. The subject of Political Science became a "specialised science of the State" and it focussed primary on the activities of the state. It studied different forms of government and its organs like legislature, executive and judiciary. It also studied in detail their composition, powers and functions, and their mutual relationship.

With the passage of time, the subject of Political Science became a specialised science of the State and focussed on the activities of the State.

However, in course of time, the scope of the subject expanded.

For instance, Laski gave it a new dimension when he stated that the study of politics concerns itself with the life of men (and women) in relation to organised state.

In the twentieth century, in the post World War II period, the 'behavioural approach' offered a third view of Political Science. This approach shifts the focus of its study from political institutions and structures to their functions. It lays stress on political activity and the behaviour of men and women who control these institutions. It replaces the study of ideas by the study of facts, evidence and behaviour. It considers political activity manifested in behaviour as the true subject of political science.

A political activity may be in the form of an individual contesting an election. It may be the activity of a group seeking the adoption of a particular policy in its favour by the government. As different people pursue different interest, such activities tend to generate disagreement, competition and conflict.

But the distinct quality of politics is that it may include physical coercion or force by the government. It may also involve the persuasive influence and effort of the government to resolve conflicts through its balanced policy decisions.

Politics is also viewed as a process whereby individuals, groups or communities seek to achieve their specific but conflicting goals. Thus, politics is the process by which scarce resources of the community are allocated within the social limit of village

a city, a region or a nation, for the purpose of providing for human needs and desires.

Politics, as the study of structures, institutions, processes and activities, recognises the possibility of the use of power. The Marxist Approach views politics as a study of irreconcilable conflicts between the two classes of the 'rich' and the 'poor', the exploiters and the exploited. But politics need not be seen only as conflict or struggle for power. There is another view according to which politics is considered as an effort for conciliation and accommodation to bring about rule of order and justice. This has been positive and substantive aspects of Political Science.

'Political' Science is generally understood to mean a systematic study of government processes by application of scientific method and analysis,

This is the modern meaning of Political Science. This meaning is broader as compared to its traditional meaning.

1.3.2 Indian Perception of Political Science

Previously the study of Political Science was only considered to be the contribution of the Western social sciences. But this view is no longer accepted. As in the West, in ancient India the political study was considered as an important aspect of social life. Monarchy was the usual form of State and government. Therefore, the political study was called Rajadharma and Rajyashastra. Dandaniti and Nitishastra were other terms used for the subject. The former two names indicated the social, political and economic relationships and the latter two names contained the scope of use of power and the science of wisdom, moral principles and right means

The most accurate term for the Science of Politics was Arthashastra, which was used by Kautilya. He defined it as "the science which deals with acquisition and protection or governance of the territory."

All the above mentioned schools have a common emphasis on Dharma, that is, the obligation of the principle of 'natural justice' on the part of the ruler. Political activity in ancient India, was considered to be a moral activity despite occasions for realism and practical aspects of the State affairs in Arthashastra or in Mahabharata.

With the advent of the British, politics was seen synonyms with subjugation, protest and patriotism. During the National movement, political ideas of Gokhale, Tilak, and Gandhi amply confirm to the need of the unity of political theory and practice in the present day world context.

Politics in India has always been understood in terms of moral purposes or norms. But this underwent several changes with the passage of time.

1.3.3 Scope of Political Science

Here we shall learn about the scope of Political Science in terms of role of the State, functions of government and its relationship with citizens.

1.3.3.1 Role of the State : The term 'State' in its modern sense was first used by Machiavelli the Italian Statesman (1469-1527). The study of the State has remained the focal point for political scientists.

The State consists of four elements. These are the People, the Territory on which they live, a Government to rule and regulate the lives of the people and Sovereignty or independence and unrestricted authority to take decisions and manage its own affairs. You will read in detail about these four elements in the next lesson.

The role and basis of the State have been interpreted differently. According to some scholars its basis lies in the consent of the people. Some others feel that it is a "necessary evil" and therefore it should govern the least. There are some who hold a strong view that it is an effective instrument of social change and welfare of the people.

In Marxist view, the State is an instrument of exploitation of the poorer class by the richer class of the society. In Gandhian view, the State would justify its existence, by acting as a 'Trustee' of the people. It should help the last poorest and weakest man or woman. It should restore to him or her, a control over his or her own life and destiny.

However, it is generally agreed that the State exists for the good of the people

The state to act as 'Trustee' of the people means that it should hold its power as a trust for welfare of the people. It should not consider people as helpless subjects, but as co-rulers in its governance.

1.3.3.2 Citizens and Government : The government is the most important instrument of the State through which it realizes its objectives. It is vested with the power to make laws and rules and to resolve clashes of interests and maintain peace and order in the country. It has to ensure territorial integrity or oneness of the country.

Modern democratic governments have to perform many other functions for the development and welfare of citizens and the society, as a whole. This is especially so in a developing country like ours.

The relation between citizens and government is reciprocal. The citizens also have certain duties towards the government.

It is the primary duty of the citizens to pay taxes to the government. They should co-operate with the government and abide by the laws and rules; should help in preventing diseases by immunisation and by keeping neighbourhood clean. They should have small families to help the government to check the population growth. They should preserve public property, help in catching and punishing anti-social and anti-national elements.

Over and above all, the citizens of different castes, religions, languages and regions should solve their problems by understanding and agreement and not by violent means. In this way, a lot of resources, energy and time of the government can be saved for constructive purposes.

1.3.4 Political Science is Distinct from Politics

Sometimes Political Science is used in place of the term politics. A clear distinction between the two needs to be understood. Some scholars define Politics to be "the science and art of government". But this is only a part of the total explanation of the subject of Political Science.

Nowadays the term Politics is used to mean the problems of the citizens which interact with the instrument of political power in one form or the other. Sometimes, politics was and is still used as the technique of compromise or the method to capture power and retain it.

But political scientists have distinguished the theoretical study of politics from practical politics in real life. The theoretical study of Politics is referred to as the study of Political Science. While the term 'Political' covers the subject matter of the study of politics, the word 'Science' refers to a systematic way of studying it.

In the view of the political scientists, the study of Political Science comprises theory of the state, concept of sovereign power, forms and functions of government, making and execution of laws, elections, political parties, rights and duties of citizens, police functions and study of welfare activities of the State and government.

Practical politics includes actual form of government, the working of government, administration, laws and legislation. It also includes international politics including such matters as peace and war, international trade and economic order, protection of your rights which are human rights, etc. All these comprise the subject matter of the study of politics.

While the knowledge of Political Science as a discipline is acquired through educational programmes, the skill of practical politics is acquired through politicking or manipulations and craftiness or by exploiting caste and regional loyalties and religious sentiments. Practical politics is often described as the 'dirty game' and a 'devious' process in the common people's mind.

But we find that there are hardly any human groupings or societies which are free from 'politics' and hardly any individual who does not know the implications of the 'game of politics'.

Practical politics also has positive aspects. The examples of which are certain steps taken by the government, such as removal of untouchability, land reforms, release of bonded labourers, prohibition of sale-purchase of human beings and begar or forced labour, introduction of minimum wages, Gharibi Hatao and 20-Point Programme, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, etc. are all such positive aspects of practical politics.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.1

1. Fill in the blanks by selecting appropriate words given in the brackets.

- (a) called Political Science a 'master science' (Plato, Aristotle, Laski)
- (b) Political Science is a special science of the (Society, State, Nation)
- (c) viewed politics as a conflict between two classes of the rich and the poor. (Greeks, Romans, Marxist)
- (d) indicates the scope of power to force. (Rajadharma, Dandaniti, Rajyashastra)
- (e) The term 'State' was first used by (Plato, Machiavelli, Kautilya)

- (f) Skill of practical politics is acquired through (honesty, morality, craftiness)

1.4 POWER AND AUTHORITY

Power and authority flow out of sovereignty of the State, which is one of its four elements, which you have already read in sub-section 1.3.3.1 of this lesson.

1.4.1 What is Power?

Broadly speaking, power is the ability to control others and make them do what one wants them to do. Therefore, this is a relationship between individuals, groups and states. It indicates change in the action of one at the instance of the other. This is accomplished through persuasion, threat, potential force or punishment. Power has been defined as "control of man over the minds and actions of other men."

By Power of the government we think of the different aspects of government. We think of ministers who have huge departments under them for the exercise of power over their fields. There is the bureaucracy and the enormous structure of government administration which has power over us. It can control our lives in various ways by making laws.

Here, one thing is to be noted. Power does not lie only in the highly publicised areas of social life, like government administration, elections, etc. It also exists in small institutions like family, etc.

1.4.2 Source of Political Power

In the ancient and medieval societies, a King or Queen was the ruler who was the source of his or her power. He or she could rule by her will or whims as suited to his or her self-interest.

But as time passed, the people struggled to change this style of governance. Instead of governance by one person's will or whims, governance by a set of rules was established. This set of rules are known as the Constitution. The personal rule was replaced by the Rule of Law.

Rule of Law : A system where law is same for all, rich or poor, and where law is supreme. All are equal in the eyes of law. No one can be punished unless it is proved that he or she has violated a law. No one is above the law.

Henceforth, a person could become a ruler by acquiring political power only according to the provisions of the Constitution. You should know that the Constitution of a country is the primary law of the land. Now a ruler cannot govern according to his or her will or self-interest. He or she rules according to the set of rules or laws, which flow out of the Constitution. The Constitution of a country is the source of power. In India the Constitution has acknowledged that the ultimate authority rests with the people who elect the government. Now the elected government draws power from the Constitution to govern the country (under parliamentary control.)

1.4.3 Authority

We have studied the meaning and source of power in detail. Now we shall learn about legitimate, and lawful and illegitimate and unlawful power. There can be powers which are considered right or proper, while others may be improper. A decoit's power over me is very real, because if I do not comply to his wishes, I might lose my life or limb. But it is not proper power generally understood. Contrary to it the power that the government representatives, policemen or judges exercise over me is proper power. The decoit's power is illegitimate power and the government's power is legitimate power over me. And the power of constitutional authorities over me is called authority. Authority contains the two ideas of power and legitimacy. Authority is the form of power which is legitimate.

Legitimacy of government or a State or its authority indicates basically the people's willingness to accept its claim to rule over them. We have seen, for instance, when we accept the authority of our elders to dictate things to us we admit the legitimacy of their power.

Before Independence, we opposed several laws of the British Government in India because we considered the right and claim of the British to rule was not just and it was not willingly accepted by us. Ultimately, after realising that their Government had lost legitimacy, the British quit India.

There is still another case where people may not be having power on the face of it. But when these simple folks organise themselves into collective forces of action, for some legitimate cause, they become powerful. Take the case of Gandhiji's Dandi March, Civil Obedience Movement or Quit India Movement. Through these movements, Gandhiji had defied the mighty British empire. He could do so because he enjoyed the support of the masses of Indian people and his ends were noble.

Do you believe that you can also become powerful as a member of an organised group dedicated to a noble cause?

INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.2

1. Fill in the blanks by selecting appropriate words given in the brackets.

- (a) The ability to control others is called (Persuasion, Power Influence).
- (b) In India the source of political power is the (President, Prime Minister, Constitution)
- (c) A decoit's power over me is (proper, improper)
- (d) Authority combines the two ideas of power and (force, fear, legitimacy)
- (e) British Rule in India was considered (just, popular, illegitimate).
- (f) The exercise of power by a politician is (cruel, proper, unjust).

- g) Even the simple folks can become powerful when they
for legitimate cause. (fight individually, are organised, remain silent
observers).
-

1.5 FREEDOM AND ITS VALUE FOR AN INDIVIDUAL AND A NATION

The term liberty is derived from the Latin word 'Liber' meaning free. Thus liberty means freedom. Freedom is of paramount importance for the development of an individual's personality. Generally the term freedom is defined as absence of restraint in the behaviour of a person. According to Professor Laski, freedom means maintenance of the conditions in which men or women have the opportunity to be their best selves.

There is a school of thought, which emphasizes complete absence of restraint for individual freedom. This negative concept of freedom advocates that individual should be free to do at will without any restraint. Such a negative notion converts freedom into licence. Licence is unrestrained freedom which means to be free to do anything including improper and undesirable things.

On the other hand, the advocates of the concept of positive freedom state that individual should be free to act only to the extent that his or her activities do not curtail the freedom of others. Law determines the extent of positive freedom to be enjoyed by every individual. Therefore, freedom in combination with law or authority is supposed to be within the desirable limits. The freedom of many may require restraints of law on the freedom of some.

From the meaning of freedom as explained by several scholars, the following principles emerge:

- (a) Freedom does not mean absence of restraints.
- (b) Individual is free to act only to the extent that it helps in his or her development.
- (c) There should be desirable restraints on individual's activities.
- (d) Real freedom is concerned not only with the external behaviour of individual but also with his or her mental attitude and mental development.
- (e) Observance of law does not restrain freedom, rather ensures it.

1.5.1 Freedom Provided in the Indian Constitution

The hallmark of the democratic system in any country is the extent of freedom enjoyed by its citizens. The framers of the Indian Constitution have, therefore, made ample provisions that gives freedom to its citizens in the form of Fundamental Rights:

1. Six freedoms have been guaranteed to the citizens under Right to Freedom which is a part of Fundamental Rights. These are:

- (a) Freedom of speech and expression;
 - (b) Freedom to assemble peacefully and without arms
 - (c) Freedom to form associations or unions;
-

- (d) Freedom to move freely throughout the territory of India;
 - (e) Freedom to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India; and
 - (f) Freedom to practice any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business.
2. No person can be convicted of an offence except for violation of law. He or she can neither be given excessive punishment for commission of an offence nor he or she can be compelled to be a witness against himself or herself.
 3. Citizens have the right to protection of life and liberty.
 4. They have protection against arbitrary arrest and detention. You will study about these freedoms in detail in Module 3.

1.5.2 Safeguards of Freedom

All the citizens want that the State should create conditions in which their freedoms are safeguarded. The creation of such conditions depends on certain essential prerequisites. These are:

- (a) Provision of rights in the Constitution.
- (b) Rule of law and equality before law.
- (c) Democratic and responsible form of government.
- (d) Decentralization of power and maximum participation of people in the political affairs.
- (e) Independent and impartial judiciary to protect freedom.
- (f) Economic equality and equitable distribution of national resources.
- (g) Well-organised party system and vigilant political parties.
- (h) Free, fearless and impartial press.
- (i) Eternal vigilance by the people who are the protectors of freedom or liberty.
- (j) Empowerment of the poor, the workers, the oppressed and other weaker sections of society.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.3

1. Fill in the blanks by picking the appropriate words from the brackets:

- (a) The term Liberty is derived from theword 'Liber' (Greek, Roman, Latin)
- (b) freedom advocates unlimited freedom for every individual. (Total, Positive, Negative)
- (c) determines the extent of positive freedom to be enjoyed by every individual. (Justice, Equality, Law)

- (d) The freedom of many may require restraints of law on the freedom of (all, some, none).
- (e) Indian citizens have the right to protection of life and (leisure, limb, liberty)

1.6 JUSTICE AND ITS SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS

The term justice is derived from the Latin word 'Just' which means a bond. Various people in a society are bound together by certain rights and duties. The bonds which connect people with their rights and duties are 'Justice'. According to Barker, "joining and fitting between man and man (or man and women) in an organised system of human relations" is justice. According to another view, "The idea of justice connotes a rightful balance in a situation where two or more parts or principles are in conflict." Thus, to establish balance is to ensure justice between the conflicting parties. This is the notion of justice which we also find in the judgements of the courts of law.

The term justice acquires an additional meaning arising out of given social order. Understood in this sense, the idea of justice is equated with equity and fairness in society. Originally, both the latter terms imply equality. The concept of equality is in a great sense central to the concept of justice. Our own Constitution accepts equality before law as one of the fundamental principles in the system of justice.

In the history of ideas, there are two major concepts of justice:

- (i) Numerical concept of Justice.
- (ii) Proportionate (in ratio of merit) concept of justice.

Numerical concept of justice advocates equal share to all in society, irrespective of difference in merits or qualities. This view elaborates that "everyone to count for one, nobody for more than one". It means unequals may have to be treated as equals in dispensing justice.

On the other hand, Plato and Aristotle favoured proportionate justice. They meant equal shares to equals and unequal to unequals. This view also means that the distribution of power and resources should be proportionate to the worth or contribution of the individual to the society. Aristotle explained this principle by giving an example. He said that if flutes are to be distributed, they should be distributed only among those who have the skill to play flute.

Justice is a dynamic concept. It has been undergoing change from the ancient times till this day. Let us study these different concepts of Justice.

1.6.1 Social Justice

Social justice lies in providing all facilities for the development of personality of everyone and to fulfil his or her social needs. Social justice also demands the support of society to the helpless, disabled and all those who are not in a position to acquire means for themselves. They should be helped by the state by application of protective dis-

rimination and distributive justice. As a matter of fact, social justice has become the first and foremost objective of the welfare states.

Protective discrimination : is an important strategy in ensuring equality for people who are otherwise backward or weak for no fault of their own.

It implies discrimination in favour of the weaker and the backward sections of society. Reservation in favour of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is an example of protective discrimination.

Distributive justice : It means that there should be fulfillment of basic needs of all before we can allow fulfillment of superfluous needs of some.

1.6.2 Economic Justice

According to M.C. Setalvad, "Economic justice is the provision of equal opportunities to the citizens to acquire wealth and use it for their living. It implies that those who are disabled or old, and unemployed and, therefore, not in a position to acquire wealth should be helped by society to live".

Gandhiji, reacting to this question said, "My ideal is equal distribution but as far as I can see, it cannot be realized. I therefore, work for equitable distribution".

1.6.3 Political Justice

Political justice implies the participation of the people in the affairs of the State and the share in the governance of the country. In a democracy, the system of adult franchise symbolizes political justice. Equal opportunity to public appointments, right to contest elections for public office, right to freedom of expression and speech, to form associations and union, and the right to criticise government are the foundations of political justice.

1.6.4. Relevance of Justice and its Relationship to Freedom and Equality

The concept of justice is explained by Barker as a natural outcome of freedom or liberty and equality. In other words, logical consequence of freedom is equality and logical outcome of equality is justice. Thus economic equality results in economic justice. Freedom and equality are two aspects of justice. The ultimate objective of both freedom and equality is justice.

Today, it is universally recognized that for the proper development of personality freedom is as much necessary as equality before law, equal protection of law, and some social, economic and political justice.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.4

1. Fill in the blanks by picking the appropriate words from the brackets:

- (a) According to justice means "joining and fitting between man and man in an organised system of human relations" (Plato, Aristotle, Barker)

- (b) Numerical concept of justice advocates share to all in society. (equitable, equal, unequal)
 - (c) favoured proportionate justice. (Kautilya, Aristotle, Machiavelli)
 - (d) Economic justice is the provision of equal opportunities to citizen to acquire (power, wealth, status).
 - (e) Equal opportunity to public appointment is justice (legal, economic, political)
-

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

The ancient Greeks equated Political Science with Political Philosophy. During the middle ages, Political Science became a branch of the Church, subordinating political authority to the authority of the Church.

In modern times, Political Science acquired a realistic and secular approach. As a result of a new economic system due to Industrial Revolution, the role of the State which was limited to maintaining internal law and order and providing defence against external aggression has undergone considerable changes.

The subject of Political Science became a specialized science of the state. It studied about different forms of government and its organs like legislature, executive and judiciary.

Laski stated that the study of Political Science concerned itself with the life of men or women in relation to organised states.

In the twentieth century, the behavioral approach has shifted the focus of its study from political institutions to their functions and the study of political activities of men and women and the institutions as the frame work.

In ancient India the Science of Politics was called Arthashastra. It was considered as the science which dealt with the acquisition and protection or governance of the territory. Political activity remained moral, based on Dharma.

During the middle ages, politics in India was perceived in terms of office and authority. In the British period and during the National Movement, it was conceived as synonymous with subjugation, protest and patriotism.

Under the scope of Political Science, we study the role of the State, functions of government and its relationship with citizens.

Political Science is distinct from politics. While the former deals with the study of politics, the latter refers to the problems of man and woman which interact with political power and conflict with each other.

Power is the ability to control others. It is the capacity to get things done as one would like other to do. Power in combination with legitimacy is called authority.

Generally, freedom is defined as absence of restraints in the behaviour of a person. But positive freedom means that individual should be free to act only to the extent that others' freedom is not curtailed. Law protects freedom. The Indian Constitution pro

vides several freedoms to the citizens. Freedom may be personal, political, economic and national. Generally, justice is equated with equity and fairness. Social justice demands support of society to the helpless and the disabled. Social justice is the objective of welfare states. The other aspects of justice are political and economic. Freedom and equality are the quint essence of justice.

TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. Explain the meaning of Political Science and its changing perceptions.
2. Write a note on the Indian perception of Political Science.
3. Describe the scope of Political Science in terms of role of the State and functions of government.
4. Distinguish between Political Science and Politics.
5. Explain the meaning of Power and distinguish it from authority.
6. Define freedom and explain its value for human progress.
7. Explain the term Justice and describe its social, political and economic dimensions.
8. Explain the relevance of justice and bring out its relation and freedom.

KEY TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

1.1 (a) Aristotle

(b) State

(c) Marxist

(d) Dandaniti

(e) Machiavelli

(f) Craftiness

1.2 (a) Power

(b) Constitution

(c) Improper

(d) Legitimacy

(e) Illegitimate

(f) Proper

(g) Are Organized

1.3 (a) Latin

(b) Negative

(c) Lqw

(d) Some

(e) Liberty

1.4 (a) Barker

(b) Equal

(c) Aristotle

(d) Wealth

(e) Political

HINTS OF TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. Refer to Section 1.3.1
2. Refer to Section 1.3.2
3. Refer to Section 1.3.3
4. Refer to Section 1.3.4
5. Refer to Section 1.4.1, 1.4.3
6. Refer to Section 1.5
7. Refer to Section 1.6 to 1.6.3
8. Refer to Section 1.6.4