
UNIT 1 WHAT IS POLITICS?*

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Politics as a Practical Activity
 - 1.2.1 Politics Difficult to Define Precisely
 - 1.2.2 Nature of Politics
 - 1.2.3 Politics: An Inescapable Feature of the Human Condition
- 1.3 What is Politics?
- 1.4 What is State?
 - 1.4.1 State: Differences on Account of Political Institutions/ Social Context
 - 1.4.2 Ralph Miliband's Views on State
 - 1.4.3 Various Forms of State
- 1.5 Politics as a Vocation
- 1.6 The Legitimate Use of Power
 - 1.6.1 Max Weber on Legitimation
 - 1.6.2 Legitimation: Central Concern of Political Science
 - 1.6.3 Process of 'Delegitimation'
 - 1.6.4 Manipulated Consent
 - 1.6.5 Personnel of the State Machine: The Elite
- 1.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.8 References
- 1.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

1.0 OBJECTIVES

This introductory unit of the first block of the new course in political theory at the Bachelor's Degree level tells you about the basic meaning of politics and thus, about the fundamentals of the discipline of political science. After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain what is politics;
- Explain the meaning of state;
- Describe and explain the concept of power; and
- Discuss legitimation and delegitimation.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this unit is to understand the concept of 'political'. The essence of political is the quest for bringing about an order that men consider good. The term politics is derived from the Greek word polis meaning both 'city' and 'state'. Politics among the ancient Greeks was a new way of thinking, feeling and above all, being related to one's fellows. As citizens they all were

equal, although the citizens varied in positions in terms of their wealth, intelligence, etc. It is the concept of political which makes the citizens rational. Politics is the activity specific to this new thing called a citizen. A science of politics is possible, because politics itself follows regular patterns, even though it is at the mercy of the human nature from which it arises.

Greek political studies dealt with constitutions and made generalisations about the relations between human nature and political associations. Perhaps, its most powerful component was the theory of recurrent cycles. Monarchies tend to degenerate into tyranny, tyrannies are overthrown by aristocracies, which degenerate into oligarchies exploiting the population, which are overthrown by democracies, which in turn degenerate into the intolerable instability of mob rule, whereupon some powerful leader establishes himself as a monarch and the cycle begins all over again. It is Aristotle's view that some element of democracy is essential to the best kind of balanced constitution, which he calls a polity. He studied many constitutions and was particularly interested in the mechanics of political change. He thought that revolutions always arise out of some demand for equality. Ancient Rome is the supreme example of politics as an activity conducted by human beings holding offices that clearly limit the exercise of power. When the Romans thought about power, they used two words in order to acknowledge an important distinction.

1.2 POLITICS AS A PRACTICAL ACTIVITY

Politics as a practical activity is the discourse and the struggle over organisation of human possibilities. As such, it is about power; that is to say, it is about the capacity of social agents, agencies and institutions to maintain or transform their environment, social and physical. It is about the resources, which underpin this capacity, and about the forces that shape and influence its exercise. Accordingly, politics is a phenomenon found in all groups, institutions and societies, cutting across private and public life. It is expressed in all the relations, institutions and structures that are implicated in the production and reproduction of the life of societies. Politics creates and conditions all aspects of our lives and it is at the core of the development of collective problems, and the modes of their resolutions.

1.2.1 Politics Difficult to Define Precisely

A crisp definition of politics—one that fits just those things we instinctively call ‘political’ – is impossible. Politics is a term with varied uses and nuances. Perhaps, the nearest we can come to a capsule statement is this: politics is the activity by which groups reach binding collective decisions through attempting to reconcile differences among their members. There are significant points in this definition.

1.2.2 Nature of Politics

Politics is a collective activity, involving people who accept a common membership or at least acknowledge a shared fate. Thus, Robinson Crusoe could not practice politics. Politics presumes an initial diversity of views, if not about goals, then at least about means. Were we all to agree all the time, politics would be redundant. Politics involves reconciling such differences through discussion and persuasion. Communication is, therefore, central to politics. Political

decisions become authoritative policy for a group, binding members to decisions that are implemented by force, if necessary. Politics scarcely exists if decisions are reached solely by violence, force, or use of threat, undermining the process of reaching a collective decision. The necessity of politics arises from the collective character of human life. We live in a group that must reach collective decisions: about sharing resources, about relating to other groups and about planning for the future. A family discussion where to take its vacation, a country deciding whether to go to war, the world seeking to limit the damage caused by pollution – are examples of groups seeking to reach decisions which affect all their members. As social creatures, politics is part of our fate: we have no choice but to practice it.

1.2.3 Politics: An Inescapable Feature of the Human Condition

So although the term ‘politics’ is often used cynically, to criticize the pursuit of private advantage under the guise of public interest, politics is in fact, an inescapable feature of the human condition. Indeed, the Greek philosopher Aristotle argued that ‘man is by nature a political animal’. By this, he meant 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. For Aristotle, people can only express their true nature as reasoning, virtuous beings through participation in a political community. Members of a group rarely agree; at least initially, on what course of action to follow. Even if there is agreement over goals, there may still be a skirmish over means. Yet a decision must be reached, one way or the other, and once made it will commit all members of the group. Thus, politics consists in procedures for allowing a range of views to be expressed and then combined into an overall decision. As Shively points out, ‘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.

Check Your Progress 1

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer.
ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) What is politics as a practical activity?

.....
.....
.....
.....

- 2) Discuss the essential nature of politics.

.....
.....
.....

1.3 WHAT IS POLITICS?

Everybody has some idea about the meaning of the term politics; to some people the question may even appear quite superfluous. ‘Politics’ is what one reads about in the papers or watches on television. It deals with the activities of the politicians, notably the leaders of political parties. What is politics all about? Why, precisely, are these activities ‘political’ and what defines the nature of politics? If one starts with a definition couched in terms of the activities of politicians, one might say that politics concerns the rivalries of politicians in their struggle for power. This would certainly be the kind of definition with which most people would agree. There would, also, probably be agreement that politics refers to the relationship between states on an international scale. ‘Politics is about power and how it is distributed.’ But power is not an abstract entity floating in the void. It is embodied in human beings. Power is relationship existing wherever a person can impose his will on other persons, making them obey whether they want to or not. Hence, a situation arises characterized by leadership, a relation of domination and subordination. 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.’ In whatever context such leadership in action exists, politics is present. In our terms, political would include any situation where power relations existed, i.e. where people were constrained or dominated or subject to authority of one kind or another. It would also include situations where people were constrained by a set of structures or institutions rather than by the subjective will of persons. Such a broad definition has the advantage of showing that politics is not necessarily a matter of government, nor solely concerned with the activities of politicians. Politics exists in any context where there is a structure of power and struggle for power in an attempt to gain or maintain leadership positions. In this sense, one can speak about the politics of trade unions or about ‘university politics’. One can discuss ‘sexual politics’, meaning the domination of men over women or the attempt to alter this relation. In a narrower sense, however 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. In the lecture quoted above, Weber after initially giving a very broad definition of politics in terms of general leadership, went on to produce a far more limited definition: ‘We wish to understand by politics’, he wrote, ‘only the leadership, or the influencing of leadership, of a political association, hence today, of a state’. In this perspective, the state is the central political association. A political question is one that relates to the state, to the topic of who controls state power, for what purposes that power is used and with what consequences, and so on.

1.4 WHAT IS STATE?

A new issue comes here: what is state? The question is by no means an easy one to answer, nor is there a general agreement as to what the answer should be. It must first be noted that there are various forms of the state, which differ from one another in important ways. The Greek city-state is clearly different from the modern nationstate, which has dominated world politics since the French Revolution. The contemporary liberal-democratic state, which exists in Britain and Western Europe, is different from the fascist-type state of Hitler or Mussolini. It is also different from the state, which existed in the former USSR and in

Eastern Europe. An important part of the study of politics, and certainly an integral element of this book, is the explanation of what is meant by those terms. The purpose is to show how each form distinguishes itself from the other and what the significance of such distinction is.

1.4.1 State: Differences on Account of Political Institutions/Social Context

States differ in terms of their political institutions as well as in terms of the social context within which they are situated and which they try to maintain. So, while the liberal-democratic state is characterized by representative institutions such as a parliament and an independent judiciary, the leader controls the fascist state. With respect to the social context, the crucial contrast is between Western and Soviet type systems in so far as the former are embedded in a society which is organized according to the principles of a capitalist economy, while in the latter case the productive resources of society are owned and controlled by the state. In each case, therefore, the state is differently structured, operates in a social framework of a very different kind, and this affects and influences to a large extent the nature of the state and the purposes, which it serves.

There are different forms of the state, but whatever form one has in mind, the state as such is not a monolithic block. To start with, the state is not the same as the government. It is rather a complex of various elements of which the government is only one. In a Western-type liberal-democratic state, those who form the government are indeed with the state power. They speak in the name of the state and take office in order to control the levers of state power. Nevertheless, to change the metaphor, the house of the state has many mansions and of those, the government occupies one.

1.4.2 Ralph Miliband's Views on State

In his book *The State in Capitalist Society*, Ralph Miliband registers those different elements, which together constitute the state. The first, but by no means the only element of the state apparatus, is the government. The second is the administrative element, the civil service or the bureaucracy. This administrative executive is, in liberal-democratic systems, supposed to be neutral, carrying out the orders of politicians who are in power. In fact, however, the bureaucracy may well have its own authority and dispose of its own power. Third, in Miliband's list come the military and the police, the 'order-maintaining' or the repressive arm of the state; fourth, the judiciary. In any constitutional system, the judiciary is supposed to be independent of the holders of government power; it can act as a check on them. Fifth, element is the local government. In some federal systems, these units have considerable independence from the central government, controlling their own sphere of power, where the government is constitutionally debarred from interfering. The relationship between the central and the local government may become an important political issue, as witnessed by the controversy in British politics over the abolition of the Greater London Council and the metropolitan counties, the argument about financing local government, 'rate capping', and so on. Sixth and finally, one can add to the list representative assemblies and the parliament in the British system. One may also mention political parties, though they are not normally part of the state apparatus, at least not in a liberal democracy. They play their obvious role in the

representative assembly and it is there that, at least partly, the competitive fight between the government and the opposition is enacted.

1.4.3 Various Forms of State

Modern state is identified as the nation state. The state has come to acquire its present character through a historical process that extends to thousands of years. It is interplay of various factors like religion, kinship, war, property, political consciousness and technological advances. In the process of historical evolution of state, there have been following forms – Tribal State, Oriental Empire, Greek City State, Roman World Empire, Feudal State and the Modern Nation State. The Modern Nation state arose after the Treaty of Westphalia was signed in 1648. It led to emergence of territorial state consolidating political authority within a particular territory excluding domestic from external. The separation of territory into distinct states each with their own national spirit paved the way for establishment of Modern Nation State along with rise of international law, legal equality of states and modern theory of sovereignty. American and French revolutions further contributed to emergence of nation states.

The modern concept of state is dominated by Liberal and Marxist perspectives. The liberal perspective is dynamic as it has changed with time depending on interests and needs of individuals and the society. The early liberal view of state was negative as it favored non-interference in individual matters. However, 20th century liberalism is associated with welfare state which tries to reconcile individual liberty with social good. The Marxist notion rejects liberal idea of state, calling the state as an instrument of class and seeks to establish a classless and stateless society through the proletarian revolution. However, that did not happen after the Russian revolution in Russia and instead of a classless and stateless society, we saw power getting concentrated in hands of a few during Soviet times. Feminist perspectives on state can be mainly seen from two angles – liberal and radical. Liberal feminists say that state can play a role in bringing equality among men and women by taking steps like increasing seats for women in parliament, extending welfare schemes to women etc. However, radicals see state as an instrument of power and blame unequal distribution of labor in a family for women's unequal status in society. Hence, they contest the liberal view that state is impartial and neutral.

Check Your Progress 2

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer.
ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) What do you understand by the term politics?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- 2) Describe Ralph Miliband's views on state.

.....

- 3) Discuss various forms of state.

.....

1.5 POLITICS AS A VOCATION

The point brings us back to Weber and his already quoted lecture, 'Politics as a Vocation'. After arguing that politics is concerned above all with the central political association, the state, Weber continued by maintaining that a definition of the state could not be given in terms of the tasks which it undertakes or of the ends it pursues. There was no task, which specifically determined the state. Therefore, one had to define the state in terms of the specific means, which it employed, and these means were, ultimately, physical force. The state, Weber wrote, 'is a human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory'. There are three distinct elements combined here: a given territory, or geographical area, which the state controls; the use of physical force to maintain its control and thirdly, but most important, the monopoly of the legitimate use of such force or coercion. This legitimacy must be acknowledged by most, if not all, of those who are subject to the state's power. Weber concluded 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.' It was also mentioned that each state exists within a particular social context. The study of politics is vitally concerned with the relationship of state and society. A state centered perspective on politics does not imply that its study should neglect what happens in the wider sphere of society and how that may, as Weber says, 'influence the distribution of power'. A further fact cannot be ignored: this is the continued growth and centralization of state power. If one sees the state in terms of a specialized apparatus of domination, then the history of modern times has been marked by the extension of its scale and grip. The modern state requires an increasingly complex bureaucracy dealing with a mounting variety of tasks. It needs larger and more sophisticated armed forces, more regulative welfare agencies, and engages in a wider range of activities than was the case before. This extension of the state's sphere of action, its growth and development, applies both to liberal-democratic systems in their capitalist socio-economic context, and to socialist systems with their collective economic framework. Weber saw such growth manifested above

all in the emergence of a trained, skilled and rationally effective bureaucracy. Someone of quite a different political and theoretical background, Marx, agreed with him on this point. Marx wrote in the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* about the growth of state power in France, which he saw as typical of the modern state. He described how through socialism, eventually the state would be abolished and society would govern itself without a specialised apparatus of repression. Weber, on the contrary, believed that socialism would need even more officials to administer a collectivised economy and society.

1.6 THE LEGITIMATE USE OF POWER

The point is that, although the state depends on force, it does not rest on force alone. Here, the notion of the legitimate use of power comes in. Power, in general, and so the power of the state, can be exercised in different ways. Coercion is one form of power and perhaps the easiest to understand, but it is not the only one. Not all power relations are to be understood on the basis of the same crude model. If a lecturer through force of argument and breadth of knowledge helps students to form their ideas, such a person exercises a kind of power, though not against the students' will. More to the point, all holders of power try to get those who are subject to their rule to believe in the rightness and justness of the power they wield. This attempt at justification in order to make people consent constitutes the process of legitimisation. One can refer to such justified or accepted power as 'authority' to distinguish it from such power as is obeyed only because of a fear of sanctions. In such a situation of legitimate power, or authority, people obey because they think it is right to do so. They believe, for whatever reason, that the power-holders are entitled to their dominant role. They have the legitimate authority, a right to command. In the words of one 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.'

1.6.1 Max Weber on Legitimisation

According to Weber, there are three types of legitimisation, i.e. three methods by which the wielding of power can be justified. The first type pertains to traditional domination. There, power is justified because the holders of power can appeal to tradition and habit; authority has always been vested in them personally or in their families. The second type is charismatic legitimisation. People obey the power-holder because of the exceptional personal qualities displayed by the leader. Finally, the third type is of the legal-rational kind. People obey certain persons who are authorized by specific rules to command in strictly defined spheres of action. One might also say that the first two types are of a personal nature, while the legal-rational type shows a procedural character. As such it corresponds to the modern conception of political authority. It is, as Weber says, 'domination as exercised by the modern "servant of the state" and by all those bearers of power who in this respect resemble him.' It is obvious that the power-holders in any system will wish to have their power accepted as legitimate. Seen from their point of view, such an acceptance will permit a considerable 'economy' in the use of force. People will obey freely and voluntarily. The means of coercion, then, will not need to be constantly displayed; they can rather be concentrated on those who do not accept the legitimacy of the power structure. In any political

system, there will be those who comply with the rules only because non-compliance will be punished. Clearly, however, the stability of any political system is enhanced to the degree that people voluntarily obey the rules or laws because they accept the legitimacy of the established order. Hence, they recognize the authority of those empowered by the rules to issue commands. In reality, all political systems are maintained through a combination of consent and coercion.

1.6.2 Legitimation: Central Concern of Political Science

These are the reasons because of which, as C. Wright Mills puts it, ‘The idea of legitimization is one of the central conceptions of political science.’ The study of politics is centrally 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 crucial 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. It is also important to ascertain the actual justifications of power, which are offered; that is to say, the methods by which a system of power is legitimised. This, as the elitist theorist Mosca points out, is the ‘political formula’ of any political system. The question of legitimacy, furthermore, is highly important in dealing with the topics of stability and change of political systems. Consent may be granted or withdrawn. It is true that political systems can survive in situations where large sections of the population cease to accord any legitimacy to the system. The case of South Africa may be cited as an example; similarly, that of Poland, where it seemed that the Jaruzelski regime had little legitimacy in the eyes of substantial popular elements. The point is that in such a situation, a regime has to rely mainly on force. It then finds itself in a more precarious position, vulnerable and open to the impact of fortuitous events. The system may survive for quite a time. However, once it rests on force far more than on consent, one condition for a revolutionary change presents itself.

1.6.3 Process of ‘Delegitimation’

This explains why a revolution is often preceded by a period when the dominating ideas of the system are subjected to sustained criticism. One may call this a process of ‘delegitimation’ whereby the ideas, which justify the existing structure of power, come under attack. Long before the fall of the ancient regime in France, the ideas of *Divine Right* and of autocracy were ridiculed and refuted by the philosophers, the critics of the absolute state. Such a movement of delegitimation contributed to undermine the foundations of the old order. It prepared the way for its revolutionary overthrow. A case in point in modern times would be the fate of the Weimar Republic when large sections of the German population lost confidence in the democratic regime and, fearing a communist alternative, gave their support to Hitler’s National-Socialist party. The result was the fall of the republic without much of a struggle. Similar causes had similar effects all over the European Continent. Many western systems of liberal democracy were overthrown and replaced by fascist or semi-fascist authoritarian systems as happened in Italy, Spain, Austria and Hungary. The conclusion, in a general sense, must be that any system loses its stability once it ceases to enjoy legitimacy in the eyes of its subjects. Finally, it must be noted that even in normal times, processes of legitimization and delegitimation are permanent features of any political system. The process of legitimization is carried on in more or less subtle

ways through many channels available for the legitimation of the existing order. Legitimising ideas are absorbed from the earliest stages of education, diffused through a variety of forms of social interaction, and spread especially through the influence of the press, television and other mass media. Views, which are accepted or considered to be within the boundaries of the system, are almost forced on readers, listeners and viewers. Action, which goes beyond those limits, is presented as illegitimate. Being made to look very unattractive blocks off a range of political alternatives.

1.6.4 Manipulated Consent

There are still more effective methods available to prevent subversive ideas from even arising. They may be intercepted at source, the source being the conscious and even the subconscious mind. An important dimension of power is 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. Consent, then, becomes manipulated consent. To a certain extent we are all affected by the prevailing 'climate of opinion'. From there an ascending scale leads to a position where the moulding of minds, manipulation, is made the deliberate purpose of the state in order to create a monolithic popular mentality. Such was the purpose of Goebbels' propaganda machine in Nazi Germany and this is still, the purpose of any totalitarian regime. Manipulation is 'power wielded unknown to the powerless', as C. Wright Mills defines it. Peter Worsley points out that 'the mechanisms by which consciousness is manipulated are of growing importance in modern society.' In Marxist language, such manipulated consent would eventually produce a 'false consciousness'. Against that, it could be argued that where people are free to choose and to express their choice as in liberal-democratic systems, the manipulation of consciousness is not possible. Manipulation can only occur where free choice does not exist, as in one-party systems. It is also argued that wherever people are free to choose, but do not in fact choose an alternative to the existing order—for example, by supporting parties committed to radical changes—it is safe to assume that the existing structure of society is broadly 'what people want'. This would lead to the conclusion that the importance of political choice and the ability to freely express that choice cannot be overrated. However, 'what people want' is to some extent conditioned by various factors. Choice does not take place in a vacuum. In short, the choice itself cannot be considered as completely free from the impact of a process of legitimisation.

1.6.5 Personnel of the State Machine: The Elite

From the short survey we have so far made of political problems, a few points of importance emerge which will recur in the following discussion. They chiefly stem from the fact that state power is structured or broken up, so to speak, into distinct sectors. It has already been mentioned that the specific relationship of the various sectors is determined by the political system within which they operate. The internal structure, say, of a communist state. A further question involves the personnel of these sectors. The state, after all, is not a machine; though the phrase 'machinery of the state' may be used. The state is a set of institutions staffed by people whose ideas and basic attitudes are largely influenced by their origin and social environment. The composition of the state elite is an important problem in the study of politics. J.A.C. Griffith in *The Politics*

of the Judiciary, exemplifies what is meant by the term ‘state elite’ with reference to a study done earlier. It shows that in Britain, ‘in broad terms, four out of five full-time professional judges are products of the elite. It is not surprising that while discussing ‘judicial opinion about political cases’, Griffith finds ‘a remarkable consistency of approach in these cases concentrated in a fairly narrow part of the spectrum of political opinion.’

It must be noted here that from different theoretical points of view, different answers will be given to the question as to how decisive the nature and composition of the state elite are. Elitist theories accord the highest importance to this factor. In their perspective, the nature of a political system is best explained by an analysis of its elite, that ruling minority, which controls the state apparatus. In this perspective, almost everything depends on the talents and abilities of the leaders. A low quality of leadership will have disastrous consequences. For that reason, Max Weber was much concerned with the nature of Germany’s political leadership. He was in favour of a strong parliament, which, he believed, would provide an adequate training ground to produce leaders willing and capable of responsible action. Alternatively, leadership would fall into the hands of the bureaucracy whose training and life style made them unsuitable material for creative leadership. Marxist theories would view the matter differently. They would accord less importance to the nature of the state elite. The argument would rather be that the purpose and the aims of state activity are determined less by the elite, but far more by the social context and the economic framework within which the state system is located. This structure is of greater significance, in this view, than the character of the personnel that staff the state machine. Generally, ‘structural’ theories would emphasize the constraints on the government stemming from the social structures within which the government has to operate. Nevertheless, the two types of interpretation need not be mutually exclusive. This brings us to a final question, which deals with the relation of state and society. 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. Then, several problems present themselves. How does the power structure of society affect and constrain the political leaders? To what extent does the state interfere to maintain and legitimise or, alternatively, mitigate the inequalities of the social system? To what extent indeed is ‘civil society’ independent of the state? For some theorists, the concept of ‘totalitarianism’ is meant to suggest a situation where society is totally controlled by state power and, therefore, has no independence at all.

Check Your Progress 3

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer.
 ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) What is understood by politics as a vocation?

.....

- 2) What is legitimation? What are Max Weber's views on it?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

- 3) What is delegitimation?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

- 4) How is consent manipulated?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

1.7 LET US SUM UP

It may be conceded that understanding the political means understanding the needs, objectives and goals of human life. It is related with the political activities of human beings. Politics is the game of power. Various players play this game at the same time and compete with each other. The state forms the central point of this whole activity, since in the national affairs it is within the state and in the international affairs, it is among the states. The state is authorized for the legitimate use of power. Authority is the right to rule. Authority is a broader notion than power. The dictates of the situation mean the understanding of the political. It is the product of a situational event. The rise of modern nation state has given stability to international system but there are a number of challenges that are before today's nations. Some communities are scattered over many parts but feel united based on common culture, language or religion. For ex, Kurds are scattered over Iraq, Syria and Turkey but demand a separate state. There have been opposite examples as well, where various ethnic groups formed a state but were not able to assimilate as a nation, for ex former Soviet Union. Then there are issues of people who have migrated to other countries and have become naturalized citizens but they continue to have links with countries of their origin. There are non-traditional threats like terrorism, climate change, drug trafficking, food security etc which cannot be tackled by a country alone but require cooperative security. This would also require that states cede some

of their authority and sovereignty in the larger interest of humanity. Hence, the modern nation state needs to address these issues to stay relevant in changing times.

1.8 REFERENCES

- Ball, Alan R. (1988). *Modern Politics and Government*. London: Macmillan.
- Bhargava, R and Ashok Acharya. (ed) (2015), *Political Theory: An Introduction*. New Delhi: Pearson.
- Friedrich, Carl J. (1967). *An Introduction to Political Theory*, New York, Harper and Row.
- Held, David (ed). (1991). *Political Theory Today*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

1.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Your answer should highlight how politics is an all pervasive activity permeating every section of society
- 2) Your answer should highlight it is a collective activity, assumes diversity of views/goals and means, reconciliation of differences through discussion/persuasion, collective and authoritative decision making and an inescapable feature of human condition

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Your answer should highlight popular perception – rivalries of politicians in their struggle for power, relationship between states on an international level and meaning of power especially with reference to Max Weber's views
- 2) Your answer should mention the name of his book and discuss the elements of state described in it
- 3) Your answer should mention the sequence of emergence of different forms of state, Treaty of Westphalia and the Liberal and Marxist perspective of state

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Your answer should highlight views of Max Weber as given in his lecture 'Politics as a Vocation', Marx's views on state in the 'Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte'
- 2) Your answer should define legitimization and discuss Weber's three types of legitimization
- 3) Your answer should define it and give examples from history
- 4) Your answer should highlight mechanisms for manipulating consent