

CHAPTER -1

Political Theory: An Introduction

Q1: Which of the following statements are true/false about Political theory?

- (a) It discusses ideas that form the basis of political institutions.
- (b) It explains the relationship between different religions.
- (c) It explains the meanings of concepts like equality and freedom.
- (d) It predicts the performance of political parties.

ANSWER:

- (a) True
- (b) False
- (c) True
- (d) False

Q2: Politics is more than what politicians do. Do you agree with this statement? Give examples.

ANSWER:

It is correct that politics is more than what politicians do. Politicians as a part of government are involved in politics but politics is not limited to their activities. Politics involves number of various negotiations that go on in society through which collective decisions are made.

- Politics involves the actions of government and its relation to the aspirations of the people.
- Politics involves the struggle of people and its influence on decision making.
- People are engaged in political activity whenever they negotiate with each other and participate in collective activities that are designed to promote social development and resolve common problems.
- For example, residents of localities form associations to solve their common problems and raise these issues at higher level.

Q3: Vigilant citizens are a must for the successful working of a democracy. Comment

ANSWER:

Vigilant people are a must for the successful working of a democracy as vigilance creates awareness about the rights of citizens and government policies that affect daily life.

- Awareness leads to discussion and debate on the issues that arise out of the implementation of policies.
- Citizens can, thus, force the government to implement new policies or modify the existing policies and programmes of the country by building up and mobilising their opinion.
- As democracy is about government of the citizens, by the citizens and for the citizens, vigilance of the citizens accelerates the successful working of a democracy.

Q4: In what ways is the study of political theory useful for us? Identify two ways in which the political theory can be useful to us

ANSWER:

Political theory is useful for us as it helps in understanding the meaning of political concepts by looking at the way they are understood and used in ordinary language.

Political theories debate and examine the various meanings and opinions from different contexts in a systematic manner.

The two ways in which the political theory can be useful to us, are:

- It helps in understanding how constitutions are shaped in a certain manner, how governments and social lives are arranged in a certain systematic manner by studying and understanding the ideas and principles that are at their base.
- It shows the significance of various principles such as rule of law, separation of power, judicial review etc.

Q5: Do you think that a good/ convincing argument can compel others to listen to you

ANSWER:

Yes, a good/ convincing argument can compel others to listen to one. Arguments prove the degree of reason of a proposition and the need to defend it. A good defence is a compelling factor in the audience listening to the speaker. The knowledge of political theory enables the individual to think systematically on issues like justice and freedom and polish his/her opinion. This helps the presentation of argument in an informed manner. A wise opinion is convincing and is for the sake of common interests. Therefore, it makes others listen to and agree with the individual who argues in a convincing manner.

Q6: Do you think studying political theory is like studying mathematics? Give reasons for your answer.

ANSWER:

Studying political theory is not like studying mathematics as mathematics deals with precise concepts and patterns while political theory studies human beings and their ideas in the context of power and decision-making. In mathematics, there are single definitions of terms.

In political theory, on the other hand, the definitions of terms vary according to the context. This is because the opinion of people changes unlike objects and carries different meanings of a single term in different contexts. The concepts that are dealt by mathematics are constant and derived through formulae whereas the concepts of political theory are at variance and open to interpretation

4 MARK QUESTIONS

Q1: What is meant by freedom? Is there a relationship between freedom for the individual and freedom for the nation?

ANSWER:

- Freedom is a situation that limits the constraints on individuals and allows them to expand their ability and reach their potential.
- Freedom allows the full development of an individual's creativity, sensibility, capabilities and the autonomy to make choices.
- It permits the individuals to exercise their power of reason and judgement.

Yes, there is a relationship between freedom for the individual and freedom for the nation.

- A free nation allows the full development of individual's talent and ability by making fewer constraints on individuals.
- An individual is said to be free only if s/he resides in a free nation.
- A nation is said to be free if it has freedom as one of its principles and only if it has provided this to its people. In this way, individual freedom and national freedom are closely linked together.

Q2: What is the difference between the negative and positive conception of liberty?

ANSWER:

	Negative liberty		Positive liberty
1.	It defines and defends the area of an individual's life where no external authority can interfere.	i.	It defines the area of society where an individual can be free with some constraints made by the society and the government.
2.	It is not concerned with the conditions of the society.	ii.	It is concerned with the enabling conditions of the society.
3.	It is concerned with explaining the idea of 'freedom from'.	iii.	It is concerned with explaining the idea of 'freedom to'.
4.	This area comes into personal	iv.	This area comes into social domain of the

	domain of the individual.		individual.
5.	More negative liberty leads to more freedom.	v.	More positive liberty checks excess of freedom to an individual, which could be an obstruction for social stability.

Q3: What is meant by social constraints? Are constraints of any kind necessary for enjoying freedom?

ANSWER:

- Social constraints are the external controls on individual freedom maintained by the society.
- The government, as a part of the society, controls individual freedom through laws that embodies the power of the government and are legitimatised.
- Constraints on freedom are also a result of social inequality.

Yes, constraints are essential to enjoy freedom.

- Constraints are necessary to develop respect for views and beliefs of others.
- It is necessary for the creation of a society.
- Absence of constraint would lead to imposition of beliefs and ideas of stronger groups eventually leading to conflict.
- Constraints are required to control violence and settle disputes.

Q4: What is the role of the state in upholding freedom of its citizens?

ANSWER:

- The state upholds the freedom of its citizens by providing certain rights to them.
- The state maintains 'justifiable constraints' or reasonable restrictions on people so that they cannot harm others and their freedom.
- It provides positive liberty to its citizens to enable them to expand their ability and talent.
- It defines and checks 'other regarding' actions of its people in order to maintain social stability.

7 MARK QUESTIONS:**Q1.How do democratic governments ensure transparency? Explain any three points.****(2011 D)****Ans.**

1. Democracy ensures that decision-making will be based on norms and procedures. So a citizen, who wants to know if a decision was taken through the correct procedures, can find out as democracy guarantees to the citizens the right and the means to examine the process of decision-making.
2. In a democracy people have the right to choose their rulers and people will have control over them. Whenever possible and necessary, citizens should be able to participate in decision-making that affects them all. Thus it ensures transparency by producing a government that is accountable to the citizens and is responsive to their needs and expectations.
3. It is right to expect democracy to produce a government that follows procedures and is accountable to people. To do so, the democratic government develops mechanisms for citizens—regular, free and fair elections, open public debate on major policies and legislations and citizens' right to information about the government and its functioning.

Q2.What are the differences between democracy and dictatorship in the decision making process? (2012 OD)**ANSWER:**

Democracy	Dictatorship
(i) Based on the idea of deliberation and negotiation. Thus, the necessary delay in implementation.	(i) Do not have to bother about majorities and/or public opinion, thus can be quick and efficient in decision-making.
(ii) Decisions are acceptable to people and	(ii) May take decisions not accepted by the

are more effective.

people.

(iii) A citizen has the right and the means to examine the process of decision-making. There is transparency.

(iii) Transparency is missing from a non-democratic form of government. There is no accountability of the government to the people.

Q3. “An ideal government would not only keep itself away from corruption but also make fighting corruption and black money a top priority”. Justify the statement. (2013 D)

Ans.

The values attached to the above statement signify the following practices and institutions:

- Regular free and fair elections, open public debate on major policies and legislation and citizens’ right to information about the government and its functions.
- An ideal government in a democracy follows procedures and is accountable to the people.
- A citizen has the right and the means to examine the process of decision making. This is known as transparency.
- An ideal government is attentive and responsive to the needs and expectations of the people and is largely free of corruption as it is a legitimate government. It is peoples own government.

Q4. Explain the role of democratic governments in reducing economic disparities. (2011 OD)

Or, “Democracies do not appear to be very successful in reducing economic inequalities”. Examine the statement with examples. (2013 OD)

Ans.

Over the years, careful evidence has been gathered to see what the relationship of democracy with economic growth and economic inequalities is.

- It is seen that on an average dictatorial regimes have had a slightly better record of economic growth, i. e., 4.34%. But when we compare their record only in poor countries (4.28%), there is no difference.
- There is enough evidence to show that within democracies there can be very high degree of inequalities. In countries like South Africa and Brazil, the top 20 per cent people take away more than 60 per cent of the national income, leaving less than 3 per cent for the bottom 20 per cent population.

Perhaps more than development, it is reasonable to expect democracies to reduce economic disparities. Democracies are based on political equality, but despite equality in the political arena there are growing economic inequalities. The poor constitute a large proportion of our voters and no party would like to lose its votes. Yet democratically elected governments do not appear to be keen to tackle the problem of poverty.

Democracies are expected to produce good government, but there is no guarantee that they would also produce development. As evidence shows, the economic development depends on several factors, such as country's size, global situation, co-operation from other countries, economic priorities adopted by the country etc.

Q5. 'Democracy is seen to be good in principle, but felt, to be not so good in practice.' Justify the statement with suitable arguments. (2014 D))

Ans.

If we look at some of the democratic policies being implemented in more than one hundred countries of the world, democracy seems to be good. For example, having a formal Constitution, holding regular elections, guaranteeing the citizens certain rights, working for the welfare of the people, etc. make us advocate that democracy is good. But if we look in terms of social situations, their economic achievements and varied cultures, we find a very big difference in most of the democracies. The vast economic disparities, social injustice based on discrimination, standard of life, sex discrimination, etc. create many doubts about the merits of democracy. Whenever some of our expectations are not met, we start blaming the idea of democracy. Since democracy is a form of government, it can only create conditions for achieving our goals if they are reasonable.

Q6. How is democracy accountable and responsive to the needs and expectations of the citizens? Analyze. (2015 OD)

Ans:

A democracy is concerned with ensuring that people have the right to choose their rulers and have control over the rulers:

- Whenever possible and necessary, citizens should be able to participate in decision-making in a democracy.
- Democracy ensures that decision-making is based on norms and procedures. A citizen has the right and the means to examine the process of decision-making. Thus democracy entails transparency.
- For a democracy to produce an accountable, responsive and legitimate government, it must ensure the following:
 - Regular, free and fair elections.
 - Open public debate on major policies and legislations.
 - Citizens' right to be informed about government policies.
 - A government free from corruption.