**State: Elements and Necessity of the State**

A **state** is a [political](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political) organization with a [centralized](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centralized) [government](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government) that maintains a [monopoly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monopoly) by use of [force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Force_(law)) within a certain geographical territory.

**Elements of State:**

A State stands identified with its four absolutely essential elements:

**1. Population:**

State is a community of persons. It is a human political institution. Without a population there can be no State. Population can be more or less but it has to be there. There are States with very small populations like Switzerland, Canada and others, and there are States like China, India and others, with very large populations.

The people living in the State are the citizens of the State. They enjoy rights and freedom as citizens as well as perform several duties towards the State. When citizens of another State are living in the territory of the State, they are called aliens. All the persons, citizens as well as aliens, who are living in the territory of the State are duty bound to obey the state laws and policies. The State exercises supreme authority over them through its government.

There is no definite limit for the size of population essential for a State. However, it is recognised that the population should be neither too large nor very small. It has to be within a reasonable limit.

**2. Territory:**

Territory is the second essential element of the State. State is a territorial unit. Definite territory is its essential component. A State cannot exist in the air or at sea. It is essentially a territorial State. The size of the territory of a State can be big or small; nevertheless, it has to be a definite, well-marked portion of territory.

States like Russia, Canada, U.S.A., India, China, Brazil and some others are large sized states whereas Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldivies, Switzerland, Togo, Brundi and many others are States with small territories. The whole territory of the state is under the sovereignty or supreme power of the State. All persons, organisations, associations, institutions and places located within its territory are under the sovereign jurisdiction of the State.

Further, it must be noted that the territory of the state includes not only the land but also, rivers, lakes, canals inland seas if any, a portion of coastal sea—territorial waters or maritime belt, continental shelf, mountains, hills and all other land features along with the air space above the territory.

**3. Government:**

Government is the organisation or machinery or agency or magistracy of the State which makes, implements, enforces and adjudicates the laws of the state. Government is the third essential element of the State. The state exercises its sovereign power through its government.

This sometimes creates the impression that there is no difference between the State and Government. However, it must be clearly noted that government is just one element of the State. It is the agent or the working agency of the State. Sovereignty belongs to the State; the government only uses it on behalf of the State.

**Each government has three organs:**

(1) Legislature—which formulates the will of State i.e. performs law-making functions;

(2) Executive— enforces and implements the laws i.e. performs the law-application functions; and

(3) Judiciary—which applies the laws to specific cases and settles the disputes i.e. performs adjudication functions.

Government as a whole is the instrument through which the sovereign power of the State gets used. Government is an essential element of State. However it keeps on changing after regular intervals. Further, Government can be of any form—Monarchy or Aristocracy or Dictatorship or Democracy. It can be either Parliamentary or Presidential or both. It can be Unitary or Federal or of mixture of these two in its organisation and working. In contemporary times every civilized State has a democratic representative, responsible transparent and accountable government.

**4. Sovereignty:**

Sovereignty means the supreme power of the state. The state must be independent internally and externally. Sovereignty is the most exclusive element of State. State alone possess sovereignty. Without sovereignty no state can exit. Some institutions can have the first three elements (Population Territory and Government) but not sovereignty.

State has the exclusive title and prerogative to exercise supreme power over all its people and territory. In fact, Sovereignty is the basis on which the State regulates all aspects of the life of the people living in its territory.