

1 Government as an Institution of the State

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Man, by nature, is a wanting animal. There are various things he needs in order to live a good life. His needs are so numerous and complex that he cannot, independent of other people, provide all his needs. Hence, he cannot afford to live in isolation. Man must seek the aid of other people to satisfy his various requirements.

As people live together in society with their often selfish interests and sometimes wicked designs, their demands and interest are bound to clash. To prevent disorder and confusion, the society requires an established body of persons that is vested with the authority and power of the community for the regulation, control and protection of the people of the community to ensure justice, security and welfare of the entire citizens. Such body of persons vested with the community power is called government.

Government is, therefore, defined as an agency established by a political community, vested with power and authority for the purpose of maintaining the security and welfare of the citizens. Government can also be defined as the sum total of political apparatus in a State through which public affairs are organised, controlled and managed for the State for the satisfaction of the needs and interests of the people of the State. Government includes all persons, institutions, agencies that are vested with the power to make, execute, enforce, interpret laws and punish offenders.

For effective performance of its functions, government is structured into three main organs in accordance with the principle of division of labour. These organs are the *legislature*, the *executive* and the *judiciary*.

The legislature performs the governmental function of legislation, that is, law-making. The executive executes the laws which are made by the legislature; while the judiciary interprets the laws and punishes offenders.

This is represented in the diagram below.

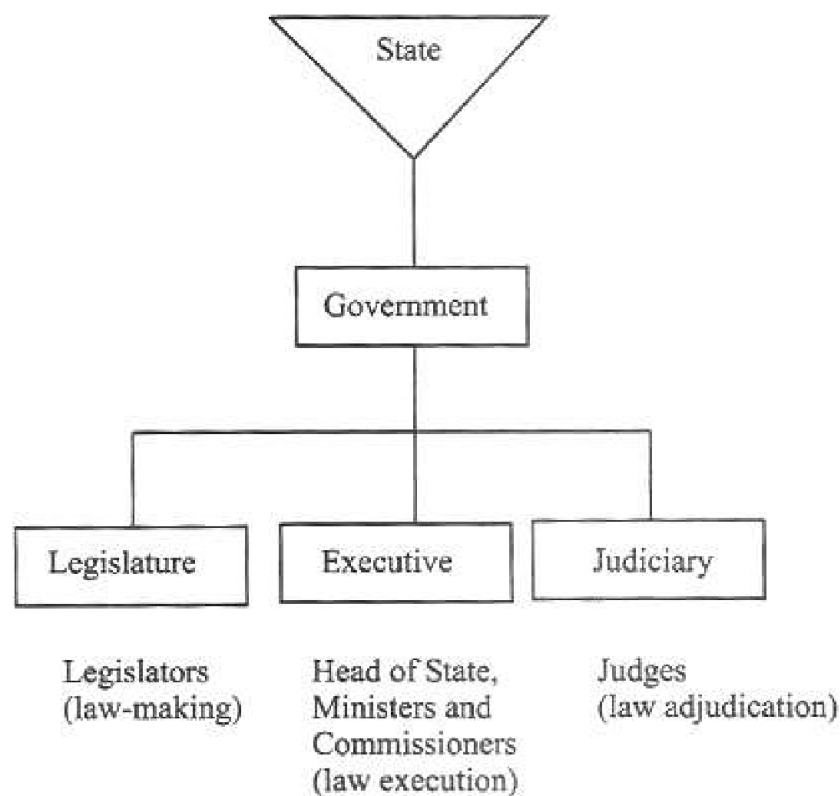


Figure 1.1: Government as an institution of the State

Some political philosophers like Jean Bodin, Montesquieu and Blackstone have expressed the view that in order to prevent dictatorship and tyranny; and guarantee civil liberty and good government, the three organs of government should be separate and distinct both in functions which they perform and in their composition. The three organs of government have a common purpose and they are expected to work in co-operation and harmony to achieve the corporate objective of government. Detailed discussion of these three organs of government is found in Chapter 7.

1.2 ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF GOVERNMENT

There are about six of these essential features and they are discussed below.

(a) Power

This is an indispensable element in government. It is the capacity to influence persons or groups to behave in a particular way and dominate their values and goals. Political power is the capacity to mobilise the resources of the State in order to achieve certain desired effects with a monopoly of all the instruments of coercion to ensure ready obedience of the citizens. Government involves a situation where some people command while others obey. Power commands obedience of the citizens to the laws and decisions of the government. The law enforcement agents of a State are the practical aspects of the source of the power of government. Power is, therefore, the force behind the government which enables it to function.

(b) Law

Law is the body of rules made by the government to regulate the behaviours of the members of the State. Laws are commands, orders and prohibitions against undesirable actions with definite penalty for non-compliance which are made and enforced by the government. Law defines the rights and obligations of both the citizens and the government. In a democracy, law governs equally the actions of the government and the citizen, and the government is not above the law. Law is, therefore, an essential instrument of government for ensuring order, peace and justice in a State. No

government can operate without a body of laws. The constitution of a State is the most important aspect of the law with which the government operates. The constitution is a body of the fundamental principles, rules and usages under which a State is organised and governed.

(c) Revenue

No government can exist without money. Public fund is the life-wire of government. The government needs a lot of money to provide services to the people and to pay all public servants. An important source of government revenue is taxation.

(d) Personnel

Government is run by people; not by the gods. The laws are made by the elected representatives of the people. The laws are executed by the chief executive, ministers, a team of political advisers, and a very large body of men and women trained in various fields of government work who are recruited on the basis of qualifications and competence. This body of officials is called the civil service. These are people who manage the government corporations and local government. Still, there is a body of legal experts called the judiciary, responsible for the interpretation of laws and punishment of offenders. We also have men and women of the armed forces and the police who maintain law and order, and provide security in the State. All the above categories of people are indispensable to any government and in fact, they all constitute what is called 'government' in its strict sense.

(e) Social Services

Government is not an end but a means for providing social services to the people. A government which cannot provide meaningful services to the people has no justification for existence. People create government in order that the government should provide them with their needs. Thus, government is a servant and not a master.

The basic services which a government provides to the people include roads, water, electricity, seaports, airports, railways, postal and telegraphic services, health and medical services, education, security of lives and property of the citizens, etc.

(f) Public Support

Political power belongs to the people and the government functions to satisfy the needs of the people. The existence of any government requires continuous support of the people. Even a military government or a totalitarian government requires the support of the people for it to operate. When the people withdraw their support from a government, expressed in the form of massive opposition to the government, widespread violent demonstrations, protests and social revolts, and civil disobedience, the government will be forced to give way. Thus, public support is an essential element for the existence and survival of a government.

1.3 NATURE OF THE STATE

The sum total of what one is studying in government is about the State. This stresses the importance of a proper understanding of the meaning of the concept to a student of government.

A State is a community of people within a definite geographical territory possessing a government endowed with coercive power, and independence from external control. Examples of a State are Great Britain, USA, USSR, China, Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Togo, etc.

The State has four indispensable components namely, a permanent population, a definite territory, an organised government and sovereignty. The territory proves the area and the resources on which the population lives. An organised government exists to provide security and welfare to the inhabitants, bring about peace, order and justice. Sovereignty provides the necessary characteristics of supreme

power and the capacity to enter into relations with other States. Power is, therefore, the most distinctive attribute of the State.

The State operates on the principle of law and exists to guarantee justice to all its citizens. The principal purpose of the State is the satisfaction of the general welfare of the citizenry, maintenance of justice and liberty. Thus, the State is a natural design for promoting social good and public welfare.

‘State’ as used here is different from the state within a federation like Nigeria. ‘States’ of the Federal Republic of Nigeria like Lagos State, Niger State, Rivers State are not States in the generic sense of the term ‘State’. They are rather component parts of a Federal State. A state within a Federal State like Nigeria or USA is simply one of the units in which a Federal State is divided. These states can best be seen as provinces that make up a Federal State. A state of a Federal State is not a real State because it does not possess all the essential characteristics of a State. The characteristics of a State are represented in the diagram below.

1.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STATE

The four essential components of a State earlier mentioned will now be discussed one after another.

(a) People

There is no State without people. The sole purpose for the existence of a State is service to the people. Since people are an indispensable characteristic of the State, the question that then requires to be answered is, how many people are required to form a State? The answer is simple. There is no prescribed number of people that is required to constitute a State. In other words, there is no minimum or maximum population requirement for the establishment of a State. Consequently, in the modern world community, there are great variations in the population of States. There are very many small States in the world; for instance, Cape Verde has a population of 300,000; Equatorial Guinea has 400,000 inhabitants; Comoro Island has a population of 386,000; and Luxembourg has an estimated population of 350,000 people. On the side of very large States in terms of population, China ranks first by posing a population of about 1.2 billion people (almost one-quarter of the world population). The estimated world population is 6 billion. China is followed by India with a population of 880 million. The third largest State is Russia (former USSR) with 260 million; while USA follows with about 220 million. There are medium States like Nigeria with about 120 million inhabitants; United Kingdom has 60 million; France has 53 million; Egypt has 33 million and Canada has about 22 million inhabitants.

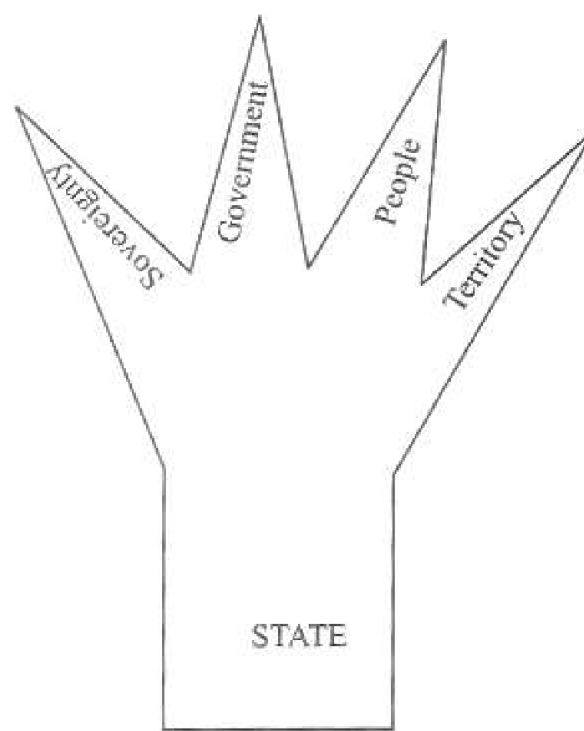


Figure 1.2: Elements of the State

Three factors are essential for the population of a State. First, a State should possess an adequate population that can ensure its economic and political independence, and security from foreign attack, or domination. Experience in the world States system has shown that States with very small population depend on bigger States for security and economic needs. None of the existing world powers has a population of less than 10 million people. It is most unlikely if not impossible for any State with less than one million inhabitants to emerge a world power.

The second factor essential for a population of a State is education of the people of the State. Education transforms the population into skilled, technical, competent, cultured and disciplined people. The State requires this for its growth, stability and survival.

The third factor is that people should as far as possible be homogeneous. Homogeneous people are those who possess common culture, customs, habits, common religion and language. A homogeneous people are more likely to produce national integration and agree more easily on major national issues.

(b) Territory

A State must possess a definite territory. A nomadic tribe or a people who are scattered about the world, like Israel before 1948 or the Palestine Liberation Organisation, does not constitute a State. However, there is no uniformity in or limit to the size of the territory which is necessary for a State. States in the modern world vary very considerably in territorial size. This size varies from a territory of only 2,586 square kilometres as in the case of Luxembourg in Europe, to a territory of 22.4 million square kilometres of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, USSR, which is the largest State in the world in terms of size of territory. It occupies one-sixth of the land space of the world. USSR is followed in largeness of territory by Canada which has a territory of 9.9 million square kilometres, then China with a territory of 9.6 million square kilometres, while India is 3.2 million square kilometres. Among the tiny States in terms of territory are, Luxembourg which has been mentioned above, followed by Burundi which has a territory of 28,000 square kilometres, Equatorial Guinea is also 28,000 square kilometres, Guinea Bissau is 36,000 square kilometres, Togo is 57,000 square kilometres, Gambia is 11, 295 square kilometres. The medium States in

terms of territory are Sudan which is 2.5 million square kilometres, Ethiopia is 1.2 million square kilometres, Nigeria is 924,000 square kilometres.



Figure 1.3: Map of West Africa showing their territories

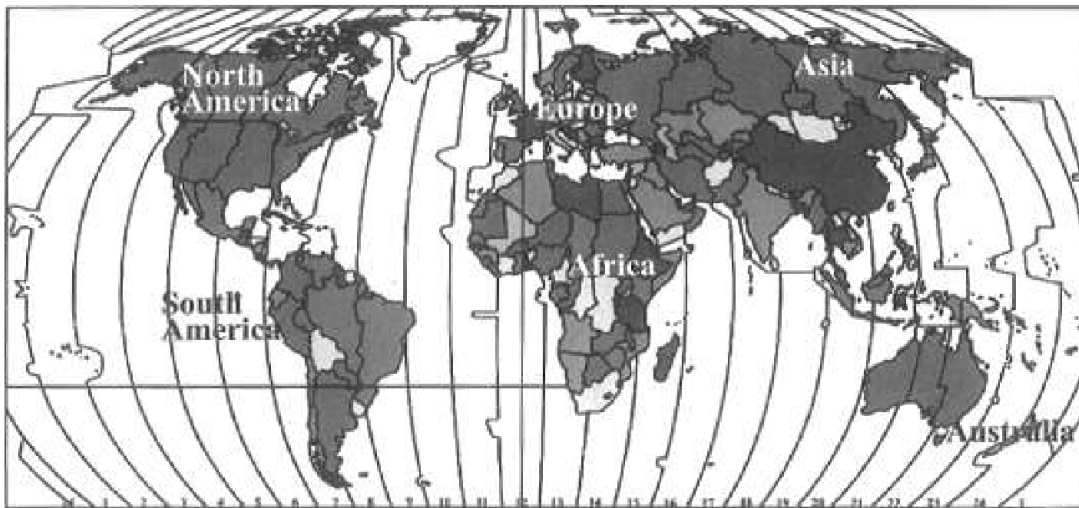


Figure 1.4: A map of the world showing the territories of the continents

There are five essential requirements for a good territory of a State. The first is that the territory should be large enough to contain and sustain the population. It should not be too large or too small. Although, no State in the world can be described as self-sufficient, yet large States like USA and the Soviet Union are more self-sufficient than tiny States like Gambia and Equatorial Guinea. Secondly, the territory should contain adequate natural resources to sustain the population. The territory should possess mineral deposits like oil, gold, tin, iron, coal. It should also be endowed with adequate crops and animals. Thirdly, the territory should have fertile land for the people to be able to produce enough food to feed themselves. The territory that is dominated by desert or barren land is likely to starve the population. Fourthly, a good territory should have a good climate. A good climate is a source of good health for the people and heavy yields of crops. A good climate produces adequate rainfall and vegetation. A mild and temperate climate with adequate rainfall is most preferable. Finally, a good territory of a State should be well located. This is very essential for the State's growth and survival. A well located territory should be at the coast of an ocean or sea and should be protected by such natural barriers as seas, oceans, mountains and deserts.

(c) Government

Government is the third characteristic of a State. It is the government that expresses the will of the State and exercises its power. Government is an indispensable machinery of the State through which the State performs its functions and maintains its existence and survival. Thus, there is no State without a government.

Government is the central and controlling force in modern society. It is the machinery for identifying and crystallising the aspirations of the people and devising effective means for satisfying them. The primary purpose of government, is the provision of social security and public welfare. Government performs its functions through its three principal organs, which are the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. The principal functions of these organs have already been mentioned earlier. Government thereby manifests itself in various forms which are discussed in Chapter 5 and 6.

(d) Sovereignty

The fourth essential attribute of the State is sovereignty. The word 'sovereignty' is derived from the Latin word *superanus* which means 'supremacy'. Sovereignty is the legal supreme power of the State to make and enforce laws with the necessary available coercive power and subject to no other superior authority. The concept of sovereignty was introduced into political science in 1576 by a French political philosopher, Jean Bodin, who defined it as the:

*supreme power of the State over citizens
and subjects, unrestrained by laws.*

The primary purpose of Jean Bodin in propounding the theory of sovereignty was to provide a legal and philosophical justification for the exercise of supreme and indivisible power by the monarch within the State. It was a legal and philosophical rationalisation for an absolute monarchy. The monarch was thus, the embodiment of sovereignty. Today, even though the absolute monarch or monarchical sovereign does not exist any longer, the concept of a sovereign State still exists. Sovereignty connotes the monopoly of political power by the State within its territory and complete independence from foreign control. A country that possesses the other three characteristics- definite territory, people and government, but lacks sovereignty is not a State. An example is Nigeria before October 1, 1960. Nigeria before her independence on October 1, 1960 was a mere country but not a State. So was Ghana before her independence in 1957. Gambia attained the State status only in 1965, Sierra Leone attained her statehood in 1961 when she gained her independence, and Liberia became a State in 1847.

Although, sovereignty is defined as 'supreme power' of the State, it is never absolute, indivisible and unlimited in practice as some political philosophers have argued. Even the father of sovereignty, Bodin, who used the words 'absolute' and 'unrestrained' in his definition of sovereignty, observed that the sovereign was limited by divine law, natural law and the law of nations.

1.5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STATE, GOVERNMENT AND NATION

(a) Government and State

The term 'government' is not synonymous with 'State'. The term 'State' is wider in scope, nature and content than the term 'government'. While the State is an association, the government is an organisation. The State is the association of the whole community made up of both the government and the governed. The government is composed of a small fraction of the community well organised and charged with the duty of making laws, executing the laws and interpreting them. The State is an association of the entire people within the community with its purpose as the maintenance of the common will of the people; while the government is the machinery of the State through which this purpose of the State is crystallised, formulated, determined and achieved. While the State has its elements as population, territory, government and sovereignty; government has its main organs as the legislature, executive and judiciary. The government constitutes the power of the State.

Furthermore, sovereignty is an attribute of the State, not of a government, although in practice, sovereignty is exercised by the government on behalf of the State. The State is an abstraction while government is the personification. The State government is quite visible, as one can easily see the rulers that constitute the government. Above all, the State is a permanent phenomenon, while government is not. Government comes and goes while the State is a continuing and enduring entity. Grotius put it more aptly thus, 'States are immortal'.

Although States can be completely obliterated through conquest, such a situation is quite rare. But there is a frequent change of government in every State. For instance, States like France, Great Britain, Germany and Italy have been stable for ages and centuries but also have passed through numerous different governments. France, as an example, has passed through absolute monarchy, empire, limited monarchy, five republics, and so on. Nigeria, since October 1960; Ghana, since 1957; and Liberia, since 1848; have all since independence, passed through various different governments, but the States of Nigeria, Ghana and Liberia, remain permanent.

(b) Nation and State

A nation is an association of people who are united by common ties. It is a product of sentimental unity, historical development and common political aspirations. It is also defined as an association of people, organised into a political body either independent or aspiring to be, through self-determination for common economic, political or social-cultural interests. Such things as common historical origin, common language, common religious beliefs, common ethnicity, and common culture, do promote a sense of nationality, but nevertheless, they are not defining elements of a nation.

Strictly speaking, a 'nation' is not synonymous with a 'State'. A State must possess the four essential characteristics already listed, while a nation may possess all but the attributes of sovereignty. For instance, Ghana before 1957 was a nation but not a State; it was only in 1957 when it gained independence that it attained the status of statehood. Furthermore, a nation can exist any time without a definite territory e.g. the Jews before 1948 when they were given a homeland at the present Israeli State. The present Palestinians, struggling for a definite homeland constitute another example. Contrary to a nation, a State may exist without a feeling of oneness among the people. An example is Nigeria before 1970, more particularly during the Nigerian Civil War, 1967 - 1970. Thus, a nation need not be a State. However, where the membership of an independent State coincides with that of a nation, it is called a nation state.

It is important to note that since the end of the first world war, there has been the tendency to regard all states as nations. Thus, a multination State like Nigeria or Soviet Union is called a nation. It is, therefore, more fashionable today to use the term 'nation' for any sovereign State in the world. But this does not imply that in their strict usage, the two concepts mean the same thing.

1.6 FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNMENT

Government exists for service to mankind. Its functions are broadly divided into three, namely, law and policy making, law and policy execution and law adjudication.

Law and policy making, law and policy execution and law adjudication are performed in the process of providing social security and public welfare services to the people. Thus, in terms of services, the function of government which is the provision of social security and public welfare services is broken into ten broad functions discussed below.

(a) Defence and Security

The primary function of any government is the security of the lives and property of its citizens. Any government that fails in this function is no government. Where there is no government, lives and property are insecure, great fear is generated everywhere in the society, and both economic and social activities end up in chaos. Government uses the armed forces to defend the State from

foreign attack and to maintain the territorial integrity and the independence of the State. It uses the police to enforce laws, and this guarantees security of lives and property of citizens and ensures order and peace within the society.

(b) Regulation of Social Life

Men are born free. Men should be free to enjoy their freedom and exercise their rights to such an extent that they do not violate others' rights and freedom. It is the responsibility of government to determine the extent to which man can exercise his rights and ensure that other people's rights are not violated.

Government makes laws which it applies in the regulation of social conduct. Laws guide the actions of men in society. Laws have the advantage of making people's behaviour within the society predictable. The effects of the mere existence of laws may prove to be a more effective deterrent to illegal behaviour than punishment, which would then be unnecessary.

(c) Maintenance of Unity

Government ensures the unity and corporate existence of the State. This is achieved through various means. Government fosters a feeling of belonging and of involvement among the various peoples that make up the State. Government encourages the free mobility of people, goods and services throughout the State; ensures even distribution of amenities and even development in the State; gives equal opportunity and equal treatment to every citizen in the State irrespective of ethnic, linguistic, religious and other affiliations. To promote unity, it is the responsibility of government to structure and organise the government in such a way that there is mass participation of the people in the government, and that the structure, organisation and the services of government satisfy a greater majority of the people.

(d) Settlement of Disputes

In the society, there is bound to be disagreements, disputes, cheating, theft, murder and so many other types of crimes and disputes. It is the responsibility of the government through its judiciary to settle these disputes and punish offenders and criminals. Prisons are established for the punishment and reform of offenders and criminals.

(e) Social Welfare

Government provides social services for the people. This is to some extent a controversial point. Government has the responsibility of eradicating illiteracy, superstition and disease. It has the function of providing primary, secondary, university and adult education to the people. Government provides medical and health services to the people. It also provides adequate water supply to the people.

(f) Provision of Infrastructure

Government provides basic infrastructure for the community. It constructs and maintains roads and bridges, railways, airports, seaports, telecommunication, postal and telegraphic services. Government also provides electricity. These services are most essential for social and economic development of any State.

(g) Economic Functions

Government has certain economic functions to perform. The degree of government's involvement in economic functions differs from one country to another. Government has a central role to play in the economy of the State. It ensures balanced economic growth of the nation through careful economic planning and implementation. It provides the currency, adopts fiscal policies, regulations, laws and measures to improve the country's economy. An important agent of government in these functions is the Central Bank. Government encourages, stimulates and boosts industrialisation and

agricultural development through aids and incentives to individuals or groups of industrialists and businessmen. These aids and incentives are in the form of loans, direct subsidies and technical assistance. Most governments today directly operate and participate in industrial, agricultural and commercial enterprises. Thus, it is the duty of modern government to ensure rapid industrialisation and agricultural development of the State. Government ensures that the material resources of the community are harnessed and distributed as best as possible to serve the maximum welfare of all citizens. It also ensures that the economy of the nation is not operated in such a way as to permit the concentration of wealth or means of production and exchange in the hands of few individuals. Government ensures full employment and better working conditions for workers.

(h) Political Functions

It is the responsibility of government to evolve suitable governmental organisational structures, procedures and regulations for efficient operation of government. Government establishes channels of communication between it and the people. It evolves means through which the people participate in the government. Government establishes a machinery through which there is smooth and peaceful change of government. For instance, it is the duty of government to make regulations which guide the conduct of elections in the State. It is the responsibility of government to conduct periodic free and fair elections.

(i) Foreign Relations

It is the function of government to maintain external friendly relations with other governments within the world community. It projects the country's image abroad and protects its national interest. While government protects the interests of other nationals within its territory, it also ensures that foreign governments protect the lives, property and the general interest of its own nationals within their respective borders through its ambassadors in those nations. Government promotes inter-state co-operation and international trade, and helps to maintain world peace.

(j) Raising of Public Revenue

Government requires money for its existence and for the provision of social amenities to the people. Public funds are raised through various forms of taxation, import and export duties, fines and fees, earnings from trade and business activities, and loans. There is a machinery for proper collection, custody, prudent expenditure, accounting and auditing of public revenue.

1.7 GOVERNMENT AS A SCHOOL SUBJECT

The Importance of the Study of Government

Government as an academic discipline is a field of study about the State. It studies the organisation and processes of the political institutions and dynamics of the State for the purpose of achieving the security and welfare of the citizens. The study of government is very essential for the attainment of democracy, political stability and good government. The sixth American President, Abraham Lincoln, defined democracy as

... the government of the people by the people for the people.

Thus, a vital requirement of democracy is that the government should be conducted by the people. People should be fully involved in the processes of their government to ensure that it exists solely for the satisfaction of their interests. This can only be guaranteed if the people are given adequate political education. For a citizen to take active part in the government of his State, and contribute meaningfully and significantly, he should know what government is all about, the duties of government, his rights and obligations to the government. The citizen should be fully aware of the institutions of government, their purposes, their processes and their relationships. The knowledge of government liberates the individual

from political ignorance, equips him with a critical and thoughtful mind necessary for evaluating public issues. Rational action, which is an assumption of democracy, is a product of sound knowledge and this can be realised through the process of political education. It increases the political awareness and widens the political horizon of the people. The effective participation which the knowledge of government engenders, ensures a virile and good government. It promotes a responsive and responsible government.

Knowledge of one's fundamental human rights made possible by the study of government guarantees civil liberty and the rule of law and prevents the emergence of tyranny and dictatorship. The study of government equips the individual with all the means available to him for the defence of his rights and privileges within the State, and how to put pressure on the government to perform its duty to the people. The study of government infuses the spirit of nationalism and patriotism to the citizens of the State. It also promotes national integration and a deep sense of unity.

The study of government gives leadership training to the student. Modern government is very complex, diverse and technical in its responsibility. Moreover, the organisation of modern government is equally complex. Leadership in modern government, therefore, requires adequate knowledge of government and the possession of special leadership qualities. Leadership in government at any level requires some knowledge of the basic principles and rules of government. A sound knowledge of government equips an individual with leadership qualities of wisdom, responsibility, right judgement, service to others, power of imagination and foresight, self-confidence, justice and patriotism.

The study of government also prepares citizens for a career in government. A person who has a diploma or a university degree in government or political science can use it to secure a job in the civil service, public corporation or in a local government. He can also secure appointments in private companies. People with such qualifications are generally employed as administrative officers, personnel officers, research officers and public relations officers. They can also work in newspaper, radio and television corporations. A good knowledge of government is very useful to a lawyer, a journalist and more importantly to a professional politician.

Division of Government

The academic discipline of government is broadly divided into seven namely, political theory, political institutions, political and constitutional development, comparative government, public administration, local government and international relations. These subdivisions are discussed below.

- (a) **Political Theory:** This deals with ideas and thoughts based on either imagination, speculations or scientific enquiries about the State and government. It deals with generalisations and conclusions drawn from political data by political thinkers and scientists. The main pillars of political theory are Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Bodin, John Locke, Hobbes, Rousseau, Edmund Burke, J.S. Mills, Hegel and Karl Marx.
- (b) **Political Institutions:** These constitute the hub around which governmental processes revolve. These include the legislature, the executive, the judiciary, and other governmental agencies. The constitution is also an important institution of government. Consequently, political institutions cover the nature, sources, functions, roles and types of constitution, be it federal, confederal, unitary, parliamentary or presidential. Political institutions include law, elections, democracy, oligarchy, civil service, public corporations, the police and the armed forces. It is, therefore, evident that political institutions are very crucial and strategic in the political process, and the success of the political system depends to a larger extent on the effectiveness of its political institutions.
- (c) **Political and Constitutional Development:** This deals with the forces that influence political development, the description and analysis of the origin and historical evolution of the State with changes in political institutions, important landmarks, issues and events at various stages of the life

of the State. This aspect of government includes all the political dynamic forces that act, react and interact during the process of the evolutionary changes within the political system.

- (d) **Comparative Government:** This is the aspect which deals with the historical, descriptive, and analytical study of the major governments in the world which include Great Britain, USA, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Switzerland, Italy, China, States of Africa and Latin America. In other words, in comparative government, the patterns and trends of politics and government in both the developed political systems of Europe and America and the underdeveloped systems of the third world nations are critically examined. The military in politics in developing nations is a new dimension in comparative government.
- (e) **Public Administration:** This deals with the implementation of approved public policies and programmes, the enforcement of laws and the realisations of public welfare by public officials. It involves application of resources of government - money, materials and personnel to achieve the objectives of government. Thus, public administration deals with administrative theory - involving appropriate administrative organisational structure, functions, control mechanisms and styles for effective operation; personnel administration - recruitment, motivation, training and discipline; and financial administration - effective utilisation of public funds to achieve government objectives.
- (f) **Local Government:** This is the study of government at the grassroots. It is concerned with the political authority whose area is small enough to be in touch with the people. It is a community-based government with functions of local nature, adequate funds and staff. Consequently, local government is designed to bring government nearer to the people, ensure full participation of the people and serve as a powerful instrument for rapid rural development. This aspect of government deals with the nature, purpose, structure, functions, finance and staffing of local government. It also deals with inter-governmental relations and the place and role of traditional rulers.
- (g) **International Relations:** This has to do with international organisation, international law, international politics and foreign policies. International organisation deals with such world bodies as the UNO, the NATO, the Commonwealth, the OAS, the OAU and others. International law deals with legal rules and practices developed by international organisations. International politics involves the actual competition, struggle, manipulation of power by States in the world community. Foreign policies are principles, rules and objectives which guide and govern the behaviour of individual State in international politics.

KEY POINTS

Introduction

- (a) **Definition:** Government is defined as an agency established by a political community and vested with power and authority for the purpose of maintaining the security and welfare of the citizens.
- (b) **Organs of Government**
 - (i) Legislature - makes laws and policies.
 - (ii) Executive - executes laws and policies.
 - (iii) Judiciary- adjudicates laws.

Essential Features of Government

- (i) Power is the capacity to influence persons and groups to behave in a particular way, and to dominate their values and goals.
- (ii) Law includes the constitution and Acts of the Legislature.
- (iii) Revenue is got from taxes, rates, fines, fees, charges, etc.

- (iv) Personnel refers to legislators, prime minister or president, ministers, commissioners, judges, civil servants, soldiers, policemen.
- (v) Social services include provision of roads, water, electricity, social security, education, health, etc.
- (vi) Public support is the support of the people to the government, and important for its survival. It is the pillar on which government rests.

Nature of the State

- (a) *Definition:* A State is a community of persons within a definite geographical territory possessing a government endowed with coercive power and independence from external control.
- (b) *Characteristics of the State*
 - (i) People
 - (ii) Territory
 - (iii) Government
 - (iv) Sovereignty

Relationship Between State, Government and Nation

- (a) *State and government:* State is associational, while government is organisational. State is wider in scope than government. State is more permanent than government. Sovereignty is an attribute of the State and not of government.
- (b) *State and nation:* A nation is an association of people who are united by common ties. A State must possess definite territory and sovereignty but a nation need not possess any of them.

Functions of Government

- (a) *Defence and security:* This is the preservation of lives and property of the citizens and the defence of the nation against foreign attack.
- (b) *Regulations of social life:* Laws, rules and regulations are made and used to regulate social behaviours.
- (c) *Maintenance of unity:* Integrating all ethnic groups, all sections, all peoples of different religious beliefs, the rich and the poor, into a harmonious, stable and peaceful political community.
- (d) *Settlement of disputes:* Judges and magistrates settle disputes, punish offenders and criminals.
- (e) *Social welfare:* This is the provision of education, medical and health services to the people.
- (f) *Provision of infrastructure:* This is the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges, water, electricity, communication system, etc.
- (g) *Economic functions:* These take care of provision of the currency to be used by the people; ensure economic growth, boost industrialisation and agricultural development, regulate and control the national economy.
- (h) *Political functions:* These establish the organisational framework under which the government operates; establish machinery for smooth and peaceful change of government through the conduct of regular free and fair election.
- (i) *Foreign relations:* This is the promotion of friendly inter-state relations, inter-state co-operation, international trade and maintenance of world peace.
- (j) *Raising of public revenue:* Government imposes taxes, fines, fees, earnings on business activities, etc., in order to get funds for its services.

Government as a School Subject

- (a) *The importance of the study of government*
 - (i) It gives citizenship training.
 - (ii) It increases political awareness and ensures full political participation.
 - (iii) It promotes the practice of democracy and the rule of law, and ensures civil liberty.

- (iv) It infuses the idea of nationalism.
- (v) It gives leadership training.
- (vi) It gives liberal education.
- (vii) It also prepares individuals for jobs in the public service.

(b) *Divisions of government*

- (i) Political theory
- (ii) Political institutions
- (iii) Political and constitutional development
- (iv) Comparative government
- (v) Public administration
- (vi) Local government
- (vii) International relations

SAMPLE EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

Essay Questions

1. What is government? Discuss briefly the main functions of government in a State.
2. What is a State? What is the relationship between a State, government and nation?

Objective Questions

1. An indispensable feature of government is
 - (a) personnel
 - (b) definite territory.
 - (c) permanency.
 - (d) sovereignty.
2. The institution of government which is responsible for the trial of criminals is
 - (a) the police.
 - (b) the executive.
 - (c) the legislature.
 - (d) the judiciary.
3. Which of the following cannot exist without the element of sovereignty?
 - (a) Nation
 - (b) Government
 - (c) Society
 - (d) State
4. Absence of government in a society is called
 - (a) fascism.
 - (b) unconstitutionalism.
 - (c) anarchy.
 - (d) tyranny.
5. Which of the following is not a characteristic of the State?

- (a) Definite territory
- (b) Adequate people
- (c) Sovereignty
- (d) Written constitution

Answers to Objective Questions

- 1. a
- 2. d
- 3. d
- 4. c
- 5. d