

Section I : Political Concepts

Introduction



We talk of our family, society, region, country etc. All of these are institutions, some are social institutions others are political institutions. Political science deals mainly with political institutions. The political institutions are associated with the government. They would include the Parliament, the Ministry, Judiciary, etc. As a citizen of a country we have certain rights and duties towards the country. These are specified by the constitutions and the various laws that are made by the government. We are expected to follow these rules. Even foreigners have to follow rules of the country in which they live.

Some questions like: 'Why should I obey the state?', or, 'What should be the limits of individual liberty?', or, 'where can I seek justice?', are questions that we face as citizens of any country. Various thinkers have tried to answer these and other questions. They have tried to understand the role of the individual and the State (government). These political thinkers have come out with various ideas that have helped us to understand the role of the individual in the society and the State better. For example, when we study

Indian political thinkers, we study the views of Kautilya on State, Mahatma Gandhi's idea of Swaraj or Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's views on Social Justice. We can also study the western thinkers to understand the views of Aristotle on Citizenship, or Locke's theories on Rights, Mill on Liberty, Marx's views about Communism, or John Rawls contribution to the theory of Justice. It is on the basis of the writings of such thinkers and others who have made significant contribution that we can understand such concepts like liberty, equality, justice, democracy, etc. Political concepts involves analytical study of ideas that have been central to political thought.

In this section, we plan to study some important political concepts. These are concepts of liberty, rights, equality and justice. There are also other concepts like nation, nationalism, etc.

The three chapters of this section are as follows:

Chapter I : The State: This chapter discusses the concepts of nation, nationalism, state and government. It tries to understand the linkages between them.

Chapter II : Liberty and Rights: This chapter looks at the two concepts of Liberty and Rights. These deal with the status of the individual in the society.

Chapter III : Equality and Justice: This chapter focuses on Equality and Justice. These concepts are concerned with the social order.

All of these concepts are also discussed in the context of India.



1. The State

You have studied Civics and Political Science in School. The focus of Civics was on the citizen. The focus of Political Science was on the State, the Government, the Administration etc. In this chapter, we will introduce you to some of the basic concepts of Political Science: Nation, Nationalism, State and Government.

Read the statements given below:

(i) One of my friend is a Punjabi and the other a Manipuri.

(ii) Two of my classmates are Iranians.

(iii) We sing India's National Anthem every day. I am proud of our National Anthem.

(iv) I have to collect my Birth Certificate from the Government Office today.

Each of this sentence deals with something. The first sentence tells about the identity of the person. The identity can be a Punjabi, Tamil, Maharashtrian, Telegu, etc. This is a regional identity. The second sentence talks about the country that you belong to. You can be an Iranian, Sri Lankan, American, etc. This is the 'nationality' that you have. The sentence about the national anthem relates to the concept of the State. When we say I am proud of our National Anthem it is a feeling of 'Nationalism'. Finally, the Birth Certificate deals with the role of the 'Government'. All these are concepts that we will study in this chapter.



Do you know ?

We use the term 'country' to describe states like India, Pakistan, China, etc. Sometimes we use the term 'nation' or 'state' to describe these countries. While all the terms appear to convey the same meaning, technically there is a difference in each of these terms. The term 'nation' has a sense of oneness that is psychological and born out of commonness of culture, ethnicity, race, religion, language, history, etc. A 'nation' becomes a 'state' when it has the following characteristics: sovereignty; independent government, specific territory and population. But in routine discussions we usually use the term 'nation' instead of the term State to describe an independent country with a sovereign government. However, in Political Science we use the term 'State' to describe an independent sovereign country.

Nation

What is a nation? A nation is a people who identify socially, culturally, politically and want to establish a separate identity for themselves. There is a sense of oneness that is psychological and born out of commonness of culture, ethnicity, religion, language, history, etc. They may or may not be located in a specific geographic territory.



Do you know ?

The word 'Nation' originates from the Latin word *Nasci*, meaning 'to be born'. Therefore, it is believed that the people belonging to a nation have ethnic and cultural linkages.

Ernest Barker defines a nation as

'A nation is a body of men, inhabiting a definite territory, who normally are drawn from different races, but possess common stock of thoughts and feelings acquired and transmitted during the course of common history...a common religious belief... use a common language....'

What are the features of a nation?

- (i) **Population:** A Nation must have a population. The population has some similarities. These similarities may be language, race and religion or there may be common cultural or historical experiences. There is a sense of ethnic, historical and cultural oneness that goes in the perception of identifying oneself as a nation.
- (ii) **Feeling of community:** The similarities of demography and culture must translate into a psychological feeling of a community. This is the emotional dimension. This is a matter of perception held by the people of that community.
- (iii) **Desire to be politically separate:** People living in a particular geographic area having common socio-cultural, religious or linguistic commonality can lead to a feeling of being a nation. Such a feeling is a product of the urge for self-determination. This can lead to a demand for self-governance at a

political level.

Nationalism

India wanted to be independent from the British colonial rule. It was a fight for the right of self-determination. India's fight for its independence was an expression of India's nationalism.

Nationalism is a sense of political identity. It is a love for one's nation. The people become sentimentally attached to the homeland. They gain a sense of identity and self-esteem by this identification and are motivated to help their homeland. The expression of such sentiments can be seen at different times: Cheering for a national cricket team, standing up during the National Anthem or support to the armed forces during a war. Nationalism is a force which holds the people to a sense of political loyalty to the country.



Nationalism

There are some features of Nationalism:

- (i) Nationalism has been a force that has been both, a builder and a destroyer. It has been described as progressive and aggressive nationalism. Progressive nationalism can help a society to come together and promote development. Aggressive nationalism can create differences amongst people.

- (ii) Nationalism discourages imperialism or colonialism. The resistance to any form of occupation of a region is one of the features of nationalism. National liberation struggles or freedom struggles across the world are a product of nationalism. It thus encourages self-determination.
- (iii) Nationalism can promote diversity. You see a large amount of diversity in India based on religion, ethnicity, language, regions, etc. But we still talk of Indian nationalism. The idea of 'unity in diversity' is the core of Indian nationalism.

Discuss in the Classroom

Read the sections titled: 'Bharat Mata' and 'The Variety and Unity of India', in Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*.

Discuss the concept of Indian nationalism on the basis of Nehru's writings on India in these two sections.

When we look at nationalism from a political perspective, we can see different forms of nationalism:

(i) Liberal nationalism: The origins of liberal nationalism are in the French Revolution. It is also seen in President Woodrow Wilson's 'Fourteen Points'. It links the idea of a nation to sovereignty. It accepts that every nation has the right to freedom and self-determination.

Do you know?

The Fourteen Points speech of President Woodrow Wilson was an outline of his vision for a stable, long-lasting peace in Europe, the America and the rest of the world following the First World War.

(ii) Conservative nationalism: This form of nationalism is inward looking. It looks at the nation as a closely linked society. It gives a lot of importance to patriotism.

(iii) Expansionist nationalism: This is an aggressive form of nationalism. In this form, countries start to become aggressive and create empires for 'national glory'. Colonialism is a product of this aggressive nationalism.

(iv) Anticolonial nationalism: This refers to national liberation struggles or freedom struggles. Countries like India experienced this form of nationalism during the days of the freedom struggle.

State

The Preamble of the Indian Constitution uses the words, 'Sovereign Democratic Republic'. Here the word sovereignty means the independent authority of the country. It signifies that the country is not dependent on any other country for taking decisions. It is independent to take its own decisions, formulate laws and govern. When people of a nation want to become a sovereign country, it means they are demanding the right to self-determination. Freedom struggle is an expression of the right to self-determination.

It is this urge for political self-determination that leads a nation in the direction of statehood. When does a nation become a state? A State must have the following characteristics to qualify for statehood: sovereignty; independent government, territory and population.

A State is a political community. Its presence is felt in almost all human activity. Activities like education, social

Some definitions of the State

Aristotle: The state is a union of families and villages and having for its ends a perfect and self-sufficing life by which we mean a happy and honourable life.

Jean Bodin: A state is an association of families and their possession governed by supreme power and by reason.

Woodrow Wilson: State is a people organised for law within a definite territory.

Harold Laski: A territorial society divided into government and subjects claiming within its allotted physical area, a supremacy over all other institutions.



Aristotle
(384 BCE-322 BCE)
An ancient Greek
Philosopher



Jean Bodin
(1530-1596)
A French Jurist and
Philosopher



Woodrow Wilson
(1856-1924)
An American statesman and
academic who served
as the 28th American President.



Harold Laski
(1893-1950)
a British political
theorist

welfare, defence, law and order, all are done by the State. Even personal matters like registration of birth, getting a PAN card or an Aadhaar card, registration of marriage, etc. the State has a role to play. The State grants rights, provides justice, ensures equality and guarantees liberty.

The State has the following elements:

- (i) **Sovereignty:** Sometimes this term is used interchangeably with the term independence. But sovereignty is a legal term while independence is a political term. It means that the country is legally sovereign with its own independent constitution. For example, India became politically independent in 1947 but it became a sovereign State in 1950 after the constitution came into effect.
- (ii) **Government:** Every sovereign state must have a government. The government must be sovereign and

independent. For example, when India was a British colony, there was a Government of India. But it was not a sovereign independent government. Therefore prior to independence India was not a State.

Institutions of the State are 'Public' institutions. These Public institutions include various organs of the government like the Executive, Legislature, Judiciary, Bureaucracy, etc. Public institutions are responsible for making policies, laws, taking decisions and implementing them. We have to make a distinction between these Public institutions and Private institutions. Private institutions belong to the civil society. These include private businesses, clubs, etc. It is the public institutions that have legitimacy to act on behalf of the State.



Do you know ?

All citizens are members of the State. The decisions are taken in public interest by the government of the State. This authority to take decisions is called legitimacy. The State has the legitimacy to take decisions in the interest of the people.

- (iii) **Territory:** It refers to the geographic boundaries of a state. A state must have a specific territory. The areas of the State within which the State has the authority to govern is called jurisdiction. Jurisdiction is the legal power that the State has to take decisions.

What is meant by 'territory'? Territory has three aspects

(i) The actual land within the national boundaries. (ii) The territorial waters along the coastline. This is 12 nautical miles (22.2 km or 13.8 miles) along the coast line. (iii) The air space above its territory (there is no international law on the height of this air space.)

- (iv) **Population:** A State cannot exist without people. This population can have any amount of diversity in terms of language, religion, culture, ethnicity, etc. Thus, a 'State' can comprise of many 'nations'. For example, the Soviet Union had people of many nationalities like Russians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Ukrainians, etc. Similarly, the United Kingdom consists of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.



Do you know ?

Case of Palestine: The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has been granted recognition as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The PLO has also identified Gaza and West Bank as the territory of the State of Palestine. However, Palestine does not have a sovereign government. Its territory is under the jurisdiction of the Israelis. This is why Palestine is a nation and not a state. However, Palestine has been a 'Non-member Observer' State of the UN since 2012 and more than a 100 members of the UN have given recognition to Palestine as a State.

Do this : Prepare a comparative chart showing the similarities and differences in the features of a Nation and a State.

State and Government

We normally use the terms State and Government without understanding the difference between them. They are different concepts. State as we have seen above, is a political organisation created for the satisfaction of the common needs of the people. A government is an agent of the State through which the will of the State is formulated, expressed and realised.

Government is the main wing of state. Its main nature is administrative. Law and order, welfare, etc. are some of the main functions of the State. These functions are performed through the government. A government has three parts: The Executive, Legislature and Judiciary. You will learn about the concept of Government in Section II of this book.

Some differences between State and Government

State	Government
State is an abstract concept.	Government is a concrete reality.
State is more extensive than a government. It includes all public institutions and all members of the society as citizens.	Government is a part of the State
A State is permanent in nature.	A Government exists for a specific time period. Systems of government can be changed. Governments come and go.
The State is an impersonal authority. It is politically neutral.	The government has an ideological agenda. It wants to implement policies to achieve that agenda.
The State is a sovereign entity.	The source of the authority of the Government is the State. Government is the means through which the authority of the State is exercised.

We studied the concepts of nation, nationalism, state and government in this chapter. In the next two chapters we will study some other concepts like Liberty,

Rights, Equality and Justice. These are concepts that deal directly with the role of the State.

Please see the following websites for further information:

The Discovery of India

Jawaharlal Nehru *The Discovery of India* (Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1985)

Chapter: 'Bharat Mata' Page: 59

Chapter: The Variety and Unity of India Page: 61

https://archive.org/stream/TheDiscoveryOfIndia-Eng-JawaharlalNehru/discovery-of-india_djvu.txt



Exercise

1. (A) Choose the correct alternative and complete the following statements.

1. The term Nation is derived from the Latin word
(Nasci, Natio, Natalis, Nauto)
2. The origin of Liberal Nationalism is in the Revolution.
(American, Russian, French, British)

(B) Identify the incorrect pair in every set, correct it and rewrite.

- (a) Aristotle - German Thinker
- (b) Jean Bodin - French Thinker
- (c) Woodrow Wilson - American Thinker
- (d) Harold Laski - British Thinker

(C) State the appropriate concept for the given statement.

1. Force which holds the people to a sense of political loyalty to the country -
2. The area of the State within which it has the authority to govern -

2. State whether the following statements are true or false with reasons.

1. Progressive Nationalism can create differences amongst people.
2. Sovereignty means State has the freedom to take its own decision.
3. Palestine is a State.
4. Expansionist Nationalism is a type of Aggressive Nationalism.

3. Express your opinion of the following.

India is a State.

4. Answer the following questions.

1. What are the features of Nation?
2. What is Nationalism? Explain its types.

5. Answer the following question in detail with reference to the given points.

Explain the following elements of the State.

- (a) Sovereignty
- (b) Government
- (c) Population
- (d) Territory

Activity :

Identify the States with smallest territory and largest territory on the world map.