

Introduction to Political Sciences

الفصل الاول (اصل كلمة سياسة) :

Origin of the term politics

Politics is derived from the Greek word (polis). Polis originally meant a hilltop fortress where people gathered for protection and often deliberation upon their public affairs.

Gradually, the Polis became the center of their civic life and city-state. In the fourth century B.C, Aristotle gave the title (politics) to a collection of his lectures, describing and comparing the organization and activities of 158 city-states in Greece and the Greek islands in the Mediterranean.

The Polis or city-state, according to Aristotle was made of citizens. A citizen was one who participated in the activity of politics or citizenship. The activity of politics is being the direction or ruling of common life.

A citizen was one who ruled and was ruled in turn; he had some share in saying what the common life of the city should be and took part in directing all activity towards that end. Thus, citizenship and politics were synonymous in Greece and it meant active participation in the affairs of the Greek city.

In the ideal city, the good man and the good citizen, according to Aristotle, were the same things. The purpose of the ideal city was to produce the best type of human being and the best possible life or the good life.

Current concepts and definitions of politics

The definitions of politics are many. Following are a number of concepts and definitions to give the students an idea of the current meaning of the word:

Man does not live alone. He has always lived with his fellow men in groups. Living together they agree on many things. When they agree there is no problem. When they disagree there are different ways of settling their disagreements. Politics is the way that men settle their disagreements and organize their lives, in an orderly manner.

Politics is the human interactions involved in the authoritative allocations of values for society. It involves people deciding, or having decided for them, how to distribute material goods and services, or even symbolic values, and it includes the procedures and power plays involved in reaching those decisions.

In reality, the conflict-free society does not exist. Men play different roles: they have different interests; politics is the clash of these interests. According to Vernon van Dykes, Politics, can be defined as a struggle among actors pursuing conflicting desires on public issues.

This struggle within a society is mostly directed towards the distribution of power. Hence, Power is innate to the study of politics, because in many ways this is what politics is all about.

Politics are, then, in one sense, always power politics. Common usage applies the term 'political' not to all activities of the state, but to issues, involving a conflict of power. Once this conflict has been resolved, the issue ceases to be “political” and becomes a matter of administrative routine.

Robert Dahl has defined politics as involving to a great extent “power, rule, or authority”. Different authors emphasize different aspects of politics. In addition to the “quest for power”, Politics is the process of making governmental policies, “the making of decisions by public means”, the science and art of government, and “the study of influence and the influential”. Moreover, politics deals with the manner in which men are ruled”, and “politics means making choices and taking sides “.

To govern is to choose. The essence of politics is choice, and this, implies a deliberate preference for one set of values over another. This choice among alternative values is an important step in any political activity. It determines the nature of political direction in any society.

Added to all these different aspects of politics, a number of political scientists draw a distinction between the politics of the state as an organization and the politics of all other forms of organizations within the state. The distinction is as follows: **First** the scope is wider as it includes the whole society. **Second**, the state through its government has the ability to back its decisions with use of legitimate forces.

Although the state is not the only organization that makes rules and enforces them, but its rules and enforcements may be backed by compulsion. Thus, in the politics of the state, the government, through its institutions and processes, is the final decision

maker within the territorial limits of society. It is the final arbiter of “who gets what when and how”.

Definitions of political Science

Political Science has been defined as the systematic study of politics, “as the science of the State” and also as “a branch of the social Sciences dealing with the theory, organization, governments and the practice of the state”.

Today, the trend is to emphasize the political system or process instead of the state as a political institution.

Now try to answer the questions:

- 1. Define : political science, politics, citizen.**
- 2. What is the origin of the term politics?**
- 3. " politics is the way that men settle their disagreements" discuss.**
- 4. " power is innate to the study of politics". Discuss.**