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NCERT Class 11 Political Science Part 1 Chapter 1: Political Theory an Introduction YouTube Lecture Handouts

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[NCERT Class 11 Political Science Part 2 Chapter 1: Political Theory an Introduction](#)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWnpRce_NVk

- Humans possess reason and ability to reflect actions, use language and communicate, express thoughts and ideas
- Roots in twin aspect of human self – How to organize? Why we need society or govt. ? What is best form of govt. ?

Political Theory

- Thinks about values like freedom, equality, and justice
- Focuses on political thinkers of past and present
- Examine extent to which freedom and equality are present in institutions
- Talks about existing institutions and modifying policy practices to become more democratic
- Idea is to train citizens to think rationally

Politics

- Political leaders and persons contest elections and hold office
- Politics is associated with manipulation and satisfying wants
- It is also linked to scams
- It is not only ordinary people who despair of politics; even businessmen and entrepreneurs routinely blame politics for their woes even as they benefit from and fund various political parties
- Mahatma Gandhi - *Politics envelops us like the coils of a snake and there is no other way out but to wrestle with it.*
- No society can exist without some form of political organization and collective decision making.

- To fulfil needs we have family, tribe, and economic institutions (acknowledge our obligations) – government plays an important role
- What government do affects lives of people – economic policy, foreign policy, educational policy (improve lives) – literacy and employment (if no good road how will sick reach hospitals)
- We form association and organize campaigns
- We negotiate with others and shape the goals
- If we disagree, we protest, organize demonstrations to persuade government
- We debate actions of our representatives
- We question on corruption, reservation and more
- We have different vision of what is just and desirable for us
- It involves multiple negotiations through which collective decisions are made
- What government do, how they relate, how people struggle and influence decision making
- People engage when they negotiate and take part in collective decision making for social development and to resolve common problems

What Do We Study in Political Theory?

- We study movement, development, and change
- Values and principles
- Kautilya, Aristotle to Jean Jacques Rousseau, Karl Marx, Mahatma Gandhi, and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar
- 5th Century BC – Plato and Aristotle discussed whether monarchy or democracy is better
- Rousseau – freedom as fundamental right of humankind
- Karl Marx – equality as crucial as freedom
- Mahatma Gandhi – Swaraj in book Hind Swaraj
- Ambedkar – SC should be considered minority
- Our Preamble enshrines freedom and equality
- Chapter on Rights in the Indian Constitution abolishes untouchability in any form
- Gandhian principles find a place in Directive Principles
- Clarifies concept such as freedom, equality, justice, democracy, and secularism
- Probe's significance of rule of law, separation of powers, judicial review
- Rousseau and Marx were not politicians but influenced politicians
- Equality may exist in the political sphere in the form of equal rights, it may not exist to the same extent in the economic or social spheres.
- Some are privileged while others are deprived; some achieve goals while other do not

- Freedom is guaranteed in Constitution and we encounter new interpretations every time – discover new meanings
- The right to life has been interpreted by the Courts to include the right to livelihood
- Societies encounter new challenges which generate new interpretations
- With changing world there are new dimensions of freedom and new threats to freedom – global communications technology makes it easier for activists to network across nations, enables terrorists, internet commerce (with protected information that you provide) ; netizens (citizens of internet) don't like government control, they recognize regulation is necessary to safeguard security and privacy

Socrates

- Socrates was described as the 'wisest man.' He was known for questioning and challenging popularly held beliefs about society, religion, and politics. For this he was condemned to death by the rulers of Athens.
- His student Plato wrote extensively about the life and ideas of Socrates. In his book 'The Republic,' he created the character Socrates and through him examined the question – what is justice? The book opens with a dialogue between Socrates and Cephalus (understanding of justice is inadequate and unacceptable)
- Speaking truth and paying debt is not correct definition for justice
- It is just to do good to our friends when they are good and harm to our enemies when they are evil
- Then he who is a good keeper of anything is also a good thief? That is to be inferred.
- Then if the just man is good at keeping money, he is good at stealing it. That is implied in the argument.

Putting Political Theory to Practice

- Political theory as origin, meaning and significance of ideas – what does it mean? How does it matter?
- Mathematics has one definition of triangle or circle but for equality or freedom we have many definitions
- Humans have opinions which are harmonized and differ
- In queue – someone jumps ahead (others feel cheated; he feels glad) - equality means equal opportunity for all. At the same time, if there are separate counters for the old and disabled, we understand that such special treatment may be justified.
- Equality involves fairness and people are not unduly exploited by economic factors
- Many children don't go to school as they need to work to feed themselves; girls are pulled out of school to take care of their siblings – right to primary education remains formal
- Some agencies must be made responsible for fairness

- *Meaning of equality is dependent on context* – we start with ourselves and proceed to others, we discover many layers of meaning
- Clarify political concepts as how they are understood and used in ordinary language – When is equality enough? When people need special treatment? How long such treatment should be given? Should midday meals be given to encourage school stay?

Why Should We Study Political Theory?

- Bureaucrats who make policies or teach political theory or lawyers; who interpret constitution and laws
 - Political theory is relevant for all the above target groups
 - We are all going to be citizens entitled to vote and decide other issues – to act responsibly we must have basic knowledge of political ideas
 - If we are thoughtful and mature, we can use the new media to discuss and express our common interests.
 - As citizens, we are a bit like the audience in a music concert; we are not the main performers interpreting the song – we set agenda, appreciate output, and put in new requests
 - Freedom, equality, and secularism are not abstract issues in our lives.
- We develop prejudice for people who are different from us in terms of caste, religion, or gender. If we feel oppressed, violent revolution is justified. If we feel justified, we deny oppression.
- We have opinions about what is right or wrong, just, or unjust but do not know whether they are reasonable or not

Political theory exposes us to systematic thinking on justice or equality so that we can polish our opinions and argue in an informed manner and for the sake of common interests.

 Mayank