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Batch 9

Basic concepts in Political Science

Political science is that branch of the social sciences that studies the state, politics, and government. Political Science deals extensively with the analysis of political systems, the theoretical and practical applications to politics, and the examination of political behavior. The Greek thinker, Aristotle, defined political science as the study of the state. Many political scientists view themselves as being engaged in fleshing out the connections between political events and conditions, and by this understanding they hope to construct a system of general principles that posit the way the world of politics works. Political science is not a standalone field and it intersects many other branches like sociology, economics, history, anthropology, public policy among others. Political scientists are much sought after these days because of the changing landscape of politics across the world and since the society wants to understand how the political world works, they need someone to explain the nuances of the political economy. Any casual perusal of the newspapers and the television channels reveals that political scientists are at the forefront of debates and discussions for their knowledge and expertise.

Nature

Politics is not only a mere institution of governance but also a mechanism for achieving societal goals. Nature of Political Science is a social science concerned with the theory and practice of politics and the description and analysis of political systems and political behavior. It includes matters concerning the allocation and transfer of power in decision making, the roles, and governance systems, including governments and international organizations, political behavior, and public policies. Thus, political science is a study of the state in the past, present, and future of the political organization, political processes, and political functions of political institutions and political theories.

Political science has several subfields, including political theory, public policy, national politics, international relations, human rights, environmental politics, and comparative politics.

Scope of Political Science

The scope of political science is vast and experts have divided the field of political science into five sub-disciplines that are political theory, public administration, comparative politics, international relations, and public law. It needs to be noted that these sub-disciplines cover the entire gamut of the modern political economy and provide the basis for the study and understanding of how the global political economy works. The study of the matters concerning the allocation and distribution as well as the transfer of power is one of the main preoccupations of political scientists. The success or otherwise of the

governance structures is gauged by political scientists who examine the multifaceted and multilayered factors at work that contribute to good or bad governance. The scope of the political scientists has now been broadened to include the realm of the study of the democratic elections across the world. In other words, with the explosion in the political systems all over the world, political scientists, and their scope of study has been considerably enhanced.

6 Important Scope of Political Science

1. A study of the State and Government:

Political Science primarily studies the problems of the State and **government**. The state is defined as a group of people organised for law within definite territory. The State possesses four characteristics, viz. Population, territory, government and sovereignty. Government is an agent of the State. Political Science studies the activities of the State and explains the aims and objectives of the State and government.

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2. A Study of Political Theory:

Political theory is a major branch of Political Science. On the basis of the political ideas or thoughts of political thinkers, political theory formulates definitions or concepts like democracy, liberty, equality, grounds of political obligation, etc. A student of Political Science must start his lessons with political theory. Political theory explains the rudimentary concepts of Political Science. It also includes the study of political philosophy.

3. A Study of Political Institutions:

The field of Political Science is rather vast. It includes the study of political institutions. This covers a study of constitutions and comparative government, explains their merits and demerits, their structure and working and arrives at different conclusions on comparative basis. Besides, the study of public administration and local government may be included in this area. These institutions are useful to the nation and hence they are studied along with the State.

4. A study of Political Dynamics:

The study of political dynamics has become significant in the 20th century. It means the current forces at work in government and politics. It covers a wide range and includes the study of political parties, public opinion, pressure groups, lobbies, etc. A scientific study of the working of these political dynamics helps to explain the political behaviour of individuals and different groups. The study in this field is often done in collaboration with other social sciences like sociology,, anthropology and psycholosiy.

5. A Study of Adjustment of the Individual with the State:

The scope of political science also includes a study of the nature of relationship between the individual and the State. It examines how man should adjust himself with the society. Man is the root of politics. The process of adjustment of men with the society is an important aspect of Political Science.

6. A study of International Relations and international law

Lastly, the scope of Political Science includes a study of international relations which has become significant since the first quarter of the 20th century. It covers a wide range and includes diplomacy, international politics, international law, international organisations like the United Nations, etc. The States are the subjects of international law. International law has assumed greater importance in recent times.