

Individual and the State



Notes

1.1.1 Changing Meaning of Political Science

The term Politics is derived from the Greek word *polis* which means city-state. That is why many commentators, as you saw, rightly define Politics in terms of the state or government. However, this definition does not exhaust the meaning of Politics. Politics also deals with *power*. Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan define Political Science as “the study of shaping and sharing of power”. In a word, *Politics deals with both state and power*. However, the power that Political Science deals with is, more often than not, the legitimate power. Since science is the systematic study of any phenomenon through observation and experiment, it follows that Political Science studies the state and power in all their aspects. You will learn more about the state and power later in this lesson.

Political Science deals with both empirical facts and normative issues. Facts are in the domain of “what is” and value preferences are in the domain of “what should be.” For example, if somebody says India is a parliamentary democracy, he or she is making a statement of empirical fact. This is what India today actually is. But if she or he were to make a statement like the one that India should switch over to presidential form of democracy, the statement would be a normative one. Political Science is not satisfied with describing the state of affairs, it wants to change or improve upon them. Empirical statements are true or false by virtue of what observation shows to be the case. Evaluative statements are ethical/moral imperatives, which are often said not to be true or false in any sense at all. Formal statements (such as the propositions of mathematics) are true or false by virtue of the meanings of their constituent terms alone. Political Philosophy deals with formal statements. Political Science deals with empirical statements and also evaluates the existing political institutions, practices and focuses on how to improve them.



Intext Questions 1.1

Fill in the blanks :

- Political Science deals with both and issues (empirical, normative, formal).
- Political Science studiesand (society, state, nation, power, class).
- The term Politics is derived from the word..... (*polis*, police, state).
- said Politics begins and ends with the state (Gettel, Garner, Lasswell).
- defined Political Science as the study of shaping and sharing of power. (Kaplan, Easton, Garner).

1.1.2 Growth of the Discipline of Political Science

Systematic study of Politics started with the Greeks in the fourth century BC. Philosophers like Plato and Aristotle used it in the most comprehensive sense. Aristotle called Politics a “master science”. For him, it comprised of not only the institutions of state or government but also family, property and other social institutions. Politics, for the Greeks, was an all-encompassing activity.

The ancient Greek view about Political Science was mainly *ethical*. In contrast, the ancient