

## Class-2 :- Political Sociology : Emergence, Nature & Scope

### Scope of Political Sociology as an Academic

#### Dicipline:-

The scope of Political Sociology encompasses the following:

**1. Power:** the central thrust of Political Sociology is power. However, the power that is of primary importance in Political Sociology is not the traditional state-centric, traditional conception of Political Science. It is more 'nonpolitical' power. Power that is decentralized and belongs to non-state social cultural economic civic and political groups.

**2. Authority:** In all civilized societies it is imperative that state power should be legitimized through one of the following means: customs, written laws, traditions, or popular mandate. Legitimized power is authority. In the traditional Monist view, the state alone possessed supreme authority over its people. In the later, Pluralist view, the multiple non-state associations, and organizations that individuals are a

part of, have been looked upon as playing equally important and influential roles upon the lives of individuals.

**3. Elite theory and the concept of elitism:** The Elite theory emerged as a 'grand retort' to this Marxist narrative of economic power as the only basis of acquiring and maintaining power. They brought to light other factors: psychological, organizational, institutional, and economic which determined the distribution of power in society.

**4. Political Culture:** It reflects how groups living within the territorial jurisdiction of a political state apparatus, look at and judge the actions and policies of the state. Political culture is not purely political, it reflects the commonly held political values, beliefs, and attitudes of groups within particular social, economic, cultural contexts.

**5. Political Socialization:** It helps to perpetuate political culture and bring in political stability. The first and most important agents of political socialization include the immediate family and neighbourhood.

**6. Political Participation:** As the terms suggest, this implies the rate and extent of active participation of the common people in the political process of the country. The state and the type of government is definitely a determining factor in securing the participation of people in the politics of the country.

**7. Bureaucracy:** Political Sociology studies the composition, nature and functioning of bureaucracies to study their effectivity and efficiency in dealing with the problems of the people. The attitude of the bureaucracy towards common people varies from country to country and culture to culture.

**8. Linkages between political behaviour and sociological framework:** It has by now become obvious that politics is not an isolated sphere of human activity, neither can any other aspect of human existence (social, economic, cultural, ideological etc.) be understood completely when considered in isolation. Man's existence is a related existence and each individual's life has multiple inter-related and interdependent aspects.

**Definitions of Political Sociology:-**

**1. Theodore Caplow** in his Elementary Sociology says that: ".....Political Sociology deals with such topics as the relation between political power and class structure."

**2. Tom Bottomore**, in his book, Political Sociology, has written in the Preface of the book: "Political Sociology is concerned with power in its social context. By 'power' is meant here the ability of an individual or a social group to pursue a course of action (to make and implement decisions, and more broadly to determine agenda for decision making) if necessary, against the interests, and even against the opposition, of other individuals and groups.

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