ForumIAS

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Optional – Answer Writing Focus Group 2025

PSIR

Dawt #01 - (Test Code : 881441)

Name	SHASHWAT PANDIT		
Email ID.	shashwatm2317@gmail.com		
Roll No.	1910158938		
Mobile No.	9453457061	Date	21-06-2025

Allotted Time : 2 Hours

Instructions to Candidates -

- There are 10 Questions in this Question paper.
- All Questions are Compulsory.
- Answers must be attempted in the QCA Booklet only.

Q. No.	Grade/Score
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Overall Grade/Score	

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Q.1) Comment: Systems Approach. (2022) (10 marks)

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Overall Grading (√)

Poor			Average			Good		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Q.2) Comment: Feminist critique of the State. (2021) (10 marks)

State has been the central theme of study in the discipline of Political Science. Different theories have been propounded with regard to nature of state and one such theory is the critique of state by feminist.

Feminists argue that not the economy but "patriarchy" is the basic structure. Every social phenomenon is impacted by the patriarchy and hence state also contains elements of patriarchy.

Scholars like Catherine Mackinnon ("Book: Towards Feminist Theory of state") says, "when I look at the state it appear male to me". The statement criticises the excessive control of state by men.

This excessive control is reflected in the functions of state. She takes the example of rape laws in America, which makes it tough for the victim to seek justice.

Moreover, we can relate the feminist critique of state with the ongoing reality of representation of women in politics. Only few countries has women as the head of state (India has only 15% women MPs)

Yet the feminist critique appears ambivalent when they propound that State is the institution which can improve condition of women. Iris Marion Young gives the concept of Differentiated Citizenship in which enabling and affirmative provision has to be provided by state only.

Overall Grading (√)

Poor			Average			Good		
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Q.3) Highlight the difference between normative and empirical theories of politics. (10 marks)

The theories of politics have evolved since the ancient times. This evolution is also marked by evolution of the approach to study politics as a discipline.

The normative and empirical, both approach originated in ancient Greece but have significant difference.

Starting with the proponents. Normative approach was propounded by Socrates and Plato while Aristotle gave the empirical approach.

Moreover, Normative approach attemps to find out the essence or idea of political science while empirical approach is focused on the observation of political phenomenon.

Further, the normative approach enquires about Righteousness or idea. It provides the solution in

the manner of right and wrong while empirical approach based on observation of facts gives the answer in true and false format.

Also the normative approach is prescriptive in nature, providing the idea of right and desired conduct while empirical approach is descriptive in nature which explains an already existing phenomenon

In the modern time, the behaviouralist attempted to include empirical approach so as to make discipline of politics as pure science but scholars like John Rawls revived the necessity of normative approach to politics to ensure Justice.

Overall Grading (√)

Poor			Average			Good		
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Q.4) Examine the Place of 'Obligation' in Political Theory. (10 marks)

Obligation refers to duty of individual towards any entity. Thinkers like Plato in Ancient times to Hannah Arendt in the modern time have provided different obligations in political theory.

In the state of Plato, man has duty to follow the rulings of philosopher king. He curbs rights but demanded that duty must be followed.

Further Aristotle mandated the obligation of civic duties as a condition to be granted citizenship. Therefore the ancient political theory posed important place to obligation.

However in the modern time, with the birth of liberalism, the need of obligation was done away with. The liberal scholar like Locke propounded for the absolute

right to posses property

Liberals like Nozick says that it is man's choice to perform charity or not. There's no obligation on the man.

It must also be remembered that "obligation" were used by totolitarian regimes to oppress citizens. We see in the fascist regimes obligation of nationalism was used to propagate violent ideas.

Today in the modern time, governance is based on combination of rights as well as obligation. We can take the example of Indian Constitution where Fundamental Duties are provided as the obligation ~~of citizen~~ on citizen to ensure common good.

Overall Grading (√)

Poor			Average			Good		
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Q.5) Contextualize the conception of justice in modern political theory. How is justice related to liberty and equality? (15 marks)

Justice encompasses fairness where fairness is the equal distribution of resources and correction of that which is inequitable. It has been called as the "first virtue" of any political system by Rawls in his work Theory of Justice

The idea of justice revived in the modern times due to various social movements like civil rights and black rights in 1960s.

To address these social movements, Rawls, a social egalitarian gave the Theory of Justice. In their theory he attempted to provide the justification behind the creation of a welfare state.

This welfare state will ensure 'Maximum equal liberty to all' which does justice with the

Competence of aspiring individuals.

Thereafter the state will ensure equality of opportunity which will create a just society. In their society there would not be favoritism rather everyone has opportunity to maximize one's wellbeing

And finally some would be left behind. for them, Rawls propose Difference principle in which people who have affluence will donate some earning of their to the disadvantaged people.

In their background, many critics developed these own criteria of Justice for libertarians like Nozick, justice lies in absence of restraints to ensure not maximin but maximax provision

Similarly the feminist propose the need to replace the concept of Justice.

with the concept of care. (Carole Giligan)

Also, Justice is related to liberty but their relationship has varying perception. While neoliberals says that justice lies in freedom from state restriction and complete liberty, social liberals like Amartya Sen says that liberty lies in capacity building by the state which will ensure functional liberty.

Moreover, Rawls propose his theory of Justice to ensure equality but socialist find it as an excuse to promote inequality. For socialist, justice would happen when there's equality of outcome

Therefore Justice as a concept remains debated in the modern political theory where everyone has his own Notion of Justice.

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Q.6) 'Political Science is a master science, "architectonic" in its character, from which all other practical sciences take their cue'. – Ernest Barker (15 marks)

Political science originated as a sub discipline of philosophy in the Ancient Greece however it evolved into master science.

The nature of political science being ~~Master science~~ ~~architectonic~~ architectonic in its character can be understood by the subject matter of their discipline.

The subject matter include state at the core of discussion. Various thinkers and scholars have tried to analyse the nature of state and gave their own version of best practicable state

Now, state has been described as the highest institution of all and only self sufficient entity by Aristotle.

Broader the arguments specially in the contemporary times: 1. Climate 2. Economic stance 3. E.t.c.

Further, if we analyse the function of state, it is authoritative allocation of values and resources.

These resources and values give identity to other practicable science. All diziplines are dependent upon the state for their survival and continuity. for example Economic Science deals with production and distribution of goods and services.

These goods and services that will be produced is determined completely by state in Socialist economy and partially in liberal economy.

Hence we understand that political science which concerns itself to the study of state is a master science.

It is because all the other practicable science owes their

continue to the division of state.

Also the discipline of political science has evolved overtime. While in Ancient times it was more concerned with philosophy, in modern times it evolved into branches like behavioral science, comparative politics etc.

Therefore the reason behind political science being master science is the subject matter of the subject which is state which to a large extent decides the working of other practical science.

Overall Grading (√)

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Q.7) In political theory the right to property is significant not merely as an economic convenience but as a litmus test of how societies conceive freedom, equality and the legitimate reach of the state. Discuss. (15 marks)

The Right to Property has been contested by different school of thought as to what degree, the right should be absolute and to what degree state can limit the right for "greater good"

John Locke provided the absolute right to property. He is the scholar of classic liberalism which stresses upon the autonomy of the individual. Their view is based on the view that man is atomistic by nature and hence individualistic.

The liberal school of thought conciems the right to property as an essential element of freedom. It puts forward their right as the source of maximum liberty ie freedom

Also the liberal societies considered the heriditary feudal rights as injustice Therefore liberals demand for Equality of Opportunity to ensure the freedom to have property.

However liberal school opposes the intervention of state in their right. Locke says " Over his life liberty and property man has absolute right". Therefore libertarian oppose the intervention by state and in doing so limit the legitimacy of state action in acquiring individual's property.

On the other hand, Socialist school considers the individualistic approach of libertarians as injustice. As per socialist state/society, property ought to be distributed equally by

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by the state.

Their will ensure the real freedom i.e freedom from necessities.

Their freedom will ensure the maintenance of egalitarian society where everyone is equal.

Their equality in the socialist society will ensure Justice and lead to collective growth.

Therefore Right to Property is not just a economic provision rather it encompasses different opinions with respect to ensuring equality, freedom and legitimate reach of the state.

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Q.8) Provide a Critical review of Hamza Alavi's formulation of the overdeveloped State. (15 marks)

Hamza Alvi's formulation of the overdeveloped state is the Marxist analysis of post colonial states of structural subschool.

The overdeveloped state in the theory refers to those state which had colonial past and still continue to be in claims of postcoloniclism for example Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Hamza Alvi says that there is blend of modernity and traditionalism in these states. As per him each state in West evolved in such a manner that there was similarities in political and economic sphere. When the polity was slave and master based the economy was slavery based.

Similarly when it advanced to feudal system in economy, the polity also remained feudal. And in modern times when capitalism got established its reflection could be seen in political structure

However in post colonial state, the political structure is imported institution while the economy remained largely feudal the politics is modern based

This overdeveloped political structure creates certain problem like creation of Bonapartist state

In the Bonapartist states, the executive has too much power with itself. This is mainly because of following

① The legacy of colonialism

② The national struggle gave unrestricted power to those who fought in struggle, post independence

③ The economic model adopted by the state

If we critically analyse the theory there is are many examples to support the theory. For example in South Asian Countries, the Bureaucracy enjoys significant amount of power

Similarly in the African nations we see the executive and many a times Military overtake the political structure. It is because the political structure is not indegenous in these societies.

However in India (a post-colonial state) the political structure is in line with economic structure India is the largest and one of most vibrant democracy of world and at same time the 3rd largest economy (by PPP). Therefore largely true Yet the theory is challenged by India as state.

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Q.9) Critically examine the Marxist theory of the state, contrasting its instrumentalist and relative-autonomy interpretations, and assess the contemporary relevance of Marxism. (20 marks)

State has been recognized as the instrument of exercise of power. It is said that political science begins and ends with the state (Garner).

Their archetectonic identity of state made it the central theme of discussion in the discipline of political science. One such discussion involves the Marxist theory of state.

Marxist theory of state emerged as the antithesis to liberals theory of state. As per Marxist theory state is an instrument of exploitation and coercion.

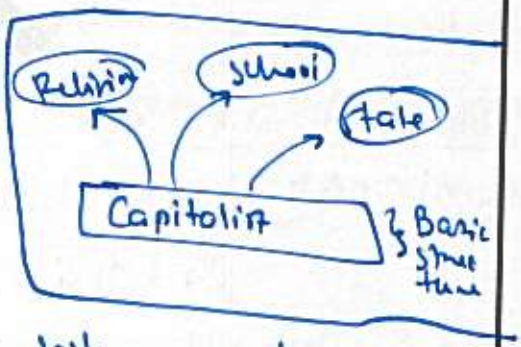
Within the Marxist theory there are two schools:

① Instrumentalist

② Relative Autonomy.

The instrumentalist theory of state was put forward by Marx in ~~which~~ his work "Communist Manifesto" As per their theory state is not an independent authority. It is an instrument of executive of power.

Their instrument is held by the dominant section of the society. Marx gave the idea of basic structure to explain dominant section of society



As per their, the basic structure is the economy. Those who control the economy controls the state. Therefore Marx says that, "State is an instrument of Bourgoise" which means state is controlled by Bourgoise

However the relative autonomy approach interprets state as not completely dependent on the Bourgoise. As per their interpretation, during certain specific condition, it becomes tough to narrate that state is independent or instrument.

These condition arises when there are more than one dominant class in the society. For example, state may have feudal as well as capitalist class in the society as dominant.

In this situation, state gets some bargaining power and ceases to be instrument of any single class. Yet, this bargain is not absolute that is why it is called relative autonomy.

The term relative highlights that when crisis comes, the true

nature of state will come ~~into~~ into picture. In this situation state will become instrument of the Bourgoise

Also the ideology of Marxism has been termed as dead by many in contemporary times. Theories like End of History attempted to establish that Marxism has no relevance today

However it is said that Marxism will continue to haunt the proponent of liberals. The rising inequality and disparity gives fuel to public to stand movement against state like workers in United kingdom and France in 2023. Thomas Pickety in his book "Capitalism in 21st Century" highlight the relevance of Marxism in today's times.

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Q.10) Critically evaluate John Rawls's conception of justice as fairness–with particular reference to the Difference Principle, democratic equality, the contractual-cum-distributive character of his theory, and his defence of limited "discrimination" (affirmative action) to secure liberal justice. (20 marks)

Justice has been described as the first virtue of any social system by John Rawls. From the time of Plato to Rawls the conception of justice remained at the core of Political theory

In the 1960s during the times of Rawls there were movements and protest going around like Black right and civil right movements. Many scholar attempted to produce theory to solve the crisis but failed.

Rawls also attempted to provide solution, but first needed to identify the core problem. He identified inequality in the society to be the core problem. The hitherto available theories provided no comprehensive solution. for example Utilitarianism ensured greatest good for greatest number but lead to majoritarianism

In utilitarianism, the dignity of minorities was being violated for the utility of majority.

Similarly Socialism has its own sets of limitations. In socialism the liberty of individual was curbed which resulted into equality of poverty. There was nothing to be distributed because nothing significant was produced.

Therefore Rawls desired his own idea of Justice which was to be acceptable to all for this he went for "purely procedural theory" where the process will be known to all but the outcome would not be known. As it doesnot give anyone preference therefore it would be acceptable to all

Moreover, he was inspired by "Social Contract" of liberalism therefore prescribes that people will come together for the distribution of social good. During distribution they will carry "veil of ignorance" knowing no specific facts about themselves

and will know only the general condition. These people are moral and rational. Under the veil these people will divide primary social good (liberty, equality etc)

During distribution, he gives the lexical principle providing three stages of distribution

1. Maximum possible liberty to all
2. Equality of Opportunity
3. Difference principle

The Difference principle ensures that those who emerge advantaged donate some of their share to the disadvantaged. This will ensure that disadvantaged dont ~~ever~~ have to ~~survive~~ beyond the minimum limit. suffer.

Yet John Rawls accept that inequality is bound to emerge. Complete equality is neither possible nor desirable because it curbs the individual liberty and motivation for hard work.

The idea of difference principle was criticized by ~~Walzer in his~~ Dworkin in his theory of Justice. As per Dworkin, Rawlsian method will lead to need for compensation again and again therefore Dworkin says to go for affirmative action even before action so that continuous support would not have to be given.

Also, the idea of Contractual cum distribution was criticized by Nozick who says that it must be the choice of person to choose maximin or maximax. He critisizes Rawls for putting restriction on liberty of person by mandating the difference principle

Even Socialist oppose the idea of Rawlsian Justice as it provides justification for inequality.

Yet Rawls must be credited for Revival of Political Science as a discipline

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Poor			Average			Good		
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