

# Chapter 1 : Political Theory : An Introduction

1. Political theory deals with the ideas and principles that shape Constitutions, governments and social life in a systematic manner. It clarifies the meaning of concepts such as **freedom, equality, justice, democracy, secularism** and so on
2. It probes the significance of principles such as rule of law, separation of powers, judicial review, etc.
3. Political theorists clarify the meaning of political concepts by looking at how they are understood and used in ordinary language.
4. It examines the extent to which freedom or equality are actually present in the institutions that we participate
5. Politics is an important and integral part of any society
6. No society can exist without some form of political organisation and collective decision making.
7. Politics is not confined to the affairs of government.
8. In fact what governments do is relevant because it affects the lives of the people in many different ways.
9. We see that governments determine our economic policy and foreign policy and educational policy.
10. These policies can help to improve the lives of people but an inefficient or corrupt government can also endanger people's lives and security.
11. The government makes policies to increase literacy and employment etc.

12. We form associations and organise campaigns to articulate our demands (under Article 19)
13. Rousseau first argued for freedom as a fundamental right of humankind
14. Karl Marx argued that equality was as crucial as freedom
15. Mahatma Gandhi discussed the meaning of genuine freedom or swaraj (Self Rule) in his book Hind Swaraj.
16. Preamble enshrines freedom and equality
17. Chapter on Fundamental Rights (Part 3, Article 12-35) in the Indian Constitution abolishes untouchability in any form (Article 17)
18. 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
19. People may enjoy equal political rights but still be discriminated against socially.
20. Though freedom is guaranteed in our Constitution, we encounter new interpretations all the time.
21. Fundamental rights guaranteed by our Constitution are continually being reinterpreted in response to new circumstances.
22. For instance, the right to life has been interpreted by the Courts to include the right to livelihood
23. The right to information has been granted in 2005 through RTI Act 2005
24. The fundamental rights guaranteed by our Constitution have been amended and expanded over time through judicial interpretations and government policies which are designed to address new problems.

25. Some form of regulation is necessary to safeguard individual security and privacy
26. Unlike in mathematics where there can be one definition of a triangle or square, we encounter many definitions of equality or freedom or justice.
27. This is because terms like equality concern our relationships with other human beings rather than with things.
28. **Equality means equal opportunity for all.**
29. At the same time, if there are separate counters for the old and disabled, we understand that such special treatment may be justified.
30. If we are sensitive, we feel that it is not fair that in a society some members cannot even have their basic needs satisfied.
31. We come to realise that **equality must involve some kind of fairness** so that people are not unduly exploited and disadvantaged by economic factors.
32. Even though the Indian constitution guarantees the right to primary education for all (Article 21A added), this right remains formal.
33. When we cannot even afford basic needs, equal opportunity is not enough.(special provisions made for them)

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