

Q) What do you mean by Political Participation?

Ans: Political participation is a basic concept in political science. It is relevant for any political system, but it is an indispensable feature of democracy. When a person actively participate in formulation, determination and implementation of public policies and decisions then his/her activity is known as political participation. It is basically concerned with the participation of the people in those activities which relate to political order of the society. Through these activities, the people affect the selection of their rulers and the formation of public policies.

It refers to voluntary activities undertaken by the people to influence public policy, either directly or by affecting the selection of persons who make policies. The political activities include the use of franchise, membership of political parties and pressure-groups, participation in the electoral process, expression of views on public matters, holding discussions, helping a political campaign, contacting officials etc. But it is seen that more people participate in politics by voting than by other means. Voting is the primary means of taking part in politics as it allows for the views of more people to be represented than any other activity. People participate in political processes and political institutions through a number of activities in order to make a healthy political system.

Definitions of Political Participation

Political participation has been defined by various scholars in different ways which are as follows:

The classical definition of political participation was given by Herbert McClosky who says, "The term political participation will refer to those voluntary activities by which members of society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly in the formulation of public policy."

According to Heinz Eulau, "Political participation is the involvement of the masses in decision-making process of policy formation."

Thus political participation and democracy is complementary to each other. Political participation was first initiated by Rousseau and the Behaviouralists political thinkers. It is a two way activity when one side acts and the other party responds. This refers to active interaction between government and citizens.