

" Political Science "

Paper : I

Q.7 Discuss the evolution ... absolute sovereignty?

Ans: Introduction:

Sovereignty which means the supreme authority of the state has been a centre of discussion and is associated with different prospects.

In 16th century, Jean Bodin defined sovereignty as absolute and indivisible power while

Thomas Hobbes proclaimed that absolute power rests with the state, he is free to govern the state on his will, take steps good for country's betterment and peace while the people have to submit their rights to him.

Moving forward in 20th century, democratic government give rise to popular sovereignty where as growth interdependence and complex governance structure gave rise to

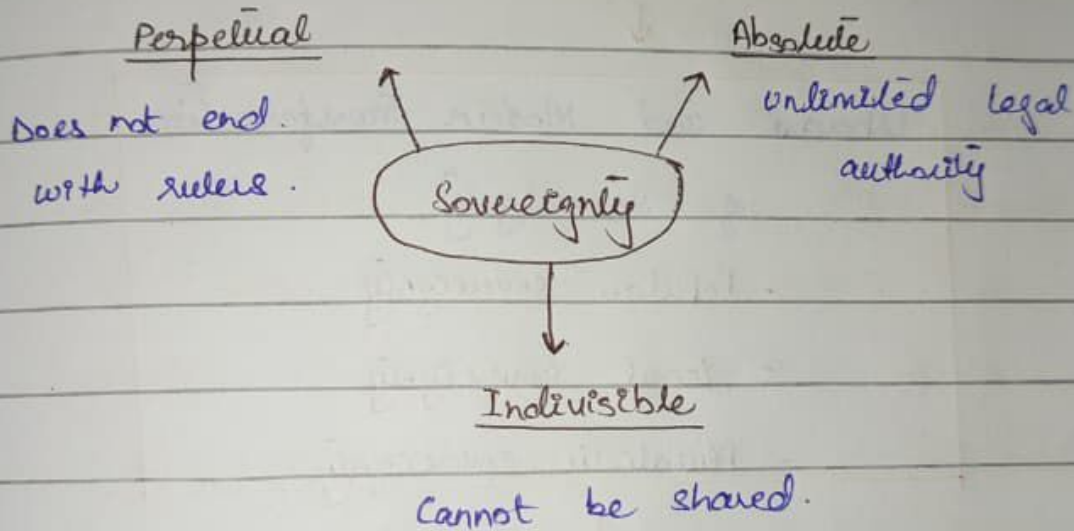
populistic theories which challenge the classical concepts. Moreover, globalisation has further intensified the situation.

States are highly inter-connected not only with other states but with foreign organisations as well.

Classical Notion of Sovereignty:

1. Jean Bodin

He was the first French and philosopher who defines sovereignty in 16th century in his book Six Books of the commonwealth.



According to him, the ruler of the state has the absolute sovereign powers.

The questions will follow the following pattern.

Introduction



Classical Notion of Sovereignty

- Joen Bodin.
- Thomas Hobbes.



Liberal and Modern Transformation of Sovereignty

- Popular sovereignty
- Legal sovereignty
- Pluralistic sovereignty



Globalisation and the Decline of Absolute Sovereignty

- Economic
- Political and Institutional
- Global issues.

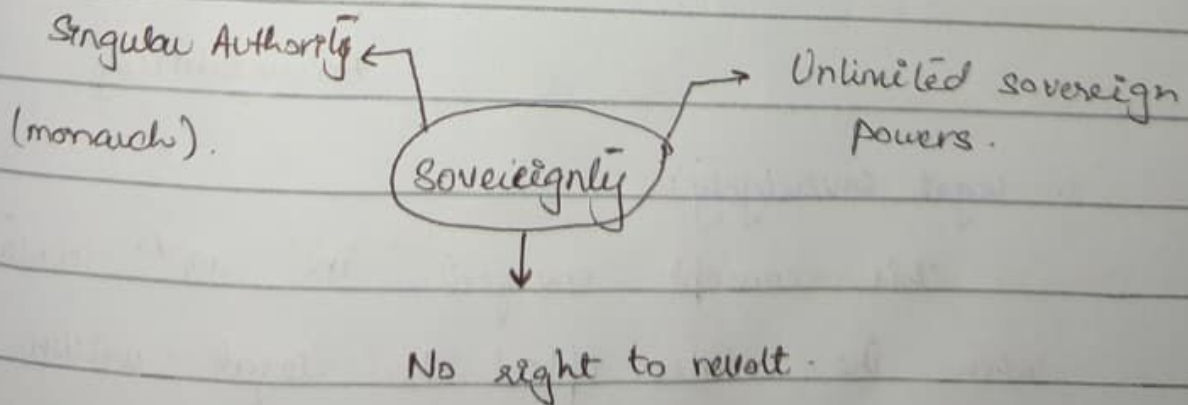


Conclusion.

2. Thomas Hobbes

He was the philosopher of 16th and 17th century. In his book *Leviathan*, he defined sovereignty on the basis of moral and justice. He was of the notion that human beings are always in a state of war and chaos. To ensure peace in the state, everyone has to surrender his rights to the one strong, absolute sovereign which is the head of the state. No one would be allowed to revolt against the sovereign as he is rational enough to make decisions which would be beneficial for the state and its people.

He proclaimed: that sovereign has:



Liberal and Modern Transformation:

1. Popular sovereignty:

This type of sovereignty emerged after the democratic system of government. Many modern philosophers, specially Rousseau, were of the view that sovereignty in a state means ultimate authority to rule or govern and in a state the ultimate absolute authority should rest with the people themselves and the head of the state is only the representation of the will of people. In this way

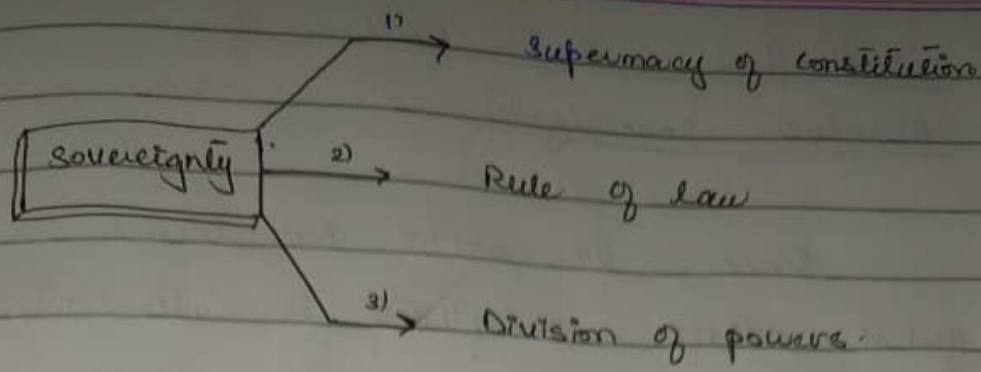
Monarchical absolutism

is replaced by.

Representation and
Accountability

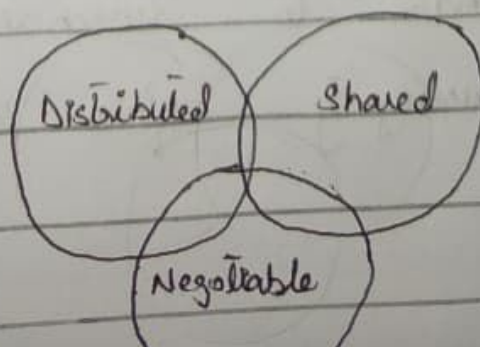
2. Legal sovereignty:

This concept emerged in 19th century when the states opted the legal written constitution and made it obligatory to run state affairs. In this way, sovereignty was redefined as.



3. Pluralistic view:

This was another perspective of sovereignty proposed by thinkers like Laski, who were of the view that sovereignty cannot be limited to state head, or people or constitution alone. Instead, it is a plural term. Since, in a state, different institutions are working in an integrated manner and all have their significant role in the society. For instance, religious institutions, corporations, local government, to name a few. Therefore, sovereignty should be divided among all the institutions and the state is only one such institute. Thus sovereignty becomes:



Globalisation and the Decline of Absolute Sovereignty:

Since the world has become a global village, everything is inter-linked and inter-dependent on other things, the concept of absolute sovereignty has become obsolete.

1. Economic Globalisation

States are dependent ^{financially} on organisations like IMF, World Bank, UNICE, etc.

In return, these organisations intervene in state's affairs.

2. Political and Institutional Globalisation:

Institutions like UNSC, IAEA, ICJ, EU impose restrictions on the countries which they have to fulfill. They are the international bodies responsible for global peace and welfare. Therefore, countries have to surrender part of their sovereignty before them.

3. Global Issues:

Matters like terrorism, climate change, pandemics, can not be handled by the state alone. For which they have to look beyond the borders. In this way, countries design their foreign policy keeping all these factors in front.

Conclusion:

This is how the concept of sovereignty that is absolute power, has transformed from the classical perspective of Jean Bodin and Thomas Hobbes to the modern concept of sovereignty, from state being the absolute sovereign to people of the state. Whereas, complexities were enhanced by globalisation.