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Q1(d)

Bases of Power.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · PSIR GS 1 · 10 marks · Political Theory

Political Theory: meaning and approaches.

Core demand of the question

- **Comment on the following in about 150 words:** Bases of Power. (10 marks)

Revision summary

A base of power is whatever enables A to affect B.

Dahl locates it in observable decisions; **Bachrach** and **Baratz** in agenda; **Lukes** in shaped wants.

Weber lists tradition, charisma, and legal-rational legitimacy.

Foucault adds productive discipline and knowledge.

Gramsci's hegemony and Indian basic-structure review are further institutional bases.

Introduction

Bases of power are the resources and relations that make A able to affect B. Political theory names several maps: decision, agenda, ideology, and the productive routines that form subjects.

Body**Maps of the base**

- **Robert Dahl** treated power as A getting B to do what B would not otherwise do, visible in decisions, as in Who Governs?
- **Peter Bachrach** and **Morton Baratz** added non-decision: keeping issues off the agenda is itself a base.
- **Steven Lukes** added a third face: shaping wants so that conflict never appears.
- **Max Weber** based legitimate domination on tradition, charisma, and legal-rational office.
- **John French** and **Bertram Raven** listed reward, coercion, legitimacy, expertise, and referent identification as social-psychological bases.
- **Michel Foucault** shifted the base from a stock owned by a sovereign to capillary discipline and bio-power joined to knowledge.

Political use

- A constitution lists offices. Bases of power ask who actually prevails in the municipality, the party, and the clinic.
- **Antonio Gramsci**'s hegemony is consent in civil society, another base besides the state's coercion.

- Indian judicial review after **Kesavananda Bharati** (1973) is a legal-rational base that can check the amending legislature.
- No single list is complete. **Dahl**'s decisions, **Lukes**'s silence, and **Foucault**'s routines must be read together.

Flow diagram

Bases of power -> Dahl decisions
Bases of power -> Bachrach non-decision
Bases of power -> Lukes third face
Bases of power -> Foucault discipline
Bases of power -> Weber legitimacy

Conclusion

Bases of power are decision, agenda, preference-shaping, legitimacy types, and disciplinary knowledge. **Dahl**, **Lukes**, **Weber**, and **Foucault** name the main files. Office is only one base.

Facts & figures

Dahl

Who Governs? (1961) studied New Haven decisions as the test of who has power.

Lukes

Three-dimensional power includes conflict that never reaches the agenda or even consciousness.

French and Raven

Five bases: reward, coercive, legitimate, expert, and referent power.

Foucault

Discipline and Punish treats surveillance and examination as bases, not only the sword.