BA LLB II SEM

POLITICAL SCIENCE *PPT LECTURE*
03 & 04

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27.03.2020 & 28.03.2020

UNIT -1

- Topic – Elitist Theory of Democracy

Elitist theory of Democracy

- Characteristics of political elites

- Main Thinkers
- Main features of elitist theory
- Criticism of elitist theory

Elite:

The word 'elite' has been one of the most general terms to be used in descriptive studies, and almost any powerful, advantaged, qualified, privileged, or superior group or category has been called an elite: politicians, bishops, intelligent people and successful criminals, to name just a few.

This class of elite is further <u>sub-divided</u> into: (i) a governing elite; and (ii) a non- governing elite. The 'governing elite' comprises of individuals who directly play some considerable part in government. They wear labels appropriate to the particular political offices, namely, ministers, legislators, president, secretaries and so on. The 'non-governing elite' are those people not connected with the governmental activities.

- In every society there is a class of people which is though small in number but has more control over political power. The power belonging to this class occupy command offices and provide leadership in ruling affairs of the society and this class of the people is known as **elite.**

Characteristics of political elites

- small in number
- Monopoly over political power
- Open competition among different elite groups
- Conscious of their interests

Elitist Theory of Democracy

- This theory emphasized on the **Elite (rich)** class of society.

- The theoretical view held by many social scientists which holds that American politics is best understood through the generalization that nearly all political power is held by a relatively small and wealthy group of people sharing similar values and interests and mostly coming from relatively similar privileged backgrounds.

- It doesn't matter who is in charge of the government , the wealthy upper class are always controlling things 1/3 of the nation's wealth held by 1% of the population.

Main Thinkers

- Mills ---writer of the power elites: defines 3 levels ,Business, political, military and shows how they are inter connected.

Defines 3 levels of elites (Mills)

Mills

- Business
- Political
- military

Vilfredo Pareto:

- Theory of Circulation of elite*

- **Two class of population in society:**

 1. Elite / Upper class and
  2. Non- elite / Lower class

Circulation: Elite to non-elite and non-elite to elite

He also extended the idea that a whole elite can be replaced by a new one and how one can circulate from being elite to non-elite.
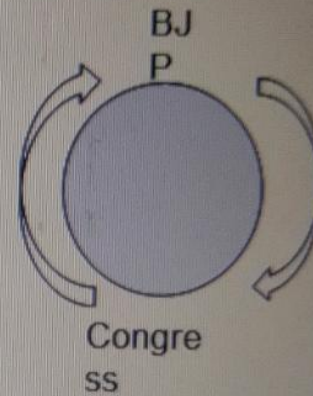
- **History repeat itself.**
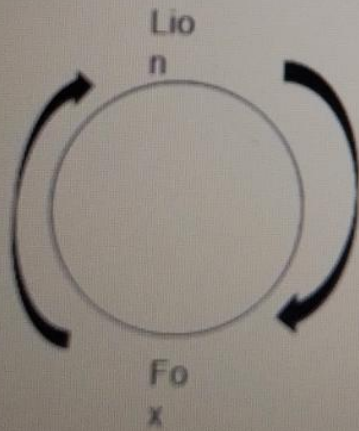- **History is the graveyard of elite.**

Elite

Historical Cycle

Non-
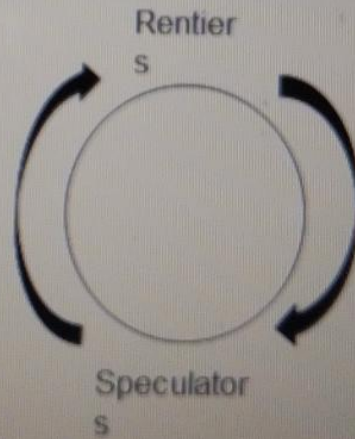Elite
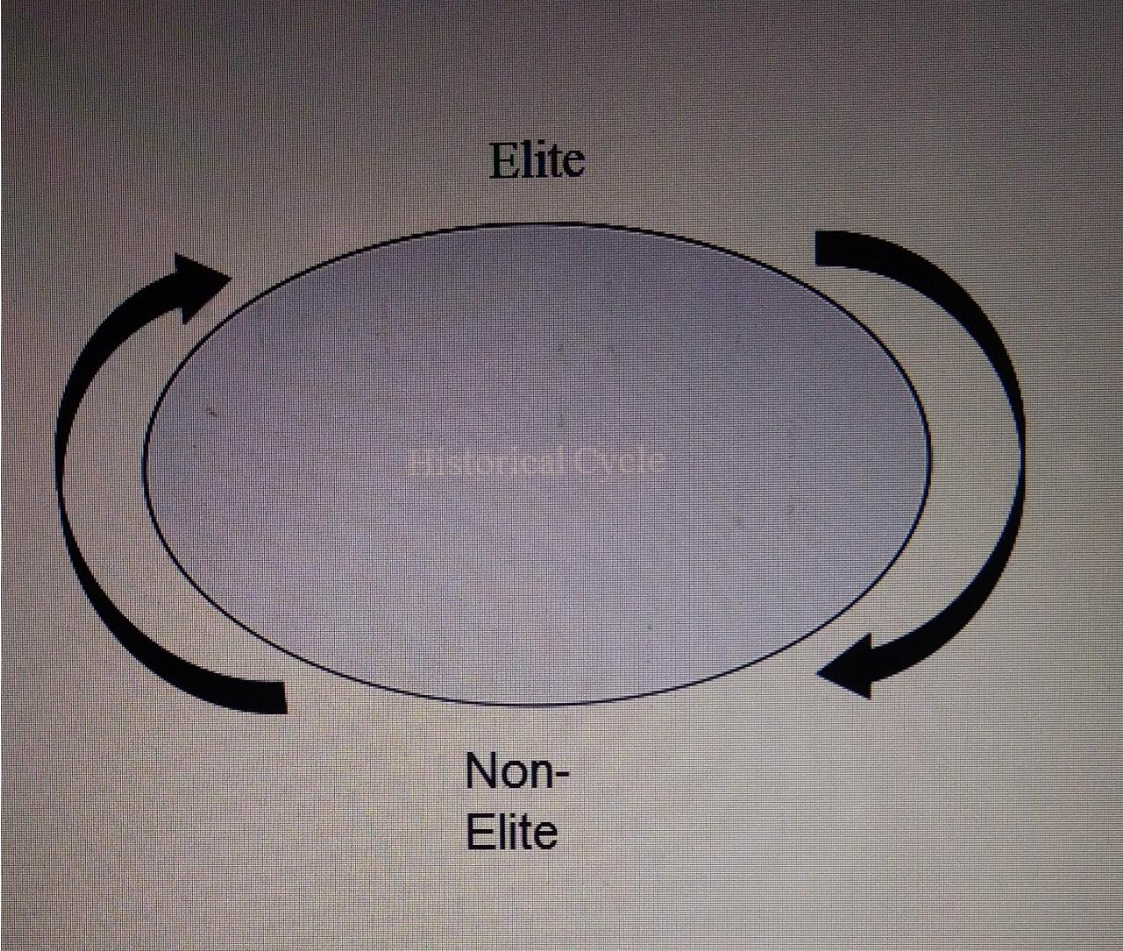
Example: Election of India

Congress

BJP

Before

BJP

Congress
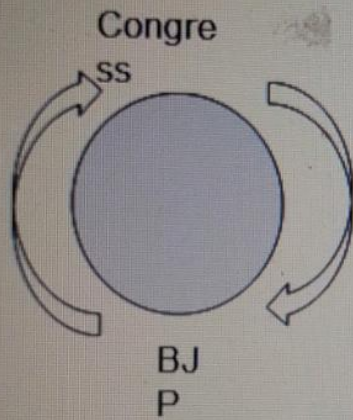
After

Different three types area are circulation of elites in society:

1. Political Area

Lion

Fox

2. Economical Area

Rentiers

Speculators

3. Ideal Area

Trust

Non-Trust
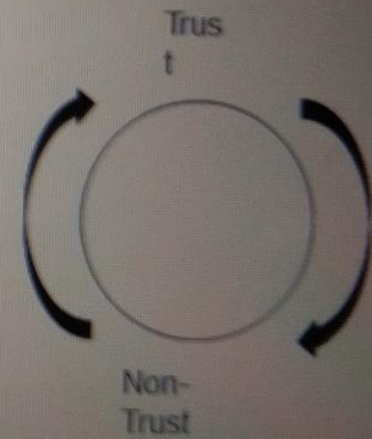
- Pareto – 2 psychological types of leaders. Foxes and lions

- Mosca -in all society 2 classes
A class that is ruled and a class that rules .

- Michels – iron law of oligarchy –tendency for all organisations to be oligarch.

Main features of elitist theory

- Two classes in society – elite ,masses
- Competition among elites.
- Accountability of elite towards masses.
- Leadership is necessary for democracy.
- Democratic method of appointing and dismissing of the policy.

Criticism of elitist theory

- It is conservative theory.
- This theory gives undue importance.
- Lack of faith in common people.
- This theory gives no importance to ideology.
- What should be the basis of political elite.
- This theory is a against the principle of social and economic equality.
- This theory gives no importance to man.

REFERENCES

1. Political Theory and concepts-Dr. Lal Sahab singh

2. Unified political Science –Dr. Nand Lal

3. An introduction to political Theory –Om prakash gawa

4. Political Theory – Dr. Pukhraj jain

- **NOTE**: Now tomorrow we will discussion on 'Marxist Theory of democracy.