Institute of Distance and Open Learning
GAUHATI UNIVERSITY

MA in Political Science
(3rd Semester)

Paper IX
COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Block 1
Introduction and MajorApproaches to
Comparative Politics

Contents:

Block Introduction–

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Block Introduction:

Comparative politics is very important in the field of political science as it widens the horizon of political science by enabling the scholars to compare the political issues and problems of different parts of the globe. It makes an endeavour to study the state and government of different countries as well as the non-state associations that influence the operational process of the government. Hence, we can easily conclude that the scope of comparative politics is much wider than comparative governments since politics and exercise of power take place not only in governments but also in other groups and associations of the society.

Though comparative studies on governments were made from a very early period, the study of comparative politics has a recent origin mainly with the efforts of the American political scientists who shifted their study from the governments to the study of political systems. However, one cannot deny the contributions made by great philosophers like Aristotle and Machiavelli to this field of study. So, we can say that it has gone through various stages since the time of Aristotle till date.

To make comparative studies of various political systems different approaches have been adopted. We can broadly divide these approaches as —traditional and modern. In the present time modern approaches are preferred over the traditional approaches to make the study more scientific.

This block will make an attempt to deal with the concept of comparative politics as well as the traditional and modern methods used in the field of comparative politics. The unit Iof this block gives us an idea about the meaning and evolution of comparative politics. Then it deals with traditional approaches like Philosophical Approach, Historical Approach, Institutional Approach and Legal Approach adopted in the study of comparative politics.

The Unit II of this block discusses at length various modern approaches in the field of comparative politics. While doing so, it discusses the distinguished features of modern approaches of Comparative Politics. Then the unit gives us idea on various modern approaches like Sociological approach,

psychological approach, system approach, marxian approach, behavioural approach, game theory, decision-making approach and political communications approach

This block consists of two units:

Unit 1: Introduction to Comparative Politics and Traditional Approaches to the study of Comparative Politics

Unit 2: Modern Approaches to the study of Comparative Politics

Detail Syllabus
PAPER IX
COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Block I: Introduction and Major Approaches to Comparative Politics

Unit I: Introduction and Traditional Approaches to Comparative Politics

   1.1 Introduction

   1.2 Objectives

   1.3 Growth of comparative Politics as a discipline

   1.4 Meaning and Features of Traditional Approaches

   1.5 Various Traditional Approaches to the study of Comparative Politics

      1.5.1 Philosophical Approach

      1.5.2 Historical Approach

      1.5.3 Institutional Approach

      1.5.4 Legal Approach

   1.6 Summing Up

   1.7 References and Suggested Readings

Unit II: Modern Approaches to Comparative Politics

   2.1 Introduction

   2.2 Objectives

   2.3 Features of Modern Approaches of Comparative Politics

   2.4 Modern Approaches

      2.4.1 Sociological Approach

      2.4.2 Psychological Approach

      2.4.3 System Approach

      2.4.4 Marxian Approach

      2.4.5 Behavioural Approach

      2.4.6 Game Theory

      2.4.7 Decision-Making Theory

      2.4.8 Political Communications Approach

   2.5 Summing up

   2.6 References and Suggested Readings

Block II: Political System and System Analysis

Unit I: Political System and General System Theory
    1.1 Introduction
    1.2 Objectives
    1.3 General Syatem Theory
        1.3.1 Certain Concepts of System Theory
        1.3.2 System Analysis and David Eastern
        1.3.3 Critical Appraisal
    1.4 Properties and Characteristics of Political System
        1.4.1 Variables of Political System
        1.4.2 Functions Aspects of Political System
    1.5 Analysis of Easton
    1.6 Summing Up
    1.7 References and Suggested Readings

Unit II: Structural-Functional Analysis
    2.1 Introduction
    2.2 Objectives
    2.3 Basic Assumptions of Structural-Functional Analysis
    2.4 Structural Functionalism
        2.4.1 Concept of Structure and Function
        2.4.2 Structural Functional Analysis
        2.4.3 Input and Output Functions
        2.4.4 Critical Assessment
    2.5 Feedbacks and Capability
    2.6 Summing Up
    2.7 References and Suggested Readings

Block III: Key Concepts of Comparative Politics: Political Development, Political Modernization and Political Culture, Political Ideology and Constitutionalism

Unit I: Concept of Political Development, Political Socialization and Political Culture

Unit II: Concept of Political Ideology and Constitutionalism

Unit 1
Introduction to Comparative Politics and Traditional Approaches to the study of Comparative Politics

Contents :

1.1 Introduction

In order to understand the concept of 'Comparative Politics' in its entirety, we will have to understand the meaning of the concept of 'Comparative Government'. Actually, 'Comparative Politics' is nothing but an advanced version of what was known as 'Comparative Government' earlier. Therefore, it can be said that the old nomenclature of 'Comparative Government' has been replaced by what we today know by the name of 'Comparative Politics'.

The subject of Comparative Government is an old one. Infact, about 2400 years ago, Aristotle, the most notable philosopher of Greece, made a comparative study of 158 Constitutions of world. But, at that time, the comparative study was made in its rudimentary form. Aristotle, was in a sense, probably the first scholar of comparative government, and considered from this angle, the study of comparative government is one of the oldest and most important to have attracted the attention of mankind. So, since

Aristotle, comparative government has been a thriving subject of study. For centuries after Aristotle, scholars have engaged themselves in the comparative investigation of different countries.

However, with the passage of time, the nature and range of comparison underwent a transformation and the study of comparative government was radically transformed. The term 'Comparative Politics' is now favoured in place of 'Comparative Government', because the former is wider in scope.

In this unit, we will make an endeavour to study the concept of Comparative Politics, the growth of the discipline, and the various traditional approaches to the study of Comparative Politics.

1.2 Objectives

Comparative Politics helps us to understand the political systems of different parts of the world. Like political science, comparative politics also uses various traditional as well as modern approaches for studying political issues and problems. After reading this unit, you will be able to understand the meaning of comparative politics. Moreover, this unit deals with different traditional approaches to the study of comparative politics.. After reading this unit, you will be able to :

- *understand* the focus of attention of different traditional approaches.

- *examine* the differences between the concepts of comparative government and comparative politics.

- *describe* the different characteristic features of the traditional approaches.

- *trace* the development and growth of the subject of comparative politics.

- *understand* the essential features of the subject of study of comparative politics.

1.3 Growth of Comparative Politics as a Discipline

We have already understood the fact that the study of comparative politics is a new phenomenon since earlier comparative study was made only in

terms of governments. In its present form, the study of comparative politics began in the 20th century, after the Second World War. At times, the two concepts of 'Comparative Government' and 'Comparative Politics' are used interchangeably. But, there lies a distinction between these two concepts. As Roy C. Macridis points out, the expression 'Comparative Government', signifies the study of the legal instrumentalities of government namely, the electorate, the legislature, the executive, the administration and the courts. Comparative Politics now offers to study the political process and institutions in a totally comparative fashion for the purpose of answering common problems and questions. The range of comparison is broadened in Comparative Politics to include as many political systems as possible. It indicates that the scheme is not only focused on formal governmental institutions or political organization but also true to one of the dominant trends in contemporary political science. It emphasizes informal factors, the dynamic nature of the political process, the role of interest groups, and the impact of society and culture on politics. Now, let us discuss in detail the growth and development of comparative politics as a discipline.

Actually, the historical development of this subject may be roughly put into three phases – unsophisticated, sophisticated and increasingly sophisticated.

- *First phase*: The contributions made to the study of politics by great figures like Aristotle, Machiavelli, Bryce, de Tocqueville etc. belong to the first place, because, they simply utilized the comparative method for the primary purpose of better understanding the working of the political organizations. They used to make the comparative study only on the basis of formal governmental institutional aspect, and also only the western nations were taken into account. Thus, the comparison was very narrow in scope.

- *Second phase*: The contributions of some important writers like Samuel H. Beer, M. Hass, Barnard Ulam and Roy C. Macridis may be included in the second phase who made use of the comparative method with a good amount of self-consciousness and also with a deliberate mood to present a more useful study of different political institutions. They have taken into account the study of 'political system' as a whole, thereby widening the scope of its study. Thus, they fall in the sophisticated phase in the growth of the subject of Comparative Politics.

- ***Third phase:*** Finally, in the increasingly sophisticated phase of the growth of comparative politics, we may refer to the contributions made by the writers like David Easton, Gabriel Almond, James C. Coleman, Karl Deutsch, G.B. Powell, Harold Lasswell, Robert A. Dahl, Edward Shils, David Apter, Sydney Verba, Myron Weiner and a host of others. The writers belonging to this phase have made use of inter-related set of concepts.

Thus, the subject of comparative politics as developed, in the latest phase, has the following characteristics :

(1) Analytical and Empirical Investigation : From the above discussion, we have understood the fact that the writers belonging to the latest phase have adopted the analytical cum empirical method in their study, which have definitely enlarged the field of enquiry and thus helped the discipline/subject to reach new heights.

(2) Study of the Infra-structure : the writers belonging to the latest phase have started studying the political system as a whole, rather than being concerned about the study of the isolated concepts of executive, legislature and judiciary. Actually, the traditionalists were concerned with only the study of formal institutional aspects. Due to this reason they were unable to understand as to why different systems function differently. But, the scholars belonging to the last phase have devoted their attention on the study of both formal as well as informal infra-structure which equally plays vital role in stimulating the functioning of a political system. Thus, they have taken into account not only the study of formal structures like executive, legislature and judiciary, but also the study of political parties, pressure groups, role of political socialization etc.

(3) Emphasis on the Study of Developing Societies : the scholars belonging to the discipline of comparative politics, laid emphasis on the study of developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, along with the study of the western developed countries. It has occurred as a result of the emergence of the newly independent countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America and also an urge to make the study of comparative politics of universal appeal. More and more attention is paid to the study of the politics of developing societies

(12)

both for the reason of making this a subject of universal study and for building theories and models. As Woods says : "one could not help being aware of the fact that there existed in the recent political experiences of dozens of countries a veritable laboratory in which to test propositions about the way governmental systems behave under stress and the factors which bring about changes in political forms."

(4) Focus on Inter-Disciplinary Approach: the scholars belonging to the last phase have emphasized inter-disciplinary study of politics. That is, they have borrowed concepts from different other social sciences like, psychology, anthropology, economics, sociology etc. in order to explain different concepts of political science. For example, systems analysis with its two derivatives in the form of structural-functional and input-output approaches owes its origin to the discipline of biology that has been borrowed by the leading American political scientists like David Easton from sociologists like Robert Merton and Talcott Parsons. Various new topics for study have come up in the field of political science, like, political development, political socialization, political modernization, political culture, political change, political leadership etc. as a result of the application of this inter-disciplinary approach. It is certainly on account of the adoption of this inter-disciplinary approach by the writers on comparative politics that the subject of political science is said to have undergone a revolution of sorts.

(5) Value-Free Political Theory : finally, we must keep it in our mind that as a result of the efforts of the writers belonging to the last phase and due to the application of the above stated features that the subject of political science has lost its normative aspect and assumed empirical dimensions in the sphere of comparative politics. Thus, the value-free political theory has replaced value-laden political theory. Actually, the writers belonging to the last phase have made it crystal clear that there is no place for 'values' in the field of political science. Political scientist must be concerned with how the things are at present, rather than being concerned about how it ought to be in the future. Thus, the writers belonging to the last phase wanted to make the study of political science very much relevant to the present condition, and thus, wanted to make the study useful. It should,

however, be made clear that the use of the term 'values' by Easton or of 'value system' by Almond has an empirical, and not a normative connotation.

Thus, from the above discussion it is clear to us that the scope of study of 'comparative politics' is broader than that of 'comparative government' as used in the earlier days. Various scholars have made their valuable contributions in the field of comparative politics and they have helped in broadening the scope of this subject by taking into their areas of study more and more countries of the world, particularly of the Afro-Asian and Latin-American regions better known as the 'world of developing areas'.

STOP TO CONSIDER :-

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 'APPROACH' AND 'METHOD' :

An approach may be defined as a way of looking at and then explaining a particular phenomena. The perspective may be broad enough to cover a vast area like world as a whole in the study of politics, or it may be very small embracing just an aspect of local, regional, national or international politics. Thus, in the words of Vernon Van Dyke, an approach consists of criteria of selection – criteria employed in selecting the problems or questions to consider and in selecting the data to bring to bear; it consists of standards governing the inclusion and exclusion of questions and data.

Approaches and methods, though inter-related, yet there is slight difference between these two concepts. Van Dyke observes that in brief, approaches consist of criteria for selecting problems and relevant data, whereas methods are procedures for getting and utilizing data. A method may also be called a technique. Owing to the use of varieties of different methods, drawn from different social sciences, that today political science has assumed inter-disciplinary character, and moved closer to other disciplines.

As applied to the field of comparative politics, the comparative method has three essential characteristics :

(1)   **Definition of Conceptual Units** : the units which we compare in the field of comparative politics are conceptual units in the sense that on the basis of those areas the comparative analysis could be made. The responsibility of the student of comparative politics does not end with the

making of similarities and differences between two governmental systems. He has to deal with the macro units i.e., the entire political system which performs functions for large and complex societies. Apart from looking at the three formal structures of a political organization like legislature, executive and judiciary, he should also study the role of the behaviour of the voters, operational form of the political parties and pressure groups etc. In other words, a student of comparative politics is concerned with the units of lesser scope that constitute the infra-structure of a political system. As such in the field of comparative politics, one should be concerned with the conceptual units and proceed ahead in the directions of making comparisons on the basis of definitions.

(2)   Classifications: Taxonomy occupies a very important place in the field of comparative politics. It facilitates the making of broad general judgements regarding the characteristics of a very complex phenomenon. The work of theory building and testing conclusions becomes easier when a student of comparative politics draws table charts to categorise different political systems on the basis of the following considerations:–

   (a)   division of power in reference to federal and unitary system.

   (b)   Relationship between the executive and the legislative departments.

   (c)   Liberties of the people in respect to democratic and totalitarian system etc.

   It is noticeable that at this stage a student of comparative politics should widen his scope of study so as to make typological illustrations. In this connection, we may refer to Finer who has identified the following elements as the basis of comparisons :-

   (a)   How far the people obey their rulers out of commitment or fear.

   (b)   How far the people are involved or excluded from the governing process.

   (c)   How far the management reflects the values of the people in the politics.

(15)

(3) **Hypothesis Formulation and Testing:** a student of comparative politics should make a comparative analysis on the basis of formulating hypothesis and then testing it so as to establish certain conclusions. By taking the political system as the basic unit of his study, a student of comparative politics is concerned with the question as to how the political system operates. The following considerations may come to the student of comparative politics while making his comparative analysis, like :-

(a) What determines the degree to which political systems will be responsive to popular demands.

(b) What determines the degree to which the outputs of a system will be sufficient to meet the threats of external pressure or domestic crisis.

(c) What determines the degree of support which the system will receive and extract from the populace, whether in the form of voting, tax paying or personal service in times of crisis.

(d) What determines the degree of institutional stability within the system.

(e) What determines the level of internal violence which the system must withstand.

(f) What determines the capacity of the system to produce effective leadership to meet the needs of all times.

Thus, a student of comparative politics may take different considerations while formulating hypothesis and testing it in order to reach a valid and reliable conclusions. So, from the above discussion, it is already clear to you all that a student of comparative politics should move ahead in a way that the conceptual units are defined, classification is made and hypothesis is formulated and tested to arrive at the conclusion. Infact, one thing to be born in mind is that the comparative method is the very life-breadth of the subject of comparative politics. It is true that there may be different forms of comparison, but a student of comparative politics should keep it in mind that the conceptual units chosen by him are precisely defined and the theories evolved should be empirically verifiable and testable.

(16)

1.4 Meaning and Features of Traditional Approaches

The traditional approaches to the study of comparative politics refers to the speculative and non-empirical approach towards the study of political problems. It needs mention here that the traditional approaches to the study of comparative government grew out of a response to the historicism of the 19th century. The traditionalists either abstractly philosophized about democracy and other subjects, or, made a formal-legal study of the governmental institutions. The analysis was essentially configurative, and each system was treated as a unique entity. The approach was, thus, preponderantly descriptive rather than problem-solving, explanatory, or analytic in its method, and description was limited to forms of government, and of foreign political systems.

Roy Macridis has very methodically and clearly recapitulated the major features of the traditional approaches. According to him, the approaches have been essentially non-comparative, descriptive, parochial, static and monographic. Again, Almond and Powell have identified three major themes that have dominated the approach to comparative government like its parochialism, its configurative analysis, and its formalism. Harry Eckstein also points out the influence of abstract theory, formal-legal studies and configuration studies characterizing the reaction against historicism in political studies.

Roy Macridis further points out that the traditional approaches addressed itself primarily to the western political systems. The emphasis was on single-culture configuration and thus, cross-cultural studies were almost entirely unknown. The study was limited in range as well as in depth. Only the

(17)

isolated aspects of the governmental process within specific countries were analysed. Thus, the study was basically monographic, and thus comparative in name only. The study was purely confined to western democratic countries like Britain, and the Commonwealth countries, the USA, France, Germany, Italy and Russia.

In the second place, as pointed out by him, the traditional approach was excessively formalistic in its approach to political institutions. The study was focused on formal governmental institutional organs and their legal norms, rules and regulations, rather than on performance, interactions, and behaviour. It totally ignored the influence of informal factors on the decision-making and also the non-political determinants of political behaviour. Thus, the traditional study was greatly unrealistic.

In the third place, the traditional study was predominantly descriptive, rather than analytical, explanatory or problem-solving in its method. There was no attempt on the part of traditionalists to develop a general theory by verification of hypotheses and compilation of the significant data.

Therefore, the main features of the traditional approaches to the study of comparative politics can be pointed out as——

- **Speculative dimension:** the traditional approaches were characterized by speculative dimension, i,e the guesswork of the leading political thinkers constituted the basis of the traditional approaches. For example, here we may refer to Platonic conception of ideal state, which was purely a speculative exercise.

- **Non-Empirical :** the traditional approaches to the study of comparative politics are non-empirical i.e., the conclusions given by the political thinkers cannot be subjected to empirical verifications. Thus, these approaches were characterized by normativism.

- **Absence of Quantification:** the traditional approaches suffered from absence of quantification i.e., the results were unable to be produced in mathematical terms. Thus, in absence of quantification, the approaches suffered from lack of precision. Since the approaches were very much speculative, they lacked precision.

- **Value-laden:** the traditional approaches to the study of comparative politics science were value-laden i.e., they were too much concerned

(18)

about what ought to be, rather than what is going on at present. They were not at all concerned about facts.

- **No theory building :** in the traditional approaches, there were neither any effort on application of theory in studies, nor there were any effort on theory building.

- **Absence of Research Design :** in traditional approaches to the study of political science, there was no provision for the application of research design in the study of political problems.

Thus, from the above discussion, it is very much clear to all of us that the traditional approaches were criticized from many aspects. It was as a result of dissatisfaction with the traditional approaches that the modern approaches came into limelight. More specifically speaking, this dissatisfaction with the traditionalists heralded a new movement which is known by the name of behavioural movement in the field of political science. Also, the ushering of the newly independent countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America gave further impetus to the growth of new trend in the field of comparative politics. Thus, Peter Merkl has very nicely pointed out that the most momentous single factor for the current transformation of the study of comparative politics was the rising importance of the politics of the developing areas. Almond and Powell mention three developments being primarily responsible for the new situation, namely, the national emergence of a multitude of nations with a bewildering variety of cultures, social institutions and political characteristics, the loss of dominance of the nations of the Altantic community and the changing balance of power, and the emergence of communism as a powerful factor in the process of restructuring of national and international political systems.

SAQ :-

Do you think that the traditional approaches were narrow in its outlook. Explain. (50 words).

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1.5 Various Traditional Approaches to the study of Comparative Politics

After reading the previous sections of the unit we have got an idea about the meaning of comparative politics as well as traditional approaches. Now, let us discuss the important traditional approaches to the study of comparative politics.

1.5.1 Philosophical Approach

The philosophical approach, also known by the name of ethical approach, is the oldest approach to the study of politics. This approach is normative in character. Here, the study of state, government and the people is linked with the pursuit of certain goals, morals, truths, or high principles supposed to be underlying all knowledge and reality. The word 'philosophical' refers to thought about thought, and therefore the study becomes speculative in nature. The thinkers and writers belonging to this approach keep on advising the rulers and the members of a political community to pursue certain higher ends. They take the study of politics to a very high level of abstraction. They were concerned about what ought to be in future, rather than being concerned about the present. Their concepts were utopian in the sense that they used to portray rosy pictures of ideal political system for future. We can here name some of the important scholars belonging to this approach. They were —— Plato, Bacon, Kant, Hegel, Green etc.

Critics criticize this approach for being speculative and abstract, which takes us away from the world of reality. It is also accused of being hypothetical. In this approach, politics becomes the handmaid of ethics or metaphysics. But, one of the leading thinkers of this approach Leo Strauss affirms that values are an indispensable part of political philosophy and they cannot be excluded from the study of politics.

SAQ :-

Do you think that the philosophical approach deals with the utopian ideas? Discuss. (50 words).

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1.5.2 Historical Approach

The distinguished feature of this approach is that it always focused its attention on the past or on a selected period of time as well as on a sequence of selected events within a particular phase so as to find out an explanation of what institutions are, and tending to be. This approach tried to give more emphasis on historical aspects. Associated with the names of Machiavelli, Montesquieu, Savigny, Maine, Seeley etc., this method lays stress on the use of historical evidence for a proper study of the political phenomena. This approach believes in the fact that all political institutions have a long record of their rise and growth and their present form may be well understood in the context of their past history. Thus, historical evidence has an importance of its own. In order to understand political theory, it is equally necessary to understand clearly the time, place and circumstances in which it was evolved. The value of historical approach lies in the fact that it enables us to make certain sound generalizations and also helps us to get authentic facts because of being based on past evidence. Moreover, such a study is always open to verification. That is why, a leading scholar like, Oakeshott associates it with the trend of conservatism and remarked "what we are learning to understand is a political tradition, a concrete manner of behaviour. And for this reason it is proper that, at the academic level, the study of politics should be a historical study." Another great advantage of this approach is that it warns us against repeating blunders of the past and thus, corrects them for the future, and this way, history becomes like a great teacher of wisdom. It thus enlarges mental horizon and improves the perspectives towards the events. Laski thus says : "the study of politics must be an effort to codify the results of experience in the history of states."

But, it must be noted here that the historical approach has its own shortcomings. For example, as James Bryce says, it is often loaded with superficial resemblances. As such, historical parallels may sometimes be illuminating, but at times they may be misleading also. Also, another point of criticism leveled against this approach is that a scholar subscribing to this

(21)

approach only takes into account the historical aspect, thereby neglecting other important aspects.

However, we will have to admit the fact that the approach has some positive points also. Works of G.H.Sabine, R.G.Gettel, W.A.Dunning, C.C.Maxey, T.I.Cook, R.J.Carlyle, G.E.G.Catlin, C.E.Vaughan etc. have an importance of their own. Thus, the above discussion proves beyond any shadow of doubt that the historical approach has its own place of importance in the field of political theory.

1.5.3   Institutional Approach

This approach was popular during the first quarter of the twentieth century. The experts who advocate this approach, lay stress on the study of the formal structures of a political organization like executive, legislature and judiciary. This trend is found in the writings of large number of political scientists from Aristotle and Polybius in the ancient to Bryce and Finer in the modern periods. This approach was popularized by the works of Walter Bagehot, W.B. Munro, Herman Finer, H.J. Laski, James Bryce etc. The emphasis of this approach was exclusively on the formal institutional aspects of government and politics. In this approach, political thinkers restrict the study of political science to political institutions only. Aristotle made extensive use of this approach while comparing 150 constitutions of different parts of the world. Aristotle, while comparing different constitutions, confined himself only to the formal institutional aspects. Accordingly, this approach has continued to exist in political science from ancient times.

This approach has been criticized by the critics for being too narrow. According to the critics, it ignores the role of the individuals, who plays a vital role in the functioning of the political system as a whole. It is because of this that the behavioural approaches have over shadowed the significance of this approach. Also, the scholars belonging to this approach have tended to ignore international politics. Another difficulty is that the meaning and range of an institutional system vary with the view of the scholar.

1.5.4   Legal Approach

The legal approach is another traditional approach to the study of comparative politics. Being a traditional approach, it has emphasized the study of

institutions in their formal and legal dimension. That is why, this approach is also known as juridical approach. Here, the study of politics is mixed up with legal processes and institutions. The sholars belonging to this approach look at the state as the maintainer of an effective and equitable system of law and order. Thus, matters relating to the organization, jurisdiction and independence of judicial institutions, therefore, become an essential concern of a political scientist. Scholars like Cicero in the ancient to Dicey in the modern periods belong to this approach. Thus, this approach treats the state primarily as an organization for the creation and enforcement of law. A distinguished scholar of this approach like Jellinek advises us to treat organized society not as a mere social or political phenomenon, but as an ensemble of public law, rights and obligations founded on a system of pure logic or reason. The scholars belonging to this approach also go to the extent of saying that the knowledge of law helps a person to become law-abiding good citizen, thereby helping that person to discharge the functions of citizens properly. Thus, this approach lays too much emphasis on the legal aspect.

But, this approach has been criticized for having a narrow perspective. Law embraces only one aspect of a people's life and, as such, it cannot cover the entire behaviour of the political actions. The critics say that the analytical jurists commit the mistake of reducing every aspect of a political system to a juridical entity.

Thus, from the above discussion, it is crystal clear to us that each and every traditional approaches have their own shortcomings. But, at the same time, it must be noted that the traditional approaches have their significance also. We all know the fact that ours is a social science, and in a social science, values must have the necessary place of importance. The importance of values cannot be totally ignored in our discipline. Thus, by laying stress on the value-dimension, the traditionalists have done a commendable job.

From the above discussion, we may sum up the important features of the traditional approaches. The first and foremost outstanding feature is that value-laden system dominates. Normativism assigns to them a peculiar and distinctive character. As a result, political theory is said to have become abstract, hypothetical, speculative, even metaphysical. Thus, we can say that the traditional approaches have their own positive as well as negative features.

Check Your Progress:

1. Discuss the differences between the two concepts of 'comparative government' and 'comparative politics'.

2. Do you think that the concept of 'comparative politics' is wider in scope than that of 'comparative government'?

3. Discuss the traditional approaches to the study of politics.

4. 'Historical approach tends to give more importance to the historical aspects'. Explain.

5. Discuss the salient features of the traditional approaches to politics.

6. Discuss the essential features of the comparative method as used in the field of comparative politics.

1.6 Summing Up

After reading this unit, it is clear to all of us that the traditional approaches had their own shortcomings, and it is owing to these reasons/pitfalls that the scholars came up with the modern approaches to the study of politics in order to avoid these defects. However, the point remains that both the traditional as well as modern approaches have a relevance of their own in the study of a political phenomena. It is true that the modern political scientists have been able to overcome the defects of the traditionalists, but while doing that they, at times, have shown too much concern for scientism, which is not proper. We can very well conclude our discussion with the sagacious observation of G.E.G. Catlin that no political theory could be complete without the 'consideration of the ends of action and the discussion of values' and so that of H.R. Greaves that "a value-free analysis would prove destructive to political theory." Thus, the traditional approaches have its own place of importance in the field of comparative politics. In the next unit of this block we shall discuss in detail the modern approaches to the study of comparative politics.

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Unit 2
Modern Approaches to the study of Comparative Politics

Contents:

2.1 Introduction

Approaches to the study of politics may be broadly classified into two categories – normative and empirical. While the former is said to be value-laden, the latter is known for being value-neutral. Fact-value relationship is therefore, the basis of our classification in this regard. On this basis, we may say that while the traditional approaches lean to the side of 'values', the latter, i.e., the modern approaches do the same for 'facts'. In the study of Comparative Politics also we find the similar approaches and techniques as that of Political Science.

From the study of the traditional approaches to the study of Comparative Politics, you have already known the fact that there were lots of defects in

the traditional approaches. Thus, an attempt was made to introduce a new kind of study, whereby different other parameters will be taken into account while studying Comparative Politics. Almond and Powell also said that there must be search for realism and precision. Comparative Politics must help towards theory building. Thus, it was as a result of these efforts on the part of political scientists that certain modern approaches came into limelight. These approaches are very important to understand how actually the political system works in reality.

In this unit, you will study the important modern approaches to the study of Comparative Politics, like, political communications, game theory and decision- making approaches etc. These approaches in the present context are very interesting and challenging dealing with 'how' the system functions so as to achieve its pre-determined goals in reality.

2.2 Objectives

The major objective of Comparative Politics is to make a comparative study of different political systems of the world. In fulfilling that objective, Comparative Politics adopts various approaches. This unit deals with various modern approaches to the study of Comparative Politics. After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- *understand* different modern approaches to the study of Comparative Politics.

- *examine* the differences amongst these approaches.

- *trace* the differences between traditional and modern approaches to Comparative Politics

- *assess* the relevance of these approaches in present scenario.

- *highlight* the fact that all these approaches lay emphasis on the 'fact', rather than being concerned only about values.

2.3 Features of Modern Approaches to Comparative Politics

You all are well acquainted with the fact that the approaches to the study of Political Science can be broadly divided into two categories: traditional and modern. The traditional approaches to the study of Political Science were

(28)

criticized by the critics due to various reasons. Roy Marcidis has methodically and clearly recapitulated the major features of the traditional approaches, like – traditional approaches have been essentially non-comparative, descriptive, parochial, static and monographic. Thus, the traditional approaches to the study of Political Science were criticized on many grounds, which you have already studied in the preceding unit. All these forces and factors led to vigorous efforts at innovation and to an attempt to create a new intellectual order. The result was, as Sidney Verba so aptly comments, "a revolution in comparative politics." Verba has nicely summed up the principles behind the 'revolution': "look beyond description to more theoretically relevant problems; look beyond the formal institutions of government to political process and political functions; and look beyond the countries of Western Europe to the new nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America". In the language of Almond and Powell, the efforts at innovation were motivated by the search for more comprehensive scope, the search for realism, the search for precision, and the search for theoretical order.

In the field of Comparative Politics too we find similar approaches. It applies both traditional and modern approaches. Here too, in the traditional approaches there are different loopholes for which in the modern time much emphasis is put on modern approaches. Modern approaches can be distinguished from the traditional approaches on different grounds which are also there characteristic features. The main features of modern approaches are————-

- It is comparatively value-free. These approaches prefer empiricism over normativism. In the process, the modern approaches have removed the speculative character of Political Science as well as Comparative Politics.

- It put emphasis on studying political systems than political structures. These approaches assume that mere study of institutions become only a partial study.

- Tries to establish relationship between theory and practice. It believes theory directs research and research leads to theory.

- Stress on adopting inter-disciplinary approaches. It believes that the artificial boundary lines between the social sciences should be removed. It believes in the integration of knowledge.

(29)

- In modern approaches, maximum emphasis has been given on the adoption of appropriate techniques and sophisticated tools for the analysis of data.

Let us now discuss various modern approaches to comparative politics in sections 2.4 of this unit.

2.4 Modern Approaches

Modern Approaches to Comparative Politics help us studying the political problems of all political system from a wider perspective. It overcomes the defects of many of the traditional approaches. Therefore, in the present time these approaches are widely used by the scholars to make the study more scientific and accurate.

2.4.1 Sociological Approach

The Sociological Approach, which has become very popular now-a-days, finds its expression in the writings of eminent writers like R.M. MacIver, David Easton and G.A. Almond. The writers subscribing to this approach, have accepted the view of leading sociologists like Comte, Spencer, Weber, Parsons, Merton and a host of others and they believes that state is more of a social rather than that of a political institution. That is, the followers of this approach believe that social context is necessary for the proper understanding and explanation of the political behaviour of the individuals. This approach has popularised the terms like – political socialization and political culture. Political socialization is simply the transmission of political culture i.e., values relating to political life from one generation to another. On the other hand, political culture refers to the totality of what is learned by the individuals as members of a society. It is a way of life, a mode of thinking, acting and feeling. This approach lays stress on the point that the rise and fall of a political system depends on political socialization. Thus, Sociological approach has its own place in the twin doctrines of political development and political decay. Besides, as society is a network of numerous associations and groups which play their own part in the operation of the politics of a country, this approach automatically suggests an investigation of the study of interest groups that constitute the infra-structure of a political system.

2.4.2 Psychological Approach

In recent times, many concepts in the field of Political Science have been borrowed from Psychology. Recently, a good number of political scientists have borrowed materials from the writings of eminent psychologists like Freud, Jung, Eyesenck and McDougall to lay down certain valid rules of political behaviour. Thus, the study of politics has been made so as to display the role of emotions, habits, sentiments, instincts, ego etc.that are the constituent elements of human personality. The important advocates of this approach are Graham Wallas, Charles Merriam, Harold D. Lasswell, R.A. Dahl and Eric Fromm.

2.4.3 Systems Approach

This approach has become very popular in recent times. Systems theory has focused its attention on the study of 'system' as a whole. As the very name indicates, here the focus of attention is on 'systems' that are defined as "bounded regions in space-time, involving energy inter-change among their parts, which are associated in functional relationships, and with their environments". The name of David Easton is very prominent in this context. The main purpose of this approach is to reduce multiplication of efforts by integrating all the knowledge and treating all systems as inter-related. Not only this, even parts of a system (called sub-systems) should be treated not as separate and isolated units but organic parts of the same system. You will study the systems theory in detail in the next unit.

2.4.4 Marxian Approach

Marxian Approach is another important modern approach to the study of Political Science which is also applied in the field of Comparative Politics. The astonishing feature of this approach is that here 'state' being the central theme of Political Science, is conceived as an inevitable consequence of class contradictions. This approach believes into the fact that a stateless condition of social life would come into being as the final stage of social development. This approach assumes that economics dominate the scene in the political scenario. Thus, it holds that the economic system determines the class structure and as there is a change in the means of production,

distribution and exchange, so there is a corresponding change in the relations of the masters and the slaves, the feudal lords and the serfs, the capitalists and the workers – the dominant and the dominated classes. Thus, this approach mainly focuses its attention on the conflict between two antagonistic classes – the haves and the have-nots. This state of contradictions can end only in the establishment of a socialist order of society. Hence, from the above discussion, you have already understood the fact that this particular approach not only lays stress on the fact of social contradictions, it also discovers their resolution.

As we know, according to the Marxist Approach, the state is basically a class organization. So, the dominant class controls political power and the state is the embodiment of that power. Hence, state is subordinate to economic power. State is an instrument devised by the dominant class for its own benefit. It is pertinent to mention here that Karl Marx was the principal exponent of the Marxian Approach.

STOP TO CONSIDER :

Differences Between Traditional and Modern Approaches :-

(1) The traditional approaches were value-laden. It could also be stated as normative or speculative in approach.

But, the modern approaches are value-free. Accordingly, in place of normativism of the traditional approaches, modern approaches prefer empiricism. Thus, the modern approaches have removed the speculative character of Political Science.

(2) In traditional approaches, the techniques adopted for the study of political problems were simple and unsophisticated. Basically, the descriptive method was used for a value-judgement on important issues.

But, in modern approaches, maximum emphasis has been given on the adoption of appropriate techniques and sophisticated tools for the analysis of data.

(3) The traditional approaches did not encourage the inter-disciplinary approach.

But, the modern approaches stressed the importance of inter-disciplinary approach in Political Science.

(4) In traditional approach, political theory and research were regarded as separate enterprise.

But, the modern approaches have sought to place political theory and research in a common frame of reference.

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(5) The traditional approaches regard institutions as the basic unit of analysis.

But, the modern approaches have also taken into account other non-institutional aspects.

Thus, from the above discussion, it is clear to you that the modern approaches have provided a remedy to the deficiencies of the traditional approaches to Political Science.

2.4.5 Behavioural Approach

The Behavioural approach indicates the trend of studying political problems taking human behaviour as the basic unit of analysis. It was basically a post world war II phenomena initiated by the American political scientists. It is considered as a protest movement against the traditional approach of Political Science. It may be noted here that the credit of being the intellectual father of this movement goes to Charles E. Marriam of Chicago University. Marriam's efforts were given a helping hand by a number of his students and faculty members like V.O. Key, David B. Truman, Herbert Simon etc. David Easton, a pioneer in behavioural research in his article, 'An Enquiry into the State of Political Science' enumerated certain salient features that may be designated as 'Intellectual Foundation' of behaviouralism, like – regularities, verification, techniques, quantification, values, systematization, pure science approach, and, integration.

The general characteristics of this approach are as follows:

- The Behavioural approach specifies the behaviour of persons and social groups rather than events, structures, institutions or ideologies as the unit of study.

- The Behavioural approach seeks to place political theory and research in a common frame in relation to social psychology, sociology, and cultural anthropology. Thus, this approach seeks to make the study inter-disciplinary.

- The Behavioural approach has stressed the inter-dependence of theory and research.

- The Behaviouralists have rejected the institution as the basic unit of analysis. It focuses mainly on the study of the political behaviour of man.

- This approach cultivates a belief in the unity of the various social sciences.

- This approach believes in the fact that the ultimate purpose of a political scientist is the construction of a systematic empirical theory of politics.

- The Behavioural approach tries to develop research designs and apply methods of analysis to political behaviour problems. It is concerned with the formulation of hypothesis, operational definition, formulation of experimental designs, reliability of instruments and norms of scientific research.

You all already know the fact that David Easton is regarded as the leading light in this direction. So, it will be pertinent for us to know the 'intellectual foundations' as referred by him.

(a) The Behaviouralists believe that regularities exists or there are certain uniformities in the political behaviour of human beings. These uniformities are to be recorded for the purpose of predicting political phenomena.

(b) That such generalizations must be testable with reference to human behaviour.

(c) The Behaviouralists emphasized that a researcher must make use of sophisticated tools like that of multi-varieted analysis, sample survey, simulation that would be useful in analyzing the data.

(d) That measurement and quantification are necessary, but only where such measurement makes sense in terms of other purposes.

(e) That ethical evaluation and empirical explanation should be kept separate.

(f) That research ought to be systematic. Systematic research implies theory oriented research. Both theory and research should form inter-related parts of knowledge.

(g) That understanding and explanation of political behaviour should precede application of this knowledge.

(h) That material from the various social sciences should be integrated.

The Behavioural approach has both merits and demerits. The good point is that this approach has contributed towards the integrated or the inter-disciplinary study of political problems. Also, it has removed the speculative character of Political Science. It also deserves appreciation for the fact that it tries to construct systematic empirical theory of politics. This approach has also made revolutionary contribution towards the study of political problems, through research designs. Therefore, in the field of Comparative Politics also this approach is adopted. However, this theory has been criticized by critics. It has been criticized for fully ignoring the descriptive approach and for its craze for too much scientism. The behavioralists have placed complete reliance on facts. In the process, values have been sacrificed by the behaviouralists. As a result, Political Science has been reduced to the position of value-free instead of being value-based social science. Also, the behaviouralists have over emphasized the need for quantitative approach in politics. But, we all know the fact that there are certain issues in politics that cannot be studied in quantitative terms. For example, ideologies like democracy, dictatorship etc. cannot be discussed in quantitative terms. As a result, this approach has narrowed down the scope of science of politics.

But, at the end, we can very well say that behaviouralism has certainly created new areas for political research and analysis and has given a new dimension to the study of Political Science as well as Comparative Politics. Studies and researches made using this method have enriched the field of Political Science as well as Comparative Politics.

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STOP TO CONSIDER:

Post-behaviouralism :-

In the late 1960s dissatisfaction, with the behavioural approach began to be keenly felt, and this ultimately culminated in an intellectual movement, called post-behavioural movement which exhorted political scientists to become more 'relevant' in their researches, to show concern for values. According to David Easton, "this new development is then a genuine revolution, nor a reaction: a becoming, not a preservation, a reform, not a counter-reformation." The two main demands of post-behaviouralism are – **relevance** and **action.** The call of the post-behavioural trend was given by David Easton in his presidential address to the American Political Science Association in 1969. It was a reaction against the 'mad craze' for scientism that was the principal focus of behavioural revolution.

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2.4.5 Game Theory

The Game Theory is another scientific approach to the study of comparative politics as well as modern political analysis. It is dominating the new generation of political scientists and has influenced them to apply mathematical models to political studies. The Game Theory has been defined as a body of thought dealing with rational decisions, strategies in situations of conflict and competition when each participant or player seeks to maximize gains and minimize losses.

The theory was originally developed by Emil Borel in 1920. The credit of introducing and to some extent applying the model to comparative politics goes to Howard Raiffa, Martin Shubik and Anatol Rapaport. Since then, it had been widely used by the new generation of political scientist like Morton A. Kaplan, Thomas Schelling and others.

Features of Game Theory:

- In the Game Theory approach, the principal emphasis has been given on players who are decision makers. They can be individuals or institutions. Each player is a rational entity with well defined objectives.

- Each player in the game has to decide his choice after taking the points of view of the other players.

- Another basic feature of the game theory is that it lays emphasis on the strategy. The decision makers will have to adopt strategies to win the game.

(36)

Martin Shubnik, Oscar Morgenstern and Karl Deustch were among the first to recognize the importance of the game theory. It is simply a method of analysis and also of selecting the best course of action. This theory attempts to answer the question what action is rational in which situation.

The model which this theory employs is that of a game of strategy and not a game of chance. Game theory envisages several types of game. The basic game is known as the 'two person zero-sum' game. In this game, there are two players only and the victory and defeat cancels out each other. In 'constant-sum' game, both the players try to acquire equal advantage by mutual co-operation. In 'non-zero-sum' game there is both conflict and co-operation between the players. In this game, neither side loses and both may win.

2.4.6 Decision-making Theory

The decision-making theory is another important modern approach to the study of Comparative Politics. Early in the 1950s, Richard Synder, H.W. Bruck and Burton Sapin undertook a theoretical exploration of the behaviour of the actors in international relations. In the sixties, several writers like William Riker, James Robinson, Herbert Simon and J.W. Buston brought about an enrichment of the decision-making approach to the study of Political Science.

This approach lays attention on how the decisions are made. The theory borrowed its ideas from sociologists like Talcott Parsons, Edward Shills and Marion Levy. Actually, politics is nothing but a process of allocating values through the making of decisions. A political system is a mechanism for decision-making. In fact, whether a political system is running efficiently or not, can be very well judged by its ability to make widely accepted decisions.

You all know the fact that the actions of a state are seen through the actions of decision makers. Thus, proper decision making is very important for the survival of a political system. Decision making is a social process that selects alternatives for implementation and execution from among the many that may be available. Richard Synder, one of the proponents of this approach believes that decision making analysis is capable of dealing with dynamic

situations. Decision making studies are studies that focus on all factors relevant to a choice and not just on the formal-legal relationships of the decision-makers.

Here, we must remember that the decision making is to be distinguished from policy-making. It is because decision-making is confined to choices that involve conscious action and are subject to sanction. On the other hand, policy making refers to a collectivity of intersecting decisions. In the development of this approach, the work of Harold Lasswell, has a central place. By defining power as participation in the making of decisions, he developed the view that political process is essentially a decision-making process. Lasswell identified seven functional stages through which all decisions are processed, namely, information, recommendation, prescription, invocation, application, appraisal and termination.

SAQ :-

Do you think that inter-disciplinary approaches can be used in Comparative Politics? Give the reasons for your answer. (60 words).

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2.4.7 Political Communications Approach

The Political Communications approach, a relatively recent and fast-moving development in the field of scientific analysis, leans heavily on the fundamental orientation of Cybernetics – the science of control and communication system. This is a relatively new approach to the study of government and politics which mainly focuses its attention on the communication processes as the central aspect of politics. According to this approach, the essential functions of government and politics is to receive and process the messages or information, decide on what action is to be taken, and then steer and co-ordinate human efforts towards the attainment of selected goals. The major

output is the decision. The main emphasis of this approach is on the mechanism of how decisions are made rather than on the cause or effect of such decisions.

From the above discussion, you have already understood the fact that this approach may be taken as analogous to and also different from the decision-making approach, which we will be discussing later in this unit itself. It is because this approach devotes particular attention to the process of making decisions as contrasted with the actual consequences of decisions. Such an interpretation leads to two orientations that this approach involves—.

Firstly, it emphasizes at all points problems of dynamics and of the various information flows attendant upon communications and decision-making. Therefore, the information flow constitutes the basic unit of ansalysis.

Secondly, there are various structures that shape this flow of information with important consequences for the resultant decisions.

Another point to be noted here is that the term 'political communication' as an important approach to the analytical study of modern political systems is different from the term 'communication' that relates to the media of dissemination of news. Thus, communication and political communication are two different terms.

Here, in this unit, we are not concerned with the study of means of communication like press, radio, TV etc., though they may have their place within the wider study of political communication. Here, our purpose is to see communication as a dynamic movement of demands and decisions from one part of the political system to another as no operation of the political system can take place unless parts of the system can communicate with each other. The study of political communication approach, is, therefore, integrally related to the study of political systems. It is the communication that gives dynamics to the political system. As a result, we will have to make a study of political communications in the same way as we study political system as a whole, i.e., in terms of the reciprocal influences between structures and behaviour.

The term political communication is a combination of two words – political and communication. As used by a mathematician like Weaver, communication includes all the procedures by which one mind may affect another. However,

used in a wider sense, the term involves not only oral speech, but all human behaviour. Now, the term communication has a different connotation when it is used in the context of 'political cybernetics'. W. Ross Ashby, refers to Cybernetics as the study of all possible machines, the word machine being construed to include men and animals as well as inanimate system.

Karl Deutsch's Communication framework :-

Karl Deutsch is one of the foremost advocates of the communication theory, and his approach has clearly been set out in his book *The Nerves of Government*. As Deustch has made it clear, his book is concerned less with the bones or muscles of the body politic and more with its nerves – its channels of communication and decision.

For Deustch, power is neither the center nor the essence of politics. The essence of politics is the dependable co-ordination of human efforts for the attainment of the goals of society. The political system, as the system of decision-making and enforcement, can be seen as a network of communication channels.

The communication approach, as adopted by Karl Deustch, may be said to have three main characteristics:–

- It no longer seeks power as the key variable in the explanation of the political phenomena. Power is neither the centre nor the essence of politics. Instead the essence of politics becomes the dependable co-ordination of human efforts and expectations for the attainment of the goals of the society.

- There is a strong emphasis on the empirical nature of the concepts. The attempt is to 'operationalise' each concept through measurement and mapping. Quantitative data is not seen as a substitute for other types of analysis but as complementary in terms of the mechanism check, strengthen or confirm the judgment of the historian or political analyst.

- It is not restricted to any one level of analysis. It is equally relevant to groups, peoples, organizations of any size, including the state, and relationships between the units.

Thus, according to this approach, politics and government "appear in essence as processes of steering and co-ordinating human efforts towards the attainment of some set of goals." The political system, as the system of decision-making and enforcement, can be seen as a network of communication channels. Deustch liberally uses such terms as receptors, decision-centres, implementation orders, effectors, load capacity, lag, gain, etc. which are more familiar to the electrical engineer than to the political scientist.

Concepts Relating to Political Communication:

Political Communication, as a matter of fact, relates to the world of political engineering. As such, it has certain important concepts that should be understood before grasping the real meaning and nature of this approach. They are————-

A. Concepts relating to operating structures:

According to communication approach, every political system has some 'receptors' or 'reception systems' dealing with the intake of information from internal and external environments. It also covers several other functions beyond intake like scanning operations, selection of information, and data processing. Within the decision-making apparatus, information is handled and acted upon by structures representing memory, value complexes and actual decision centres; while memory relates to the incoming information to the relevant past experiences concerning both processes and consequences, values perform the normative tasks of relating to preferences. Outputs in the form of decisions are the results of inputs. The decisions made are then communicated to the effectors, which in turn translate the communicated decisions into actions. Here, figure the concepts of 'feedback' and 'feedback process'. Feedback means the communication network that produces action in response to an input of information.

Thus, according to the communication process, in every political system, there is a receptive system which receives information both from inside as well as outside the country. Then, there is scanning whether the information is necessary and then there is the data processing process. In a political

system, loads vary. In the load capacity, there are number of factors which are connected. The background knowledge, fidelity, distortion, responsiveness etc. are important i.e., whether a particular system is capable to pick up the load.

B. Concepts relating to flow and processes:

Here, we deal with channels, loads and load capacity. 'Load capacity' is a function of the number and types of available channels, while 'load' itself relates to the overall intake of information at any given time. Load capacity is closely related to factors like responsiveness, fidelity, background, noise and distortion. Responsiveness refers to the facility of the apparatus in taking account of and handling incoming information. Fidelity refers to the accuracy with which information is transmitted in the various processes of perception, selection and handling. The level of fidelity can be affected by several variables like distortions and noise that tend to obscure relevant information. Then comes the recall or the ability of the communication system to associate, locate and bring forth past experiences that is relevant to the analysis of incoming information. All these process elements form the combinatorial capacity of the overall operation of a political system.

C. Concepts Relating to Outcomes:

Outputs in the form of decisions are the results of inputs. The question of outcomes raises several considerations as those of compliance, effectiveness and authority.

The next important concept is that of 'feedback' and 'feedback process'. According to Deustch, feedback is a communication network that produces action in response to an input of information, and includes all the results of its own action in the new information by which it modifies its subsequent behaviour. Feedback may be either positive or negative.

Thus, from the above discussion, it is clear to you that the political communication approach lays stress on the point that all the functions exercised within a political system are performed by means of communication. Communication is such an important aspect that it sustains and nourishes the body of a system. Thus, communication approach lays stress on the process which may be compared to the circulation of the blood within the

(42)

body. It is thus clear that this approach is vitally interested in the problems of dynamics. The flow of information which links up steering with movement constitutes the basic unit of analysis.

SAQ :-

Do you consider Karl Deutsch's communication framework as a highly sophisticated technique of political analysis. If yes, why? (60 words).

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Criticisms:

Criticisms leveled against communications theory:

The communication theory has been subjected to criticisms from various quarters. The major criticisms are ——

- firstly, it is essentially an engineering approach modeled on the performance of machines rather than of human beings. It is far too mechanistic in nature. Such mechanistic approach is not suitable for assessing political phenomena.

- secondly, this approach is focused primarily on the process of decision-making and not on the causes and consequences of such decisions.

- thirdly, because of its quantitative bent, it has a tendency to accumulate masses of data without relation to what is actually pertinent. Thus this approach ignores quality and overlooks the significance of information.

- fourthly, it is sometimes said that the model of Karl Deutsch appears to be too deterministic, and fails to allow for the influences of political change in development.

- fifthly, the approach is so very sophisticated and complicated that instead of solving the political problems, it has a tendency of confusing it.

Check Your Progress:-

1. Explain and evaluate the modern approaches to the study of Comparative Politics.

2. Explain Karl Deutsch's theory of political communications.

3. Trace the differences between traditional approaches and modern approaches to Comparative Politics.

4. Examine the salient features of the modern approaches to Comparative Politics.

5. Discuss the importance of game theory and decision-making theory as modern approaches to Comparative Politics.

2.5 Summing Up

We have already discussed different modern approaches to the study of Comparative Politics. It is seen from the above discussion that the modern approaches have a relevance of their own in the study of a political phenomenon. Apart from the above discussed approaches, several other identifiable approaches and conceptual frameworks may be mentioned as relevant for the analysis of government and politics. The exchange and bargaining theories seek to apply economic models to the study of politics. This approach views political process as a process of exchange, and politics as a market place. There are also other important theories like, group theory approach, quantitative approach etc. From the above discussion, it is already clear to you that in recent years, there has been proliferation of approaches to the study of Comparative Politics. A cursory look at all these modern approaches helps us to understand the fact that these approaches mainly came into limelight as a result of dissatisfaction with the traditional approaches. According to Peter Merkl, the most momentous single factor for the current transformation of the study of Political Science was the rising importance of the politics of developing areas. With the great rush of former colonies to independence and nationhood, and with their increasing importance in world politics, these countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America simply could no longer be ignored. Almond and Powell mention three

developments being primarily responsible for the new situation, namely, the national emergence of a multitude of nations with a bewildering variety of cultures, social institutions, and political characteristics, the loss of dominance of the nations of the Atlantic community and the changing balance of power, and the emergence of communism as a powerful factor in the process of restructuring of national and international political systems.

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Institute of Distance and Open Learning
GAUHATI UNIVERSITY

MA in Political Science
(3rd Semester)

Paper IX
COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Block 2
Political System and System Analysis

Contents:

Block Introduction–

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Detail Syllabus
PAPER IX
COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Block I: Introduction and Major Approaches to Comparative Politics

Unit I: Introduction and Traditional Approaches to Comparative Politics

 1.1 Introduction

 1.2 Objectives

 1.3 Growth of comparative Politics as a discipline

 1.4 Meaning and Features of Traditional Approaches

 1.5 Various Traditional Approaches to the study of Comparative Politics

   1.5.1 Philosophical Approach

   1.5.2 Historical Approach

   1.5.3 Institutional Approach

   1.5.4 Legal Approach

 1.6 Summing Up

 1.7 References and Suggested Readings

Unit II: Modern Approaches to Comparative Politics

 2.1 Introduction

 2.2 Objectives

 2.3 Features of Modern Approaches of Comparative Politics

 2.4 Modern Approaches

   2.4.1 Sociological Approach

   2.4.2 Psychological Approach

   2.4.3 System Approach

   2.4.4 Marxian Approach

   2.4.5 Behavioural Approach

   2.4.6 Game Theory

   2.4.7 Decision-Making Theory

   2.4.8 Political Communications Approach

 2.5 Summing Up

 2.6 References and Suggested Readings

Block II: Political System and System Analysis

Unit I: Political System and General System Theory

Unit II: Structural-Functional Analysis

Block III: Key Concepts of Comparative Politics: Political Development, Political Modernization and Political Culture, Political Ideology and Constitutionalism

Unit I: Concept of Political Development, Political Socialization and Political Culture

Unit II: Concept of Political Ideology and Constitutionalism

Block Introduction:

In the modern period political scientists prefer to use the term political system over state since it denoted the power system that operates within a social system having its own boundaries, goals and processes. David Easton has pointed out certain difficulties in using the term state. In his words, 'if we were to use the concept of the state with its most widely adopted meaning today, we would find that it has a number of obvious shortcomings for an understanding of the political system.' Like Easton, Almond believes that, 'Instead of the concept of state, limited as it is by legal and institutional meaning, we prefer political system.'

Thus we find that modern political thinkers widen the scope of political science by using the term political system instead of state. In the field of comparative politics also, we find that studying and comparing different political systems have been preferred over studying the states only. Scholars have also hold the opinion that political system is widely used because it directs attention to the scope of political activities within a society, regardless of where in the society such activities may be located (Almond and Powell, 1966).

Again, within a political system there are different structures that perform different functions. It needs mention here that origin of functionalism as an approach can be traced back to the time of Aristotle. Montesquieu also through his theory of separation of powers discussed functionalism. However, Gabriel Almond's name has been associated with the development of Structural-Functionalism in modern political science. This analysis mainly focuses on structures and functions where structures are patterened behaviour which may not be formalized in concrete institutions. On the other hand, functions are the consequent activities which influence the system as a whole. Thus, the political systems in structural-functional analysis are systemic wholes that influence and are also influenced by their environments.

Unit 1 of this block discusses the general system theory. This unit mainly focuses on the system analysis as put forwarded by David Easton. While doing so, it discusses various concepts of system theory. Again, this unit also deals with properties and characteristics of political system.

Unit 2 of this block makes an attempt to discuss the Structural-Functional Analysis. Therefore, the unit discusses the basic assumptions of structural

functionalism and also the concepts of structures and functions. Moreover, the unit also discusses the input-output functions as pointed out by Almond. Lastly, the unit discusses two important components of structural functionalism, viz, feedback and capabilities.

This block has two units.

Unit 1: System Analysis and Political System

Unit 2: Structural-Functional Analysis

Unit 1
General System Theory

Contents:

1.1 Introduction

This unit deals with various dimensions of the concept of political system as a whole. Today, political scientists are more concerned with 'political system', rather than being concerned with state and government. It is because of the fact that the concept of political system covers various parameters, and thus is all inclusive. It is wide in its scope as compared to the isolated concepts of state and government. Thus, political system is preferred in place of state and government. This unit deals with the general systems theory and the interpretation of David Easton regarding political system. Also, this unit deals with the properties and characteristics of political system. The reading of this unit will help you to understand the meaning of systems theory as well as the meaning of the concept of 'political system'. This unit deals with such concepts which emphasize on inter-disciplinary study. Inter-disciplinary study means borrowing heavily from other disciplines, and thus integrating the knowledges of different social sciences. Thus, by reading this unit, you will understand as to how different writers have interpreted differently the

concepts of systems and political system. This unit also focuses on the variables and functional aspects of political system.

1.2 Objectives

This unit is an endeavour to introduce you to the concept of political system. Concept of political system widens the horizon of political science which was earlier concerned with state and government only. After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- *understand* the meanings of 'systems analysis' and 'political system'.
- *examine* David Easton's interpretation of political system.
- *explain* the properties and characteristics of political system.
- *understand* the contributions of different thinkers in the field of political system and general systems theory.

1.3 General Systems Theory

The systems theory had its origin in the natural sciences, but generally speaking, the theory originated in movements aimed at the unification of science and scientific analysis. In the period after the Second World War, this crystallized around the concept of systems, which Von Bertalanffy, the German biologist, defined as a set of "elements standing in interaction." This concept is based on the idea that objects or elements within a group are in some way related to one another and in turn, interact with one another on the basis of certain identifiable processes. David Easton, one of the first political scientists to suggest the utility of systems analysis for the study of politics, defines a political system as that "behaviour or set of interactions through which authoritative allocations (or binding decisions) are made and implemented for society." A system is marked by differentiation and integration. The general systems theory provides a broad framework for the examination of politics, and appears to be highly attractive from the standpoint of empirical research. It gives us an excellent opportunity for fusing micro analytical studies with macro analytical ones.

(10)

1.3.1 Certain concepts of System Theory

Before going to understand certain concepts of systems theory, first of all we must understand how the concept of system as a whole came into limelight. Actually, a change of focus from the study of state and government to the study of 'political system' as a whole should be attributed to the shift in the emphasis from the formal political institutions to that of the real political processes.

From the discussions made so far it is learnt that the term 'political system' refers to the study of state and government in the empirical dimensions and also from an inter-disciplinary standpoint. This trend of studying the political system as a whole has occurred owing to certain developments indigenous to the discipline of political science in which recent writers have sought to study the state and government in relation to the role of 'extra-governmental' agencies. System analysis in social sciences finds a significant place that draws its main inspiration from natural sciences flowing through the discipline of sociology in as much as it argues that all social phenomena "are part of discernible, regular and internally consistent patterns of behaviour."

The credit of introducing the Systems Analysis in social sciences goes to the host of leading American writers like David Easton, G.A. Almond and Morton A. Kaplan. These writers have reacted against the traditional tendency of rigid compartmentalization of any discipline, belonging to the world of social sciences. According to them, this rigid compartmentalization of these social sciences like economics or politics, psychology or sociology, has resulted in nothing else than a reduction of the cross-flows between various sister fields of study. These writers have realized the fact that unidimensional studies in social sciences have impeded the patterns of a scientific analysis by creating conditions hostile to the tendency of unification of all knowledge. Thus, these writers have realized the fact that if the students of one discipline take the help of analogous disciplines for the study of their analogous problems, then they will get opportunities for meaningfully integrating their knowledge. These new social scientists have actually drawn inspiration from the contributions of natural scientists like Ludwig Von Bentallanfy, who pioneered the movement of unification of all natural sciences.

Several important conferences were held in leading American educational institutions to explore the possibilities of scientific research towards a unified theory of human behaviour. The setting up of the society for the Advancement of the General Systems Research in 1956 has given further impetus to the development of General Systems Theory. Under the auspices of this society, annual year-books appeared to throw special focus on the areas of general Systems Theory.

The term 'Political System' is a compound of two words – political and system. The first word 'political' refers to the existence and role of state in empirical terms. The second word 'system' implies a set of parts in interdependence as well as in operation. According to G.A. Almond, a system implies the interdependence of parts and a boundary of some kind between it and its environment. Almond opines that a political system involves the features of comprehensiveness, interdependence, and existence of boundaries. Comprehensiveness means all inclusive i.e., a political system includes within it all the interactions (inputs and outputs) which affect the use or the threat of the use of physical coercion. Interdependence means a change in one subset of interactions produces changes in all other concerned subsets. Finally, existence of boundaries means that where other systems end, political system begins.

A definition of the term 'political system' thus furnished by Almond as follows : what we propose is that the political system is that system of interations to be found in all independent societies which performs the functions of integration and adaptation (both internally and vis-à-vis other societies) by means of the employment or threat of employment of more or less legitimate order-maintaining, or transforming system in the society. We use the term 'more or less' to modify legitimacy, because we do not want to exclude from our definition political systems, like the totalitarian ones, where the degree of legitimacy may be very much in doubt, revolutionary systems where the use of legitimacy may be in process of change, or non-western systems in which there may be more than one legitimate system in operation.

Beer and Ulam describe 'political system' as 'a structure that performs a certain function for a society.' It includes an arrangement for making decisions which have 'legitimacy', because the members of a society accept them as being in conformity with their conceptions of authority and purpose'.

The word 'system' has been used and defined differently by different writers belonging to different disciplines. Ludwig von Bertallanfy describes system as "a set of elements standing in interaction." Hall and Fagen again define system as a set of objects together with relations between the objects and between their attitudes. Collin Cherry says that a system is a whole which is compounded of many parts – an ensemble of attitudes. According to Morton A. Kaplan, "a brief and non-technical description of the object of systems analysis would include : the study of a set of interrelated variables, as distinguished from the environment of the set, and of the ways in which this set is maintained under the impact of environmental disturbances."

David Apter has restated the characteristics of system as follows :

(1) systems have boundaries within which there are functional inter-relationships mainly based on some of the communications;

(2) systems are divided into sub-systems, with exchanges existing between the sub-systems (as, for example, between a city and a state, or a state and the national government); and,

(3) systems have a capacity for coding – that is, they take informational inputs; are able to learn from inputs, and translate inputs into some kind of output.

From the above discussion of the definitions of system, it is clear that the following points should be kept in mind while dealing with a proper definition of the term 'system' in social sciences :

(1) a system is not to be taken as a mere random aggregation of elements. It is a compound of elements all at a level of inter-dependence that can be located with some precision both in time and in space.

(2) A study of systems analysis forms a significant part of inter-disciplinary approach. The fundamental concept of systems analysis aimed at breaking down the compartmentalization of disciplines and moving towards the unification of sciences.

(3) Systems theory as applied to the field of natural sciences is not to be taken as a general theory of all systems. Different kinds of systems require different theories for the sake of furnishing scientific explanations.

(13)

(4) The use of systems theory in social sciences should be made with certain precautions. As social objectives lack the fixed and definite character of the natural objects, social sciences must likewise avoid extreme particularization in social and political formulations.

(5) The researcher of a social science should, for this reason, adopt the middle course. He should be aware of the limitations of a social science. Thus, he should act like a balancer. Therefore, he should make use of the comparative method and thereby stick to the point that different systems need different explanations.

The system analysis has its own set of specific concepts that should be understood first of all. These specific concepts can be discussed under the following three heads :

(1) Concepts in the nature of primarily descriptive and classificatory variables :

In this category, we can include concepts that lay down the lines of differences between various kinds of systems like a democratic or open and a non-democratic or closed system.

(2) Concepts in the nature of regulatory and preservative variables :

This category constitutes the key part of the general systems theory as the real stress of this theory is on the regulation and maintenance of the systems. Thus, this category includes the notions of stability, equilibrium, feedback etc.

(3) Concepts in the nature of forces causing dynamics :

Change which is the very law of nature can be both disruptive as well as non-disruptive. This category deals with the concepts causing changes.

SAQ :-

Do you think that the systems analysis is broader in scope as compared to the isolated concepts of state and government? Explain. (50 words)

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1.3.2 Systems Analysis and David Easton

The most important name in the list of political scientists, subscribing to the use of systems analysis is that of David Easton. It was Easton, who seems primarily concerned with portraying the relationships between a system and the environment, in which it is located. He is interested in directing our attention to the boundary between politics and other aspects of social life and postulates the existence of a close relationship between a system and the environment. David Easton's 'Input-Output' model stresses the behaviour of the political system vis-a vis its environment, in terms of analyzing inputs (demands and supports) and outputs (authoritative allocation of values or policy decisions and actions).

David Easton has the distinction of having developed an original and unique systematic approach for the purposes of political analysis. Since the publication of his book – *A System Analysis of Political Life* in 1965, it has engaged the attention of social scientists for providing an explanation of political phenomena in a new way. Easton's basic concept is that of a political system as one of the subsystems of a society operating within an environment. Easton defines the political system as that system of interactions in any society through which binding or authoritative allocations are made and implemented.

Following the course of a natural scientist like Stephen Toulmin, Easton set out to develop the systems theory. The empirical theory which Easton has enunciated is called the 'general theory of politics'. The empirical political theory of Easton has these salient characteristics:-

(1) Easton rejects the idea of constructing different kinds of theories to deal with national politics and international politics. He is keen on building a 'unified theory of politics' for explaining the behaviour of national and international political systems and also for comparing them.

(2) He states that the primary task of political science is to analyse the general problems common to all political systems, i.e., analysis of the conditions under which a political system survives as a system over a long period of time. Thus, Easton is concerned with the issue of survival or persistence of the political system.

(3) Easton is critical of the equilibrium analysis that stops at the point of analyzing factors that create stability or instability in a political system. His real concern is to deal with the conditions necessary for the existence and continuation of a political system.

(4) Further, Easton rejects the type of political analysis which concerns itself with power-relations between elements of a political system. He is of the opinion that the benefits provided by political and governmental process cannot be determined by the amount of power an individual power-holder exercises. The purpose of Easton is to study political system from both theoretical and applied perspectives.

(5) Easton rejects the approach of a sociologist like Talcott Parsons who suggested that 'political theory can be analysed in terms of a general theory of social institutions'. Such a view, Easton contends, makes politics a handmaid of sociology.

Thus, from the above discussion, it has become clear to you that David Easton is the first political scientist who systematically develops a framework on the basis of the systems approach for the study of politics. He selects political system as the basic unit of analysis and puts forward his ideas in his work entitled *The Political Systems : An Enquiry into the State of Political Science*, published in 1953. The concept is elaborately explained in two of his later books namely, *A Framework for Political Analysis* and *A System Analysis of Political Life* both published in 1965.

Easton's Input-output analysis takes for granted that every political system is open and adaptive. It emphasizes the fact that the political system works in processing and converting a variety of inputs into outputs. The inputs include demands and supports. Demands may be generated by the environment or may originate within the political system itself. Demands pass through the conversion or weeding out procedures to reach the output stage. Only a small number of demands in the long run reach the output stage, leaving the rest to be eliminated in the conversion process. Supports are actions, statements or attitudes favourable to a person, group, institution, goal or idea. Supports are what make both selection and processing of demands possible. In order to strengthen political system, Easton prescribes the concept of support. No political system could last long without the support of the society of which it is a part. Easton makes an important distinction between overt and covert support. Overt support is any open and direct action which an interest group would take to advance its demands. Covert support means simply an attitude or a sentiment that is not hostile or even unfavourable. Both kinds of support flow simultaneously and both are important for the functioning of the political community.

The outputs of a political system are the authoritative decisions and actions of the political authorities for the allocation and distribution of values. The manner and mechanism through which a political system converts inputs and responds to the process in the environment is called the conversion process. It has been observed that the political system has more control over outputs than it has over inputs. The conversion process, thus, turns inputs into outputs after some process of selections, limitations and rearrangement. Feedback is essentially a dynamic process through which information about the performance of a system is communicated in such a way as to affect the subsequent behaviour of the system.

Thus, the input-output analysis is indeed an excellent technique for comparative analysis since it is focused on an overview of entire political systems, and has an inclusive set of concepts and categories which facilitate comparison. Oran Young has described this analysis as "undoubtedly the most inclusive systemic approach so far constructed specifically for political analysis by a political scientist." According to Eugene Meehan, Easton "has

produced one of the few comprehensive attempts to lay the foundation for systems analysis in political science and to provide a 'general' functional theory of politics." Easton claims that his method is definitely oriented towards exploring change as well as stability. There is a continuous exchange going on between the political system and its environment, and the system is constantly engaged in a conversion process, producing outputs and altering the environment.

STOP TO CONSIDER :-

Substantive nature of general systems analysis :

(1)   Primarily Descriptive and Classificatory Variables :

   1. concepts that separate different kinds of systems like open v/s closed or organismic v/s non-organismic.

   2. concepts concerning hierarchical levels of systems such as sub-systems, orders of interaction and scale effects.

   3. concepts delineating aspects of the internal organization of systems such as integration, differentiation, inter-dependence and centralization.

   4. concepts relating to the inter-action of systems with their environments such as boundaries, inputs-outputs etc.

   5. concepts dealing with various paths which systems may follow over time such as state-determinedness and equi-finality.

(2)   Regulatory and Preservative Variables :

   1. stability equilibrium or homeostatis.

   2. feedback.

   3. repair and reproduction.

   4. entropy.

(3)   Dynamics :

   1. non-disruptive change either through internally generated process or through responses to altered environmental conditions.

   2. change towards reversible directions :

     (i)   adaptation, learning and growth.

     (ii) purposes, goals and teleology.

   3. changes towards irreversible directions :

     (i)   disruption, dissolution and breakdown.

     (ii) Crises, stresses and strains.

     (iii) Overload and decay leading to the law of positive entropy.

1.3.3 Critical Appraisal

David Easton applied the concept of systems in the field of political science. He was the first political scientist to introduce the systems model for the analysis of politics. Talcott Parsons applied the systems analysis in the field of Sociology. Easton applied this concept of systems analysis with the same vision. That is why, David Easton is often described as Talcott Parson of political science. Easton has immensely contributed to the methodology of political analysis.

In the first place, he goes beyond the equilibrium approach and takes note of the change and dynamism in the system. The concepts like disturbance, stress, regulation, porpositive direction etc. are helpful for political analysis.

In the second place, his methodology is advantageous in the field of comparative political analysis. It provides a properly standardized set of concept.

In the third place, he makes a comprehensive attempt to the foundation for systems analysis in political science which provides a general functional theory of politics. Easton's systems analysis in political science provides a very neat conceptual framework.

Fourthly, he believes in a unified theory of politics which explains the behaviour of both national and international political systems and brings out their comparison.

Fifthly, in his work the various elements of the system are well ordered and the overall process has been clearly described.

Finally, Easton is concerned with the issue of survival or persistence of the political system.

However, the systems approach of David Easton has been subject to criticisms from various quarters:

- *Firstly*, it is very difficult to determine the boundary of the system. Also, it is very difficult to apply abstract and conceptual concepts in empirical studies.

- *Secondly*, he has also failed to give a clear definition of what is 'political' or what distinguishes political interactions from other kind of social interactions.

- *Thirdly*, Easton's input-output analysis is also liable to criticisms because of its status-quo basis. This analysis gives emphasis on functions and modified process of change but not on revolutionary or large scale change.

- *Fourthly*, it is predominantly limited in scope in terms of the interactions among the different political systems.

- *Fifthly*, its focus on the politically active and relevant members of society tends to give it an elitist orientation.

- *Finally*, this analysis causes some confusion to its practitioners.

Despite the various criticisms leveled against this approach, one cannot deny the fact that through his systems analysis, Easton has made significant contributions to the study of political science. Earlier, political scientists studied only isolated political institutions or areas but it was Easton who selected political system as the basic unit of analysis. He analysed all the political processes and forces with due emphasis on the environment and its relationship with political system.

1.4 Properties and Characteristics of Political System

The concept of 'political system' has gained wide currency now-a-days for the reason that it directs attention to the entire scope of political activities within a society, regardless of where in the society such activities may be located. Defining this term, Almond and Powell says: "when we speak of the political system, we include all the interactions which affect the use or threat of use of legitimate physical coercion. The political system includes not only governmental institutions such as legislatures, courts, and administrative agencies, but all structures in their political aspects." A set of concepts considered to make up a political system is advanced not only to help one to understand the government and politics of a particular country but to aid in understanding the government and politics of any country of the world.

The term 'political system' refers to the study of a government in its empirical dimensions and also from a strictly interdisciplinary point of view. Political system thus, becomes 'a set of interrelated variables conceived to be

politically relevant and treated as if they could be separated from other variables conceived to be politically relevant not immediately relevant to politics.' Thus, a set of concepts which make up a political system, helps one to understand the government and politics of any country of the world. The concept of 'political system' as a whole has acquired wide currency now-a-days. Various political sociologists and political psychologists have offered their own interpretations of the term 'political system'. For instance, David Easton says that a political system allocates values by means of its policies that are binding on the society by virtue of being authoritative.

Thus, from the above discussion, it is crystal clear to all of us that the concept of political system is all inclusive and to speak in terms of Beer and Ulam, the political system "produces a certain output for the society: legitimate policy decisions. The goals at which these decisions aim may be precise and programmatic, or only vague and general. They may be accepted readily or reluctantly, by many or by few. But to call them policy decisions is to stress that they do have consequences for the society, and to note their legitimacy is to draw attention to the main characteristics that makes them political. Through the political system goals for the society are defined and carried out by legitimate policy decisions."

Almond says that a political system has its own properties and characteristics. According to him, a political system has the three main properties of comprehensiveness, interdependence and boundaries and it has five essential characteristics – universality of political system, universality of political structures, universality of political functions, multi-functionality of political structures and the culturally mixed character of the political systems. Now, let us discuss these properties as well as characteristics systematically:

Let us first examine the main **properties** of the political system which are as follows :

1. **Comprehensiveness :** it means that a political system includes all the interactions – inputs as well as outputs – that affect the use or the threat of the use of physical coercion. It emphasizes on the point that Almond is not merely concerned with the structures like parliaments, courts and bureaucracies, political parties, pressure groups etc., he is also concerned with all other structures like, kinship

and lineage, status and caste groups, religious and cultural bodies, as well as anomic phenomena like violent riots and street demonstrations.

2. **Interdependence :** it implies that a change in one subset of interactions produces changes in all other subsets. For example, the changes in the technology of communications have transformed the electoral process, the characteristics of political parties, the legislature and the executive.

3. **Boundaries :** it means that there are certain boundaries where the other systems end, and the political system begins. Also, it implies that there are certain points where the political system ends and the other systems begins.

Now, let us discuss the **five characteristics** which are shared by a political system :

1. **Universality of systems** : it implies that all the political systems whether old or new, developed or underdeveloped, have political structures or a legitimate pattern of interaction by means of which internal and external order is maintained. Thus, a student of comparative politics is equally concerned with the study of different political systems like, European, or American, or Afro-Asian. Thus, viewed from this perspective, every political system may be said to have these four essential characteristics : (i) all political systems have political structures, (ii) the same functions are performed in all political systems, though these functions may be performed with different frequencies in different kinds of structures, (iii) all political structures, no matter how specialized, are multi-functional, (iv) all political systems are 'mixed' in the cultural sense.

2. **Universality of political structures** : all political systems have the same structures that perform same functions, though with varying degrees of frequency. It is a different thing that in an advanced system political structures perform

specialized functions as compared to those where traditional structures in the form of kinship or lineage groups still operate.

3. **Universality of political functions** : the approach of a student of comparative politics should not be mere 'structure-bound'; but it should also be 'function-bound'. In every political society, the structures perform certain political functions. These may be in the form of proper structures like legislature, executive and judiciary, or these may be in the form of infra-structures as political parties, interest groups, mass media agencies etc. the student of comparative politics should take into account the role of the factors of initiation, communication, authorization, modification, vetoing, representation, advocacy and interpretation and the like in the study of 'non-state' institutions and agencies like political parties, interest groups factions, elites, mass media agencies etc. that constitute the infra-structure of a political system. There should always be an endeavour to know as to how people are recruited to and socialised into political roles and orientations in different political systems. We already know from the study of structural-functional aaproach that Almond offers a sevenfold classification in the input and output categories. While the input category includes : (i) political socialization, and recruitment, (ii) interest articulation, (iii) interest aggregation, and (iv) political communication; the output category includes : (i) rule-making, (ii) rule-application, and (iii) rule-adjudication functions.

4. **Multifunctionality of political structures :** though every political structure has its own specialized functions, at times it tends to become multi-functional. Thus, though every structure has its specialized functions, it performs some other functions as well that are supposed to fall within the domain of another structure. For example, the legislature not merely makes laws, it also performs some executive functions by exercising control over the president or the prime minister

and his ministers. Also, a student of comparative politics should appreciate the facts that the courts not only adjudicate, they also legislates at times, that bureaucracy is one of the most important sources of legislation, that legislative bodies affect both administration as well as adjudication, that the political parties and pressure groups initiate legislation and participate in the national administration, that the means of communications represent interests and affect the working of all the three departments of a political organization.

5. **Culturally mixed character of political systems** : all the political systems have a mixture of formal and informal structures. Even the modern political systems have many traits of a traditional system. Thus, all the political systems are mixed in the cultural sense. For instance, the proceedings of the British Parliament start after a short prayer. Similarly, even the most primitive political systems have some traits of a modern system like codification of law and administration of justice through the courts.

Thus, we have discussed above the different properties as well as different characteristics of a political system. It should be mentioned here that from the functional point of view, a political system has two sides : inputs and outputs. From the above discussion, it is clear to you that the input category includes four variables – political socialization and recruitment, interest articulation through organized groups, interest aggregation through political parties, and political communication. Similarly, the output category includes three departments of the state – legislature (rule-making), executive (rule-implementing) and judiciary (rule-adjudication). Thus, in short the function of a political system is to convert inputs into outputs.

1.4.1 Variables of Political System

We have already discussed above the concept of political system, which implies that all the elements within a system or process are inter-dependent.

(24)

However, thinkers like Beer and Ulam make reference to institutions as legislature, executives, political parties, electorate etc. and say that though these terms are used in every political system, whether developed or developing, or whether democratic or totalitarian, they have different connotations in different political systems. Keeping this consideration in mind, they have forwarded a scheme of Variables which can be found in any political system. Thus, Beer and Ulam offer a fourfold analysis of the variables that can be found in any political system of the world whether western or non-western, democratic or totalitarian, developed or developing and the like. These are:

1. **Pattern of Political Culture:** it refers to the beliefs, convictions and attitudes of the people towards their political system. It is this political culture which guides the people how to act in a particular situation. A study of the working of the political systems shows that these attitudes condition the interests and goals being pursued, the means that are adopted to reach them and the acceptance or rejection of the decisions by the members of the system.

2. **Pattern of Power**: it refers to an array of means by which the process and action of decision-making may be influenced. Within a system, different groups try to influence the decision-making process on the basis of their power. Thus, in each and every system, there is a pattern of power.

3. **Pattern of Interest**: it refers to the set of goals that various individuals or groups pursue for the sake of protecting and promoting their specific interests. Interests may be positive or negative, they may be special or general; but their role is very important so far as the functioning of political systems are concerned.

4. **Pattern of Policy**: policy consists of valid decisions. Power and interests interact to produce decisions. A student of comparative politics is concerned with how the decisions are made within a system, and how these decisions affect the next round of decisions.

Thus, we have discussed above the different variables of a political system. Every political system has these four variables, and they are inter-dependent

in view of the fact that a change in one pattern certainly brings about a change in another. Such a scheme of variables helps us in understanding the working of political system in a better way.

1.4.2 Functional aspects of Political System

In order to understand properly the functional aspects of political system, we will have to discuss briefly the ideas of some of the eminent writers on this subject :

Views of Easton: Easton has nicely highlighted the close relationship that exists between a system and its environment. He divides the basic components of his model of the political system into 'inputs' consisting of 'demands' and 'supports' and 'outputs' connected by the 'feedback' loop. It is the feedback which determines the capacity of the system to cope with stress. We have already discussed above Easton's analysis of political system, from which it is clear that according to Easton, the function of a political system is to convert the inputs into outputs. 'Outputs' are the decisions of the authorities.

Views of Mitchell: Mitchell divides 'inputs' and 'outputs' in a way somewhat different from that of Easton and indicates that along with the demands and supports, expectations and resources also have a vital role to play in the proper functioning of the political system. He also defines the 'outputs' of the system into three categories – goals, values and costs, and controls.

Views of Almond: Almond presents a seven-fold classification of the functional variables in a political system. He mentions four variables in the input category what he calls as political socialization and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation and political communication. In the output category, he includes three variables like – rule-making, rule-application and rule-adjudication functions. We have discussed in detail about these functions of political system in the unit of structural-functionalism, where we have discussed Almond's views of 'structure' and 'functions' in an elaborate manner.

Views of Blondel: Blondel gives a somewhat different interpretation of the 'functions' of the political system. According to him, 'conflicts'

(26)

arise in every society and it is the function of the political system to 'digest' them. The political system selects and combines these demands that arise out of the social conflicts. These demands have their impact on the decision-making process. Also, the customs, usages, rules of good behaviour will have to be kept in mind by the decision-makers. Outputs are the decisions of the government that can be either natural or imposed. They are natural if they are in accord with the normative values of the society; they are imposed if they pertain to the whims and caprices of the men in power.

Views of Apter :- David Apter, while giving his functional interpretation of a political system, has drawn a line of difference between democratic and totalitarian varieties. According to him, in a democratic set up, government acts as an instrument of tension reduction and tries to resolve the crisis. Opposed to it, in a totalitarian model, government tries to deal with institutionalization, socialization and internalization by mobilizing the people.

We have discussed above the functional aspects of political system in detail. From the above discussion, we have noted one thing that the different thinkers have interpreted the functional dimension of political system from their own angle of thinking.

SAQ :-

Do you think that the concepts of systems analysis and political system facilitate inter-disciplinary study? If yes, How? (50 words).

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1.5 Analysis of Easton

We have already discussed above David Easton's Systems analysis in detail. So, now we will just have a revision of what we have already discussed above. David Easton's Input-Output analysis is mainly concerned with portraying the relationship between a system and its environment. According to him, political system works in processing and converting a variety of inputs into outputs. The inputs include demands and supports. The outputs of a political system are the authoritative decisions and actions of the political authorities for the allocation and distribution of values. According to Oran Young, these decisions and actions "play a crucial role in generating specific support for a political system because of the existence of feedback loops that complete the cycle of a political system and make it a dynamic and regenerative operation." This analysis has been subjected to criticisms but it has also its own place of importance in the field of comparative politics.

Check Your Progress :-

1. Discuss David Easton's interpretation of political system.

2. Critically discuss the variables as well as functional aspects of a political system.

3. Discuss the properties and characteristics of political system as highlighted by Gabriel Almond.

1.6 Summing Up

This unit discusses the different dimensions of the concept of political system. After reading this unit you are now in a position to discuss the characteristics, properties, variables as well as the functional aspect of a political system. From the discussions in the unit, it is very much clear to you all that the concept of political system lays stress on the study of state in empirical terms on the basis of structural-functionalism. In stead of using two separate terms like the state and government, the new writers prefer to use one term 'political system' that operates with the mechanism of 'inputs' or demands and supports coming from the 'environment' and 'outputs' or decisions that are taken by the concerned authorities and that are binding as well as legitimate on account of being taken by the legally constituted authorities of

the state. However, the whole concept has been criticized from the Marxian standpoint, which contends that the political system should be studied in the context of its historical development in which the fact of class antagonisms should not at all be lost sight of. According to the Marxian interpretation, the political system actually operates according to the laws of historical materialism that bring about a change in its character from a feudal to a bourgeois order and then from a bourgeoise to a socialist order. However, despite all the criticisms leveled against it, we must agree with the optimistic view of many important writers that as a result of the study of the concept of 'political system', new vistas and opportunities have opened up thereby leading the political scientists to relate the more specific work they are doing to the larger political world. Thus, the leading exponents of this concept hopefully claim that the systems framework "represents a genuinely important step in the direction of 'science' for political science and provides a new paradigm for the discipline". (Gabriel A. Almond).

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Unit 2
Structural-Functional Analysis

Contents:

2.1 Introduction

In the preceding unit we have already discussed about the systems analysis in detail. It is to be noted here that the systems analysis, as it has been borrowed by the leading American political scientists from the disciplines of anthropology and sociology, has two important derivatives in the form of structural-functional and input-output analysis. In this unit, we will discuss in detail the structural-functional approach. As an offshoot or a derivative of the systems analysis, the structural-functional analysis is a means of explaining what the political structures are as well as their basic functions in the political system. So, the structural-functional analysis is one of the foremost system-derivatives in the field of political science, and a major framework for political research. Originating in the work of anthropologists of the early twentieth century, especially of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, structural-functionalism came to political science by way of sociology. It has been specially adopted in the field of comparative politics by Gabriel Almond. This approach or mode of analysis is fundamentally concerned with the

phenomena of system maintenance and regulation. The basic proposition of this analysis is that in all social systems, certain basic functions have to be performed by certain structures and our concern is to find out as to what structures perform what basic functions. The social theorists subscribing to this approach lay emphasis on the fact that no society can survive or develop unless it performs certain basic functions. The survival and maintenance of a social system require that society must be having a well-functioning economic system, a legal system, a system of values and so on.

In this unit, we will make an endeavour to study the concept of structural-functionalism covering all its aspects. Therefore, we shall discuss the basic assumptions of structural-functionalism, concepts of structure and functions as well as structural-functional approach as a whole.

2.2 Objectives

In a political system different political structures perform different political functions**.** This unit deals with the various dimensions of the concept of structural-functionalism. After reading this unit, you will be able to:–

- *understand* the concepts of 'structures' and 'functions', within political system.

- *know* as to which structures perform what functions.

- *explain* the fact that certain functions are basic for the survival of the system.

- *understand* the fact that now-a-days the study of political science has really become inter-disciplinary.

2.3 Basic Assumptions of Structural-Functionalism

The structural-functionalism approach was adopted in political science by some leading American writers like, David Easton, Mitchell, David Apter and Morton Kaplan. Particular reference could also be made to that of the contribution of Almond towards the development of this analysis. With a view to understand the implications and nature of the structural-functional analysis, we should look at its basic assumptions and postulates:

- It takes the society as a single, inter-connected system each element of which performs a specific function. The basic feature of such a system is the interaction of its components for the maintenance of its equilibrium.

- From the first assumption, the second one automatically follows that if the society is a system as a whole, it has its parts that are interrelated. A social system has a dominant tendency towards stability that is maintained by virtue of built-in mechanism. If there are deviations or tensions, they are resolved. Thus, change in a social system is not sudden or revolutionary but gradual and adjustive.

- Underlying the whole social structure there are broad aims and principles that are observed by the members of the society. Thus comes the factor of value consensus with its on-going usefulness.

As the very name of this analysis suggests, this approach revolves around mainly two key concepts – structures and functions. In order to understand this approach properly, we must understand properly the concepts of structure and functions.

2.4 Structural-Functional Analysis

Before going in to the details of structural-functional analysis, first let us have a brief idea about the concept of structure as well as functions.

2.4.1 Concept of Structure and Functions

According to the structural-functional analysis, a political system is composed of several structures which are "patterns of action and resultant institutions." The concept of structure is very important in this analysis. Structures refer to those arrangements within the system which perform the functions. A single function may be fulfilled by a complex combination of structures, just as any given structural arrangement may perform functions which might have different kinds of consequences for the structure.

Concept of Functions :

Three basic questions are involved in the concept of functions – what basic functions are discharged in any given system, by what instruments those functions are performed, and under what conditions the performance of these functions is done. Actually, the proponents of this approach draw attention to certain "conditions of survival", or certain functions which are essential for the maintenance and preservation of the basic characteristics of a political system so that it remains recognizable over a length of time. Following the lead of Talcott Parsons, sociologists attempted to identify four such functions, namely, goal-attainment, adaptation, integration and pattern-maintenance. Gabriel Almond has also developed a list of political functions required and divided them into four input, and three output functions.

Thus, a function is nothing but a regularly recurring pattern of action and behaviour carried on for the preservation and advancement of the system. Just the opposite tendency is dysfunction which means an action detrimental to the existence and growth of the system.

SAQ :

Do you feel that one structure within a system is capable of performing only one particular function? Discuss. (50 words).

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2.4.2 Structural Functional Analysis

Social Anthropologists like Radcliffe Brown and B. Malinowski, have written a lot on functionalism. However, since 1950s, a number of political scientists started applying its principles to the study of the comparative politics. Here, the names of Marion Levy, Robert K. Merton, Talcott Parsons need special mention. Marion Levy was primarily concerned with the problem of the survival of the system and he developed the concept of functional requisites or requirements or conditions of survival necessary for

the maintenance of the system. However, the name of Robert K. Merton is more important because he has given certain new directions to this approach. Merton's special contribution to this approach is that he has developed the concepts of functions that may be 'manifest' or 'latent'. While the 'manifest functions' are those whose purposes and consequences are both intended and recognized, the 'latent functions' are those whose purposes and consequences are covert, unintended. Merton also draws distinction between the concepts of 'functions' and 'dysfunctions', which is based on the issue of the survival and disintegration of the system. Thus, while 'functions' are those observed consequences which make for the adaptation and adjustment of a given system, 'dys-functions' are those observed consequences which lessen the adaptation or adjustment of the same. Also, Talcott Parsons developed a comprehensive theoretical framework for the study of societies on the basis of structural-functional approach. The contributions of this well-known sociologist relate to the concept of a system, primary subsystems of a society, pattern variables and notion of change. He lays stress on the fact that the parts in a society can be understood only in the context of the whole, the whole being the system itself. Parson's concern is to analyse society and system of functionally inter-related variables, and a system as an ongoing set of recurrent and inter-related social actions. A system, according to him, is an action framework in as much as all human actions occur within it.

David Easton is another important political scientist, who made contributions in the field of structural-functionalism. It is he, who explains properly how a political system works with the help of demand and supports constituting 'inputs', which ultimately gets converted into 'outputs', with a connecting link called the 'feedback process'. According to him, a situation of stress for a political system develops when the interaction between its essential variables threatens to breakdown. While dealing with David Easton's Input-Output analysis, you have already come to know that Easton is mainly concerned with the maintenance and survival of a political system.

Also, Mitchell's name deserves mention here. In his work on American political system, he offers four requisite functions that are performed by a polity – authoritative specification of the system goals, authoritative mobilization of resources to implement the goals, integration of the system, and allocation of values and costs. He was very much influenced by Talcott

Parsons. Apter also affirms the fact that all political systems are characterized by a number of contingent functions. It may, therefore, be visualized that Apter's analysis, like any other structural-functionalist, involves a search for the functional and structural requisites of the government.

However, the most representative contribution, in this direction, is that of **Gabriel A. Almond**. Almond was the first scholar to give a comprehensive analysis of the structural-functionalism. The objective of Almond is the same as that of Talcott Parsons' and David Eastons'. Like them, he is also in search of a "functional theory of the polity", his primary interest being to understand how political system changes in type from the traditional to the modern. He believes strongly that he has succeeded in elaborating such a theory and that it would ultimately make possible statistical and perhaps mathematical formulations.

The structural-functional approach seeks to discover the functions which an organism or a system must perform in order to exist or remain in operations. It then sets out to find the structures but strictly in the light of the functions.

Political systems invariably differ from each other, but they all share some common properties. Almond identifies four basic characteristics of a political system, which are universal in nature –

- Every political system has its structures, some of which may be more specialized performing more functions, while others may be less specialized performing less functions.

- Whatever difference may be between the system and its structures, the same political functions are performed in all political systems.

- Political structures perform a number of functions. That may be termed as multi-functional.

- All political system being parts of the society as a whole have a culture of their own i.e., always a mixture of the traditional and the modern.

According to Almond, the political system is also characterized by three properties. These three properties are as follows——-

(36)

- *Comprehensiveness* – it means that a political system includes all the interactions – inputs as well as outputs – that affect the use or the threat of the use of physical coercion.

- *Interdependence* – it implies that a change in one subset of interactions produces changes in all other subsets. For instance, a change in the technology of communications has its effects on the transformation of the working of political parties, groups and the departments of government.

- *Boundaries* – it means that there are certain boundaries where the other systems end, and political systems begin.

Almond analyses in detail the various functions of the political systems. In this context, his main objective is to see how the structures of the different political systems perform their duties. Almond has formulated a seven fold classifications of functions performed by a political system. These can be classified into two broad categories – input functions and output functions.

STOP TO CONSIDER :

Structural-Functional Imperatives and Requisites, by three different thinkers :

Analysis of Marion Levy, Jr. :

Functional requisites :
1. role of differentiation and role assignment.
2. communication.
3. shared cognitive orientations.
4. shared articulated goals.
5. regulation of the choice of means.
6. adequate socialization.
7. effective control of disruptive behaviour.
8. adequate institutionalization. etc.

Structural requisites :
1. structure of role differentiation.
2. structure of solidarity.
3. structure of economic allocation.
4. structure of political allocation.
5. structure of integration and expression.

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(37)

2.4.3 Input and Output Functions

According to Almond, the following are the main functions in the input dimension –

1. Political Socialisation and Recruitment.

2. Interest articulation.

3. Interest aggregation.

4. Political communications.

In the output dimension, the political system performs the following functions–

1. Rule-making.

2. Rule applications.

3. Rule adjudication.

The above discussed are the seven variables of functional categories. The input functions are performed by the non-governmental sub-systems including the general environment. The output functions are performed by the government.

- **Political Socialisation and Recruitment :**

The term 'political socialisation' refers to the process by which people are inducted to that of the political system and its political culture. The sole objective of every political system is to perpetuate its own culture, structures, ideology and above all, image, and to achieve that end it must indoctrinate its own people. Young people are inculcated in such a manner that on the attainment of adulthood they demonstrate obligations to the political system.

Political recruitment refers to the initiations of members in politics. The term 'political recruitment' is also indicative of the process of how people are trained to have faith and conviction in political values and how they are inducted into the specialized role in the political system. It helps in developing effective political organization, participation and awareness.

- **Interest Articulation :**

It refers to the study of the interest groups that struggle for the protection and promotion of their specific interests. The political system adopts measures for the articulation of interests, claims and demands. There are various agencies which are involved in the articulations of interests. Generally, this function is performed by the interest groups, which are of various types. These interest groups articulate the interest of the people on behalf of the political system. Interest articulation function may be general or particular, latent or manifest.

- **Interest Aggregations :**

The interest articulated by various interest groups have to be examined and aggregated, and this function is performed by political parties. The demands and claims which are articulated by the interest and pressure groups are to be aggregated by the political systems. It is sometimes found that particular agents or persons are recruited for that purpose. As mentioned earlier, this function is generally performed by the political parties. In so far as the democratic political systems are concerned, the role of the political parties are more profound. Although the political parties are available even in totalitarian political system, the functions of the political parties in terms of interest aggregation is limited in it. Almond classified party system into –

(a) authoritarian system,

(b) dominant non-authoritarian system,

(c) competitive two-party system,

(d) competitive multi-party system.

- **Political Communication** :

Political Communication is the medium through which all other functions of the political system are to be performed. Demands and claims are submitted to the authority and this process passes through the communications. The legislators, judges, bureaucrats and other personnel of the government are communicated by different means and on the basis of the information, they proceed to formulate policies. Almond compares this function with the functions of blood circulation.

Output Functions : now let us discuss the output functions in brief.

- **Rule-making :**

This is one of the output variables which can produce changes in the environment and affect the political system. Rule-making processes are present in some form or the other in all political systems. It may be observed that in every society, the rule-making pattern is greatly influenced and affected by the leadership and cultural environment. In a modern society, the rule-making function is performed by the legislatures.

- **Rule-application :**

Rule application is another important output variable and is closely related to rule-making. It is infact, a continuation of the rule-making process in so far as it is concerned with the enforcement of the rules which have been made available to the society. Therefore, the function of rule-application is of immense importance. The rules made by the legislature are to be applied by the executive. This function requires the services of the bureaucrats possessing high degree of administrative capabilities.

- **Rule-adjudication :**

This is another important output variable which ensures that rules are not violated and if they are violated, the guilty person is awarded necessary penalties. The rule-adjudication function is performed by the judiciary. Whenever there is a question raised against the relevance of a particular rule, it would be ultimately decided by the judiciary. The decision given by the judiciary is considered to be final.

In his later writings, Almond, under the influence of David Easton, further elaborated his model to accommodate the process of adoptions and change. For this, he introduced the concept of capabilities to determine how far the system can cope with the inputs successfully. Almond also talks about the conversion process and explains how the political system responds to the environments and converts inputs into outputs. Finally, Almond emphasizes that the political system in the process of converting the input should not strain its capacity, because this can effect the basic transformations of the systems. Thus, the political system shall be in a state of equilibrium, only if the inputs and outputs conform.

Thus, from the above discussion, it is already clear to you that Almond has laid down his classic statement of structural-functionalism, in the introduction to *The Politics of the Developing Areas,* edited by Almond and Coleman. From the above reading, you all already know that, Almond stresses the interdependence between the political and other societal systems, and suggests several common properties of all political systems, namely, that there are political structures performing the same functions in all systems; that all political structures are multifunctional; and that each political culture is a mixture of the 'traditional' and the 'modern'.

Finally, we may refer to the contribution of Morton A. Kaplan, who has also contributed to this approach. According to him, step-level functions are of prime significance in the study of the behaviour of systems. Changes in the environment that influence the functioning of the system are called 'inputs'. Inputs that lead to radical changes in the system are called step-level functions. It is to be noted here that Kaplan's concept of the political system has its distinctive place in the study of comparative politics.

Thus, we have discussed in detail the contributions of different political theorists in the field of structural-functionalism. This approach has been

widely adopted in the field of comparative government and politics because it is claimed to provide standard categories for markedly different political systems. Its heuristic value, its influence on the development of comparative politics in several different ways, and the fruitfulness of the model for comparative political research must also be admitted.

Check Your Progress:

1. Examine Gabriel Almond's structural-functional approach to the study of political science. Point out its shortcomings.

2. What do you mean by 'structures' and 'functions' within a political system?

3. Discuss the basic assumptions of structural-functional approach.

4. Examine in detail the 'input' and 'output' functions in a system as highlighted by Almond

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2.4.4 Critical Assessment

Though Almond has discussed structural-functionalism in detail, it must be noted here that the structural-functional model of Almond suffers from serious defects and has met with severe criticisms:

- In the first place, it is pointed out that Almond borrowed the concept from other disciplines and applied them to political field without modifications. As a result, the theory got distorted. Almond talks of function without referring to the system in which only functions have a meaning.

- Secondly, the whole thrust of structural-functionalism is on the survival capability of the political system. The emphasis on the maintenance of the political system is so deep that the approach has become in effect, conservative and even status quo in its nature.

- Thirdly, the critics are of the view that the political development approach of structural-functionalism of Almond is not sufficient to cover the tremendous pattern of changes that have taken place in the political systems.

- Fourthly, the seven variables of functions mentioned by Almond are defective in so far it is difficult to draw a boundary between the political and non-political groups. Almond is also not clear as to why the interest aggregation is the work of political parties and not of other organizations. Also, though Almond acknowledges the importance of communications, he does not clarify as to what he means by free communication between the society and the state.

- Fifthly, though Almond gives enough importance to the output functions, he fails to give due importance to the feedback functions. He fails to note the importance of the feedback process in aggrevating or minimizing the challenges of the existence or even the survival of the political system.

- Sixthly, the study of the structural-functional analysis is so sophisticated that it is limited to the study of selected affluent western democratic countries.

- Seventhly, Almond's definition of political system is also subject to criticism. He fails to make it clear as to what he means by 'interdependent societies' and how they are related. Similarly, the definitions of a system-inspite of its being comprehensive, inter-dependent and having boundaries separating it from other systems-posed a number of other problems which are associated with the system approach.

- Almond's analysis cannot be applied to the study of political development in the communist countries.

- The critics have also stated that the structural-functional approach is nothing but an attempt to defend and justify the status-quo. Therefore, it is not much relevant in the context of understanding the changes within the system.

The major weakness of Almond, thus is the same as that of other functionalists- sociologists or political scientists. He does not only aim at the development of a theory of polity but believes that, theory that he has evolved, does specify the elements of the polity in such form as may ultimately make possible statistical and perhaps mathematical formulations.

(43)

Notwithstanding its obvious defects and weaknesses, the structural-functional approach has introduced a new conceptual tools in political science and thus, enriched the discipline. It has provided new insights into political realities and has made it illuminated.

Thus, from the above discussion, it is clear to all of you that one great limitation of this analysis, as we have already seen, is that it is essentially a static system. Its emphasis on the way things are, can lead to an unquestioning assumption of stability and an incapacity to deal with the challenge of change, particularly of a swift or violent character. It has a strong bias towards status-quo, and its research tends to support the existing order of things. Great caution needs, therefore, to be exercised in applying this analytical tool if the pitfalls are to be avoided.

SAQ :

Do you feel that the essential 'structures' and 'functions' as highlighted by Almond will help the system to survive for a long time. Discuss. (50 words).

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STOP TO CONSIDER :

Mutual Relationship between the Concepts of 'Structure' and 'Functions' :

In a political system, there exists close relationship between structure and functions. It is essential for all of us to know and understand as to what is structure and what is function and where lies their mutual relationship. Oran Young in *Systems of Political Science* has said that a function is generally defined as the objective consequences of a pattern of action for the system in which it occurs. A function is thus concerned with a pattern of action. In other words, it is related to a system. Closely related with function is functionalism. William Flanigan and Edwin Fogelman said that in its widest usage functionalism means simply

that in analyzing some phenomena, the political scientists will be concerned with, among other things, their functions in the sense of purpose served by the phenomena. On the other hand, structure refers to the arrangement through which these set of functions are carried out. Thus, these concepts are inter-related.

2.5 Feedbacks and Capability

Feedbacks and Capability are the two important components of structural-functionalism. In the absence of these two components, the system will face the problem of survival. Thus, for effective functioning, these two criterias must be met by the system. Political scientists subscribing to this approach refer to the notion of 'capability' that relates to the extent to which the system can cope with inputs in a successful manner, and can convert them into necessary outputs. A study of Parson's empirical functionalism helps us in understanding these concepts properly. A system, according to Parson, is an action frame-work in as much as all human actions occur within it. What is, therefore, of paramount necessity is that a state of equilibrium should be maintained on the basis of the fulfillment of the functional needs of the society, relating to four problems like:

- *Adaptation* : it means that the capacity or capability of the system to meet the demands of the 'actors' must be increased. The individuals are the 'actors' who play their roles in the context of the shared values of the system.

- *Goal Attainment* : it means the co-ordinate actions of collectivity and the units to bring about desired relations between the system and its environment to move towards the goal set by the system for itself.

- *Pattern Maintenance and Tension Management* : it refers to the upholding of the basic principles of the system with regard to both the value of such patterns and the commitment of the system units to them. Goal attainment is concerned with the cultural components of a system and pattern maintenance with its social components. Here, the role of the family, other associations like schools, unions etc. should be emphasized.

- *Integration* **:** it is concerned with the adjustment of relations between and among the units of a system for establishing a level of solidarity among them to permit the system to function. It involves an aspect of the socio-control process. As a matter of fact, this functional requisite is basically concerned with the internal problem of co-ordination of differentiated but interdependent roles. Parsons admits that in every social system there may be some behaviour that is not prohibited by norms but is nevertheless malintegrative. The integrative function is performed both by coercive mechanism (state) and non-coercive mechanisms (social institutions). (J.C.Johari).

A study of David Easton's system analysis shows us that he has laid emphasis on 'demand' and 'support' constituting 'inputs' and the 'decisions' of the men in authority roles as 'outputs', with a connecting link called the 'feedback process'. According to him, a situation of stress for a political system develops when the interaction between its essential variables threatens to breakdown. There is a feedback loop, the identification of which helps us to explain the processes through which the system may cope with the stress. The idea of feedback means that if the actions of the authorities are taken to satisfy demands or create conditions that will do so, information must be fed back, at least to those authorities, about the effects of each round of outputs. Without this feedback function in a system, the authorities would have to operate in dark, which will hamper the smooth functioning of the system. Easton, further, says that the feedback loop itself "has a number of parts worthy of detailed investigation. It consists of the production of outputs by the authorities, a response by the members of the society to these outputs, the communication of information about the response to the authorities and, finally, possible succeeding actions by the authorities. Thereby, a new round of outputs, response, information-feedback, and reaction by the authorities is set in motion, forming a seamless web of activities. What happens in this feedback thus has a profound influence on the capacity of a system to cope with stress and persist."

Thus, from the above discussion, it is clear to you that these two components, namely, feedback and capacity are very essential for survival of a system,

and it also helps the system to cope with the environment, thereby facilitating smooth functioning of the system.

Thus, we have discussed above all the necessary parameters of the concept of structural-functionalism. After a careful analysis of structural-functional analysis, we can come to the conclusion that it has got advantages as well as disadvantages. Structural-functional approach has its advantages limited to the study of selected affluent western democratic countries where alone it may look quite attractive for a comparative analysis of political systems. However, despite the fact that structural-functional approach has occupied a very important place in the realm of comparative politics, it cannot be denied that it has some serious shortcomings that may be enumarated as under :

- This approach is criticized as being anti-change. This approach has the serious flaw of being 'concerned with the present' and having 'no perspective of the future'.

- The functionalists defeat the very purpose of their approach by misapplying their tools of empirical investigation while studying the political systems of the third world.

- This approach suffers from, what is termed by Marion Levy, the 'fallacy of functional teleology'.

- Neither its conceptual framework, nor the range of derivable propositions for research are as specific as one would like. What Almond has produced is at best, as Meehan points out, "a classificatory scheme, or perhaps a model, a very imperfect and loose model, that can be used to order political data and perhaps standardize observations of political phenomena."

SAQ :

Do you think that the feedback mechanism helps in attaining sustainable development within a system. Explain. (80 words).

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> **Check Your Progress:**
>
> 1. Feedback and capability are the two very important components of structural-functional approach. Explain.
>
> 2. Discuss the merits as well as demerits of the structural-functional approach.
>
> 3. Structural-functional approach helps the system in getting the essential guidelines as to how to survive for a long time. Explain this fact.
>
> 4. Discuss Morton Kaplan's and David Easton's contributions in the field of structural-functionalism.

2.6 Summing Up

From the above discussion, it is already clear to you all that structural-functionalism is actually an offshoot or derivative from the systems theory. Its main purpose is to deal with the survival strategy of a system. That is why, it emphasizes on the basic fact that for the survival of a system, certain very basic functions needs to be performed by a system. The performance of these basic functions necessitates the existence of certain basic structures within the system. Though this approach has been criticized by some of the critics, yet it must be admitted by us that it helped us a lot in understanding the survival strategy of a system. Structural-functionalism deals with a manageable collection of variables; and it provides a set of standardized categories that can be applied successfully over widely disparate political systems. All the political systems in different parts of the world need certain basic structures and functions for smoothly carrying on its functions, and this point has been quite nicely pointed out by the structuralists.

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Institute of Distance and Open Learning
GAUHATI UNIVERSITY

MA in Political Science
(3rd Semester)

Paper IX
COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Block 3
Key Concepts of Comparative Politics:
Political Development, Political Modernization and
Political Culture, Political Ideology and
Constitutionalism

Contents:

Block Introduction–

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Detail Syllabus

PAPER IX
COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Block I: INTRODUCTION AND MAJOR APPROACHES TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Unit 1: Introduction and Traditional Approaches to Comparative Politics

   1.1 Introduction

   1.2 Objectives

   1.3 Growth of comparative Politics as a discipline

   1.4 Meaning and Features of Traditional Approaches

   1.5 Various Traditional Approaches to the study of Comparative Politics

      1.5.1 Philosophical Approach

      1.5.2 Historical Approach

      1.5.3 Institutional Approach

      1.5.4 Legal Approach

   1.6 Summing Up

   1.7 References and Suggested Readings

Unit 2: Modern Approaches to Comparative Politics

   2.1 Introduction

   2.2 Objectives

   2.3 Features of Modern Approaches of Comparative Politics

   2.4 Modern Approaches

      2.4.1 Sociological Approach

      2.4.2 Psychological Approach

      2.4.3 System Approach

      2.4.4 Marxian Approach

      2.4.5 Behavioural Approach

      2.4.6 Game Theory

      2.4.7 Decision-Making Theory

      2.4.8 Political Communications Approach

   2.5 Summing Up

   2.6 References and Suggested Readings

Block II: POLITICAL SYSTEM AND SYSTEM ANALYSIS

Block III: KEY CONCEPTS OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, POLITICAL MODERNIZATION AND POLITICAL CULTURE, POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND CONSTITUTIONALISM

Block Introduction:

In the field of comparative politics, concepts of political development, political modernization, political socialization and political culture have assumed great importance. This block makes an attempt to introduce you to these concepts. Concepts of political development and political modernization are mainly post-Second World War. American political scientists viz, Lucian Pye, Leonard Binder, Myron Weiner, David Apter etc have contributed towards the emergence of the concept of political development. Political modernization mainly denotes the transformation of the political culture in response to the changes in social and physical environments. On the other hand political, socialization denotes the process of learning by which individuals are trained to become well-functioning members of a political community. Various institutions and groups in the society help in the process of political socialization which can be categorized as agents of political socialization. These agents include family, peer groups, school and other higher educational institutions, pressure groups and political parties etc. Political socialization depends on political culture and on the other hand political socialization helps in the process of political stability and change in the society.

Again, this block also discusses two important concepts of comparative politics i.e, ideology and constitutionalism. The significance of ideology in the field of comparative politics can be understood in the light of the fact that in every political system, ideologies provide guidance in the formulation of policies. Constitutionalism stands for supremacy of law in a political system. It also stands for limited government power.

Unit 1 of this block presents before you the meaning of the concepts of political development, political modernization, political socialization and political culture. It discusses the growth and characteristics of the concept of political development as well as political modernization. Moreover, this unit also focuses on the concept of political socialization and different agents of political socialization. Lastly, the unit introduces you to the concept of political culture and its different dimensions.

Unit 2 discusses the concept of ideology and constitutionalism. While doing so, the unit first makes an attempt to deal with the meaning and nature of political ideology. It also gives you the idea on the ideology of Marxism and

(7)

Liberalism. Moreover, the unit also discuses an important debate in the field of comparative politics i.e, the decline of ideology and end of history. Again, from this unit you will also get an idea about the concept of constitutionalism and its growth. Lastly, the unit focuses on the western concept of constitutionalism and constitutionalism in developing countries.

This block consists of two units: –

Unit 1: Concept of Political Development, Political Modernisation, Political Socialization and Political Culture

Unit 2: Political Ideology and Constitutionalism

Unit 1
Concept of Political Development, Political Modernisation, Political Socialization and Political Culture

Contents:

1.1 Introduction

In modern political analysis as well as comparative politics, concepts of political development, political modernization, political socialization and political culture have come to assume great significance. Concepts of political development and political modernization emerged after the Second World War. At that period it was necessary to study the new political events and situations emerging in the newly independents nations of Asia and Africa which were different from the western countries.

Political socialization is an important concept since it helps in understanding the factors responsible for the political behaviour of the people. Political culture on the other hand, is a part of general culture consisting of the attitudes, beliefs, emotions and values of the society relating to political system and political issues.

This unit will discuss at length the concept of political development as well as political modernization. Besides, this unit will also give you some ideas about the concepts of political socialization and political culture.

1.2 Objectives

You have already learnt that concepts of political development, political modernization, political socialization and political culture are important in the study of comparative politics. After reading this unit you will be able to:–

- *explain* the meaning of political development
- *discuss* the meaning of political modernization
- *list* the major agent of political modernization
- *elaborate* the meaning of political culture and its role in bringing stability and change in the society

1.3 Concept of Political Development

The rise of the concept of political development can be traced back to the post-World War II era when many of the Asian and African countries got independence from foreign rule. Many of the American scholars have dealt with the concept of political development. Most prominent among them are Lucian Pye, Leonard Binder, Myron Weiner, David Apter etc.

1.3.1 Pye's Concept of Political Development

Lucian Pye in his books, *Aspects of Political Development*, *Political Culture and Political Development* and *Communication and Political Development* has discussed various elements of political development. He is of the view that social, economic, administrative, political and cultural

variables play important role in shaping political development. According to Lucian Pye, political development can be understood/examined at three different levels—— with respect to population as a whole, with respect to governmental and general systematic performance and with respect to organization policy.

Before giving his own ideas on political development, Pye discusses various other definitions of political development. Let us now examine Pye's criticism of various other views on political development.

- The economists are of the view that political development is the pre-requisite of economic development. They opine that economic development/growth depends on political and social conditions. Pye rejects this view on four grounds. Firstly, it has a negative character in the sense that it is easier to examine how the social or political condition impedes economic development. Secondly, obstacles of economic development may vary from country to country. Thirdly, a prospect of economic development is quite remote in poor countries. Fourthly, most of the under-developed countries are clearly more concerned with political development than economic development.

- Pye rejects the view that political development is the politics typical of industrial societies on the ground that it ignores the role of several other factors like forces threatening the interests of the advantageous section, an appreciation of the values of orderly legal and administrative procedures, an acknowledgement that politics is rightfully a mechanism for solving problems and not an end in itself, a stress on welfare programmes and finally an acceptance of some form of mass participation.

- Political development is also considered to be the political modernization by many scholars like J. Coleman, Karl Deutsch and S. M. Lipset. They are of the opinion that political development means a study of the developed societies of Western and modern countries. It also includes the study of the ways and processes the developing countries are trying to emulate from the Western countries. In other words, these scholars believe that the advanced western and modern countries set the measure of political

(11)

development. Pye criticizes the view because it fails to distinguish between Western and modern. He further says that developing countries may have their own historical traditions which they refuse to give up for following the modern or western society.

- Again, scholar like Edward A Shils views political development as operation of modern state system. Thus, political development is identified with the politics of nationalism which is an important element of a modern nation-state. Pye rejects the view on the ground that nationalism is only a necessary but not the sole factor of political development.

- From the point of view of Max Weber and Talcott Parsons political development can be seen as administrative and legal development of a community. Max Weber believes that establishment of an effective bureaucracy is essential for development. But according to Pye, if administration is overstressed, it may bring imbalances in the society which stands in the way of political development.

- Many scholars have viewed political development as mobilization and participation of the citizens in the political process. Universal Adult Franchise results in mass participation in the decision-making process. Pye on the other hand pointed out the disastrous effects of politics of mass participation. In his words, such a view of political development 'is also fraught with the dangers of either sterile emotionalism or corrupting demagoguery, both of which can sap the strength of a society.'

- Political development is also described as building of democracy and inculcating values of a democratic order among the citizens. However, Pye rejects the view on the ground that such a concept excludes non-democratic countries.

- Karl Deutsch and F. W. Riggs are of the opinion that stability is linked with the concept of development because social and economic development of the society depend upon the environment in which stability exists. Absence of uncertainty creates the conducive atmosphere for planning and development. Pye criticized this view on the ground that it 'leaves unanswered how much order is necessary or desirable and for what purpose change should be directed'.

- Again, political development can be examined in terms of level of mobilization of power by the system. Pye criticizes the view on the ground that such explanation is applicable only to democratic political system and not other systems.

- Many political thinkers believe that it is inappropriate and unnecessary to isolate political development from other development. Political development can take place within the context of multi-dimensional process of social change. Pye did not reject this view since according to him all forms of development are related.

- While discussing development syndrome, Pye refers to the problem of 'development syndrome' pointed out by scholar like Myron Weiner. However, Pye said nothing about this statement and gave his own definition of political development that includes some element of all the above mentioned definitions of political development.

1.3.2 Main Characteristics of Political Development

Lucian Pye's view on political development bears three characteristics. They are—

1) *Equality*: political development implies mass participation and popular involvement in political activities. Whether it is a democracy or a totalitarian system, the subjects should become active citizens. Equality also implies that laws 'should be of a universalistic nature, applicable to all and more or less impersonal in their operation'. Again, it means recruitment to political offices 'should reflect achievement standards of performance and not the ascriptive considerations of a traditional social system.

2) *Capacity:* capacity of a political system implies its capacity to give outputs and the extent to which it can affect the rest of the society and economy. It also implies the performance of the government and also the conditions that affect the performance. It also means effectiveness and efficiency in the execution of public policy. Capacity further denotes rationality in administration and a secular orientation to policy.

(13)

3) ***Differentiation*:** it stands for diffusion and specialization of structures. In the sphere of governmental activities, offices and agencies should have their distinct and limited functions. Thus, according to Pye differentiation is not 'fragmentation and the isolation of the different parts of the political system but specialization based on an ultimate sense of integration'.

Pye further points out that these three characteristics of political development may or may not fit together easily. The efforts at achieving greater equality can challenge the capacity of the system and differentiation can reduce equality. Again, development is not unilinear and it is neither divided into certain distinct stages.

After Pye, Leonard Binder discussed the concept of political development. He discussed political development in the context of developing countries of the Third World. According to him, political development has following implications——

I. change of identity from religious to ethnic and from parochial to societal.

II. Change of legitimacy from transcendental to immanent sources.

III. Change of political participation from elite to mass and from family to group

IV. Change of distribution from status and privilege to achievement

V. Change in the degree of administrative and legal penetration into social structure and remote regions of the country.

F. W Riggs on the other hand integrates the concept of political development with the forces of environment. Riggs is of the view that in the political sphere development implies an increasing ability to make and carry out collective decisions affecting the environment. While putting forward his ecological theory, Riggs pointed out that ecological environment should also include human and cultural environment besides the physical environment. Thus, Riggs' view of development involves an understanding of both constraints and resources of the environment.

It must be mentioned here that the concept of political development also covers the aspect of political decline or decay. Hence, it can be said that

the political development does not imply a single direction movement, because institutions grow and mature as well as decay and dissolve. Samuel P. Huntington's name is associated with the concept of political decline or decay.

Thus, political development can be viewed as the operation of a political system in terms of its increasing democratization while political decay implies regression and disintegration of the political system. Political development is also understood as the capacity of a political system 'to control and co-ordinate various processes of change in society generated by the socio-demographic and structural changes.

Pye admits that social, economic, cultural administrative and political variables shape the environment for political development.

1.3.3 Factors Leading to Political Development

Various factors help in creating a conducive atmosphere for political development. They are—— industrialization, urbanization, spread of education and literacy, increasing exposure of the mass-media, expansion of secular culture etc. These factors help in the growth of modern bureaucracies, development of a sense of nationhood, advent of political parties, popular participation etc.

Almond and Powel are of the view that political development is mainly influenced by international environment, domestic society or political elites within the political system. Almond and Powel also discussed four different problems in bringing out political development. These are as follows —

1. **Problem of State-building**: problem of state building may arise from external threats from international environment to the political system. It may also be caused by internal situation like revolutionary pressure challenging the stability of the political system. In the words of Almond and Powel, 'state-building occurs when the political elite creates new structures and organizations designed to penetrate the society in order to regulate behaviour in it and draw a larger volume of resources from it'.

2. **Problem of Nation-building:** Nation-building stands for ignoring the primordial and narrow identities and showing loyalty to the nation.

(15)

Hence, the concept of nation-building urges the individuals to give up narrow loyalty to the tribal chief, family, caste, ethnic group etc.

3. **Problem of Participation**: in a developed society the common public also wants participation in the decision-making process. People make such demands through political parties, pressure groups and such other organizations.

4. **Problem of Distribution**: the common people with their increased participation may also demand that national income should be distributed equally among all sections of the society without any artificial discrimination.

Stability of a system depends very much upon the types of problems it faces.

Political development also faces crisis if the factors do not properly work. Lucian Pye refers to six types of crisis of political development. They are–

I. *Identity crisis*: identity crisis emerges when a political system fail to achieve a common sense of identity. Mostly the newly independent nations because of their differences in terms of language, ethnicity and culture face this problem.

II. *Legitimacy crisis*: when the government does not listen to the problems of common people and rule authoritatively legitimacy crisis occurs.

III. *Penetration crisis*: it refers to the problem of building up the effectiveness of the formal institutions by government and also of establishing confidence and rapport between rulers and subjects.

IV. *Participation crisis*: it occurs when there is uncertainty over the appropriate rate of expansion and when the entry of new participants creates problems in the existing institutions.

V. *Integration crisis*: it refers to the problems of relating popular politics to governmental performance. It deals with problem of integrating different parts of the system.

VI. *Distribution crisis*: it mainly deals with the question of use of governmental power in the distribution of goods and services.

1.4 Concept of Political Modernization

Political modernization can be described as those changes in political culture and political institution that occurs as a result of the process of modernization. Thus, it also denotes the transformation of the political culture in response to the changes in social and physical environments. Political modernization is described as the 'systematic, sustained and powerful application of human energies to the rational control of man's physical and social environment for various human purposes.' A modern society is a society based on advanced technology and the spirit of science, a rational view of life, a secular approach to social relations, a feeling for justice in public affairs and where the nation state is the prime unit of the polity.

Concept of modernization has different facets. Hence, political modernization has also got different dimensions. At the psychological level, there is a change in attitude and orientation of the people. At the intellectual level, there is expansion and diffusion of knowledge. Demographically, there is change in the mobility of the people. At the social level, individual loyalty is shifted from primary to secondary associations. Last but not the least, at economic level modernization implies improvement in agriculture, trade and commerce as well as industrialization.

Political modernization is regarded as a result of 'social mobilisation' and 'economic development' where according to Karl Deutsch social mobilization is a process by which traditional beliefs pertaining to social and economic fields are eroded and new patterns of socialization takes place. Thus the term political modernization can be described as a positive term, where changes occur for the betterment of the society. It also refers to the situation of political transformation European countries undergo in the modern period which is again followed by a host of countries in different parts of the world.

1.4.1 Stages of Political Modernisation

Concept of political modernization is of great importance in the developing countries of the Third World. David Apter has discussed certain stages of modernization. They are —

- *First Stage* (**Stage of Contact and Control**): this stage is shaped by few individuals who are guided by mission or desire for adventure. Here we may refer to the adventures made by the British, French, German, Dutch and Portuguese colonialists. Because of their adventure new technologies were spreaded resulting in the growth of trade and commerce.

- *Second Stage* (**Stage of Reaction and Counter-action**): in the second stage of political modernization the colonialists come in closer contact with the native people. The closer contact with the native people helps them in carrying out their policies and also in their administration. The colonies are also benefited by the rule of colonial power. However, at some point of time the natives realize that they are being exploited by the colonial rulers. They keep their contact with the colonial rulers and try to establish various organizations for putting forward their demands. As a result of it, national leaders emerge from the native people.

- *Third Stage* (**Stage of Contradiction and Emancipation**): in the third stage of modernization, the conflict between the native and colonial rulers becomes more visible. The national movement becomes widespread. The natives start demanding for sharing administrative power. The colonial powers in turn devise new

administrative policies. However, the nationalists leaders pursue their demand for more independence.

- *Fourth Stage* (**Search for a Solution**): this stage occurs after the advent of independence. In this phase a second revolution for socio-economic changes take place. However, the political system faces new difficulties. The leaders of the nationalist struggles also losses their charisma.

The concept of political modernization is criticized on various grounds. The major criticism leveled against this concept is that it mainly speaks about westernization in general and Americanization in particular. It is also believed that through this concept America wants to impose their model on the newly independent nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Moreover, this concept is silent about the modernization process of Communist or Socialist countries like Soviet Union or China.

1.5 Concept of Political Socialisation

Political socialization is a learning process by which individuals are trained to become well-functioning members of a political community. The term political socialization has been coined by H H Hyman. By this term he denotes the perpetuation of political values across generations. Political socialization is a learning process through which the members of a society get acquainted with the norms and behaviour of a political system. It is that process through which political cultures are maintained and changed. This process operates in a quiet manner i.e. without people being aware of it. Political socialization mainly emphasises the transition of political values from one generation to another. Now let us discuss some of the definitions of political socialization given by eminent political philosophers.

- According to Rush, political socialization is a process by which an individual becomes acquainted with the political systems which determine his reaction to political phenomenon.

- Almond and Powell is of the view that political socialization is the process by which political cultures are maintained and changed.

- Easton and Dennis is of the view that political socialization is that development process by which persons acquire political orientation and pattern of behavior.

(19)

- According to Austin Ranney, political socialization generally means socialization of masses, the process by which ordinary people develop their attitude towards their political system.

- Stephen L Wasby holds the view that the subject matter of political socialization is the process by which people acquire political values not simply during active political participation but also during the period before they engage in an explicitly political activity.

- According to Michael Push and P. Althoff, political socialization may be defined as a process by which individuals become acquainted with the political system and which determines his reaction to the political phenomena.

- Fred I Greenstein defines political socialization as all political learning, formal and informal, deliberate and unplanned at every stage of life cycle including not only explicit political learning but also nominally non- political learning that affects political behaviour, such as, learning of politically relevant social attitude and acquisition of politically relevant personality characteristics.

From the above definitions you must have learnt that the process of political socialization mainly deals with the individual's orientation towards political objects. Through the process of political socialization, political culture is maintained, changed and shaped at individual as well as community level. Political socialization process communicates the political values from one generation to another. Political socialization is the process through which individuals in a political system learn their political orientation and disposition.

Again, this process answers the questions like how does a person learn his political roles such as a voter, a member of an interest group, a campaign worker, a legislator or which process helps him in learning political behaviour. Citizens learn how to behave politically and how to think and talk about politics through this process.

1.5.1 Agents of Political Socialization

You have already learnt that political socialization is a process through which the political culture of a society is transmitted from one generation to another.

This process begins at the early age of life and it continues throughout the life. There are some agents who carry and who help in transmitting the political values from one generation to another. This includes- family, school, peer groups, employment experience, mass media, government and party agencies, religious institutions and symbols. There agents or factors play an important part in this process of norm internalization. Now let us examine the role played by various agents in the process of political socialization.

Family is the first agent of political socialization. Family is the primary social unit to which a baby gets exposed. A child tends to identify with parents. The child even tends to adopt the outlook of its parents towards the political system. Most of the time the father become the authority figure and it influences the child to a great extent. A study in USA has shown that the child develops political affinity towards a party according to the loyalties of their parents. This is a primary organization with authority, structure and a decision making process. It is the first and foremost agent of socialization. The childhood of a person influences his orientation towards authority. The child recognizes the first experience of authority in the family only in the form of parents. Disobeyance of authority may lead to punishments. It also has a decisive impact on his obedience to the political sphere. The child gradually starts taking part in family decision making process which later on influences his capability as a decision maker in the political system.

After family, educational institutions play an important part in the process of political socialization. School is the second unit through which the child gets exposure to the society. School is the centre of primary education. it exercises the strongest possible influence upon the child. In a particular kind of school the children may develop a particular kind of frame of mind. For example, the schools in Nazi Germany taught about the Nazi philosophy. The students were politically socialized in such a way that they developed a feeling of support towards the Nazi system. Moreover, the views and ideas of teachers also help in the forming of political ideas. The courses of the school also influence the thinking of a child. The schools impart political culture through rituals like salute of the flag, morning assembly, singing of the national anthem, celebration of the historical events, display of historical portraits or events on classroom walls etc. Educational institutions perform the following functions—

- Imparts knowledge about the political system.

- Inculcates the young with positive feelings towards the country and the governmental system.

- Induces modern universalistic orientation in the people especially in developing countries.

- Generates civic competence and the sense of participation in the political affairs.

Stop to Consider:

Theories of Political Socialization-

System Persistence Theory- this theory is advocated by Easton and Dennis. According to this theory, political systems are confronted with stress. To manage these various kinds of stresses an effective mechanism called political socialization is necessary. A number of processes have been involved in this regard like investigation, ordering and management of stress as well arriving at possible solutions.

Psychoanalytic Theory- Sigmund Freud is one of the advocators of this theory. He opines that every child is born with some natural instincts or unconscious needs. But many times the outside world restricts or restraints these needs. As a result of these restrictions, conflicts arise. This process makes the child grow, develop and become civilized. For instance, the physical appearance of a political figure may attract a child. But the child may come to know about the negative qualities of that person through his/her parents. This will create a conflict in the mind of the child and it helps him in forming and developing an opinion of his own.

Learning Theory: the process of learning helps a person to acquire characteristic responses to given stimuli. This learning can be of two types- direct learning and indirect learning. Definite communication of information, values or feelings towards political ideas and objects implies the direct learning, for example, the civic courses in high school curriculum. On the other hand, the long process of personality development of individual which begins from early childhood results in indirect learning. Through this process of indirect learning, the political ideas and value orientations are acquired by the members of a political system.

Cognitive Development Theory: this theory refers to the cognitive intellectual equipment which is available to a person in various stages of his development. The stages of development follow orderly sequences. The child learns particular

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political situations or occurrence at different stages of development. For example a child learns that Delhi is the name of a city. In the second stage he learns that every state has a capital of its own. In the third stage he comes to know that New Delhi is the capital of India.

The main objective of these theories is to examine the behaviour of individual in political situations as well as uniformity of behaviour in particular situation.

Though family and educational institutions play a major role in the process of political socialization, in the contemporary world peer groups play a strong role in this process as in contemporary world on average, a child spends more time with peers than with family. Peer groups denote the people belonging to almost same age group and sharing similar problems. Therefore, the impact or the influence of the peer groups can be nicely observed. The members of the peer group can have an open discussion about the political matters as they belong to equal age and status group and there is no hierarchy system. The group discussion in political matters is spontaneous and not formal. It can totally change the political view of a new member.

The experience in work place also helps in this process of political socialization. The relation between the employee and employer and the experience as a member of some groups of union or trade also influence the normal internalization process of a person. The political ideology of an association also influences the political socialization process of its employees. The views and ideas of the employees are influenced by factors like his decision making power as participation in union, collective bargaining, demonstrations and various other forms of decision making help in shaping the orientation towards politics.

Among all the mentioned agents of political socialization, mass media plays the most important part. Mass media which includes television, newspaper, radio etc, is another agent of socialization. People get to know about the political happenings through mass media. Mass media like radio, television, newspaper etc communicate the opinions, ideas, values, beliefs about the system which largely influence the political system of the country. In many cases, the general public's views are shaped on the basis of media reports. The government often tries to manipulate media in order to change the political orientation of the citizens of that country. Mass media helps in developing and shaping political values among the citizens.

The contact with political parties and pressure groups also helps in shaping up the political culture of a person. People get to know about different values through political agendas of political parties. Political parties use propaganda to win the faith of the general public.

Social and religious institutions like temples, church, youth movements also help in the formation and transition of political values. The teachings in the religious institutions also influence the process of political socialization. For example, the teaching in mosque or gurudwara may help a person to develop a special kind of political values. Social institutions also assume a great role to play in the process of political socialization. For example, in India caste system plays an important role in politics. Election and selection of candidates during elections many times depends on the caste system.

Religion plays an important role specially in developing societies. People tend to follow the religious leaders in political issues also. For example, the Roman Catholic Church has imparted certain political attitudes to its followers specially the women. In India also, the political parties try to take advantage of religious issues to mould the political orientation of the people. Moreover, certain symbols like observance of birthdays of Bhagat Singh, Mahatma Gandhi, Subhash Bose etc help in shaping up a political culture.

The government can also play a positive role in the process of political socialization. If the government is not corrupt and dedicated to the development and welfare of the people, the general masses will definitely develop a feeling of affinity towards that government. Almond and Powell have rightly said that irrespective of the impressions and views of the political system inculcated by family and school, when a citizen is ignored by his party, cheated by his police, starved in the breadline and finally conscripted into army, his views of the political system is likely to alter.

A child born into an elite family definitely enjoys some privileges compared to that of a child born in a poor family. The child of the elite family gets to enjoy socio- economic and political privileges which the child of the poor family cannot. Definitely the elite child will know more about the politics.

The unstructured events like riots, street demonstrations etc influence the political orientation of the public. Some major political events also help in the process of political socialization. For example, the announcement of internal emergency in India during 1975- 77 affected the orientation of the citizens.

From the above discussion now you are in a position to understand the process of political socialization and the role played by various agents in the continuation of this prcess. Political socialization is an ongoing continuous process. A child gets its first political knowledge from family i.e the family introduces the child to the political system of the society. But gradually the political views of the child are influenced by peer groups and the working environment.

1.6 The Concept of Political Culture

Political culture is that part of general culture which deals with politics. The attitudes, beliefs, emotions and values of society related to political system and political issues constitute the political culture of the society. These attitudes may not be consciously held. It may be implicit in an individual or group's relationship with the political system. To understand the meaning of political culture let us examine the various definitions of culture.

- Lucian Pye is of the view that the notion of political culture assumes that the attitudes, sentiments and cognitions that inform and govern political behaviour in any society are not just random congeries but represent coherent pattern which fit together and are mutually reinforcing. In spite of the great potentialities for diversity in political orientations, in any particular community there is a limited and distinct political culture which gives meaning, predictability and form to the political process.

- According to Eric Rowe, a political culture is pattern of individual values, beliefs and emotional attitudes.

- Ray Macridis is of the view that political culture means commonly shared goals and commonly accepted rules.

- According to Almond and Powell, political culture consists of attitudes, beliefs, values and skills which are current in an entire population as well as those special propensities and pattern which may be found within separate parts of that population. Political culture refers not to what is happening in the world of politics but what people believe about these happenings.

- Beer and Ulam is of the view that certain aspects of the general culture of a society are especially concerned with how government ought to be conducted and what it shall try to do. This sector of culture is called political culture.

- Michael Push and P Althoff hold the opinion that political socialization may be defined as a process by which individuals become acquainted with the political system and which determines his reaction to the political phenomena.

From these definitions you have learnt that political culture deals with the orientation of people towards politics.

1.6.1 Dimensions of Political Culture

There are five main components in a political culture. These are as follows-

1. Orientation towards politics: orientation refers to people's awareness of, feelings about and judgements on the political system. Orientation towards politics also includes the input output process as well as their role in the political system. There are three orientations namely, cognitive, affective and evaluative.

- *Cognitive-* it refers to the knowledge of people about the political system, its functions, institutions and concerned actors. This knowledge may be accurate or inaccurate. For example, the knowledge of a person about how the political system works or the knowledge about the leading political figures like prime minister, president etc. of the country constitute the cognitive orientation of a political culture.

- *Affective-* it implies the feeling of attachment, involvement, detachment, rejection and the like about the political objects. Emotional feeling of the people towards their political system constitutes the affective orientation of political culture. People may feel attached or alienated towards the system. These emotional feelings affect the activities of people to a great extent. For example if a person feel attached towards the system, he/she will feel like taking part in the political activities. And if the person feels detached or rejected he/ she will not take part in the affairs of politics.

(26)

- *Evaluative*- The judgment and opinion towards the system implies the evaluative orientation of political culture.

2. Political beliefs: it refers to the understanding of the people about how things are in political world. Beliefs imply the ways in which people interpret or perceive the nature of a political relationship.

3. Political attitudes: the attitude that explains the political behaviour generally refers to as political attitude. These attitudes may be towards the regime, the input system, the output system or the authority. This attitude helps in determining the trust of the people in the system. It also helps the citizens in identifying with the nation. This political attitude most of the time decides the nature of the political system.

4. Political values: it refers to the standards used to set the goals of the political system. It also implies the standards used to evaluate the performance of the political system. Political values, beliefs and attitudes generally overlap one other and it becomes difficult to separate them.

5. Political Symbol: the common sharing of signs and symbols also influences the political culture. For example, use of flags, anthem, historical monuments, old institutions, public buildings, political and religious rituals, festivals etc. influences the attitudes towards the political system.

1.6.2 Political Culture, Stability and Change

After going through the concept of political culture you have learnt that political culture plays an important role in the sphere of political stability and change. The political culture of a society decides the stability of the political system. Whether the citizen of a country will accept democracy or autocracy will be decided by its political culture. One cannot impose democratic form of government upon the people who have likings for dictatorship. John Stuart Mill has rightly remarked that despotism is the best form of government for the barbarians while representative government is best for the civilized ones. In this regard we can cite the example of Germany and Japan. In Germany, the political instability resulted from the wide gap between the democratic form of government and the authoritarian elements found in military, bureaucracy, political parties as well as family.

In Weimer Republic of Germany which was established after the First World War there were two different sets of political culture. On the one hand, the democratic rules of the government exert democratic values while on the other hand institutions like military, bureaucracy, political parties, family etc show authoritarian elements. It was the main reason behind the political instability of Germany. While in the case of Japan, there was a state of status quo and there was no change due to the traditional attitude of the Japanese people towards political system.

It needs mention here that the concept of political bi-culturalism emerged as a result of the dichotomy between traditional and modern culture. It creates a problem for the makers of the new states as they become confused as to how to take their state in the path of political modernization. Sudden and total change may lead to unwanted consequences. The tradition bound people may not accept those changes contradictory to their conventional culture as it may lead to the breakdown of the new political system. On the other hand people will accept gradual changes. Therefore, it can be said that the stability of a political culture depends on how the change is introduced. If it is sudden and rapid change, it will lead to political instability. On the other hand, gradual and slow change is the basis of political stability. The stability of a political culture also depends on the ability of a leader to maintain a balance between the old and the new culture. For example, the leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, introduced gradual changes in India. It does not affect the stability of the political culture.

1.7 Summing Up

After going through this unit you are now in a position to define certain important concepts of comparative politics like political development, political modernization, political socialization and political culture. This unit has helped you in comprehending the ideas of Lucian Pye on political development. You are also in a position to explain the concept of political modernization as well as distinguish between political modernization and political development. Moreover, from this unit you have learnt that political socialization is a learning process by which individuals are trained to become well-functioning members of the political community. There are certain agents of political socialization like family, educational institutions, political parties,

(28)

pressure groups, mass-media etc which play important role in the process of political socialization. Reading of this unit has also helped you in understanding that there are different dimensions of political culture and political culture helps to maintain stability as well as bring changes in the society.

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Unit 2
Political Ideology and Constitutionalism

Contents:

2.1 Introduction

Ideology occupied an important position to the study of political science. It provides justification and rationalizes any policy undertaken by the government on behalf of the people or the society. On the other hand, constitution of a country is the sum total of its valid norms on the basis of which it functions. We know that ideology sets goals for political actions at national as well as at international levels and the constitution of the country leads to achieve the desired goals set by it. However, there is no agreement as to how ideology influences a nation's policy and how it works, but it is believed that ideology of nation helps in moulding national behaviour. The constitution of a nation is the reflection of its ideologies. Both the constitution and ideology shape the national behaviour and leads the country to the path of development. This unit makes an attempt to introduce you to the meaning of political ideology and also to examine various ideologies. An attempt is also made to discuss the decline of ideologies in the present world. In this unit we shall also discuss the meaning and the very nature of constitutionalism along with its development in western and developing countries.

(31)

2.2 Objectives

It is well known that the political and social behaviour of person is determined by the social norms and legalized by the prescribed rules of the nation i.e. constitution. Hence it can be said that ideology and the constitution rationalize a nation's behaviour. After reading this unit you will be able to:—

- *discuss* the concept of political ideology
- *explain* two dominant political ideologies – Marxism and Liberalism
- *examine* the debate on the end of ideologies
- *discuss* the concept of constitutionalism
- *trace* the development of constitutionalism in different cultures

2.3 Political Ideology: Meaning and Nature

We have already discussed the meaning and nature of ideology in your previous semester. It is known to us that the term ideology was coined by French scholar Antonie Louis Claude Destutt de Tracy in 1796 to refer to 'science of ideas'. Ideology usually denotes the cluster of ideas about life, society or government which originates in most cases as consciously advocated or dogmatically asserted social, political or religious slogans or battle cries and which through continuous usage and preachment gradually becomes the characteristic beliefs or dogmas of a particular group, party or nationality.

In terms of politics, political ideology refers that type of political theory which upholds a certain political system and the values and norms that sustain it and controll the human mind to attain the ultimate goal of the nation. Frank Thakurdas in his book *The Expanding Frontier of Political Science* said that the test of political ideology lies in its application. Hence, he wants to say that political ideology consists of the social norms and values of nation which are backed by the popular consent. The success and failure of any political ideology depends on the adaptability and rationality of the same. In the words of Preston King, an ideology will either involve the actual application of a coherent system of political ideas to a political system in such a way as to direct its activities or it involves the serious distinction of making this application. Hence, political ideology is defined as a system of abstract ideas held by the nations which purports to explain reality, expresses value goals and contains programmes of action for retention or attainment

(32)

of the kind of social order in which its proponents believe the goals can be realized. Thus, ideology is also linked up with political, social and economic power of a nation.

Ideology and ideological beliefs depend on the surrounding environment too. Hence, political ideologies also depend on socio-political environment of the country. For example, the developing countries due to its unique characteristics are divided into tribal, cultural, religious and ethnic lines; many of the newly independent nations have adopted the ideology of nationalism. Because, they believed that such an ideology can unite a heterogeneous society like theirs. Again due to their rigorous problems like over-population, poverty, neo-colonial exploitation they are forced to adopt a new kind of ideology and, they consider socialism to be the panacea to all these problems. Again due to the colonial experience they rejected totalitarian dictatorships and many countries tried to adopt liberal democracy. Hence it is proved that ideology is a set of abstract ideas which helps one country to follow the real path of development. On the basis of an ideology one country tries to maintain their statuesque in the political realm.

Stop to Consider:

Morgenthau's Classification of Ideology:

Prof. Morgenthau has divided the various ideologies into three categories. They are—

a) *Ideology of Status Quo*: it tries to seek the statues-quo of contemporary position.

b) Ideology of Imperialism: A policy that seeks to alter the status-quo or a given power distribution is regarded as imperialist policy. The policy of imperialism is always in need of some justification for altering the existing territorial arrangement. This policy must prove that the status quo which it desires to overthrow is not necessary. It bases its case on moral grounds and on natural law. Imperialist ideology is used by a nation for justifying its policy of expanding its national power beyond its borders for economic, strategic and political gains. Ideology of imperialism seeks to overthrow status quo.

c) *Ambiguous Ideologies*: Ambiguous ideologies are also known as ideologies of anti-imperialism. Three ambiguous ideologies are——— the ideology of national self-determination, the ideology of the United Nations and the ideology of peace.

2.3.1 Ideology of Marxism

In your previous semester you have already learnt that ideologies are mainly divided into two groups: ideology of Marxism and ideology of Liberalism. Here in this unit we will just remind you with a brief explanation of your previous readings.

We know that Marxism or Communism is a branch of socialism which believes in abolition of classes and common means of production. German sociologist Karl Marx is the advocator of this ideology. He is in the view that communism is the final stage in the society which is established after a successful proletarian revolution. Hence from the Marxist point of view the ideology of Marxism refers to a classless, stateless society where means of production are controlled by the proletariat and every member of the society gets the opportunity to take part in the decision-making process in both political and economic life. In political science it also refers to the policies of the various communist states based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism which emphasizes centrally planned economies and ownership of all the means of productions.

Hence it is seen that Marxist ideology is based on the assumption that economic factors determine all social relations along with social, political, cultural behaviour of an individual. The ideology totally opposed liberal ideas and emphasizes more equality rather than liberty. In the Marxist ideology we find a distinction between the states made on the basis of economic power. It classifies states as rich or capitalist states and the poor and non-capitalist states. It seeks to end the class division between the rich and the poor. Communist ideology identifies itself with the working class and advocates an economic and political system controlled by the proletariat i.e the working class. It considers state as an instrument of exploitation in the hands of the rich to exploit the poor. Hence, it stands for a classless and stateless society. The ideology of communism strongly opposes capitalism along with its system of capitalist democracy.

Stop to Consider:

Fascism:

Fascism was considered to be one of the important ideologies. However, after the fall of Hitler it became a dead ideology. Fascism got its impetus by Italian national

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syndicalists during World War I. It opposed the autonomy of cultural or ethnic groups who are not considered as a part of the fascist's nation. They also believed that a nation is an organic community that requires strong leadership, singular collective identity, and the will and ability to commit violence and wage war in order to keep the nation strong. A fascist state suppresses opposition to the fascist state and the fascist movement. Fascism as an ideology was very popular in Italy during the period of 1922-1943.

2.3.2 Ideology of Liberalism

In the contemporary period, liberalism is the most dominant ideology in the world. It stands for peace, friendship, freedom, co-operation and justice available to the people of the world. Thus liberalism becomes identifiable with internationalism that stands for the peaceful settlement of international disputes, renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy, non-aggression, non-intervention of one state into the domestic affairs of another. Vernon Van Dyke has said that, 'faced with a choice between guns and butter, the liberal is inclined to choose butter, perhaps to the peril of his nation. Faced with a choice between appeasement and resistance to a foreign threat at the risk of war, the liberal may be inclined towards appeasement, for war threatens most of the values he holds dear. In recent decades, particularly, the liberal democracies have been very reluctant to engage in military preparations and to participate in war.' (Veron Van Dyke 1957:p-64)

Ideology of liberalism also stands for the values for freedom, democracy and humanism with having three fundamental assumptions—-

- limited government,

- pluralistic society and

- unlimited scope for human actions.

The ideology of liberalism becomes a dominant ideology in the western countries. With the advancement of social, political and economic systems since 17th century have contributed towards the growth of liberal ideology. The ideology of liberalism has gone through different stages and since 20th century it came to be developed as a doctrine of 'Liberal Democracy', 'Democratic Capitalism' and also 'Modern Liberalism'. However, a common factor among them is that all of them advocate policies and actions

designed to safeguard and promote the values of rights, liberty and individuality. Liberalism reduced state's control over the individual as possible and favoured free competition, free trade and freedom of choice as the three cardinal principles of a free and happy society and the key to progress.

SAQ:

Try to list out the factors that have made liberalism the most dominant ideology in the contemporary world. (60 words)

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2.4 Decline of Ideology and End of History

Though ideology occupied an important position to the study of a state action rationally, gradually it lost its importance. For the first time Allan Ball noticed that after the Second World War ideology becomes stagnant in politics. He is of the view that the end of USSR influence over Europe denotes that now ideology is in its last stage and gradually it should be hidden form the political activities. According to him, end of communism in Europe and rise of a mixed political culture fuelled the process of ending the influence of ideology from world politics. The period of 1960 is marked as the beginning of the notion of 'end of ideology'. Emergence of many new independent nations form Asia, Africa, Latin America adopted a completely new system for the development. They did not support the ideology of capitalism and communism which are the predominant ideology at that time rather they adopted a development oriented policy combining the good nature of capitalism and communism. Here in this section we are going to discuss the never ending debate of political science on 'Decline of Ideology' and 'End of History'.

Scholars of political science argued that 19th century is the age of ideology, not because the word itself was so widely used, but because so much of the thought of the time can be distinguished from that prevailing in the previous centuries by features that would now be called ideological. Communism

and several other types of Socialism, Fascism, Nazism, and certain kinds of nationalism emerged during that period. But World War II changed the scenario of world politics. Two of the leading protagonists, Great Britain and the United States, agreed more in their anti-ideological stance and their hostility to Nazism than in promoting an alternative ideology. Again Cold War also paved the way for declining ideology. After the Cold War the fall of Communism clearly marked a new beginning in the world history and indicated an end of old ideologies. The phrase 'End of Ideology' and 'End of History' got popularized specially after 1950s. During this period many writers have claimed that this 'age of ideologies' is drawing to a close; that ideological distinctions are now superfluous, completely devoid of any real political significance. It is collectively known as 'endism'.

In this context we can mention the name of Francis Fukuyama who advocated the theory of End of History. In his essay 'The End of History' *(1989)* he advocated for historicism, a doctrine that essentially views history as a logical process, with all events leading to one ultimate goal (Festenstein and Kenny 2005:433). According to him, this goal was Western liberalism: 'the end point of mankind's ideological evolution'. He argued that the people's intention towards democracy and capitalism, evident in the collapse of authoritarian regimes during the 1980s and, more spectacularly, in the dissolution of the communist block, proved that the world was approaching this goal, and, subsequently, the end of all ideological debate. In his own words, 'the twin crises of authoritarian and socialist central planning have left only one competitor standing in the ring as an ideology of potentially universal validity: liberal democracy'. Thus, it is seen that the combination of free market economics and representative democracy is widely accepted phenomenon and be the best political framework for development which led the society to economic prosperity. Hence, the rigid strength on ideologies comes to an end.

However, Daniel Bell (1960) and Seymour Martin Lipset (1969) proposed that both the Right and the Left had been equally discredited, resulting in 'a kind of exhaustion of political ideas' (Lane 1962:15). According to Lipset, post-war societies had achieved sufficient stability, affluence and intellectual awareness in the process of overcoming the functional need for ideology created during the turbulent Industrial Revolution. He observed that Western politics had become largely consensual, with all normative questions about the true nature of a 'good society' replaced by practical, technical questions

of how best to achieve affluence (Heywood 2007:334). It means that, the old ideologies are now meaningless due to their inability to bring economic prosperity. According to them rigidity of ideology led us to war, as it happened in 1914 and 1939. Moreover, we have also witnessed the Cold War due to the ideological differentiation. Hence, we do not need such strict adherence to ideology; we just need a system which can provide us a good life and a stable world order. Such views also contributed to the debate on end of history or end of ideology.

Thus, from the above discussion now it is clear to you that end of history means beginning of a new era which is developed after the Cold War. This new period brought a drastic change in our society with the motto of economic development and led us to a good life. Unlike the past when we were more conscious about different ideologies, now we are with liberal views and a mixed system, based on free market and democratic ideals.

Stop to Consider:

Four Claims leading to 'The End-of-Ideology'

Mainly, there are four related claims that led to the end-of ideology and in conjunction, they have cast a long shadow over political psychology. The first claim has grown out of Converse's (1964) famous argument that ordinary citizens' political attitudes lack the kind of logical consistency and internal coherence that would be expected if they were neatly organized according to ideological schemata. The second claim is that most people are unmoved by ideological appeals and that abstract credos associated with liberalism and conservatism lack motivational potency and behavioral significance. The third claim is that there are no substantive differences in terms of philosophical or ideological content between liberal and conservative points of view. The fourth claim, argued that there are no fundamental psychological differences between proponents of left-wing and right-wing ideologies

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Check Your Progress:

1. What do you mean by Political Ideology? Critically examine the Marxist ideology.

2. Discuss the Liberal ideology and comment on its relevance in the contemporary period.

3. Discuss critically the *End of Ideology debate.*

2.5 Constitutionalism: Meaning and Nature

The study of constitutionalism occupies an important position in the sphere of comparative politics. It is a modern concept that desires a political order should be governed by laws and regulations. Defining constitutionalism is not an easy task. It is a complex phenomenon. It has variety of meanings. In common parlance it denotes "complex ideas, attitudes and patterns of behaviour elaborating the principle that the authority of government derives from and is limited by a body of fundamental law". (Fehrenbacher 1989:1). American scholars define constitutionalism as a body of laws which regulates the pattern of governmental behaviour and which are derived from the people. Hence it can be said that constitutionalism simply means a body of rules which govern the government or a government which is based on laws.

However, in order to have a proper understanding of the term constitutionalism you must first understand the meaning of terms like 'constitution' and 'constitutional government'. According to Strong, a constitution is the collection of principles according to which the powers of the government, the rights of the governed, and the relations between the two are adjusted. It is a mixture of legal and non-legal rules which govern the nation. And constitutional government implies that government which give proper attention to the rules and regulations prescribed by its constitution. In other words, we can say that constitutional government has an obligation towards the established rules. On the basis of those meanings of constitution and constitutional government David Fellman in his book *Constitutionalism* opined that "whatever particular form of government a constitution delineates, however, it serves as the keystone of the arch of constitutionalism, except in those countries whose written constitutions are mere sham. Constitutionalism as a theory and in practice stands for the principle that there are—in a properly governed state—limitations upon those who exercise the powers of government, and that these limitations are spelled out in a body of higher law which is enforceable in a variety of ways, political and judicial. This is by no means a modern idea, for the concept of a higher law which spells out the basic norms of a political society is as old as Western civilization. That there are standards of rightness which transcend and control public officials, even current popular majorities, represents a critically significant element of man's endless quest for the good life."

Thus it is seen that constitutionalism is a complex concept, deeply embedded in historical experience, which subjects the individual who exercise governmental powers to the limitations of a higher law. It proclaims the desirability of the rule of law as opposed to rule by the arbitrary judgment. You can also say that the main thrust of constitutionalism is the concept of limited government under a supreme law. Most generally, constitutionalism is a complex of ideas, attitudes, and patterns of behaviour elaborating the principle that the authority of government derives from and is limited by a body of fundamental law. Again these ideas, attitudes and patterns of behaviour, form a dynamic political and historical process rather than as a static body of thought. We can say that an (political) organization is constitutional to the extent that it contains institutionalized mechanisms of power control for the protection of the interests and liberties of the citizenry, including those that may be in the minority.

Thus, it is seen that, constitutionalism proclaims the desirability of the rule of law as opposed to rule by the arbitrary judgment or mere fiat of public officials. To conclude, in the words of Rohini Das Gupta we can say that constitutionalism is a modern concept that stands for the supremacy of law. It is against arbitrary rule and wish to establish a political order in which the powers of the government are limited. The rise of the concept constitutionalism is essentially a historical process. It is the result of a pro-longed struggle against authoritarian rules and such type of government: monarchy, absolutism and feudalism. It is worth mentioning here that such kind of struggle was first emerged in the Western countries and gradually it spreads to different countries of the world. Now it becomes a way of life.

Stop to Consider:

Constitutionalism and French Revolution

We have already learnt that constitutionalism is the result of a prolonged struggle against authoritarian rules and a concept of western nations. We can find the seeds of constitutionalism in the French revolution. We also know that the French Revolution was inspired by the writings of Rousseau, and paved the way for the establishment of constitutional government. It needs mention here that France witnessed rise and fall of several unstable monarchies subsequently, it finally embarked upon the path of constitutional government. The United States also made significant contribution in this regard. The 'Declaration of Independence' of 1776 categorically asserted the democratic right of the people and supremacy of the constitution.

2.6 Growth of Constitutionalism

Though constitutionalism is a modern term, we can find its root in ancient Greece. Some form of constitutionalism has existed in the ancient Greek and Roman city states. Ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle studied constitutionalism from purely a normative and ethical perspective. Again, with establishment of great Roman empires, constitutionalism got further impetus. In Rome despite its irresponsible autocracy, Roman constitutionalism made important contributions to the development of this concept. During the 6th century A.D a drastic change had been seen after the disintegration of the Roman Empire i.e rise of feudalism. Nevertheless, such changes fail to bring people supremacy. The clash between the Church and monarchy kept out people from the ambit of governmental bodies. It is only the civil war of 1640-48 in England, which was followed by the Glorious Revolution of 1688, established the sovereignty of the people. Again the principle of "rule of law" propounded by Dicey also strengthened the claim of people's supremacy.

But, the 19th century again brought the authoritarian rules with the rise of communism in Russia, Fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany. However, one remarkable aspect of this period was the establishment of the League of Nations which aimed at constitutional resolution of conflicts among nations. After the First World War people thought that the tension was over, but it proved only to be a day dream when the Second World War broke out in the year 1939. Again, dictatorship emerged in world politics, which overthrew the concept of constitutionalism. Dissolution of League of Nations also indicated the destruction of constitutional rules. But after the Second World War the destruction of dictatorship in Italy, Germany and Japan, constitutionalism again got its impetus in world politics. Establishment of UNO in 1945 also strengthens the norms of constitutionalism, which is still working smoothly. It is important to note that the only model that survived as an alternative to western constitutionalism was Communist Model of the erstwhile Soviet Union. The post-Second World War period was also marked by the progress of democratization and emergence of a numbers of Third World Countries. This period witnessed the emergence of bi-polarism.

The ideological conflict between USA and USSR, termed as 'cold war' brought the chance of a Third World War. As we stated earlier, the post

Second World War era was marked as bipolar world system. In simple, the world was divided into two blocks: capitalist or liberal or communist. During that period, a number of small nations got their independence from their colonial rulers and entered into the active world politics under the banner of UNO. It was a tough time for them to take decisions, in which group they should join. They took the policy of non-alignment. Whatever it may be, the fact remains that constitutionalism made a vigorous march during this period and today we find most of the countries have adopted democracy and constitutionalism as the accepted principle. With the collapse of communist empire and virtual end of colonialism and racism, constitutionalism has become a predominant ideology of the world.

SAQ:

Do you think that constitutionalism is a western concept? Give arguments in support of your answer. (60 words)

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2.6.1 Western Concept of Constitutionalism

Form the above discussion you got an idea that constitutionalism stands for a system having division of powers and an arrangement of checks and balances so that the government remains accountable and responsible. Though constitutionalism favours the democratic system of government due to its responsible nature, it does not necessarily stand for a particular system of government. Here comes various interpretations of constitutionalism. In this section, we are going to discuss the western conceptualisation of constitutionalism.

The western concept of constitutionalism stands for a constitution that is either written or unwritten. Western scholars like Thomas Paine, Tocqueville, Bryce, Laski, Friedrich hold the view that constitutionalism is both end and means in western civilisation. Again, they also believe that it is both value-free and value-laden and has both normative and empirical dimensions.

The western concept of constitutionalism viewed that the provisions of the constitution not only provide for the composition of various organs of the government and the powers entrusted to them, they also attach the sanctity to the norms of liberty, equality and fraternity. In this context you should remember here that our constitution through its preamble also enshrines the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. Thus according to the western concept, constitution is not only an end that ought to be respected by all, it is also a means to an end, which stands for the achievement of the security and the protection of individual liberty. In simple words we can say that western concept of constitutionalism stands for the protection of individual liberty, corporation between government and other organisation and opposes any form of discrimination.

In this context, we can put forward the example of the United Kingdom. It is perhaps the best instance of constitutionalism in a country that does not have a written constitution. We know that, only after a prolonged struggle between the King and the Parliament, they established a well-developed polity with multiple governmental and private institutions that counter the power of the state and enhance individual liberty to a great extent.

If we closely analyse the western concept of constitutionalism, we find that it desires for a constitutional state, that has a well-organised body of laws and conventions for the operations of a limited government. With the example of USA's concept of constitutionalism we can easily understand this view. In USA, there is a rich tradition of state constitutionalism besides its federal constitution that offers broader insight into constitutionalism in the United States. Both the constitution, rest on a shared assumption that their legitimacy comes from the sovereign authority of the people or popular sovereignty. This notion came form the Declaration of Independence and it unites the American constitutional tradition and considers the view that all governments in America rested on the sovereignty of the people for their legitimacy.

Thus, now it is clear to you that the western concept of constitutionalism stands for democratic ideals, which include, individual liberty, justice for all, equality, fraternity and so on. In short, the western conception of constitutionalism is based on the notion of rule of law.

(43)

2.6.2 Constitutionalism in Developing Countries

The developing countries which are also termed as Third World countries came into existence after the World War II. Most of these countries have witnessed colonial exploitation by the western countries, and therefore, it influenced in the making of their constitution after their independence. For example, in India, we find that our constitution borrowed many noble ideas from the constitutions of USA, Ireland, and Canada etc. However, it was British traditions from which we got our constitution. In simple words we can say that the constitution of these countries is a mixture of their traditions, customs as well as colonial experiences. So, it is very difficult to suggest the precise features of the concept of constitutionalism in such poor and backward countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America, Middle East. It is because they got their independence recently and still struggling for achieving the ideal of a social welfare state.

Nevertheless, the constitutionalism in developing countries appears that they are torn between the poles of imitating the system of some European country (under which they remained for a long period of colonial domination) and desire to make a better and more workable system having much of the

indigenous elements coupled with the socialist system. It is also seen that some of the developing countries are experimenting with the imported constitutional arrangements and trying to establish a synthesis between the ideals of liberal-democratic constitutional state. They are also trying to fulfil the demands of their people's aspirations. For this reason, we have experienced some alternating system like parliamentary to presidential system of government and vice versa in countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan. One major characteristics feature of constitutionalism in developing countries is due to the fragile political system they often experience the collapse of constitutional government or popular system. Again, after the collapse of popular system, rise of military rule is found in many countries including our neighbouring state Pakistan.

Thus we find constitutionalism in Third World countries have the following features:–

- Some countries, like India, Sri Lanka, are able to incorporate the western values like liberty, equality, justice to make a welfare state.

- Some countries like Ghana, Uganda are still not in a position to adopt the western ideologies and feel that they are not useful to serve their purposes. So they adopt a new system based on their traditional customs.

- In some countries, a shift is seen towards imbibing the values of Marxist concept.

In simple words we can say that the constitutionalism in developing countries, is the combination of western, Marxist and their own values.

Check Your Progress:

1. Examine the Western concept of constitutionalism.

2. Comprehend the concept of constitutionalism in developing countries.

3. Briefly discuss the development of constitutionalism in western countries.

4. Write a note on Indian constitutional system.

5. Critically discuss the Marxist interpretation on constitutionalism.

2.7 Summing Up

After going through this unit now you are in a position to discuss the concepts of political ideology as well as constitutionalism. It also helps you to explore the relationship between ideology and constitutionalism. It has been discussed that constitutionalism reflects one nation's ideology. Though we have various ideologies in the genesis of political science, the predominant ideology is liberalism in the contemporary period. Nevertheless Marxism still holds great importance in the study of political science and this unit therefore has helped you in comprehending the ideas of Marxism. Likewise the western concept of constitutionalism that stands for individual liberty is now widely accepted. However, in Third World countries we have witnessed a mixed type of constitutional system. But, all of them unanimously supported the views of liberalism. Thus, it can be said that as the ideology of liberalism now becomes a way of life, the western concept of constitutionalism becomes the heart of a welfare nation.

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