

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

ABOU BEKR BELKAID TLEMCEM UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF LAW AND POLITICAL SCIENCES



Comparative political systems

Conference Handouts to the student of 2nd year political Science

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2024-2025

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Comparative Politics

Comparative politics is the comparative study of other countries, citizens, different political units either in whole or in part, and analyzes the similarities and differences between those political units. Comparative politics also entails the political study of non-US political thought. Here are a few tips when choosing resources for comparative political research:

- Use a **subject encyclopedia** to research major comparative political theories and concepts.
- Use **country profiles** to locate basic information, facts, and statistics about individual countries.
- Search for research articles in a general article database such as **EBSCO Discovery**.
- Use a subject database such as **PAIS** to locate political-specific articles.

Since ancient times, scholars, thinkers and political scientists have been studying various models of governance and politics. The study so far may not have been conclusive but it draws upon a general systemization of socio-economic and political factors at play. The focus has been the government and political process, institution and their behaviour, and political thoughts. Comparative politics covers many of the same subject but from the perspective of parallel political behaviour in different countries and regions.

In the study of political science, while it is certainly important to learn about the facts pertaining to the institutions of three or more countries, it cannot be called comparative politics until it is a comparative study. What are the useful types of comparisons? The earliest and the most original form of comparative government is the study of constitutions. The base of this study is Aristotle's compilation of the constitutions and practice of 158 Greek city-states. Of these, only the Constitution of Athens is still existent. Although undeniably, the comparative study of different city-states consolidates a few of the generalizations in

Aristotle's *Politics*. This is similar to the manner in which the comparative study of different living organisms constitutes his biological writing. However, since Aristotle, biology scaled new heights, but the comparative study of constitutions has not achieved such heights. This is partly because it is not easy to achieve the optimum balance of generality. A few research studies have compared countries all over the world. These studies provide some useful statistical generalizations. However, no academic agreement has been found on basic questions like the relationship between the economic development of a country and its level of democracy. A different way of looking at it is by considering all cases of a common phenomenon—such as revolutions, totalitarian states, or transitions to democracy. In few of the cases, this point of view is difficult to define, for instance, revolution.

The most popular form of comparative government is still the elaborate study of selected policies in two or more countries. Researchers are always focused on the issues of 'too few cases' or 'too many variables'. There may be a large number of factors which cause a country to become a corporatist nation and other factors which influence the rate of growth of economy. Yet, the present-day researchers are more sensitive to the problems pertaining to generalization and correspondingly more cautious in their conclusions, than the researchers of ancient times.

This book, *Comparative Politics*, has been designed keeping in mind the self- instructional mode (SIM) format and follows a simple pattern, wherein each unit of the book begins with the Introduction followed by the Unit Objectives for the topic. The content is then presented in a simple and easy-to-understand manner, and is interspersed with Check Your Progress questions to reinforce the student's understanding of the topic. A list of Questions and Exercises is also provided at the end of each unit. The Summary and Key Terms further act as useful tools for students and are meant for effective recapitulation of the text.

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Define comparative politics
- Discuss the nature and scope of comparative politics
- Assess the importance of studying comparative politics
- Analyse the various approaches to comparative politics

COMPARATIVE POLITICS: AN INTRODUCTION

Like any other form of evolutionary process, comparative government evolved into its present form over a period of time. When you study the evolution of comparative governments, you study how political systems and procedures vary across countries and across time periods. The actual evidence of undertaking such a study came to prominence in the 1950s, but its roots are even older. Aristotle can be called the ‘ancestral father’ of the study of comparative politics, since the methods that he used in assigning politics among the sciences and problems and questions that he raised are still prevalent in current political studies.

A comparative study of the diversity of lives among people of different nations is sometimes surprising. Consider the differences in the lives of the people staying in the US and Somalia. Somalia is one of the poorest nations in the world, which is located in the Horn of Africa with an area of around 6,37,657 square kilometres and a population of around 93,60,000 people. Its official languages are Somali and Arabic. Inhabited since the Paleolithic times, it is a country of pyramidal structures, tombs and ruined cities which hint at an ancient sophisticated civilization. The current circumstances, however, are far from the realms of sophistication. Most countries have raised themselves from the ashes and remerged after World War II. However, the case of Somalia has not been that good. The communist rule and the Somali Civil War, that followed, were causes of destruction of the nation. These factors disrupted the whole system in many ways and plunged the nation into great adversity. The new coalition government tried to reform the country with the help of the United Nations and other developed countries, yet the condition is far from normal.

The United States of America, on the other hand, is one of the superpowers of the world. With an area of 98,26,675 km and an estimated population of about 31,07,15,000, this country has no official language at the federal level. English is the national language. Following the American revolutionary war, the country gained its independence on 4 July 1776. The after-effects of World War I plunged the nation into a state of great depression. But the country sustained and emerged as a superpower after World War

II. It became the first country in the world to possess nuclear weapons. Over the years, the nation and its citizens have progressed by leaps and bounds.

Hence, for a clear output, the study of comparative politics must depend upon conscious comparisons in the study of political experience, institutions, behaviour and the processes of the different systems of different governments.

Need for the study of comparative governments

It is now generally felt that a pragmatic evaluation of the government and politics or political system of one's own country is made possible by recognizing the governmental processes of other countries or their political systems. A comparative study of governments not only streamlines the progress of objective and rational judgement about political systems, but at the same time disperses the dangerously ambiguous form of ethnocentrism, that one's own country is superior to any other.

The study of governments is a significant part of the study of politics. The structure and behaviour of government makes an exciting and challenging area of concern for the students of political science. Modern governments are rising more and more as essential instrumentalities of versatile development, particularly in the developing nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America. They also act as active forces in the formation of economic, social and environmental conditions.

The world's political systems include a vast variety of institutions, processes and interactions and no two governments, past or present, have been the same. In other words, governments have varied in complexity. Instances can be multiplied at random to confirm the rather simplistic view that different societies require different kinds of government to realize their particular needs.

Modern courses in the field of political science, thus, almost consistently include surveys of the governmental and political systems. Examples of these are the processes of Great Britain, France, Germany Italy and the US. Russia, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Latin America, Near Eastern, Middle-Eastern, Far-Eastern and other Asian and African countries are also occasional additions to this category. The decline of some former great powers and emergence of new nations have affected the processes of inclusion and exclusion.

A comparative analysis of political structures and processes, both within and across political systems, is for that reason an essential requirement for the students of political science. If comparative government and politics are broad in range (as they have actually been to include all political systems and reach forces and motives below the surface of governmental institutions) they can encompass nearly the whole of political science. Hence, practically, comparative government is not only the most important subsystem of the discipline of political science, but it is also very nuclear.

The comparative study of government and politics has preoccupied a large number of fine methodical theorists and philosophers. It is well known that Aristotle, in his time, compared and contrasted various political systems and developed an explanatory theory regarding their generation. In a way, Aristotle was certainly the first scholar of comparative government and considered the study of comparative government as the oldest and most significant to attract the attention of mankind. Since then, comparative government has been a flourishing subject.

For centuries after Aristotle, scholars have engaged themselves in the comparative investigation of foreign cultures, with varying degrees of complexity. With the increase in the tension and rivalry between democratic and undemocratic political systems, the impact of the so-called 'Third World' during the Cold War era, the growing importance of informal politics, the utility of synthesis of data and the nature and range of comparison underwent a transformation. The decreasing emphasis of the traditional approach logically concluded in the so-called 'behavioural revolution'. In the 1950s and 1960s, the study of comparative government was drastically transformed despite consequent reactions against the behavioural tidal wave. It had scaled new heights of precision, firmness and theoretical order. It had also acquired an altogether new style of analysis, which was not known till then. Improvement in concepts and methods, impulses coming from interdisciplinary emphasis on area studies and the growing significance of the politics of developing areas, all combined to bring about an unadulterated 'revolution' in the study of this subject.

1.2.1 Popular Definitions of Comparative Politics

According to M. G. Smith, 'Comparative politics is the study of the forms of political organizations, their properties, correlations, variations and modes of change.'

According to Roy C. Macridis and Robert Ward, 'Government is not the sole concern of students of comparative politics.' Comparative politics, no doubt, has to be concerned with the government structure but at the same time it has to take note of the following:

- Society, historical heritage and geographic and resource endowed
- Its social and economic organizations
- Its ideologies and value systems
- Its political style
- Its parties, interests, and leadership structure

According to M. Curtis, 'Comparative politics is concerned with significant regularities, similarities and differences in the working of political institutions and political behaviour.'

According to E. A. Freeman, 'Comparative politics is comparative analysis of the various forms of government and diverse political institutions.'

All these definitions provide a basis for the study of comparative governments in its contemporary term. It involves a comparative study of the institutional and mechanistic arrangements along with the empirical and scientific analysis of non-institutionalized and non-political determinants of political behaviour.

1.2.2 Nature of Comparative Governments

The nature of comparative politics seeks to analyse and compare different political systems that work under different societies. Therefore, it takes into account all the three associations of politics which are as follows:

1. Political activity
2. Political process
3. Political power

Political activity deals with the activities involved in the resolution of conflict or in the struggle for power. The basis of conflict resolution is the authoritative allocation of values; hence, it involves an analysis of the process by which the authoritative values are made and implemented. In this sense, politics stands for political power. It involves the study of all government as well as non-state agencies, through which the political process is made operational. The political process depends upon the signals and information which it receives from non-state agencies. It further transforms these signals and information into authoritative values. Politics, hence, involves the study of power and power relations in society since it is a struggle for power and a process of conflict resolution through the use of legitimate power.

The study of contemporary comparative politics is characterized by the following features:

- **Analytical research:** Great stress is laid on analytical research when it comes to the study of contemporary comparative politics, as it is no longer confined to descriptive studies. Empirical analytic research, thus, works on providing a clearer view of the actual activities of the governments along with their structures and functions.
- **Objective study of political science:** This deals with the empirical study of the various processes of political study in different environments. Since political science is a social science, it takes into account only those values whose validity can be demonstrated scientifically.
- **Study of infrastructures:** Comparative politics also analyses the actual nature of individual, groups, structures, systems and subsystems, in relation to the environment in which the behaviour manifests. The study of the dynamics of politics and its actual operation in the environment is regarded as an essential component of comparative politics.
- **Study of developing and developed societies:** Earlier, comparative politics was only confined to the study of the political systems of developed societies. However, it has evolved in contemporary times and it stresses on the study of political systems of developing nations as well. In fact, modern political scientists like David Easton and Sidney Verba, besides many others, are of the opinion that emphasis should be given to the study of politics of developing nations.

These added features of contemporary politics make us see comparative politics from a different point of view. It has completely rejected all old norms and parochial nature of traditional comparative politics. Now, it is a more realistic study of politics which is capable of explaining and comparing the phenomenon of politics all around the world.

-NATURE, SCOPE AND APPROACHES TO COMPARATIVE POLITICS.

Although the terms ‘comparative politics’ and ‘comparative government’ are usually used loosely and interchangeably, there still lies a point of difference between the two.

While comparative government deals with an extensive study of different political systems with special emphasis on their institutions and functions, comparative politics has a much broader scope. It covers all that which comes under the study of the latter, along with the study of non-state politics. Hence, comparative politics covers a much wider area in the study of politics

- **Major Approaches**

But whatever the approach or the origin of its ideas, we can say that political science as a discipline is concerned with the problems of ends; the goals of good society; the means of governing in such a manner as to realize the good society, the activities of the ruled (the public), especially political actions personified in voting, public opinion and attitude formation; and the underlying connections between society and government. Its key concern is with power—how it is shared through participation and representation and how it is affected by growth and change.

—David E. Apter

Source: Apter, Introduction to Political Analysis (New Delhi: Prentice-Hall of India, 1978), p.17.

The study of comparative politics is so interesting because of the different approaches, methods and techniques used in the realization of ‘political reality’. A number of significant writers hold contrary viewpoints and adopt different strategies. The results, however, seem to be interrelated or synonymous. With the passage of time, some approaches have become stringent and have had to give way to new and contemporary methods.

With a view of highlighting the meanings of different themes used in the sphere of contemporary political analysis, David Apter defines some of them in the following • **Paradigm:** It is a framework of ideas that establishes a general context of analysis. Fundamentally, paradigms combine a mixture of philosophical assumptions and criteria of valid

knowledge. The resulting combinations are sharply distinguished from each other.

- **Theory:** It is a generalized statement summarizing the real or supposed actions of a set of variables, whether dependent, or independent, or intervening. Parameters represent the conditions within which independent variables operate. A macro or micro theory may deal with large or small groups or units. Moreover, it may be abstract, or formal or notational, or concrete.
- **Method:** It is a way of organizing a theory for application to data. Thus, methods are known by the names of conceptual schemes. They may be of many types like comparative, configurational, historical, simulative and experimental.
- **Technique:** It links method to the relevant data. It represents various modes of observation and ways of recording empirical information. As such, techniques vary in appropriateness, sampling, public-opinion testing, interviewing, regression analysis, factoring, scaling and testing.
- **Model:** It is a simplified way of describing relationships. It can be constructed from a paradigm, a theory, a method or a technique. It may be typological, descriptive, formal, mechanical, organismic, biological, etc.
- **Strategy:** It is a peculiar way of applying one or more combinations of the above type to a research problem. It is required that quality and integrity should be combined in a strategy. A good strategy fits a problem, theory, methods and techniques together in a systematic and coherent way.
- **Research design:** It converts strategy into an operational plan for field work or an experiment. It is a prospectus or an outline from which research is carried forward. It is a final stage in professional research preparation.

The traditional approach

The traditional approach to the study of comparative governments emerged as a response to historicism of the 19th century. It stressed the historical examination of Western political institutions from the earliest to the modern times. The traditionalists, either theoretically philosophized about democracy and other subjects, or made a formal and legal study of governmental institutions. The analysis was basically configurative and each system was treated as a unique entity. The approach was heavily descriptive rather than problem-solving, explanatory, or analytic in its method, and its description was incomplete and limited to forms of government and of foreign political systems.

Roy Macridis, author of *Modern Political Regimes*, has very systematically and clearly summarized major features of the traditional approach. He briefly points out that the approach has been essentially non-comparative, descriptive, parochial, static and monographic. Similarly, Almond and Powell have identified three major premises that have dominated the criticism of the approach to comparative government feature of the pre-World War II period. These premises are as follows:

- Its parochialism
- Its configurative analysis
- Its formalism

Harry Eckstein also points out the influence of abstract theory, formal legal studies and configuration studies that characterize the reaction against historicism in political studies.

First, as Macridis points out, the traditional approach addressed itself mainly to Western political systems. The stress was on single-culture configuration, i.e., the representative democracies of the Western world and the study was limited to Britain and the Commonwealth countries, the US, France, Germany, Italy and Russia. Undemocratic Western systems and political systems of Asia, Africa and Latin America were studied by a handful of adventurist researchers. Cross-cultural studies

were almost entirely unidentified. The study was limited not only in range, but also in depth; only the isolated aspects of governmental process within the specific countries were analysed. The study was more often monographic and comparative.

Second, the comparative study of politics was extremely formal in its approach towards political institutions. The study was focused on governmental institutions and their legal models, rules and regulations, or political ideas and ideologies, rather than on performance, interaction and behaviour. It pays no attention to the influence of informal factors on decision-making and also the non-political determinants of political behaviour. Only formal institutional organs like parliaments, chief executives, civil services, etc., were applicable for institutional and structural–functional comparison. The realities of political action and behaviour within institutional structures were not given any serious thought. The traditional study in this respect was greatly unrealistic.

Third, the traditional study, as mentioned earlier, was mainly descriptive rather than analytical, explanatory or problem-solving in its method. The emphasis was on pure description in terms of a large number of facts. There was little attempt to develop a general theory by verification of hypothesis and compilation of significant data. It has been very aptly pointed out that the empirical deficiency of traditional analysis was the adjoining drive for behaviourism. This is what Robert Dahl called ‘empirical theory’ in contemporary studies.

The mood of discontent with subjectivism and formalism of the traditional approach to the study of government and politics was led by the logic of the situation to the process of reconstruction of the discipline. A number of factors worked to bring about a radical change first in the outlook of the US and then other countries.

According to some authors, three factors—changes in philosophy, changes in the social sciences and technological innovations in research—may not completely account for the behavioural innovation in political science, but provide sufficient explanation for the growth and prosperity of the movement. According to Peter Merkl, author of

Making of a Stormtrooper, the most momentous single factor for the current transformation of the study of comparative politics 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, the Middle East and Latin America simply could no longer be unseen.

Almond and Powell mentioned some developments being chiefly responsible for the new situation. These are as follows:

- The national emergence of a multitude of nations with a baffling variety of cultures
- Social institutions and political traits
- The loss of dominance of the nations of the Atlantic community
 - The changing balance of power
 - The emergence of communism as a power factor in the process of restructuring national
 - International political systems

The revolution in comparative politics

All these factors led to dynamic efforts in innovation and to an effort to create a new rational order. The result was, as Sidney Verba so aptly comments, 'A revolution in comparative politics'. Verba has adequately 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.

Nature and directions of the transformation

It is not really needed at this stage to concern ourselves with the specifics of the behavioural phenomena. A more apt thought will be the general nature of the transformation brought about by behavioural influence in the field of government and politics and the central features of this approach within the purview of our study. It must be noted that the behavioural approach has now been generally accepted and incorporated into the discipline.

Under the influence of the behavioural reform, the institutional mode of analysis has been restored by the process mode. Behaviourists study the behaviour of people and groups rather than the structure, institutions, ideologies or events. It is now largely agreed that the process mode avoids the static quality of structural analysis. It has a dynamic dimension that is particularly valuable in accurately capturing the mercurial quality of political life. Secondly, the state was no more regarded as the central organizing concept, and attention was now paid to the empirical investigation of relations among human beings. Smaller, more manageable units like individuals and groups and their interaction became the centre of study. In the third place, one of the directions of practical innovation had been the redefining of institutions as systems of related individual behaviour or systems of social action. For example, instead of studying the American Supreme Court or the American Congress as isolated institutions, behaviourists enquire about the behaviour patterns of the justices of the Supreme Court and of the members of the Congress.

In the fourth place, in terms of the methods, one finds a diverse tendency toward the building of complicated models, the use of quantitative techniques of statistical measurements and management of computers in speeding up the management of large amounts of quantitative data and in stimulating administrative or military processes of decision-making.

Lastly, as Sydney Verba has examined, some of the fruits of revolution have been a rich body of theoretical literature, a proliferation of frameworks, paradigms and theories, and elaborate system models, which are important as part of the intellectual equipment of the students

of political systems. Some of these paradigms and frameworks have often been so abstract as to suggest no clear focus on problem, but nobody can question the utility of these models in accounting for the observed regularities of political behaviour and for providing a solid foundation for its further study.

-New Approaches to the Study of Government and Politics

The discussion about the nature of behavioural political analysis and its departure from the traditional approach would enable the students to understand the major paradigms, such as:

- Nature
- Goals and methods
- Conceptual frameworks
- Contending approaches and models

The main aim of this study will be to assess their significance for the study of comparative government and politics at a time when a debate between the empirical and normative theories is still continuing.

General Systems Theory

The most well-known among these are a number of systematic approaches, which stem from the general systems theory. The systems theory had its origins in natural sciences, but on the whole, the theory originated in movements aimed at amalgamation of science and scientific analysis. The advocates of the theory wanted to find a unifying element, which would offer a broader perspective for creative analysis. In the period after World War II, this resolved itself 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.

The term 'system' is useful for organizing one's knowledge about many social objects. The use of the 'systems' approach to politics allows one to see the subject in a way that 'each part of the political canvas does not stand alone but is related to other parts'. The operation of the one part cannot be fully understood without referring to the way in which the whole system operates.

David Easton, one of the first political scientists to propose 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 separation and integration. The chief function of a political system is making authoritative decisions that allot advantages and disadvantages for an entire society. At the core of this concept lies decision-making, which is the essence of the political system. The proponents of the systems theory identify three primary constituents of every political system, namely the political community, the regime and the political authorities. The political community comprises all those persons bound together by a political division of labour. The regime makes up the constitutional legal structures, political processes, institutional norms, as well as basic values. The political authorities are those individuals who exercise power as agents of the state for any given time. For example, we may regard the Indian people as one such political community.

The administration consists of Indian constitutional foundations, basic values of the politico-economic system, political parties, periodic elections and other institutions that are allied with the Indian system of government. The ruling elite in New Delhi consists of major political authorities. The general systems theory provides a broad structure for the examination of politics. It provides the theoretical equipment for both

looking at political phenomenon on a macro-level and the setting in which micro-analysis can be carried out. It keeps us conscious of the broad implications of political acts and institutions and of the relation

between events. It provides a large-scale map of the political world, a new pattern for the discipline.

In the general systems structure, there are certain fundamental concepts that may be divided into three categories. Some concepts are primarily explanatory, as for example, those distinguishing between open and closed systems, organismic and non- organismic systems, such hierarchical levels as subsystems, orders of interaction and scale effects, such organizational aspects as integration, differentiation, interdependence and centralization and also such terms as boundaries, inputs and outputs dealing with interaction of systems with their environments. Some concepts focus on factors that control and maintain systems. In this connection, the concepts of stability, equilibrium and homeostasis are introduced. Lastly, there are concepts that focus on dynamics or change, both disruptive and non-disruptive. Here, the notions of adaptation, learning and growth, disruption, dissolution and breakdown, systemic crisis, stress and strain, overload or decay, are introduced and utilized.

The general systems theory appears to be striking from the point of view of empirical research. It gives us an excellent opportunity for fusing micro analytical studies with macro analytical ones. The notions developed by this theory opens up new questions and creates new dimensions for investigating political processes. Time and again, this theory facilitates the communication of insights and ways of looking at things from other disciplines. It provides excellent channels for maximizing the flow of interchanges with disciplines that are far removed from political science in substantive terms. It contains a number of extremely clear and accurate ways of formulating concepts that can be reduced to operational forms. It may be regarded as one of the more motivated attempts to construct a theoretical framework from within political science.

The general systems theory has been criticized for failing to sufficiently provide for concepts such as political power and influence or to handle mass behavioural aspects such as voting. It is of limited utility in studies of political policy-making. Critics also refer to the problems of

empirical operation, when applied to social sciences. It is also pointed out that the entire approach is ingrained in conservatism and reaction. No fully developed attempt has yet been made to apply the theory of political analysis.

Offshoots of the Systems Theory

The behaviourists adapted the essential framework and terminology of the general systems theory; it was adopted to fit the needs of political science and then continued to develop new techniques of political analysis. One of the most important challenges in political science, to develop a broadly applicable theory of the political system, was made by David Easton. His 'input–output' model stressed the behaviour of the political system, vis-à-vis its environment, in terms of analysing inputs (demands and support) and outputs (authoritative allocation of values or policy decisions and actions).

Another significant systematic approach is structural functionalism, which is one of the most widely known offshoots or derivatives of systems analysis and a matter of considerable controversy. One important school of systematic theory stresses models of decision-making by entire political systems or parts thereof. Another kind of systems theory uses the communications theory and models of communication systems. It is used to conceptualize the process of political integration among the several countries or ethnic communities that make a new system.

1.3.3 Input–Output Analysis

David Easton has developed an original and unique systemic approach for purposes of political analysis, which was not borrowed from other social sciences. In 1965, his book, *A System Analysis of Political Life*, engaged the interest of social scientists for providing an explanation of political phenomena in a new way. Easton has criticized the structural–functional approach, mainly on the grounds that it does not provide the concepts to deal sufficiently with all kinds of systems. Its main concept of function cannot be taken as a basis of a theory and it cannot be experimentally applied because it lacks precision.

The empirical theory that Easton has pronounced is called the 'general theory of politics'. It is general for two particular reasons. First, he 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. Second, he states that the primary task of political science is to analyse the general problems that are common to all political systems, i.e., analysis of the conditions under which a political system survives as a system over a long period. Further, Easton rejects the type of political analysis which is concerned with power-relations between elements of a political system. He is of the opinion that the benefits provided by political and governmental processes cannot be decided by the amount of power an individual power-holder exercises.

Easton's fundamental concept is that of a political system as one of the subsystems of a society, which then operates within an environment. Easton describes the political system as 'that system of interactions in any society through which binding or authoritative allocations are made and implemented'. A political system has certain features. First, it is a system because it has a regularly frequent pattern of relationships among actors, i.e., the individuals and institutions involved; second, it is the system for a particular society because it is universally accepted and unquestioningly authoritative; third, it is political because it is concerned with the satisfaction of those needs of society that are beyond the scope of non-governmental capabilities. Input-output analysis takes for granted that every political system is open and adaptive. Another prominent feature of the political system is the nature of exchanges and transactions between the political system and its environment. It brings into the limelight various concepts concerning systematic boundaries and boundary conditions. It emphasizes the fact that the political system works in processing and converting a variety of inputs into outputs. The inputs include demands and support. Demands are statements of authoritative allocation that should or should not be made by those responsible and authorized for doing so. Support consists of actions,

statements or attitudes that are favourable to a person, group, institution, goal or idea. Demands may be generated by the environment or may originate within the political system itself. Demands pass through conversion or weeding out procedure 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. If the demands call for authoritative action, there is a problem of overloading. Overloading may take place due to too many demands (volume stress) or due to the qualitative elements in the nature of the demands (content stress).

Support makes both selection and processing of demands possible. Easton makes an imperative distinction between overt and covert support. An overt support is any open and direct action that 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 concurrently and both are vital for functioning of the political

community, the regime and the government. It is for the authorities to process inputs from environments into outputs.

The outputs of a political system are authoritative decisions and actions of the political authorities for the distribution and division 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 the feedback loops that complete the cycle of a political system and makes it dynamic. This is the process through which information about the performance of a system is communicated in a way to affect the subsequent behaviour of the system.

Easton's formulation pivots on two core variables, namely, a strong underlying concern for systematic persistence, sources of stress and process of regulating stress and a sequence of concepts that Easton calls 'summary variables'. The central point in the input-output analysis is concerned with the developments that may drive the essential variables of a political system beyond critical ranges, coupled with various

regulatory responses to these developments. The bulk of the approach deals with the sequence of concepts.

According to this analysis, the stability of a political system, i.e., its ability to retain the basic qualities despite the impact of disturbing factors or developments, depends on the existence of structural mechanisms like political parties, pressure groups, news media and legislatures. These articulate and regulate the flow of demands; cultural mechanisms like customs, mores, etc., which establish criteria for the suitability of demands. Procedural mechanisms convert general demands into specific issues for political processing and channels of communication that effectively transmit the demands to the centre of decision-making. You have also seen that the stability of a system is further augmented by sustained and extensive support to the three main components of all political systems, namely the political community, the regime and the political authorities.

It should be remembered that a political system is not just a set of processes that converts inputs and outputs as a routine matter. It is a complex cyclical operation, with dynamism of its own. It has a programmed goal towards which it tries to move, though at every stage it may have to face problems of stress and maintenance and go through regulatory processes. Input–output analysis is certainly an outstanding technique for comparative analysis since it focuses on an overview of all political systems and has an inclusive set of concepts and categories that facilitate comparison. Oran Young has described this analysis as ‘undoubtedly the most inclusive systemic approach that has so far been constructed specifically for political analysis by a political scientist’.

According to Eugene Meehan, a famous lawyer, 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. An even stronger feature of input–output analysis is its dynamic approach to the problem of pattern maintenance. It also deals with its awareness of the importance of the problems of stress, disturbance, regulation and planned reorientation of system goals. 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 by producing outputs and altering the environment. The analysis suffers from some weaknesses. First, its basic presupposition that concerns system-persistence is the most important and inclusive subjects for political analysis may not always be acceptable. Second, such a focus may be productive, but does not result in a general theory of politics. Third, it is for the most part limited in scope in terms of the interaction among different political systems. Fourth, its focus on the politically active and relevant members of society tends to give it an elitist orientation. Fifth, in its emphasis on functional rather than revolutionary processes of change, the approach is believed to be oriented towards status quo and this is not an entirely reasonable criticism. Finally, the input–output analysis is the cause of some confusion for its practitioners.

1.3.4 Structural–Functional Analysis

The structural–functional analysis is one of the primary system-derivatives in political science and a major framework for political research. As a result of the works of anthropologists of the early 20th century, particularly that of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, structural functionalism emerged a political science through sociology. It has been adopted as a field of comparative politics by Gabriel Almond. This mode of analysis is primarily concerned with the phenomena of system-maintenance and regulation. The basic theoretical proposition is that in all social systems, certain basic functions have to be performed. The central question is: ‘What structures fulfil what basic functions and what conditions govern any given system?’

According to this approach, a political system is composed of several structures that are ‘patterns of action and resultant institutions.’ These institutions and patterns of action have certain functions that are defined as ‘objective consequences for the system’. A function is a regularly recurring pattern of action and behaviour that is carried on for preservation and advancement of the system. Dysfunction is the

opposite of function, which means an action detrimental to the existence and growth of the system. In the words of Robert Merton, 'Functions are those observed consequences which lessen the adaptation or adjustment of a system.' A certain level of dysfunction is unavoidable in the operation of any pattern of action. From time to time, it is possible to identify actions or decisions that are functional for the political system, as a whole, or for some of its components.

Merton has advanced an additional distinction between manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions refer to those patterns of action, whose outcomes are intended and recognized by the participants. In latent functions, consequences are neither intended nor recognized and understood initially. The concept of structure is vital in structural-functional analysis. Structures refer to those arrangements within the system which perform the function. Merton has developed the idea that a given function can be fulfilled by many diverse structural arrangements. Likewise, any given structural arrangement may perform functions that might have different kinds of outcomes for the structure. Almond and Powell refer to the same phenomenon when they observe in a highly distinguished system, such as that of the United States. Political functions may be performed by a large number of highly specialized structures and those political structures, in turn, have a propensity to be multifunctional.

The advocates of the structural-functional analysis draw attention to certain 'conditions of survival', or certain functions that are vital for the maintenance and preservation of fundamental characteristics of a political system so that it stays recognizable over a length of time. Marion Levy, Jr., for example, has tried to identify the functional requisites of any social system on a theoretical basis and has compiled a list of required functions. Following the lead of Talcott Parsons, sociologists attempted to identify four such functions, namely goal-attainment, adaptation, integration and pattern-maintenance. Gabriel Almond, in applying this analysis to political science, developed a list of political functional requisites and divided them into four input and three output functions. The four input functions are as follows:

1. Political socialization and recruitment
2. Interest-articulation
3. Interest-aggregation
4. Political communication

The three output functions are as follows:

1. Rule-making
2. Rule-application
3. Rule-adjudication

The input functions that are performed by non-governmental subsystems, by society and the general environment, are looked upon as highly important. The output functions are performed by traditional governmental agencies like the legislature, the executive, the judiciary and the bureaucracy.

Almond's classic statement of structural-functional analysis is found in the introduction to *The Politics of the Developing Areas* that has been edited by Almond and Coleman. He is inspired by the desire to develop a more universal and clear analytical vocabulary for the study of non-Western states, especially of the politics of the 'third world' countries. He defines politics as the integrative and adaptive functions of a society, based on more or less legitimate physical coercion. He defines the political system as 'that system of interactions to be found in all independent societies which perform 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.'

Almond stresses the interdependence between political and other societal systems and suggests several common properties of all political systems. According to him, there are political structures that perform the same functions in all systems; that all political structures are multifunctional; that each political culture is a mixture of the 'traditional' and the 'modern'. Systems adapt to their environment

when political structures do not behave dysfunctional. Almond's functional categories have already been mentioned, Almond is aware of the common criticism pointed against his model that it is stability-oriented and conservative. In his later works, he clarifies that his concept of 'political system' is one of 'interdependence' but not one of 'harmony'. He also admits that his framework 'did not permit us to explore development patterns, to explain how political systems change and why they change'. It might, on the other hand, be observed that Almond, in his formulation, is primarily concerned with the capabilities of the system and the problem of system-maintenance.

The structural–functional approach has been very widely adopted in the field of comparative government and politics because it claims 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 success of the model for comparative political research must be admitted.

Criticism has nevertheless been made of its value orientations, its tautological premises, and its vague and non-operational conceptual units. Neither its conceptual framework, nor the ranges of derivable propositions for research are as definite 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'.

Meehan also thinks that the functional categories he suggests are far too broad to be of much use. Almond has not produced a theory, of course, nor even as well-articulated classification scheme. The taxonomy is incomplete and unambiguous. Oran Young has criticized its tendency to force divergence phenomena into a systematic framework of, 'fallacy of functional teleology', the fallacy deductive functionalism and the postulate of universal functionalism. When applied to Third World countries, the functional framework cannot analyse the empirical reality

that exists in these societies. The complex political realities of these societies cannot be effectively explained with the help of the assumptions on which the theoretical scheme of the functionalists is based.

One great limitation of this analysis, as we have already seen, is that it is basically a static system. Its stress on the way things are, and can lead to an inclusive assumption of stability and incapacity to deal with the challenge of change, particularly of a swift or violent character. It has a strong favouritism towards status quo and its research tends to support the existing order of things. Hence, great caution needs to be exercised in applying these analytical tools, if drawbacks are to be evaded.

1.3.5 Decision-Making Theories

Decision-making in certain respects is the least successful of all new approaches to the study of government and politics. Politics is a process of allocating values through the making of decisions. Process refers to the sum of techniques, methods, procedures and strategies by which a given decision is made. A political system is a mechanism for decision-making. The efficiency of a political system can be measured in terms of its ability to make decisions that are widely accepted. The interplay between social configuration, ideology and governmental organs constitute the dynamics of politics, the making of decisions.

1.3.6 Marxist Methodology for the Study of Comparative Government and Politics

In spite of claims by some political scientists that the field of comparative politics has experienced swift progression, no effort has been made towards the construction of sophisticated empirical models. There is no doubt that the sub-discipline is still seeking the right methodological direction and theoretical orientation. Systems analysis and structural-functionalism, along with other approaches, have been found to have fallen short of satisfactory methodological orientations and requirements. The primary questions are: To what extent does Marxism provide a scientific methodology? Can we use it in the field of comparative politics?

Roughly speaking, the whole doctrine of Marxism is based on dialectical and historical materialism. Based on the three laws of dialectics—the law of transformation of quality into quantity and vice versa, the law of negation, and the law of the union of opposites—Marx identifies the following general pattern of social phenomena: their interdependence, their movement and development, positive interconnection between opposite forces and intrinsic disagreements within the social process. To him, ‘the mode of production in material life determines the general character of social, political and intellectual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence; it is their social existence that determines their consciousness.’ Marx never defines the term ‘class’ except in the third volume of capital where he says, ‘The owners merely of labor power, owners of capital and land-owners, whose respective sources of income are wages, profit and ground rent, in other words, wage labourers, capitalist and landowners, constitute the three big classes of modern society based upon the capitalist mode of production.’

Still, ‘class’ makes up the base of his discussion—individuals are dealt with only to the extent that ‘they are personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class relations and class interests’. Even though no one agreed with Marxist’s model of politics, you can identify, very reasonably, a few methodological themes: search for social bias in social ‘facts’; efforts at being rigorously scientific without pretending to be value-free; explanations of human activity, partly in terms of affirmed purposes and conscious interactions and partly in terms of a given moment in historic time; emphasis on the necessary determinacy of economic elements in the social structure with recognition of reciprocal interaction of the political, social and cultural elements; search for contradictions as a key constituent in social dynamics; use of the concept of ‘class’ as vital in social development; recognition of technology as an important variable; and finally, recognition of a careful distinction between possibility, causes and symptoms of capitalist crisis. This theory not only reveals the dependence of social realization and the entire social structure, but also

observes the totality of social relationships, structures and institutions. It is done by probing existing productive forces of society and resultant productive relations and the ideological superstructure that is built on them.

Now, let us observe how you can apply the Marxist theory in the field of comparative politics. First, one can make inquiries into the nature of property relations in different political systems. In this attempt, though, one should remember that property relations do not simply mean relation between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. Then again, one should also keep in mind the difference between 'possession' and 'ownership'. It is, in effect, the latter on which the focus is more. Second, to what extent does the social division of labour distinguish different political systems? Although Marx speaks of different types of divisions of labour, he gives emphasis to the division of labour as leading to exchange, communication and introduction of techniques, practices and consequently, ideas. Yet again, division of labour may be found in a family, in a village and so on, but our main focus should be on the division of labour in society. Third, in order to compare different levels of political development in various countries, you ask this question: What is the stage of economic activity in a particular society? According to Marx, there are different types of state–society relationships, which are based on the diverse stages of development in different societies. In a feudal society, regardless of the feudal lord being both the owner of the means of production and of the political authority in his sphere of influence, his exploitativeness over the peasants remains 'veiled by religious and political illusions', but this is no longer true in a capitalist society where the 'state and society become abstracted from one another'. Thus, through the comparison of different stages of economic development of various political systems, both the nature of political authority as well as the extent of 'freedom' that is enjoyed by the people can be made. Fourth, the nature of the political system and its direction can best be explained only when you place it against the background of its past development. Neither the systems theory, nor the structural–functional theory lays any stress on the

historical procedures. The Marxian approach is undoubtedly better than them in this respect. Fifth, you have already argued that in both systems, the structural functionalist theorists have transferred their social values and institutions into a theoretical framework which they have claimed to be universal. As a result that political reality in the Third World remains either unclear or vague. But, on the basis of Marxian analysis, you can argue that common factors in the world are settled on by the world's economic order. In comparing Third World countries, one should start from the existing world economic order and the production relations in the societies that are being compared. Finally, by using what Warner describes in Marx's method as 'the method of specification by comparison', you can understand the conditions for the appearance of a particular historical configuration or to emphasize the features of that configuration.

Therefore, to summarize, the Marxist framework is far better adapted to analyse different systems in terms of historical development of various social structures and their interrelationships, and particularly to tackle the problems of instability and change. Marxist analysis provides a general framework within which one can search for historic process laws about particular structures that are applicable to limited and concrete situations. But one should remember that 'completeness of method, however, does not necessarily mean that one can find in Marx, everything in every specific context. Instead, these can come to light only through long, patient research, conducted on the basis of the Marxist method, which brings out the global, historical sense of a social evolution.' Again, all philosophers are the product of their own times and Marx was no exception. There were certain 20th century developments, which Marx could not visualize in his 19th century background. This did not mean that he had been disproved or was ignorant. He himself said, 'Like all other laws, it is modified in its actual working by numerous conditions.'

2.2 TRADITIONAL APPROACHES

The traditional approach to the study of comparative governments emerged as a response to historicism of the 19th century. It stressed the historical examination of Western political institutions from the earliest to the modern times. The traditional approaches to the study of

comparative politics are historical, legal and the comparative approach, and institutionalism.

2.2.1 Historical, Legal and Comparative Approach

The various methods of comparison are mentioned in this section. Historical Method

The historical method can be distinguished from other methods in that it looks for causal explanations which are historically sensitive. Eric Wolf emphasizes that any study which seeks to understand societies and causes of human action could not merely seek technical solutions to problems stated in technical terms. The important thing was to resort to an analytic history which searched out the causes of the present in the past. Such an analytic history could not be developed out of the study of a single culture or nation, a single culture area, or even a single continent at one period in time, but from a study of contacts, interactions and ‘interconnections’ among human populations and cultures. The world of humankind ‘constitutes a manifold, a totality of interconnected processes, and inquiries that disassemble this reality into bits and then fail to reassemble it falsify reality’.

Historical studies have concentrated on one or more cases seeking to find causal explanations of social and political phenomena in a historical perspective. Single case studies seek to produce general statements which may be applied to other cases. Theda Skocpol points out that comparative historical studies using more than one case fall broadly into two categories, ‘comparative history’ and ‘comparative historical analysis’.

Comparative history is commonly used rather loosely to refer to any study in which two or more historical trajectories are of nation-states, institutional complexes, or civilizations are juxtaposed. Some studies which fall in this genre, like Charles, Louis and Richard Tilly’s *The Rebellious Century 1810-1930*, aim at drawing up a specific historical model which can be applied across different national context. Others, such as Reinhard Benedix’s *Nation Building and Citizenship* and Perry Anderson’s *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, use comparisons primarily

to bring out contrasts among nations or civilizations, conceived as isolated wholes. Skocpol herself subscribes to the second method, i.e., comparative historical analysis, which aims primarily to develop, test, and refine causal, explanatory hypothesis about events or structures integral to macro-units such as nation-states. This it does by taking 'selected slices of national historical trajectories as the units of comparison', to develop causal relationship about specific phenomenon (e.g., revolutions) and draw generalizations.

There are two ways in which valid associations of potential causes can be established. These methods laid out by John Stuart Mill in his *A System of Logic* are: (i) the method of agreement and (ii) the method of difference. The method of agreement involves taking up for study several cases having in common both the phenomenon as well as the set of causal factors proposed in the hypothesis.

The method of difference, which is used by Skocpol, takes up two sets of cases:

(i) the positive cases, in which the phenomenon as well as the hypothesized causal relationships are present and the (ii) the negative cases, in which the phenomenon as well as the causes are absent but are otherwise similar to the first set. In her comparative analysis of the French, Russian and Chinese Revolutions, in *States and Social Revolutions, A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*, (Cambridge, 1979), Skocpol takes up the three cases as the positive cases of successful social revolution and argues that the three reveal similar causal patterns despite other dissimilarities. She also takes up a set of negative cases, viz., failed Russian Revolution of 1905, and selected aspects of English, Japanese and German histories to validate the arguments regarding causal relationship in the first case.

Critics of the historical method feel that because the latter does not study a large number of cases, it does not offer the opportunity to study a specific phenomenon in a truly scientific manner. Harry Eckstein, for instance, argues that generalizations based on small number of cases 'may certainly be a generalization in the dictionary sense.' However, 'a

generalization in the methodological sense' ought to 'cover a number of cases large enough for certain rigorous testing procedures like statistical analysis to be used' (Harry Eckstein, *Internal War: Problems and Approaches*, 1964).

Legal Method

Since we are exploring the traditional approaches, we will also refer to methods like legal and juridical. As evident, this means that we shall analyse political systems along with the institutions and legal processes that comprise it. For political scientists using this method, law and justice are not limited to being the matters of jurisprudence but the state itself is treated as in charge of an equitable and effective system of law and order. Therefore, for political scientists, organizational matters, as well as those related to jurisdiction and independence of judicial institutions, are matters of concern. State has been analysed as a corporation or a juridical person by analytical jurists from Cicero in ancient times to Dicey in the modern period. Politics thus became a science of legal norms, independent of the science of the state as a social organism. This approach, therefore, treats state as the prime entity to craft and implement laws.

Applied to the study of national and international politics, the legal method presumes that any action which is to be taken in case of an emergency is prescribed in law. It forbids action taking in some other situations, thus fixing the limit of action permitted. Moreover, it emphasizes that where rule of law prevails, its very knowledge among the citizens can help in determining their political behaviour. However, by its very nature, the legal method is very narrow.

Philosophical Method

Principles of political theory were laid with the help of history, law, ethics and philosophy. This approach significantly contributed to literature on normative political theory. Thinkers like Plato and Burke successfully laid down the principles of political theory and developed concepts like liberty and equality, rights, law and justice. On the one hand, with traditional approach, Plato, Kant and Hegel idealized the

state; on the other hand, Aristotle, Hobbes and Machiavelli became more practical and developed theories of the state which could be practiced for real. Relationship between politics and law was adopted by Grotius, Bentham, Austin and Dicey. This approach continued to remain in operation for a very long time and examined every political institution with the help of available evidences.

Comparative Approach

The comparative method, its nature and scope, has its own supporters and critics. Theorists like A. N. Eisenstadt argue that the approach has no specific method but involves focuses on cross-societal institutional or other macro aspects of societies for social analysis. On the other hand, theorists like Arend Lijphart, contend that comparative approach is a method and not just a vague term that symbolizes or indicates towards the focus of one's research. Lijphart defines this method as a basic method compared to others that are more experimental, statistics-based or rely on case studies to make generalizations. Another theorist, Harold Lasswell, argues that the comparative nature within the scientific approach cannot be avoided and thus to anyone who uses such an approach to a political phenomena, a completely independent comparative method, seems redundant.

Comparative approach has also been equated to the scientific method by Gabriel Almond. Yet, there is a general agreement between different scholars that the comparative method is not a method of measurement but aimed at discovering empirical relationships between variables. The first step is to measure variables before a relationship is explored among them. It is the latter step which is referred to as the comparative method. Theorists argue that a distinction must be made between the technique and the method and identify comparative method as a broad, general method and not a narrow, specialized technique. Keeping these arguments in mind, theorists refer to it as the comparative approach method or a method of comparison because it lacks the nature and principles of a method. Therefore, the comparative approach can also be thought of as a more basic research strategy than a strategic tool of research.

When compared with the experimental, statistical or case study methods, the comparative approach can be better understood. For instance, the experimental method is a process to understand the relationship between two variables in a controlled environment. Such experiments are rare and difficult in political science, therefore, an alternative is used by the way of statistical method. Within statistical method, the empirical data is conceptually manipulated to discover controlled relationships among variables. Control is ensured through division of the sample into many different groups, also referred to as parting correlations or cross tabulations, like differentiating on the basis of age, income, gender, education. This is followed by finding the correlation between two selected variables in each case. This is the standard procedure followed in this method and applied to most empirical research. The two methods—experimental and statistical—use the same logic and are often referred to as the approximation of each other.

Therefore, comparative method essentially resembles the statistical method except that the number of cases it deals with is often too small to permit statistical methods. But it is necessary to understand that the comparative method is not an adequate substitute for the experimental method as in the case of natural sciences. But these weaknesses can be minimized in a number of ways. The statistical method is best to use as far as possible, except in cases where entire political systems are being compared, then the comparative method has to be used. The two can also be used in combination. In this comparative analysis it is the first stage in which macro hypotheses are carefully formulated, usually covering the structural elements of total systems, and the statistical stage is the second, in which through micro replications these are tested in as large a sample as possible. Second, too much significance must not be attached to negative findings: for example, rejecting a hypothesis on the basis of one deviant case especially when the sample is small. Rather, research should aim at probabilistic and not universal generalizations. Third, it is necessary to increase the number of cases as much as possible

(though small samples are not of much use). Comparative politics has advanced because of the formulation of universally applicable theories or grand theories based on the comparison of many countries or political phenomenon within them. For example, structural functional analysis theory opened up a world of comparative research unknown before. Fourth, increase the number of variables if not the number of cases; through this more generalizations are possible.

Fifth, focus on comparable cases, i.e., those that have a large number of comparable characteristics or variables which one treats as constants, but dissimilar as far as those variables which one wants to relate to each other. This way we study the operative variables by either the statistical or comparative method. Here, the area or regional approach is useful, for example, while comparing countries within Latin America or Scandinavia or Asia. But many scholars have pointed out that this is merely a manageable argument, which should not become an imprisonment. Another alternative is studying regions within countries, or studying them at different points of time as the problem of control is much simpler as they are within the same federal structure. Here, it may be mentioned that the states within the Indian Union provide a rich laboratory for comparative research that has not yet been undertaken. Many scholars feel that focus should be on key or contextual variables, as too many variables can create problems. This not only allows manageability but also often leads to middle range theorizing or partial comparison of political systems. This has been used successfully in anthropological studies as tribal systems are simple. Political scientists can also do this by limiting the number of variables.

The case study method is used whenever only one case is being analysed. But it is closely connected with the comparative method, and certain types or case studies can become an inherent part of the comparative method whenever an in-depth study of a variable is needed prior to comparison with other similar ones. The scientific status of the case study method is somewhat ambiguous because science is neither generalizing nor a ground for disapproving an established generalization. But its value lies when used as a building block for

making general propositions and even theory building in political science when a number of case studies on similar subjects are carried out. Case studies can be of many types, for example, a theoretical or interpretative, theory confirming or informing each useful in specific situations. Thus, the comparative and the case study method have major drawbacks. Due to the inevitable limitations of these methods, it is the challenging task of the investigator in the field of comparative politics to apply these methods in such a way as to capitalize on their inherent strengths and they can be useful instruments in scientific political inquiry. Many scholars have spent much of the post war period constantly improving the use of these methods.

2.2.2 Institutionalism

The study of institutions goes a long way back, starting possibly with the philosophical explorations of Plato's Republic. In this section, we will get a general idea of the historical evolution of the institutional approach.

We are, for the most part, concerned with studying the approach within the field of comparative political analysis. Therefore, our main concern is with the historical moment at which the institutional approach took on a comparative character. Ethnocentrism is a typical feature of this approach. A major portion of the works which represent the institutional approach in comparative politics have only taken into account governments and institutions in the West. Inherent in this approach is the belief that western liberal democratic institutions are dominant. Thus, according to this view, western liberal democracy is not only the best form of government, but it also has a normative and universal character. The widespread nature of western liberal democracy takes for granted that not only is this style of government the best, but also relevant across the world. The 'normativity' of western liberal democracies is a consequence of this belief.

If it is the best form of governance which is also appropriate in all contexts, liberal democracy is the form of government which should be implemented everywhere. But an important exception also arises from

this prescribed norm of liberal democracy. This exception implies: (a) that the institutions of liberal democracy were specifically western in their origin and contexts and, (b) that non-western countries were incapable of democratic self-rule and would only be fit to do so if they underwent training under western imperialist rule.

In the following sections, we shall undertake a detailed study of the beginning of the institutional approach from ancient times to the first quarter of the present century when it became a prime method which made comparative study possible.

Historical Background

Aristotle studied constitutions and practices in Greek city-states. Possibly, this is the oldest comparative study of governments. Aristotle contrasted them with politics in the so-called 'barbarian' states. He established similarities and differences between governments differentiating between monarchies, oligarchies and democracy, and between these 'ideal' governments and their 'perverted' forms. An interrelation between facts and values marked the study of comparative politics at this stage. At the initial stages, an attempt was not made to analyse the theory and practice of government, as James Bryce had emphasized in the late nineteenth century. In its place was an irresistible desire to explore 'ideal' states and forms of governments. More emphasis was given to assumption, on what should be instead of on what 'is' or what is actually present. Practical details and knowledge of existing state of affairs, however, came to be known due to the efforts of Machiavelli (*The Prince*) in the sixteenth century and Montesquieu (*The Spirit of Laws*) in the middle of the eighteenth century. A large number of constitutional lawyers were the followers of Montesquieu. Their profession demanded that they concentrate more on the contents, i.e., the theoretical (legal-constitutional) framework of governments rather than the manner in which these frameworks unfolded in practice.

The forbearer of the study of 'theory and practice' was Tocqueville. This theory later became the real spirit of the institutional approach in comparative political analysis. Another noteworthy contribution to the

expansion of this element of the institutional approach was made by Bagehot (*The English Constitution*, 1867) in his examination of the British cabinet. In this, he drew points of comparison with the American executive. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Bryce, Lowell and Ostrogorski contributed significantly to a comparative study of institutions and by doing so, to the development of a distinct branch of study that dealt with comparative governments.

Institutional Approach and the Emergence of Comparative Government

At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a drastic change in the contents of the institutional approach, and thereby the nature and scope of comparative politics. This was due to the contributions of Bryce, Lowell and Ostrogorski.

In his appraisal of their work, Jean Blondel asserts that Bryce and Lowell were, indeed, the true founders of comparative governments as it developed as a separate branch of study in the latter part of the nineteenth century. *The American Commonwealth* (1888) and *Modern Democracies* (1921) were two noteworthy works of Bryce. In *Modern Democracies*, Bryce focused on the theory of democracy and examined the working of the legislatures and their decline. Lowell's works, *Governments and Parties in Continental Europe* (1896) and *Public Opinion and Popular Government* (1913), where he undertakes separate studies of France, Germany, Switzerland, etc., and a comparative study of referendums and its impacts respectively, were equally important.

In the same way, another pioneering work was Ostrogorski's study *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties* (1902) which aimed to test the hypothesis of the 'democratic' or 'oligarchical' character of political parties.

It becomes significant to see how these works improved and changed the way in which institutions were being studied until now.

(i) Theory and practice of governments: It has been mentioned earlier that comparative study of governments was inclined to be philosophical-speculative or largely legal-constitutional, i.e., they were

either concerned with theoretical concepts like the ‘ideal state’, or with data regarding the legal-constitutional frameworks and structures of governments. With the liberal constitutional theory as a base, the formal institutional structures were examined with emphasis on their legal powers and functions. This formed part of studies on ‘Comparative Government’ or ‘Foreign Constitutions’. These works were a result of the effort of the elites in institutional-building in different countries. This is the reason institutionalism acquired some fascination in the newly independent countries.

According to Bryce and Lowell, the existing studies were partial and incomplete. An all-inclusive scrutiny of governments should comprise the working of the legal- constitutional frameworks of governments. They emphasized that such a study not only necessitated a study of the theoretical bases or contexts of governments (i.e., the legal-constitutional framework and governmental institutions) but also equally important was the emphasis on the study of ‘practices of government’.

Focussing just on constitutions, as was done by lawyers, was inadequate as it would result in ignoring the difficulties of their operation and implementation. Alternatively, focusing completely on practice without putting it in its theoretical (constitutional) perspective would not give the complete picture as one could lose sight of the contexts within.

It was, thus, primarily with Bryce and Lowell that the content of institutional approach in comparative political analysis came to be defined as a study of the ‘theory and practice of government’.

(ii) Focus on ‘facts’: An important part of these studies was the concern to study ‘practice’ through an analysis of ‘facts’ about the functioning of governments. To examine practice, one required to find out and ‘amass’ facts. Bryce categorically backed his view that it was essential to base one’s analysis on facts, without which, he said, ‘data is mere speculation’: ‘Facts, facts, facts, when facts have been supplied each of us tries to reason from them’. A major complication encountered during collection of data regarding practices of governments was the

tendency among governments to conceal facts than to make them public. This made it difficult to acquire facts because governments and politicians often hid facts or were reluctant to clarify what the real situation was. However, this difficulty did not discourage them from stressing the importance of collecting data

about almost every aspect of political life, parties, executives, referendums, legislatures, etc. This effort was sustained by later comparativists like Herman Finer (*Theory and Practice Institutional Approach of Modern Government*, 1932) and Carl Friedrich (*Constitutional Government and Democracy*, 1932).

(iii) Technique: While searching for facts, Bryce and Lowell came across the use of quantitative indicators, on the basis of the realization that in the study of government, qualitative and quantitative types of verification have to be fair. Finally, however, Bryce and Lowell felt that findings could be reliable only on the basis of as wide a range of facts as possible. Keeping this in mind, they extended their studies geographically to a large number of countries which, at the time, had institutions of a constitutional or near constitutional character. They, therefore, endeavoured to focus their study on governments of western, central and southern Europe. But it was with Ostrogorski's work that comparative political analysis began to focus on studying particular institutions on a comparative basis. In 1902, Ostrogorski published a comprehensive analysis of political parties in Britain and America.

The institutional approach faced much criticism in the 1950s from 'system theorists' like Easton and Macridis who stressed upon the building of overarching models having a general global application. They attempted to understand and explain political processes in different countries on the basis of these models. These criticisms and the defence offered by institutionalists will be discussed in the next section.

Institutional Approach: A Critical Evaluation

Criticisms of the institutional approach in comparative political analysis have come in consecutive waves, in the early part of the twentieth

century and later in the 1950s. A refined version of the approach reappeared after each wave of criticism.

The approach was criticized before the study of institutions attained a comparative nature (however restricted) at the turn of the century. It was said to be not only: (i) speculative but also (ii) prescriptive and normative. (iii) It was concerned with only irregularities and regularities and ignored relationships. (iv) It focussed on individual countries and therefore was non-comparative. It was said to be (v) ethnocentric as it focused on western European democracies. (vi) As it focussed on formal structure, both constitutional and governmental—it was said to be descriptive. (vii) It did not focus on analysis but at the same time was historical. (viii) The contributors tended to ignore the upper chambers of UK, the US and the USSR. (ix) Methodologically, they were said to be incomplete, at least in part. Theoretically, however, they were said to have failed to recognize the essence of political life.

With Bryce and his contemporaries, the nature and content of the institutional approach went through a phase of transformation. The approach attained a comparative character and at the same time attempted to combine theoretical contexts with governmental practices. In the 1950s, the institutional approach, as it developed with Bryce, Lowell and Ostrogorski, once more faced severe criticism by political scientists like David Easton and Roy Macridis.

David Easton criticized Bryce's approach in his work *The Political System* (1953), calling it 'mere factualism'. Easton claimed that this approach had affected American Political Science admitting that although Bryce did not neglect 'theories' his aversion to making explanatory or theoretical models, had led to a 'surfeit of facts' and as a result to 'a theoretical malnutrition'.

It will not be difficult to understand why Easton felt that Bryce's approach had misguided American Political Science in the wrong direction. Jean Blondel defends the institutional approach from critics like Easton who attacked its 'factualism'. Blondel argued that the charge of 'surfeit of facts' was incorrect since very few facts were

actually available to political scientists to analyse politics comprehensively.

Actually, there was hardly any knowledge of the structures and activities of key institutions of most countries, especially about the communist countries and the underdeveloped countries. It was important, therefore, to collect more facts, considering that governments tended to hide facts rather than pass them on.

Any successful study had to be based on facts. Reasoning would not be possible in the absence of 'facts' or 'data'. This, along with the point that facts were not easy to get hold of, made them vital to the study of political analysis.

In 1955, Roy Macridis felt that the comparative study of governments should be reoriented. He felt that in the present form, comparative study had been 'comparative in name only'. According to Macridis, the orientation of the institutional approach was 'non-comparative', 'parochial', 'static' and 'monographic'. He said that a fair amount of work was 'essentially descriptive'. He owed this to the analysis being historical or legalistic, and therefore quite narrow.

In the 1950s, it became obvious that there was a dearth of facts which was a cause of concern. It was not possible to make proper generalizations. According to Blondel, there was, a 'surfeit of models' instead of a 'surfeit of facts'. He pointed out that building models without basing them on facts would lead to misinformation. It was not easy to obtain information about certain countries. Also, wrong information was likely to influence and reinforce preconceptions about those countries.

In 1971, while writing about Latin American Legislatures, W. H. Agor stated that legislatures in that part of the world were not strong. With no facts available for the purposes of the study, the reliance was more on evidence which was 'impressionistic'. Thus, those who followed the institutional approach emphasized the need for collecting and coming up with ways of collecting facts.

The criticisms were, however, followed by works that had a more comparative focus and included non-western countries.

2.3 MODERN APPROACHES

The modern approaches to political science play a very important role in studying comparative politics. It includes approaches like the behavioural system, structural- functional and the Marxist approach. Many thinkers and theorists have given their views and theories with regard to these approaches. This section deals with the behavioural approach.

2.3.1 Behavioural Approach

As you know, behaviouralism is related to the rise of the behavioural sciences and is based on the natural sciences. It examines the behaviour, actions and acts of individuals instead of the characteristics of institutions like legislatures, executives and judiciaries.

Before the Behaviouralist Revolution, critics saw the study of politics as being which was necessary to call it a science. However, behaviouralists would go on to use strict methodology and empirical

research to validate their study as a social science. The behavioural approach was innovative because it changed the attitude of the purpose of inquiry moving towards research supported by verifiable facts.

Behaviouralism uses the following methods to understand political behaviour:

- Sampling
- Interviewing
- Scoring and scaling
- Statistical analysis

David Easton was the first to differentiate behaviouralism from behaviourism in the 1950s. In the early 1940s, behaviourism itself was referred to as a behavioural science and later called behaviourism. The two disciplines were given distinct meanings by Easton.

Easton also listed the ‘intellectual foundation stones’ of behaviouralism, which

are as follows:

- Regularities: This is related to the generalization and explanation of regularities.
- Commitment to verification: This refers to the ability to verify one’s generalizations.
- Techniques: This represents an experimental attitude towards techniques.
- Quantification: Results are to be expressed as numbers wherever it is possible and meaningful.
- Values: The approach also keeps ethical assessment and empirical explanations distinct.
- Systemization: The importance of theory in research also must be considered.

- Pure science: It defers to pure science rather than applied science.
- Integration: It aims at integrating social sciences and value.

Objectivity and value-neutrality

According to David Easton, behaviouralism must be 'analytic, not substantive, general rather than particular, and explanatory rather than ethical.' Therefore, the theory aims to evaluate political behaviour without 'introducing any ethical evaluations'. Rodger Beehler calls this 'their insistence on distinguishing between facts and values'.

Criticism of behaviouralism

The approach has been criticized by both conservatives and radicals for the purported value-neutrality. Conservatives see the distinction between values and facts as a way of undermining the possibility of political philosophy. Neal Riemer feels this approach does away with 'the task of ethical recommendation' because behaviouralists believe 'truth or falsity of values (democracy, equality, and freedom, etc.) cannot be established scientifically and are beyond the scope of legitimate inquiry'. Christian Bay believed behaviouralism was a pseudo political science and that it did not include 'genuine political research'.

Bay objected to empirical consideration taking precedence over normative and moral examination of politics.

Post-Behaviouralism

The theory of post-behaviouralism questioned the prevalent notion that academic research needed to be 'value neutral'. They also claimed that despite the alleged value-neutrality of behaviouralist research, it was biased towards the status quo and social preservation over social change.

This school of thought argued that values should not be neglected and that behaviouralism was biased towards observable and measurable phenomena. Simply put, this meant that trivial issues that could be easily worked on were being emphasized at the cost of more important topics. The post-behaviouralists believed that research was very relevant in society and intellectuals had a positive role to play in the same.

Criticism of Post-behaviouralism

Well-known American political scientist Eulau criticized post-behaviouralism as a 'near hysterical response to political frustrations engendered by the disconcerting and shocking events of the late sixties and early seventies'.

-Traditionalists versus Behaviouralists

Traditionalism in political science is a continuation of classical political philosophy in the modern times. It is represented by political scientists of varied professional inclinations, having an affinity with practitioners of moral or social philosophy. It also includes institutional analysts. Contrary to traditionalism in political science, behaviouralism postulates that social sciences can more closely approximate to methods and goals of natural sciences. On the other hand, traditionalism takes the stand that political science can never become a science in the real sense. The traditionalists continue to argue that even if it were possible for political science to become a science, it would be undesirable to attempt it.

The traditionalists' challenge to behaviouralist methods is the most outspoken. Their basic premise is that political science can never really become a science. To support their view, they advance the proposition that units of analysis in political science are not comparable to those of natural science. Unlike the stable units found in natural sciences, human beings are unique by virtue of their self-consciousness. They have the capacity to alter any plan about behaviour on the basis of past, present and future expectations and experiences. Therefore, any claim to

general predictive laws would be highly presumptuous and inaccurate. Political behaviour by its very nature is not amenable to experimental enquiry. For, in a historical sense, it is unique and not recurring at intervals. Hence, the very search for regularities which the behaviouralist analysis undertakes is in vain.

The traditionalists maintain that quantification and analysis do not suit political science. The discipline as a whole is lacking in both precise concepts and the required metrics. Significant issues usually cannot be quantified, while those quantifiable easily are usually trivial. The traditionalists doubt the extent to which significant human behaviour can actually be apprehended and observed in a systematic manner.

Moreover, the traditionalists argue that additional subject matter differences between social and natural science. They are convinced that social scientists cannot examine or investigate their subject matter dispassionately. Nor is it possible to achieve objectivity as demanded by the scientific method. In fact, the scientific method confronts social scientists with the pervasive reality of their biases at all stages of investigation. This detracts them from keeping values and facts separate.

As in methods, the differences between the traditionalists and behaviouralists also focus on scope and objectives. The traditionalists uphold such appropriate objectives that are action oriented. They appear in the role of humanitarian advocate, critic and reformer. Indeed, the traditionalists' position implies a special characterization of the scientific method. On one level, it amounts to rejecting the scientific method, claiming that the pattern of justification varies between natural sciences and social sciences. On another level, the traditionalists' position implies that techniques of discovery differ in natural and social sciences. The former claim is much more radical in import than the latter one. Much of the current debate fails to articulate this important distinction.

On the contrary, it is possible to establish such broad meanings that almost any systematic accumulation of information can be so designated. When it is not clear what claims are being made for or against science, there is an artificiality about these debates. In recent years, philosophers of science have persuasively stated the case for a view of science and scientific methods that falls between the above extremes. Thus, a middle path has emerged in recent times. To quote the political scientist Malcolm B. Parsons, 'It is possible to define sciences and scientific enquiry so narrowly that only a few areas in the physical sciences could qualify.'

At this stage, it would be worthwhile to explain the differing implications of the traditionalist and the behaviourist positions in political science. The debate between them points to one significant conclusion. It is at least possible to set the requirements of a genuine science whether so narrowly as to rule out all but a few natural sciences or to make it so broad-based that it could include almost any kind of common sense speculation. If we limit science only to those areas of enquiry for which there exists fully formalized theories, offering explanations that are strictly deductive in form, this would considerably narrow down the range of scientific enquiry. On the contrary, if the difficulty in obtaining relatively unbiased observational data is overemphasized, and the importance of law-like generalizations is underscored, a vast array of pre-scientific and philosophical enquiries would lay claim to be included in a scientific discipline.

The role of theory is central to all scientific explanation. It is on this score that social science has been found most lacking. To date, social science has singularly failed to produce a widely accepted account that can serve as a paradigm for further research. It has not been able to produce even the grounds for adjudicating the relevance and law-likeness of empirical generalizations and far less the grounds for explanation of social behaviour. Traditionalists treat this failure as endemic to political science. Not only has the discipline failed to

measure up to the requirements in the past, but there are overriding reasons for assuming that it can never satisfy these demands. In a way, it is an empirical claim resting on past history and the present condition of political science. Evidence is quite adequate for predicting a continued failure of the discipline to measure up to the requirements of a genuine science.

Contrary to this, the behaviouralists' plea is that social scientists have been successful in applying a variety of sophisticated statistical techniques to data. In a large number of cases, these techniques have been used to make accurate predictions. As a result of this, many empirical theories have been propounded which have attained some measure of support. However, if we were to expect from a science a total theory which does for social science or at least for one of its major divisions what Newton's theory did for physics, the traditionalists' denigration of the accomplishments of empirical theorists would be deemed plausible. It is, however, doubtful whether even physics has a theory of such cosmic significance.

Distinguished American sociologist Robert K. Merton rightly maintains that the proper aim, at least in current conditions, and the proper measure of social science, is its success in providing theories of mid-range. Such theories are more than empirical generalizations or summaries of observed uniformities. They comprise specific testable assumptions that can be falsified or confirmed by observation. They occupy a middle position between isolated observational generalizations and all-embracing speculative theories. Merton's characterization of the theories of the mid-range embraces such classic accounts as Emile Durkheim's theory of suicide and Max Weber's theory of relationship between Protestantism and capitalism. More recent examples include the reference-group theory and the role set theory.

Given the numerous theories of the middle range, it is wrong to lament the death of theories as the traditionalists do. Moreover, the failure of

political science to produce widely accepted and well-established grand theories (in a period of only 30 years or so) which can be used to predict future developments is naive and immature. This cannot be deemed a sufficient ground for denying politics its scientificness of its accomplishments in the realm of scientific theory. If the history of the development of other sciences is any guide, the gestation period for a new natural science often has been much longer.

The traditionalists' attack in relation to political behaviour is three-fold:

(i) The human political behaviour involves too many variables. It is too complex to visibly exhibit the regularities necessary for the determination of empirical laws and theories.

(ii) The subject matter, that is, human behaviour, precludes explanation by empirical laws and theories.

(iii) That even such laws and theories as might be presented are inevitably biased in such a way as to prevent scientific objectivity in evaluating them.

Each of these criticisms has been widely challenged. These have, however, failed to establish that it is impossible for social sciences to resemble natural science in method. In fact, political science, if properly practised, can be a genuine science. This does not mean that social science must or will develop to meet the requirements of scientific explanations and if possible, predict as well.

Reproductive Fallacy

The traditionalists' objection that social and political behaviour is too complex to be explained in terms of law-line generalizations drawn from adequate empirical theory, suffers from a few confusions. The primary one among them is called the 'reproductive fallacy'. This means that an adequate explanation of a given event must account for that event in all its uniqueness. Any event is susceptible of many descriptions and it is argued that no complete description is possible,

that language in general is inadequate to capture experience and that describing a thing is different from actually perceiving and reacting to it. However, this in no way implies that descriptions are somehow necessarily inadequate. Nevertheless, an adequate explanation of social behaviour is possible under only one of the many possible descriptions.

Social and Natural Science—Points of Divergence

Similarly the objection that the uniqueness governing social behaviour is not merely uniqueness governing all events, but rather the kind of behaviour that does not recur. In other words, it is that behaviour that appeals to political science as a matter of fact and applies to a single instance or at best to a few cases. As against this, the descriptions of interest to physicists apply to large phenomena for purposes of explanation. This limitation of social science is shared by other physical sciences like geology and meteorology. These natural sciences too are interested in explaining unique events, but lack adequate tools and techniques to explain the phenomena before them. This is not a failure of the younger natural sciences alone but also older sciences like physics. They lack knowledge of the contingencies and variables governing the infinite diversity of particular conditions.

Moreover, the kinds of concepts employed by physicists are idealisations that actual physical objects only approximate to. Physical laws apply in their purity to rigid bodies like objects in a vacuum or frictionless mass. Explanation and prediction apply to objects and events only when we accept simplifying assumptions that exclude some variables. For example, the rational economic man is a construct or idealisation that involves simplifying assumptions. Actual economic agents only approximate to this ideal. However, this does not mean that we cannot adduce law-like generalizations which apply to actual economic behaviour.

Philosopher Karl Popper supports the viewpoint that social science deals with the phenomena that are more complex than those investigated by natural scientists. He finds the source of complexity of subject matter of social science in the tendency to compare concrete social or political situations with those found in the laboratory of natural scientists. But the laboratory situation is shaped exactly to limit the effect of certain variables.

Another source of the assertion of complexity, Popper argues, is the belief that social scientists must give an account of social phenomena. This somehow includes the mental condition of all participants. This requirement is highly unrealistic. It is tantamount to demanding that physicists know the behaviour of each molecule before they can employ concepts like pressure or temperature that relate to the collection of a large number of molecules.

The traditionalists claim that human behaviour is different in kind from the behaviour of inanimate objects. This is so because human beings are clearly conscious of their own behaviour. This points to the fact that human beings can alter their own behaviour. They can do so despite or precisely because social scientists have preferred a theory or made a prediction. Besides, human beings can give meaning to their actions and their institutions. There can be no complete or even adequate explanation of human political behaviour and institutions unless it takes account of this factor. Moreover, this meaning or significance cannot be understood in terms of some theory which abstracts from the overt behaviour responses. Consequently contemporary behaviouralism misses the most important dimension of human behaviour due to abstracted empiricism.

Most scholars agree that dissemination of the results of political enquiry in social sciences may have effects altogether different from the publication of conclusions in natural science. For example, the publication of preference poll results may affect outcome of the election, while nobody expects the publication of tide tables to affect

the tides. Nevertheless this difference between the natural sciences and social sciences may not be significant as may be first imagined. The effects of publishing preference polls are themselves open to empirical study, just as are the effects of using a thermometer. Herbert Simon's work on the bandwagon effect offers a good example of how publication of preference polls may be treated as an empirical variable.

Peter Winch supports the claim that the subject matter of social science enjoins a methodology which may radically differ from that employed in natural science. According to Winch, the description of human behaviour as an action, rather than merely as a piece of physical behaviour, demands that the actor possesses in advance certain concepts in the light of which he views his action. What he does is intimately connected to what he perceives himself to be doing. Indeed all meaningful behaviour, and social behaviour, in particular, can be adequately described only when it is treated in terms of the concepts the agents actually have. More importantly, since the ideas and theories of people change and develop social behaviour and social relations are not suited to making broad generalisations. As a corollary to this, social science differs from natural science in two ways.

First, the criteria for determining evidence are not those of the observer, but those of the observed.

Second, appropriate explanation does not come through assumption of particular behaviour under law like generalisation. It emanates from an understanding of behaviour as an instance of some social practice or activity.

British philosopher Winch aligns himself with Max Weber against the position taken by Pareto and Durkheim. The latter plead for a vocabulary of recurring observable social features. In their view, these can be developed and (at least in principle) are suitable for inclusion in scientific generalization. Social facts may describe social behaviour in terms radically different from those employed by the actors themselves.

Durkheim's concept of anomie as it functions in his discussions of suicide is a case in point.

Winch and Weber argue that social scientists must attempt to obtain a *Verstehen* which means an emphatic or interpretative understanding of human action. For both, this understanding is not merely a case of a social scientist attempting to put himself into the other man's shoes, and seeing the world as the social actor sees it, but more than that.

Weber sees *Verstehen* as a first step in social research to be supplemented by a search for statistical generalization. In contrast, Winch suggests that social scientists should engage in an enquiry akin to that of philosophers. They should try to grasp the standards or social rules relevant to the behaviour under study as a result of which this behaviour becomes intelligible.

Winch, admittedly, is justified in joining out the importance of the agent's own account of social and political behaviour, which behavioralists can take into consideration. Normal social and political concepts or categories provide a focus for investigation and specific individual explanations can be included as data. The demand to account for human behaviour in all its uniqueness is only another example of the reproductive fallacy. In a sense bureaucratic behaviour cannot be understood or appreciated unless we see it from the viewpoint of a practising bureaucracy. Nevertheless, it does not imply that there is an alternative explanation of understanding to be gained from subsuming this behaviour under law-like generalizations. This may be so even when the concepts employed in framing these generalizations and in describing specific pieces of behaviour, differ radically from those that the agent himself would employ.

As against Winch's position, social science has been described as the study of the unintended consequences of human action. This description understates the relevance of Winch's argument, while this position itself misses one vital aspect of social enquiry. Conceding that one important

task of social science is to characterise the rules which constitute various social practices or activities, one need not accept the suggestion that this is all there is to social enquiry. Such an analysis is conspicuously static. It does not leave room for equally important questions that arise about the origin and development of various practices and activities.

Problem of Objectivity

The traditionalists emphasize the intrusion of values at every stage of political analysis. This tends to make objective judgements impossible. Bias or prejudice will surely enter the collection and evaluation of data, allocation of funds for research and admission or rejection of certain variables in theories. Even behaviouralism leads to concern with problems which are not politically relevant. It, thus, given at least tacit support to existing political institutions and practices.

Another objection is that all our complex judgements are reflection of ideology.

They are, therefore, historically relative rather than objective.

The given logic has been countered by the behaviouralists or other practitioners of scientific methodology in political analysis. Undeniably, particular pieces of research have been infected by bias or they have been characterized by an unacceptable intrusion of particular judgements of value and by the investigator's points of view. Probably this happens more often in social sciences than in natural science. However, empirical evidence does not show that the intrusion of values is unique to social science or that it can be eliminated. Furthermore, judgements of value enter into the evaluation and reception of results in natural as well as in social sciences. In this respect, social science may be seen, in principle, as no worse than natural science.

Social science also does not vary in kind from natural science. However, it cannot be denied that some research in social science has been trivial and irrelevant to immediate social and political problems. But it is also

wrong to assume that all or even most investigations in natural science are endowed with special significance or scientific importance. Triviality in choice of research problems, unimaginative research design, lack of insight into the relationship between particular pieces of research and larger problems in a field, and finally, the relative stupidity of the investigator can result in banality and trivialisation of research in both natural and social sciences.

The lack of direct relevance or application often besets basic research in both natural and social sciences. Theorizing is always some steps removed from practical application and what may lead to a fruitful development is not known in advance. Freedom is, therefore, necessary in matters of choice concerning a research problem. It is difficult to see how the demand for relevance at the expense of theorising is different from the charge that a scientist should turn away from some basic research. Both may be worthwhile and not necessarily exclusive undertakings. It does not mean, however, that, in particular cases, priorities cannot be established. If funds are limited, the more important of the research areas may be given priority.

Finally, even if biases and verifying value systems create greater difficulty in social science, it does not follow that they cannot be eliminated. For example, when the application of the Western developmental model to the Third World hides a value bias and is culture-bound. It is a case of intrusion of values into scientific enquiry.

MARXIST APPROACHES :

There are a number of Marxist concepts that are related to the study of political science— political economy, historical materialism and rational choice theory. The term ‘political economy’ denotes the distribution of political and economic power in a particular society and how it influences the directions of development and policies that bear on them. Karl Marx’s concept of historical materialism also examines the process of capitalism as a whole. Extensions of Marxism such as analytical Marxism and the rational choice theory move beyond traditional Marxist studies and help in analysing social and economic behaviour.

- Political Economy and Historical Materialism

Karl Marx explains his approach on the subject of political economy in his work, *Das Kapital*. *Das Kapital* is a wide-ranging discourse on political economy written in German by Karl Marx and edited (in part) by Friedrich Engels. *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* was also written by Karl Marx and it provides a significant scrutiny of capitalism. The concept of ‘political economy’, according to Marx, is not a moral exposition. It is an attempt to examine the process of the capitalist system as a whole, its origins and future. Marx tried to find out the causes and dynamics of the addition of capital, the growth of wage labour, the alteration of the workplace, the concentration of capital, competition, the banking and credit system, the tendency of the rate of profit to decline, land-rents and many other things. According to Marx, the strength of capitalism lay in the misuse and alienation of labour. The ultimate source of capitalist profits and surplus was the unpaid labour of wage labourers. Employers could claim the new output value because of their ownership of the productive capital assets which was protected by the state through property rights.

Marx said that the political economists could study the scientific laws of capitalism in an objective way because the expansion of markets had in reality objectified most economic relations. The cash nexus had stripped away all previous religious and political illusions.

Marx also says that he viewed ‘the economic formation of society as a process of natural history’. The growth of commerce happened as a process which no individual could control or direct, creating an enormously complex web of social interconnections globally. Thus, a ‘society’ was formed ‘economically’ before people actually began to consciously master the enormous productive capacity and interconnections they had created, in order to put it collectively to the best use. The concept of capital does not propose a theory of revolution (led by the working class and its representatives). Instead, it throws up a theory of crises as the condition for a potential revolution or what Marx refers to in the Communist Manifesto as a potential ‘weapon’, ‘forged’ by the owners of capital, ‘turned against the bourgeoisie itself’ by the working class. Such crises, according to Marx, are rooted in the contradictory character of the commodity, the most fundamental social form of capitalist society. According to Marx, in capitalism, improvements in technology and rising levels of productivity increase the amount of material wealth (or use values) in society while simultaneously diminishing the economic value of this wealth, thereby lowering the rate of profit. This tendency leads to a paradox characteristic of crises in capitalism of ‘poverty in the midst of plenty’ or more precisely, crises of overproduction in the midst of under-consumption.

Karl Marx also wrote that the term ‘political economy’ most commonly refers to interdisciplinary studies drawing upon economics, law and political science in explaining how political institutions, the political environment and the economic system—capitalist, socialist, mixed— influence each other.

The term was originally used for studying production, buying, and selling and their relations with law, custom and government, as well as with the distribution of national income and wealth, including the use of the budget process. Figure 2.1 shows the essence of Marx's concept of the political economy.

Social Production of Existence

In the theory of the social production of existence, men usually enter definite relations, which are independent of their will. This includes relations of production that are appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society. This is the real foundation on which a legal and political superstructure arises and with which the definite forms of social consciousness corresponds. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a particular stage of development, the material and productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces, these relations turn into their bindings. This leads to changes in the social economic foundation that lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole superstructure.

In studying such transformations, it is always necessary to understand the material transformation of the economic conditions of production. This can be determined with the precision of ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and the fight begins. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness. On the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production. No social

order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society.

Mankind, thus, inevitably sets itself only such tasks as one is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation.

Broadly speaking, the Asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production may be designated as epochs marking progress in the economic development of society. The bourgeois mode of production is the last antagonistic form of the social process of production but the productive forces developing within the bourgeois society create the material conditions for a solution of this antagonism also.

Historical Materialism

The concept of history according to Karl Marx is known as dialectical or historical materialism. 'To Marx', explains Larson 'matter is not a product of mind: on the contrary, mind is simply the most advanced product of matter.' Though Marx rejected Hegel's content orientation, he retained the dialectical structure. Historical materialism is the Marxist theory of society. This is clear in a detailed passage in the Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy.

Stages of Human History

One of the primary themes contained in Karl Marx's The Communist Manifesto is the stages of human history. He differentiated the stages of human history on the basis of their economic regimes and categorized them into four modes of production which he called the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal and the bourgeois.

Being a materialist, Karl Marx believes thoughts to be based on facts. According to Marx, 'It is not the consciousness of men that determines

their existence, but on the contrary, it is their social existence that determines their consciousness.’

In this way, social laws change along with the history of social and economic evolution. There have always been conflicting classes in society. From historical evidence, these conflicting classes have three major forms, which are as follows:

- Society of slave tradition
- Aristocratic society
- Capitalist society

According to Marx, only a communist society can resolve the conflict. Even the economic basis of social evolution has two parts:

- Means of production
- Economic relations

The first comprises machines and second, ownership and ways of distribution. The order of society underwent a change with the development of the classes. With the development of agricultural implements, it entered into a state of agriculture.

The industrial age was conceived with the discovery of industrial machinery. In the same way, society underwent important changes with the entry of banks and currency into the medium of distribution.

Modes of Production and Practical Aspects of Historical Materialism

Therefore, the history of society is reflected in the history of development and the law governed during the successive modes of production. This succession passes through six consecutive modes of production.

•Primitive society: This was the first and the lowest form of organization of people. It existed for thousands of years. In this stage, men made use of primitive implements. The relations of production and the productive forces were not very developed. Everything was done on communal basis. The people tilled the communal land together with

common tools and lived in a common dwelling, sharing products equally. The productive forces developed slowly. With the growth of productivity, the clan began to break into families. The family became the owner of the means of production. Thus, private property arose and with it, social

inequality. This resulted in the first antagonistic classes—masters and slaves.

- Slave society: In the earlier stages of human society, called primitive communism by Marx, the community was a society. People did not have the need to accumulate. However, when man started using the result of one day's labour over a number of days, the tendency to accumulate increased. This was the beginning of the convention of wealth.

Ownership of objects spread to ownership of men because slaves helped to increase the inflow of objects. In this way, the slave and master classes came into being in society and consequently, master and slave morality grew. This increased dissatisfaction which in turn led to class conflicts. Slaves revolted against masters for equal rights.

- Feudal society: As time passed, the masters did concede some rights to slaves. Though the slaves possessed some ownership over land, a major portion of the yield still went to the master. It was the inception of 'lordship society'. In this society, too, there were two conflicting classes—serfs and lords. Lords were superseded by kings or emperors. The serfs laboured and the lords or kings benefited. In order to give sanction to the authority of kings and lords, religion was resorted to.

In this way, religious ethics were born and the concepts of Heaven and Hell came into being. God was recognized as the religious emperor under whom lay many gods and goddesses. The serf was taught to pray to this God and to rest satisfied with his lot, which was allocated to him by God. It was God who had vested authority in the king. Also, there were lords authorized by the king. Thus, to obey their orders was the duty of the public. There was a vast difference in the status of the ruler and the ruled.

•Capitalist society: In this age, conflicts in the lordship system became more intense. On the other side, steam was discovered in the forces of production and factories derived power from steam engines. The lords abandoned their dukedoms and entered the industrial field. They created the capitalist or owner class. They joined hands with businessmen and white-collared middle class people. The serfs went on to become the labour class. Thus, society was again stratified into two layers or classes—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In the bourgeois and proletariat morality too, there is a tremendous conflict as in all conflicting classes. The policy of the bourgeois is one of exploitation. They have nothing to do with the problems of the proletariat. Resorting to secular orders, laws of action and religion, they preach lessons of humbleness and patience to the labourers.

•Socialist society: After the working class has been exploited to the hilt, it looks for an escape. Class consciousness is built up that leads to revolution against the capitalists and if it is successful, socialism is gained. In socialism, production is directed by the elected councils of the workers. The means of production are transferred from the hands of capitalists to that of the workers. He called this change the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’. Economically, each worker is paid according to the amount of labour he contributes to the society.

•Communist society: The communist society, according to Marx, is the future society aimed at by all form of development and revolution in society. This is best defined by the Party Programme in USSR as, ‘Communism is a classless social system with one form of public ownership of the means of production and full social equality of all members of society under it, the all-round development of people will be accompanied by the growth of the productive forces through continuous progress in science and technology; all the springs of cooperative wealth will flow more abundantly, and the great principle, “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs” will be implemented. Communism is a highly organized society of free, socially conscious working people in which public self-government will be established, a society in which labour for the good of society

will become life's prime want of everyone, a necessity recognized by one and all, and the ability of each person will be employed to the greatest benefit of the people.'

In the communist state, the class struggle will come to an end. The disparity between mental and physical labour will lose recognition and the government and religion will be destroyed. Only then will true morality be conceived.

An Assessment of Historical Materialism

Historical materialism or the materialist conception of history is the direct application of the principles of dialectical materialism to the development of society. Karl Marx made it the cornerstone of his social and political philosophy. Even though Marx does not explain what he means by his theory of historical materialism, it is based on the economic interpretation of history. Marx probably used the word 'materialistic' to contrast his theory with that of Hegel as sharply as he could.

The theory of the materialistic conception of history starts with the belief that economic activities are the basis of political, legal, cultural and religious institutions and beliefs. Various forms of state or varieties of legal system cannot be taken as results of the development of human mind but have their origin in the material conditions of human life. The theory starts with the simple truth that man must eat to live and in order to eat, he must produce. Thus, his survival depends upon the success with which he can fulfil his needs.

Production is the most important of all human activities. Society is the result of these necessities of man. Marx grouped the efforts of man in this regard into four main stages:

- Primitive or Asiatic stage
- Ancient stage
- Feudal stage

- Capitalist stage

In all these stages, the class which controls the means of production controls the rest. It is this fact of domination which creates a perpetual state of tension and conflict. In all stages of human life, the forces or conditions of production determine the structure of society.

Marx's theory of materialistic conception of history contains a greater amount of truth than his dialectical materialism. According to the Marxist thinker Carew Hunt, all modern writers on social sciences are indebted to Marx, even if they do not admit it. In this sense, Marx's historical materialism or economism represents a very valuable development in the methods of social sciences.

However, it is impossible to explain all historical movements exclusively in economic terms. Marx's theory ignores the fact that human passions, sentiments, emotions and religion also influence human behaviour. As a philosophical doctrine, the economic interpretation of history is incapable of universal application.

We may see reason in the emphasis laid down by Marx on economic factors though history cannot be explained in terms of decisions made by politicians and kings acting in vacuum. The major problem arises when the views of Marx are offered as a complete explanation of an extremely complex phenomena. Many ideals which, according to Marx, were only reflections of material interests of one's place in the economic order, actually attain independent status. It is possible that Karl Marx and his colleague Engels recognized the over-emphasis that was laid on the economic factors. The excessive zeal of some of his admirers to make his ideas rigid led Marx on one occasion to say that he was not a Marxist. By this, he seems to have meant that he was rigid when they were applying the materialist conception of history.

2.4.2 Rational Choice

The rational choice theory provides a framework for not just understanding but also modelling behaviour, both social and economic. Not only is it important in the school of microeconomics, that is presently dominant, but it is also of great significance in modern political science, sociology and philosophy. It is the same as instrumental rationality, which involves the identification of the most cost-effective method for achieving a specific goal without affecting the worthiness of that goal.

Individual preferences

The rational choice theory is based on the idea that behavioural patterns in societies represent the choices made by individuals during their attempt to maximize benefits and minimize their costs. In other words, the decisions of people regarding the way they act is made by comparing the costs of different actions with their benefits. As a result, patterns of behaviour will develop within the society the results from those choices. The concept of rational choice, wherein comparison of costs and benefits of certain actions are made by people, is quite evident in economic theory. Since people want to get as many useful goods as possible at the lowest price, they will consider/weigh the benefits they get from a certain product (for example, how useful or appealing it is) compared to similar objects. They will then compare the prices. Simply put, most consumers will select the object which will give them the maximum reward at the minimum price or cost. It is claimed that rational choice theory makes certain unrealistic assumptions to generate predictions that are tractable and testable. These include: An individual possesses complete information regarding what exactly will result from a certain choice. Models that are complicated depend on the probability of describing the outcomes. An individual possesses the cognitive ability and time to consider and weigh each against every other choice. Studies about the drawbacks or constraints related to this assumption are included in theories of bounded rationality.

Proponent of Rational Choice Theory

The application of rational choice theory was supported by Gary Becker, recipient of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences in 1992 for his studies on crime, discrimination and human capital. In the late 20th century, the rational choice theory was the school of thought that dominated the study of political science. Rational choice is more self-consciously theoretical than other research programmes. History and culture are irrelevant for rational choice theorists, who wish to understand political behaviour. All they need to know is the interest of the actors and the assumption that these interests are pursued in a rational manner. While the decision-making approach in the past chose to explain the decisions of elite groups (usually in foreign policy-related issues), rational choice theorists chose to apply their formal theory (at times requiring mathematical notations also) to all aspect of political life.

Rational Choice Theory: Practical Applications

The main feature that defines the rational choice theory is that people attempt to always maximize their interests in situations where their vote is required or where they are required to volunteer politically. There are many variants to the approach. Decision theory, for instance, is based on cost-benefit analysis done by individuals without reference to anyone else's plans. The game theory, on the other hand, examines how people make choices on the basis how they expect others to act.

The primary idea of the rational choice, economic and public choice (although these variants differ in important particulars) is that behaviour is purposive. Political behaviour is not just an outcome of psychological drives, socialization or organizational norms. In fact, individuals possess goals which they attempt to achieve, acting as rationally as possible given the level of knowledge, available resources and the situation.

Rational Choice Theory in Political Economy

The rational choice theory refers to the interaction between the society, state and markets. It makes use of sophisticated analytic tools and techniques in its investigations. Rational-choice theorists examine individual behaviour as well as the state policies in terms of benefit maximization and cost minimization. The rational choice theory has become more and more involved in social sciences other than economics, such as sociology and political science in recent times. It has had far-reaching effects on the study of political science, especially in fields like the study of interest groups, elections, behaviour in legislatures, coalitions, and bureaucracy. Models that depend on rational choice theory often adopt methodological individualism, and assume that social situations or collective behaviours are solely the outcome of individual actions; that larger institutions play no role. The mismatch between this and sociological conceptions of social situations is responsible for the limited use of the theory in sociology. Among other things, sociology focuses on the determination of individual tastes and perspectives by social institutions, conflicts with rational choice theory's assumption that our tastes and perspectives are given and inexplicable

Rational choice theory defines 'rationality' more narrowly and specifically so as to simply mean that an individual tries to balance costs against benefits to decide on an action that gives maximum personal benefits. In general, the rational choice theory does not take into account or address the role played by an individual in terms of morals or ethical decision-making. Thus, economist and Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen refers to those who follow the rational choice model as 'rational fools'. This is because the rational choice theory is bereft of the understanding of consumer motivation. Some economists restrict the use of theory to understanding business behaviour where there is more clarity of goals.

PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT

In a parliamentary form of government, the tenure of office of the virtual executive is dependent on the will of the legislature; in a presidential form of government the tenure of office of the executive is independent of the will of the legislature (Leacock). Thus, in the presidential form, of which the model is the United States, the president is the real head of the executive who is elected by the people for a fixed term. The president is independent of the legislature as regards his tenure and is not responsible to the legislature for his/her acts. He, of course, acts with the advice of ministers, but they are appointed by him as his counsellors and are responsible to him and not to the legislature for his/her acts. Under the parliamentary system represented by England, on the other hand, the head of the executive (the crown) is a mere titular head, and the virtual executive power is wielded by the cabinet, a body formed of the members of the legislature, which is responsible to the popular house of the legislature for its office and actions.

Being a republic, India could not have a hereditary monarch. So, an elected president is at the head of the executive power in India. The tenure of his office is for a fixed term of years as of the American president. He also resembles the American president in as much as he is removable by the legislature under the special quasi-judicial procedure of impeachment.

But, on the other hand, he is more akin to the English king than the American president in so far as he has no 'functions' to discharge, on his own authority. All the powers and 'functions' [Article 74 (1)] that are vested by the constitution in the president are to be exercised on the advice of the ministers responsible to the legislature as in England. While the so-called cabinet of the American president is responsible to himself and not to the Congress, the council of ministers of the Indian president is responsible to the Parliament.

The reason why the framers of the constitution discarded the American model after providing for the election of the president of the republic by an electoral college formed of members of the legislatures, not only of the Union but also of the states, has thus been explained. In combining stability with responsibility, they gave more importance to the latter and preferred the system of 'daily assessment of responsibility' to the theory of 'periodic assessment' upon which the American system is founded. Under the American system, conflicts are bound to occur between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. On the other hand, according to many modern American writers, the absence of coordination between the legislature and the executive is a source of weakness of the American political system.

What was wanted in India on her attaining freedom from one and a half century of bondage is a smooth form of government which would be conducive to the manifold development of the country without the least friction. To this end, the cabinet or parliamentary system of government was considered to be more suitable than the presidential.

A more debatable question that has been raised is whether the constitution obliges the president to act only on the advice of the council of ministers, on every matter. The controversy, on this question, was raised by a speech delivered by the President Dr Rajendra Prasad at a ceremony of the Indian Law Institute (28 November 1960) where he urged for a study of the relationship between the president and the council of ministers. He observed that, 'there is no provision in the constitution which in so many words lay down that the president shall be bound to act in accordance with the advice of his council of ministers.'

PRESIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT

The president of the United States of America is decidedly the most powerful elected executive in the world. The constitution had declared that, 'the executive power shall be vested in a president of the United States of America.' The framers of the constitution intended to make the president the constitution ruler. But, in due course of time, the office has gathered around itself such a plentitude of powers that the American president has become 'the greatest ruler of the world'. He has vast powers. According to Munro, he exercises 'the largest amount of authority ever wielded by any man in a democracy.' It is difficult to believe that the modern presidency was deliberately created by the founding fathers in their form. They did not want to do anything that would directly or indirectly lead to concentration rather than separation of powers. Their main decision was to have a single executive head—a part of honour and leadership rather than that of 'commanding authority'. But the modern presidency is the product of practical political experience. Three powers of the president have been supplemented not only by amendments including twenty-second amendment, twenty-third amendment and twenty- fifth amendment; but also by customs, usages, judicial interpretations and enlargement of authority by various president's themselves.

Process of Election

The presidency of the United States of America is one of the greatest political offices of the world. He is the chief executive head of the state as well as the head of the administration. The makers of the constitution were very much agitated over the nature of the executive. In their anxiety to establish a free, yet limited government, they devised a system of government which came to be known as the presidential system; their original contribution was to constitutional law. All executive authority is, therefore, vested in the president.

The constitution provides that a candidate for the office of the president must be:

- (i) A natural born citizen of the US
- (ii) Not less than thirty-five years in age
- (iii) A resident of the United States for at least fourteen years

The president is elected for four years. Originally, the constitution was silent about presidential re-election. US President George Washington, refused a third term on the ground that this would make the United States too much of a monarchical rule. So, a convention grew that a president should not seek election for the third time. The convention was followed till 1940, when Roosevelt offered himself for the third term election and he succeeded. He was elected even for the fourth time.

In 1951, the US constitution was amended. According to this amendment of the constitution, the tenure of the office of the president was fixed for two terms. Thus, Franklin D. Roosevelt continues to remain the only president to be elected for more than twice in American history.

Further the constitution provides that in case a vice-president assures the presidency consequent upon death, resignation, etc., of the president, he will be allowed to seek only one election provided that he has held the office for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected. If someone has held office to which someone else had been elected, for less than two years, he can be elected for two full terms by his own right.

The constitution provides for the removal of the president earlier than the completion of his term of four years. He may be removed by impeachment. He can be impeached for treason, bribery or other high crimes. The impeachment proceedings against a president may be initiated by the House of Representatives only. The changes are framed by representatives by a simple majority. The changes thus prepared are

submitted to the senate, and a copy of the charge sheet is sent to the president. Now the senate sits as a court and the chief-justice of the Supreme Court presides over its sittings. The president may either appear personally or engage councils for his defence. After the arguments of both the sides are over, the senate may decide by two-third majority to impeach the president.

Election of the President

One of the most difficult problems faced by the framers at Philadelphia was that of choosing the president. Having decided that the head of the state must be elected, the problem before them was to decide how he would be elected. Ultimately, it was decided that the president would be indirectly elected by the people. But the growth of political parties and political practices has set up the method of presidential election. First we shall see the constitutional provisions and then examine how the election is actually held.

The plan of election as provided in the constitution is rather simple. The president is elected by an electoral college consisting of the representatives of the states. The people of each state elect presidential electors (members of Electoral College) equal to the number of representative the state has in Congress. No member of the Congress is allowed to be a presidential elector. The presidential electors meet in each state on fixed dates and vote for the president. All the votes are sealed and sent to the capital of the US. The president of the senate counts the votes in the presence of members of both the Houses of Congress. The candidate who secures majority of the electoral votes cast for the president is declared elected. If no candidate receives a clear majority of the electoral for the president, the members of the House of Representatives choose a president from among the three candidates who have received the highest number of electoral votes and the new president assumes office.

Election in Practice

According to the constitution, the American president is elected indirectly; but in practice his election has become direct. Although the language of the constitution of presidential election remains unchanged, whether that be the party system or the means of communication and transportation, all make his election direct. The developments have reduced the importance of the Electoral College. The following are the various stages of his election.

(i) National convention: The first step in the election of the president is taken by the political parties who proceed to nominate their candidates early in the year in which the election is due to take place. Both the major political parties convene a 'national convention'. The convention may be held sometime in June or July. Delegates to the national convention are chosen according to certain rules framed by the parties. About a thousand delegates take part in the Convention, and all of them are leading and active party workers in their states. The convention selects the presidential nominee and issues a manifesto which in the US is known as the 'platform'.

(ii) The campaign: The campaign generally begins in the month of July and continues till the Election Day in November. The parties have their campaign managers and a very effective machinery to conduct the nationwide propaganda. The presidential candidate visits all the states and addresses as many meetings as he can, delivers a number of nationally televised speeches. His supporters use various media of mass contact.

(iii) Election of the Electoral College: The election of the members of the Electoral College is held in November. Technically voters go to polls to elect members of the Electoral College; but as we have seen above, this in practice means direct vote for a particular candidate. Due to the rise in party system, the electors are to vote for their party nominee for the presidential office.

They do not have a free hand in the choice of the president. They are rubber stamps. As it is known beforehand for which candidate each elector will vote, the result of the presidential election is known when the results of the election of the presidential electors are announced.

Thus, the election of the president has become direct. It is no longer indirect. The American voters personally participate in the election of the president. Hence, the president election in the month of December merely becomes a formality. Thus, theoretically, the president is elected indirectly, but in practice he is elected directly.

- **Powers and Functions of the US President**

The US president is not only the head of the state but also the head of administration. The constitution clearly lays down that all executive authority belongs to him. The constitution enumerates the powers of the president. In fact, they are much beyond those contained in the constitution. Many factors are responsible for the growth of the presidential powers and today many view the extent of these powers as a dangerous trend. In addition, lot of powers are enumerated in the constitution, the president has acquired a list of authority by statutes.

‘Congress has lifted the president to a status again to that of constitutional dictator’. The decisions of the Supreme Court usages have also considerably strengthened the position of presidency. The powers of the president may be studied under the following heads:

1. Executive powers

The executive powers of the American president include the following:

- (i) He is the chief executive and it is his duty to see that the laws and treaties are enforced throughout the country.
- (ii) He has the power to make all important appointments but all such appointments are to be approved by the senate. As a matter of usage, the senate does not interfere in the appointments of the secretaries,

ambassadors and other diplomats. Appointment of the judges of the Supreme Court is scrutinized thoroughly by the senate. In the appointment of federal officers in various states of the US, the convention 'senatorial courtesy' has come into existence. The constitution says that the federal are to be made by the president and approved by the senate. The president has the power to remove any person appointed by him. The senate has no share in the removal of officers appointed with its own consent. Thus, the president has almost unrestricted power for removing the federal officers.

(iii) The president has control of foreign relations which he conducts with the assistance of the secretary of state. He appoints all ambassadors, consultants and other diplomatic representatives in foreign countries, with the approval of the senate. Besides he may send 'special', 'secret' or 'personal' agents, without the senatorial approval, who take orders directly from him. The president receives all foreign ambassadors and other diplomatic agents accredited to the United States. He can, if circumstances require, send them home and even break off relations with a certain country. He negotiates treaties with foreign powers. But such treaties must be rectified by a two-third majority of the senate. The senate can block a treaty that the president has negotiated but it cannot make treaty or force the president to make one. Though his treaty making power is subject to rectification by the senate, he is free to enter into 'executive agreements' without the consent of the senate.

(iv) He has the sole power to recognize or refuse to recognize new states. In fact, he is the chief spokesman of the US in international affairs and is directly responsible for the foreign policy of his country and its results.

(v) The president is the commander-in-chief of all the three forces. He is responsible for the defence of the country. He appoints officers of the army, navy and air force with the consent of the senate and anybody's approval during a war. He cannot, however, declare war. This

power has been entrusted to the Congress but as the supreme commander of the defence war. He is the regulator of foreign relations and can handle the situation in such a way as to make war; the president may also govern the conquered territory. He can appoint officers there, make laws and ordinances.

2. Legislative powers

The US Constitution is based on the theory of separation of powers. The executive and legislative organs of the government are made independent of each other. Hence, the Congress legislates and the president executes.

But, in practice, the president has become a very important legislator. His legislative powers are as follows:

(i) The president is required by the constitution to send messages to Congress giving it information regarding the state of the Union. It is a duty rather than the power of the president. The time, place and manner of sending the message to the Congress depends upon the discretion of the president. Formerly, the president used to deliver his messages personally to the Congress, the senate and the House of Representatives meeting in a joint session for the purpose. Later on, the practice was given up and messages were sent to be read to the Congress on his behalf. A custom has been developed which requires that the president must send a comprehensive message to the Congress at the beginning of every session. This is a regular feature. Besides these regular messages, the president may send many more special messages every year. Sometimes, these messages contain concrete proposals for legislation. Today, the 'message' is not merely an address to the Congress; it is used as an address to the people of the country and to the world at large. In recent years, the drafts prepared by the president are introduced by some members of the Congress belonging to the president's party, in their own name. The messages exercise great influence on the legislation by the Congress, particularly when a

majority of the legislature is composed of the party to which the president belongs.

(ii) In the US, the president is not authorized to summon or prorogue the Congress or to dissolve the House of Representatives. However, the president can call special sessions of both Houses of the Congress, or any one of them, on extraordinary occasions. These extra sessions are convened, the agenda is also fixed by the president and the Congress does not transact any other business during that session only of the senate. Thus, very often the president is introduced by some members of the Congress belonging to the senate. This may be done to secure rectification of an urgent treaty.

Again the president may insist upon disposal of certain business before adjournment of a regular session of the Congress, by threatening to convene an extraordinary session soon after the regular session prorogues. Thus, normally the president has no power of convening the sessions of Congress, but to deal with extraordinary situation, he has got this power also.

(iii) The president can also issue certain executive orders having the force of law. This is known as the 'ordinance power' of the president. Some of the ordinances are issued in pursuance of authority conferred upon him by the Congress; others are issued to fill the details of laws passed by the Congress. The number of such executive orders is very large. As a result of this, the president has been able to increase his legislative influence tremendously.

(iv) In recent times, the presidents of America have used the device of taking the Congressional leaders into confidence by holding personal conferences with them. By this the president is able to secure their support for legislative measures.

(v) If president's party is in majority in the Congress, then he does not face much

difficulty in getting certain laws of his choice passed.

(vi) President can appeal to people at large. It means the president can win public opinion for his policies and measures. He tries to win public opinion through speeches on the radio, television, weekly press conferences that in practice the election of President is direct; therefore, it is easier for the president to gather opinion on his side. When Congress knows that the public is with the president, it has to pass the laws wanted by him.

(vii) We have seen the president's position in law making which is equally important and his influence is exercised by him through his veto power. Veto power means the authority of the president to refuse his signature on a bill or resolution passed by the Congress. All bills passed by the Congress are presented to the president for his assent. The president may refuse to sign a bill and send it back to the House in which it originated within ten days of the receipt of the bill. While returning a bill that the president has voted, he is required to assign reasons for his disapproval the Congress can override a veto by passing the bill again. The only condition is that the bill must be passed by a two-third majority in each House of the Congress. So the veto of the president is only a suspensive one. But sometimes, it becomes difficult to secure a two-third majority in each House. In that case, the suspensive veto becomes an absolute one.

If a bill is sent to the president and he neither signs the bill nor returns it back to the Congress, the bill becomes the law within 10 days even without his signature. The only condition is that the Congress must be in session. If the Congress adjourns in the meantime, the bill is automatically killed. This is called 'Pocket Veto' of the president. This means that the president can simply ignore a bill (pocket a bill and forget about it), if it is passed by the Congress on a date less than 10 days before it adjourns. Many bills passed towards the close of the session of the Congress are killed in this way. The pocket veto is absolute and cannot be overridden by the Congress. Thus, the president

can recommend persuading the Congress to pass legislation which he approves and can prevent too hasty or inadvisable legislation by using the weapon of veto. But it has been said 'he can persuade or guide, but rarely threaten'.

3. Financial powers

In theory, it is the Congress which controls the public purse in practice, the budget is prepared under the guidance and supervision of the president. Of course, Congress is at liberty to change the budget proposals, but it seldom makes any changes.

4. Judicial powers

The president has the power to grant pardon and reprieve to all offenders against federal laws, except those who have impeached or those who have offended against the state. He also appoints (with the consent of the senate) judges of the Supreme Court which is the highest practical organ in the US.

Leader of the party

The makers of the US constitution had rejected the parliamentary system of government because it could not function without parties and political parties which according to them were not the need of the time. It means they were against the political parties. However, today, organized political parties and the president is the leader of his party.

The moment a party selects its presidential candidate, he becomes its national leader and if he succeeds in the election then he becomes the president, he also becomes the leader of his party for the next four years. He as leader of the party has a decisive voice in the selection of party candidates for numerous elective offices. He can exert great influence in decisions such as the distribution of party funds. As chief campaigner of his party, he may be more enthusiastic in support of some of the candidates, and less in case of others. It is all the more important to note

that the role of the president as a party leader is entirely extra-constitutional.

Position

The powers of the presidency in practice have varied from time-to-time with men occupying the office and the circumstances under which they came to occupy it. Whenever there has been an emergency or crisis or whenever foreign affairs have overshadowed domestic affairs, one finds strong presidents coming to power and completely dominating the Congress which recedes and becomes a body for the purpose of voting supplies as and when demanded by the president, but in times of tranquility, when domestic affairs have been to the fore, we find presidents of weaker timber in saddle, lacking personal force magnetism and initiative, the Congress which recedes and becomes powerful and exercises the chief choice of policy. At any given moment, therefore, the circumstances in existence and the personality of the president, each acting and reacting upon the other, have been responsible for establishing the powers of the presidency.

We can say that the president enjoys enormous powers. He combines in himself the office of the head of state and of the head of the government and this makes the office of the American president the most powerful political office in the world and his decision can sway the destinies of the world. In the range of his powers, in the immensity of his influence and in his special situation as at once the great head of a great state and his own prime minister, his position is unique. All this does not mean that he is a dictator. The American presidency is a constitutional office. Its powers are huge, but they have to be exercised within constitutional office. Its powers are huge, but they have to be exercised within constitutional limits.

-Comparison between the US President and the British King and Prime Minister

The American presidency is considered the most powerful executive office in the world.

E. S. Griffith has described it as the 'most dramatic of all the institutions of the American Government.'

According to Munro, the American president exercises the largest amount of authority ever wielded by any man in a democracy! Due to his increasing powers and importance he has become 'the focus of federal authority and the symbol of national unity.' Laski has very correctly said that the American president is both more or less than a King; he is also both more or less than a prime minister. In a sense, he is a king who is his own prime minister.

The US president is both head of the state and head of the government. Both the queen of Great Britain and the president of the US are heads of state and mighty figures in their respective countries. Both have supreme command of defence forces in their hands.

American president is more than a British king

The US president has vast powers. Article II of the constitution reads, 'The executive power shall be vested in the president of the United States of America.' He is the head of the state and government and runs the whole administration but the British monarch is only the head of the state and not of the government. In all his official functions, he acts on the advice of his ministers. It means the king has to do what ministers tell him to do. He is held, no doubt, in great esteem and still exercises in Bagehot's wordings the right 'to be informed, to encourage and to warn the ministers.'

Position of the US president in relation to the cabinet

The position of the US president is superior to the British king in relation to his cabinet. In the US, there is a cabinet; but its members are not equal to the president, they are not his colleagues.

In fact, ministers are his subordinates. He is their boss. They are nominees of the president and they work during his pleasure. He is not bound to act according to their advice or even to consult them. On the other hand, the British king is bound to act according to the advice of his ministers, who form de facto executive. There was a time when ministers used to advise and king used to decide but now the case is just the reverse. He has no hand in the selection of his ministers. Nor can he dismiss them. He can advise them but cannot override the decisions of the cabinet. The king is outside the cabinet and cannot participate in its proceedings. It is the prime minister who leads the cabinet.

Executive powers

The US president exercises vast executive powers. He has the power of appointing a large number of officers with the consent of the senate but he enjoys absolute power in the removal of the officers. But the British king has to exercise all his executive powers with the advice and consent of his ministers.

Legislative powers

The US president has an important role to play in the field of legislation. He can send messages to either house or both, in extraordinary session. He has suspensory and pocket veto powers. On the other hand, the British king has no legislative powers. In reality, it is the cabinet which exercises his power to summon, prorogue and adjourn the legislature. His speech is prepared by the cabinet. As a convention, his absolute veto power has not been used since the time of Queen Anne.

Judicial powers

The US president exercises judicial powers given to him by the constitution. He has an important role to play in the appointment of judges. While the British king exercises his judicial powers on the advice of his ministries.

Foreign affairs

The US president plays a leading role in the formation of his country's foreign policy by virtue of his being the commander-in-chief and the chief manager of his country's relation.

American president is also less than the British king

It is also true that the president is less than the king in certain respects.

1. Appointments

The American president is elected directly by the people. He is eligible for re-election for only one extra term. The British king, on the other hand, is a hereditary monarch born and brought up in the royal family.

2. Term of office

The American president is elected for a term of four years. He is eligible for re-election for only one extra term. As a president, he can remain in office for 10 years at the most. On the other hand, once the British king or queen becomes a monarch, he or she remains on the throne for the rest of his/her life.

3. Party relations

The British monarch has no party affiliation and renders significant impartial advice to his ministers. He can view problems from a national angle, much above the narrow partisan viewpoint. He gains experience, while acting as an umpire in the game of politics being played by leaders of the ruling party and the opposition party. As for the American president, he is elected on party lines. He does not reign, though he has been called 'the crowned king for four years.' He occupies the White House for a short duration and after his term of tenure, he becomes an

ordinary citizen. The monarch is head of the church as he is regarded as the 'Defender of Faith' and commands respect of all the subjects, but it is not so in the case of the President.

4. Impeachment

Lastly, the president of America can be impeached by the Congress on the ground of 'Violation of the Constitution' and can be removed even before the expiry of his term. But the British monarch is immune to such sort of impeachment.

From the above points of comparison, it can be concluded that there is truth in Laski's saying that 'the president of America is both more or less than the British king.' He rules but does not reign and the American president combines in his person the office of the king and prime minister. But on the whole, he enjoys vast and real powers than the British king.

3.3.3 Comparison of Presidential Powers in America and Britain

It is worthwhile comparing the office of the president of the US with that of the prime minister of the UK. There are significant and marked differences between the two. Both the offices occupy topmost position in the government structure of their respective countries, following large democracies. It is rather difficult to point out as to whose position is superior to the other one. Both are the choice of the people. They are the representatives of the people, and are popularly elected but in an indirect way. Both the offices wield enormous power in peace time as well as in time of war. The relative

strength of the two most powerful executive officers in the world depends upon the form of government prevailing in their respective countries.

If the president of the United States is the 'uncrowned king', he is at the same time, his own prime minister. He is the head of the state as well as of the government. Administration is carried out not only in his name, but by him, and under his direct supervision by his subordinate officers. But he is not a dictator as certain limitations are imposed upon him. He

combines in him the offices of the head of the state as well as head of the government. On the other hand, the British prime minister is only head of the government. He is a de facto executive. It is he, who carries on the administration, in reality, but in the name of the president, who is a de jure executive. Dr Jennings, while talking about the Atlantic Charter, once said, 'the president pledged the United States, while the war cabinet, not the prime minister, pledged the United Kingdom.'

Appointment

Strictly speaking, the American president is indirectly elected by an electoral college, but in reality, his election has almost become direct in actual practice due to strict party discipline. The British prime minister is appointed by the king. Normally, he has no choice as he 'has to call the leader of the majority party in the House of Commons'.

Term

In the parliamentary government of Great Britain, the prime minister and other ministers are collectively responsible to the House of Commons. They continue in office as long as they enjoy the confidence of the House. They have no fixed term of office. The House of Commons can dismiss them any moment, if they lose confidence 'of the House, that is, if they lose their majority in it.' On the other hand, in the presidential form of government in the US, the president enjoys a fixed tenure of four years. He stands outside the Congress. He is neither a member of either house of Congress nor is he responsible to it. Of course, he can be impeached by the Congress on grounds of 'Violation of Constitution', and can be thus removed. This has happened, so far, only once in the American history in the dismissal of President Johnson.

The president is then in a position to pursue his policies persistently and with firmness, while the prime minister has to submit the political pressures in the parliament. Therefore, administration in England lacks promptness and firmness.

Administrative Powers

Apparently, the American president is more powerful than the British prime minister. He is the de jure as well as de facto head of the executive. He is commander-in-chief of the armed forces. He conducts foreign relations on behalf of the country. He concludes treaties and makes high appointments though, of course, with the consent of the senate. He wields a vast patronage.

The British prime minister and his cabinet colleagues work under constant responsibility to the parliament. They have to answer a volley of questions regarding their omission and commissions. But the British prime minister with a strong and reliable majority behind him in the House of Commons, can do almost everything that the American president can. He can conclude treaties and offer patronage without seeking the approval of the parliament.

Their relation to their respective cabinets

The relationship of the president of America with his cabinet is markedly different from that of the prime minister of England with his cabinet colleagues. The president is the master or boss of his cabinet and completely dominates its members. They are his subordinates or servants. They are his nominees and hold office during his pleasure. It is purely a body of advisors to the president known as his 'kitchen cabinet', 'family cabinet.' They have been rightly described by President Grant as 'Lieutenants to the President'.

In the words of Laski, 'It is not a council of colleagues with whom he has to work and upon whose approval he depends.' President Roosevelt turned to his personal friends more than to his cabinet for advice. On the other hand, the prime minister's relations with members of the cabinet are more or less like a chairman of the Board of Directors of a government enterprise. They are his trusted colleagues, not his subordinates. They are public men and have the support of the people. The British prime minister is the recognized leader of his cabinet, but he is neither its master nor a boss but only a captain of his team. The phrase, 'first among equals', does less than justice to his position of

supremacy but it does indicate that he has to carry his colleagues with him; he cannot drive them out. He runs a great risk, if he provokes the antagonism of any of his eminent and powerful ministers.

In relation to Legislation

The American president is often spoken as the chief legislator in the United States, but in fact, he has no direct legislative powers. Thus, he cannot get legislation of his choice enacted by the legislature. Though, of course he can apply brake in the enactment of a law by exercising his veto power. But that is only his limited power. He can only request the Congress to make a law but cannot force or compel it. Laski has said, 'he can argue, bully, persuade, cajole, but he is always outside the Congress and subject to a will he cannot dominate.' He is neither a member of the Congress nor has any intimate relation with it.

Hence neither he nor his ministers can participate in the proceedings of the legislature. He can only pressurize the legislature through his power of sending messages and convening special sessions. He can issue ordinance and executive orders.

On the other hand, the prime minister is a member of the legislature along with his colleagues. They are rather important members of the parliament and participate actively in its proceedings, the prime minister enjoys vast legislative powers. He prepares the ordinary bills and monthly bills with the help of his cabinet and being a leader of the majority in the house, can easily get those enacted. The king cannot exercise his veto power over such law as according to convention this power has become obsolete. Hence, no bill can become an Act without his consent. But the president can issue ordinance and executive orders; the prime ministers cannot do so.

The US president is the Supreme commander of the American armed forces and can order general mobilization. But this power is enjoyed by the king in England and not by the prime minister.

The prime minister wields enormous powers which the American President does not. As far as the American president is concerned, he is

a constitutional dictator during emergencies; obviously the powers of the president and the prime minister are greater and less than those of the other at different Points. Much depends on the personality of the occupant of the office.

From the above discussion it can be summed up that the American president is both more or less than a king; he is also more or less than a prime minister. Brogan has also rightly stated that the American president combines in his person the choice of the king and the prime minister.

3.3.4 Election of the US Vice-President

The framers of the constitution have provided for a vice-president of the limited states. Many of the delegates at the Philadelphia convention, which framed the American Constitution, expressed the view that the office was unnecessary. One of the delegates said that the vice-president might aptly be called 'His superfluous Highness'. Ultimately the office of the vice-president was created with qualifications similar to those laid down for President.

He must be a natural born citizen of America. He must have attained the age of 35 years and must have been a resident of the United States for at least 14 years. The original constitution did not provide for separate election to the office of vice-president. The presidential candidate obtaining the second highest vote electors were declared as the elected vice-president. This arrangement was changed by the 12th Amendment to the Constitution, which provided for, separate nominations for the offices and separate ballot papers. The candidate for vice-presidency, who polls an absolute majority of the votes of 'Presidential electors', is elected vice-president. If no candidate receives an absolute majority, the senate makes the choice between the two obtaining the largest number of votes. The vice-president of the US receives a salary of 62,500 dollars per year.

The constitution assigns two functions to the vice-president, one potential and the other actual. Vice-president is the presiding officer of the senate. He is not a member of the Upper House, but presides over it. He has no vote except in case of a tie, when he can exercise a casting vote. As the presiding officer of the Senate, vice-president performs normal duties of a chairman. Roosevelt, when he presided over the Senate referred to it as 'an office unique in its functions of rather in its lack of functions.'

Succession to the Presidency

The potential function of the vice-president is to fill the office of the president 'in case of the removal of the president from office, or his death or inability to discharge the powers and duties of the said office'. Thus, the vice-president does not get or officiate as the president for a short period. But the moment the office of the president falls vacant, the duties of the chief executive shall devolve upon the vice-president'. He assumes the presidency and remains in office till the next election of the president. The Constitution has authorized the Congress to decide by law, who will succeed, in case of death, resignation, removal or disability both of the president and vice-president.

The office of the vice-president has developed along a line different from that expected from the constitutional makers of the US. According to Munro, the founding fathers intended the office to be 'a dignified one and a sort of preparatory school for the chief executive position'. Actually, the vice-president has been 'forgotten men in American history'.

The vice-president of the United States is generally regarded as an object of pity. In this connection Laski says, 'the vice-president has been little more than a faint wrath on the American Political horizon.' Much, however, depends upon the personal relationship between the President and his number two. Mr Johnson was sent out by President Kennedy as his envoy to renew contacts with

foreign governments. Nixon was also sent to various foreign countries as special envoy of the president to iron out differences with those governments or to improve relations with them. However, the fact remains that most presidents have not availed themselves of the limited assistance the vice-president may render.

Comparison between the American and the British Cabinet

Both America and Britain have cabinets in their respective countries, but they fundamentally differ from each other. The American cabinet can be said to resemble the British cabinet in one thing only. Both have arisen from custom or usage. While in all other respects the American Cabinet stands in sharp contrast to its American counterpart. The chief differences between the two are as follows:

(i) Difference regarding constitutional status: The contrast is because of the different constitutional systems in which the two cabinets function. The British Parliamentary government is based on the close relationship between the executive and the legislative branches of government. So, all the members of the British Cabinet are members of the Parliament. They are prominent leaders of the party. They present legislative measures to the Parliament, participate in debates and are entitled to vote.

On the other hand, the American constitutional system is presidential, which is based upon the principle of separation of powers. So, the members of the cabinet cannot be the members of the Congress like the president himself. They may ‘appear before Congressional committees, but they cannot move legislative measures or speak on the floor of either House of Congress.’

(ii) Membership of legislature: In the presidential system like the US, in case a member of either House of Congress joins the presidential cabinet, he must resign his seat in the House.

Whereas in Britain, if a member of the cabinet is chosen from outside the parliament, he must seek membership of the parliament within a period of six months; otherwise, it will not be possible for him to continue as minister.

(iii) Political homogeneity: The British cabinet is characterized by political homogeneity, all its members being normally drawn from the

same party. The American cabinet may be composed of politically heterogeneous elements. Presidents frequently ignore party considerations informing their cabinet.

(iv) Ministerial responsibility: The British cabinet holds office so long as it enjoys the confidence of the House of Commons, which is the Lower House of the British Parliament.

But in the US, the ministers act according to the wishes of the president and they are responsible to him alone.

(v) Collective responsibility: The British cabinet always functions on the principle of collective responsibility. Its members are individually as well collectively responsible to the parliament. But this is not the case with the US. As Laski says 'The American cabinet is not a body with the collective responsibility of the British cabinet. It is a collection of departmental heads that carry out the orders of the president. They are responsible to him'. They can remain in office during the pleasure of the president.

(vi) Official status: Membership of the British cabinet is a high office which one gets as reward for successful parliamentary career. It may be the stepping stone to prime ministership. Whereas, in America, many of the persons appointed to the cabinet have little or no Congressional experience. It is not even, necessarily towards the presidency. According to Laski, it is 'an interlude in a career, it is not itself a career'.

(vii) Position of their heads: Members of the American cabinet stand on a completely different footing in their relations with the president from that of the members of the British cabinet in their relations with the prime minister. The prime minister is the leader of his cabinet team. His position with his colleagues is that of a primus- inter-pares or first among equals. He is by no means their boss or master. He hazards his head when he dispenses with a powerful colleague. In other words, he cannot disregard a powerful colleague without endangering his own position.

On the other hand, the members of the American cabinet are not the colleagues of the president. They are his subordinates. The president is the complete master of his cabinet, which, in fact, is his own shadow. Members of the cabinet are his subordinates, at best advisors and at worst his office boys. According to Laski 'the real fact is that an American Cabinet officer is more akin to the permanent secretary of government departments in England, than he is to be a British cabinet minister.

Keeping in view the composition, position and the relationship of American cabinet with that of president, Laski describes that 'the cabinet of USA is one of the least successful of American federal institutions'. Being completely over-shadowed by the President and being excluded from Congress, the cabinet officer has no independent forum and no independent sphere of influence. An influential member of the Senate is in a better position to influence public policy because he has a sphere of influence in which he is his own master. Prof. Laski, rightly contends that 'the American Cabinet hardly corresponds to the classic idea of a cabinet to which representative government in Europe have accustomed us.'

The Congress

The legislative branch of the American federal government is known as the Congress. Congress consists of two Houses—the House of Representatives and the Senate. The organization of the Congress on the bicameral pattern was the result of a compromise between the claims of more populous states who wanted representation, in the new legislature, and the smaller states that were keen on equal representation to ensure equality of status in the new set-up. In accordance with the formula devised, aspirations of bigger and smallest states were fulfilled. Each state irrespective of its population, sends two members to the senate and representation of the States in the House is in proportion to their population.

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