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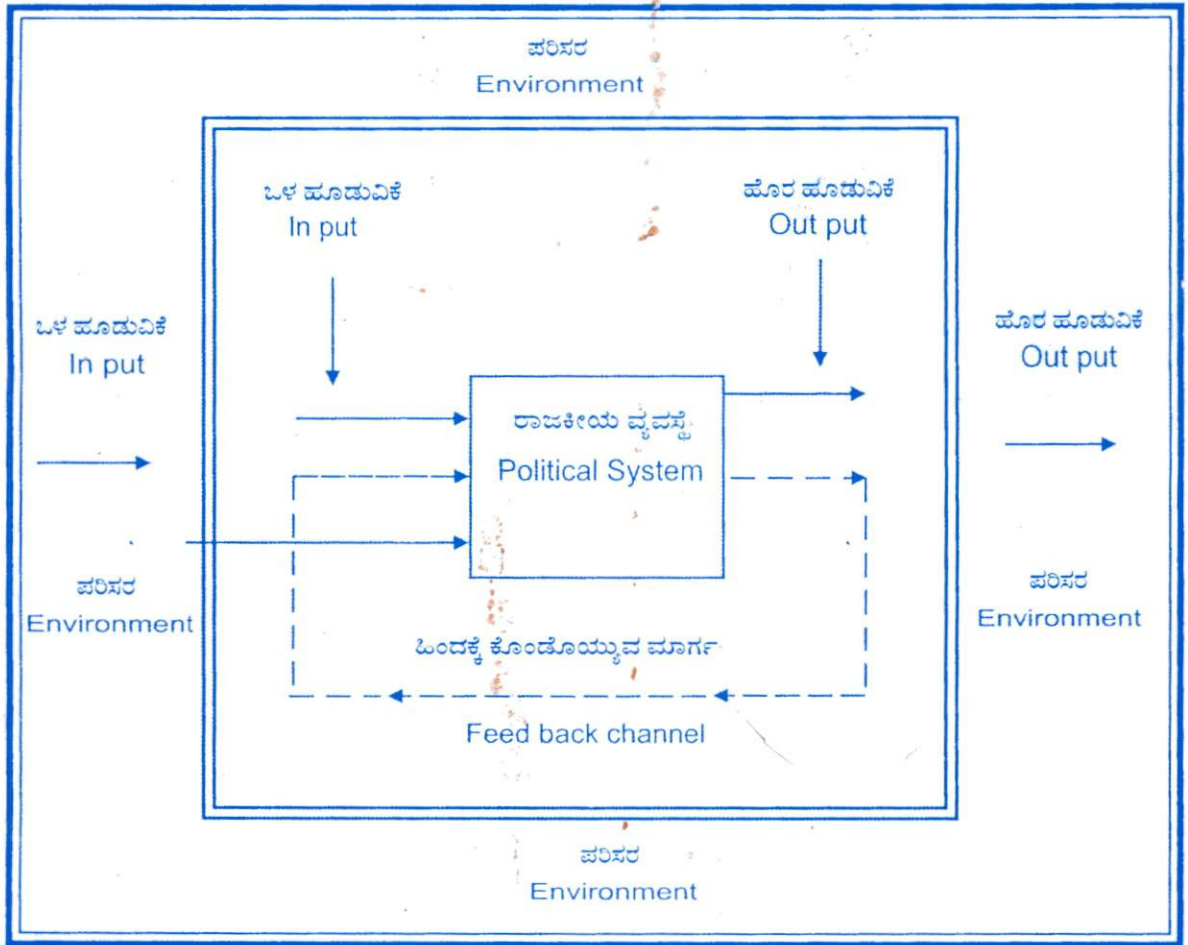


KARNATAKA STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY
Mukthagangothri, Mysore - 570 006

Political Science
M.A. (Final)

English Medium

Comparative Government Politics



Course - I

Block - I

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**Karnataka State
Open University**

**Political Science
Course I**

Block

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COURSE - I

Introduction

The student of Political Science in the II Year M.A. degree is expected to Study 5 papers as it was in I Year M.A. Out of these 5 papers (called as Courses in SIM pattern). Comparative Government and politics is the first paper. This paper deals with the political system, political institutions and outside institutions which influence the functioning of political system and political institutions in working. In order to understand the efficiency of any political system or political institution comparison is necessary. It is said and believed that comparison helps in understanding fully any political system or institution in a better way. Only when we compare we can know the merits or defects of any political system and institution. When these are understood, it will be easy to adopt by any country the system which suits and helps to develop in all aspects of the state. Comparison also helps to find out the defects which are there in the existing political system. Not only that it also helps to find solutions to solve the defects or to adopt an alternative political system. Which may be good to the prevailing society to progress.

Comparison is not a new idea. Aristotle, the father of political science had done comparative analysis of different political systems and came to the conclusion. Which is better good and bad. This process has been continued from that day to this day. Infact, the factor of comparison has gained so much of importance, Comparative government has become a subject matter of political science. As such the students of political science are expected to study this paper to enlighten themselves with different political systems.

In this course there are 7 blocks and each block is further divided into units. This has been done to facilitate the students to understand clearly the paper.

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Block I

This block deals with four important issues in Comparative Politics. First unit deals with the meaning, nature, importance and growth of Comparative Politics as a discipline. The second unit focus on the issues of Political System, particularly its meaning, nature and characteristics. Third unit analyse the contributions made by well known political scientist, Almond and David Easton for the study of Political System. Final unit once again deals with the issues of Political System, mainly features, kinds and functions of Political System

**Unit -1 Comparative Politics-Meaning, Nature, Scope, Importance
and Growth of Comparative Politics**

Structure

- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 Meaning
- 1.4 Nature
- 1.5 Scope
- 1.6 Importance
- 1.7 Growth of Comparative Politics
- 1.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.9 Key Words
- 1.10 Some Useful Books
- 1.11 Answer to Check Your Progress Exercises

1.1 Objectives

After studying this Unit You will be able to

- To study the meaning of Comparative Politics
- To understand the nature and scope of Comparative Politics
- To evaluate the importance and growth of Comparative Politics

1.2 Introduction

It is said that, “comparison is fundamental to all human thought”. Comparison helps in understanding fully the political system of one’s own. It deepens our understanding about the past and helps in constructing the future. Comparison also helps us to understand the weakness inherent in ones’ own country. At the same time it provides alternative to the problems facing the country concerned. Further, as Almond argues, “it illuminates the virtues and shortcoming of our own political life”. Meanwhile it is also true that comparative analysis would help us “expand our awareness of the possibilities of politics”. The study of comparative politics as a discipline is not a new one- it has its own history, and honorable past. It dates back to the period when Aristotle was making comparative analysis of different political systems. In fact, Aristotle can be claimed to be the original thinker of comparative politics for the reasons that he gave primacy to the study of comparative politics vis-a – vis the other disciplines and also to the fact that he used comparative method which is now also being used as well as practiced across the globe. It was Aristotle who contrasted, “economies and social structure of many Greek city states in an effort to determine how the social and economic environment affected the political institutions and politics.” There are others too who can be called the ancestors of comparative politics: Plato, Polybius, Cicero, Machiavelli, Montesquieu, Tocqueville, Marx, Mill, Bagehot and Mosca. Although they belonged to different period of history, their contribution as ancestors of the study cannot be neglected or overlooked. In recent years scholars like Robert Dahl compares the economic characteristics, culture and historical experiences of many countries to understand the different forms of government. To this category one can include such scholars as Almond, La Palambora, David Easton, Apter, Huntington, Harry Eckstein, Roy C. Macridis, D.A. Rustow, etc

1.3. Meaning

Before understanding the meaning of Comparative Politics it is essential that we should understand the meaning of politics. The word politics derived from the Greek word *Polis*, meaning city state. Politics is always identified with human behaviour or it is related to human decision. It is a social activity. This is the reason why Aristotle made political science, “master science of all”. It is in this context political science becomes the study of such decisions. However, it is true that not all the decisions are political; many of them are economical or social.

Nonetheless “politics” is defined differently. It is a contested concept, with different meaning; different values are attached to it. It is difficult to define it precisely. In the broadest sense it is seen “as an activity through which people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live”. Nonetheless politics is inextricably linked to two important issues: conflict and cooperation. Presence of different opinions, different wants, competing needs etc always ends or brings in conflict. In fact H.R.G Greaves tries to look at the politics as a matter, concerned among other things, with conflict- the latter is seen over the proper use of force, power, and authority. This does not mean that men live without any cooperation. The latter is essential to preserve and live in a peaceful manner. This is reason why the heart of politics is called conflict resolution. It is true that not all the conflicts can be resolved over night. Maurice Duverger has rightly argued that, “ever since men have been reflecting on politics, they have oscillated between two diametrically opposed interpretations. According to one, politics is conflict, a struggle in which power allows those who possess it to ensure their hold on society and to profit by it. According to another view, politics is an effort to bring about the rule of order and justice in which power guarantees the general interest and common good against the pressure of private interests”

There is another meaning attached to politics, especially when the word is used in every day practices. Here the term becomes loaded one-most of the time the term politics is used as a “dirty word”: it gives the impression of manipulation, double game, violence, deceit etc. Such associations of terms are not new. US historian Samuel Johnson for example called politics as “the systematic organization of hatred”

The fourth way of looking at the politics lies in the establishment of final authority,

which represents the forces, institutions and organizational forms for the maintenance of “order” and reconciliation of the differences. This is where cooperation and the establishment of an authority become all the more important. Pennock and Smith have argued that, “Politics is then, refers to all that has to do with the forces, institutions, and organizational forms in any society that are recognized as having the most inclusive and final authority existing in that society for the establishment and maintenance of other, the effectuation of other conjoint purposes of its members, and the reconciliation of their differences”.

There is another way of looking at politics: as ‘the exercise of power, the exercise of authority, the making of collective decisions, and the allocation of scarce resource’ etc. This particular argument encompasses large number of issues. In fact, it is David Easton who defined politics as “the authoritative allocation of values”.

However in the field of comparative politics, the latter word has three important connotations: Political activity, Political Process and Power.

- **Political Activity:** It is basically emanated from the predicament of people. It is linked to the issues of conflict and the methods to resolve it through cooperation for the purpose of creating a just society. There are different methods to resolve the conflict: persuasion, reasoning, adjustments, diplomacy, and compromise or even by resorting to violent methods of force and coercion. Nonetheless, there should be agencies to resolve the conflict such as government. In the absence of such agencies the unending conflict would not only destroy the society but also the state, including the individuals
- **Political Process:** Political process is an extension of political activity. There is no single agency involved in the political process or the activity. Every society has numerous groups or the agencies to protect or defend their interests. These groups compete with the political agencies or the institutions to increase/ defend and protect their interests. Ultimately this becomes an issue of power – they try to influence the political authorities or the decision makers, they fight among themselves so as to make the government arbitrator for the increasing conflicts between different social groups. This is the reason why political process is analyzed as “a set of procedures whereby private associations existing in a state seek to influence the government or participate in policy- formation by the government or become the government” In other words,

the comparative politics tries to understand the linkage between the political process and the government, especially how different groups, associations interact with the government and in the process how they undergo change

- **Political Power:** One of the important components of politics is power. In fact the theory of power is not a new one. It is as old as Greeks. Some time the word is identified with such terms as authority, influence, domination etc. However, it has its own meaning. It means many things to many people. "It is seen as the ability to affect or control the decisions, policies, values or fortunes of others". Scholars like Laswell and Kaplan defines the politics as "study of shaping and sharing of power". It is also defined as "ability to determine the behaviour of others in accordance with one's own wishes". Nonetheless power is not the same as that of force. Power is latent force, force is manifest power. Even "authority" is not the same. The latter is institutional power. In fact power appears in different ways in informal and formal institutions. Incidentally power can not be located in one sector/one segment or the institution. It is spread out between numerous institutions/groups, including different communities. Every political community tries to increase, enhance and retain the political power. Broadly there are three different forms of power: political, economic and social. Political power is vested with the state and manifest in the forms of legislature, executive, police, military, bureaucracy and judiciary. "The way the organs of government work and enforce the commands of the state exhibit political power". In fact, as we said earlier power can not be located in one agency or institutions. It spread across different political groups, political parties, pressure groups, elites etc. In other words power is dispersed and diffused. On the contrary there is an argument which tries to see the political power in the hands of "ruling class" or the "dominant class". This is the reason why study of politics should not be confined alone to state or government. It should encompasses to study the influence, role and significance of power in different communities, societies, groups, associations, parties, etc. Meanwhile it is also essential to know how these groups, associations interact with the political system in the matter of addressing the issues of power. Incidentally throughout the world the "political power" is not uniformly distributed. It changes in each country depending upon the political condition. This is the reason why comparative politics makes it a point to understand

the political power both within and outside the countries. It is here the meaning of comparative politics is expanded to include the study of power at different structural level, including the role of different social groups, political parties, associations' etc vis-à-vis the politics.

However there are different levels of understanding the politics. Haywood for example understood the politics in terms of four levels:

- Politics as The Art of Government:
- Politics as Public Affairs
- Politics as Compromise and Consensus
- Politics as Power and Distribution of Resources

Nonetheless the issues of politics are also addressed from the ideological point of view. Basically there are two neat ideological camps: liberals and Marxist.

Liberal view of politics can be traced to the writings of large number of political thinkers such as Hobbes, Locke, Burke, Bentham, Mill, Green Laski, McPherson Oakshott, MacIver etc. They would see man having his own personality which can not be suppressed or crushed by the state. They are also concerned about the autonomous individuals whose interests are reconciled with the interests of the society. Meanwhile society is treated as a space for competition and conflict. Society is thus like a free and competitive area "that is governed by the laws of free contract, exchange and competition". This is the reason why McPherson calls it as "possessive individualism". It is here they stressed the need for an agency to deal with the problem of social conflict. In this particular context liberals would see politics as a matter concerned with "state and government that are required by the society for the establishment of conditions ensuring a condition of competition and also maintain a system of law and order in which man may have the best possible development of his personality".

On the contrary Marxist has a different view with regard to man, society and politics. For Marxist man is first a social being and then a political being. They believed that man should be understood in terms of objective conditions around him. At the same time man is a part of social whole, which include family, groups and classes. Further they believed that man is slowly becoming alienated from other social classes mainly due to the growth of dominant

class or the exploiters. The latter controls different apparatus, including the state apparatus. Marxist would view the state as an instrument of class oppression. The politics in the final analysis becomes the study of class relations and class struggles in the society. The politics would come to an end with the proletariat revolution. In other words, the character and nature of Politics would change in the final stage. However this particular analysis of politics has been used in different parts of world, which has helped in the formation of communist regimes including Soviet Block. But, not all the have countries vouched for orthodox Marxist understanding of politics- there are variations in the understanding as well as arguments. Comparative Politics focus on these differences and tries to understand the problems inherent in these ideologies

It is in this context that comparative politics faces the problem of semantic confusion. This is discernible in the presence of different definitions of comparative politics. Secondly confusion also arise due to fact that many a time terms such as “Comparative Government”, “Comparative method”, “Comparative Analysis” are loosely and interchangeably used. Edward Freeman for example argued that, ‘ Comparative Politics is nothing but the comparative study of political institutions, of forms of government’. Here the problem lies in the fact that he took cognizance of political institutions and the government, leaving out different groups, associations which are acting and interacting with the politics.

A more realistic definition was given by Curtis who argues that “Comparative Politics is concerned with significant similarities and differences in the working of political institutions, and in political behaviour”. His definition is also abstract, especially when he refers to political behaviour – what was he meant by political behaviour -of masses? Or groups? Or political institutions?

On the contrary Almond looks at Comparative Politics in terms of studying political systems “not as isolated cases but through generalizations and comparisons”. This is the reason he says that “in principle the comparative politics could consists of comparisons of cities, states, international organizations, clans, or even individual leaders”. Nonetheless, in practice it is nothing but studying the state or what we commonly referred to as countries.

However, Comparative Politics needs to be seen as a study which focus not only on the formal governmental institutions or political organizations but also emphasizes informal

factors, “the dynamic nature of the political process, the role of interest groups, and the impact of society and culture on politics”. In this context S.N Ray, argues that “it now offers to study both the political process as well as political institutions in comparative fashion for the purpose of answering common problems and questions”. It is here the range of comparison has multiplied to include large number of political systems within which politics is treated as a social function, “that involves deliberation and decision –making for adjusting and reconciling the power aspirations in society”.

Nonetheless, at present Study of Comparative Politics signifies multiple things: comparative analysis of political structure, systems, political process, political behaviour and power politics both within and across the nations. Its major concern remains the “politics” which has no precise meaning or definitions. This is because either the concept is too broad to include everything, including every day practices, or confined to issues of structures and behaviour. Whatever it may be the Comparative Politics has come to stay for many years to come.

Check Your Progress - 1

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Discuss the meaning of Comparative Politics.

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1.4 Nature

Comparative politics uses different methodologies to understand the changes taking place. Aristotle in his *Politics* contrasted the economies and social structure of different Greek City State so as to understand the effect of social and economic environment affecting the political institutions and politics. Similarly in recent years a well known political scientist Robert

Dahl in his series of studies on Democracy, “compares the economic characteristics, cultures, historical experiences of many contemporary nations in an effort to discover the combinations of conditions and characteristics that are associated with that form of government”. Comparative method is also used to explain the differences between process and forms of different political systems; it is also used to compare different constitutional regions with authoritarian regimes, two party democracy vis-à-vis the multiparty democracy, parliamentary with presidential regimes, and finally stable government with unstable government.

There are many intellectual traditions that influenced shaping the nature of Comparative Politics. One of the intellectual traditions was the Historicism which influenced the study of political institutions. “In the study of political institutions interest now came to be centered primarily upon historical first principle, upon the “cunning of history”, upon construction of audacious developmental theories, unilinear in form based on single determining principles and more often than not predicting the imminent universality of democracy- theories of change more organic than mechanistic form”. In fact many of its concepts were used in the study including the fact that many of its problems such as the problem of relation between the politics and development, politics and education, politics and culture of societies were often used in Comparative Politics.

Meanwhile one can not overlook the fact that the Comparative Politics is trying to identify the nature and characteristics of different political system “in the light of generalized characteristics”. It is obvious that there is a shift in its nature. Meanwhile it aims at developing some of the intellectual tools of study and analysis so as to develop some yardsticks to measure the political system. In other words, it helps in developing new tools, new perspective to understand the political system better or from closer angle. In fact, the ultimate aim of comparative politics is to build a body of knowledge which would help us in prediction and forming policies relating to political system. Now the politics is no more confined to issues of institutions alone, rather its nature has changed to include the political role of different social groups, associations, traditions, etc for the broader understanding of political system.

Nonetheless, there are other factors that also influenced the changing nature of Comparative Politics. One important factor is the growth of Behavioural revolution that helped in expanding the horizons of Comparative Politics. Secondly, Comparative Politics has been

able to co-opt both allied and foreign discipline such as sociology, psychology, economics, mathematics, physical sciences and engineering. This is the reason why “identifying the outer line” is becoming difficult day by day and the study is becoming more complicated one.

In recent years the nature of Comparative Politics has further changed, with the new actors entering into the domain of politics. For example, the role of Multinational Corporations, International Institutions such as WTO World Bank etc in state or the nation building in the third world or different parts of the world has received the major focus. Further, Comparative Politics now also focus on the issues of contestation, resistance or opposition of different civil society to the globalization or liberalization, including the increasing ethnic conflict, nationality struggle. It also focus on the issues of Global Civil Society too. This is the reason why it is now focusing on larger political process acting and interacting at the global level rather than confining to the country concerned

However Comparative Politics has been criticized from two different angels:

- By taking narrow view of politics as interaction and role, it neglects the “output function” of the political system. Interesting Comparative Politics stresses on input function than the “output function”
- Secondly by taking politics as extra-governmental political activity, it would create “the problem of the proper “boundary” of comparative politics as one of the subfields of political science”

Check Your Progress - 2

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Discuss the nature of Comparative Politics

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1.5 Scope of Comparative Politics

There are three central issues in comparative politics. One is the issues is political activity, secondly, the issues of political process and finally the issues of political power. Nonetheless the scope of comparative politics has changed over the years. Earlier the major focus was on the structures of the government or constitutions of different countries. Hardly was there any focus on the every day politics of the state- how the groups interacted with the state; what were the associational representation to the body politics, what were the structures that brought masses to the political systems etc were not dealt with. Most of the time the study of comparative politics was confined to European continent alone, particularly Anglo Saxon countries. Third world studies were completely off the scholarship. However over the years the scope of the comparative politics has expanded to include the study on third world countries .There are reasons for the development of such a trend. One of the reasons is the increasing use of different methodological tools to understand the political phenomenon. In addition, the increasing use of interdisciplinary discourse also had the affect on the study of comparative politics. In fact large number of tools were either borrowed or used from different disciplines such as statistics, biology, sociology, anthropology etc, This is also the result of “revolution of new approach” such as Behavioural approach “which made the scholars to come down from the “armed chair” philosophies to understand the phenomenon at the grass root level which have helped in understanding the cross-cultural phenomenon of the third world countries. During the post-war period three important phenomenon helped in expanding the scope of comparative politics:

1. “The national explosion in the Middle East, Africa and Asia”. This created the conditions for the creation of new state with varieties of cultural practices, social institutions and political characteristics
2. The change in the Euro-centric power to non- Euro centric power. At the same time “ the spread of international power and influence into the former colonial and semi-colonial areas”
3. The rise of communism as a competitor to the western world, particularly to the US. This completely reshaped the relationship between countries and also societies

In recent years few more issues have expanded the scope of comparative politics.

1. One important issue is the issue of globalization. This is precipitated by the collapse of Soviet Union and its satellite countries. In fact globalization brought to focus the new paradigm of development, issues of sovereignty, issues of "nation-state" etc in the third world countries
2. Second important issue is the growth of global civil society. These global civil societies are now linking the local with the global and also challenging the globalization. In the global civil society one can include large number of social movements of the third world. These social movements are now concerned about the democratic spaces, communitarian identity, and the politics..
3. Third is the emergence of new states after the collapse of Soviet Union and new forms of conflicts such as ethnic conflict, nationalist conflict etc. However one can not negate the influence or the growth of new terrorist outfit on the comparative politics.

In fact, the post cold war has left a world engaged in different approaches to the issues like economic growth, political stability, different paths or strategies to democracy, different methods to control the power of the governments, different methods to create vibrant democracy. The issues that the government faces now have multiplied: how to preserve our environment, how to provide scope for different social categories to enter into the domain of politics, how to confront the ethnic strife, how to preserve the different identities of the masses etc. At the same time the world now is increasingly becoming smaller due to the revolution in technology and communication. At present we are living in "Global village" wherein everything is interconnected and interdependent. Now no economies of world can remain isolated or try to develop without the assistance of the other countries. Incidentally we are now living in "borderless" situation, wherein no government claim to have complete control over the information transmitting from one parts of the world to the another. It is in this situation that states are witnessing a complete change: now states are "withdrawing", "retreating" or rolling back. It is in this context the scope of the comparative politics has further increased to study the factors affecting the sovereignty of the countries, the factors that are changing the nature of the state; the factors that are now creating "exteriorization" of categories; and factors affecting the national/international politics. Comparative politics now focus not only on the

politics of the countries concerned but also those of international institutions that affect the political process or the politics at the domestic level.

Check Your Progress - 3

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Analyse the scope of Comparative Politics.

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1.6 Importance of Comparative Politics

In fact the comparative study is essential for certain reasons. One of the reasons is the fact that it would help in expanding the political knowledge about different countries, different cultures, and different forces acting and interacting on the political system and also the factors that affect changes in the political structure. It is in the process that one acquires knowledge about the political structure under which he or she is operating, but also acquire the knowledge about the other countries and other continents.

Secondly, it helps in constructing new meanings to the understanding of political structures. At the same time, it provides scope for new interpretations to the political phenomenon or political structures. Further, it gives new perspective for understanding the larger politics operating at different continents or countries.

Thirdly, comparison provides a method to understand not only political phenomenon but in the process it helps in theorizing the politics from different perspectives. It also helps in overcoming the lacunae inherent in the one's own theory.

It also provides spaces for cross cultural studies such as why European continent behaves differently on the issues of war than on the issue of creating larger Union etc. Further

it helps in understanding the cultural behaviour, its history at different intervals.

As Almond argues, “it is only the way we can understand our own political system. Comparing the past and present of our nation and comparing our experience with that of the other nations deepen our understanding of our own institutions”

At the same one can argue that analyzing the politics of different societies helps us in creating or throwing up alternatives. Meanwhile it helps us in finding out the problems inherent in our system, including the shortcomings in our political life as well as the political system. . “It helps expand our awareness of the possibilities of politics”

Further it helps us in developing our own theoretical models and also tests the theories in the way the political process works in which political change occurs. Here political scientist uses the methods used in the exact sciences.

Check Your Progress - 4

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Discuss the importance of Comparative Politics

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1.7 Growth of Comparative Politics

Study of Comparative Politics moved away from unsophisticated to increasingly sophisticated direction over the years. The comparative politics was first employed by Aristotle who tried to understand the working of different political organization. However, the beginning of modern study of Comparative politics began with renaissance political thought of Machiavelli and comes to its “fruition in the Enlightenment, particularly in the writings of Montesquieu” At the same time one can not over look the contributions made by other scholars during the initial period of its growth: De Tocqueville, Bryce, Ostrogorski and Weber. Even we can not

deny the contribution of Marx to the study of Comparative Politics. These scholars or the thinkers used comparative method to find out the ideal type or the progressive forces of the political history. In fact, growth of Comparative Politics was affected by the emergence of new intellectual tradition and areas focus. One of the major studies that had had the effect on Comparative Politics is Political Sociology. Intellectuals like Weber, Mosca, Pareto, Michels are among the "more luminous in the study of Comparative Politics" However there were reaction to the older conception of comparative politics. This reaction came about during 1920s and 1930s on three important themes. These were 1) its narrowness 2) its concentration on the individual political systems and finally, "its relatively narrow focus upon the government institutions, rules and legal standards and on political ideas". Until the end of Second World War even the study was largely confined to European continent, despite the fact that there were large number of intellectuals who contributed to its growth. Major contributions came from James Bryce, C.J. Friedrich Catlin, Laswell and others. This constitutes the second phase in the history of Comparative Politics. Nonetheless, in the intellectual arguments of the scholars the Afro Asian countries received little focus in the midst of euro centrist approach to the study. Most of the time study remained traditional, confining itself to descriptive studies of the Western Europe. In fact, even in the Western Europe not all the countries received the equal focus; rather it was confined to the study of one or two countries.

Post –War (World War-II) brought in new vistas to the study. During this period large number of contributions came from intellectuals like G.A. Almond, James Coleman, Karl Deutsch, and G.B. Powell. David Apter, Lucian Pye, Myron Weiner, Samuel Huntington and others. It was characterized by reawakened interest in large scale comparison. There were four important trends in the study: Firstly, the focus shifted from the western to the non-western world. Secondly, there was a shift to make the study more "scientific" by using new techniques, analytical tools, approaches, etc. In other words there was attempt to make study more scientific rigor. three, there was a shift to emphasizing the role of social groups, vis-à-vis the political institutions that play "a special role in molding political values and cognitions, loyalties and identifications" – agencies of political socialization; finally, shift to using imported conceptual tools from other social sciences to understand the political phenomenon.

Limitations:

Comparative politics although helps in understanding the problems both from within a country and outside it, however, it has its own limitations:

- It is not always good to use the same western model or theories to understand the developing countries. The methodology that is used to analysis one country may not suit the other country.
- The use of same concepts irrespective of cultural background may not give correct picture about a country understudy
- Thirdly there are no clear-cut boundaries or the focus in the field.

Check Your Progress - 5

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Describe the growth of Comparative Politics

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1.8 Let Us Sum Up

It is now widely accepted that a realistic assessment of one’s own political system or the politics is done only with reference to the other political system. In that way Comparative Politics helps in understanding the divergent political process, behaviour, activities, and structures across the nations. Over the years the scope and the nature of the Comparative Politics has either expanded or changed. There are larger number of factors influenced its growth. Although Comparative Politics is as old as Aristotle, it is made rich by the contributions of large number of scholars or intellectuals across the discipline. Even the growth of different intellectual traditions in other disciplines also influenced its growth. Comparative Politics

essentially required as it helps in understanding the political structure, behaviour, institutions and their interrelationship between different social groups etc in comparative way. It also helps in testing the theoretical or intellectual tools or perspective against the other. Further it helps in understanding the problems or loopholes in one's own system through the methods of comparison. Finally, it gives us a method to understand the politics across the nations.

1.9 Key Words

Historicism	:	It is generally associated with the development in the mid-19th century, in Germany in particular, of a "historical sense", that is, the recognition that the past is radically different from the present and can be grasped only in terms of its own context
Phenomenon	:	Occurrence, Observable fact, happening
Retreating	:	Moving Back
Withdrawal of State	:	State moving back from different realms
Behaviourism	:	It believed that objective observation and measurement is applied to the full range of human behaviour as it manifests itself in the real world.

1.10 Some Useful Books

S.N.Ray	Modern Comparative Politics
G.A.Almond et.al	Comparative Politics Today
David Apter and Harry Eckstein	Comparative Politics
J.C.Johari	Comparative Politics
Andrew Haywood	Politics

1.11 Answer to Check Your Progress Exercises

Check your Progress Exercise - 1

1. See section 1.3

Check your Progress Exercise - 2

1. See section 1.4

Check your Progress Exercise - 3

1. See section 1.5

Check Your Progress Exercise - 4

1. See Section 1.6

Check Your Progress Exercise - 5

1. See section 1.7

Unit -2 Political System- Meaning, Nature and Characteristics of Political System

Structure

- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Introduction
- 2.3 Meaning
- 2.4 Nature
- 2.5 Characteristics
- 2.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.7 Key Words
- 2.8 Some Useful Books
- 2.9 Answer to Check Your Progress Exercises

2.1 Objectives

After studying this Unit You will be able to

- To study the meaning of Political System
- To analyze the nature of Political System
- To understand the characteristics of Political System

2.2 Introduction

For the last couple of years, the term political system is being increasingly used in the Comparative Politics. The usage of this term “system” instead of popular terms such as “government”, “nation” or the “state” etc denotes the changing notion or perception about the political phenomenon.

Incidentally Andrew Heywood in his *“Politics”* looks at the issues of political system beyond “government and the state”. He includes the different structures and also the process as part of political system. This is apparent in the following argument: “A political system or regime is a broader term that encompasses not only the mechanisms of government and the institutions of the state, but also the structures and processes through which these interact with the larger society”. Further he argues that political system is a network of relationship “through which government generates “outputs (policies) in response to “inputs” (demands or support”) from the general public”

On the other Almond argues that the “new terms include some new names for old things, and some new terms refers to activities and processes which were not formerly recognized as being parts or aspects of politics”. Incidentally the new term “political system” is increasingly being used as it “directs attention to the entire scope of political activities within a society”. Most of the old terms such as “government” “Political parties” were referred to or used to pinpoint particular political institutions. Secondly, it was largely focused on the institutions of the west than the non-west world. The non-west or the developing world were either looked down upon or were not focused properly. Here lies the limitations of the study of political science too- especially confining studies to western political institution and treating them as “universal “one. In fact in many of the non western countries the roles played by different political institutions were not only different but also their interrelationship. They were

all cultural specific. Most important is the fact that there were many factors affecting or interacting with the political system too. This can be seen in the way formal or informal groups, caste groups, ethnic groups interact with the political system, but in the process they also shape and limit the role of “formal governmental institutions”

2.3 Meaning

Before understanding the meaning of Political system it is essential to understand the meaning of “system”. Every system should have two important properties: 1) it has to have interdependent parts and 2) it has to have environment with which it interacts. It is true that system itself is not a single whole. There are many systems: mechanical, automobiles, ecological etc. All these systems are not only having the *boundaries* but that they are interdependent. This is the reason why Almond argues that “political systems are a particular type of social systems- namely, one involved in the making of authoritative public decisions”. It is in this context political system can be treated as a set of institutions such as parliaments, bureaucracies, and courts etc, “that formulate and implement the collective goals of a society or of groups within it”.

Secondly, the meaning of political system is enlarged to include not only the coercive institutions such as law courts, legislature etc but also host of institutions “beginning with family, and including communities, churches, schools, universities, corporations, foundations, and think tanks which influence political attitudes and public policy”

In fact, for the last couple of years the term “political system” is increasingly being used instead of such common terms as “government” “state” or “nation”. This obviously shows the shift taking place in the matter of viewing political phenomena. The older terms such as “nation” “state” or “the government” were largely focusing on a particular set of institutions, mainly the modern western societies. This study or the focus, exclusively on the western hemisphere would have had the disadvantage of leaving out large number of non-western world, including the differences within a political system as well. There are large number of groups, institutions, political attitude that shape and limit the nature and scope of formal governmental institutions. It is in this context the meaning of political system acquired a new dimension, especially “it directs attention to the entire scope of political activities within a society”.

One of the reasons why Political system acquired new dimension is the fact that it is associated with the “use of legitimate physical force in the societies”. It is through the force that the political system acts, which gives special quality and importance as a system. These forces are legitimate in the sense that the political system has the right to use the force and command obedience from the citizens. This is the reason why Almond argues that, “when we speak of political system, we include all the interactions which affect the use or threat of use of legitimate physical force”. At the same time he argues that political system also formulate rules and demands compelling obedience in the form of taxation, law making, defense policy etc Thereby it can not be exclusively limited to or attached to the analysis of one particular institution or physical force alone. Hence he includes legislatures, courts, and administrative agencies including family, social groups especially in their political aspects as part of political system.

Second important reason is the fact that political system encompasses the authoritative and coercive activities. For example the political organizations like the political parties do not have coercive authority; however, they influence or control the government. In fact, governments are centrality of political system. It is not only the political parties which influence the political system, there are others too: family, churches, media, schools, clubs universities, corporations, foundations, ethnic groups, religious groups, business classes, think tanks, trade unions, farmers union etc which affect the public policy and thereby the political system. It is in this context the political system now covers all these social categories, agencies, including institutions to understand the way they interact with the politics or the political system and vice versa.

Finally, meaning of the political system is enlarged due to its ever enlarging activities years. In reality, every political system allocates values through the mediation of policies which are binding on the part of the society as they are authoritative. This is aptly defined by Easton. He defines the political system as “that system of interaction in any society through which binding or authoritative allocations are made and implemented”. This characteristic distinguishes the political system from other systems such as physical, biological, social, psychological etc.

Check Your Progress - 1

- Note:* 1) Use the space given below for your answer.
2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Critically analyze the meaning of political system

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2.4 Nature

One of the important natures of political system is that they are not static. They are open as well as adaptive. They are open to the change, depending upon certain factors. One of the important factors is the domestic and international environment. Every Political system receives inputs from the environment and translated the same into policy formulations which are called outputs. Internal environment like spaces for democratization, freedom, literacy rate, peoples' awareness etc definitely affect the political system. Even the system undergoes or makes changes depending upon the pressure exerted by the internal environment. Similar case is with the external environment. Possible war from foreign country, peace initiative from outside, role of the international organizations etc does influence the nature of any political system. Every political system tries to adjust itself with the external environment, including the internal one.

Secondly every political system has to have legitimacy- it should be backed by legitimate coercion, including obedience. It is true that the legitimacy of any political system is not constant- it varies over the years. For example the legitimacy of American government was very high during the period of Second World War but it declined during Vietnam War period. Low legitimacy is always a threat to the political system- it might end up in the collapse of the system itself. The best example is the collapse of Soviet Union- its legitimacy to keep all its allies under its tight control was questioned and, that had the effect on the break down of Soviet Regimes itself.

Thirdly, nature of political system is affected by boundaries. Boundaries are defined in terms of persons, territory, and property. Citizenship is one level of boundary. No person, for example can be a citizen of two countries. Territory of one country should not overlap with other countries- there should be a clear-cut demarcation of boundaries between the countries. This is true even in the case of property. A piece of land belongs to only one country, than multiple countries. However these factors affect the nature of the political system. If two political systems claim their rights over a piece of land, it will end up in war, and destruction. It is in this context political system can adopt multiple strategies to protect its land- from reconciliation to war. In fact, boundaries between the society and the polity differ from one political system to another.

As Robert Dahl argues “political systems differ in their institutions for sharing and exercising power”. In other words political systems also differ in the distribution of power. In each political system power is distributed or concentrated in one, few or many. Even in the case of making policies, the distribution of power is apparent. This is because of the fact that the processes of policy making are extremely complex. There are large number of factors or actors involved who would affect the policies: such as citizens, activists, elites etc, and, at the same time they use different methods as threats, persuasions, promises, direct action, manipulations etc. The nature of political system, in this context, varies on two respects: one, the participation of citizens as voters, decision makers, or policy makers etc. and two, “the extent to which those who are closet in the actual making of a governmental decision must compete for the votes of the electorate in unrigged elections, in which those who oppose the conduct of the Government can compete on equal terms”.

Further, every political system faces or confronts disagreement, conflict and coalition. However, the “patterns of political disagreement, conflict and coalition have different causes in different systems”. This obviously mean that the nature of any political system depends on the kind and the pattern of conflict, or coalition .No single factor can be attributed to “conflict” taking place within a political system. Political conflicts in different countries are related to multiple issues such as social status, economic differences, income distribution, poverty level, ideology, religion, region etc. Even the cleavages and coalitions in a political system depends upon large number of factors such as development pattern, distribution of wealth, social

cohesion, existence of social categories etc. All these factors differ from country to country and thereby the nature of political system also differs.

In addition, "The severity of conflict varies over time within any given system and from one system to another during the same period of time". This can be seen in all the political systems. For example, one century ago, Americans were involved in "killing one another on a massive scale in a civil war". The same is now transformed into a peaceful society. Another example is the overthrow of regimes in Bangla Dash and Pakistan over the period of time. They are the best examples for different forms of conflicts: ethnic, social, communal and regional. Even in India the severity of conflict over the years has changed. Classic case is the way Khalistan became the issue of the past- which once threatened our Indian democracy. The severe conflicts can be seen in the form of armed rebellion, civil war, violent revolution, guerilla warfare, street battle, mass exile etc. Even the peaceful countries also once or twice face the conflict, but the severity of conflict varies- it depends upon the nature of political system. In a democratic country the conflicts are resolved through persuasion, accommodation, or negotiation. On the contrary, in autocratic countries conflicts are resolved through the language of armed revolt, or revolution.

Finally the nature of political system depends on the factor of distribution of political resources and skills. It is true that the political resources and skills are distributed in different ways in different political systems. Although they are distributed unequally "in all the systems the degree of inequality varies from one system to another". In some countries or in political system inequality is greater than other countries. For example, the inequality exist in India varies from one region to another.

Check Your Progress - 2

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Discuss the nature of Political system

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2.5 Characteristics of Political Systems

Robert Dahl has viewed the following as the characteristics of a political system:

- **Uneven control of political resources:** The political resources in a political system are distributed unevenly. There are four reasons why the resources are distributed unevenly. First, Specialization in functions creates differences in access to different political resources. This is because specialization is obvious in each society. These specializations make uneven distribution of political resources. Second, since the differences are inherent –biologically and socially it is obvious then that the people will have different access to political resources. Dahl argues that, “all people do not start life with the same access to resources, and those with head start often increase their lead”. Third, “differences in biological and social inheritance, together with differences in experiences, all produce differences in the incentives and goals of different people in society”. This is the reason why society can not provide standard set of identical motives and aims. Different motives will lead to receiving different political resources. Fourth, inevitability of differences. This is done in order to equip individuals for different tasks
- **Second important characteristic of political systems is the quest for political influence.** He argues that people seek political influence for the simple reason that any control over the government would benefit them. “Control over the government is such a familiar way of furthering one’s own goals or values that it is hard to imagine a political system in which no one sought power”
- **Uneven Distribution of Political Influence:** This is argued on the ground that the political influence is distributed among the members of a political system unevenly. Further it is argued that “some people have more resources with which they can influence the government makes it easier for them to gain more influence over the government if and when they wish to do so. People with more influence over the government can use their influence to gain control over more political resources”.
- **The Pursuit and Resolution of Conflicting Aims.** It is argued that every member in the political system pursue different interests or the aims. At the same time they try to resolve the conflicting aims amicably. The respective governments of the country deal with these conflicting interests. “Conflicts and consensus are both important aspects of

political systems”.

- **The Acquisition of Legitimacy:** It is argued that, “ leaders in a political system try to ensure that whenever governmental are used to deal with conflict , the decisions arrived at are widely accepted as not solely from fear of violence, punishment, or coercion but also from a belief that it is morally right and proper to do so’
- **Development of an Ideology:** Every system creates its own ideology .There is one reason why leadership develops an ideology: this is just to endow their leadership with legitimacy and also convert their political influence into authority.

The Influence of Other Political Systems: Dahl argues that “the way a political system behaves is influenced by the existence of other political systems”. This obviously mean that no political system exist in isolation. Every political system influences the other political system.

- Finally, **Inevitability of Change:** It is argued that no political system remains stagnant forever. It undergoes changes depending upon certain historical, cultural, social factors influencing the political system.

On the contrary, Almond came out with the argument that every political system has to have three important properties. They are:

- **Comprehensiveness:**

This obviously mean that the political system covers all kinds of interactions – both input as well as output. In fact, Almond was not merely concerned about the structures of the system as such as political parties, interest groups, legislatures, executives, bureaucracies, and courts alone, but also other factors such as kinship, lineage, status and caste groups, violent groups in the larger framework of politics.

- **Interdependence**

This means that change in one sub sect of system affects the other sub sects as well. No system can be treated as absolutely independent or autonomous. All the systems are interdependent for their survival. For example, economic system can not survive without the help of political system- or for that matter legislature passed by the political system.

Even changes taking place in communication system at the present context however has brought tremendous changes in electoral behavior, electoral process and electoral system itself.

- **Boundaries**

Almond writes, “By the existence of a boundary in the political system, we mean that there are points where other systems end and the political system begins”. This can be explained with a specific example of relationship between society and the political system. Every social system has its own particular function to carry: for example, marriage, religious, etc. it can not arrogate itself the power of a political system. Its boundary ends up in framing and enacting some regulations for its members than the political system. There is a clear cut demarcation of its functions and the political system. Any overlapping of functions would lead to a situation of chaos and crises.

Further Almond argues that every political system has to have following important characteristics:

1. **Universality of political systems:** this obviously means that every political system, be it a primitive or modern or even the simplest one has to have political structure. It is in this context it is argued that the nature of the political system is not uniform- there are differences in its size, its development or its capacities.
2. **Universe of Political structure:** Every political system has to have some structure which perform similar function. In fact Almond argues that all types of political structure which are visible in modern system are also present or visible even in non-western or primitive system too. In the non-western or primitive political system, the interaction or structures might be occasional or irregular. Even they may not be clearly visible. This does not mean the absence of any structures. Further he argues that, “all political structures, no matter how specialized, whether it is found in primitive or in modern societies is multifunctional”. The rule making, rule adjudication, political communication or even functions like articulation, aggregation etc are carried out by different structures of a political system. Even one political structure might do multiple functions- for example; political structure like Supreme Court might do the functions of a watchdog,

administer justice, and uphold the constitution etc simultaneously or at different times. It is here he argues for multifunctional political structure, although its degree of frequency might differ.

3. **Universe of Political Functions:** Almond argues that “any particular structure may perform more than one function”. In fact, political structures tend to perform many functions, although the function of any political structure depends upon many factors. It is true that more number of functions is obvious in simple or less differentiated societies; however it is universal phenomena or general characteristics of all the political societies.
4. **Mixed Political culture:** It is difficult to reduce all political systems to pure form. All political systems are culturally mixed one. Some of the traditional cultures are even apparent in the modern political system. Classic case is the presence of Hereditary Monarchy and House of Lords in the UK on the one hand and the House of parliament on the other- the latter represents the modern political system or structure, the latter represent the traditional political structure or system.

Check Your Progress - 3

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Explain the Characteristics of Political System

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2.6 Let Us Sum Up

Over the past couple of years, instead of using the terms such as “government, state or the nation”, the term political system is increasingly being used in comparative political science. This obviously reflects the changing or shifting importance from the study of a particular

institution to larger issues interacting with the politics. Now the political system encompasses political parties, interest groups, and ethnic groups including the role of family as political entities, in the politics. Therefore reducing the study of political system to one issue becomes problematic. At the same time it is true that the nature of political system is not static, rather it is undergoing changes depending upon certain factors. There are internal as well the external factors that affect the nature of political system. At the same time one should not over look the fact that no two political systems are uniform or the same- although they might have similar characteristics or properties such as boundaries, comprehensiveness, interdependency etc. There are a wide variety of forms of political systems; there are differences in their size and structures too. Even the differences can be seen in their approach to public policy and performance.

2.7 Key Words

Pursuit	:	Search Quest
Structure	:	Arrangement, Configuration, Organization
Adjudication	:	Negotiation, mediation, Settlement
Articulation	:	Expression, Communication
Boundary	:	Border, edge, Perimeter
Kinship	:	relationship, affinity
Lineage	:	Family, ancestry, hereditary
Status	:	Rank, Position
Persuasion	:	Influence, Advice, Urging

2.8 Some Useful Books

Robert Dahl	-	Modern Political Analysis
S.N.Ray	-	Modern Comparative Politics
David Apter and Harry Eckstein	-	Comparative Politics
Andrew Heywood	-	Politics

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|---------------------------|---|---|
| Robert Dahl | - | On democracy |
| S.P.Verma | - | Modern Political Analysis |
| G.A.Almond and G.B.Powell | - | Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach |
| G.A. Almond and Others | - | The Politics of Developing Areas |
| G.A.Almond and others | - | Comparative Politics Today: A World View |

2.10 Answer to Check Your Progress Exercises

Check your progress exercise - 1

1. See section 2.3

Check your progress exercise - 2

1. See section 2.4

Check your progress exercise - 3

1. See section 2.5

Unit 3 System Analysis of Gabriel Almond and David Easton

Structure

- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Introduction
- 3.3 Almond's Structural and Functional Approach
- 3.4 David Easton's System Analysis
- 3.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.6 Key words
- 3.7 Some Useful Books
- 3.8 Answer to Check your Progress Exercise

3.1 Objectives

After studying this Unit You will be able to

- To study the major contributions of Almond towards system analysis
- To evaluate the David Easton's contribution to the study of system analysis

3.2 Introduction:

Two important political scientists who have brought in paradigm shift in the understanding of systemic analysis are Almond and David Easton. Almond's analysis is better known as structural-functional approach. On the contrary David Easton is known for Input –Output analysis. The latter stresses the behaviour of political system in relation to the environment, in terms of analyzing inputs which constitute demands and supports and outputs which are nothing but authoritative allocation of values or the policy decisions or actions. The Structural – Functional analysis believes in the fact that every political system has to have political structure and that every structure has multiple functions to operate. In fact, Almond's desire was to develop a universal analytical tool to study the non-western world particularly the third world. This is apparent in his classic statement in the introduction to *The Politics of Developing Areas*: that **“this is the first effort to compare the political systems of the “developing areas” and to compare them systematically according to a common set of categories”**. He continuously use structural- functional analysis even in recent works such as the one “Comparative Politics: A World View”. On the contrary David Easton tries to understand the political system as part of larger environment. His analysis is unique as it tries to understand political system in terms of multiple categories operating or interacting with it. His main concern was to know how a political system retains its stability despite facing crises.

3.3. Almond' Structural and Functional Approach

Almond's theory is better known as “Structural and Functional Approach to Comparative Politics. Its intellectual origin grew out of the “traditional concept of political theory”. Its intellectual origin also traced to 17th and 18th century when theory of “separation of power”- particularly separation of power between legislature, executive and judiciary- was central in the political discourse. The political system advocating separation of power was treated as one, which protects the human rights, liberty, and as one, which is stable and

free. Among the theorists Almond would locate the precursors of functionalist in three American Statesman such as James Madison, John Jay and Alexander Hamilton. Their argument in favour of "Checks, Balances, and separation of power" was viewed as the major contributions to functional theory. Nonetheless there are other factors which added to the functional theory on later date: development of universal suffrage, (right to vote), rise of mass political parties, organized pressure groups, development of media and mass communication. This is the reason why other than three organs of the separation of power, Almond intends to add three more functions to analyse the political system. These are clubbed under, "Interest Articulation", "Interest Aggression" and "Political Communication".

In fact Almond argues that the political system is always associated with the legitimate use of physical force. This legitimate use of force is called the "thread" which gives the political system a distinctive place as well as importance.

Almond believes that the usage of term "political system" rather than "government", "nations" or the "state" denotes new way of looking at the political phenomena. He distinguishes the usage in terms of older terms and new terms. In the former case, Almond believes that the focus was mainly centered on the particular set of institutions usually seen or found in the western world or societies. This has had the effect on limiting the scope of political science. It is true that overlooking the differences in the formal institutions in different countries would be gross miscalculations done by the political scientist of the west. At the same time, one has to understand the non-western world in terms of influence or the role played by different informal groups in the formal institutions. This requires a new focus. It is here Almond feels that one should cover other areas to understand the political phenomenon.

Secondly he justified the usage of the term "political system" on the ground that "it directs attention to the entire scope of political activities in the society". It includes such activities as legitimate use of power or force, violence, or compelling obedience, Taxation, law making and defense policy. In other words political system not only makes rules and enforces them; it also includes obedience and performance. . It is here he argues that, 'political system includes not only governmental organizations such as legislatures, courts, and administrative agencies, but all structures, including family, or social groups, in their political aspects". Therefore usage of "political system" becomes all the more important for Almond.

Nonetheless he defines political system as “that system of interactions to be found in all independent societies which performs the functions of integration and adaptation by means of the employment or threat of employment, of more or less legitimate order-maintaining or transforming system in the society”

Nonetheless he begins his thesis by focusing on “system”. He thinks that system implies “interdependent of parts and a boundary between it and its environment”. Almond uses the term “interdependence” to imply that, “when the characteristics of one part in a system change, all the other parts of the system as a whole are affected”. This argument is stretched to analysis the political system as such. Every political system, it is argued that has many components such as political parties, mass communication etc which would not only affect the general capabilities of the system but also affect the domestic and internal environment. This is because all the components of the political system are *interdependent*. In other words, no component is independent of the influence of other. For example economic system always depends upon the political system for the regulation of market, development etc

Second notion is about the *boundaries*. A boundary is defines as one where “a system starts somewhere and stops somewhere”. Nonetheless it is difficult to draw a clear-cut boundary, especially when people perform multiple roles in different setting. For example an individual is not only perform the role of family, but also perform the functions of a citizen such as voter, legislator etc. At the same time individuals also perform different roles in economy, the religious community, the family and voluntary association. Individuals do shift their role from non-political to political and vice versa. It is in this context a clear-cut demarcation of boundary becomes very difficult. In addition, Almond argues that the boundaries of political system might undergo shift or large variations. This happens at the time of war, elections etc.

Third important characteristic is comprehensiveness. It includes all the interactions – both inputs as well as outputs including undifferentiated structures such as kinship and lineage, and political activities like “riots, and street demonstrations and not merely the interaction which take place within the structures associated with the state like parliament, executives, and bureaucracies and formally organized units like parties, interest groups and media of communication”.

Almond is also concerned about the structures; the latter means, "the observable activities which constitute the political system". He thinks that the structures are the central issues in the political system. When he refers to activities, Almond was not concerned about the total activities of the individuals, rather that part of activities that are linked to political process. It is here he uses the term "role". The latter refers to "the particular part of activity of individuals which is involved in political process". However roles are not confined alone to political system, they are discernible in social activities, economic activities. Almond argues that one of the basic units of political systems is its *political role*. He refers the latter to "particular set of roles which are related to one another as structures". Thus, being a judge is a role; the court is a structure of roles

Almond is also concerned about the issues of sub-system. This he calls as secondary system. Every system has sub-system and that both is related and has interacting roles. For example, legislatures, voters, pressure groups constitute the sub-system of the larger political system

Nonetheless he believes that every system works within a particular *environment*. This environment might be the environment from within or they may be international one. They affect the functioning of political system. For example UN decision might affect the political system of a country. Similar case is the ethnic crises within a country. This too would affect the politics of the country.

In addition Almond also uses the term "structural differentiation" which is nothing but a process, "by which roles change and become more specialized or more independent or by which new types of roles are established, or new structures and subsystems emerge or are created." It is in this context he argues that the relationship between the roles, structures, or between subsystems may not always remain stagnant, rather they might undergo changes. For example the role of judiciary had undergone changes over the years.

Further Almond argues that every political system is continuously involved in *recruiting* new individuals into the system or to the political roles. This is one of the major functions of the political system. This must be the function of all the political system.

Functional aspects of political system

In fact, Almond begins to argue that functionalism is an old theme in political theory. It emphasizes the necessity of “adapting any structure to its functions”. In the modern times, the functionalism is largely borrowed from anthropology and sociological theory. It is brought into the domain of political theory with the intension of predicting certain functions of structures. In other words every system has to have some function. This is called universality of functions.

There are different levels of functioning done by the system. “One level of functioning is the system’s *capabilities*”. The latter “capabilities is nothing but the way system performs as a unit in its environment”. For example some “machines process information, other produce power and economy produces and distributes physical goods and services. Family ties produce children and introduce them into adult role and disciplines”. Here Almond was refereeing on the behaviour of the system as a unit in relation to other systems, particularly social systems and to the environment in which it was working.

In fact he argues that there are different types of *capabilities* which he derived from the analysis of inputs and outputs of the system. He believed that some political systems are primarily *regulative and some extractive*. The classic case is the way the totalitarian system responds to the demands coming from society and from the outside or international system. Meanwhile they extract maximum resources from their population. On the contrary the communist systems have maximum *distributive* capabilities. Nonetheless he further argues that there are systems that are responsive too. Classic case is the way the democracies response to the demands made by different groups operating in the society. These are called *responsive capabilities* of the political system. These capabilities— regulative, extractive, distributive and responsive capabilities, Almond thinks are “only the methods of talking about the flows of activity into and out of the political system”.

However, he thinks that there are different factors affecting the *capabilities*. One important factor that affects the capabilities is the role of elites in the society. Their response to demands takes different form such as repression, indifferences, substitution, or accommodation. “The repression of demands requires an increase in the regulative capabilities. Indifference or lack of awareness may result in greater pressure on the political system producing more intense demands which may make later responses more difficult”. Second

important factor affecting the capabilities is the material resource “level required for the performance of the political system”. This can be seen in such things as foreign exchange, agricultural production, etc. Third important factor affecting the capabilities is the organizational apparatus of the political system. This can be seen in the presence or development of bureaucracy, and the presence of differentiated and specialized political structures. Finally the levels of support extended to the political system affect the capabilities. This support might be in the form of payment of taxes in time, integrity of the soldiers, following the rules etc. He believed that tax evasion or civil disobedience, loyalties to tribe or clan etc would definitely affect the capabilities of the system.

Second important function of the system according to Almond is the *conversion* function. The latter are nothing but the methods by which, “system change inputs into outputs. In fact in the political system this involves the methods by which demands and support are changed authoritative decisions and are implemented”. It is here that Almond argues that while comparing one system with other following issues must be taken note of: 1) formulations of demands (interest articulations), 2) demands are formulated in the form of alternative course of action (Interest aggregation). 3) Formulation of authoritative rules (rule making) 4), application and enforcement of (rule application), 5) application of rules determined by the law in individual cases (rule adjudication) and 6) communication of various activities both with the political system and between the political system and its environment.

There is one more function: system *maintenance and adaptation* function. Towards maintaining the system, he argues that every system must recruit new faces and at the same time they should be trained in the new rules. Meanwhile he argues that every system should adapt to the conditions prevailing. For example, in the event of threat looming large from the international environment, the systems adapt culturally to face the challenge by such methods as “stimulating military-type attitudes and acquiring the skills and values associated with it.”

Further he argues that while comparing any political system one needs to compare capabilities, conversion function, and system maintenance and adaptation function. This is because of the fact that they are all interrelated and any change in one function would have the effect on the other function of the system. It is in this context he argues that every political system has to have following important characteristics. They are as follows:

- **Universality of Political system:** This means that every political system has to have political structure- whether primitive or advanced one or the modern does have structures. It also means legitimate pattern of interaction between different structures which helps in the maintenance of order.
- **Universality of Political structure:** All the political system can be compared in terms of their relationship between functions and structures. This is nothing but universality of political structures- that all political systems have political structures. For example even the simplest tribal group such as Eskimos or the biggest democratic country like the US functions with the help of structure. They work on the basis of clear-cut political structures
- **Universality of Functions:** All political system performs multiple functions. This is nothing but arguing that every political system performs many functions. In addition, this can reduced to the argument of universality of functions.
- **Mixed Political Culture** In fact, Almond dismisses the argument that political systems can be divided neatly on the basis of traditional cultures and modern cultures. The modern societies are often treated as one which treats all the individuals as one or equal in a universal manner. On the contrary, the traditional societies have been treated in terms of “attributes of particular statures and instinct and specific relationship”. It is in this context Almond argues that “any analysis of modern political system must consider the continuing importance of the informal and traditional relationship which shape the attitudes and action of individuals”. Hence the argument: All political system has mixed political culture.

Nonetheless, Almond argues that there are four variables in the input category of a political system:

1. Political Socialization and Recruitment
2. Interest articulations
3. Interest Aggregation

Political Communication

On the contrary he includes three variables in the output category. They are

1. Rule Making

2. Rule Application

3. Rule Adjudication

Almond thinks that every political system faces challenges from different quarters: from the international environment, from the domestic society, political elites or by a rival nation etc. At the same time he argues that it may occur due to the internal change in the society. Even it may come through different classes such as middle class which must have come into existence by the methods of commerce and manufacturing. Further, there are possibilities that even the political elites challenge with the purpose of “increasing the resources available to them for the purpose of constructing impressive buildings or monuments or for creating a military force capable of conquering neighbouring political system”. In the final analysis Almond argues that any political system can face four kinds of challenges or the problems:

- 1) **Problem of State Building:** This particular problem is also called problem of penetration. State building involves many things: development of new structures, roles and subsystems. However, in the process of state building large number of groups emerge demanding participation in the political system. This has the consequence of challenging the political system to develop political competence and attitude to deal with the issues
- 2) **Problem of Nation Building:** This involves cultural aspect of political development. Almond thinks that nation building refers to the “process by which people transfer their devotion and loyalty from smaller tribes and villages to the larger political system”.
- 3) **Problem of Participation:** The participation problems come when different groups demand a role in the decision making process. Participation has the consequence of producing large number of political groups and factions
- 4) **Problem of Distribution** of resources or the welfare of the population: This occurs when “there is a rapid increase in the volume and intensity of demands that the political system confront or affect the distribution of resources or values among different elements of the population”.

Merits

- His analysis is more representative than anybody else such as David Easton.
- His analysis is hailed for the simple reason that it provides standard categories for noticeably diverse political systems. Its influence on the comparative government and politics is much more. More and more scholars are nowadays using the categories that Almond used to deal with the multiple issues confronting the third world political system.
- His theory has been helpful in understanding the contemporary mood of distrust of government “ with a searching exploration of the theme of why government exists and what function it serves”

Demerits or Criticisms:

- One of the criticisms leveled against the structural functional analysis of Almond is that it is conservative in its approach. It tries to understand the third world from the methodology adopted in the western world rather than understanding them from within.
- Second important criticism is that structural functional analysis is biased towards status quo as it describes it as a ‘set of institutions at a particular time’.
- Thirdly it is argued that Almond’s analysis is ambiguous, non operational and that it advocates the fallacy of deductive functionalism
- Further it is argued that, what Almond produced was a “classificatory scheme, or perhaps a model, a very imperfect and loose model that can be used to order political order”. In fact, he has not produced a well-knit or well articulated classificatory model or scheme.
- Almond’s theory is basically focusing on static system. It has a strong bias towards retaining the status quo rather than change.
- His analysis has failed to explore different patters such as development one and also it has failed to explain certain phenomenon such as how political systems change and why they change.
- Finally it is argued that his analysis while using it for the purpose of understanding or analyzing the third world fails to comprehend the existing or empirical reality such as

caste system ,communal politics, ethnic crises, social inequality or relations in the third world. .

Check Your Progress - 1

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Explain the structural-functional analysis of Almond

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3.4 David Easton's System Analysis

To begin with, David Easton was the first to use systematically a framework to study politics on the basis of systems analysis rather than merely reproducing it from other social science such as anthropology or sociology. He was the first American political scientist “to analyze politics in explicit or clearly stated system term”. He used political system as his basic unit of analysis to understand the working of politics. His analysis has been characterized as “constructivist” for the simple reason that he has adopted analytical tool to understand the systems and in the process he comes out with new concepts to understand the units of political system and also the factors affecting political system. His analysis is an improvement over Almond's structural and functional analysis in the sense that his analysis would help in understanding all forms of systems. He also made it a point that one should not confine oneself to political system alone, rather one has to go beyond it so as to focus on larger environment and other forms of systems- they may be biological, social, economic etc. What distinguishes the political system from other systems is the fact that political system has the power of authoritative allocation of values. There are two kinds of environment within which the political system operate: intra-societal i.e.; one consisting of system other than the political one and second, extra-societal, which include those that are outside the societal one. This is why he

defines political system as, “that system of interactions in any society through which binding or authoritative allocations are made and implemented”.

David Easton maintained that all political systems are both open and adaptive. His main concern was to understand the “nature of the exchange and transactions that takes place between political system and the environment”. It is open for the simple reason that it receives large number of influences from outside the political system and thereby the actors require adjusting themselves to the influences exerted on them. Meanwhile Easton believed that every system should adapt itself to the changing conditions, including the disturbances that take place. Further he believed that every system has extraordinary capacity to adjust itself to the conditions under which it has to work. Further he believed that “political systems accumulates large repertoires of mechanisms by which they try to cope with their environments and through which they regulate their own behaviour, transform their internal structure, and even go so far as to re-model their fundamental goals”.

In fact, Easton was not in favour using the equilibrium theory as used by the sociologist, as the latter overlooks the variable capabilities of the systems to deal with the environmental influences. He thinks that the every system has variable capability to deal with the systemic issues. He believed that every system might have its own priorities than that of reaching one or another point of equilibrium. This is the reason why he argues that “system need not react to disturbance by oscillating in the neighborhood of a prior point of equilibrium or by shifting to a new one”. Further he argues that, “it may cope with the disturbance by seeking to change its environment so that the exchanges between its environment and itself are no longer stressful”. It is here that he emphasized the sources of stress and the modes of the process of regulating the stress, despite being critical of “equilibrium” theory.

Easton argued that every system undergoes or faces stress, especially when essential variables are pushed beyond “critical range”. This obviously means that every system has to have relationship between the political system as well as other social system. It is true that there is a continuous contact between the two. In the process political system receives support as well as challenges from the society. Political system is expected to deal with the challenges from the social system so as to maintain itself through the means of support that it receives. In other words every political system receives demands as well as support from the environment

in which it is situated.

He understood the political system in terms of *input* and *output* functions. He identified two types of inputs into the systems, which are in the form of demands and support. The demand according to David Easton "is an expression of opinion that an authoritative allocation with regard to a particular subject- matter should or should not be made by those responsible for doing so". The demands might be in the following manner

- Demands for allotting goods and services. For example for educational opportunities, for scientific wages and deciding labour hours
- Demands for regulation of behaviour such as public safety. Control over market, marriage, health and sanitary condition
- Demands for participating in the political system. For example to contest the election, or right to vote etc
- "Demands for communication and information"

These demands might be combined together, or they are addressed in different manner, even sometime intensity of demands might vary. He also used other terms such as *over- load*, especially this happens when demands become too much on the system or they may be exacting in their nature. Despite wide range of demands, the system tries to cope up with the new and new demands and handles them carefully. At the same time the political system tries to react to the challenges of demands. It has its own mechanism either to "push back the demands" or allow the demands in a muted form so that system does not face big and formidable challenge. It is in this context that Easton argued in favour of four form of regulatory mechanism to checkmate every demands entering into the system. These four fold regulatory mechanism are; 1) not allowing all the demands enter into the political system. This is called *Gate Keeping*-allowing only those that can be faced or solved by the system; 2) Use of cultural mechanism and socio-cultural norms 3) using different communication models through which demands may be persuaded or pressurized 4) using the reduction process by which, "the demands may be forced to convert themselves into specific issues without which, they would not able to feed the conversion process of the political system in a proper way".

Second type of input is in the form of support to the political system. In fact, political

system receives support from the environment for its own survival. Support are either overt, which are manifested in terms of actions and are supportive, or covert, which are in the form of sentiments or attitudes. Support may be for a specific political object or it may be total or all-out – This could be for the “political community” or to the regimes or the authorities holding the power. Nonetheless the support to a “regime”, “authority” or the “political community” is not always static. It might decline or erode due to one or the other reason. Many a time it is due to the failure of the political system to deliver the goods to the public. If a substantial number of people dissatisfied with the system for its failure to deliver the goods, they might threaten the system by the methods of partial or complete withdrawal of support to the system. Despite these stresses still the system tries to maintain itself through the methods of attracting or drawing upon support from other areas. Meanwhile the political system adapts itself to the stresses come from the support structures through different ways: changing the structural elements, changing representation system, party system etc. At the same time the political system tries to create spaces for *diffused* support so as to overcome or counterbalance the lack of *specific support*. However, there are different examples for support rendered to the political system:

- “material support such as payment of taxes, rendering services to the system such as military men, as administrator etc
- respect to law and regulations of the political system
- Support also rendered in the form of participation such as at the time of election, participating in the political debate, or voting
- “Attention given to governmental communication and evidence of respect for public authority”

In fact, the demands made in different forms might affect the policies or goals of the political system. However, support would provide resources to the political system to make changes with regard to the goals. Nonetheless, Inputs to a political system are not necessarily come from within a political system rather they might come from international environment in the form of threats, invasion, controls, and assistance etc.

Out put of a political system also reflect the same thing as that of the support. Out put

are defined as, “the decisions and actions of the authorities”. Out put are largely in the form of decisions, but they can reflect the following:

- extraction, such as taxes, tribute,
- regulation of behaviour
- distribution of goods and services, opportunities , honors etc
- symbolic outputs

These outputs either are *authoritative* as they are made binding or they may be *associated* which lack the compulsory or binding character. These outputs according to David Easton, “not only help to influence events in the broader society of which the system is a part, but also, doing so, they help to determine each succeeding round of inputs that finds the way into the political systems”. These are called *feedbacks*, which are nothing but response to the actions or the policies of the political system. The *feedback* is one the important mechanisms through which the information about the performance of the political system communicated back to it so that the behaviour of the system can be changed or adopted in due course

Merits of David Easton’s System Analysis

- One of the important merits of the David Easton’s System Analysis is the fact that his analysis goes beyond the so called equilibrium approach. In the process he takes note of changes and the dynamism of the political system. His concepts like stress, overload, disturbance etc gives a direction of dynamism to the political system.
- Secondly, he used the term ‘system’ differently from that of an economist, sociologist or anthropologist. He is more concerned about the system operating within a larger environment- how the political system is affected and interacted with the larger environment.
- Thirdly the categories or the concepts that Easton used are logically all-encompassing or that makes easier to comprehend the entire political system.
- Finally, his system analysis is not only help in understanding the evolutionary but even revolutionary change at different parts of the world or different levels- such as *state change in the system, regime change, change in the political community , basic system change*, etc.

Demerits and Criticisms

- One of the important criticisms leveled against David Easton is that his analysis suffers from a conservative or old fashioned temperament.
- Secondly, his system analysis is not specific to any country, rather his analysis is focusing on “abstract political system”
- Thirdly, Easton has failed to give a clear definition of what is “political” or what distinguishes political interaction from various kinds of “social interaction”
- Finally in Easton’s analysis there is no place for individual. He failed to understand the affect of individual on the system or the vice-versa. Individual stands outside the realm of political system.

Check Your Progress - 2

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Describe the contributions of David Easton to the study of System Analysis

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3.5 Let Us Sum Up

One of the major contributions to the study of system comes from Almond. His major concern was to study non-western world through the “structural-functional analysis”. He never however, used the category called ‘state’, “government” or Nation” rather he uses the term “political system”. This is for the simple reason that the political system for him is not located in the institutions alone, rather it covers a wide variety of groups, parties, associations etc which are acting and “interacting in their political aspects”. . In other words, for him system is all comprehensive one. At the same time he thinks that every system has boundaries, works

within an environment, faces stress, works through subsystem, it is interdependent etc. Meanwhile he argues that there are certain common properties among the political systems: that all political structures perform similar functions; that all political structures are multifunctional; and that all political systems are culturally mixed one. On the contrary David Easton, who has been criticized as the “conservative theorist”, “who has failed to distinguish political interaction from other social interaction”, was one of the first political scientists to give a clear-cut direction to the study of political system; His major concern was to see how a political system operates and interacts with the environment. His theory broadly had three important components: Inputs, Outputs and Feed back. Inputs are either in the form,of demands or support. Outputs are in the form of decisions that the system makes through its men. Feedback is nothing but the response that the system receives through its many channels of communications. Nonetheless, David Easton used different concepts or categories while explaining a political system such as boundaries, environment, conversion process, stress, over-load, system maintenance, equilibrium, gate-keepers etc. His analysis of system is not only helpful to understand the evolutionary situation of a political system but also the revolutionary, although the latter was not the major concern of David Easton.

3.6 Key Words

Conservative	:	Traditional or Conventional, Old-fashioned
Temperament	:	Nature, Character, Personality
Dynamism	:	Vitality, Vigor
Obedience	:	Submission, Respect, Agreement
Binding	:	Compulsory, Obligatory
Comprehend	:	Understand, know
Abstract	:	Theoretical, not-clear, Conceptual

3.7 Some Useful Books

- G.A.Almond and G.B.Powell Jr. - **Comparative Politics, a Developmental Approach**
S.P.Verma - **Modern Political Theory**

- G.A.Almond and others - **Comparative Politics Today: A World View**
- G.A.Almond Ed - **the Politics of the Developing Areas**
- G.A.Almond and Sidney Verba - **The Civic Culture: The Political Attitudes and Democracy in First Nations**
- David Easton - **A Systems Analysis of Political Life**

3.8 Answer to Check Your Progress Exercises

Check your Progress Exercise - 1

- 1) See section 3.3

Check Your Progress Exercise - 2

- 1) See Section 3.4

Unit 4 Features, Kinds and Functions of Political system

Structure

- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 Introduction
- 4.3 Features
- 4.4 Kinds of Political System
- 4.5 Functions of Political System
- 4.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.7 Key Words
- 4.8 Some Useful Books
- 4.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercise

4.1 Objectives

After studying this Unit You will be able to

- To study the features of Political System
- To evaluate the kinds of Political System existing
- To Study the functions of Political System
- Finally, to explain different functions of Political System

4.2 Introduction

Analysis of political system has its own its history, it is not a new phenomenon. It dates back to the period of Plato and Aristotle who studied the growth of political system and classify different political system in terms of “pure and distorted form”. In fact, Aristotle was trying to develop conception of political system based on the experience of the then Greek City-state. Even the Roman Political thinkers like Polybius and Cicero continued this trend. Interestingly in their analysis of political system , none of them focused on non-western or the orient. Although Aristotle did focus on the Kingship in the Orient however his analysis was entirely based on the experience of Greek City state.

Over the past few years the focus on the political system is increasing. At the same time the scholars have divided the political system basing on different criterion. In other words, it has given rise to spurt in the classification of political system. This is the reflection of, as Harry Eckstein argues, “rapid development in social theory and the broadening of the rang of materials”. In addition it is due to the emergence or growth of new and new states after the Second World War. This made the use of different methodologies, different techniques a possibility. This is the reason why study of political system is not uniform as they are not homogeneous. There are structural categories, functional categories, structural-functional categories, system analysis, etc.

4.3 Features

David Easton feels that any political system has to have two essential elements which constitute the main features of political system. These elements are: inputs (demand and support)

and out puts (decisions of policy). However Almond gave comprehensive features of political system. He came out with the following features:

- Comprehensiveness
- Interdependence
- Boundaries

Nonetheless, it is true that every political system has to have some common features. They can be explained as follows:

1. Every political system has to work within the larger environment. It should be adaptive and responsive to the pressures exerted from the environment. There are two kinds of environment that influences the political system: inter-societal and intra-societal. In both cases political system respond to the issues
2. Every political system has the authoritative power. This is the reason why David Easton called the political system as “authoritative allocation of values”. These values are not only binding but are legitimate.
3. Thirdly political system has the mechanism to cope up with the worst type of crisis that it might face. It has the “self-regulating mechanism” to overcome the crisis. This may be done through multiple means: checkmating all the demands entering into the system, or using cultural means etc.
4. Political systems try to retain the stability through different means. Despite the crises emerging from within all the political systems has the capacity to retain their stability. Some time due to “over-loading” of the demands, the system might undergo a situation of “critical range”.
5. One thing is fairly clear that all political systems are dynamic. They are not static forever. In other words they have to cope up with the demands and the stresses coming both from within and outside
6. All the political systems can not operate exclusive without the help of other system. Every political system is interdependent- for example political system is dependent upon economic system for its development. At the same time other systems are

distinguished from political system.

7. Every political system operates within a particular boundary. No two systems can cut across the boundary of each other. Political system can not work like a social system and vice-versa.
8. Every political system has its own subsystem. They are not exclusive, rather they are all interlinked. For example parliament, assemblies are the subsystem of our political system. Their operational and their survival depend upon the nature and character of Political system. For example in the event democratic political system transformed into an authoritarian political system, it would not only affect the functioning of different subsystems of political system such as parliament, assembly but that they would face the challenge of extinction.
9. Every political system retains equilibrium. This becomes a fact when there is a proper balance between input and outputs. Otherwise the system may undergo “crises” “critical range” even system may break down. Every political system tries to retain the equilibrium so as to checkmate the system undergoing disintegration.

Check Your Progress - 1

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1) Explain the features of a political system

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4.4 Kinds of Political System

The interest in differentiating political systems stems from two important factors: First, it helps in *understanding* the politics and the government. The second purpose is that it helps

in evaluation of the regimes of the systems as such. This would in the longer run help in searching for an “ideal” type for the benefit of people. This can be seen in the works of Plato’s *Republic*, Thomas More’s *Utopia* and Peter Kropotkin’s “*Fields Factories and Workshops*”. Incidentally it was the comparative evaluation of systems that provides the alternative. Nonetheless, while classifying the political one can not overlook the drawbacks or dangers..

First of all there is a danger of over simplification. In fact there is a risk that “differences that divide the political system will be ignored and disguised”. Further there is a possibility that the same phenomenon may have different meaning to different system, leading to ambiguity in the understanding. At the same time the ethnocentrism would also affect the understanding. This includes the value biased while detailing different political system. This is apparent while classifying or clubbing the communist and fascist regimes as totalitarian.

It was the Greeks who were the first to classify the political systems. Their classification of the political system was based upon the principle of number of participants in decision making. It is here that they divided the political system into *Monarchical, Aristocratic, and Democratic*. However Greek philosopher Aristotle differentiated the political system based on two principles: ‘the relative number of citizens entitled to rule’ and two, whether the rulers governed in “the common interest” or in their own selfish interest”. Hence he divided the political systems into: *Monarchical*- rule of one; *Aristocracy* (rule of few) and *Polity*(rule of many). In fact he argued on the basis of his analysis of 158 Greek city states then existing. This thinking of dividing the system continued for many years to come.

Aristotle’s Classification

Who Rules?

One Person	The Few	The Many
Tyranny	Oligarchy	Democracy
Monarch	Aristocracy	Polity

Here the major concern of Aristotle was to evaluate different political systems “ on normative ground with the hope of identifying the ‘ideal ‘constitution’”. For him tyranny, oligarchy and democracy were all perverted forms of rule represented by single man, small

group or the masses respectively. Here they would rule on their own interest at the expense of the interest of the others. On the contrary the rule of the Monarch, Aristocracy and Polity is the rule for the benefit of all. Or they rule for the interest of all. He thought that tyranny was the worst form of system, the Monarchy as well as Aristocracy is impracticable as they were, 'based on God- Like willingness to place the good of the community before the ruler's own interests". Meanwhile Aristotle opposed the popular rule on the ground that it would lead to the situation of chaos and they would be swayed by the demagogu. This is the reason why Aristotle stressed on the "Polity" and argued that it was the best form of political system one can envisage.

Nonetheless, the Aristotelian comparative method was adopted on later date by thinkers like Thomas Hobbes and Jean Bodin. Both were concerned about the issues the sovereignty. Jean Bodin would look at the sovereignty as undivided one. For him indivisible sovereignty was the most important and essential one. Similarly Hobbes in his *Leviathan* saw sovereignty as a monopoly of coercive power, implying the unrestrained power. Nonetheless others later on revised these ideas. Locke for example argued that the sovereignty should reside with the people and advocated a system of limited government. On the contrary Montesquieu proposed a system of "separation of powers" between different institutions such as legislature, executive and judiciary. This principle was on late incorporated into the US constitution and was treated as one of the cornerstones of liberal democratic government.

However the methods of classifying the political systems into different kinds have multiplied. Some scholars used "box" system to differentiate political system. The "box" approach would divide the political system into two neat categories: Western and Non-Western political system. There is another approach: it is called "continuum" approach. It is found in large number of schemes- such as dividing the political system into constitutional and totalitarian, traditional and Modern , Agricultural and Industrial etc.

In fact different approaches are used to differentiate political systems. One of the best known approaches is *Constitutional-Institutional* Approach. This approach was adopted during nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This approach focused on "differences between codified and uncoded constitutions, parliamentary and presidential systems and federal and unitary systems"

Second approach was *Structural Functional* approach which became famous during 1950s and 1960s. This approach was concerned about multiple issues such as how political system work in practice, how they translate “inputs into outputs”

Finally “*three worlds approach*”. This approach was basically economic-ideological in orientation. It stressed on material development and the ideological moorings of the political systems.

There are other ways of differentiating political systems too. In fact there are some who would use *classificatory method* consisting of three basic terms. This is done by Weber. He classified the political system basing on the legitimating authority dominant in them. He divided the political systems into *traditional*, *rational-legal* and *charismatic* types. These are not only pure form but they are “ideal” too for Weber. On the contrary Marx would divide the political system according the economic structure of the political system. He divided the system into *feudal*, *capitalist* or *bourgeoisie*, *socialist/communist*. Feudal belongs to past on the one hand, the capitalist or the bourgeoisie belongs to the present and socialist and communist belongs to the future. Bernard Crick however classified the political system into *autocratic*, *republican* or *totalitarian*, Nonetheless others like Coleman would classify the political system into *competitive*, *semi competitive*, or *authoritarian*. On the contrary, well known political sociologist like Apter classified the political systems as *dictatorial*, *oligarchical*, *indirectly representational* and *directly representational*. At the same time he thinks that political system consist primarily of government, political groups and systems of social stratification. Each of the elements in the political systems is divided into subunits and the sum total constitutes the larger political system. Governments for example have five important elements which requires for its survival also. These five components are: “authoritative decision making, accountability and consent, coercion and punishment, resource determination and allocation and political recruitment and role assignment”.

However, thinkers like Edward Shills classified the political system based on “new states”: these were *political democracies*, *tutelary democracies*, *modernizing oligarchies*, *totalitarian oligarchies* and *traditional oligarchies*. On the contrary, Coleman after dropping one system in the scheme of Shills added two new political systems: “terminal colonial democracy” and “colonial or racial oligarchy”.

Nonetheless another political sociologist Laswell divided the political system on the basis of functional variables: intelligence, recommendation, prescription, invocation, application, appraisal and termination. On the contrary Robert Dahl divided the political systems into *democracy, hierarchy and bargaining system*.

Interestingly Dahl begins his argument that there is “millions of political system”. It is mainly due to elastic nature of the definition. This is the reason why he pinpointed the fact that there are large numbers of political systems in a country like the US. This is aptly clear in the following argument: “ In one country, the US, there were 50 states, 3043 counties, 17,996 municipalities, 17,144 townships and towns, 34, 678 independent school districts and 18,322 special districts”. In this context Robert Dahl divided the political system into the following:

- 1) **Closed hegemonies** : which deny suffrage and suppress all opponents ;
- 2) **Inclusive Polyarchies**: They grant universal suffrage, protect the institutions and freedom. The US, Britain, the Scandinavian countries, is the examples of polyarchies,

Nonetheless Almond divided the political systems into *Anglo-American, Continental European, pre-industrial or partially industrial and totalitarian*. Another political sociologist such as Eisenstadt classified the political systems into *primitive political systems, patrimonial empires, nomad or conquest empires, city-states, feudal systems, centralized historical bureaucratic empires and modern societies* (democratic, autocratic, totalitarian and underdeveloped). Interestingly scholars such as Fred Riggs came out with new typology of political systems. He classified the political systems into fused, prismatic, or refracted

Despite these typologies or kinds of political system no typology can claim that it is the best typology. This is because there are differences among the different political systems. Robert Dahl had come out with some reasons why political systems differ, in addition to the fact that why do we have multiple kinds of political systems.

1. One of the reasons is the fact that every political system has its own past. They do not have the same claim for the present.
2. Secondly, each country has traversed different paths to modernity. Even the degree of modernity of each country is different. There are, “profound differences from one country to another in the amount of income per capita, literacy, education, technical skills,

technology, industrialization, urbanization, newspaper and magazine circulation, electronic communications, transportation facilities and the like”.

3. Third important reason is the fact that the political resources and skills are not evenly distributed. They are distributed in different ways in different political systems. This is the reason why the degree of inequality differs from one system to another.
4. Fourth important reason is the differences in cleavages and cohesion. In other words the “patterns of political disagreement, conflict and coalition have different causes in different systems”.
5. Fifthly the severity of conflict also differs from one political system to another. It varies over time within any given system and from one system to another during the same period of time.
6. Finally political system differs in terms of sharing and exercising power. In other words the political system differs in terms of power distribution.

Nonetheless Almond argues that while comparing or dividing the political systems one needs to stress on the following: *capabilities, conversion functions, and system maintenance and adaptation functions.*

It is argued that the classical division of political system became redundant during the late eighteenth century with the growth of new and new political systems. This is apparent in the following argument of Andrew Heywood, “the constitutional republican established in the US following the American war of Independence of 1775-83, the democratic radicalism unleashed in France *by* the 1789 French Revolution, and the form of parliamentary government that gradually emerged in the UK created political realities that were substantially more complex than early thinkers had envisaged. Traditional systems of classification were therefore displaced by a growing emphasis on the constitutional and institutional features of political rule”. It is in this context that, monarchies were differentiated from republics, parliamentary systems from presidential one, including unitary from federal one

Political systems were once again differentiated into different kinds during the early twentieth and twenty first century. During the interwar period the growth of Stalinist Regime in the former Soviet Union, the fascism in Germany and Italy gave the impression that there

were only two forms of political systems dominating the scenario: one, democratic political systems and totalitarian political systems, This continued for couple of years, till the beginning of cold war, even though the fascism or Nazism had collapsed during the end of second world war. During the period of cold war a new search was led to further division of political system on the basis of development or ideology. This was an attempt to bring in value neutrality while analyzing the political systems. This led to the creation of what is called “*three world approach*”, which believed that the political systems can be grouped under different “worlds” or blocs

- A Capitalist “first world”: The US, Canada, UK, Australia were added into this category. They are all liberal democratic countries. At the same time they are all highly developed countries. Their political systems were treated as “highly stable”. At the same time these systems are “wedded to “capitalist “principles, such as the desirability of private enterprise, material incentives and the free market.
- A communist “second world”: Bulgaria, Rumania, Poland, etc were treated as second world. They were part of communist bloc and their political system were called “closed” one These systems were committed to communist values such as social equality, collectivization, and centralized planning. These systems were better known for single party states controlled or dominated by the communist parties.
- A Developing “Third World”: All the developing /underdeveloped countries were clubbed and treated as part of “third world”. They are either following the democratic norms or authoritarian regimes. The political systems are also not stable either- some of them either transformed into authoritarian systems or experimenting with democratic system.

After 1970s the same classification of political system is no more sustained. Economic affluence of different countries particularly in the Middle East, etc changed the equation. At the same time one can not negate the presence and emergence of “fourth world”, constituted of poverty stricken and absolutely backward countries in the African continent. Nonetheless what changed the meaning of political system in recent years is the collapse of communist regimes in European continent. Incidentally it was treated as triumph of western liberal democracy. It is in this context that the ‘ second world and third world regimes were collapsing

as a result of the recognition that only the capitalist first world offered the prospect of economic prosperity and political stability". This is treated as traditional systems of classification or kinds of political systems.

One more shift is discernible after 1980s. This is because of the fact that earlier three world categories of political systems are no more sustainable in the changing condition. With the collapse of the Communist regimes in the European continent the US has emerged as an undisputed leader and the western liberalism is treated as the only prevailing political system available to everybody. Here the triumphalism of western liberal democracy makes one to believe that every argument about political system in the final analysis becomes western – centric. This view point incidentally over looks the presence or significance of different forms of regimes that have emerged or existed in recent years ..For instance Islamic and Confucian political systems or forms- they are either treated as mere aberrations or simply as evidence of 'resistance to otherwise unchallenged advance of liberal democracy.'

It is in this background Heywood has classified the political systems or the regimes of the modern world into five neat categories. This is based on following parameters:

- Political participation and the rule
- Means used for achieving the desired goals
- Nature of political power
- Acquisition of power
- Character of political system
- Balance between the individual and the state
- Level of material development-
- Organization of economic life
- Stability of the regime
- Responsiveness of the political system

Nonetheless, Heywood divides the political system of modern world into the following

1. Western Polyarchies

They are largely falls into “liberal democratic” category. The US, Australia, Canada including India is the classic examples. It stresses on high tolerance of opposition which is expressed through the means of competitive party system. It also believes in institutionally guaranteed civil liberties, periodic election and civil society. It provides scope for participating in the politics without any prejudices. Important features of polyarchies are : government is in the hands of elected representatives; elections are free and fair, adult franchise, unrestricted freedom to run for office, freedom of expression and right to criticize, presence of civil society groups. All this does not mean that there is uniformity and homogeneity between different political regimes. Some would favour centralized and majority rule, others would prefer fragmentation and decentralization. This has made scholars like Lijphart to divide the democratic political system into two neat categories: “Majority democracies” and “consensus democracies”. Westminster is the best example for majority democracies (UK) and Netherlands, Belgium and Austria are classic example for consensual democracies. The former west minister model of system has the following characteristics: two party systems, unitary and centralized government, uncoded constitution and a sovereign assembly. On the contrary, “Consensual democracies” are also called pluralist democracies. The main features of this democratic political system are: they believe in coalition government, separation of power, presence of effective bicameral system, a multi party system, proportional representation, federalism, a codified constitution and a bill of rights

2. Post Communist Regimes:

These political systems are undergoing transition after the collapse of Communist regimes. Rumania, Bulgaria, Poland, Latvia, Estonia former East Germany are the best examples for post communist regimes. These regimes or the systems are undergoing tremendous transformation from within. Some of the systems are slowly adopting social democratic model. Most of them are now slowly following western “polyarchy” model. Despite the transition, their past as communist regimes can not be erased. In addition the process of transition has unleashed new forces distinctively different from western world. They face the problems of creating strong civil society, a strong party system and a stabilized political system .Meanwhile they face the problem from different nationalities, ethnic groups etc either for

autonomy or total freedom. At the same time not all the post communist regimes are same in terms of economic development. Some of them are more industrially advanced and already westernized (such as Hungary, Czech Republic, and Poland). They belong to the western block. Meanwhile in the eastern blocs there are countries which are treated equally backward such as Romania, Bulgaria and to some extent Russia

East Asian Regimes.

The East Asian political systems are better known to have performed “economic miracle”. Although they too advocate liberal democracy, they are distinct from the west. This is because of the fact that these political systems are embedded in the Confucian “ideas and values and ones shaped by liberal individualism”. Nonetheless they have common characteristics: they tend to revolve around economic goals rather than on political one. Their stress is on prosperity and growth than on “enlarge individual freedom in the western sense of civil liberty”. They support “strong government” and are implicitly “authoritarian”, finally great emphasis is given to family values, and social/community cohesion. The classic cases for eastern regimes are: Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Singapore.

3. Islamic Regimes

Islamic countries are constructed or reconstructed on the basis of Islamic principles. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran , Egypt are classic case for Islamic form. However there is no uniformity in Islamic political systems. Some of them follow orthodox such as the case of Iran, the others follow moderate Islam. In the latter case, the right to freedom is guaranteed, polyarchy is much practiced, competition for public service is allowed, it believes in periodic election etc. Malaysia is a classic case for “guided democracy” being followed in an Islamic country.

4. Military Regimes

Military regimes are nothing but another name for “authoritarianism”. There are large numbers of countries in the African countries, Latin America, Middle East which have fallen into military regimes. In this regimes political system does not allow the freedom to the individual; neither it will provide scope for multiparty system. They are known as closed systems. However the power in the military system is not uniform. In some cases such as in

the Latin America the power is controlled by Military Junta, a collective military government. In some regimes an individual directly controls the political power Best examples for such regime are: Papadopoulos in Greece during 1974-80, General Pinochet in Chile after the military coup, General Abacha in Nigeria, 1993-98.

Merits :

- Division and comparison of political system helps in understanding the similarities and differences between political systems
- It helps to evaluate success or failure of different political system

Limitations

- Given the number of methods to divide the political system, it becomes difficult to say which one of them is most suitable to understand the political system
- Secondly, one can raise the fundamental question with regard to the utility of classifying the political systems as such. Does it serve the purpose for studying or understanding the political system?
- A third important limitation is how to distinguish one scheme from another. In other words how can one say that one particular political system is good compared to the other? How to distinguish one good scheme from a bad one

Check Your Progress - 2

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Discuss various kinds of political systems

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4.5 Functions of Political Systems

No two political theorists would agree on the issues the functions of political systems, as the nature of political systems varies according to their size, ideology, structures etc.

To begin with political scientist like Almond comes out with sevenfold classification in his input-output model and treats them as the functions of any political system. Four variables belongs to input category such as Political Socialization and Recruitment, Interest articulation, Interest Aggregation and Political Communication. Three variables are in output category. They are Rule Making, Rule Application and Rule Adjudication

- Political socialization and recruitment refers to how people are indoctrinated or trained to have convictions about the political system. Almond defines Political Socialization as “a process of induction into the political culture”. There are large numbers of agencies who induct the values: family, church, schools, work group, voluntary associations. Nonetheless, Almond argues that, “Political Recruitment function takes up where the general political socialization function leaves off. It recruits members of the society out of particular subcultures- religious, communities, statuses, classes, ethnic communities and the like and inducts them into the specialized role of the political systems, trains them in the appropriate skills, provides them with political cognitive maps, values, expectations and affect”
- “Interest articulation” refers to the study of different interest groups which make demands for political claims. There are four main types of structures involved in the interest articulations: 1) institutional interest groups, 2) non-associational interest groups, 3) anomic interest groups and 4) associational interest groups
- “Interest aggregation” refers to the organization of political parties in aggregating the interests. Almond writes, “Every political system has some way of aggregating the interests, claims, and demands which have been articulated by the interest groups of the polity. Aggregation may be accomplished by means of formulation of general policies in which interests are combined, accommodated, or otherwise taken account of or by means of the recruitment of political personnel”.
- Almond believes that all the functions performed in the political system is done through the means of “communication”- this include both input and output functions.

Almond however, includes Rule making, Rule Application and Rule Adjudication as “governmental functions” or output function which perform respectively the functions of legislative, executive and judiciary function.

On the contrary, Blondel, a political theorist of comparative politics thinks that the every political system performs multiple functions. He begins his argument by disagreeing with the arguments of well known theorists such as David Easton and Almond on the issues of functions. He argues on the contrary that every system faces “conflict” from the society and, it becomes the function of every political system to “digest” them. Further he insists that every system select among from the pressures circumstantial facts to process the inputs. Secondly it has to combine the demands arising out of social conflict. Not all the demands it can choose rather it becomes imperative that only “few” demands the system selects for processing. Third important function of the political system is to convert the demands or inputs into outputs. Here every political system undergoes two important phases. In the first phase, systemic norms are articulated in the general statements and in the subsequent phase they are applied to a *specific or particular situation*. In the final phase they are double checked. Nonetheless in Blondel’s scheme each structure “fulfils one function, only one function, and always the same function”. This is not the case always. It is true that every structure has to perform multiple functions.

Check Your Progress - 3

Note: 1) Use the space given below for your answer.

2) Also check your answer with the clue given at the end of the Unit.

1. Critically analyze various functions of political systems

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4.6 Let Us Sum Up

Analysis of political systems is not a new phenomenon. It requires to be seen in the history of Greek, particularly in the writings of Aristotle and others which later on traversed to Roman Empire and other parts of the world. There are many criterions which have been taken into account while differentiating one political system from another. Initially the study of political system was embedded in the study of European countries and thereby it was marked by bias, particularly it was biased towards European countries, it was descriptive rather than analytical, , it was excessively formalistic in its approach to political institutions. However a large number of factors have changed the study of political systems in recent years: emergence of new nations, growth of nationalist spirit, globalization and liberalization etc. In recent years third world countries are receiving much focus while detailing different political systems.

Incidentally every political system has multiple functions to perform. At the same time it has many features: in the latter case, every political system has its own boundaries, it works within an environment, it has the feature of subsystem, it faces the challenge or stress from within,. Even its functions are not one. Political theorist like Almond would locate seven variables – four input variables and three output variables in the functioning of a political system. In the input variables he includes political socialization and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation and political communication. In the output variable he includes rule making, rule application and rule adjudication which correspondingly does the work of legislature, executive and judiciary.

4.7 Key Words

Continuum	:	Gamut, Variety,
Prescription	:	Remedy, answer
Invocation	:	Chant, prayer
Moorings	:	Jetty
Tutelage	:	Guidance, Protection
Totalitarian	:	Dictatorial, Authoritarian
Oligarchy	:	Rule Of Few

Polyarchy	:	Rule of Many
Fused	:	Compound, Mixed
Modernity	:	Changing from old to new
Collectivization	:	Co-operativization
Triumph	:	Victory
Pluralist	:	Multiplicity

4.8 Some Important Books

Robert Dahl	-	Modern Political Analysis.
David Apter and Harry Ekstein	-	Comparative Politics
Robert Dahl	-	Modern Political Analysis
S.N.Ray	-	Modern Comparative Politics
Jean Blondel	-	An Introduction to Comparative Government
Roy C.Macridis and Bernard E Brown ed	-	Comparative Politics: Notes and Readings
Joseph La Palombara	-	Politics within nations
David Easton	-	The Political System: An Enquiry into the State of Political Science

4.9 Answers to Check your Progress Exercise

Check your progress exercise - 1

1) See Section 4.3

Check Your Progress Exercise - 2

2) See Section 4.4

Check Your Progress Exercise - 3

3) See Section 4.5

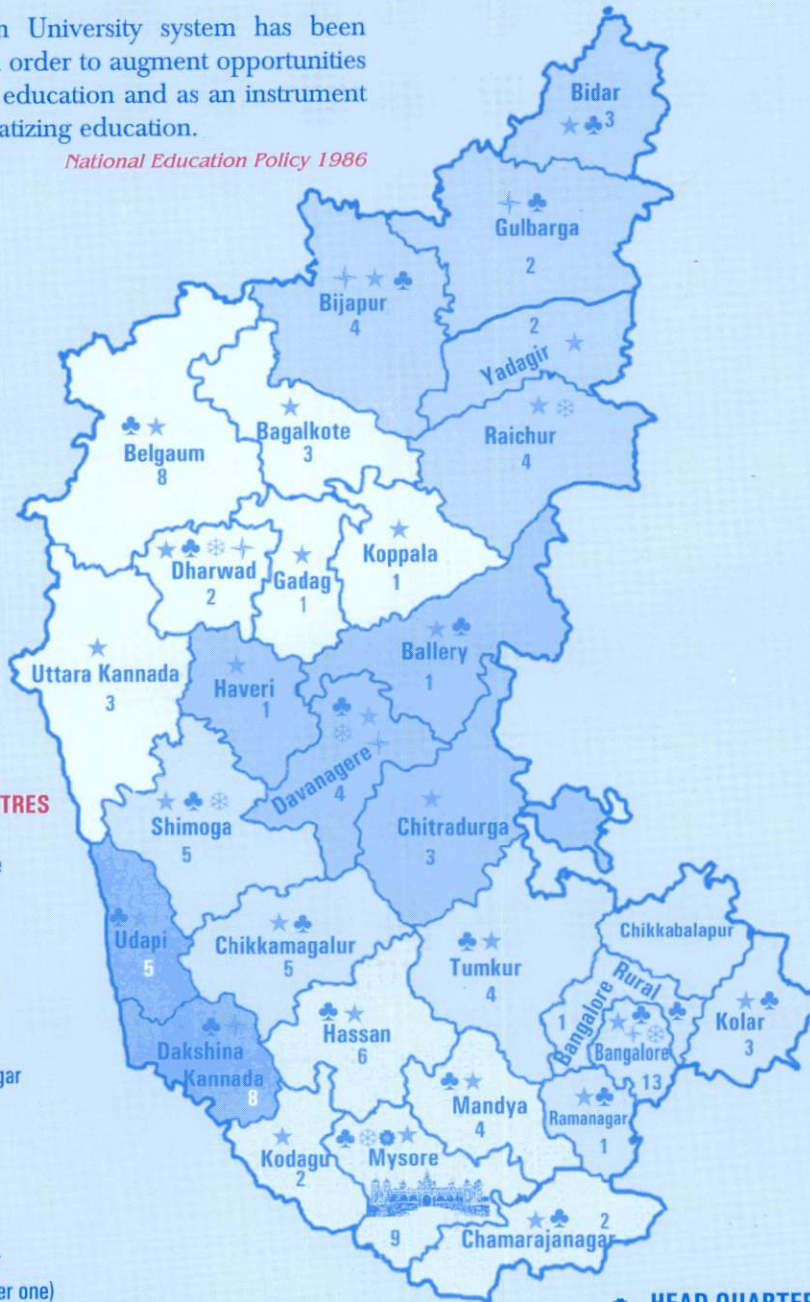


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