

COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

B.A. (PROGRAMME) POLITICAL SCIENCE
SEMESTER-IV
MINOR PAPER
DSC-7

READING NOTES

SYLLABUS

Comparative Government and Politics

Syllabus	Mapping
Unit I: The Nature, Scope and Methods of Comparative Political Analysis	Unit 1: The Nature, Scope and Methods of Comparative Political Analysis (Pages 1-14)
Unit II: Classifications of Political Systems (a) Parliamentary and Presidential (b) Federal and Unitary	Unit 2: Classifications of Political System (a) Parliamentary and Presidential (Pages 15-29) (b) Federal and Unitary (Pages 31-44)
Unit III: Electoral Systems First Past the Post, Proportional Representation and Mixed Systems	Unit 3: Electoral Systems First Past the Post, Proportional Representation and Mixed Systems (Pages 45-57)
Unit IV: Party Systems Single-Party, BI-Party and Multi-Party Systems	Unit 4: Party System One Party, BI-Party and Multi Party Systems (Pages 59-69)
Unit V: Structures of Power in Society Classical Elitist Theory, Power Elites, Pluralism and Theory of Ruling Class	Unit 5: Structures of Power in Society Classical Elitist Theory, Power Elites, Pluralism and Theory of the Ruling Class (Pages 71-81)
Unit VI: Comparing Regimes Democratic, Authoritarian, Welfare, Populism and Security Regimes	Unit 6: Comparing Regimes Democratic, Authoritarian, Welfare, Populism and Security Regimes (Pages 83-96)

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Unit-II	Classifications of Political System	
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(b)	Federal and Unitary	Dr. Santosh Kumar Singh
Unit-III	Electoral Systems First Past the Post, Proportional Representation and Mixed Systems	Neha Singh
Unit-IV	Party System One Party, Bi-Party and Multi Party Systems	Neha Singh
Unit-V	Structures of Power in Society Classical Elitist Theory, Power Elites, Pluralism and Theory of Ruling Class	Dr. Shakit Pradayani Rout
Unit-VI	Comparing Regimes Democratic, Authoritarian, Welfare, Populism and Security Regimes	J.S. Pathak

CONTENTS

UNIT 1	THE NATURE, SCOPE AND METHODS OF COMPARATIVE POLITICAL ANALYSIS	1-14
	1.1 Learning Objectives	
	1.2 Introduction	
	1.3 Why Compare?	
	1.4 Nature and Scope of Comparative Politics	
	1.4.1 Nature of Comparative Politics	
	1.4.2 Scope of Comparative Politics	
	1.5 Methods of Comparison	
	1.6 Conclusion	
	1.7 Practice Questions	
	1.8 References	
UNIT 2	CLASSIFICATIONS OF POLITICAL SYSTEM (A) PARLIAMENTARY AND PRESIDENTIAL	15-29
	2.1 Learning Objectives	
	2.2 Introduction	
	2.3 Parliamentary System	
	2.4 Presidential System	
	2.5 Democracy in United States and Britain	
	2.6 British Parliamentary System	
	2.6.1 Supremacy of the Parliament	
	2.6.2 Constitutional Monarchy	
	2.6.3 Unitary system	
	2.6.4 Multi-party system	
	2.7 US Presidential System	
	2.7.1 Written Constitution	

- 2.7.2 Separation of Powers and Checks and Balances
- 2.7.3 Federal System
- 2.7.4 Presidential Form of government
- 2.7.5 Bicameral Legislature
- 2.8 Conclusion
- 2.9 Practice Questions
- 2.10 References

(B) FEDERAL AND UNITARY

31-44

- 2.1 Learning Objectives
- 2.2 Introduction
- 2.3 What is Government?
- 2.4 Major forms of Government
 - 2.4.1 Unitary Government
 - 2.4.2 Federal Government
- 2.5 An Analysis
- 2.6 Conclusion
- 2.7 Practice Questions
- 2.8 References

UNIT 3 ELECTORAL SYSTEMS FIRST PAST THE POST, PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION AND MIXED SYSTEMS

45-57

- 3.1 Learning Objectives
- 3.2 Introduction
- 3.3 Principles of the Electoral Systems
 - 3.3.1 First Past the Post
 - 3.3.2 Advantages of FPTP
 - 3.3.3 Disadvantages of FPTP

- 3.4 Proportional Representation
 - 3.4.1 Advantages
 - 3.4.2 Disadvantages
- 3.5 Mixed System
 - 3.5.1 Advantages
 - 3.5.2 Disadvantages
- 3.6 Trends in the Electoral System
- 3.7 Conclusion
- 3.8 Practice Questions
- 3.9 References

**UNIT 4 PARTY SYSTEM ONE PARTY, BI-PARTY AND
MULTI PARTY SYSTEMS**

59-69

- 4.1 Learning Objectives
- 4.2 Introduction
- 4.3 Functions of the Political Party
- 4.4 Types of Political Parties
- 4.5 One Party System
 - 4.5.1 Advantages of One-Party System
 - 4.5.2 Disadvantages of One-Party System
- 4.6 Two Party System
 - 4.6.1 Contrast of the Two-Party System with the Multiparty System and One-Party System:
 - 4.6.2 Advantages of the Two-Party System
 - 4.6.3 Disadvantages of the Two-Party System
- 4.7 Multi-Party System
 - 4.7.1 Advantages of the Multi-Party System
 - 4.7.2 Disadvantages of the Multi-Party System
- 4.8 Conclusion
- 4.9 Practice Questions
- 4.10 References

UNIT 5	STRUCTURES OF POWER IN SOCIETY CLASSICAL ELITIST THEORY, POWER ELITES, PLURALISM AND THEORY OF THE RULING CLASS	71-81
	5.1 Learning Objectives	
	5.2 Introduction	
	5.3 Meaning of Elite Theory	
	5.4 Power Structure and Elite	
	5.5 Authority and Legitimacy	
	5.5.1 Traditional Authority	
	5.6 Classical Elite Theory	
	5.7 Pareto and Mosca on Elite Theory	
	5.8 Robert Michels, James Burnham & Charles W. Mills on Elite	
	5.9 Critical Evaluation on Elite Theory	
	5.10 Conclusion	
	5.11 Practice Questions	
	5.12 References	
UNIT 6	COMPARING REGIMES DEMOCRATIC, AUTHORITARIAN, WELFARE, POPULISM AND SECURITY REGIMES	83-96
	6.1 Learning Objectives	
	6.2 Introduction	
	6.3 Understanding the Nature of Political Regimes: Its Challenges and Objectives	
	6.4 Basis of Classification: From Number of Rulers and Nature of Authority Exercised	
	6.5 Democratic Regimes: Nature and Characteristics	
	6.6 Authoritarian Regimes: Nature and Characteristics	
	6.7 Conclusion	
	6.8 Practice Questions	
	6.9 References	

UNIT 1

THE NATURE, SCOPE AND METHODS OF COMPARATIVE POLITICAL ANALYSIS

Abhishek Choudhary

Structure

- 1.1 Learning Objectives
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 Why Compare?
- 1.4 Nature and Scope of Comparative Politics
 - 1.4.1 Nature of Comparative Politics
 - 1.4.2 Scope of Comparative Politics
- 1.5 Methods of Comparison
- 1.6 Conclusion
- 1.7 Practice Questions
- 1.8 References

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- The Chapter will provide the insights about the nature and scope of Comparative Political Analysis
- The Chapter will discuss the reasons to compare along with different methods of doing Comparative Political Analysis

1.2 INTRODUCTION

The chapter has two-fold objective. First, it provides an overview of the sub-discipline of comparative politics and seeks to examine its nature and scope. Second, it provides an understanding about the rationale for comparing and explains the methods of comparison.

NOTES

Before examining these, it would be pertinent to understand what comparative politics means.

Scholars have understood comparative politics as one of the three main subfields of political science, the other two being political theory and international relations. Comparative politics has been defined in several ways. Some prominent definitions worth attention are as follows:

Jean Blondel (1999) defines comparative politics as being concerned with “simultaneous or successive examination of two or more political systems”. For Hague, Harrop and Mc Comrick (2016: 12), comparative politics is the “systematic study of government and politics in different countries, designed to better understand them by drawing out their contrasts and similarities.” However, comparative politics is more than just identifying similarities and differences. Comparison allows one to go beyond “identifying similarities and differences” to “ultimately study political phenomena in a larger framework of relationships” (Mohanty 1975). This approach helps in deepening ones understanding of given political phenomenon and therefore allows one to be in a position to have a better explanation, it deepens our understanding and broaden the levels of answering and explaining political phenomena.

1.3 WHY COMPARE?

Comparing two or more things is a natural attribute of human behaviour. Whether one has to choose the subject to study after schools, whether one has to buy clothes, phones or any other thing, there are constantly involved in comparison. Politics is an even more important and an ever evolving domain that requires comparison to equate, differentiate and assess various phenomena.

Todd Landman (2008) has identified four reasons for comparison: *contextual description, classification, hypothesis-testing and prediction*.

- (i) *Contextual description*—It allows political scientists to know what other countries are like (Landman 2008). This has been the primary objective of comparative politics wherein the focus is on ‘describing the political phenomena and events of a particular country, or group of countries’ (Landman 2008: 5). It is important as it provides an outside observer to make sense of a system not entirely known to him/her. This aspect is

closer to the first tradition and provides the comparativists with detailed information about a political system. While some critics assert that single-country studies cannot be truly considered comparative, there are benefits of studying a particular country or a group of countries. For instance, a detailed analysis of political system of United Kingdom provides us with the information about benefits and limitations of parliamentary system. This can help us assess other cases where similar or opposite systems exist.

- (ii) *Classification*—It implies simplifying and organizing information so that it can be easily observed and categorized (Landman 2008: 5-6). Classification allows grouping of categories that are not same but have some level of similarity. For example, let us assume two countries where one has a Parliamentary system while the other has a Presidential system. Both have very different set of rules. But both can be ‘classified’ as democracies. Thus, the world of politics is made less complex through classification (Landman 2008: 4).

One of the earliest known comparativists, Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), used the same logic while classifying 158 city-states into six categories: monarchy, aristocracy, polity, tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy. Based on the ‘number of those who rule’ and the forms as good or corrupt, Aristotle’s classification can be summarised through the following table:

Form of Rule	Those who rule			
		One	Few	Many
	Good	Monarchy (kingship)	Aristocracy	Polity
	Corrupt	Tyranny	Oligarchy	Democracy (mob rule)

Source: Todd Landman (2008), *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An Introduction*, New York: Routledge.

In similar way, one of the most prominent work on comparative social revolution, Theda Skocpol’s *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (1979) provides a classificatory analysis of role of state structures, international forces, and class relations. She uses this to explain and analyse the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution and the Chinese Revolution.

NOTES

(iii) *Hypothesis-testing*—After describing and classifying information, the next logical step is to understand the factors that explains what has been described and classified. This aspect has been called as ‘hypothesis testing’ and implies the search for factors so that better theories could be built. This aspect is closer to the second tradition of comparative politics which is focussed on analysis and seeks to establish relation among variables.

Comparative research is a focus on analytical relationships among variables validated by social science, a focus that is modified by differences in the context in which we observe and measure those variables. Arend Lijphart claims that comparison helps in testing “hypothesized empirical relationships among variables” (Lijphart 1971). Comparative analysis also leads to accumulation of more information that helps in having a better and more complete explanatory theory. Thus, comparing nations and testing theories contributes to the development of a wider information base and enhances global knowledge.

(iv) *Prediction*—Comparison of countries and the generalizations based on such comparison allows one to ‘predict’ likely outcomes. The likely outcomes in other countries that are not included in the original comparison can be made based on a robust theory. Also, prediction can be made about outcomes in the future on the basis of certain factors and conditions. Predictability is an excellent attribute of a good theory and it is asserted that a ‘good theory’ is able to predict outcomes with better accuracy.

Other than these four reasons, comparison provides us perspective to understand the less known political systems. It also helps to understand differences in outcome in different socio-political settings. It also helps in understanding as to why countries develop the way they do and why they are ruled the way they are.

Hague, Harrop and McComrick (2016) identify two major purposes of comparative politics:

- a) It broadens one’s understanding of the political world
- b) It helps in predicting political outcomes

Arguing on similar lines, Newton and Van Deth (2010) provide three important reasons for studying comparative politics:

- a) One cannot understand one’s own country without knowledge of others

- b) One cannot understand other countries without knowing the background, institutions and history of other countries
- c) One cannot arrive at valid generalisations about government and politics without the comparative method.

Thus, it can be argued that describing, analysing, predicting and generalizing are four major attributes of comparative politics that makes it an important aspect of broader political analysis.

1.4 NATURE AND SCOPE OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS

A major definitional aspect relates to the question: what is to be compared? On one hand, if two things are entirely different, there is no point of comparison. On the other hand, if two things are entirely same, comparison would not be useful either.

One important aspect is to specify “functional equivalence” between concepts or indicators (Dogan and Pelassy, 1990). This aspect is based on two major ideas. First is the idea that “different structures may perform the same function”. The second is that the same structure “may perform several different functions”(Dogan and Pelassy, 1990). By arguing in favour of functional equivalence, it is asserted that instead of looking at institutional similarity, one can assess the roles and functions performed by various institutions within and outside the politics. This idea has been championed by scholars who fall under the category of ‘functionalists’. In simple terms, it is the performance of ‘functions’ and the role played by different organs of the society that matters. This may include non-political institutions as well. No institution can be attributed to a single function exclusively. Similarly, no institution can be limited to a single function too. For instance, the military may perform roles much more than that of securing the borders in some states. Or, the function of the president may vary drastically in two different countries.

1.4.1 Nature of Comparative Politics

Daniel Caramani (2011) seeks to provide answer to “what” is being compared in comparative politics. He argues that “national political systems” are the main cases

NOTES

that are compared as they happen to be the most important political units in world politics. However, they are “not the only cases” that are analysed by comparative politics (Caramani 2011: 5). For instance, comparative politics can analyse “sub-national regional political systems” like the states or regions of India. or, they can analyse “supranational units” like:-

- a) *regions* (comprising more than one country, like West Asia).
- b) *political systems of empires* (like Roman, Ottoman, Mughal, etc.).
- c) *international or regional organizations* (like SAARC, EU, NATO, etc).
- d) *types of political systems* (democratic versus authoritarian, etc.) (Caramani 2011: 5).

Comparative political analysis can also compare “single elements or components”. This may include a comparison of party systems, electoral systems, structures of various institutions, policies, etc.

In general terms, comparative politics seeks to analyse and compare the political systems operating in various societies. It also compares units within and beyond states. With its focus on comparison and analysis, it takes into account political activity, political processes as well as political power in various political systems.

The discipline of comparative politics has three traditions (Caramani, 2011):

1. Oriented towards the study of single countries
2. Methodological
3. Analytical

The first tradition is oriented towards the study of single countries. It follows the initial inclination of American comparativists who focused on the study of political systems outside of the US. This tradition reflects the Anglo-Saxon dominance over the subject and studied foreign countries as ‘others’. This tradition often focusses on countries in isolation without actually engaging in comparison. It is limited to providing detailed description of a single case. Despite the criticism of this tradition, major contributions in the field of comparative politics stem from detailed descriptive study of single countries.

The second tradition seeks to establish rules and standards for comparison. It focusses on ways in which a better reservoir of comparative information, explanation and prediction can be created. Understood in this sense, comparative method is a

“method of discovering empirical relationships among variables” (Lijphart 1971). Thus, ‘comparative method’ is one of the traditions within comparative politics that is different from descriptive and analytical traditions. By focusing on rules and standards, this tradition provides starting point for analysis of countries or groups of countries.

The third tradition is analytical and provides a combination of empirical description with method. Most of the work that now a days are categorised as ‘works of comparative politics’ falls under this tradition. Comparative studies of political parties, regime types, social movements, etc. in two or more countries are a few examples of this body of literature. The works are mainly concerned with identifying and explaining “differences and similarities between countries” and their “institutions, actors, and processes” by using the method of “systematic comparison” of common phenomenon (Caramani 2011: 4).

1.4.2 Scope of Comparative Politics

The scope of Comparative Politics essentially deals with the gradual evolution of the discipline and changing ambit of the discipline, from the initial phase up to now. The discipline of comparative politics has been criticised on different levels. It has been considered as Eurocentric implying that the ‘western model’ is seen as better than the rest of the world. This sort of parochialism leads to the perpetuation of the hegemonic nature of a particular system. This further leads to the ‘self’ versus ‘other’ bias. Due to this, the ‘self’ gets defined in relation to the ‘other’. The first tradition mentioned above is subjected to this criticism. Even the third tradition succumbs to this Eurocentric bias and the ‘non-west’ is compared in a manner that presents the west as better and superior.

Roy C. Macridis (1955) in his seminal essay identified certain limitations of the traditional approach. First, it has been called as ‘essentially noncomparative’ implying that the reference point is the institutional structure of a given country. It has been alleged that single case study is being passed as a comparative study. He further alleged that the traditional approach is more descriptive and less analytical. This criticism stems from the fact that the historical and legalistic approaches have their limitations. The historical approach focusses on studying the “origins and growth” of certain institutions (Macridis 1955: 17). In doing so, it does not make any effort towards evolving any analytical scheme. Thus, the focus stays limited on the chronology of events within a country and the chosen institution of that country. The legalistic approach

NOTES

NOTES

focuses primarily on the study of powers of different branches of the government. It does not try to analyse the factors that shape particular forms of power in specific ways. Thus, they fail to provide any “general frame of reference” that can be used in a truly comparative sense (Macridis 1955: 18).

Second, Macridis considers the traditional approach as ‘essentially parochial’. This critique is related to the undue focus on institutions of Western European countries. Such a focus significantly limited the scope of comparative politics and rendered other regime types as less important. Third, Macridis called the approach as ‘essentially static’. This implied that comparative politics ignored the ever changing factors that leads to change and growth. Finally, he called the approach as ‘essentially monographic’ implying that the study remained focussed on political institutions of a given system. It meant that focus of comparativists remained on individual case studies. This critique is close to the critique that considers comparative politics as descriptive and as lacking systematic formulation.

Neera Chandoke (1996) builds up on Macridis’ critique and traces the crisis of comparative politics. First, the discipline faced a general attack on grand theorization. It was questioned for removing issues from contextual specificities. It further was accused of over generalised regularities. The discipline was considered as reductionist. It was searching for simple variables for the sake of comparison. It ‘reduced’ complex phenomenon of politics to simple variables that could be compared with ease. The second indication of crisis stems from the ethnocentric nature of the discipline and focus on studying the ‘other’ - other societies, other regime types, and other institutions. The third reason for the crisis of comparative politics is the crisis of nation-state itself. The usual category of comparison, the state, faced challenges due to external forces as well as internal autonomy movements.

A set of problems faced by comparative analysis relates to the methodological dimension. There is often a criticism against any case study for having a “selection bias” (Landman 2008). The choice of countries to do a comparative study might be based on the bias of the comparativist. Another problem relates to the emphasis on a “behavioural approach”. The behavioural approach in social science in general and comparative politics in particular related to tendency to explain social phenomenon using scientific methods. It was asserted by the behaviouralists that social reality can be observed, quantified and generalised. Behaviouralists use methods of sampling, survey, interview, and statistical analysis to explain social realities.

Example of these problems is the criticism levelled against the seminal work by Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (1963). The study was called ethnocentric as it favoured consensual democracy as the most stable form. It is further pointed out that political culture of Mexico was deliberately pitted against the political culture of the United States to prove that liberal democracies (like the US) are better than one-party systems (like Mexico during those years). The study was also called an attempt of behaviouralists to quantify political orientations to categorize countries, ignoring the dynamic nature and contextual specificities of socio-political relations.

1.5 METHODS OF COMPARISON

Kopstein and Lichbach (2005) have argued that focussing on ‘interests, identities, and institutions’ are three ways that provide different paths of doing comparison. These variables have an impact on how political systems operate.

- (a) *Focus on Interest*—Many comparativists thinkers focuses on the idea of interest. For them, the material interest of people is what matter the most. People decide on the basis of rational calculations and organize politically in order to maximize their interest. They support a regime type that ‘maximizes their life chances’ (Kopstein and Lichbach 2005). For instance, a group of people may organize against a regime type or support it purely based on rational calculations. The calculations are interest based and therefore, it may be possible that a particular regime type is supported in a particular society but the same may be opposed in another social setting. However, an undue focus on interest may be misleading. The next two paths downplay the relevance of interests and consider interest being shaped by identities or institutions.
- (b) *Focus on Identities*—Some comparativists consider identity as the most important factor. They argue that there are no objective interests and one’s interest is defined by one’s identity. Two most common forms of identities are religion and ethnicity (Kopstein and Lichbach 2005). People or groups of people define their interests in terms of their identity. A simple example could be religious support to a theocratic regime. Another example could be the rise of caste based or religion based parties in India where the support to a particular political

NOTES

party is based primarily on identity. While some identities are based on birth and place, modern societies also generate newer identities. As an example, organizing around gender and environmental issues results in the development of newer identities. The 2020 US elections demonstrated the ways in which people's decisions are influenced by the interaction between older and younger identities.

- (c) *Focus on Institutions*—The major understanding is that neither material interests, nor identities determine how the politics of a country works. For them, the rules and procedures embedded in institutions dictate the way power operates and countries work (Kopstein and Lichbach 2005). Institutions shape the working of a country either directly or indirectly. In particular, Democracies have a diverse and complex set of institutions that define how a country would shape up. For example, the institutionalised electoral system of the United States is based on a 'first-past-the-post' system. On the other hand, Germany has adopted the electoral system majorly imbibing Proportional Representation system. Both the countries are democratic but the political life and political culture of both democracies vary-and one major factor for this variation in the difference in institutions. Comparativists who tend to focus on institutions, try to explain variation in outcomes on the basis of variation in institutions. The aspect of 'functional equivalence' is relevant here as same institutions may perform different functions and different institutions may perform same functions.

Comparativists have proceeded in their task by focussing on one or a mix of the three ways mentioned above. While one of the 'ways' may have its limitation, a mix of more than one provides a broader understanding of the issues.

A different way to approach the question "how to compare" has been answered by political philosopher James Stuart Mill. He provides five strategies for undertaking comparison (Finn 2011):

- a) *Method of agreement*: Two or more instances of an event (effect) are compared to see what they have in common. That commonality is identified as the cause.
- b) *Method of difference*: Two or more instances of an event (effect) are compared to see what they all do not have in common. If they have all but one thing in common, that one thing is identified as the cause.

NOTES

- c) *Joint method of agreement and difference*: A combination of the methods of agreement and difference, the joint method looks for a single commonality among two or more instances of an event, and the joint method looks for a common absence of that possible cause.
- d) *Method of residues*: all known causes of a complex set of events are subtracted. What is leftover is said to be the cause.
- e) *Method of concomitant variations*: correlations between varying events are sought, that is, correspondence in variations between two sets of objects, events, or data.

Of these, the ‘joint method of agreement and difference’ is relevant to comparative politics as it combines the method of agreement and difference. It seeks to look for a single commonality among two or more instances of an event and common absence of a possible cause (Finn 2011). J.S. Mill’s ‘method of difference’ is also known as the “most similar system design”. It is used in comparing similar cases having dependent variables. His ‘method of similarity’ is also known as the “most different systems design” (Black 1966). It is employed to compare dissimilar cases having independent variables. However while comparing, one should be careful about what to compare and how to compare. There is much greater value in comparing events and institutions that are in situated in similar time frame than those that are widely separated in time. The comparison of societies or smaller groups that are concerned with reasonably similar problems is more likely to lead to satisfactory conclusions than comparisons between societies existing many centuries apart (Black 1966).

Thus, comparative research designs can either focus on similarities or on differences Daniel Caramani (2011) argues that it would not be correct to say that comparative politics relies of a specific method. This is because different methods could be employed based on the differences in number of cases chosen, type of data analysis used and time period under study. Thus, the research method would depend on question that the researcher is asking.

Another reason is that there can be different dimension under comparison. Therefore, a single method will not be useful:

- a) *Spatial or cross-sectional*, meaning that two political systems are compared as a cross section. For example, comparison of federal systems of India and Canada.

NOTES

- b) **Longitudinal**, meaning that institutions and systems could be compared across time. For example, comparison of the phase of congress system in India with the phase of coalitional politics.
- c) **Functional or Cross-Organizational**, meaning that the object of study is not territorially different but can be within a given political system. For example, comparison of government policies relating to expenditure on military and education.

1.6 CONCLUSION

Comparative politics is a broad sub-discipline that involves various traditions, methods and approaches. It includes description, analysis, prediction and generalization of political activity. Comparative politics has been accused of being Eurocentric, parochial, formalistic, and excessively descriptive. Despite these limitations and problems, scholars have sought to find solution and enhance the ambit of comparative politics. It is important to break the ethnocentric nature and situate the political processes in context. In this regard, it is asserted that one needs to situate analysis in historical, cultural and geographic contexts. It is important to note that over-generalization is a problematic aspect of any theory. If one seeks to explain a political activity in complete abstraction, it would be away from reality. If the study is only looking at specific situations, it loses its relevance for broader context. Therefore, a shift towards middle-level of grounded theory was advocated by scholars (Blondel 1981). The narrowing of the scope of comparative political analysis also led to a focus on case-oriented studies. Against the criticism that comparativists tend to universalize concepts, there was a renewed focus on development of methods based on few cases. However, this approach was also considered problematic as the hypothesis is not testable when there are several factors at play. Despite these problems and narrowing of focus, comparative political analysis remains a very important sub-discipline of political science. It provides insight into contemporary national, regional and international politics by providing descriptive, analytical and methodological frames of reference.

1.7 PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Explain the Nature and Scope of Comparative Politics.
2. What are the advantages of studying comparative politics? Explain.
3. Explain different methods of Comparison.

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UNIT 2

CLASSIFICATIONS OF POLITICAL SYSTEM

(A) PARLIAMENTARY AND PRESIDENTIAL

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Structure

- 2.1 Learning Objectives
- 2.2 Introduction
- 2.3 Parliamentary System
- 2.4 Presidential System
- 2.5 Democracy in United States and Britain
- 2.6 British Parliamentary System
 - 2.6.1 Supremacy of the Parliament
 - 2.6.2 Constitutional Monarchy
 - 2.6.3 Unitary system
 - 2.6.4 Multi-party system
- 2.7 US Presidential System
 - 2.7.1 Written Constitution
 - 2.7.2 Separation of Powers and Checks and Balances
 - 2.7.3 Federal System
 - 2.7.4 Presidential Form of government
 - 2.7.5 Bicameral Legislature
- 2.8 Conclusion
- 2.9 Practice Questions
- 2.10 References

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Classification of Political Systems
- Distinctive Features of Presidential and Parliamentary Systems

NOTES

2.2 INTRODUCTION

The word ‘democracy’ has its roots in the words ‘demos, meaning people and kratien, meaning ‘to rule’. The meaning attributed to the word ‘democracy’ has been constantly evolving. . The Athenian democracy is considered to be a pioneering example of democracy at work but it should be remembered that it was the government of a tiny section of the people called Freemen which meant this was not a government by the people since slaves, and women were not considered as citizens.. Athenian democracy is also considered to be an example of direct democracy with people collectively taking decisions which seems a farfetched idea in modern societies with large populations. In its long journey spanning centuries after the Athenian experience the meaning of democracy has widened and changed especially since the nineteenth century with the extension of franchise, affirming civil liberties of citizens, curbing the authority of the rulers etc. Amongst 193 countries in the world today, most of them are functioning as liberal democracies. Liberal democracy means presence of responsible government, rule of law, free and fair elections, political accountability etc. This implies that democracy is usually run by the elected representatives or political executive who in turn are accountable to the people. They make policy decisions and ensure its implementation from the permanent executive or the bureaucracy. The political executive forms the top tier of government. It directs the nation’s affairs, supervises the execution of policy, mobilises support for its goals and offers crisis leadership.¹ Countries with different ecological settings like political culture, economy, population, social structure, etc. have adopted different modes of democracy. Considering the relation between executive and legislative, democratic form of governments could be classified into two categories; Parliamentary form of government and Presidential form of government.

2.3 PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM

Parliament derives from the French word ‘parole’ meaning ‘talk’ or ‘speak’. It refers to a place where people discuss or deliberate about the affairs of a nation. In a broader sense, it refers to all political systems which has got an assembly of representatives elected by the people to govern the country. Two variants of Parliamentary democracies

Classifications of Political System (a) Parliamentary and Presidential

could be found - Parliamentary republics and constitutional monarchies. In case of Parliamentary republics, head of the state, that is, President indirectly elected but the head of the government is directly elected by the people. For example, India, Germany, Italy etc. In case of constitutional monarchies, head of the state is the monarch whereas head of the government comes from the parliament. For example UK, Japan, Denmark etc. Usually, the leader of the majority party is chosen as the Prime Minister, who then chooses his own cabinet. The party in power is accountable to the lower house of the Parliament and in case of no-confidence motion passed against them, they have to resign. In contrast to this, in the Presidential system, the President is both the head of the state and government, is directly chosen by the people. Ministers are chosen at the discretion of the President. United States of America is an example of Presidential form of Government.

The following are certain features of the Parliamentary system:

Nominal and real executive—The President or Monarch is the nominal/de jure executive and Prime Minister is the real/de facto executive. The President or Monarch is the head of the state and Prime Minister is the head of the government who exercises most of the executive powers and responsible to the Parliament. As far as distribution of powers between the two is concerned, it is defined by a written Constitution in some countries like India while in England it is left to the operation of various conventions.

Majority Party rule—The party securing the majority of seats in the lower house of Parliament forms the government. The head of the state (President or Monarch) appoints the head of the government i.e Prime Minister. He/she along with the council of ministers makes critical policy decisions in the name of President or Monarch. Whenever a piece of legislation is introduced by the ruling majority in the Parliament, it is expected from each and every member of that party to vote in favour of that law.

Collective Responsibility—This is the significant principle of parliamentary system. Ministry i.e council of ministers is collectively responsible to the lower house of the Parliament. It has to get all its policies, decisions passed by the legislature in order to remain in power. This means the government remains in power as long as it enjoys the confidence of the house. They could be removed from the office by passing a vote of no confidence.

Ministers are members of the both the legislature and executive—This means there is no strict separation between the two. Executive emerges from legislature.

NOTES

NOTES

The leader of the party enjoying majority in the Parliament becomes the Prime Minister. In case of appointment of any non-member as Minister, he/she has to become the member of either house of Parliament within a fixed period. The harmony between executive and legislature plays a major role in ensuring stability in the Parliamentary system.

2.4 PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM

In Presidential system, head of the state and head of government is fused in a single authority i.e the President. President appoints his own ministers or cabinet to administer the country. Neither the legislature can remove him from office by passing a motion of no-confidence nor can he dissolve the legislature before the expiry of its term. This kind of system believes in strict separation of powers. Certain features of Presidential system are:

1. There is no distinction between the nominal executive and real executive unlike Parliamentary system. President is both the head of the state as well as of the government. All actions are taken by him/her at his/her own judgement.
2. There is a clear separation of powers between legislature and executive in this system. A member of an executive cannot be a member of the legislature. They cannot participate in any proceedings of the legislature. Both the branches are independent of one another.
3. The President runs the country with the help of his own appointed officials called the cabinet. Members of the cabinet are responsible to him and hold office at the pleasure of the President. Unlike Parliamentary system, ministers are not responsible to the legislature for their actions. However, in countries like USA, legislator may constitute some investigation committees to investigate the functioning of various government departments.
4. In Parliamentary system, usually all ministers belong to the same political party having majority in the Parliament. Only in cases of coalition governments where no party secures a majority in the Parliament, the cabinet may consist of members from different political parties. However, in Presidential system, there is no such requirement. The President may appoint any person, whom he considers fit, to

any office. He can choose person from different political parties or men of eminence and appoint them to run the country.

NOTES

2.5 DEMOCRACY IN UNITED STATES AND BRITAIN

USA	UK
Written and codified constitution	Unwritten, constitution based on conventions
Republican Democracy	Constitutional Monarchy
Federal system of government	Unitary system of government
Presidential system	Parliamentary system
Separation of powers	Fuzzy separation of powers
Two party system	Multi-party system

2.6 BRITISH PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM

The role of governments across the world is generally defined by the Constitution. However, Britain is one country which doesn't have any written Constitution. This unwritten constitution of the Britain is a mixture of various acts of Parliament, conventions, traditions and judicial pronouncements.² Unlike other countries, British Constitution was not drafted by any Constituent Assembly. Constitutional lawyer J.A.G Griffith says, 'The Constitution is what happens'.³ This means the formation of Constitution is evolutionary and a never-ending process. Because of the unwritten nature of the Constitution, it becomes the most flexible constitutions in the world. Countries with a written constitution lay down detailed procedure for amending the constitution in order to prevent the majority party to act in an unprecedented manner. However, in Britain, the Parliament or ruling government can make any changes just with a simple majority even on significant issues like abolition of House of Lords, abolition of Monarchy etc. This is the reason we find the gradual transfer of power from Monarch to Parliament and from Parliament to the cabinet, thereon to the Prime Minister. The flexibility of the British Constitution is also because of the British people

NOTES

having faith in traditions and conventions. Except for one instance where attempt was made to reform the House of Lords in mid-seventeenth century, no Parliament or Prime Minister has even dared to change the constitution. There is a consensus among all the stakeholders to abide by the rules of the political game and not alter the essence of the British political system.

2.6.1 Supremacy of the Parliament

British Parliament is regarded as the mother of all political systems in the world. Because of the absence of any written constitution, Parliament is considered as the supreme authority. It is so powerful that it can do everything except, as Bagehot says, making a man a woman and vice versa. With unbridled powers, it is in the words of Lord Hailsham, an elective dictatorship implying the ability to make any law or make any changes in the existing arrangements as long as it enjoys majority in House of Commons. Even the judiciary does not have authority to question any law passed by the Parliament. It rests on the notion of popular sovereignty where leaders are chosen by voters through free and fair elections. It consists of the Crown, the House of Lords and House of Commons. The House of Commons is the lower house of the Parliament. There are 650 Members of Parliament (MPs) and each MP is elected from areas called constituencies through general elections. These MPs belong to some or the other political parties on whose ticket they are elected to the Parliament. Some MPs may be independently elected as well. It is supreme law-making body. It makes laws for the governance of the country. In case of ordinary bills, powers of both the Houses seems to be equal in theory but in practice, power of House of Lords is restricted since it can prevent any bill from getting passed for a period of one year only. Once this duration is passed, the concurrence of the Lords is not required. In case of money bills, House of Commons has got more powers again since the House of Lords has to pass the money bill within a period of one month. The upper house of Parliament is known as House of Lords, consisting of approximately 800 members mostly life peers. It plays a major role in making laws, holding government accountable and examining public policies announced by the ruling government. Its power has got weakened over the years because of the concentration of power in the House of Commons.

Being a Parliamentary democracy, the executive is responsible to the legislature. Parliament exercises control over the executive through various mechanisms like

Classifications of Political System (a) Parliamentary and Presidential

adjournment motion through which discussion takes place on a matter of public importance, censure motion, no-confidence motion etc.

The party winning the majority of the seats in House of Commons forms the government. The party chooses someone as the leader of the party who then becomes the Prime Minister. The Monarch appoints the Prime Minister (PM) who then appoints his own team of ministers. He is often known as *primus inter pares* meaning first among equals.⁴ In order to remain the PM, he must enjoy the confidence of his party. He chooses his own cabinet which consists of senior ministers' members of either House of the Parliament. While appointing ministers, the Prime Minister considers certain factors like competence, co-option for preventing internal rivalry within the party and ensuring their consistent support to the government, representativeness etc. The Ministers remain accountable to the Parliament for their acts of omission or commission. They possess both the collective responsibility for the general policies and individual responsibility for all the actions of the office or department under his control. The notion of individual responsibility has lost its significance since it is the Prime Minister who decides whether to defend the individual Minister for this action in the Parliament or to ask him to resign before the issue is taken up in the Parliament. The notion of Collective responsibility holds great significance in British Parliamentary system. It means all ministers must swim or sink together. All MPs are expected to support the government's policies in the public realm irrespective of their personal opinion on a particular matter or policy. In case any individual minister shows his displeasure towards any policy of the government, he/she must resign. Collective responsibility also means that the majority party must enjoy the confidence of House of Commons otherwise it can be removed by passing a no-confidence motion.

2.6.2 Constitutional Monarchy

In countries with Constitutional supremacy, the power of the President is clearly stated in the constitution. Britain is a unique case in point where powers of the Monarch are not written anywhere and no act of Parliament has ever outlined the powers of the Monarch. Before the Glorious Revolution of 1688, Monarch possessed almost all the powers. However, the process of democratisation has led to decline in its power and transfer of powers to Prime Minister and House of Commons. Prime Minister became the head of government assuming all powers and King or Crown remained the titular head of the state.

NOTES

NOTES

In theory, Crown has got all the powers. All executive actions of the government are taken in the name of the Crown. The Crown appoints administrative and judicial officers, holds supreme command over the defence forces, supervises the work of all major executive agencies etc. In terms of legislative powers, Crown can summon or prorogue the session of the Parliament or dissolve the House of Commons. All the bills passed by the Parliament needs assent from the Crown in order to become an Act. But in practice, the Crown has to act in accordance with the advice tendered by the Council of Ministers headed by Prime Minister. Walter Bagehot, supporting the Monarch, reflects upon three powers of the Monarch - right to be consulted, right to encourage and right to warn. The Prime Minister keeps the Crown informed of all the affairs of the administration, executive actions taken and the proceedings of the Parliament. Despite the increase in the powers of the Parliament, Crown still holds an influence in the British Parliamentary system. This is evident from what British people say ‘while the sovereign is in the Buckingham palace, all is right with the realm.’

2.6.3 Unitary system

A unitary system is one where the whole power is concentrated in one unit and there is no division of powers. If at all, some regional or local units need to be created for the sake of administrative convenience, they can be created by the central government. The central government wields all the power and it is in its discretion to devolve little powers to the other subordinate units or not. These units do not enjoy any autonomy or in other words, they exist at the mercy of the central government. Britain’s constitution is unitary in nature. The central government placed at London assumes all the powers and regional governments of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland derive their powers/ authority from the central government. The Scottish government and Scottish Parliament, Welsh government and National Assembly for Wales, Northern Ireland Executive and Northern Ireland Assembly have been devolved certain powers by the central government. The central government can, at any time, deprive these units of authority. This implies the UK parliament enjoys absolute powers in terms of deciding the terms and conditions for the regional units and ultimate power resides in the Central Government.

2.6.4 Multi-party system

Political Parties are an indispensable part of any democratic political system. Two party system prevailed in Britain since the 1930s. However, it does not rule out the existence of the other parties. In addition to the presence of two major political parties i.e Labour and Conservative party, the rise of the small or third parties has gained prominence since the 1970s like Scottish Nationalist Party, Liberal Democrats, UK Independence Party etc. However, these minor parties have not been able to garner more than 1-2% of votes during the elections. While the Conservative party believes in promoting the interest of the rich, aristocratic and affluent classes, supporting right to property and minimal intervention of state, the Labour Party believes in promoting the interest of the working class, establishing social equality and a welfare state. Despite ideological differences between the two parties, both parties till late 1970s agreed upon the major key social and economic policies like strong state, mixed economy, maintenance of strong defence forces, employment etc. The period was also termed as 'era of consensus'. Post 1970s, with the emergence of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 as the leader of Conservative party, party reinvented itself by promoting neoliberal strategies of development. Because of the successive defeats of Labour, it had also undergone a change under the leadership of Tony Blair in 1997. Labour Party was renamed as 'New Labour'. It reframed its strategies in accordance with the changing demands of the people and devised new strategies or principles to attract all sections of the society. It propagated Pro-Europeanism, equality of opportunity, keeping public spending under control etc.

NOTES

2.7 US PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM

Unlike Parliamentary form of government, Presidential form of government represents the minority of democratic system in the world.⁵ In this system, President is directly elected for a fixed term and has complete control over his cabinet. The head of the state and head of government is fused in the Presidency. There is a clear separation of powers in the US Presidential system. The US Constitution, adopted in Philadelphia Convention in 1787 is the world's oldest written constitution. It lays down a proper structural framework within which the government operates. Following are the certain features of the US presidential system:

NOTES

2.7.1 Written Constitution

Like all other federal constitutions of the world, US has a written constitution. It is the outcome of Philadelphia Convention of 1787. This Convention gave a constitution having seven articles. Prominent among them pertain to the three organs of the government- President as the executive, Congress as the legislature and Supreme Court and other federal states as the Judiciary. The American Constitution is regarded as most rigid in the world because of the lengthy and difficult process of amendment in the constitution. A clear distinction has been made between an ordinary law and constitutional law. A bill for amending the constitution could be brought either by calling a special convention or by special majority of both houses of legislature. The former i.e., a convention could be called with the ratification of two-thirds of the 50 states. This process has never been used for bringing any amendment. The latter requires the two-third vote of members of both houses of congress followed by the ratification by three quarters of 50 state legislatures approving the proposed changes. Because of this rigidity, only 27 amendments have taken place in US Constitution.

2.7.2 Separation of Powers and Checks and Balances

The doctrine of separation of powers and checks and balances forms the core of the US presidential system. Power is clearly distributed between the three branches of government i.e., Legislature, Executive and Judiciary. Each organ has been given the power by the constitution to perform specific functions and restricting their authority to interfere in the jurisdiction of other organs. Article I of the Constitution says: 'All legislative powers shall be vested in the Congress.' The executive branch is expected to implement the laws passed by the legislature. The Judiciary is expected to interpret the laws in accordance with the Constitution. The founding fathers were well aware of the fact that each organ may try to compete for power and impose its will on the other organs of governments. In order to prevent this, the framers of the constitution provided the doctrine of 'checks and balances' alongside the separation of powers. The constitution enabled each branch of government to keep a check on the other branches in a harmonious manner. The legislative branch keeps a check on the executive power through following ways: approving the treaties and certain appointments made by the President, overriding the Presidential veto by passing the bill again by two-third majority of both the houses, removing the president from the office through a process of

impeachment etc. The executive, in turn, can veto any legislation passed by the Congress, can demand for a special session of the congress etc. The Judiciary too, by resorting to its power of judicial review keeps a check on both President and the Congress. It can examine the constitutionality of any of the laws and declare them invalid if found repugnant to any provisions of the Constitution. The congress also has the power to determine the number of judges, their salaries and also their removal through the process of impeachment. This institutional structure reflects the fact that both of these doctrines are integral parts of the US political system.

2.7.3 Federal System

Elliot Burner defines federalism as a constitutional mechanism for dividing power between different levels of government so that federating units can enjoy substantial constitutionally guaranteed autonomy over certain policy areas while sharing power in accordance with agreed rules over other areas. US is an example of an indestructible union with indestructible states. Federal government is entrusted with the responsibility pertaining to all matters of national importance and matters of local importance have been given to the states. All residuary powers reside in the hands of state governments.

2.7.4 Presidential Form of Government

The US Constitution provides for a Presidential form of government. In this, President is both the head of the state and head of the government. He is directly elected for a term of four years and only in exceptional cases, could be removed by the Congress if found guilty of treason or high crimes and misdemeanours. In the British Parliamentary system, Prime Minister and his ministers must command majority in the legislature to remain in office. However, in Presidential system, the President appoints his own Cabinet, Ministers and may remove them at his/her own pleasure. Since the executive and legislature are two separate branches of the government, the president and his ministers cannot be the members of the legislature. Constitution vests the executive powers in the office of the President. He enjoys enormous powers pertaining to the appointment of the Ministers, federal judges, ambassadors; implementing the laws passed by the congress etc. With respect to legislative powers, he has the power to veto any bill passed by the Congress. The president is given 10 days time for giving assent on the bill or send it back to Congress with certain suggestions. However, if the Congress passes the same bill with two-thirds majority, it becomes a law then without

NOTES

even referring the bill to the President. He also possesses the power of Pocket veto implying that in case of adjournment of Congress session within a period of 10 days and President doesn't take any action on the bill, then the bill is considered to be invalid or killed. Talking about his judicial powers, the President can grant pardon, reprieve or commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offence. He is also commander-in-chief of the armed forces, appoints the officer of the armed forces subject to ratification of the Senate but can remove at his will during the emergencies or war times.

Comparing the position of US President and British Monarch, it seems they both share similar powers in some respects but there are many fundamental differences in their powers and roles. In both cases, administration is carried out in their names, both are head of their respective states, both make important appointments, give assent to the bill passes by their respective legislatures, possess the power to grant mercy too. However, in case of Britain, everything is done by the Monarch on the aid and advise of head of the government i.e., Prime Minister.

US President on the other hand has been granted sufficient powers to act on his own individual judgement. In addition to the being the head of the state, he is also head of the government, responsible for running the country in accordance with the Constitution. He has the power to nominate his own ministers, send messages to the congress, vetoes any bill passed by the Congress. These powers reflect the powerful position of President as compared to British Monarch. Having said that, it needs to be remembered that President is a party person elected for a term of four years but position of Monarch is permanent, above politics reflecting the faith of the British people in the institution.

While comparing the US President with the British Prime Minister, one can observe that both enjoy significant powers in their respective states. Looking at the administrative powers, it seems the US President is more powerful than the British Prime Minister for the simple reason that ultimately the Prime Minister is responsible to the house of Commons for all his actions. He has to enjoy the confidence of his ministers or cabinet in order to remain in office. His government is always checked by the Parliament through various mechanisms like censure motion, no-confidence motions etc. All these restrict the executive position of Prime Ministers, whereas the US President is free and independent of the legislative branch and can act on his own judgement in all matters of administration. In the legislative domain, British Prime Minister is more powerful than the US President because being the head of the government, he has the

discretion to determine the proceedings of the Parliament, can get any bills passed owing to the majority enjoyed by him or his party in the Parliament. (For these reasons, it is sometimes called as the Prime Ministerial government in Britain. On the other hand, powers of US President are limited because his power of veto could be nullified by the congress by passing the bill for the second time, his appointments of officers or signing of a foreign treaty are subject to the ratification of the Senate. The British Prime Minister is equally powerful in getting the budget passed in Parliament unlike the US President whose budget may be subjected to a lot of changes and modifications by the Congress. The US President enjoys more powers than the British Prime Minister in granting pardon, reprieve, or amnesty. He is ultimately both the head of the state and the government while the British Prime Minister is only the head of the government. In a nutshell, it can be said that while the British Prime Minister does not reign but rules; the US President rules as well as reigns.

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2.7.5 Bicameral Legislature

Like Britain, US has a bicameral legislature: House of Representatives (lower house) and Senate (Upper house). Together, they are known by the name ‘Congress.’ Unlike other upper houses of the various democratic systems, Senate is considered to be the most powerful upper house in the world. The House of Representatives consists of 435 members elected on the basis of demographic population with the condition of having at least one member from each state. The composition of Senate reflects the federal principle of equal representation of all states, each state having 2 seats, 100 seats in total, irrespective of the state population. Members of the lower house serve for a period of two years and members of Senate are elected for a term of 6 years. While the President contest elections on issues of National and International importance, Senators and Representatives contest by seeking votes on issues of local and regional importance. Congress has got the power to raise revenue, declare war, initiate the process of impeachment against President, introduce and passing of the bill, having a last say in the appointment of President and Vice-President in case of a tie in Electoral College, controlling the finance of the country by passing the budget document etc. Between the two houses of Congress, Senate is considered to be more powerful. It is also considered to be the most powerful upper house in the world for multiple reasons. The Constitution of USA vests all executive power in the hands of the President but it also provided Senate, the upper house, some extraordinary powers to keep a check on Presidential authority. All foreign treaties and appointments of judges, ambassadors

NOTES

by President must be ratified by the Senate. In case of passing of the bill by the legislature, the power of Senate, unlike Britain's House of Lords, remains significant. Any bill passed by the House of Representatives must be passed by the Senate before becoming an Act. In Britain, House of Lords could delay the bill only for a period of one year. In case of USA, Senate can delay the bill or kill the bill for umpteen number of times. Even in case of Money Bill, House of Lords could delay it only for one month but Senate as the Upper House of Congress can delay it for indefinite period. Senate also possesses the power of making changes in the money bill. In all matters, concurrence of Senate is required. Senate also plays a pivotal role in impeachment proceedings against the President or Vice President. Once charges are laid down by the House of Representatives, it is the Senate that conducts the trial. It acts as the highest court with Chief Justice of Supreme Court presiding over the trial. It can award punishment if the charges are approved by the two-third majority in the Senate. All these facts reflect the powerful position Senate enjoys as the Upper chamber unlike other upper houses in the world.

2.8 CONCLUSION

Having reviewed the two democratic systems, it is pertinent to ask which one is best system of governance. Advocates of Parliamentary systems point out features like fusion of legislature and executive which is seen as being helpful in getting any of the bills passed, preventing any deadlock situation between the two and accountability of the executive to the legislature etc. In case of Presidential systems, one greatest advantage it possesses is the stability of the government since executive and legislature are both separate. President enjoys security of tenure with no fear of the fall of the government and remain immune from the party politics. Presidential system has a clear advantage over the Prime Ministers on matters of foreign policy. President can act unilaterally during times of crisis; he can consult any one he wishes to and act in a decisive manner unlike British Parliamentary system in which Prime Minister has to consult cabinet ministers and foreign secretaries during the times of crisis. So, it can be seen that both these systems have their own set of advantages as well as limitations. Both these systems have been running successfully in different states and it is difficult to pronounce any one as 'best' system of democracy. Choosing the 'best' system of government for

any country may depend on its political culture, historical, social and economic circumstances.

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2.9 PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Explain Parliamentary System and Presidential System.
2. Difference between the functioning democratic institutions in United States of America and Britain.
3. What is meant by Supremacy of the Parliament? Explain.
4. Difference between One party system, Two party and Multi-party system.
5. Explain the doctrine of Separation of Powers and Checks & Balances.

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(B) FEDERAL AND UNITARY

NOTES

Dr. Santosh Kumar Singh

Structure

- 2.1 Learning Objectives
- 2.2 Introduction
- 2.3 What is Government?
- 2.4 Major forms of Government
 - 2.4.1 Unitary Government
 - 2.4.2 Federal Government
- 2.5 An Analysis
- 2.6 Conclusion
- 2.7 Practice Questions
- 2.8 References

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this lesson students can understand:

- The lesson would make the students understand about the federal and unitary political system.
- It would elaborate and similarities between unitary and federal form of government.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

Government is one of the important components to run the state, and its constituent parts. It is government which performs major functions of the state. It makes laws and policies to conduct the various affairs of state and daily life of the people. The government has many forms as it has been mentioned by the Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Leacock etc.

NOTES

Plato has mentioned three folds of classification—perfect state, imperfect state and state of ignorance. Whereas Aristotle has classified the forms of government on the basis numbers with sovereign power and the aim of government. According to him the best government is which, work for the interest of people. It became perverted when the government work for their interest. Polybius classified the government into three forms monarchy, aristocracy and democracy.

Leacock's classification of government is generally accepted. He said there are two major forms of government, despotic and democratic. A despotic or a dictatorship government means where the will of one person prevails, whereas the democratic government means the will of people prevails and sovereignty lies in the hands of people rather than one person. If we try to do the classification of modern form government, it can be formed on the basis of social, economic, philosophical and historical factors. We can observe that democracy in contemporary era have different shades—Britain, USA, France, India, Canada, Germany, South Africa.

2.3 WHAT IS GOVERNMENT

The term *Government* comes from the term govern, which stands for 'to rule, guide, govern and direct. The term has historical root. It is commonly describing the government is Monarchy, Oligarchy and democracy. All these terms have roots in the Greek. There is no universal definition of government. According to the *Merriam-Webster dictionary* government stands for 'the body of persons that constitutes the governing authority of a political unit or organization: such as officials comprising the governing body of a political unit and constituting the organization as an active agency'. *Britannica dictionary* has defined the government as 'the political system by which a country or community is administered and regulated'. On the other hand according to *Blackwell dictionary* has defined as 'The government' usually refers to the rulers, that group of people who are in charge of the state at a particular time.

On the basis of various meaning, it can be said that the term government represents a form of system which exercise control over a society through law and order. At the same time, it can be it can be a way of exercising power. Government exists to operate the various elements of state. As it has been mentioned by the *Soltau* that government means 'all those individuals, institutions, and mean which help in

expressing the will of the state and give it concrete shape'. In another words *Garner* has said that 'government is a collective name for agency or organisation through which the will of the state is formulated, expressed and realised'. *C.F Strong* has mentioned 'if we want to make and enforce the law the state must have sovereignty, without this state couldn't exist.'^{iv}

The term government mostly used in four ways. The way as body which is charged with the sense of responsibility to govern. Another way as a machinery or engine of state. It is a state's machinery without this state could not exist. Thus, the government is an important organ of the state and it is vested with the rights to exercise sovereign power over the people of the state. To perform these functions the government can be divided into three organs—Legislature, Executive and Judiciary. The primary function of the legislature is to perform the function of law making for the state and people. The executive main function is to enforce the law. The major function of the government is run the state, make rules and laws for the state, decision making and policy formulation Whereas the judiciary major function is to interpret the application of laws to specific cases.

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2.4 MAJOR FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

In contemporary era there are majorly two forms of government i.e., Unitary and Federal. The formation of these two forms of government is based on the model of division and concentration of power and the relationship between the Union and State or local bodies, government. The country like India, USA, South Africa, Canada, Australia has federal system. Whereas the country like Britain, Japan, Italy, and France has adopted unitary structure of government.

2.4.1 Unitary Government

Unitary government is a form of government under which all the powers lie in the hands of one central government. The major power is concentrated in the hands of central government and local or state government given required powers to perform the basic activities. The local or state government perform the functions as per the

NOTES

central government. It can be said that the local government operates only the way which directed by the central government. The power and the role of local government depends on the wishes of central government. As it has been mentioned by the *Dicey* under unitary form of government ‘the habitual exercise of supreme legislative authorities by one central power’. The central government have the only power to make the law for entire state and enforce the law either by self or transfer to the local authorities. The main features of the unitary government are;

- (a) *Power in the hands of Central Government:* In the unitary form of government all the power concentrate in the hands of central government. The provincial or local units draw their power and authority from the central government and are responsible to it for the exercise of that authority. As it can be seen in the case of Britain the power lies in the hands of central government i.e., Prime Minister, same as in the case of France all the powers are kept in the hands of president. The law-making authority is not available to any other body or the institution except that the power transferred and delegated by the central government to the state or local government. In France according to 1958 constitution the central government is having all the powers and responsibility to define and implement the nation’s policy. The parliament has only the power the make and pass the law. The France president also head of the state and head of the executive, supreme commander of military and determined the policy after the consultation with council of ministers.
- (b) *Flexible Constitution:* The constitution of a country with unitary government can have written or unwritten. In most of the unitary government, it has been found that it possesses a flexible constitution. The flexible constitution is very useful for any country especially to the developing country because it gives great chances to update and change the written/unwritten rules according to the demand and the condition. It does not hinder progress due to its adaptability. At the same time, it protects the basic principles of the constitution, as it can noticed from Britain’s unwritten constitution. Furthermore, it has been noticed that in a unitary system the units do not possess a separate entity.
- (c) *Centralised Rules and regulations:* In the unitary government the power is centralised in the hands of central government. Thus, it is not required to distribute the power between centre and state government. Due to this, the written rules and constitution is also not required to divide the powers and allocate the

Classifications of Political System (b) Federal and Unitary

functioning. The written rules can be written like France and unwritten like Britain accordance to the people. The Britain has a unitary form of government hence, both Houses of Parliament—the House of Commons and House of Lords have the power to make law for the whole country.

(d) Local or state government follows the guidelines of central government:

As all the powers are in the hands of central government, it can do all the things as per its own choice and interest. There is no interference from the local government, whose duty is only to follow the instructions of the centre. The administrative and other departmental works are done by local government as per the direction made by central government, for example in Britain the Prime Minister and Council of minister gives the directions to the local body to do the work as more efficient manner.

(e) Flexible and easy to adapt environment: In unitary government, due to power stays in the hands of central government, it helps the government and administration to take the decision according to changing time. The central government is not dependent on the assent of the local government, for example at the time of Covid-19 France, Britain government and administration has taken extraordinary decision. In unitary government the central government have the power to amend the constitution according to need and requirement. As it has been mentioned by the *E.B.Schulz*, ‘the principal advantage of unitary government is its flexibility and the matter of distributing powers on the territorial basis.’

(f) Uniform Administration: In the unitary government the power vested in the Centre government, that is based on the principle of centralisation of power. In such political system the hegemony of decision-making power and function lies in the hands of central administration. According to *C.F. Strong* under the unitary system the supremacy lies in the central parliament. The status of central parliament governs all the people like the British House of Commons passes all the laws and govern the local bodies. Moreover, centralisation of power is also the core idea in unitary government. In such a system, the local governments dependent on the central government. It is subordinate to the central government in all the aspects.

In contemporary era, China is the best example of unitary government. The Constitution of China (1982) has introduced the unitary form of government. The

NOTES

NOTES

National People's Congress (NPC) is the highest authority of the country. It is house which not only makes the law for whole country but also controls the government. The NPC does the major work, one hand it creates and interprets the law on the other hand it has significant formal authority over the executive and judicial branches.

2.4.2 Federal Government

A federal state represents several sovereign states combine together and form a big state or on the other hand when a big state reorganises itself divide into several state under one umbrella. As Dicey has said 'A federal state is intended to reconcile national unity and power with the maintenance of state rights.' A federal state is a union of states as it has been mentioned the article 1 of the Indian Constitution that India is a union of states. It was USA who has initiated the federal form of government in late 18th century, which was drafted in 1789 constitution. The Canada has adopted the federal model of United States of America (USA). Later on, many other countries followed and adopted the federal system. In India the roots of federal system evolved through the Government of India act, 1935. Under this act, the devolution of power between union and states or provinces has introduced. Hence during the formation of Indian Constitution, the constitution makers have identified the ethnic and cultural diversity to adopt the federal system. After the independence India was divided into 565 princely states and most of the states organised on the basis of linguistic and ethnicity background. It is quite clear that various kinds of federal government have different degrees of power distribution and sharing.

The federal state and government are a product of two kinds of forces—centripetal and centrifugal. Centripetal means when independent states agree to join hands to create a new state, the Australia and USA is the best example of such federal state. On the other hand, centrifugal means when unitary government transform into federal government. Under this system, the unit demand a large measure of autonomy which can be only provided in federal state. India is a very good example of centrifugal federal state. The federal structure is a kind of demand from different regional units to put balance between national unity and regional autonomy.

In a federal system, the written and unwritten constitution performs major role. In the federal state the relationship between centre and unit defines in terms of constitution. In such situation it plays pivotal role to define the power and functions of centre and the state i.e., unit. The distinct feature of the federal government is division

Classifications of Political System (b) Federal and Unitary

of power between central government and several state governments. In USA the sovereignty lies in its constitution. If any new law passed by the centre or state, it tries to match with constitution. It should not violate the basic principles of constitution. In unitary feature centre can pass any law to protect and promote the interest of people but in federal state, all the law tries to see the interest of states along with the people. The main features of the federal government are:

- (a) *Delegation and distribution of power:* In a federal state, the government comprises at least at two or more levels in a given territory. All of them perform activity through some common institutions and the power given to them in a shared basis. It can be said that in a federal government the powers distributed and delegated between the centre and state (units) and many other local governments too. It is one of the most essential features of the federal government. In federal state, the constitution which works as a sovereign over the both central and state government. For example, in America, the central government have some power which is different from those 50 state powers. Both centre and state work on their defined spheres of functions. The central government work on the area related to national importance, which is related to the nation as well as people, for example, the foreign affairs, diplomacy, trade, international negotiations and treaties etc. whereas, the state and local government works related to state affairs like local and state level issues of education health, sanitation road etc. As it has been mentioned in the Canada's constitutional Acts, 1867 to 1982 about the direct taxation within province, property and civil rights, administration of civil/criminal justice, education and natural resources.
- (b) *Written and Rigid constitution:* In federal government, the power is distributed and divided between the central and state government. Thus, at this situation it become essential and binding to define the powers in a written and enacted constitution. The written document can only give the effective distribution and division of power. The unwritten constitution may generate and bring some misunderstandings, confusion and disagreements between the central and state governments. As it can be observed in the case of USA, India and Canada have written constitution.

In the federal system of government, it has been said that the written constitution is rigid. It is due to protect the nature of federal structure. The

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central and state government together have the power to amend the written constitution. Moreover, it is due to maintain the stability and nature of federal state. Under this mutual consent between centre and state, the method follows to amend the any part of constitution related to federal structure require special majority i.e., 2/3rd majority. For example, in America, if there is any amendment in the constitution required by the government related to the federal structure. The amendment follows two stages, at the first stage it requires 2/3rd majority of both the houses (Senate and House of representative) or the convention called by the congress on the demand made by 2/3rd members of the state assembly. At the second stage, the passed amendment either approved by the 3/4th state legislatures or by special convention in 3/4th of the state. It is only after passing through both the stages the amendment incorporated in the constitution.

- (c) *Anchoring role of Judiciary*: Judiciary plays pioneering role to protect and promote the federal nature of state. It is judiciary which protects and interprets the constitution. In India and USA, the judiciary utilises the power of judicial review over the laws of centre and state government. The judiciary not only interpret or protect the constitution but also solves the dispute between centre and state or state or state affairs like in India the Supreme Court have solved the issues related to river.

In federal state, there is always various issues evolves like, the boundary, resources, powers, actions etc. In such situation, the role judiciary very important to solve the disputes between centre and state. As it has been mentioned by the J. S. Mill ‘the constitutional authority of central and regional government alike should be precisely and clearly defined but the power to decide between them in any case of dispute should not reside in either of the government, or in any functionary subject to it, but in an umpire independent in both.’ In this regard, it can be found that the Judiciary performs key role in USA, Canada, and India.

- (d) *Dual Administration and Citizenship*: A federal state featured by the dual administration—at the centre government for the people of federation and other at the level of state government. The nature of functioning of administration at the centre and state level government is totally independent but it also works as a mutual support basis on the subject of national interest. For example, during Covid-19 the USA, Canada and India central

and state government worked in cooperation with each other is incorporating to overcome from this global pandemic. In the federal structure of the government the citizens have to follow two sets of laws—central laws and the state laws.

Moreover, in federal government each person gets individual citizenship of state and centre. In other words, it can be said that people of federal state get double citizenship—one is common union citizenship of whole nation and another is the state as unit of which the person is resident. For example, in Australia, America and Canada the dual citizenship can be found. In USA the people enjoy the citizenship of USA as well as the state. In our state, Bharat, we follow single citizenship norm.

- (e) *Bicameral legislature*: In a federal state, In the federal countries the power always allocated in its constituent parts or units. The constituent parts are empowered by the sharing of power. Thus, to decentralise the power most of federal countries witness the dual legislature. In one house—the people of central government are given representation to centre, while the other house represented by the units of the federation. The USA and Canada, have bicameral legislature. In USA the Senate i.e., Upper House represents the states whereas the house of representative represent centre. In USA, the people of the state have been given equal representation in the house of representation and the 50 states have been given equal representation.
- (f) *Equality to all the unit states*: The federal system of government follows one key principle to treat all the state or units as equal basis. It never gives special or extra preference to any state on the basis of its size, population, resources etc. It is due to this requirement all the states given equal seats in one or two houses of the central legislature for example, in America Senate all state represented by two members either the state is large in size or population. As *K. C Wheare* mentioned that the framers of federation must ensure that all the units can maintain their independence within the sphere allotted to them and work the federation. Principally, it can be said that the federal government takes neutral or middle path between the centre and the unit affairs. The system is supported by the method of distribution of power between the central and state governments.

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The America's political system has witnessed many changes in its federal character. The initial nature of America's federalism was based on the model of *dual federalism* i.e., based on the principles of equality between the centre and state. It was only till the starting of second world war 1939 and 1940s. After some time, the nature of America's federalism changed in to the model of *cooperative federalism*. In this federalism, the America has started regulating the economy in the model of give and take. In contemporary era, the nature of American federalism is mixed with dual and cooperative federalism i.e., the centre and state government neither fully free nor subordinate. It is quite clear that the larger geographical area and cosmopolitan culture have mostly adopted the federal form of government. It is basically to represent all the region and community people. But some state like India have adopted the federal system to adopt both the things the larger geographical area along with to represent the voices of the diversity.

In recent year there is trend to adopt more federal system in the world—it is due to provide autonomy to the regions and achieved rapid development and security. Moreover, in the contemporary world the nature of federal states has been changed from dual federalism to cooperative federalism. In cooperative federalism the both centre and unit government trying to complement each other and work on mutual support basis. It is clearly visible in terms of America and India.

2.5 AN ANALYSIS

In the contemporary world, almost all the countries have adopted the democratic form of government. In which most of the states have followed either the unitary or the federal form of government. If we can do the analysis of both the forms of government, we may find some merits and demerits are there. It can be understood under different points, these are:

- (a) *Centralisation versus Decentralisation*: When we see both the unitary and federal form of government, it can be easily noticed that the major difference between these two forms of the government is the distribution of power i.e., centralised and decentralised power system. The unitary form of government follows the principle of delegation of power from top to bottom for example the Spain or the Britain have delegated the power to different autonomous agencies

Classifications of Political System (b) Federal and Unitary

to function the various activities of government. It established a one point that the lower units are dependent on the upper authority and at last the centre power. This represents the single power is taking the decision.

However, in the federal form of government the power is decentralised. It means the decision-making process is not dependent on one centralised person or institution, but the power lies in the hands of multiple political actors. The subunits are capable enough to take the decision by self rather than taking permission from centre like the unitary form of government. This centralised and decentralised system can be easily understood through Britain, Spain and France where the decision is taken by one person or the institution. On the other hand, in federal government like America, Canada, and India the decisions are being taken at several other unit ends rather than only from the centre.

- (b) *Stable and powerful government:* If we analyse and compare the unitary and federal form of government it can be noticed that the unitary government is more strong and powerful in compare to federal government regarding to take the decision and policy making. There are chances that the unitary government can turn into a totalitarian or dictatorship. It is due to the power, which is kept in the hands of centre and there is no check on the activities of government. There are high chances of misuse of power. In Pakistan many times military overtaken the government and established the military government.

Sometimes division of power between the centre and state create deadlock between both. The central government find difficulty to implement the policies, programs and the decisions without support from the state government. On the other hand, state government also find the difficulty to implement the schemes and policies with support from the central government. As *Gettlell* has said that the proper adjustment for the central government is always source of problem its majorly due to some sectional and local fractions are always present in the state.

- (c) *The nature of constitution:* The Constitution have very important aspect in democracy and in the Unitary or the federal form of government. In unitary form of government, the constitution is flexible. It is easy to amend by the central government. Whereas, in the federal form of government the constitution is rigid and not easy to do amend that is due to maintain the equitable relationship between the centre and state. As we can see the America's constitutional

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NOTES

amendment and Britain's constitutional amendment. It can be easily noticed that USA has witnessed only few constitutional amendments whereas, the Britain has experienced many constitutional amendments.

(d) *Administration and governance*: The administration plays very important role in both the forms—unitary and federal government. In unitary government, administration is flexible. The flexible constitution ensures to fulfil the demands and need of the people according changing time. The unitary system also adapts the situation according to the social needs and environment. It is due to the system that provides for the creation of a powerful central government with full discretion to use its power and amend the constitution according to the requirement. As it has been mentioned by the *Gettell* that unitary system for its uniformity and freedom from repetition, wastefulness and extravagance. But the unitary government is suitable only for the small or homogeneous states. For large state where multicultural system where multiple language, religion, and regional diversity. In such situation, federal form will be the suitable government. In the unitary system, due to the existence of single executive and legislature for the whole state makes dominance of administration of administration by the bureaucracy.

(e) *Conflict and the Stability in the state*: A strong desire for the unity among the people is the first and prior condition for the formation and success of federal government. Thus, the idea of 'unity in diversity' is become hall mark for the successful federal government. The diverse interest of the federal units create conflict with the unit and national interest. Many times, it creates conflict and unhealthy competition between the regions. For example, the regional loyalties, racial, linguistic and religious issues.

The unitary government is suitable for small and single identity in terms of language, culture and ethnicity. For large state like India, USA, China, Russia or multi-cultural state like India it's not suitable as government is located in centre and face the problem related to state as a national basis. Due to its concentration on the central issue, it fails to satisfy the issues and needs of local people. Apart from this, the local government don't have much power and administrative agencies to solve the local problems.

2.6 CONCLUSION

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In early modern phase the world has seen the emergence of monarchies and dictatorship regimes. But after the American, Glorious and French revolution the one-man rule has been replaced by the democratic form of government. This democratic form of government has seen two kinds of system one is more centralised as unitary system and another is decentralised as federal system. Now, all the forms of government—unitary or federal government trying to protect and promote the voices of individual with the model of good governance. Both the forms of government have their own positive and negative points. It's the nature of state which decides the best form of government—unitary or federal. In modern world, most of the countries are trying the mixed model like unitary feature with the federal government—unitarian federalism. For example, India according to constitution *Article 1* India is 'union of states' but in practice it is more quasi federal—the centre is more powerful than the states. It's due to power providing to the central government to take the national decision whereas autonomy to the states to solve the local issues. Along with this it has been found that most of federal form of government evolved in large geographical area along with the cultural, linguistic and ethnicity diversity.

The principle of 'unity in diversity' or the 'union with autonomy' in actual practice is always source of individual identity and protection to units in the system of federal government. Federal system is most suitable system for the large state in terms of size, population and diversity—it protects and promotes the interest of people in terms of language, culture, religion, race and the class. The centre cannot be powerful and strong without cooperation and support from local or state government. Thus, most of the modern states are trying cooperative and centralised federal system for providing goods and services to people and federation as whole.

2.7 PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Q.1. Examine unitary system. Elaborate how unitary system working in UK.
- Q.2. What do you understand by federal system? Examine the significance of federation in the context of territorial division of power.

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Q.3. What is federalism? Explain the division of power system in India in compare to Canada.

Q.4. Compare and contrast various aspects of federalism in India and USA.

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UNIT 3
**ELECTORAL SYSTEMS FIRST PAST THE POST,
PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION AND
MIXED SYSTEMS**

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Structure

- 3.1 Learning Objectives
- 3.2 Introduction
- 3.3 Principles of the Electoral Systems
 - 3.3.1 First Past the Post
 - 3.3.2 Advantages of FPTP
 - 3.3.3 Disadvantages of FPTP
- 3.4 Proportional Representation
 - 3.4.1 Advantages
 - 3.4.2 Disadvantages
- 3.5 Mixed System
 - 3.5.1 Advantages
 - 3.5.2 Disadvantages
- 3.6 Trends in the Electoral System
- 3.7 Conclusion
- 3.8 Practice Questions
- 3.9 References

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- The lesson would elaborate on various principles of the electoral system, their advantages and disadvantages.
- It would also make the student understand about various trends of electoral system across globe.

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3.2 INTRODUCTION

The electoral system holds great significance as it sets parameter of elections and referendums and determine how their results should be declared. According to Gallagher, electoral system is the set of rules and regulations, that define structures, how votes are cast at election and how these votes are then converted into seats.⁶ These rules and regulations govern all the aspects of the process of voting, when shall the elections be held, who are eligible to vote, and other related factors that affect/influence the electoral outcome. In other words, an electoral system is a process by which the votes can be converted into elected representatives. This way it establishes important legislative decisions. “Electoral systems have to be based on Constitutional Law and other Legislation. As we have said, the design of electoral systems determines the ways in which votes are turned into public offices. In other words, such a design determines how voting affects political representation. That’s why an electoral system’s regulation begins at the constitutional level, and continues at the legislative one.”⁷ There are three main elements of any electoral system. “ballot structure comprising of (how and ‘for what’ a vote is cast); constituency structure consisting of (whether, and how, the electorate is divided into territorially defined constituencies), and the electoral formula including (an assembly election, a method of translating votes into seats).”⁸

The choice of the type of the electoral system remains one of the key important determinants of the future of the political life of the state concerned. Once such electoral system has been chosen, remains constant. It remains a fundamental political process that involves evolution of the state machineries, political actors, interests of the citizens. It is an evolving process. Some electoral systems aim at electing a single winner to the position such as Prime Minister, President, Governor while other electoral systems target bringing out of multiple winners like members of the Parliament, board of directors etc. Hence, there are many kinds of electoral systems such as First Past the Post System, Proportional Representation, Mixed systems.

This chapter shall discuss these types of electoral systems in details. But prior to unravelling these types of electoral systems, it becomes important to understand the guiding principles behind the electoral systems.

3.3 PRINCIPLES OF THE ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

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Any electoral system aims at establishing a stable system with efficiency, efficacy and effectiveness. It may have coherent coalitions but the stronger political parties remain few. Any kind of electoral systems like proportional representation or the first past the post system, the common guiding principles are:

- **Representation**—Primarily, the objective of an electoral system is the convert the votes into seats that is expressed by the will of the voters represented through the casting of the votes. Factors such as geographic representation, ideology/political representation design the suitable electoral system.
- **Transparency**—Transparency holds importance to avoid any confusion and distrust between the political parties and the candidates. If one looks at the choice of electoral system of any state, one shall find that transparency remained one of the key ingredients for the culmination of the electoral system. Also, the process of review or reform in the electoral system requires greater transparency to make the process more legitimate.
- **Inclusiveness**—The process of elections includes fair, legitimate and widespread outreach to the voters. It tries to ensure that through the inclusive voting rights the system is easily understood and easily accessed polling stations are installed. Inclusivity also includes more participation by the voters.

These principles of electoral system can be very well found in various types of the electoral system. The various kinds of electoral system are as follows:

3.3.1 First Past the Post (FPTP)

First past the post system, also popularly known as winner take all systems or the simple majority voting method is the simple form of plurality or the majority system that uses the single member districts and the candidate centric voting. The winner elected is the person who wins may not be required to get majority i.e. (50%+) votes so long as he gets larger number of votes than compared to other candidates. This system largely depends upon the single member constituencies. It allows the voters to cast only one vote on their ballots. “According to Duverger’s law, the

NOTES

first past the post system also encourages the growth of relatively stable political systems dominated by two major parties.”⁹ The FPTP system is claimed to be simple in design and highlight defined geographic areas and governability. This system is used in the direct Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies elections in India. It is also seen in Britain. The advantages of FPTP are as follows:

3.3.2 Advantages of FPTP

- The FPTP provides a clear choice to the voters between the two major parties. The disadvantages of the third and minority parties fragment the votes and sway/wither away the voters. Hence FPTP provides a clear choice to the voters.
- It brings out a single party government as a winner. This in turn removes the restriction of minority coalition partners where power is bargained between the coalition partners.
- It even gives an opportunity for the popular independent candidates to come out as a winner. This opportunity is particularly important for the development of the party systems where family, clan, kinship play strong variables in influencing the electoral systems.
- It allows the voters to choose people rather than being influenced by the parties. This way the voters can access the performances of the individual candidates rather than just relying on the list of candidates given by the party.
- It establishes a link between constituencies and respective representatives that further produces a legislature of representatives of geographical areas. Geographic accountability is much necessary in the agrarian and developing societies.
- It even makes the opposition very strong. With the strong single party government coming to power, opposition is entrusted with the responsibility of critical check to balance out any abuse of power.

However, there are also many flip sides to the FPTP system.

3.3.3 Disadvantages of FPTP

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- The greatest critique of FPTP system is that it excludes the smaller and fair representation. “In the 1993 federal election in Canada, the Progressive Conservatives won 16 per cent of the votes but only 0.7 per cent of the seats, and in the 1998 general election in Lesotho, the Basotho National Party won 24 per cent of the votes but only 1 per cent of the seats. This is a pattern which is repeated time and time again under FPTP.”¹⁰
- It thus, opens the avenues for the broadly accepted candidate. The representatives from the minority clan has bleak chances of winning. As such FPTP system is non integrative in approach. There remains very less chances of a black candidate to win in the districts of UK or USA where there are strong evidences of racial minorities.
- It encourages the development/growth of the political parties that are based upon clan, ethnicity and region that attract majority of the population. Their policies and campaigns are influenced by the majority faiths and belief patterns. In countries like Malawai and Kenya the parties work on majority culture that is concentrated geographically. There are little incentives to appeal to those who are geographically outside and do not support the majority culture.
- As such the FPTP system remains unresponsive to the changes in the public opinions. It is geographically concentrated and goes by the majoritarian/universal belief and faith of the voters. It overlooks or ignores the alternative opinions. “In some democracies under FPTP, a fall from 60 per cent to 40 per cent of a party’s share of the popular vote nationally can result in a fall from 80 per cent to 60 per cent in the number of seats held, which does not affect its overall dominant position. Unless sufficient seats are highly competitive, the system can be insensitive to swings in public opinion.”¹¹
- “Finally, FPTP systems are dependent on the drawing of electoral boundaries. All electoral boundaries have political consequences: there is no technical process to produce a single ‘correct answer’ independently of political or other considerations. Boundary delimitation may require substantial time and resources if the results are to be accepted as legitimate. There may also be pressure to manipulate boundaries by gerrymandering or

NOTES

malapportionment. This was particularly apparent in the Kenyan elections of 1993 when huge disparities between the sizes of electoral districts—the largest had 23 times the number of voters the smallest had—contributed to the ruling Kenyan African National Union party’s winning a large majority in the legislature with only 30 per cent of the popular vote.”¹²

The electoral changes and the inception of the smaller parties are now trying to replace the FPTP system with that of the proportional representation. According to Curtice¹³, the FPTP is based upon two principles—the Duverger law and the cube law. Duverger law argues that the FPTP system focuses upon the two-party system while ignoring the minority parties. Cube law focuses upon the discrimination practiced under FPTP system where the smaller parties are given little margin. According to Curtice, “FPTP discourages people from voting because a majority electoral system discounts votes given to smaller parties, even if people vote for their chosen party if it is a small party then it is in fact helping one of the two largest parties without bias to win because as mentioned before, the party that reaches the benchmark first governs the country.”¹⁴

3.4 PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION (PR)

The proportional representation comes as an alternative to the FPTP system where the system proportionately is distributed in the elected body. The Proportional Representation (PR) system comprises of the multiple voting districts to fill a single seat through the proportional method. In this method the voters through the single transferrable votes are used for multiple member districts where a candidate although is casting a single vote each but ranks the individual candidate in order of his preference. Unlike the FPTP system, the proportional representation system believes that it is impossible to divide a single seat proportionally in an occasion hence the PR system stresses upon List PR and Single Transferable Vote (STV). Under the STV the voters rank the candidates in a multi member districts. This way the system seeks to create representative body that highlight overall distribution of support of the public for all the political parties. Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Italy are few countries who have adopted the proportional representation.

The proportional representation unlike the FPTP system accommodates diversity. “Proponents maintain that the plurality system can produce unrepresentative, minority governments, such as in the United Kingdom, where the two major parties governed the country for the last three decades of the 20th century with little more than 40 percent of the votes. The proportional system also is suggested as a means of redressing the possible anomaly arising under majority or plurality systems whereby a party may win more seats with fewer popular votes than its opponents, as occurred in the British elections of 1951 and February 1974.”¹⁵

It even accommodates changed/alternative opinion to the majority beliefs. This system is best suited to the democracies having deep societal cleavages. It produces representative legislature. There are several other advantages of the Proportional representation system that makes it quite significant.

3.4.1 Advantages

- The PR system reduces the seat bonuses for the larger parties and the small parties are equally given an opportunity for the minority parties as well.
- The PR system actually facilitates minority parties’ representation. This way irrespective of the fact that to whom the vote is going it creates a situation where a single party system cannot win all the seats, thereby making the system integrative and accommodating of different ideologies.
- This way it emphasises upon the continuity and stability of the system. The example of Western European experiences with the PR system suggests that unlike FPTP where ideologies are polarised, the PR system makes it coherent in the decision-making process. It makes the decision making more inclusive and cross sectional in the society.

3.4.2 Disadvantages

The PR system is primarily criticised as it leads to coalition governments and fragmented party system.

- The fragmented party system can lead to the destabilisation as there shall be always tussle between in a coalition government over bargaining the power. Israel and Italy are good examples where we see how due to shift in the coalition government lead to instability.

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- The coalition government is incapable of carrying out the coherent policy making. They are exposed to the danger of conflicts post policy making which could lead to further factions.
- The smaller parties under the PR system get disproportionately larger amount of power while the bigger parties may be forced to form the coalition government. This way the PR system might be harsher to the bigger party.
- The coalition government generally make the policies there remains little clarity to the voters as well. As such there is a requirement of education and training of the voters and the poll workers. It has been believed that the Weimar Germany failed due to the PR electoral system.

3.5 MIXED SYSTEM

“A mixed electoral system is an *electoral system* that combines a plurality/majoritarian voting system with an element of *proportional representation* (PR).”¹⁶ In the FPTP system one finds the feature of the plurality/majoritarian concept while in the PR system one can observe the use of party list PR the most. What makes the mixed system very significant is the fact that the voter here can hire both the plurality/majoritarian and PR aspects of the electoral system. “MMP generally produces proportional election outcomes, meaning that a political party which wins $n\%$ of the vote will receive roughly $n\%$ of the seats. Parallel voting tends to produce semi-proportional outcomes: more proportional than a plurality/majoritarian system but less proportional than a PR electoral system. Both parallel voting and MMP feature two tiers of elected representatives: one associated with the plurality/majoritarian component and one associated with PR. It is not necessary, however, for a mixed system to have multiple electoral tiers.”¹⁷

The MMP system tries to compensate the disproportionality existing in the district seats. “For example, if one party wins 10 per cent of the vote nationally but no district seats, then it will be awarded enough seats from the PR lists to bring its representation up to 10 per cent of the seats in the legislature. Voters may get two separate choices, as in Germany and New Zealand. Alternatively, voters may

make only one choice, with the party totals being derived from the totals for the individual district candidates. The proportion of seats allocated according to the two elements of the system vary from country to country. Lesotho's post-conflict electoral system, adopted in 2002, contains 80 FPTP seats and 40 compensatory ones while Germany elects 299 candidates under each system."¹⁸

There are various types of the MMPs:

- **Parallel Voting**—The parallel voting system comprises of the mixed non compensatory system. It is two-tier in nature. The first tier comprises of the single member district representative elected by the means of plural/majority method as practiced under FPTP. The second tier comprises of the regional or the larger representative elected through the method of separate proportional method like that of the party list PR. Countries like Japan, South Korea, Russia are few examples.
- **Mixed Member Proportional**—The MMP like parallel voting comprises of one tier of district representatives like the FPTP system and the other tier of regional large representation like the PR list. It aims at correcting the disproportionate systems. Countries like Germany, New Zealand have adopted this system.
- **Alternative Vote Plus**—This system is like the additional member system but it is significant owing to the alternative vote method. This system was proposed by Jenkins Commission as an alternative to the FPTP system.¹⁹ It was adopted by the Parliament of UK.
- **Scorporo**—It is a two-tier mixed system that strikes resemblance to MMP system. The single member district tier partially addresses the disproportionate in the vote transfer mechanism at the single member district tier. This system was adopted by Italy from 1993 to 2005 and is also used by Hungary in contemporary times.
- **Majority Bonus**—This system of majority bonus has also been referred as the unconventional mixed system. The majority bonus helps in popular party alliance helping the majority of the seats with the minority of the votes. This is quite similar to the plural or the majoritarian system practiced in countries like Greece, Italy from 2006 to 2013.²⁰

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- **Dual Member Proportional**—DMP system is mixed compensatory very similar to that of MMP except that of the plurality system. The PR seats are dedicated to the two seat districts. Dual Member Proportional system was used as an alternative to the FPTP system in the Canadian elections.

The Mixed system enjoys several advantages than compared to the PR system.

3.5.1 Advantages

- It removes the issue of false majorities.
- It reduces or lessens the issue the problem of wastage of the votes by providing for representatives for third and fourth parties. This also further reduces the issue of lack of support across the country.
- It establishes link/connect between the geographical territory and representative of the local area.
- It also enhances the quality of the constituency work.

3.5.2 Disadvantages

- The granting of representation to the smaller parties creates two types of MPs which have no direct link of representation of the constituencies.
- It increases the scope of party control as the decision about the electorates.
- It complicates the ballots and discourages the voting process.
- It could be expensive to conduct an election than FPTP or PR system.

3.6 TRENDS IN THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Earlier the electoral system was mainly based on the principle of plurality. However, during the 19th century the majority system gradually became more popular and widely accepted. In the early 20th century with the expansion of the right to vote, the

proportional representation list system was popular. This method was adopted to ensure that no one group like that of the working-class socialist group would come out as majority. Later, the proportional representation electoral system made curious entry in democracies. British Parliament was the first country to adopt it. Ireland and Tasmania have adopted the proportional representation but sans the Single Transferable Voting process. Even the Australian Upper houses adopted the single transferable vote in 1949. The second half of the 20th century saw the revival in the electoral system that observed the demand in the change, reform and experimentation in the system. The Communist parts of Eastern Europe saw creation of new democracies. This altered their electoral system. Countries like New Zealand saw flux in the adoption of PR from plurality. Italy and Japan moved to complicated mixed system. The recent trend has seen a sharp rise in the proportional electoral arrangements. Also, the mixed electoral system is adopted popularly so as to take advantages of more than one type of electoral family.

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3.7 CONCLUSION

There are diverse rationales behind the different kinds of the electoral system. But the electoral system should be inclusive in nature. It should represent diverse people. Also, any electoral system should also be responsive to the demands of the voters. The voters need to educate themselves to endorse changes in the electoral system through referendums. This shall make the electoral system more effective and efficient.

3.8 PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Explain various principles of the Electoral Systems.
2. Discuss the advantages and disadvantage of FPTP system.
3. Examine the difference between proportional and mixed representation electoral system.

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UNIT 4

PARTY SYSTEM ONE PARTY, BI-PARTY AND MULTI PARTY SYSTEMS

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Structure

- 4.1 Learning Objectives
- 4.2 Introduction
- 4.3 Functions of the Political Party
- 4.4 Types of Political Parties
- 4.5 One Party System
 - 4.5.1 Advantages of One-Party System
 - 4.5.2 Disadvantages of One-Party System
- 4.6 Two Party System
 - 4.6.1 Contrast of the Two-Party System with the Multiparty System and One-Party System:
 - 4.6.2 Advantages of the Two-Party System
 - 4.6.3 Disadvantages of the Two-Party System
- 4.7 Multi-Party System
 - 4.7.1 Advantages of the Multi-Party System
 - 4.7.2 Disadvantages of the Multi-Party System
- 4.8 Conclusion
- 4.9 Practice Questions
- 4.10 References

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this lesson student will be able to understand:-

- Functions of the Political Party
- One party system and its advantages and disadvantages

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- Two Party System and its advantages and disadvantages
- Multi party system and its advantages and disadvantages

4.2 INTRODUCTION

The political party in a system is primarily a group of people who come together to contest elections so as to hold power through forming government via contesting elections. This way the people intend to represent the common interests of the people based on same ideology, issues, and others. The political parties mobilise the voters too to support common interest, goals, ideology and issues. The parties fix the political agenda and policies and persuade people by claiming how they are going to meet the common interests of the people through their policies articulated by their political parties. The political parties thus define representation of the people.²¹ The competition between the political parties in the elections creates a pressure on them to perform better than the other party. This way the political party in power and the opposition in competition with each other also have checks and balance system. The concept of party system was designed by European scholars. Thinkers such as James Bryce, Moisey Ostrogorsky read how the party system expanded over the democracies in the world. In broad sense, the political party represents the voice of the people communicated to the government to make policies. Giovanni Sartori classified number of political parties. These classifications are based on various components. Broadly, all the political parties have three components:

- **Leaders**—Any political party cannot exist without a leader. Leader puts forward the agenda of the party, ideology of the party system in front of the voters and tries to connect with them. In several cases thinkers such as Max Weber have observed that good and charismatic personalities have led to the formation or rise of the party system. Narendra Modi of BJP in India is the recent example to highlight how the charismatic leadership can change the course of the party system in the state.
- **Active Members**—The active members of the political party aid in the articulation and stimulation of party's ideology amongst the common masses. Many times, it is also observed that these active members irrespective of their personal

developments prefer to work for the development of the party system. Communist Party of China for example has active members who continuously work hard to keep the ideology of the party active and relevant in the country.

- **Followers**—The followers of the party system are the biggest supporters of the party system. They believe in the ideology of the party system and expect its reflections in the implementation of policies and agendas of the parties.

Without these three components the existence of any political parties is difficult. These components aid the political parties in carrying out the activities.

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4.3 FUNCTIONS OF THE POLITICAL PARTY

- The prime function of the political party is to contest elections by placing the candidates.
- In USA, the candidates of the political party are selected by the members and supporters of the party.
- On the other hand, in countries like India, the party leaders choose the candidates.
- Every political party has different policies and programmes. The voters are given choice to opt in accordance the policies and programmes.
- In a democratic set up the group of people with the similar ideological beliefs form a political party. These political parties form a direction to the policies to be adopted by them when forming the government.
- The political parties that fail to form the government form the opposition who maintain the checks and balance system on the ruling party and try to make the public aware about the pros and cons of the policies.
- The political parties form/shape the opinion of the public. This way it even aids in creating the pressure groups that enforces the government to make the policies for the advantage of the larger people.
- Since the political parties work for the welfare schemes, the local political parties serve as a bridge between the citizen and government officer.

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4.4 TYPES OF POLITICAL PARTIES

There are three main types of party systems. This chapter shall be discussing these types of party systems in details. Such classification or typology of political parties is not just merely based upon the number of political parties within a particular state but also highlights a distinctive feature of the three systems. The two-party system and the multiparty system represent the organised political conflict in a pluralistic society. It also highlights the democratic apparatus. On the other hand, the single party system operates in a system where the political conflict is not welcomed. They do not present the ideology of opposition. The chapter shall now discuss the one-party system in details.

4.5 ONE PARTY SYSTEM

The one-party system is also popularly known as single party system. Under this system the single political party that forms the government is usually based upon the constitution of the state.²² The other parties which come into existence in the system are either permitted limited participation in electoral processes or the termed as outlawed. The de facto single party system also expresses the dominance of single party. It nominally allows the other parties to exist. But very effectively, expresses itself through various methods and techniques. It claims for the unity of nation as it provides umbrella shield for the polity of the state. For example, in Soviet Union it is believed that the multiple parties represent the class struggle. So, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union represent the people. Similarly, in People's Republic of China under the United Front express how the opposition parties are allowed as allied parties to exist with the dominant party. It becomes important to understand the circumstances wherein the single party system or the one-party system exists:

- An ideology forms the basis of the single party system in a state. Marxism Leninism and international solidarity in countries such as Soviet Union is a good example to show how it forms a circumstance to aid these parties to exist.
- Extending on the above argument the nationalist ideology also plays an important role in the one-party dominance. The Nazi party in Germany and the fascist ideology under Mussolini in Italy are vital examples to prove the argument.

- The wake of independence from the yoke of colonial rule also observed dominant role in the call for liberation and independence.

The one-party system however is considered to be authoritarian in nature to such an extent that many times it converts itself into a totalitarian. But one has to keep in mind that all authoritarian states may not operate under the one-party rule. Examples of absolute monarchies and the military dictatorships make the existence of any political party as illegal.

4.5.1 Advantages of One-Party System

- One-party system is often appreciated for taking the quick decisions.
- Since the single party implements the policies unopposed it leads to stable political growth.
- It does not allow the wastage of resources, money and time on political campaigns. But the one-party system has been criticised on many grounds.

4.5.2 Disadvantages of One-Party System

- The one-party system lacks participation of people making it less integrative in approach.
- People as voters have no choice at the election.
- Very often the minority section of the state is neglected. They remain excluded from the mainstream welfare policies.
- Since the government is dictatorial in nature, it lacks responsiveness and accountability to the citizens of the country.

The above disadvantages of the one-party system create a search for an alternative approach.

4.6 TWO PARTY SYSTEM

Differing from the one-party system, the two-party system observes a shift in the power from one hand to two dominant major parties. Out of the two parties, the party that enjoys the majority support forms the governing party while the party with minority

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support forms the opposition party. Across the world, the two-party system has been identified differently. In countries like United States, Malta, Zimbabwe, the two party defines an arrangement where the elected officials belong to either of the two majority parties. There is little scope for the third party. The third party in the two-party system set up rarely wins any seat in the legislature. Thinkers such as Maurice Duverger, William H Riker, Jeffrey D Sachs establish a strong correlation between voting arrangements and number of party in a system. As such in this set up the winner takes it all factor seems to work/influence the election rules. According to Duverger's law²³, the two-party system is an organic product of the winner take all voting system. However, in countries with parliamentary systems such as United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, the term two party system indicates an arrangement where inspite of the two-parties, the third party also gets an opportunity to win seats in the elections. Here, the multitude of lesser or smaller parties influence the electoral system in varying degrees and even the elect officials belonging to these parties. Many commonwealth countries based on the Westminster system enjoy the parliamentary democracy. Here, the majority party forms the government, minority party forms the opposition while the third parties many times forms the coalitions. In rare circumstances, hung parliament arises. Thus, there is not a sharp demarcation between a two-party system and a multi-party system. To help understand the difference the next part of the chapter shall highlight the difference between the one-party system, two party system and the multiparty system.

4.6.1 Contrast of the Two-Party System with the Multiparty System and One-Party System:

At first the two-party system shall be contrasted with the multiparty system.

Two-Party System with the Multiparty system

- The multiparty system comprises of the effective number of parties that is greater than two and lesser than five while the two-party system comprises of the two dominant parties.
- Under the multiparty system, the coalition can control the government while under the two-party system the coalition government is rarely formed.

The Two-party system shall be now contrasted with the Multi-party system.

Two-Party System with the One-party system

- In the one-party system, only single party is legally recognised. The presence of other alternate parties is restricted. The single party like that of the Communist Party of China or Communist Party of Cuba wields power. While under the two-party system there exists shifts between two dominant parties.

4.6.2 Advantages of the Two-Party System

- Many thinkers suggest that the two-party system encourage centrism and find common goals that appeal to the larger electorate.
- It is a simpler governing system with lesser fractions that focuses on political stability.
- Unlike the hung parliament in the multi-party system, the two-party system is more preferred. Also, it provides fewer voting choices it is easier to understand.
- The non-governing party forms a strong opposition that keeps a strict vigilance on the governing party.

4.6.3 Disadvantages of the Two-Party System

- The two-party system is criticised for being less competitive and giving voters fewer choice.
- The two-party system is often criticised to encourage partisanship instead of inter party compromise.
- Ross Perot believe that the two-party system fails to voice the matters addressed by the two-majority party.

4.7 MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM

The multi-party system forms the basis of politicisation of new issues. It aims at avoiding of polarisation of issues like that of the two-party system. It also opens up for ideological innovation for public agendas, inclusive political institutions etc. In the multi-party system,

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multiple political parties exist in the political spectrum who compete with each other to control the government. The multiparty system is often observed in the parliamentary system over the presidential system. It is far common in countries that have proportional representation over the first past the post elections. All the political parties under this system have reasonable chance to form the government. The proportional system has range of representatives. Countries like India, Germany, New Zealand have the multiparty system. It also opens a space to form coalitions while attaching legitimate mandate.

Unlike the one-party system the multi-party system encourages multiple, political identities. “A two-party system requires voters to align themselves in large blocs, sometimes so large that they cannot agree on any overarching principles. Some theories argue that this allows centrists to gain control. On the other hand, if there are multiple major parties, each with less than a majority of the vote, the parties are strongly motivated to work together to form working governments. This also promotes centrism, as well as promoting coalition-building skills while discouraging polarization.”²⁴

4.7.1 Advantages of the Multi-Party System

The Multi-Party system has several benefits.

- It truly represents the various identities in a plural society by giving opportunity to various ideologies to come up and form the government.
- It gives several options to the voters.
- It is inclusive in nature.
- The multi-party system is very transparent in nature as it is integrative in nature and responsive to the needs of various spectre of the society.
- Unlike the One-party system and two-party system, the multi-party system ensures healthy competition and leaves no space for the dictatorship. This way the multi-party system is democratic in nature.
- The multiparty system is more responsive to bringing the shift in the public opinion.

However, inspite of the advantages of the multi-party system, there are several demerits of the system.

4.7.2 Disadvantages of the Multi-Party System

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- Many times, the multi-party system leads to coalition government that is instable for the longer run. Often the countries with the multiparty system observe a hung parliament.
- It is often messy as the presence of multiple identities may lead to difficulty in formation of the policies. The process of policy implementation may lead to various deliberations and discussions within the party.
- It may lead to corruption as there are plural identities existing in the system with various ideologies, as such there lacks transparency.
- The presence of linguistic or regional parties may lead to concentration of the development of the particular region. As such the larger nation may get ignored.

4.8 CONCLUSION

The party system represents the set of choices provided to the voters/electorates. According to R Michael Alvarez and Jonathan Nagler²⁵, the party system is mostly defined by the policy design. Also, the historical development of the party system in the state offers a strong base in defining the kind of party system in the state. However, according to Rajni Kothari²⁶, the recent occurrences like rise of the civil society restricting the role of the political parties and giving the common voters more indulgences in the political arena can call for change in the party system. Secondly, the old models of the political parties like that based on the Westminster model of parliamentary democracy is gradually diminishing by the rise of new alliances with rising ideologies across the globe like that on saving the environment, anti-corruption etc. the new parties forming are now focusing upon the developmental strategies and demand greater accountability, responsiveness and people's participation. These changing dynamics are calling for the changes in the party systems.

Still one cannot deny the fact the party system represents the voice of the common man. It is the duty of the political party to convert those needs/demands/voices into policy. Under the two-party system, the governing party tries to integrate those demands by implementing policies while one as an opposition party creates a pressure on the

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governing party to integrate those demands in the policies. The multiparty system is often applauded for its integrative nature. Thus, we see that different party systems hold its own significance. Any change in the type of party system shall definitely represent the change in demand/voice of the people which at large should be welcoming for the political stability.

4.9 PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What are the main function of Political Theory.
2. Discuss various types of party system.
3. Examine various difference between one, two and multiple party system.
4. Critically explain advantage and disadvantage of one party system.

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UNIT 5

STRUCTURES OF POWER IN SOCIETY CLASSICAL ELITIST THEORY, POWER ELITES, PLURALISM AND THEORY OF THE RULING CLASS

Dr. Shakit Pradayani Rout

Structure

- 5.1 Learning Objectives
- 5.2 Introduction
- 5.3 Meaning of Elite Theory
- 5.4 Power Structure and Elite
- 5.5 Authority and Legitimacy
 - 5.5.1 Traditional Authority
- 5.6 Classical Elite Theory
- 5.7 Pareto and Mosca on Elite Theory
- 5.8 Robert Michels, James Burnham & Charles W. Mills on Elite
- 5.9 Critical Evaluation on Elite Theory
- 5.10 Conclusion
- 5.11 Practice Questions
- 5.12 References

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- After completing this lesson, the students would understand the meaning and nature of the elite i.e. existing power structure in the society.
- They will also know about classical elite theory, the power elite, and the theory of the ruling class.
- It will help the students understand the idea of pluralism in a democratic set-up.

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5.2 INTRODUCTION

The word elite can be referred to as the commodities of excellence. Political elite can be understood as those persons who sit at the top of political activities and hold positions, above others by their superior qualities. It is a name given to a group that emerged in every walk of life, to a position of leadership and influence at every social level. In other words, the elite consists of those successful people who rise to the top in every occupation and stratum of society. In the beginning, the concept of the elite is evaluated and studied by sociologists. The concept later became part of the study of political science. In the lesson, we will discuss the political elite as a concept and its interconnectedness to the power structure in the society. The lesson will try to understand the classical elite theory, and attributes of the governing elite and look at various trends in how the circulation of the elite is taking place.

5.3 MEANING OF ELITE THEORY

Let us understand who the elites are. The elite is the microscopic minority who usually exercises control over any political social power structure. Whether it is primitive or modern, democratic, or totalitarian society everywhere you can find a group of people usually a ‘chosen few’ who rule the society. The political philosophers from time to time have recommended having a special class to rule. They prescribed some attributes to hold for the positive i.e. education, intelligence, virtues. According to elite theory, society is split between the majority and the ruling minority, with the latter always holding political power—the ability to make decisions that are binding on the entire society. The goal of elite theory is to provide a scientific explanation for the fact that, in every society, a minority holds the majority of the social, economic, intellectual, and cultural resources, which they use to exert control over the rest of the population, regardless of when or where these resources are concentrated.

Every philosopher who proposed the concept of the “elite”—from Plato to Rousseau—had certain characteristics. The British theory has its roots in the ideas and writings of Plato, but it is further developed in the writings of Gaetano Mosca and Pareto. Thus, the “elites” continue to hold the majority of the power in society. The

term “elite theory” describes a theory that aims to explain the composition and function of organisations where decision-making authority is concentrated.

The thesis of men’s inequality and their intellectual aptitude is supported by the elite theorist. Therefore, the elites are the selected group within the general populace, having risen to prominence through a combination of brilliance, charm, economic and natural resource management, or even physical prowess.

A small group of people known as the elites often make all significant choices and see to it that the populace carries them out and obeys them. To control all of society’s resources, they need social respect, prestige, rank, positions, and nationality. and make an effort to divide and assign resources to the general populace. Elites are those who hold positions of leadership in influential groups and movements, as noted by Higley and Bruton in 2006. As such, they can consistently and sustainably influence political outcomes (Lopez: 3). Thus, there are various types of elites:

- Business elite/Economic elite
- Ruling elite
- Religion elite
- Elites among Mechanics
- Corporate Elites

The political elite are those who came to prominence in the political field by their role and positions in politics. In a democratic political system, political, economic and cultural elites are being recruited openly and fairly manner. Recruited from different social strata based on rationality, merit and charisma.

5.4 POWER STRUCTURE & ELITE

In politics, power is the currency. It is the ability to effect the desired change. Just as money permits the efficient flow of goods and services through an economy, so power enables collective decisions to be made and enforced. Without power, a government would be as useless as a car without an engine. It is the key political resource that enables rulers both to serve and to exploit their subjects (Hague & Harrop, 2007: 10-11). Thus, elites are those who uses powers over most of the people.

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We can locate power across society. It sometimes lies with the head of the family, with Sarpanch with the university administration with the spiritual guru. Power is sometimes formal & and sometimes informal. Hannah Arendt defined power as ‘not just the ability to act but the ability to act in concert.’ (1966, p. 44) While defining power Arendt views power and violence as enemies rather than siblings she said that power and violence are opposite, where the one rules, the other is absent. Violence can destroy power; it is currently incapable of creating it. (1966, p. 56)

Power consists of the ability to persuade a person or group of people to do the same work without their consent. In Dahl’s famous definition (1951), power is a matter of getting people to do what they would not otherwise have done. Note that the underlying view of power here assumes conflict rather than consensus (ibid, 11).

5.5 AUTHORITY & LEGITIMACY

There is a strong relationship between elites, power structure and the process of legitimization. Max Weber elaborated on the three different types of authority in his noted work.

5.5.1 Traditional authority

Max Weber’s first type, traditional authority, is based on ‘piety for what, allegedly or presumably has always existed (1923, p. 296) (ibid 11). Traditional rulers do not need to justify their position, rather, obedience. For example, Monarchs rule because they always have done so. To demand any justification would itself constitute a challenge to traditional authority. Such arrangements are like structures of patriarchy- the father’s or the oldest man’s authority within the family. For Weber, charismatic authority is another form and one that contrasts sharply with authority based on tradition. In contrast, to the foundation of traditional allegiance in the past, charismatic authority spurns history. The charismatic prophet looks forward, convincing followers that the promised land is within reach. Because they motivate their followers, such leaders are followed. who credit their saviour with exceptional and even supernatural qualities. (p. 11) The third & and final type of authority is the legal & and rational one. Rational-legal authority is expressed when a leader can make decisions based on prescribed laws, rules and regulations prescribed by the Constitution. The hallmark of this type of authority is

stability and efficiency. This type of authority power is vested in a particular rationale, system and ideology and not necessarily in the person who implements the specific of that doctrine.

Here obedience is owed to rules rather than individuals, resulting in a government based on regulations, not tradition or charisma. In Germany, it is often described as Rechtsstaat: a state based on law. In Britain, It is referred to as Niti, the Indian legal system.

Weber's	Classification of Authority	Illustration
Traditional	Basis Custom and the established way of doing things	Monarchy
Charismatic	Intense commitment to the leader and his message	Many Revolutionary Leaders
Legal Rational	Rules and procedures the office, not the person	Bureaucracy
Source: Weber (1922) (ibid 12)		

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5.6 CLASSICAL ELITE THEORY

Great attention has been paid in the last few years to the contraposition between people and the elite, perceived as the fundamental character of the populist discourse. Within this frame of reference, both the people and elite express a conception of the univocal will and the homogeneous interest of two collective bodies. To better understand the polysemic term “elite”, it’s necessary to distinguish between two different uses of the term. The first comes from the Latin word eligere, i.e. fit to be chosen and is used to express a positive meaning. This meaning is popularised by the works of Vilfredo Pareto who also used, as a synonym of the elite, the term” aristocrazia”, aristocracy, referred to as the “best”. This meaning was refused by Gaetano Mosca, who found the definition of the ruling class” more proper because the elite implied a eulogy of the ruling class that, in many cases, it does not deserve. The second use of the word is currently the most common and refers, in a neutral way, to every institution, organization, and association that has elites in its structure.

NOTES

The first period of development of “Elite Theory” could be placed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Even if elitism was not a new topic- back in the eighteenth century, there were precursors such as Saint Simon, Comte, Tocqueville, and Taine who used the main concept of elite or managerial class to explain the major historical and political transformations of society. The Italian school of Gaetano Mosca, Vilfredo Pareto, and Robert Michels, also known as the “Machiavellian School”, started this new strand of study, focusing not only on the assumption that every society is characterized by an asymmetric distribution of political power but investigating who holds the power, how. On that basis, how, the power can move from one small group to another?

The core of classical elitism is the notion of the inevitability of elites in any type of government. They say that society is necessarily elite-driven. In the elitist view, elites could only be substituted by another set of elites, which means the majority of the masses is necessarily ruled by the minority. Thus, elite theory assumes that anyone but not everyone could eventually become a member of the elite strata.

5.7 PARETO AND MOSCA ON ELITE THEORY

Elite theories have held a significant place in Western intellectual discourse since the early 1900s, drawing interest from global political scientists and sociologists. Particularly intriguing to those studying power distribution, influence, and decision-making authority in societies, the examination of elite theories has grown in prominence over the past few decades, notably following World War II. The post-war era, marked by the independence of numerous Afro-Asian nations, has brought an increased focus on the rise of new elites as a central theme in scholarly research.

Pareto characterized the elite as a class consisting of individuals with the highest standings in their respective fields. According to him, elites encompass those who score the highest on scales measuring various social values like power, wealth, and knowledge. He identified two distinct classes within the elite: the governing elite, involving individuals directly or indirectly influential in government, and the non-government elite, which includes the rest. Pareto divided the overall population into two strata - the non-elite lower stratum and the elite higher stratum, further classified into governing and non-governing elites. For Pareto, studying historical changes entails an examination

of elites, emphasizing that understanding decisions among the elite is more crucial for societal history than events involving the broader masses.

In his influential work, “The Rise and Fall of the Elites,” Pareto formulated several laws, with the first two emphasizing that human action primarily stems from sentiment rather than logical reasoning. Pareto’s psychological framework posits that human actions result from a combination of “residues” (major motivations) and “derivations” (external elaborations). He identified six residues as the primary motivations for action.

- i. Combination, or the propensity to create and take on novel experiences. Stated differently, the ability to be as crafty as a fox
- ii. Preservation Persistence, or the propensity to assemble, to solidify, and to create security. To put it another way, to be strong, capable of fighting, and possess lion-like qualities.
- iii. Expressiveness, or the propensity to use symbols to represent emotions.
- iv. Social skills and inclination to form groups.
- v. Integration and the propensity to uphold a positive self-concept.
- vi. Sex, the propensity to interpret social interactions in an amorous manner (Bhusan:187).

The primary idea Pareto made was that the Elite maintain their position of power by fusing the slyness of a fox with the tenacity of a lion. To remain in power the elite combines the quality cunningness of a fox and the perseverance of a lion.

Mosca uses the term ‘elite’ in a very restricted sense. By elite, he means the ruling class. In a quoted book: *The Ruling Class*, he writes: “In all societies – two classes of people appear – a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class, always less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages that power brings. In contrast, the second, the more numerous classes, is directed and controlled by the first, in a manner that is now more or less legal, now more or less arbitrary and violent, and supplies the first, in appearances at least, with material means of subsistence and with the instrumentalities that are essential to the viability of the political organism”. Additionally, he stated that across nations, a minority of influential individuals holds control over the administration of public affairs, a situation where the majority may or may not acquiesce. Mosca observed that it is the minorities who govern the majority, as opposed to the reverse scenario.

NOTES

NOTES

The organized minority, being a cohesive group, follows a unified direction, inevitably leading to its dominance over the unorganized majority. The larger the political community, the more challenging it becomes for the majority to coordinate and counteract the minority. Additionally, the ruling minorities distinguish themselves from the masses by possessing specific characteristics, either through inherent material, intellectual, or moral superiority or by inheriting these qualities from esteemed individuals with significant influence. In ancient times, military prowess was crucial, while in contemporary societies, wealth served as the gateway to the political class. These attributes mutually reinforce each other, as wealth begets political power and vice versa, establishing a connection between affluence and influence. Other avenues for social influence include personal publicity, quality education, specialized training, high positions in the church, public administration, and the military, all of which are more readily accessible to the wealthy than to the less affluent. (ibid: 190)

Mosca further highlights that, whether officially recognized or not, political classes commonly tend to become hereditary. He links this phenomenon to the force of inertia in physics, suggesting that political forces naturally gravitate towards stability. As a result, specific families acquire the qualities required for occupying significant offices and maintaining dominance over an extended period. Even in democratic electoral processes, successful candidates often display hereditary characteristics. This explains why, in English, French, and Italian parliaments, there is a frequent occurrence of family ties among members, involving sons, grandsons, brothers, nephews, sons-in-law, and even relatives of current or former members and deputies.

He also discussed the concept of the 'circulation of elites,' wherein the composition of the political class changes, typically by enlisting new members from lower societal strata. Occasionally, this process involves incorporating new social groups, and in some instances, established elites may be entirely replaced by a 'counter elite,' as seen in revolutions (Bhushan: 191).

Mosca adopts a restrained stance on the use of force and leans towards advocating for change through persuasion. He recommends that governing elites gradually adjust the political system to align with shifts in public opinion. In democratic political systems, the power of persuasion offers a range of effective tools for negotiating with the opposition.

He was also in favour of a multiplicity of social forces. He also introduced the concept of sub-elites comprising civil servants, managers of industries, scientists and scholars and treated them as a vital element in society (ibid).

5.8 ROBERT MICHELS, JAMES BURNHAM & CHARLES W. MILLS ON ELITE

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Robert Michels introduces another aspect of the elite phenomenon in his work 'Political Parties: A Sociological Study of Modern Democracy (1962).' Michaels identifies two factors that bring leaders or elites closer to power: organization and psychological aspects. In terms of organization, he emphasizes that political parties campaigning for power need to efficiently coordinate activities such as organizing votes, canvassing supporters, providing information for speakers, fundraising, and managing the party's financial structure and legal standing. These activities require expertise and planning that the masses may lack, resulting in elites controlling party funds and communication channels.

Regarding psychological aspects, Michaels notes that a significant portion of the population remains apathetic toward public matters. Leaders who remain psychologically committed to addressing public needs can thus retain leadership positions within the party system. Michaels conducts an in-depth study of European Socialist political parties and trade unions, particularly focusing on the German Socialist Party. He finds that despite parties committing to democracy and socialism, a few leaders wield significant power, a concept he terms the 'iron law of oligarchy.'

James Burnham's theory of the elite, as presented in his book 'The Managerial Revolution (1941)', shifts the focus to the real functional power held by managers rather than political representatives or businessmen in terms of control and ownership. Burnham agrees with Marx on the connection between control of production and political power, social prestige, and wealth. However, he proposes a different explanation for the decline of capitalism, suggesting that the capitalist ruling class was eventually displaced by technically indispensable managerial elites.

Charles Wright Mills' book 'The Power Elite' (1956) marks a turning point in the study of political elites. Mills conducts a comprehensive empirical, historical, and sociological analysis across political, military, economic, and institutional hierarchy's top posts. He concludes that American society is dominated by a power elite, which makes significant decisions without being accountable to the people. The power elite controls the mass media, manipulating public opinion and maintaining power through flattery, deception, and entertainment.

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5.9 CRITICAL EVALUATION OF ELITE THEORY

Elite theory opposes pluralism or the sharing of power with any socio-political group. The pluralist perspective within elite theory contends that decision-making involves many dimensions and dichotomies among the elite, with all participants sharing equal status regardless of possession, power, or rights. Key pluralist thinkers include Robert A. Dahl and Seymour Lipset. Dahl in his book *Polyarchy* (1971) systematizes the pluralistic approach, emphasizing the politically autonomous nature of pluralist elite groups. He explores the concept of polyarchy, where regular elections and recruitment of new members prevent dictatorship and demagogic populism, fostering a state of equilibrium. In the book, he mentioned democracy which can thrive better when citizens are being considered as 'political equals'. Polyarchies are competitive regimes with a responsive mechanism to initiate change through free and fair elections and the inclusion of new elites to rule (p:8).

5.10 CONCLUSION

The contemporary society undergoing significant political and social change requires a fresh theoretical perspective on the elite. While the law of elite circulation in democratic societies typically occurs peacefully, variations exist globally regarding power structures, elite involvement in resource distribution, and their participation in the policy process. Political scientists must continually refine their understanding of elites to address the challenges faced by democratic societies and promote responsible and responsive governance.

5.11 PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- (i) What is the social structure of power, and how do they influence the people in society?
- (ii) What do you understand about classical elite theory? Explain it.

- (iii) How does the power elite dominate over the masses in society, what are the features of the power elite, and evaluate it?
- (iv) What is pluralism? Discuss various dimensions of Pluralism given by Robert Dahl.

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UNIT 6

COMPARING REGIMES DEMOCRATIC, AUTHORITARIAN, WELFARE, POPULISM AND SECURITY REGIMES

NOTES

J.S. Pathak

Structure

- 6.1 Learning Objectives
- 6.2 Introduction
- 6.3 Understanding the Nature of Political Regimes: Its Challenges and Objectives
- 6.4 Basis of Classification: From Number of Rulers and Nature of Authority Exercised
- 6.5 Democratic Regimes: Nature and Characteristics
- 6.6 Authoritarian Regimes: Nature and Characteristics
- 6.7 Conclusion
- 6.8 Practice Questions
- 6.9 References

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this lesson students will be able to understand:-

- Understanding the Nature of Political Regimes
- Basis of Classification
- Democratic Regimes
- Authoritarian Regimes

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6.2 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will look into the nature of Authoritarian and democratic regimes. However, in order to compare and contrast the two, it is necessary to get a basic idea on the different kinds of regimes and the basis of their classification briefly. It will enable us to get an understanding of how different kinds of regimes have been established with changing political, social and economic conditions. The first section of this chapter would define, what is meant by the term state, government, political system and political regime in the context of this chapter. Then the following section would highlight the challenges of classification of regimes. This chapter would also discuss the basis of classification that has been used to characterise political regimes. For, this purpose this chapter will focus on the number of people ruling and the nature of power the state holds in relation to its subjects and political institutions. Also, this chapter would throw light on the difference between authoritarian and democratic regimes in greater detail, by highlighting some of the most fundamental aspects of these regimes. So, by the end of this chapter, we should be able to get a glimpse of the basis of classification of regime types and understand in detail the nature of authoritarian and democratic regimes.

As we proceed to understand the nature of authoritarian and democratic regimes, it is necessary to identify with a working definition of terms such as the state, government and political regimes or political systems. We often use these terms interchangeably, especially the term state with government and vice versa. However, let us discuss the meaning of these terms briefly for or better understanding. The state could be defined as an organised political community, with a definite territory, sovereignty and a government. While the government is the agency that acts on behalf of the state. Political regimes can be defined as “the formal and informal structure of state and governmental roles and processes” (Siaroff 2013:2). It represents a set of processes, norms and culture that determines how the government functions. It refers to the pattern of interactions between the various institutions, structures, the government and the civil society of the state.

6.3 UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF POLITICAL REGIMES: ITS CHALLENGES AND OBJECTIVES

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Understanding the nature of regimes has been a great challenge due to the changing nature of parameters to characterise a regime and also the presence of too many variables, to an extent where there may be overlapping. However, understanding the nature of regimes is useful to understand how governments function, facilitate better governance and ensure human rights.

The earliest tradition of investigating regimes could be traced to 4th Century B.C. Thinkers like Plato and Aristotle have contributed greatly to the tradition of studying regimes. In Plato's scheme of classification, he assigns five different kinds of regimes with Aristocracy as the most desirable form of government, followed by timocracy, then oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny. For, Plato democracy was not a very desirable form of government, since it implied a state of rule by all, with ultimate freedom, leading to order less society. Aristotle after studying 158 constitutions, classified regimes into Monarchy, Aristocracy, Tranny, Oligarchy and Democracy and even he considered democracy as the most perverted form of government.

The modern state and rise of the Westphalian state have introduced several changes, how we look at a modern state. The emergence of liberal democratic states, the constitution and the factors such as freedom of expression and speech, the spectrum of political and social rights have greatly shaped the nature of regimes a country may have. However, with the process of decolonisation and cold war politics in the nineteenth and twentieth century, the modern classification of regime types was begun broadly to be classified under democratic and authoritarian states. However, such classification has been considered majorly Eurocentric and often overrides a tendency of privileging the west. These classifications have failed to take into account the socio-political realities of post-colonial Asian and African states.

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6.4 BASIS OF CLASSIFICATION: FROM NUMBER OF RULERS AND NATURE OF AUTHORITY EXERCISED

Two major variables which have been employed to understand the nature of regimes have been: the number of people ruling (who is ruling) and secondly how the ruling body exercises power over the governed. In the case of the second criteria, power has been a major basis of classification and a yardstick to investigate the nature of the relationship the state may hold concerning its political institutions. The nature of the relationship shared between the centre and the units determine whether the state is a unitary or a federal state. Also, regimes may be classified based on the relationship the executive and the legislative therefore it could be a parliamentary or a presidential form of government.

A regime in which the source of power is highly centralised is called as a unitary form of regime. On the other hand, a federal form of a regime, the power is distributed amongst its provinces. The key features of a federal form of a government are as follows: i) Written constitution ii) Independent judiciary iii) division of powers between the centre and the states. Federations have come into existence as a result of written agreements between states. It has a judiciary, to resolve disputes between the centre and the states, or between the states. It also has a written constitution, which may be rigid or flexible or a mix of both to ensure changes and the survival of the federation at the same time. There is also a clear demarcation of powers between the centre and the states so that each could exercise its jurisdiction on various subjects and sometimes jointly on certain subjects often listed through a concurrent list. The Indian state is an example of a federal state, with a written constitution, independent judiciary and clear division of powers between the centre and the state. However, the Indian state is also called as a federal state with a unitary bias, one could discuss the reasons why?

Before we proceed onto understanding the contemporary nature of regime types let us look at how regimes may be classified based on the number of people who executes political power.

Comparing Regimes Democratic, Authoritarian, Welfare, Populism and Security Regimes

Type of Regime	The number of people who rule and the nature of rule
Monarchy	It is a rule by one person. In such a kind of regime the monarch is the head of the state. The nature of such regimes could vary from constitutional; to symbolic to absolute monarchy (examples may include Nepal, Jordan or medieval Europe, Britain)
Dictatorship	One (examples may include Germany under Hitler's and Italy under Mussolini, or in the current times North Korea)
Oligarchy	Rule by a few, often by the wealthy class. It is a kind of rule where a certain class of people assumes rule over several aspects of a regime (for instance South Africa under the apartheid regime)
Aristocracy	Rule by few, such regimes are characterised by a rule by the small ruling class. (examples of such regime types could be ancient Greece)
Democracy	Many (Examples of Democracy may include the United States and India)

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As we try to understand, what classifies as a Monarchical regime, which, may range from constitutional monarchy to symbolic monarchy like in case of Britain to absolute monarchy. A constitutional monarchy is a form of monarchy in which the rule of the monarch is often determined by written laws and rules, based on the constitutional provisions. Under such circumstances, the rule of the monarch may not be absolute. Absolute monarchy, on the other hand, is more like an autocratic rule of the monarch, which is not be regulated by any law, or custom or rule. In many constitutional monarchies, the rule of the monarch is determined by the constitution and in many instances, the position of the monarch is more a symbolic position, for instance in Britain the position of the monarch is more symbolic than vested with real powers. North Korea is often cited as an example of absolute monarchy, determined by hereditary. Monarchy in both cases could be hereditary or elective or a combination of both, however the nature of rule and how it may exercise its power and control over the political and civil liberties of the population may vary. Instances of how countries may have moved from the form of the monarchy to another may include Bhutan, which moved from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy in 2003. Jordan and Kuwait are other countries which have adopted constitutional monarchy, however, the amount of power the monarch may continue to possess or exercise may still vary from one country to another.

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Dictatorial regimes are the ones, in which political power is concentrated and held by a leader, who could be referred to as the dictator. In such form of governments, political pluralism and freedom of expression which is one of the most fundamental aspects of civil liberties is restricted to maintain a stronghold of the dictator. When, dictatorship tries to have complete control over all aspects of political, economic and civil rights it may be characterised as a totalitarian state, which will be discussed elaborately in the next sections of this chapter.

An oligarchy is a form of regime, in which the power is held by a few groups of people. These group of people may constitute the wealthy class, military or economically more influential class of people. In many cases, oligarchies may be hereditary or may not be hereditary. They also could be tyrannical and in some cases not so. Since oligarchies consist of a rule by a few people, it could also be understood as a rule by a minority. South Africa during the apartheid rule could be characterised as a having an oligarchical rule, headed by a dominant racial group over the rest.

Aristocracy is a term that has been derived from a Greek word meaning rule of the best. An aristocracy is a form of government in which a few rules, specifically the ruling class, who are privileged to rule so. Plato and Aristotle believed that the state should be governed by a group of few capable and the best class of citizens, who would be selected through a very carefully drafted selection procedure. They often contrasted Aristocracy which is a rule by a few (deserving candidates) over monarchy which was the one of one. Interesting, the ancient Greek, considered aristocracy is as a better form of government over hereditary monarchy since it did not correspond to rule by the best. Plato and Aristotle considered Aristocracy better over democracy. However, they did not consider aristocracy as a better form when it was corrupted in the form of an oligarchy and considered worse than a corrupted form of Democracy which they described as Mobocracy.

Next, after we have seen how we can classify regimes based on the number of people who rules, we can classify regimes based on the government executes power and holds power as mentioned below.

Type of Regime	Its relationship with power and its execution
Totalitarian	Absolute control over every aspect of life and governance (examples may include Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Greater German Reich)

Comparing Regimes Democratic, Authoritarian, Welfare, Populism and Security Regimes

Autocratic	Such a regime is also very controlling, however, it is less controlling than a totalitarian regime (French empire under Napoleon Bonaparte, Chile under Pinochet)
Authoritarian	Such a regime is also very controlling, however, it is less controlling than a totalitarian regime (some examples may include People's Republic of China, Jordan, Turkey)
Constitutional	Under such regimes the amount of power exercised by the state is controlled by rules that are laid out in the constitution and any abuse of power is ensured by a system of check and balances.
Democracies	Under such a regime the source of power lays with the people. The elected representatives of the people are responsible for exercising power on behalf of the people. Democracies may be direct or indirect.

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After we have understood the various existing kinds of regimes based on the number of people ruling and its relationship with power, this section would specifically deal in detail, the nature of authoritarian and democratic regimes.

6.5 DEMOCRATIC REGIMES: NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS

It refers to a political system characterised by the rule of the people. Democracy is represented as a form of the regime in which people elect their representative. The word Democracy comes from Greek Word *Demos*, meaning the people. It refers to a kind of political rule, where the supreme power is vested with the people. In fact, some of the earliest references for Democracy is traced to ancient Greece. For, instance many of these ancient Greek city-states, had certain institutions in place which was democratic in nature. In Athens a few could elect their representatives or officials, thereby having an element of election and a system where rule by the majority was an acceptable form of political process and it is considered due to the level of mass participation by the masses (Heywood 2019:183). Both of these examples demonstrate traces of democratic processes. Although, democracy at that time is not like the current nature of democracy. The way we need to understand is the position of the individual with regard to the community.

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Prevalence of democratic practices would be traced to the Indian subcontinent as well with early social and political formations. Some of the prominent institutions would be traced to 6.B.C, where a few people could exercise their participation through the *Sanga's* and Panchayats during the era of the *Mahajanapads*. However, the nature of democracy then and the modern notions of democracy varies today.

As we begin to move away from the ancient period, we see that as the political, cultural and economic changes begin to take place, so did the nature of state and nature of political regimes. For instance, the nature of political regimes in the medieval period was greatly influenced by the events such as the Renaissance in Europe and eventually the treaty of Westphalia 1648 which formalised the notion of a modern state with territorial sovereignty as one of the fundamental aspects of a state (Heywood 2019: 124). Eventually, other many significant events in the United States such as the passage of the Bill of Rights 1789 were landmark developments for the growth of democratic ideals. The French revolution in 1798 too played a significant role, which led to the establishment of the constitutional monarchy after abolishing the Ancient regime, is considered to have laid some of the most fundamental aspects of modern liberal democracy.

The 20th century was one of the most eventual periods in the context of the rise of democratic regimes. The impact of the First World War with the victory of the Allies was a period when democratic regimes received more legitimacy. However, the peace between the interwar period and victory of the allies was short-lived, due rise and popularity of authoritarian regimes. For instance, the rise of Nazism in Germany and Mussolini in Italy, are some of the most striking examples of authoritarian regimes in the 20th century. The cold war period too saw a period when the struggle between the communist and the capitalist bloc influenced the nature of political regimes in many countries. Also, other political developments such as the prominence of Stalinism in Communist USSR, demonstrates how authoritarian states turned totalitarian in nature. Having, mentioned that, the upcoming sections would provide a comparative analysis of how the nature of authoritarian regime may differ from totalitarian regimes.

However, post-cold war, the dissolution of USSR, the decolonisation process and civil rights movements, had impacted the gradual demise of non-democratic regimes. Many former colonies of the imperial powers were to grant political autonomy/ sovereignty in lieu of cooperating with their war efforts of the imperial powers. For instance, India was promised independence if India were to cooperate with Britain in their war efforts against the axis powers. Representative governments started becoming

more popular. Even today, many countries are making transitions concerning the nature of political regimes they have. However, one of the greatest challenges of democracy remain, that true democracy is a distant possibility. Appropriation of democracy by vested interests and populist regimes have taken away the real essence of the objective of a democratic political system.

The next section will discuss some of the major characteristics of a democratic regime. The nature of a democratic regime is usually determined by the position of an individual with respect to the community, civic and political rights.

When we speak of democracy in an everyday language, we refer to the rule of majority as one of the basic principles of democracy, which implies the rule of the people. Universal Adult Franchise and voting rights do constitute the core of any democratic regime. However, majority rule does not naturally imply that a state may be democratic. A true democracy, especially in countries with diverse ethnic and religious composition has to ensure the concerns of the ethnic and religious minorities.

Political Pluralism is one of the most important aspects of a democratic regime. In modern-day democracies and especially in states with a complex societal composition and multiple institutions, political pluralism becomes a crucial characteristic of a well-functioning democracy. One of the basic features of a democratic regime is the free formulation of preferences through freedom of association, information and communication (Linz 2000:58)

Democracies usually guarantee certain inalienable rights to its citizens. Freedom of speech and expression, Religious and Cultural Freedom are some of the rights.

Political Freedom is another major characteristic of a democracy, which is marked by the presence of civil liberties, mass participation, freedom of media and press. Election of leaders either directly or indirectly is one of the core features of a democratic regime.

Equality before the law and equal opportunities irrespective of caste, gender, or religion is a fundamental feature of the modern democracies. For democracies to be real there has to equality of opportunities in not just political, but social, educational and economic sense (Gillin 1919: 704)

Economic freedom, the right to practice a profession of choice and absence of absolute state control over economic activities have also been a part of liberal democracies.

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Mass political mobilisation is a fundamental aspect of modern democracies since representatives compete in elections for the purposes of governing (Boix and Stokes 2011:9).

Since political participation and freedom of expression may form a crucial feature of democracies, therefore it is often marked by the presence of civil society groups.

However, it should also be noted that no democratic regime offers absolute rights or political freedom. Often and at many instances rights as qualified in nature and not absolute. For instance, one cannot hurt the sentiments of other communities in the name of freedom of speech or make derogatory remarks against women. However, it is also true that many at times a lot of these provisions in a democracy is misappropriated. Alan Siaroff (2013: 117), identifies a few factors which make some countries more democratic than others and they are political pluralism, level of economic development, nature of development, the role of the military, population, homogeneity, socio-cultural and regional factors too.

Democracies could be of two types, which are direct and indirect democracy. In a direct democracy, people elect their representatives directly and govern directly, for example, Switzerland. On the other hand, indirect democracy people elect their representatives, so often called representative democracy. In representative democracies, people elect their leaders indirectly and it is effective as long as the relationship between the governed and the government is full-filing and reliable (Heywood 2019:181). Representative democracies could be parliamentary, presidential, liberal and illiberal too. Democracies may be characterised by a dominant one-party system and also multi-party system. India has a representative form of democracy, characterised by a phase with one-dominant party system in the immediate post-independence days, and also with time saw an emergence of regional parties and coalition politics. The American system has the feature of a two-party system with the Republicans and the democrats. Britain can be characterised as having a multi-party system, however since 1920 there have been two major parties, the labour party and the conservative party have dominated politics. However, the one-party system is not the same as a pure one-party system, which exists in countries like the Peoples Republic of China. In a one-party dominant system, one party predominates over the rest, whereas a pure one system is characterised by a single party, which is non-democratic (Siaroff 2013:202)

We have discussed how different regimes differ from each other based on the number of people who rule and the nature of power they wield over the political,

economic, social and cultural sphere of the state and its subjects. By now it is already evident that there is no strict categorisation of any regime as such, but only an identification of some more prominent characteristics of these political systems. However, democracies are also not without its pitfalls, often democracies have assumed oligopolistic characteristics and also rivalries between political parties and opposition creates disharmony too (Heywood 2019: 184). Also, there are different theories of democratic thought which explore various forms of democracies such as pluralist, liberal, substantive, deliberative (Hilmer 2011: 605-607).

A critical analysis of each of these regimes types, as in when we look at the actual functioning of these political systems we may see that certain countries with a democratic set up may not be as democratic as it may seem to be as enshrined in the constitution. For instance, one of the major criticisms around democracy, apart from Aristotle's understanding of democracy as mobocracy is that it is a form of oligopolistic form of government, in which a few rules over the entire state of affairs in the name of the people.

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6.6 AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES: NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS

Authoritarian regimes are characterised by governments which has a strong command over power, often a centralised power structure. Such regimes are characterised by limited political freedom. Under such regimes, political rights, freedom of religion and political pluralism are very limited. Also, there may be overlapping of judicial, executive and legislative functions of the state. Even today, many authoritarian regimes may have features of a democratic system and a democratic system may have features of an authoritarian regime. As, discussed earlier each of these regimes may have variations and may often overlap with the characteristics of other regimes, however political scientists have classified authoritarian regimes as oligarchic or autocratic, or rule by a one-party or the military.

Alan Siaroff (2013:243-245), lists different kinds of authoritarian regimes which may range from traditional, military, theocratic, to electoral authoritarianism. The traditional authoritarian regimes are the ones that are based on a patron-client relationship. Bureaucratic military apparatus is those which sustain themselves through

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and within the bureaucratic structure. Competitive authoritarian regimes are those regimes which have democratic structures, but authoritarian in its functioning. Also, as discussed in the previous sections, authoritarianism in its extreme form takes the shape of a totalitarian state. Some of the fundamental characteristics of authoritarian regimes are discussed in the section below.

Authoritarian regimes have a very controlled power structure; it usually has a centralised power structure. It is not just political power which is centralised, even economic power may be highly centralised. In authoritarian regimes or non-democratic set up, a lot of the rules are left to the rulers to decide and not independent bodies (Linz 2000: 59)

One of the core aspects of an Authoritarian regime is that it lacks political pluralism. Such regimes lack a spirit to accommodate any opposition or presence of alternate institutions. Authoritarian regimes are less tolerant of diverse ethnic and religious composition.

Most often, such regimes sustain on use of violence or coercion. Any non-adherence to the dictates of state may invite very harsh punishments. Secret killings, arrests become a common feature, for instance, Nazi Germany during Hitler's reign was based on an extensive spy and surveillance system and often resorted to force to suppress any opposition or alternative thinking.

It is often marked by an indefinite rule by one political power, often maintaining its position through abuse of power. Such leaders often come to power not necessarily people elect them or grant consent but often occupy positions of power through coercion and even populist propaganda. Such leaders remain in power by disseminating fake information, with total control over mass media and freedom of speech. Therefore, controlled media and freedom of the press is another feature of such regimes.

Authoritarian regimes are characterised by limited civil liberties and attempts are made to control civil liberties.

Lack of mass mobilisation and mass participation in political affairs become a dominant feature of many authoritarian regimes due to the use of severe coercion and state repression.

History had examples of many authoritarian regimes, however, with the end of second world war, many countries moved away from authoritarianism to democracy. Factors such as the use of force or coercion alone have not been able to hold such

regimes in power although it has been a crucial factor, for instance, Pol Pot was ousted out of power after killing two million Cambodians (Gandhi and Przeworski 2: 2007).

Factors such as the end of decolonisation, end cold war, fall of Soviet acted as a catalyst for the shift away from authoritarian regimes. Arab Spring in 2010 was another event which began in Tunisia and spread to many countries such as Libya and Egypt challenged the authoritarian regimes. However, even today we have many authoritarian regimes such as North Korea and the Peoples Republic of China exist.

NOTES

6.7 CONCLUSION

At the end, we need to understand that there is no strict mode of classification of regime types. Political scientists have classified regimes on based on the nature of the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, civil and political liberties, the relationship between various organs of the government.

We have learnt that political regimes could be classified based on the number of people ruling, such as Monarchy, Dictatorship, Aristocracy, Oligarchy to Democracy. A monarchical rule may be constitutional, symbolic or autocratic. Then also based on the nature of power its exercises which is authoritarianism, autocratic, totalitarianism, constitutionalism and democracy. Accordingly, there may be different forms of democracy based on the nature of the relationship shared between the executive and the legislature and also the mode of participation; direct and indirect democracy.

We have discussed the characteristics of authoritarian and democratic regimes as well. One of the most important aspects we need to keep in mind is the nuanced difference between the totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, although both may have similar features as well.

The process of decolonisation, especially after the post-cold war has introduced complex changes in many Asian and African countries, therefore new modes of classification become a necessity for a more meaningful study of the various political systems across the world.

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6.8 PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Describe the understanding the Nature of Political Regimes and its Challenges.
2. Differentiate between Number of Rulers and Nature of Authority.
3. Critically analyse the Democratic Regimes.
4. Briefly explain Authoritarian Regimes.

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