**Concept of Political Development**

The concept of political development is a newer construct and entered the lexicon of political science in the fifties. The idea gained momentum when the newly independent states of Asia and Africa began formulating development plans for the socio-economic development of their nations. Thus, the term ‘political development’ is of recent origin in the field of politics as the origins of the concept of development finds its roots in economics. The concept is surrounded by ambiguity and is a more elusive concept than economic development. The concept refers systemic change and is used to refer a cluster of changes that includes: the development of differentiated and functionally specific political structures, changes in values and attitudes from the theistic, ascriptive and particularistic towards the scientific and secular, egalitarian and universalistic, the penetration of society, by governmental agencies and activities, and a broadening of participation in politics (Easton, 1965: 50).

**Definitions of Political Development**

Though the concept of political development is surrounded by ambiguity, lacking standard and precise definition, political scientists have attempted to come forward with its definitions.

GA. Almond and G B. Powell Jr defined it as “the increased differentiation and specialisation of political structures and the increased secularisation of political culture’.

Samuel. P Huntington and Jorge I. Dominiquez defined it as “a pattern of change which occurs in a particular type of society, which is produced by a particular cause which is directed towards particular goals, or which is fundamentally required by particular social and economic conditions.’

Alfred Diamont defined it as “a process which aims at a particular condition, but one which creates an institutional framework for solving an ever-widening range of social problems”.

**Origin and growth of Political Development**

The decline of colonialism and imperialism in Asia and Africa after the Second World War led to the emergence of a large number of free and independent states in the region. However, decades of exploitation and underdevelopment under a colonial rule made these newly emerged nations, backwards in many respects. Although the process of decolonisation liberated these backward states from the Western political domination and the evils of imperialism, these states found themselves engulfed in a variety of economic, political and social problems. Thus, their process of taking shape as new nations was slow and faced with a number of challenges, unknown to the first (Western) world. Taking their peculiar experiences of underdevelopment and social and political undergrowth into concern, the leaders of these nations directed their efforts to establish a new political system suited to their soil. These efforts attracted the attention of many social scientists, mostly Americans, that led to the careful study of the process by 1950. Thus, we can see that the concept of political development has its origin in the studies of politics of the developing countries. James S.Coleman W.Howard Wriggins Leonard Binder, Herbert Fieth, Lucian Pye, Myren Weiner, David Apter and many other political scientists came out with excellent studies of the developing countries like Nigeria, Sri-Lanka, Pakistan, Indonesia, Burma, India, Ghana. They concentrated their attention on the types of nationalism – the process of their development, difficulties they faced at the political, social, economic and cultural levels. They analysed the role that bureaucracy or army or religion played in their political development (Gandhi, 1981:143).

**Dimensions of Political Development**

**Geographical*:*** Under the geographical dimension, almost any study on some aspects of the politics of the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America could be termed as s study of political development.

**Derivative:** This dimension implies that the study of political development is a study which refers to the political aspects and consequences of the broader process of modernisation. It may be noted that many scholars have attempted to identify political development with political modernisation. However, some scholars have maintained that identifying political modernisation with political development is not correct. They viewed that while political development has positive connotations, the process of political development often culminates in conflict, violence and disruption.

**Teleological:** This dimension covers political development in terms of moving towards one or more goals or status for the political system. The different goals with which political development has been identified include democracy stability, legitimacy, participation, mobilisation, institutionalisation, equality, capacity, differentiation, identity, penetration, distribution, integration etc.

**Functional:** When a society moves towards attaining the characteristics of modern, industrial society, such development is conceived as functional development. In this society, a certain type of political processes, values, leadership and institution are assumed as existent. As most industrialised societies do have some political system, it can be inferred that the existence of an urbanised political party is one aspect of political development. However, political development cannot be simply understood as a process derived out of modernisation. Rather, political development is a pre-requisite for an effectively functioning modern society, and not a consequence of political modernisation (Myerson & Banfield, 1955: 304-305).

**Factors that influence Political Development**

There is a marked difference between the political system of a relatively primitive, traditional, agrarian societies from those of highly complex, modern industrial societies. There are also major differences in the process of by which different political systems have evolved from the traditional to the modern ones. While political development in some societies are characterised by sharper cleavages and violence, others have experienced harmonious and peaceful political development. Political development can be explained in terms of the different factors influencing it. These factors can be broadly classified into social, economic, cultural and political factors.

**Social factors:** The social factors include the nature and evolution of the status system in the society, the opportunities for social mobility and the nature of communal (racial, national, linguistic, religious, caste) differences in the society. It is argued that the development of stable democratic institutions is impossible in a society in which there are deep communal cleavages and social conflicts.

**Economic factors:** The economic factors include the rate of economic development, the relationship between social mobilisation and economic development, the balance of unevenness of economic development among regions, patterns of land ownership and tenure, the timing and methods of commercialisation of agriculture and the pace of industrial development.

**Cultural factors:** Cultural factors also play a major role in influencing political development during the process of adaptation of modernisation. Some of the cultural factors that influence political development are; value for thriftiness, investment, hard work, education, organisation and discipline among the members of the society.

**Political factors:** Political factors also influence the process of political development. These factors include the nature of the traditional political system, the sequences and ways in which new groups enter political elites, the skills of political leaders, the nature and extent of political participation and the development of political institutions.

**Environmental factors**: In the evolution of a political system, both internal and external environmental factors play a very significant role. The external influences on the society include the diffusion and assimilation of ideas, models, techniques, resources and institutions from other societies. The intervention of foreigners through political, military, economic, or cultural means also affect the political development of society. Finally, the domestic reaction against the threat of foreign invasion and penetration also contributes to shaping the political development of society.

The term ‘political development’ suffers from a precise and standard definition as the concept is being studied and viewed from a number of inter-disciplinary point of view, precisely on the subject of growth, modernisation and development of the newly emerged states (Johari, 1978:95). In this connection, the works of Lucian Pye, Samuel P Huntington, Sidney Verba, G. A. Almond comes into prominence. Among these pioneers, Lucian Pye is credited with coming with the most in-depth work on the concept of political development.

**Views of Lucian W. Pye on Political Development**

Lucian W.Pye was among the first batch of scholars who have made an in-depth analysis of the concept by vividly examining diversity in the explanation of the concept of political development. These are:

(I) Political development as the political pre-requisite of development.

(2) Political development as the politics typical of industrial Societies.

(3) Political development as political modernisation.

(4) Political development as the operation of nation-State.

(5) Political development as administrative and legal development.

(6) Political development as mass-mobilisation and participation.

(7) Political development as the building of democracy.

(8) Political development as stability and orderly change.

(9) Political development as mobilisation of power.

(10) Political development as one aspect of a multi-dimensional process of Social change. (Maheshwari, 1983:185).

There are other interpretations also, such as national self-respect, attainment of dignity in international affairs, etc. But according to Pye, most of them create confusion. According to him, these various interpretations share some broad characteristics, and therefore has abstracted the following three features of political development from the above multitude of interpretations:

(1) An attitude towards equality,

(2) The capacity of political system and

(3) Differentiation and Specialisation of structures resulting in the increased functional specificity of the various political roles within the system (Maheswhari, 1983:185).

The first broadly shared characteristic is an attitude towards equality among national citizens, legal order and role allocation. Whereas, capacity refers to the political system by which it can give outputs and extent to which it can affect the rest of the society and economy. Finally, the third characteristic of Political Development is differentiation and Specialisation of the structure resulting in the increased functional specificity of various political roles within the system (Pye, 1965:45-46).

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