**Huntington’s view on Political Development**

Samuel P Huntington’s paper on ‘*Political Development and Political Decay’* is one of the most significant contributions to the concept of political development. Huntington tried to explain the concept of political development by introducing the concept of political decay. According to him, political development is not a unilinear process nor should it be confused with modernisation as many of his contemporaries supposed. He argued that just as political institutions grow and mature, they may also decay and dissolve (Huntington, 1965: 388). He denies a rulebook progression of events from one state of development to the next higher stage as supposed by Pye, Rostow and others. History is witness to the fact that innumerable nations have experienced periods of remarkable glory followed by stagnation and decay often lasting for longer durations.

Huntington has also disapproved the tendency of equating political development with political modernisation. Whereas, most western scholars considered the indicators of socio-economic changes experienced by their own nations to be considered as modernization, Huntington threw light on another outlook. He pointed out that westernization of society cannot be conceived as equal to modernisation. There are many instances of remarkable progress achieved by non-western societies like China, Russia and Japan and other non-western systems of polity that happened without the patterns of western experiences. He also pointed out that the highly developed ancient civilizations of China, India, Greece, Rome and Egypt achieved political development in context of the time and condition in which they prospered. Therefore, the core factor of political development is institution building, irrespective of the type and model of the political system. A well institutionalized polity would be marked by high levels of adaptability, complexity, autonomy and coherence which are indeed the hallmarks of healthy political development.

Thus, Huntington (1965) provides a model of political development as follows:

**Political System**

**Political development Political Decay**

1. Adaptability--long and regular chain of leadership 1. Rigidity

adapting to new challenges

1. Complexity--existence of a large number of 2. Simplicity

Institutions each carrying its responsibility

Without hindrance from others

1. Autonomy--independence and full control 3. Subordination

over clearly defined jurisdiction

1. Coherence—a degree of consensus and internal unity 4. Disunity

prevailing in the system

Huntington’s model of development is clear and precise. The emphasis of his model that political systems may experience both development and decay is an important empirical truth. His assertion on not confusing modernization with westernization is an important addition towards understanding political development worldwide. The drawing of clear distinction between political development and modernisation or westernization helps to prevent the viewing of political development as a matter of western experience alone. Also, his emphasis on institutionalization or institution-building as the core concept of political development postulates the idea that the stability, vitality of the systems of all nations depend upon sustenance and strength of their own institution. Hence, once the fundamentals of what constitutes political development and political decay are agreed upon, Huntington’s model can be applied to examine and explain the nature of political development or decay in regard to all political systems, past or present, developed or developing. Thus, Huntington’s model reflects a simple yet, global standard of parameters for understanding political development.

***Indicators of Political Development***

While various attempts of identifying the indicators of political development have been made, all these have their own limitations and hence been subject to criticisms. Nevertheless, S R Maheshwari (1980) have given a list of tentative indicators of political development, which are as follows:

1. National Integration.
2. Voter turnout
3. Popular participation in governmental decision-making process
4. Autonomous interest group
5. Mass media circulation, particularly in regional languages
6. Political and administrative decentralization
7. Autonomy of local governmental institutions
8. Expansion and autonomy of non-bureaucratic sector of society
9. Duration of legislative sessions
10. Number and effectiveness of Watchdog organizations overseeing the government and the bureaucracy
11. Autonomy of quasi-governmental sector i.e. Public undertaking, institutions
12. Stable Party system characterized by inner democratic functioning
13. Political competitiveness
14. Consensual politics
15. Tolerance for dissent and protest
16. Broadening social base of the political elite
17. Openness in public administration
18. Provision for redresses of citizen’s grievances
19. Constituency service by legislators
20. Education
21. Urbanization
22. Freedom of press
23. Anomie movements with certain limits
24. Honest, non-partisan election machinery
25. Independence of judiciary
26. Apolitical character of the army.

***Negative indicators of political development***

Maheshwari (1980) has also laid down certain negative indicators of political development

1. Coups
2. Riots
3. Number of political prisoners in jails
4. Political assassinations
5. Manipulated defection of legislators.

**Difference between Political modernisation and Political Development**

The concept of Political modernisation and Political Development, although appear synonymous have altogether different connotations. In most cases, these two concepts are used interchangeably, thereby giving a false impression of being similar. In order to understand the difference between the two, we need to understand the nature of changes that each process bring into a society. While, change is an inevitable characteristic of a society, there are differences in the ways, those changes take place. Some changes are automatic, involuntary that do not have the power of will or choice (Pandey, 1985:223). On the other hand, there are changes that are the products of the intervention of will or choice i.e. desired, planned, directed and stimulated. The concepts of modernisation and development are changes that belong to the second category (Pandey, 1985:223). The distinctions between the two concepts are as under:

1. Modernisation is open ended and value free term. But, as political development implies movement forward to some goal or preferred political order, it is value-oriented term.
2. Political modernisation provides both the possibilities of development as well as decay. On the other hand, political development is a movement towards some higher order.
3. Political modernisation is a narrow term. But, political development is a broad term as it even covers political modernisation also.
4. While, political modernisation lays stress on the spreading of secular world culture and democratization of political institution, political development lays emphasis on the overall socio-economic development of the nation.

**Conclusion**

Even after various attempts by different political scientists, there has been no universally accepted theory of Political Development as the concept lacks a standard and precise definition. However, theorists of political development have tried to analyse the process of development in the third world countries, in commensurate with the difficulties faced at the political, social, economic and cultural levels. Theorists of political development have drawn the attention of the world to the problem of Political development of the third world nations which is a vastly different experience than the first world. Scholars like Huntington argue that it is impractical to consider the indicators of political development in the Western countries as the parameter to measure political development in the third world countries. The necessity to identify and acknowledge the differences in the trajectories of history and nation building in the third world countries forms an important part of the study of political development. Thus, the concept of Political Development focusses on understanding the politics of the developing countries.

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