
BLOCK II

COMPARING REGIMES

The classification of political regimes is as old as the study of politics itself. Beginning from the 4th Century BC onwards, there have been numerous attempts to classify the regimes, define the concepts, and specify the basis of classification. The most widely accepted classification in those days was the one proposed by the Greek philosopher, Aristotle. He classified governments on the basis of number of rulers and quality of rule. In the medieval ages, attempts were made by Bodin, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Kant, etc. to improve upon the Aristotelian classification but they could not carry farther. New modes of classification emerged with the rise of modern nation-state. The American and French revolutions gave a blow to monarchy and brought about the republican and democratic forms. Further refinements in the classification of governments and regimes became necessary in the post-Second World War period because of the emergence of a number of post-colonial societies as sovereign independent states.

In the developed world, political institutions and traditions have had decades, even centuries to develop and have achieved high levels of legitimacy and public acceptance. In contrast, most developing countries are still searching for a political form and for the kinds of institutions and processes that best suit their needs. It is in this context that this block examines contemporary political regimes classified using common parameters: who rules? (Civilian or Military government) and how is compliance achieved? (Democratic or Authoritarian).

UNIT 3 AUTHORITARIAN AND DEMOCRATIC REGIMES*

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Government, Political System and Political Regime
- 3.3 The Purpose of the Classification of Political Regimes
- 3.4 Evolution of Democratic Regimes
- 3.5 Democratic Regimes in the Developed States
- 3.6 Democratic Regimes and the Developing States
- 3.7 The Nature of Authoritarian Regimes
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 - 3.7.2 Authoritarian Regimes in the post-Second World War Period
- 3.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.9 Some Useful Books
- 3.10 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

3.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit examines contemporary democratic and authoritarian forms of government, a broad classification of political systems/regimes that has been adopted since the inter-War period. After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- distinguish the terms government, political system and political regime;
- explain the evolution of democratic regimes;
- analyse the nature, forms and characteristics of modern democratic regimes;
- identify the features of authoritarian regimes; and
- analyse the forms of post War authoritarian regimes.

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3.1 INTRODUCTION

As we saw in the last unit, classification as well as characterisation of the various forms of political regimes began with Aristotle, the Greek philosopher of 4th century BC. In his attempts to describe the political regimes then in existence, he coined the terms 'democracy', 'oligarchy' and 'tyranny'. Comparative political theorists working in the context of modern nation states continue to use these terms to describe modern political regimes.

Contemporary political systems/regimes are broadly categorised as democratic or authoritarian. As we shall see, this categorisation was a response to the events of historical significance in the 20th century -the emergence of Stalinist Russia, Fascist Italy and Spain and Nazi Germany. Before we proceed to examine the nature and evolution of modern democratic and authoritarian forms of government, it is necessary to address a theoretical issue of critical significance. This relates to the different connotations of the terms government, political system and political regime.

3.2 GOVERNMENT, POLITICAL SYSTEM AND POLITICAL REGIME

Though the terms government, political system and political regime are used interchangeably yet there are differences. Government refers to institutional process through which collective and usually binding decisions are made and implemented. The core functions of government are law making (legislation), law implementation (execution) and law interpretation (adjudication) which are performed by its three organs namely legislature, executive and judiciary.

A political regime or political system, however, is to be analysed in a much broader perspective in the sense that they encompass not only the organs of the government and the political institutions of the state, but also the structures, processes and values through which they interact with the civil society. It follows that different political regimes have tended to prioritise different sets of criteria. Among the parameters, most commonly used to classify the nature of political regimes, are the following:

Who rules? Does the process of political participation involve only elite, or does it involve the people as a whole?

How is compliance achieved? Is the political regime obeyed as a result of the use of coercion, or through consensus, bargaining and compromise?

Is the political power of the regime centralised or fragmented? What kind of mechanisms are needed to ensure separation of powers and checks and balances exist within the political regime?

How is government power acquired and transferred? Is the regime open and competitive, or is it monolithic?

What is the relationship between the state and the individual? What is the nature of distribution of rights and responsibilities between government and the citizens?

What is the nature of political economy? Is the political economy geared to the market or to State regulation and planning?

Within what limits and scope the political regime operates? Whether it is a limited or unlimited Government and what is the proper extent of democratic rule?

Under which conditions and constraints is the government operating? What are the socio-economic and cultural problems coming in the way of the functioning of the political regime?

How stable is a political regime? Has a particular regime survived over a considerable period of time, and has it shown the capacity to respond to new demands and challenges?

Check Your Progress 1

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answer.
ii) Check your progress with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1) How would you differentiate between government and the political regimes?

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3.3 THE PURPOSE OF THE CLASSIFICATION

The process of classification of political regimes serves three purposes: First, classification of a political regime is an enabling exercise as far as the understanding of politics and government is concerned as it involves the issues related to them mentioned in the second section. Second, the process of classification facilitates a meaningful evaluation of a particular political regime which leads to a better governance; Third, apart from involving the normative issues, the process helps in tackling the questions at the concrete level like should the transition liberal democratic regime in the former communist countries from people's democratic regime be welcomed? Should developing countries favour a 'guided' democratic regime on the pattern of South East Asian countries and similar other questions? etc.

3.4 EVOLUTION OF DEMOCRATIC REGIMES

The term democracy is an ancient political term whose meaning is derived from the Greek words *demos* (people) and *Kratia* (rule or authority). Hence it means 'rule by the people', The word *demokratia* was first used by the Greeks towards the middle of the fifth century BC to denote the political regimes of their City States, The usage was part of the 'classical' classification of regimes that distinguished rule by one (monarchy), the few (aristocracy or oligarchy) and the many (democracy).

The advocates of democracy have always debated the question as to who should compose the demos. Both the classical Greece as well as in modern times the citizen body has always excluded some individuals as unqualified. When Athenian democracy was at its height in the fifth century BC, only a small minority of the adult population of Athens comprised the 'demos', or those able to participate in the political process. It is only in the twentieth century that universal suffrage and other citizenship rights were extended to all, or almost all, permanent residents of a country. For instance, universal adult franchise was introduced in Germany in 1919. A year later it was introduced in Sweden. France introduced universal adult franchise only in 1945, just a couple of years ahead of India.

Along with the changing notion of what properly constitute the people, the conceptions as to what it means for the people to rule have also changed. The political institutions and the systems have evolved in the contemporary democratic regimes primarily to facilitate 'rule by the people'. The ideas about political life that lend legitimacy to these institutions and systems enshrined in them are radically different from the democratic regimes of classical Greece, the Roman Republic, or the Italian republics of the middle ages and early Renaissance. Thus with the winning of universal suffrage, the democratic theory and practice turned to issues of democratic nation building as there was shift of the locus of democracy from the small scale of the city-state to the large scale of the modern nation-state.

The assertion of national independence got reformulated in democratic terms as democratic regimes came to be identified with the right of collective self-determination. Consequently, even where the 'new' post-colonial regimes could not ensure self-government, they nevertheless called themselves democratic on the strength of their experiences of anti-colonial struggle. In the similar vein, one can refer to the people's democratic regimes of the Second and Third worlds which asserted their democratic legitimacy in the language of economics pointing to their collective ownership of capital production and distribution, work for all under planned economy, while neglecting the political and legal rights, multi-party electoral system and parliamentary politics. The democratic regimes in the Western countries relied on traditional political and legal language, emphasised electoral and civic rights, democratic constitution and institutions and the formal liberty and equality of the political system.

The above brief historical sketch of the evolution of democratic regimes shows that democracy has been subjected to marked ambivalence and intense philosophical and ideological debates. It acquires distinct characteristics depending on the nature of the countries they are based: East or West, developed or developing ones.

3.5 DEMOCRATIC REGIMES IN THE DEVELOPED STATES

The liberal democratic regimes in the developed states have been categorised as polyarchical regimes by Robert Dahl in his work *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. The term 'polyarchy' has been preferred to 'liberal democracy' by

the Western comparative political theorists primarily because of two reasons. First, liberal democracy as a concept has been treated mostly as a political ideal than a form of regime, and is thus invested with broader normative implications. Second, the usage of the concept of 'polyarchy' tends to acknowledge that the democratic regimes in the developed countries still fall short, in significant ways, of the goal of democracy as theorised in political theory.

The liberal democratic or polyarchical regimes are to be found in the states of North America, Western Europe and Australia. However, there are states like Japan and South Africa who also exhibit the same characteristics. Some of these characteristics may be identified in a brief manner as given below:

- These democratic regimes represent political institutions and practices which include universal suffrage. Elections of representatives for a specified period makes them directly responsible to people. These regimes also provide equal opportunities to the citizens to compete for public office. The political parties and the political leaders enjoy the rights to compete publicly for support.
- Free and fair elections are the basis of the formation of governments. A competitive party system is supplemented by the pressure groups and the lobbying organisations. These pressure groups influence the conduct of the government by mobilising the people.
- The democratic regimes reflect a high level of tolerance of opposition that is sufficient to check the arbitrary inclination of the government. The existence of alternative sources of information independent of the control of the government and of one another is helpful in this regard. Institutionally guaranteed and protected civil and political rights are further strengthened by the presence of the new social movements. It all results in a vigorous and democratically conscious civil society.
- The democratic regimes accept the presence of political cleavages due to diversity in the civil society. As such, political conflicts are seen as an inevitable aspect of political life. Political thought and practice, enshrined in these democratic regimes accept conflict as normal and not aberrant feature.
- Modern democratic regimes are distinguished by the existence, legality and legitimacy of a variety of autonomous organisations and associations which are relatively independent in relation to government and to one another.
- These democratic regimes derive their underpinnings from the Western liberal individualistic tradition of political thought. Thus, besides guaranteeing the individual rights they also support free competitive market society. The cultural and ideological orientation of these regimes likewise is also derived from Western liberalism.
- The democratic regimes in the developed World are not considered all alike, some of them tend to favour centralisation and majority rule whereas others favour fragmentation and pluralism. Thus, the comparative political theorists like Lijphart distinguish these regimes between 'majority' democratic regimes and the 'pluralist' democratic regimes.

The ‘majority’ democratic regimes are organised along parliamentary lines in accordance with the Westminster model. Such democratic regimes are to be found in United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and Israel. Some of the significant features shared by these regimes are single party government, a lack of separation of powers between the executive and the legislature, a simple plurality or first past the post electoral system, unitary or quasi-federal government, legislative supremacy, etc. We will be examining some of these in detail in Block III and Block IV of this course.

The pluralist democratic regimes based on the US model represent the separation of power and checks and balance. The provisions of the Constitution allow institutional fragmentation. The states like the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria and Switzerland which are divided by deep religious, ideological, regional, linguistic and cultural diversities have adopted such regimes which are also called the consociational democratic regimes. These regimes promote the value of bargaining and power sharing which can ensure consensus. The common features these regimes share are coalition government, a separation of power between the legislature and executive, an effective bicameral system, a multiparty system, proportional representation, federalism or devolution of political power, a Bill of rights, etc.

Check Your Progress 2

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

ii) Check your progress with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1) What are the features of the ‘pluralist’ democratic regimes?

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3.6 DEMOCRATIC REGIMES AND THE DEVELOPING STATES

A number of newly independent states of Africa and Asia emerged from colonial rule after the Second World War. Decolonisation brought forth the hope that the modernising political elite of the ‘new’ states might successfully transform the nationalist, anti-colonial movements into democratic government and thereby advance the gigantic task of nation building and State building. Most of these new States, however, suffered from severe handicaps, some in the shape of objective conditions like lack of literacy and industrial development and others because of their traditional cultures like lack of democratic experience. Thus, even when most of these Asian and African post-colonial states adopted democratic form of regimes, many of these regimes developed authoritarian tendencies. Many states in the developing world alternate -between democratic and authoritarian forms of regime. Pakistan is such an example. Then, while some regimes maintain the democratic form, they are authoritarian in actual working.

A major obstacle to the success of the democratic regimes in the developing states has been the deep ethnic divisions along the linguistic, tribal and religious lines -affecting their civil societies. These ethnic groups remain at different stages of socio-economic and political development. The ethnic diversities are naturally reflected in political organisations and form the basis of political mobilisation on the part of the ethnic groups for the fulfilment of their demands in a resource-scarce economy. The political regimes in the face of the increased level of political participation by the wider groups with their increased expectations find it necessary to introduce measures that would co-ordinate and control these groups and their demands. Often such measures are the beginnings of the authoritarian measures. Participation explosion has forced most of the democratic regimes into authoritarian military or bureaucratic regimes in the States of Latin America.

Another major problem before the democratic regimes in the developing States has been that of underdevelopment as the dependency theorists have put it. This calls for strong initiatives on the part of the regime. Thus, the democratic regimes in the East and South East Asian states are oriented more around economic goals than the political ones. Their overriding economic priority has been to boost growth and deliver prosperity, rather than to enlarge individual freedom in the western sense of civil liberty. This essentially practical concern is evident in political economies of these countries (South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia). Second, in these countries of East and South East Asia, there has been broad support for strong regimes. Powerful ruling parties tend to be tolerated, and there is general respect and faith in the ability of the regime to guide and regulate the decisions of private as well as public bodies, and draw up strategies for national development. Third, these Asian democratic regimes command legitimacy based on Confucian values which stress on loyalty, discipline and duty. All the above three factors qualify the democratic regimes of East and South East Asian States as they reflect implicit and sometimes explicit authoritarian tendencies.

People's democratic regimes in the Asian states like China have not been formal democracies in terms of competition, accountability and political liberties. However, unlike the erstwhile communist party regimes in Eastern Europe, these regimes have been noted for the extensive participation as citizens have got used to voting periodically in local elections.

Islam, as Samuel P. Huntington has argued in his work *Clash of Civilisations*, has had a profound effect on politics in the States of North Africa, the Middle East and parts of South and South East Asia. As a consequence of the challenge to the existing regimes in the last two decades by the pro-urban poor militant Islamic groups, 'new' democratic regimes have been constructed or reconstructed on Islamic lines. Iran, Sudan and Pakistan among others are the pertinent examples.

Such Islamic democratic regimes have been considered 'by the Western comparativists as 'illiberal' on two counts. First, these regimes violate the distinction between private and public realms, in that they take religious rules and precepts to be the guiding principles of both personal life and political conduct. Second, these regimes invest political authority with potentially unlimited power,

because temporal power is derived from spiritual wisdom. As such these regimes cannot claim to be based solely on the popular consent or follow the constitutional framework. It would be apt to note, in this context, that Islam has been found compatible with the political pluralism followed by the 'guided' democratic regime in such countries like Pakistan and Malaysia. In essence, however, authoritarian tendencies have remained in the Islamic regimes even if it may not be correct to call them 'fundamentalist' in character.

Check Your Progress 3

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

ii) Check your progress with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

- 1) List out the major obstacles to the success of the democratic regimes in the developing states.

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3.7 THE NATURE OF AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES

Democratic and authoritarian regimes may be distinguished both in terms of their objectives as well as means to achieve them. Authoritarian regimes decide what is good for individuals. The ruling elite impose their values on society irrespective of its member's wishes. Authoritarian refers to a form of government which insists on unqualified obedience, conformity and coercion. It is in essence negation of democracy.

When power is based on consent, respected willingly, and recognised by wider masses, it is legitimate and binding. This is called authority. Authority is power raised in a moral or ethical level. Authority involves legitimate exercise of power, and in that sense, it arises 'from below'. Democratic regimes uphold this type of authority and are authoritative. However, when a regime exercises authority regardless of popular consent and with the help of force, it can be called authoritarian. As such authoritarianism is a belief in, or practice of 'government from above'.

The practice of government 'from above' is also associated with monarchical absolutism, traditional dictatorships, most single party regimes, and most forms of military regimes. They all are authoritarian in the sense that they are concerned with the repression of opposition and political liberty.

Authoritarian regimes are distinguished from the totalitarian regimes. **Totalitarian regimes** depict modern dictatorship in terms of a model government by complete centralisation and uniform regimentation of all aspects of political, social and intellectual life and in these respects transcending by far the earlier manifestations of absolute or autocratic or despotic or tyrannical regimes and their capacity to control and mobilise the masses. In this sense totalitarianism is truly a phenomenon of twentieth century. The term has been applied to the three radical dictatorial regimes of the inter-war period: Italian Fascism, German National Socialism and Stalinism in Russia.

It follows that though totalitarian regimes are authoritarian- all authoritarian regimes are not necessarily totalitarian. No doubt the authoritarian regimes are concerned with the repression of opposition and political liberty. However, unlike the totalitarian regimes, these regimes do not aim to achieve far more radical goal of obliterating the distinction between the state and civil society. Authoritarian regimes tend to tolerate a significant range of economic, religious and other freedoms.

3.7.1 Characteristics of Authoritarian Regimes

In the authoritarian regimes the techniques of decision by public discussion and voting are largely or wholly supplanted by the decision of those in authority.

- The authoritarian regimes exercise sufficient power to dispense with any constitutional limitations.
- Those in power in an authoritarian regime claim to derive their authority not necessarily and always from the consent of the governed but from some special quality that they claim to possess.
- Based on force, authoritarian regimes are likely to use violence against the citizens who do not receive any importance in the governance. Power is controlled, changes of government or even of leaders, is not smooth and peaceful under authoritarian regimes. Such changes take place either by means of coup d'etat or as a result of revolutions. Coup has been a normal feature as far as the authoritarian regimes in Africa are concerned.
- Authoritarian regimes are likely to employ force also in their relations with other countries. Since institutions of such regimes are not based on the participation of the people, and are not accountable to people, the moderating influence of public opinion is not effective. As such the authoritarian regimes do not help the cause of international peace.
- Authoritarian regimes are characterised by low and limited political mobilisation. De-politicisation of the mass of the citizen's falls into the intent of the ruling elite, fits with their mentality, and reflects the character of the components of the limited pluralism supporting them.
- Contrary to the democratic regimes which represent almost unlimited pluralism in institutionalised form, the authoritarian regimes represent limited pluralism. The limitation of pluralism may be legal or de facto, implemented more or less effectively, confined to strictly political groups or extended to interest groups.
- Moreover, political power is not legally accountable through such groups to the citizens, even when, it might be quite responsive to them. This is in contrast to democratic regimes, where the political forces are formally dependent on the support of constituencies.

3.7.2 Authoritarian Regimes in the post-Second World War Period

Authoritarian regimes have been mostly established in the developing states of Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and South East Asia. Developed states of the West like Spain, Portugal and Greece, however, have also experienced it in the post-World War period. These regimes -more than political, economic, cultural or ideological factors- have been dependent on the use of military power and systematic repression. Democratic institutions-both formal and informal- have been either weakened or abolished and the political and legal rights have been non-existent.

These regimes have been mostly under the control of a military junta comprising of the officers of the three wings of armed forces like in Argentina during 1978-1983 or in present day Myanmar. However, there are other forms of regimes where a military backed personalised dictatorship is established. In such cases a single individual acquires pre-eminence within the junta or regime, often being bolstered by a cult of personality drawing on charismatic authority. The military regimes headed by Colonel Papadopoulos in Greece, General Pinochet in Chile, General Abacha in Nigeria, General Zia-ul-Haq in Pakistan, Ft. Lt. Jerry Rawlings in Ghana, Sergeant Samuel Doe in Liberia are among the pertinent examples. Still another form of such a regime is one where the civil regime survives primarily due to the backing of armed forces. In such cases military often prefers to rule behind the scenes and exercise power covertly through a civilianised leadership. Zaire under Mobutu, who came to power in a military coup in 1965, but later allowed the army to withdraw progressively from active politics by ruling through the popular movement of the revolution in the sixties can be cited as an example and so is the case of Egypt which experienced transition from military regimes to authoritarian civil rule under Gamel Nasser and Anwar Sadat, both military figures in the 1960's and 1970's.

Check Your Progress 4

- Note:**i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your progress with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1) What is the difference between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes?

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2) What are the characteristics of an authoritarian regime?

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3.8 LET US SUM UP

Government in its broadest sense represents any mechanism through which ordered rule is maintained, its central feature being its ability to make collective decisions and implement them. A political regime or system, however, involves not only the mechanisms of government and institutions and instructions of the state, but also the structures and processes through which these interact with the society;

Classification of political regimes enables us in the understanding and evaluation of politics and government. It also helps us in analysing the problems of a particular regime.

The inter-war period saw the alteration in the nature of classifying the regimes. Broadly speaking, two kinds of regimes, democratic and authoritarian can be universally accepted.

Democratic regimes have undergone a process of evolution beginning with the Greek city States to the modern nation-states.

Post Second World War period saw the emergence of 'three worlds' classification of political regimes. The first world liberal capitalist, 'second world' communist and 'Third World' 'new' democratic regimes were found to have material and ideological differences.

In the developed states, the democratic regimes are polyarchal in the sense that they operate through institutions and political processes of modern representative democracy which force the rulers to take into account the interests, aspirations and rights of the citizens.

In the developing states of Asia, Africa and Latin America, the democratic regimes have been under considerable constraints due to ethnic diversities and socio-economic backwardness. Role of religion like Confucianism and Islam has provided uniqueness to the political regimes of some developing states.

Authoritarian regimes are anti-democratic in the sense that such regimes limit democracy, liberty and law. Such regimes insist on unqualified obedience, conformity and coercion. Authoritarianism can be distinguished from totalitarian in the sense that the former does not seek to obliterate the distinction between the state and civil society.

Authoritarian regimes during the post-second World War period, whether in the developing or developed countries, have been primarily established with either the covert or overt role of military.

3.9 REFERENCES

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3.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) While the former refers to the institutional process through which collective and binding decisions are made, the latter is a much broader term involving structures, processes and values through which the political institutions interact with civil society.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) These promote values of bargaining and power sharing through institutional arrangements like checks and balances among different organs of the government, multiparty system, and division or devolution of power.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) High levels of political participation in the context of deep ethnic divisions, the problems of underdevelopment and the need for strong initiatives of the regimes.

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) Totalitarian regimes are characterised by complete centralisation and uniform regimentation of political, social, economic and intellectual life. The distinction between state and civil society are obliterated. Authoritarian regimes tolerate some amount of pluralism and do not seek to control all aspects of an individual's life.
- 2) Based on force, law and limited political mobilisation, absence of constitutional accountability etc.

UNIT 4 CIVILIAN AND MILITARY REGIMES*

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Civil-Military Relations
 - 4.2.1 India
 - 4.2.2 China
 - 4.2.3 Explaining Military Intervention in Politics
- 4.3 Military Regimes: Meaning and Features
 - 4.3.1 Types of Military Regimes
 - 4.3.2 Strategies of Rulership
- 4.4 Military in Politics: The Consequences
- 4.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.6 References
- 4.7 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

4.0 OBJECTIVES

As we saw in the last unit, military regimes are a subset of authoritarian regimes. These systems which are controlled by ‘men on the horseback’ are often contrasted with the civilian regimes. This unit focuses on military regimes, bringing out the nature of civil-military relationships in developing countries. After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain different patterns of civil-military relations;
- Describe military regimes and their features;
- Identify various types of military regimes; and
- Describe the consequences of military rule for society, economy and polity.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The military is a powerful institution in contemporary society of states. Military regimes are a sub-set of authoritarian regimes, but all authoritarian regimes are not ruled by the military. Generally, the military has taken over the reins of

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government in a state afflicted with internal crisis. Otherwise, irrespective of the form of government, the military is expected to be subservient to the executive and assist it when called upon. On its part, the executive is expected to cater to the genuine requirements of the armed forces and give them their due. In other words, the civilian executive and the military are expected to perform their respective duties and not encroach upon one other's space and, thus, not impede the smooth functioning of the other. However, among the newly emergent countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, there has been a wide prevalence of the military's intervention in politics. A number of these newly established states have witnessed military coups. Since the 1980s, there has been a transformation of military regimes into civilian ones in both developed countries and in East Europe in the 1990s. But coups and attempted coups continue to plague many countries and military regimes have persisted in the developing countries.

In our own neighbourhood, the military in Bangladesh, Myanmar and Pakistan has either come to power or have dictated, or continue to dictate, the civilian government from behind the scene. The relationship of super-ordination and subordination existing between the military and the lawfully constituted public authorities has, therefore, emerged as an important basis for classification of political systems. We will first examine the patterns of civil-military relations and later examine the features of military regimes and the impact that military rule had in the developing part of the world.

4.2 CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

At the outset, it will be useful to clarify the terms, the military, civilian and civil military relations. A standard definition of 'military' refers to all segments of the state-organized and uniformed armed services that share three defining criteria: (1) they possess the monopoly over weapons of war; (2) their primary purpose is the defense of the nation-state and its citizens against external military threats; and (3) they are legalized and legitimized as instruments of the state (Edmonds 1988). The term 'civilians' is used to refer to all non-military social actors, institutions and organizations, both state (legislative, executive and judicial branches of the government) and non-state (political actors such as political parties, interest groups, social movements, and associations of civil society etc.) Thus, the term 'civil-military relations' refers to the relationship between the military and civilian authorities or in a broad sense, between the military and society at every level.

It should be noted, however, that the broad distinction between the two terms, civil and military, has not been easy to put in practice. There have been societies in which the ruler and the tribesmen were also warlords and the armed hoard. Similarly, in the feudal monarchies of Europe, the barons were both the warriors and political leaders. It is only in the late 18th century, particularly after the French Revolution, that the loyalty of the officer corps to their dynastic sovereign, or even to elected authorities, was replaced by loyalty to the nation. This development, combined with the development of the officer corps into a career-oriented institution with distinct life styles, training, social status and

material interests made possible the divergence of outlook between the armed forces and the government of the day.

In the post-war period, the military emerged as a ruler or as a major factor in the politics of several developing post-colonial countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The wide prevalence of military rule in these countries can be gauged from the fact that in the five decades since the Second World War, about 56 per cent of the developing states (excluding the communist states and mini-states with a population below 10 lakhs) had undergone at least one military coup d'état. Of course, military regimes existed in a few developed countries of Europe- Spain (between 1930s and 1970s), Portugal (between 1920s and 1970s) and Greece (between 1967 and mid-1970s), but it was nevertheless the high incidence of military intervention in politics of developing countries that attracted the attention of political scientists. While the nature of civil-military relations has varied from one political system to the other and the issues of concern have differed at different points of time, one can classify political systems into three groups based on their pattern of civil-military relations, with minor variations in between.

In the first group are political systems in which the armed forces are depoliticised to large extent and in which the military is entirely subservient instrument of the state. India and the United States of America offer good examples of this pattern. This form of civil-military relationship does not preclude the military from exercising very considerable political influence, but the civil authorities had always the final say.

In the second group, we have political systems such as those in China and Iraq where there exists a symbiotic relationship between the armed forces and the ruling party. This pattern of civil-military relationship is prevalent in all Socialist states and in a number of others where an ideological single or hegemonic party-controlled power. The former Soviet Union and Myanmar are the other good examples of this type.

Finally, we have a number of polities in which the military has overthrown the lawfully elected governments and installed its own members as rulers or has acquired enormous influence over the civilian government. Nigeria and Pakistan offer a good example of this pattern of civil-military relations. Both these countries were under military rule for a prolonged period of three decades and despite returning to a democratically elected civilian government, find that the military had emerged as a strong pressure group wielding enormous influence in political decision making.

Let us take up prominent examples from the first two groups - India and China, for examination. The examples and features of military regimes are discussed in a separate section.

4.2.1 India

In India, there has been the established tradition of the apolitical nature of the military. In the early years after independence, the military was more or less excluded from any decision making in matters of foreign and security policies. After the 1962 war with China, there was an increased sensitivity to matters of

external security and defence acquired high policy priority. However, the military has not been accorded any significant role in the affairs of the state.

The relationship between the civilian leadership and the military has not always been smooth. There have been a few occasions when the military had entered into a tug with its political masters. By far, the best-known example is that of the then head of the Indian Army, General (later Field Marshal) Thimmayya tendering his resignation to the then Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru, hours before his Pakistani counterpart was due to arrive in Delhi. The General withdrew his resignation later. Several years later, a detachment of the Army had been moved from its peacetime location without the required permission from the civilian leadership anticipating a serious law and order problem. Much later, in December 1998, the Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Vishnu Bhagwat, was sacked for 'compromising national security and wilfully disobeying the orders of his Defence Minister. The Admiral challenged the decision of the government, but the Supreme Court upheld the government's decision to dismiss him from service.

The sacking of Admiral Bhagwat is, by far, the most controversial episode in the gamut of civil-military relations in India. The actual dismissal and the days preceding the dismissal witnessed an acrimonious slanging match between the military and civilian arms of the government. It had prompted a debate on the subject in the country. Though the results of the debate are yet to manifest themselves in concrete terms, it had provided the occasion to seriously probe the limits to civilian, either of the leaders or of the bureaucracy, control over matters concerning the day-to-day functioning of the Armed Forces. It was argued at that time that the civilian arm should define policy and strategic objectives and it was for the military to implement them. Interference in the day-to-day running of the Armed Forces would imperil discipline and gnaw at its professionalism. The debate had also suggested the creation of the post of Joint Chief of Staff to provide inputs to the Cabinet in framing strategic policies. In December, 2019, General Bipin Rawat was appointed as the first Chief of Defence Staff.

It is, however, significant to note that in India, retired officers of the Armed Forces have been appointed as public representatives. Moreover, the Indian Army, at the express orders of the Union government, has been involved in fighting insurgencies/terrorists.

4.2.2 China

In China, a country guided by Marxist ideology, it is the Communist Party of China which controls the affairs of the state. The military is at once a part of the ruling structures and yet under the firm control of the Party. The military and the Party were closely inter-linked, at least in the earlier years. Mao Tse Tung had drawn a clear line of distinction between the military and the Party and said 'the Party must always control the military', though he had also said that 'political power grows out of the barrel of the gun'. Over a period of time, the military has acquired 'professionalism' and this had, on occasion, brought it into a conflicting role with the Party, though it is the Party that still controls the military; a position

that continues to the present times. In other words, the military has not always remained totally subservient to the Party.

The military was often a member of the highest decision-making structures in the country, like in the Standing Committee of the Politburo. However, it should also be noted that in the year 1987, the military was not represented on the Standing Committee, for the reason that reforms initiated during that time sought to draw a clear line of distinction between the Party, the government and the military. Having realised during the events that unfolded later- the 1989 demonstrations against the policies of the Party-that military did not evince expected levels of enthusiasm in performing internal security duties assigned to it, the military's membership in the Standing Committee was restored in 1992. One analyst has observed that there is a greater interdependence between the Party and the military at the higher levels than at the lower levels of the hierarchy.

Whether the military would go on to acquire significant influence over the Party, meaning political power, is a matter of debate among several analysts. The debate commenced especially after the military was included in the economic modernisation drive and was asked to take up tasks that would eventually contribute to the country's treasury. In 1998, the military was asked to cease all business operations as it had been found that it was increasingly getting out of civilian control. Besides, among other things, there were also allegations of corruption and hoarding against the military, as also having provided inspiration to the police forces and the judiciary, too, to undertake business activity. There is also the view that having taken-up business activity the military has, to an extent, suffered professionalism.

4.2.3 Explaining Military Intervention in Politics

As decolonisation gathered pace and many countries emerged as sovereign independent states in Asia and Africa, it was widely believed that there was little chance that the military would play a role in their politics. And yet, in a short span of time, the military emerged as a strong political force in many of these countries. This has prompted a number of social scientists to study the specific nature of civil-military relations in the developing countries. Samuel F. Finer's book *Man on Horseback* is the first major work on civil-military relations in developing countries. Finer relates civil-military relations with political culture. He identifies four levels of political culture- mature, developed, low and minimal- and relates them with the propensity of the military to intervene and to the different kinds of military intervention. Low level political cultures lack state institutions and procedures regulating the exercise of power are weak or lack popular legitimacy. Developing countries characterised by low political culture, that is, weak legitimacy, are prone to experience coup d' etat or extreme form of military intervention. According to Finer, such intervention may also occur in countries with developed political culture, but they are usually limited to the exercise of pressure by the military on the political leadership. Critics of Finer's analysis say it is tautological. Low political culture is defined as a lack of consensus. Rather than offering an explanation of lack of political consensus, the concept of political culture offers a statement that is true by definition. Nevertheless, his work has inspired a number of studies to explain the absence of

functioning and legitimate state institutions as the key factor in prompting military intervention into politics.

Other factors have also been identified to explain the political role of the military in developing countries. For instance, some scholars have highlighted the link between the political influence of the military and the role it has played during the struggle for independence and subsequent state creation. Here they cite the example of Algeria where the armed forces were in the forefront in the country's struggle for independence from France. This has continued to legitimise its predominant role in the Algerian political system upto the present day.

A few studies have also looked at the social conditions that might be conducive for a strong role of the military. Amos Perlmutter, who has studied civil-military relations in Egypt, for instance, has identified several social conditions which contribute to what he called praetorianism, that is, state in which political decision making is controlled or at least heavily influenced by the military. Some of the social conditions identified as providing a fertile ground for military intervention include, a lack of social cohesion, the existence of fratricidal social classes, in particular, a politically weak middle class, and a generally low level of political mobilisation.

In addition to the above, there are a number of studies using statistical analysis of a large number of countries to explain or predict military coups, explain the role of foreign aid, economic development etc. But it has been difficult to arrive at conclusive findings largely owing to methodological limitations.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check the answers with the model answer given at the end of this unit.

1) What is the nature of civil-military relationship in states guided by Marxist ideology?

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2) How did the prolonged absence of political activity affect Pakistan polity?

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4.3 MILITARY REGIMES: MEANING AND FEATURES

As we observed earlier, military regimes are states where members of the armed forces make the top political decisions exclusively or predominantly. Although the term covers the cases where an alien army of occupation rules a conquered state (as the Allied military governments in Germany and Italy during the Second World War), the term, military regime, is frequently used with reference to states whose military forces have supplanted a former civilian government and rule in their own name.

Military regimes differ from other forms of authoritarianism in terms of origin or legitimacy or range of governmental penetration into the society or in combinations of all these factors. Modern military regimes differ from the civilian autocratic regimes in their sources of legitimacy. The civilian dictators in the developing world derive their legitimacy from their 'leadership in the independence struggle or from the leadership of the single parties founded by them or from some rigged election. They retain power by maintaining 'a vertical network of personal and patron-client relations'. Military rulers also resort to this strategy to retain power, but their regimes suffer from an innate sense of lack of legitimacy.

Military regimes should also be distinguished from totalitarian regimes. One can identify three differences between the two. First, totalitarian regimes claim legitimacy on the basis of their ideologies, which, they state, are higher and nobler forms of democracy. Military regimes on the other hand, do not generally espouse elaborate and guiding ideologies. Secondly, unlike military regimes, which come into being as a result of intervention by the armed forces in politics, totalitarian dictators seize power by organising armed political parties. Once in power, totalitarian dictators establish the supremacy of their parties over all organisations, including the armed forces. Finally, military regimes allow limited pluralism, though there is no responsible government. Totalitarian regimes on the other hand, try to control the whole society through the single-party system and widespread use of terror.

4.3.1 Types of Military Regimes

Broadly speaking, different military regimes can be distinguished by the place the military holds in the decision-making structure of the state and or by what they do with the power they wield.

The role played by the military in top decision-making varies from state to state. We can broadly distinguish two types here. First, there is the military-junta type in which the supreme policy making organ is a junta or command council of officers representing the three services (army, navy and the air force). The military junta usually appoints a civilian cabinet to administer under its authority. Parties and legislatures are suppressed or else only a single official party is permitted. Often parties and legislatures are nominal and subservient artefact of the military executive. The military, as represented by its senior officers, plays the active and supreme role in policy making in the military-junta type of regime.

Secondly, there is the presidential type in which the military plays a supportive role rather than a creative or active role. Here, the cabinet is formed largely or wholly from civilian rather than military personnel. In Zaire for instance, the army's role is supportive of the president, while the official party is largely nominal. In Syria, however, the local political party is at the vanguard in a symbiotic relationship with the officer corps. Here the military's role is not limited to being supportive, but extends to play a more active role. However, the existence of the party enables the president to arbitrate, and so exert independent leadership over both civilian and military sectors.

Military regimes can also be distinguished by the way they wield power. Some military governments confine themselves to supervising or 'patrolling' the society. In Thailand, for instance, the largely military cabinets permit the civil service a wide autonomy in running affairs, and preside over what is on the whole a freewheeling economy. In Ghana and Nigeria, however, the governments go further: they direct a national programme, but they leave the civil service to administer it. Finally, there are those military regimes, such as those in Burma and in Indonesia, in which, the armed forces not only exert supreme authority in policy-making but also play a large part in actual administration.

4.3.2 Strategies of Rulership

Despite these differences, one can discern strategies of rulership that are common to military regimes. The first strategy of rulership of military rulers is to manage their 'constituency', that is, to keep their hold on the armed forces. The military leaders' group seeks to establish its dominance over the whole army. The establishment of this dominance often requires the use of ruthless violence to suppress the opposition factions within the armed forces.

Crude and ruthless violence is also resorted to terrorise the population into total subjugation. As repression becomes a part of the strategy of rulership, military rulers develop an elaborate network of intelligence services to monitor the aggregation and articulation of protest. General Zia-ul Huq in Pakistan, for instance, developed an Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Directorate with nearly one-lakh employees for surveillance of politicians as well as officers.

Violence and intelligence surveillance are, however, negative strategies of rulership. Military rulers also adopt positive strategies to keep the armed forces satisfied. Increasing the salaries and other allowances and prerequisites of the members of the armed forces does this. Military rulers almost invariably increase the defence budgets soon after take over. Once raised, defence allocations usually remain at high levels in subsequent years.

4.4 MILITARY IN POLITICS: THE CONSEQUENCES

In the 1950s and '60s, when armed communist cadres threatened the countries of Southeast Asia, Western capitalist countries came to see the military as an important institution to fight and defeat their onward march. Social scientists, particularly those in the United States, keen on making their studies policy

relevant, overestimated the role of the military in the modernisation of the developing countries. Lucian Pye, M. Halpern and J.J. Johnson, for instance, developed theoretical models depicting the military as a highly modern force, capable of transferring its organisational and technical skills to fields of government and administration. However, these expectations were belied by several studies done later. Most empirical studies conducted on military regimes in the developing countries revealed that they had a negative or, at best, no unique effect on social and economic modernisation.

The performance of the military regimes in the sphere of political development has been more disastrous than in the sphere of economic development. It was argued that in the developing countries, which are mostly divided on religious, ethnic, linguistic and regional lines, the military alone can bring about national integration that is a prerequisite for political development. The performance of military regimes till date does not support this hypothesis. It was the military dictatorship in Pakistan in the 1950s and 60s that produced the first successful secessionist movement in the Third World. In a similar fashion, the process of Nigerian disintegration started after the coup of January 1966 when the military launched a ruthless attack on prominent military and political figures. The military presided over the civil war in Nigeria for two years with combat deaths running into hundreds of thousands. Similarly, the Sudanese military rulers have been fighting the guerrillas in the southern part of the country since 1958.

In fact, military intervention in politics, in most cases creates a vicious circle that perpetuates the conditions of political underdevelopment, which initially must have brought the military into power. As Huntington has argued, the key factor in political development is the growth of durable political institutions. The primary resources for developing political institutions in any country are the political skills of its political leaders. The political skills needed for developing a viable and self-sustaining political system involve, among others, ideological commitment, the capacity to respond to new challenges, administrative abilities, and abilities for negotiation and bargaining. These can be acquired only in the 'hard school' of 'public life'.

Military regimes, however, restrict the free flow of political process. In order to retain their power, military leaders prevent the aggregation and articulation of protest. Often their first actions in office are to 'impose censorship on the press' and 'ban political activity'. Political leaders either move into a self-imposed exile or are forced into exile into far-off countries. With would-be politicians failing to acquire political skills, civilian democratic traditions fail to take root. Among the military regimes in the developing countries, in one-third of the cases, civilian governments have been restored. In most cases of civilian restoration, civilian leaders, that is, politicians have failed. They have demonstrated their inability to match their official performance with the expectations of the people. While this is partly due to the intractable nature of the problems faced by these nations, to a large measure this is due to absence of political skills in the civilian leaders resulting from the preceding period of military rule. 'This provides scope for the military to intervene in politics once again asserting the vindication of their self-fulfilling prophesy of the inevitable failure of the self-seeking politicians'. Thus, the chain of political underdevelopment gets perpetuated.

The political role of the military also corrodes the military vitality of the armed forces. Several armies have been compromised by their political role expansion and suffered humiliating defeats at the hands of other armies that have been encouraged only to excel in professionalism. In the Arab-Israeli War of 1967, the Syrian army's performance suffered immeasurably because of fratricidal feuds among its officers. The Iraqi army was similarly debilitated by internal political strife. The political role expansion of the Egyptian armed forces, similarly, robbed its professionalism. More professional Israeli armed forces inflicted a quick and humiliating defeat on the Egyptian army. Armed forces in Uganda, which first acted as an instrument of Idi Amin's terror and brutality, simply disintegrated when faced with poorly equipped Tanzanian troops and a Ugandan exile force in 1979. Argentina's armed forces, spoiled by politics, were easily defeated by Britain in the Falklands war.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check the answer with the model answer given at the end of this unit.

- 1) In what ways do military dictatorship differs from totalitarian dictatorship?
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- 2) According to Huntington, what is a key factor in the political development of a state?
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- 3) What are the typical strategies of rulership adopted by military regimes?
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4.5 LET US SUM UP

A military regime is a usurper of political power through force. Unlike most civilian forms of government, a military government is characterised by absence of legitimacy.

We have seen that the soldier-politicians seem incapable of furthering major socio-economic development in the countries they rule. The military's performance in the field of political development has been even more dismal. Military regimes accentuate the problems of political development with which the civilian regimes were initially faced, and they deprive the would-be civilian

politicians of the opportunity to acquire much needed political skills, thus perpetuating the claims of political underdevelopment. The role expansion of the military also robs the armed forces of professionalism, resulting in external and internal security vulnerabilities.

A harmonious relationship between the executive and the military is essential for a healthy all-round development of a country. Civil-military relations in countries having different forms of government are varied. While in some countries the military had remained subservient to the civilian leadership, in others it had, many a time, organised a coup and had overthrown elected governments. However, even in countries where it had assiduously remained loyal to the government of the day, there have been instances when it had differed with the civilian leadership. There is more or less a general agreement among scholars that in the present times the balance in civil-military relations has somewhat tilted more towards the military than ever before.

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4.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Marxist regimes are characterised by a symbiotic relationship between the armed forces and the ruling party.
- 2) Political institutions became weak. In the absence of political skills that can be acquired through participation in political activities, civilian leaders demonstrate a lack of ability to deal with issues confronting the nation. Moreover, the armed forces remain powerful as a pressure group, often directing civilian rulers from behind.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Totalitarian regimes are different from military regimes in the sense that they are guided by ideology, collie to power by organising armed political parties and seek to control all aspects of an individual's life.
- 2) The growth of durable political institutions.
- 3) In order to manage the armed forces and political opposition, military rulers resort to ruthless violence and surveillance on press and political activities. They also increase salaries and other allowances and prerequisites of the members of the armed forces.



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