BLOCK 3
POLITICAL SYSTEM

UNIT 7   SEGMENTARY*

Structure

7.0   OBJECTIVES

After study this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the segmentary societies;

- explain some key features of segmentary societies;

- explain the distinction between the stateless society and a society with state; and

- discuss the functions of segmentary society.

7.1   INTRODUCTION

This is the seventh unit of the block of "Political System". In this unit you are going to learn about politics and political organisation. You will learn about the segmentary societies which generally lack a centralised system of authority. Here the significance of kinship organisation is dealt with in relation to political control. We have discussed here the political system which are present in segmentary societies. We have also described the segmentary tribes in India. Finally, we have discussed the emergence of government in stateless societies.

7.2   POLITICAL SYSTEM

A society is held together by a system of rule. Political system is a specific subsystem of any society. Political institutions refers three aspect: system of control, organization for control and use of force for control. All these aspects are related with social system. Therefore, sociologists hold that the political institution as a system of control, organization and the legal use of force is a subsystem of the larger social system. Political institutions certain kinds of social relations which exist within a particular area. Thus, territorial area is an important aspect in the political process of any society. The territorial structure provides the framework not only for political organisation but for other forms of organisation as well. However, when we study political institutions we deal with the "maintenance and establishing of order within a territorial framework by the organised exercise of coercive authority through the use or possibility of use of physical force" (Fortes M. and Evans, Pritchard, E.E., 1949)

One of the important political institutions in society is state. It has been described as a human community which successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a given territory. State is different from government in the sense that government is the agency which carries out the orders of the state. Thus, we can say that political organisation consists of the combination and interrelationship of power and authority in the maintenance of public affairs.

In modern complex societies the police and the army are the instruments by which public order is maintained. Those who offend are punished by law. Law is one of the means by which the state carries out its function of social control.

There has been a progressive growth of political organisation in different societies. As societies have developed from the simple to modern industrial societies, all other aspects of social organisation, even political institutions have become more complex. There are stateless societies without any centralised authority.

7.3   POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND SEGMENTARY SOCIETIES

Simple societies have very low population in comparison to modern societies. There exists a very indeterminate political community in these societies. Here, since face to face relation is possible no formal agency of social control exists. We are now going to discuss the political organisation in the segmentary societies or stateless societies. In all types of segmentary societies, however simple their organisation might be, they generally have an idea of their territorial rights. These rights are maintained through the notions of age, and social sanctions and social control.

Here, we must make it clear that we are talking generally about the African tribes. In these societies various forms of political institutions such as, councils, monarchies, chiefs, etc., exist. In the segmentary societies power and authority are generally diffused in different groups in society. Political order is maintained through the ties of kinship and lineage systems.

A society is called segmentary or stateless if it:

●   has no rigid boundary or permanent physical territory,

●   follows oral traditions, and the bureaucratic aspect is absent from it,

- has a single person holding several major powers of religious, economic and political offices within the society,

- there is no fixed rigidly spelt out ideology, and

- has simple economy

7.3.1 Sources of Data about Stateless Societies

There are three sources of knowledge about simple societies without government. It is from these that our information is derived:

- archaeological records about stateless societies,

- literature produced by missionaries, travellers and administrators, and

- monographs written by anthropologists.

The archaeological record is very important in the study of stateless societies. This leads to an important point. All the records of simple societies show that they have always been involved in a process of change, growth and development. We note here that there is no static simple society - they are all dynamic.

Anthropologists studying stateless societies have also used literature, produced by missionaries, travellers and colonial administrators. Last but not the least are the monographs written by anthropologists on stateless societies. These are our main sources of information, given in this unit.

7.3.2 Types of Segmentary Societies

The segmentary societies can be generally divided into four broad types of societies according to their socio-political organisations:

i)   First type of societies are those which usually live by hunting and gathering. Here the largest social units are the co-operating groups of families or close kin. There does not exist any other formal grouping besides this. There are no gradations or stratification's or even any separate institutions. No specific political organisation exists in this type of society. The authority rests with the senior members of these families. But this authority is very limited in scope. Some of the examples of these societies are the Bushmen of South Africa and some of the people of South East Asia, Jarwa of Andaman Islands etc.

ii) Second type of society is that which is made up of village communities which are related to one another by various kinship and economic ties. They have formally appointed councils to maintain administration. In these councils the eligibility for membership varies from one society to another. Some of the criteria for eligibility are descent from either old family or reputed family etc. or any other social eminence such as economic power. Here we can see that there is an emergence of political order. Some of these types of societies are the Ibo and Yako of West Africa.

iii) In the third type, the societies have political control vested in age-set systems. This is a common feature of the societies in East Africa. In these societies the allocation of authority is vested in the elders of the society. Thus age-set organisation is based on the principle of seniority. An example of such a tribe is the Cheyenne of America and the Nuer of Africa.

(iv) Finally, the fourth type of societies are those in which political functions are performed through groups organised in terms of unilineal descent. The unilineal descent is traced along the line of either father or mother. In such societies there are no specific political offices. There are no political chiefs, but the elders of the society may exercise a limited authority. In this type of society the groups within the society may be in a state of balanced opposition. Some of the example of such type of societies are, the Nuer, the Dinka of Southern Sudan. This aspect will be explained later.

7.3.3 Kinship System as a Form of Political Control

Kinship system plays a very crucial role in the socio-political and economic organisation of simple societies. Its functions are extensive and overlapping with functions of the political and economic institutions. It takes up the task of maintaining order and balance in society. The principle of fission or conflict and fusion or cohesion works within the simple societies along the kinship and territorial lines. For example, the Nuer tribe is divided into segments. The primary sections or segment of the tribe is the largest and it occupies the largest territory, the secondary section is smaller than the primary and it occupies the next largest territory and finally the tertiary section, which is the smallest and occupies the smallest territory. This division of Nuer society is not just political or territorial but it is also a kinship distribution. In such a society conflict leads to alliances and opposition along the kinship and especially lineage lines.

Activity 1

Compare the Nuer society (as described here) with the socio-political order of your own society. Write a note on this comparison. Compare your note with other students at your study centre.

In all stateless societies where the society is segmented or divided into sections alliances take place along the lines of territory, residence, kinship, descent, heritage and marriage. Conflict leads to cohesion in such societies. For example, in case of conflict, all the members of a group, descended agnatically from a particular man, many see themselves as a unit against all the agnatic descendants of that man's enemy. The enemy might be a member of one's own lineage or another lineage. The segmentation of society maintains itself through the presence of actual or potential opposition to one another. This opposition is characteristically expressed in the institution of "blood feud" in these societies. If a person has killed a member of another section of the society, that other section will not be satisfied until the murderer or any member of his section is killed. However, these inter-lineage antagonisms are countered by other cross cutting ties like those of affinity and matrilateral kinship. Thus there are always people in opposing groups whose interest is to seek peaceful solution of disputes between lineage's.

Therefore, we can say that in stateless societies the kinship ties are performing political roles. The principles of **exogamy** - where a person marries only outside one's community, and **endogamy** - where a person marries within a particular community - play an important part. It is these principles which decide the nature of one's potential supporters or allies in case of conflict.

7.4 POLIICAL PRINCIPLES OF STATELESS SOCIETY

Segmentary societies are vary many, and their traditions have wide variation. Yet it is possible to distinguish some basic principles to which their organisation adheres. These principles seem to underlie and appear in all stateless societies:

- Society becomes united when different groups or segments unite. They initially owe loyalty to different groups but come together for some particular cause such as defence of territory or 'blood feud', etc.

- Authority, which is delegated or given to a subordinate, becomes independent. Thus juniors who are given power by seniors in a stateless society become powerful in their own right.

- Mystical symbols also 'integrate' and unify stateless societies. This is because the entire society regards these to be sacred and that which should be protected.

7.4.1 An Example: The Tonga

Let us take the **example** of the African tribe Tonga. The Tongas live in small villages in the hope of escaping raids upon them. These raids are performed by unfriendly tribes to steal food and valuables. In this tribe the headman has little power. This is one of the key features of stateless societies. This tribe is nomadic (moves its locations from time to time) due to agricultural needs. In doing so many new friendships are struck up and often old friendships break. Tongas belong to a matrilineally related kin group called the **mukowa**

Now it is important to note that **no marriage may link up two mukowa**. This principle of exogamy is a primary mechanism for establishing the various alliances and linkages. A very interesting feature is that Tonga clans are related by what are called joking relations' between cross-cousins. A 'joking relationship' is where merriment is made into a ritual and is created perforce. The persons cannot talk normally but must joke and laugh. This institution is very important. Among the Tonga this joking has important political consequences.

This is because "clan joking" creates a large number of friendships, among all the people concerned. Further it provides the privileged go-betweens and judges of morals in a society an opportunity to intervene in the lives of people without looking authoritative. This is because during joking, 'counselling' and 'warnings' are allowed to be given as part of the jokes exchanged. Society functions without the mediations of political power and authority.

7.4.2 An Example: The Lozis

In some stateless societies there are institutions which protects the rights of all the members of society where food is scarce or limited. Since in these societies the concept of accumulation of property and food does not exist, there is always the problem of distribution. Amongst the Lozis of Africa there exists an institution called **kufunda,** which literally means legal theft. It is present in some other tribes also. Any person of the tribe can take any article or food from one's kinsmen's house. It solves the problem of hunger because one can always get

food from one kinsman or the other. A person in these tribes has to share his or her food with the others. Thus kufunda or legal theft is a political institution and gives meaning to kinship and economic structures of the society.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Explain what is meant by a stateless society?.

    ....

    ....

    ....

    ....

2) Stateless societies are also called simple societies.

           Yes   No

3) A 'blood feud' is a method of making group members donate blood.

           Yes   No

4) What are the three sources of knowledge about stateless societies?

    (i) ....

    (ii) ....

    (iii) ....

5) A "joking relationship' is: (Tick the answer)

i) A meeting of humorists.

ii) Competitions of jokes.

iii) A form of institutionalised behaviour.

iv) To make fun of each other.

7.5   SEGMENTARY TRIBES IN INDIA

This section would enable you to explain how the 'segmentary' tribes of India function and organise themselves within the Indian nation. This section will show how in contemporary India certain tribes fit into the category of segmentary societies. As you will see they have a rich and complex life and maintain order. Sociologically speaking, they have their own inner logic of functioning and to a large extent they still live by it. However, it should not be assumed that they have not changed with time. In fact, they are increasingly getting modernised and attempts are being made to help them to develop.

7.5.1   Political Organisation in Indian Tribes

Political institutions in Indian tribes are based on

i) Clan and lineage

ii) village unit and

iii) group of villages.

Every clan has a common ancestor to which it can trace itself. Over time every clan "breaks" or "splits" up into several lineages.

Lineage segmentation or division into smaller sections is very important as a principle of political structure in stateless societies. Among the Bhils the lineage is structured with a depth of five to six generations as one unit.

7.5.2 The Lineage System

The political functioning and conflict in the lineage system among the Santal, Oraon and Bhil can be illustrated diagrammatically as follow:
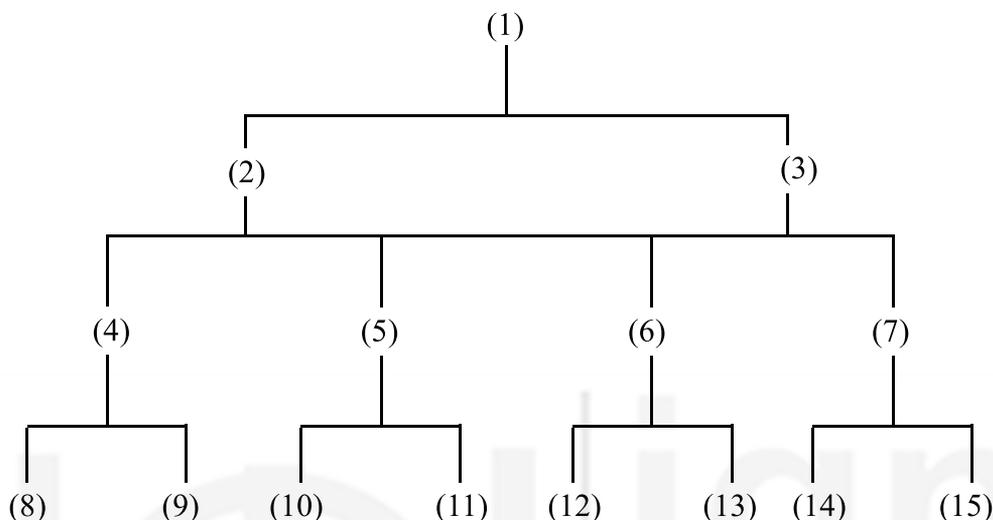
```
                           (1)
                 _____|_____
                |                       |
               (2)                     (3)
          _____|_____           _____|_____
         |             |         |             |
        (4)           (5)       (6)           (7)
       __|__         __|__     __|__         __|__
      |     |       |     |   |     |       |     |
     (8)   (9)    (10)  (11) (12)  (13)   (14)  (15)
```

Diagram 1 : Political Functioning in Stateless Societies

In this diagram the members represent lineages of different orders. They all claim descent from (1) The male line goes down from (1) to (2) and (3) and two lineages are formed. After this the lines segment further into (4)-(5) and (6)-(7) respectively. In the next generation we find the lineage segmenting into (8), (9), (10), (11), (12), (13), (14), (15) respectively. This structure is very important for conflict regulation.

Now it often happens that there is enemity between members of (8) and (9) as per the diagram. In such a case all the members of (8) and all the members of (9) are potential enemies. All the other branches of the lineage such as (4), (5), (10), (11), (2), etc., are not involved. This is also true of (12), and (13). It is therefore a general principle in case of any conflict within a tribe which, apply to all segements.

Now consider carefully a different situation. If a member of (8) or (9) is engaged in conflict with a member of (10) or (11) then all (8) and (9) "fuse" (unite) or regard themselves as one group. Thus members of (8) and (9) will be pitted against the 'fused' group of (10) and (11).

At a yet higher level of consideration let us see what would happen if a member or members of (4) or (5) were engaged in hostilities with the members of (6) or (7). In such a case the whole lineage directly tracing descent from them will be united under them and be ready to fight for them. That is, lineage members of (8), (9), (10) and (11) will become enemies of lineage members of (12), (13), (14), and (15).

If there is a conflict at a still higher level between members of (2) and (3), all segments subsumed under them will become opposed to each other. Finally if clan (1) become opposed to another clan, all members of the clan (1) would fuse into one group for feuding with the opposing clan members.

When the hostility is over, then "fission" (division) or return to original position in the diagram takes place. This process is important not only in India but elsewhere as well most notably in Africa among the Nuer tribe, discussed in detail by Evans-Pritchard in his book, The Nuer (1940).

Activity 2

Try to find out from other members of your family or kinship network about a recent dispute. Write a note about this dispute in about two pages describing the various factors involved, the reason for the dispute and who all (i.e. their social status); were the people who managed to resolve the dispute.Compare your answer with those of other students at your study centre.

7.5.3   Conflict Regulation

The territorial separateness prevents casual conflict occurring with other lineage which are bigger or of a different generation.

The tribal village is an active political unit. We find that the way of regulating the village goes downward in authority:

- village officer, and

- Village administration.

The political mechanism functions through its officers who are known by different designations in various tribes. In minor tribes (Birhor, Juang) all these activities are in the hands of one man. Among major tribes (Santal, Bhil) authority is rested on two headmen. One is for secular and the other is for sacred purposes. Very often they have assistants.

Most tribes have a proper 'judicial' machinery to deal with breaches of peace and social offences. There is usually a village council or an assembly of elders. For example, among the Malers, the council of elders of the village is presided by Majhi. The **goriat** acts as the public prosecutor. The Panchayat is called at the instance of the **majhi** by the **goriat.**

Informal control over behaviour is done in the evening meetings. Here criticism is very pungent and effective. Public disapproval is also very effective in controlling or rectifying behaviour. This includes making clear what a member would suffer if he goes beyond the unwritten tribal laws. In short the evening meetings are called to keep those going out of line on line. In this way their problem does not become so severe as to call forth punishment.

7.5.4   Crime and Punishment

However there is no society which does not have criminal cases. These cause a severe disequilibrium in society. This has to be rectified by punishment.

The evidence that is called for, while deciding a criminal case, is:

- **Oath,** taken on a sacred deity, and

- **Ordeal,** undergone by tribal standards.

Among the Malers the **oath** taken is of loss of life. The suspect touches the knife at a sacred centre (holy spot etc.), and swears he will tell the truth or die. Here it is both society's pervasive influence as well as the person's own faith that produces a result. The result is almost always true and just.

In the case of **ordeal** the suspect is innocent if he remains unhurt by grasping a red hot axe or putting his hand in burning oil. Malers have the **saveli** ordeal, in which a red hot axe is to be grasped by the accused. In the **pochai** ordeal ritualistic rice beer is used. Only the innocent can grasp the axe or drink the ritualistic beer and get away unscathed. The guilty suffer burns or die of poisoning.

Oath and ordeal are both threatening alternatives as, they serve as a means of voluntary submission of the accused to law. The fine for the guilty depends upon the seriousness of the crime. The most serious punishment is excommunication. The tribals with beating of drums desecrate the house of the accused. They defile it with rubbish and may burn it down.

This symbolises their dislike and hatred for the crime and the criminal. **Bitlahan** (excommunication) occurs in cases where the crime is so severe that the very person who has committed it would be intolerable. One of these crimes is that of marrying among the taboo or forbidden category of persons. Again a person who disrespects the tribal deity and attacks it, breaks it, spits on it, is liable to be excommunicated.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Describe briefly the process of "fission' and 'fusion' in stateless societies.

   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....

2) Give the names of three 'stateless' tribes of India.

   (i) ....

   (ii) ....

   (iii) ....

3) Describe briefly the method of 'informal control'

   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....
   ....

4)   In the saveli ordeal the person is made to fast till death.

                    Yes   No

5)   Bitlaha is the name of the Santal God.

                    Yes   No

7.6   POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIETY

Hunting and 'food gathering' societies can be divided into "easy" and "hard" hunters. The easy hunters live almost completely by gathering fruits, vermin, and insects. They live in temporary tenements of branches and leaves. Apart from the dog they have no domestic animals. The hard hunters are more evolved and go for larger animals. They use horses for travelling. Their sense of territory is much more definite. They keep domestic animals and have secondary arts such as spinning, weaving and pottery. In these societies we find that some form of complex centralised authority has emerged. We will examine this aspect now. Diagram 2 shows the levels of development of simple society.
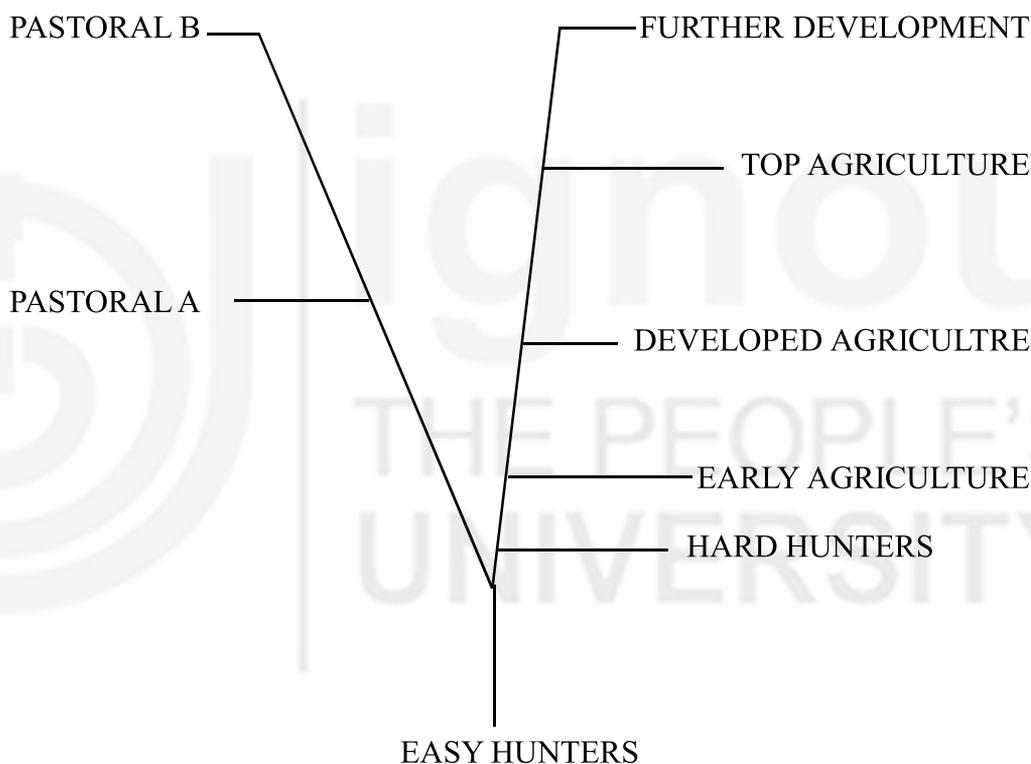
PASTORAL B ——————   —————— FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

                                            —————— TOP AGRICULTURE

PASTORAL A ——————

                                            —————— DEVELOPED AGRICULTRE

                                            —————— EARLY AGRICULTURE
                                            HARD HUNTERS

                        EASY HUNTERS

Diagram 2 : Levels of Development

We would like you to note three important facts. These are:

●   the anthropologists' account and the information which comes from archaeology are in close agreement.

●   there were no successive stages of pastoral and agricultural development. These were simultaneous and in different directions of growth from the social condition of the higher hunters.

●   it was only from the highest basis of settled and mixed agriculture that large scale social systems, including state-formation, were able to grow.

That is to say stateless societies, with their hunting and herding can carry the development of the social system to a point. They cannot go beyond this point. Let us now consider briefly what emerges from these developments.

7.6.1 Emergence of Simple Form of Government in Society

First we find that there is the emergence of 'government' in simple form within each community. In the easy hunters there is a very simple form of government but at the top agricultural and pastoral levels settled government is established.

Secondly, there is a clear extension of settled government to embrace wider groupings. In only twenty-five percent of easy hunters does "government" extend beyond the primary community which is the family and kinship group. Almost eighty per cent have proper government with an administrative machinery.

There are several interesting features to note. We find that chieftains usually possess 'authority' within the pattern of custom. This type of government also involves a Council of Elders. All have to observe customary rules. It is called a government by discussion.

The same development is clear in the organisation of law,. In the stateless societies, kinship solves disputes. Some customary procedures of retaliation and retribution such as 'blood feud' the 'customary fight' and so on as found in some African tribes like the Nuer, exist. However in these forms of retribution the guilt of the individual is not involved. There are also forms of compensation where retribution is still visited upon the guilty kin group but punishment takes the form of restitution. This aspect has been discussed earlier.

At the highest pastoral and agricultural levels systems of public justice are established. This is regular with reference to attacks on the social system but sporadic in small-scale conflicts. In such cases customary procedures can be applied provided they do not become socially distruptive. In more complex societies there is regular public justice.

As a stateless society changes there is a marked movement from tribal concerns and religious offences by corrective punishment towards claim and counter-claims of restitutive punishment. Oath and ordeal are used less and less. The matrilineal principle of descent predominates among the hunters and gatherers. While amongst pastoralists the patrilineal principle of descent predominates.

7.6.2 Political Aspect of Religion in Simple Societies

The function of religion in the simpler societies is two fold: It serves ecological functions, by giving men an interpretation of their relationship with nature. It indicates to them how they should relate with it. Religion also serves social and political functions. It binds men together, and gives meaning and legitimacy to authority. In the higher pastoral and agricultural societies higher forms of authority systems appear. These are the doctrines, rituals and worship.

Though morality is not directly linked with religion, the latter requires regulation of wide areas of behaviour, including various do's and don'ts. In simple societies, religion does not hold the individuals responsible for all their actions.

Check Your Progress 3

1) What are the stages of stateless societies?

    ....

    ....

    ....

    ....

    ....

2) Easy hunters hunt big animals.

       Yes   No

3) What functions does religion serve in stateless societies?

    ....

    ....

    ....

    ....

    ....

7.7   LET US SUM UP

We have seen that segmentary societies are those which lack centralised power. There is **hardly any administrative machinery** in them. There are no judicial institutions. Sharp cleavages of wealth, rank and status are missing. These societies include the Nuer and Tallensi, in Africa. They also cover Bhils, Oraons and Santals in India.

In such societies without government, what gives them law and order? However it is the segmentary lineage system which controls political relations between different territorial segments. Kinship in these societies is very significant in political organisation. This is due to the link between territorial grouping and lineage grouping

In such societies political office carries no economic privileges. Wealth can confer status and help in acquiring political leadership.

This is because wealth itself accrues from superior status in stateless societies. It was previously held that stateless societies came under the control of those with a state. They were conquered in war and acquired a state. This theory has been questioned and is generally not accepted now. Further there is no association, class, or segment which dominates. It does not control the political system any more than another group. Force when used is met with opposing force. Again the important fact is coexistence: if one segment defeats another it does not try to establish political control over it. Since there is no administrative support, it cannot do so. There is no person or group with absolute authority. Thus stability is maintained by equilibrium at every point of separation.

More than this, unity and cohesion come in these societies through common symbols. These include myths, dogmas, persons, sacred places and so on. These are regarded as final values in themselves.

Thus we can say that segmentary societies have an internal cohesion system that is strong and effective. They are 'stateless' but they do not miss out any component that creates efficiency. These societies are, in fact, fully formed political units, and must be treated as such.

16.8 KEY WORDS

Clan	:	A kin group with a common ancestor
Endogamy	:	A social practice that prescribes marriage within a specific group
Exogamy	:	A social practice that prescribes marriage outside a specific group
Kinship system	:	A system of social ties based on matrimonial (i.e. affinal ties) and blood ties. (i.e. consanguinal ties)
Lineage	:	A segment of clan based on ancestral heritage in one line, either father's or mother's
Matriarchal	:	A social system based on female domination and authority
Matrilineal	:	A social system where descent is traced through the mother
Patriarchal	:	A social system based on male domination and male authority
Patrilineal	:	A social system where descent is traced through the father
Sanction	:	Certain constraints prescribed by the society.

3.9 FURTHER READINGS

Evans-Pritchard, E.E., 1940. *The Nuer.* Oxford University Press: Oxford. (Chapter IV).

Gluckman, Max. 1965. *Politics, Law and Ritual in Tribal Society.* Basil Blackwell: Oxford. (Chapters 3 and 4).

Vidyarthi, L.P. and Rai, B.K., 1985. *The Tribal Culture of India (2nd Ed.).* Concept: Delhi. (Chapter 2, pp. 25 and Chapter 5, pp. 195-235).

3.10 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) A stateless society has no rigid boundary. It has only oral traditions. Very often a single person is the chief of the entire tribe. There is no rigid boundary and economically these societies are primitive.

2) Yes

3) (i) Archaeological record

   (ii) Literature produced by missionaries, travellers and administrators

   (iii) Monographs written by anthropologists

Check Your Progress 2

1) Stateless societies comprising a single ancestor divide or create fission in the second or third generation for various purposes. They behave as opposed units. However when under threat from other stateless societies they 'fuse' or join their forces.

2) i) Santal

   ii) Oraon

   iii) Bhil

3) Informal control is exercised during the evening meetings. The criticism is very pungent and effective. Public disapproval is another such method for informal control.

4) No

5) No

Check Your Progress 3

1) a) Early Agriculture

   b) Developed Agriculture

   c) Top Agriculture

2) No

3) Religion serves an ecological purpose. It also serves a social function and binds people together.

UNIT 8   TOTALITARIANISM*

Structure

8.0   OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will able to:

- Discuss totalitarian as a form of government;

- Describe the rise of totalitarianism;

- Analyse Stalin's Totalitarian State; and

- Discuss the Nazism in Germany;

8.1   INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit of this course we looked at segmentary. In this unit, we will discuss totalitarian political system. We will begin this unit Totalitarian: Form of Government, then, we will discuss rise of totalitarianism (1919-1939), fascism in Italy, Stalin's totalitarian state and Nazism in Germany. After this we will discuss major traits of totalitarianism

One of the ways to compare forms of government is to divide them into two categories: democracies and dictatorships. In **democracies** the people tell the leaders what to do, and in dictatorships the leaders tell the people what to do. **Dictatorship** is a form of government in which the ruler has the power to govern without the consent of the people. Many dictatorships are also totalitarian. **Totalitarian** governments are those that establish total political, social and cultural control over the governed and are generally headed by a charismatic leader. Not

---

*Written by Prof.Manisha Tripathy Pandey,

all dictators are fascist, like Mussolini. **Fascism** is a form of right-wing totalitarianism which emphasizes the subordination of the individual to advance the interests of the state.

8.2 TOTALITARIAN: FORM OF GOVERNMENT

8.2.1 A Government of Total Control

Totalitarianism is a form of government in which the government takes total, centralized, state control over and regulates every aspect of public and private life. In contrast, the people control democratic governments. It seeks to erase the line between government and society. It has an ideology, a set of beliefs, that all citizens are expected to approve. It is often led by a dynamic leader and a single political party.

Mass communication technology helps a totalitarian government spread its aims and support its policies. Surveillance technology is used to keep track of the activities of many people. Finally, violence, such as police terror, discourages those who disagree with the goals of the government.

Totalitarianism challenges the highest values prized by Western democracies – reason, freedom, human dignity, and the worth of the individual. To dominate the entire nation, totalitarian leaders devise methods of control and persuasion. These methods include the use of terror, indoctrination, propaganda, censorship, and religious or ethnic persuasion.

Mussolini built the first totalitarian state. In this form of government, a one-party dictatorship attempts to regulate every aspect of the lives of its citizens. Other dictators, notably Stalin and Hitler, followed Mussolini lead. Mussolini's rule was fascist in nature, as was Hitler's, but totalitarian governments rise under other kinds of ideology as well, such as communism in Stalin's Soviet Union.

Michael Halberstam (1999) distinguishes two significantly different approaches to the idea of totalitarianism:

1) Liberal approach that views totalitarianism as its own anti-thesis. Carl Friedrich's definition of totalitarianism assumes this kind of perspective in *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*. According to this approach,

    a) Totalitarianism is rule by force not by consent. It eradicates political freedom, democratic process, and legality as such, by setting up the pronouncements of the ruler and the party as an omnipotent force with unchecked powers to exercise control over the institutions of the state as well as all other social institutions.

    b) Totalitarianism violates the freedom of conscience. It forcibly disseminates an ideology that is total and claims to be authoritative for all areas of individual consciousness.

    c) Totalitarianism violates the boundaries between the public and the private spheres by politicizing all areas of the life of the community.

    d) Totalitarian rule is both irrational rule and overly rational rule. Irrational in the sense that it appeals to quasi-religious sentiment to rouse mass

support for policies contrary to the considered interests of the individuals as well as to the interests of the community as a whole. Rational in the sense of both the scientific methods of propaganda and population control it deploys in its efforts to maintain power and the logicality and internal coherence of its doctrines.

2) The second theoretical approach views totalitarianism as an outgrowth and culmination of a crisis of modernity. Hannah Arendt is the best example of this position. Totalitarianism is the consequence of a "loss of world" occasioned by the critical project of emancipation, modern rationalization, secularization of life and democratic massification of society.

Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* is an analysis of the historical circumstances that led to the rise of totalitarianism in the 20th century. It is divided into three sections: Antisemitism, Imperialism and Totalitarianism. Arendt investigates why and how the Jews played an integral role in Nazi and totalitarian propaganda. Also, how the disintegration of the nation-states coincided with imperialism in the late 19th century. Arendt argues that the new political formation of the bourgeois class, characterized by ongoing movement and accumulation, gave rise to racism and bureaucracy as major ideologies of modern society. These were precursors to the totalitarian movements of the 20th century. Finally, Arendt says that the essence of totalitarianism is terror and its purpose is to stamp out the spontaneity of the human spirit totally. But Arendt is hopeful that humanity will overcome such horror through the spontaneity of political action contained in the birth of a new generation.

Box 8.1

George Orwell illustrated the horrors of a totalitarian government in his novel, *1984*. This depicts a world in which personal freedom and privacy was not there. It is a world made possible through modern technology. Even citizens' homes have television cameras that constantly survey their behavior.

Orwell's prophetic novel *1984* portrays a fictional totalitarian, authoritative state and a dystopian world called Oceania. The ruling Party in Oceania is an authoritative and totalitarian party headed by Big Brother. It controls everything in Oceania, even language and people's history. It prohibits free thought, sex, and individualism. The state is controlled by the privileged elite of the Inner Party. It regulates Ingsoc and the Thought Police and keeps the members of the Outer Party under close scrutiny through technologies like telescreens. The three slogans of the Party namely, 'War is Peace', 'Freedom is slavery' and 'Ignorance is Strength' sums up the grim and oppressive political scenario of Oceania where war seems to be endless, freedom is curbed, and people are subjugated. In today's society also, such totalitarian regimes exist where the 'Big Brother" is always watching and people are put under surveillance. States like North Korea in 2019 represent such totalitarian and Orwellian state.

8.2.2 Totalitarianism: An Agency of De-civilization

Eric Hobsbawm (1997), while contrasting civilization (Enlightenment) with barbarism (darkness), asserted that civilization in modern times is primarily a

matter of 'the system of rules and moral behaviour' and rationality. The withering away of civilization started with the First World War continued the rise of Fascism and Nazism and the Second World War. The nineteenth-century civilization did not recover mainly because of the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia and the spread of Leninist-Marxism. This was the beginning of the age of totalitarianism of which Fascism and Nazism were alternate expressions. Thus, totalitarianism did not begin of its own accord but was an accident of history. Truth and reason were the two biggest casualties of the War and the victims of totalitarianism. Norman Davies puts it, "despite the victory of the Western democracies, the most dynamic political product of the Great War lay in the anti-Western, anti-liberal and anti-democratic monster of totalitarianism". For Hobsbawm, with the destruction of civilization, we entered into a renewed state of barbarism. In other words, totalitarianism became one of the primary agencies of de-civilization, the other two being globalization and colonialism.

8.3   RISE OF TOTALITARIANISM (1919-1939)

The catastrophe of World War I shattered the optimism in the West since the Enlightenment and the world experienced rapid changes. Besides technological changes and the Great Depression, Europe saw rise of authoritarian rule and totalitarian governments under different kinds of ideology in Italy, the Soviet Union and Germany, namely, Fascism, communism and Nazism in early 20th century.

Three Totalitarian States in Early 20th Century: Italy, the Soviet Union, and Germany

Country	Dictator in Power	Ideology	Example of Terror Tactics
Italy	Benito Mussolini in power in 1922	Fascist; Fanatic Nationalism	Black Shirts suppressed dissent.
Soviet Union	Joseph Stalin in power in 1924	Communist	Stalin sent millions to Labour camps.
Germany	Adolf Hitler in power in 1933	Fascist; Racial policies of hatred, aimed particularly at Jews	Nazis began to restrict and terrorize German Jews.

8.3.1   Dictatorship

Mussolini, Stalin and Hitler were classic dictators. Each took all political power for himself and used brutal police or military forces to maintain that power. None was held responsible to the will of the people. Besides them, Julius Caesar in ancient Rome, Francisco Franco in Spain and Fidel Castro in Cuba, are other examples of dictators.

Julius Caesar, Ancient Rome

In the Roman Republic, the Roman Senate would appoint a dictator to serve as Rome's top official in times of civil strife. Dictators had broad powers, but usually served for six months. Some Roman rulers, including Julius Caesar, found the law too restrictive. In 49 B.C., Caesar and his army took control of Rome after the civil war and declared himself dictator. Gradually he had gained enough power to have himself made dictator for life. He had also gained enemies in the Senate, many of whom joined in a successful scheme to assassinate him.

Francisco Franco, Spain

During the civil war of the 1930s in Spain, loyalists fought to preserve Spain's republican government. They fought against the conservative Nationalists military groups, led by General Francisco Franco. He accepted military help from Hitler and Mussolini. After his victory, Franco created a dictatorship based on fascism. He killed or imprisoned thousands of former Loyalists. He remained in power till 1970s by limiting dissent and by satisfying the varied factions on whom he relied for support.

Fidel Castro, Cuba

In 1952, an army revolt brought Fulgencio Batista to power in Cuba. Batista promised to end government corruption. Instead, he looted the treasury, threw his opponents in jail, and stifled the press. In 1956, Fidel Castro and a small group of rebels began a guerrilla war against the Batista regime. In 1959, Batista fled and Castro took control. However, Castro did not restore political and civil rights, as he had promised. Instead, he began a communist dictatorship. His regime killed political opponents and jailed anyone suspected of disloyalty. The Soviet Union supported Castro by giving Cuba economic and military aid.

8.3.2 Fascism in Italy

In early 1920s, a new leader, Benito Mussolini, arose in Italy. The Italians were inspired by Mussolini's promises to bring stability and glory to Italy. Being a son of a socialist blacksmith and a teacher, Mussolini had been a socialist in his youth. Later, he rejected socialism for intense nationalism. In 1919, he organized veterans and other discontented Italians into the Fascist Party. They took the name from the Latin *fasces*, a bundle of sticks wrapped around an ax. In ancient Rome, *fasces* symbolized unity and authority.

Mussolini was a fiery and charismatic speaker. He promised to end corruption, replace turmoil with order and revive Roman greatness. He organized his supporters into 'combat squads' called Black Shirts, the party militants who rejected the democratic process in favour of violent action. They broke up socialist rallies, smashed leftist presses, and attacked farmers' cooperatives. Fascist gangs used intimidation and terror to oust elected officials in northern Italy. Many Italians accepted these actions because they, too, had lost faith in constitutional government.

Mussolini became the prime minister in 1922, and took the title *Il Duce* meaning 'The Leader'. He suppressed rival parties, muzzled the press, rigged elections, and replaced elected officials with Fascist supporters. In theory, Italy remained a parliamentary monarchy. In fact, it was a dictatorship upheld by terror. Critics were put in prison, forced into exile, or murdered. Secret police and propaganda bolstered the regime.

Mussolini brought the economy under state control and the Fascist party-controlled industry, agriculture and trade. Loyalty to the state was glorified. 'Believe! Obey! Fight!' was urged for fighting for the glory of Italy. Women were pushed out of paying jobs. As part of a propaganda drive, German mothers received medals for bearing several children. Mussolini's rise to power in the 1920s served as a model for ambitious strongmen elsewhere.

8.3.2.1 Nature of Fascism

Generally, the term fascism is used to describe any centralized, authoritarian government that is not communist, whose policies glorify the state over the individual and are destructive to basic human rights. In 1920s and 1930s, though, fascism had different meanings in different countries. All forms of fascism, however, shared some basic features. They were rooted in extreme nationalism. Fascists glorified action, violence, discipline and blind loyalty to the state. They also pursued aggressive foreign expansion. They glorified warfare as a noble struggle for survival.

Fascists were also undemocratic. They rejected faith in reason, equality and liberty. To them, democracy led to corruption and weakness and put individual or class interests above national goals. Instead, fascists emphasized emotion and supremacy of the state.

Although fascism put restrictions on individual freedom, it appealed to many. This was because it promised a strong, stable government and an end to the political feuding that had paralysed democracy in Italy. Mussolini projected a sense of power and confidence at a time of disorder and despair.

8.3.2.2 Fascism Compared to Communism

Fascists were the sworn enemies of socialists and communists. While communists worked for international change, fascists pursued nationalist goals. Fascists supported a society with defined classes. They found allies among business leaders, wealthy landowners, and the lower middle class. Communists touted a classless society. They won support among both urban and agricultural workers.

Despite such differences, the products of these two ideologies had much in common. Both drew power by inspiring a blind devotion to the state, or a charismatic leader as the embodiment of the state. Both used terror to guard their power. Both flourished during economic hard times by promoting extreme programs of social change. In both, a party elite claimed to rule in the name of the national interest.

8.4 STALIN'S TOTALITARIAN STATE

Karl Marx had predicted that under communism the state would eventually wither away. Under Stalin, the opposite occurred. He turned the Soviet Union into a

totalitarian state controlled by a powerful and complex bureaucracy. Stalin's **Five-Year Plans** set high production goals and brought all economic activity under government control. The government owned all businesses and distributed all resources. In a sharp contrast to the capitalist system, the Soviet Union developed a command economy, in which government officials made all basic economic decisions.

Stalin's **forced collectivization in agriculture** led to a lot of unrest which was suppressed by the **police state**. Stalin wanted all peasants to farm on either state-owned farms, or collectives *i.e.* large farms owned and operated by peasants as a group. The state set all prices and controlled access to farm supplies. Stalin used brutal force against *kulaks* or wealthy farmers who resisted to give up their land and sent them to labour camps.

Stalin's Communist Party used **secret police**, torture and violent purges to ensure obedience. He tightened his grasp on every aspect of Soviet life, even stamping out any signs of dissent. There was no free press, and no safe method of voicing protest. Terror was used as a weapon against people and critics were sent to Gulag, a system of brutal labour camps, where many died. The secret police arrested and executed millions of so-called traitors. In 1934, Stalin launched the **Great Purge**, a campaign of terror directed at anyone who threatened his power. Thousands of old Bolsheviks who helped stage the Revolution in 1917 stood trial.

The Communists attempted to control thought of Soviet citizens through **propaganda and censorship**. Relentless propaganda was used as a tool to build a 'cult of personality' around himself. Soviet artists and writers, newspapers, radio and motion pictures were made to conform to the views of the state and faced official censorship.

Stalin also controlled the cultural life in the Soviet Union by promoting a policy of **Russification**, *i.e.* making nationality's culture more Russian and imposing Russian culture on minorities. Moreover, Stalin tried to strengthen his hold on the minds of the people by destroying their religious faith and replacing it with the communist ideology. In accordance with the ideas of Marx, **atheism**, or the belief that there is no god, became the official state policy. The writings of Marx and Lenin became the 'sacred' texts and portraits of Stalin replaced religious icons. The terror and cultural coercion of Stalin's rule made a mockery of promises of communism. The reality of communism fell short of Lenin's promises.

8.5   NAZISM IN GERMANY

In 1919, Adolf Hitler, a German army veteran, joined a small group of right-wing extremists. Within a year, he was the unquestioned leader of the National Socialist German Workers, or Nazi, party. In 1923, tried to follow Mussolini's example and made a failed attempt to seize power in Munich. He was put behind bars for treason. While in prison, Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf* ('My Struggle'). Later it became the basic book of Nazi goals and ideology. It reflected his obsessions – extreme nationalism, racism and anti-Semitism.

To revive Germany after the defeat in World War I, Hitler urged Germans everywhere to unite into one great nation. The Great Depression led to the rise of unemployment and Nazi membership grew. Hitler's program, after his release

from the prison, appealed to veterans, workers, the lower middle classes and small-town Germans. He promised to end reparations and create jobs. With the support of conservatives (who feared the growth of communist political power), Hitler was appointed chancellor in 1933. Soon he became a dictator of Germany – suspended civil rights, destroyed the socialists and Communists, and disbanded other political parties. Germany became a one-party state. He organized an efficient but brutal system of totalitarian rule. Nazis controlled all areas of German life – from government to religion to education. Elite, black-uniformed troops called SS, enforced Hitler's will. His secret police, the *Gestapo*, rooted out opposition. School courses and textbooks were rewritten to reflect Nazi racial views. Like Fascists in Italy, Nazis sought to limit women's roles.

In a fanatical anti-Semitism, Hitler set out to drive Jews from Germany. They were prohibited to attend or teach at German schools, holding government jobs, practicing law or medicine, or publishing books. Nazis beat and robbed Jews and roused mobs to do the same. The Nazis also sought to purge, or purify, German culture.

Nazi Germany

Martin Niemoller, a Lutheran minister, preached against ruthless Nazi policies and was ultimately jailed. He later observed:

"The Nazis came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time there was no one left to speak up".

- Martin Niemoller, quoted in *Time* magazine

THE MAKINGS OF A TOTALITARIAN STATE

In totalitarian Italy, Mussolini's government tried to dominate every part of the lives of Italians. Mussolini's totalitarian state became a model for others, although his rule in Italy was not as absolute as that of Stalin in the Soviet Union or Hitler in Germany. Still, all three governments shared the following basic features:

- A single party dictatorship with blind obedience to a single leader.

- State control of the economy

- Use of police spies and terror to enforce the will of the state

- Government control of the media to indoctrinate and mobilize citizens through propaganda.

- Use of schools and youth organizations to spread ideology to children, and

- Strict censorship of artists and intellectuals with dissenting opinions.

Dictatorship Today: North Korea's Kim Jong-un

Dictatorship as a form of government still exists today. North Korea is an example of Stalinist totalitarian dictatorship and functions as a highly centralized, one-party state. Kim Jong-un, head of a communist totalitarian regime in the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea, is considered among the most dangerous of the present-day dictators. In fact, Kim has been described as 'Stalinist'. He took over as a dictator from his father, Kim Il-Sung, in 1994. Since then, he has violated the civil liberties of his own people, and he has destabilized international relations in the region with claims that North Korea possesses nuclear weapons.

8.6 KEY TRAITS OF TOTALITARIANISM

Arendt (1994) writes: "Totalitarianism is the most radical denial of freedom". Friedrich and Brzezinski (1972) postulate a syndrome of six systematic characteristics: a ruling ideology, a single party under the dominance of a leader, a secret police apparatus, control of the media, monopoly of all weapons, and an economy that is state directed if not state controlled.

Emilio Gentile (2006) defined totalitarianism as:

"An experiment in political domination implemented by a revolutionary movement that has been organized by a party with military discipline and all-absorbing concept of politics aimed at the monopoly of power, which on taking power by legal illegal means destroys or transforms the previous regime and builds a new state founded on a single-party regime with the principal objective of conquering the society, that is, subjugation, integration and homogenization of the ruled on the basis of the total political nature of existence, whether individual or collective, as interpreted by the categories, myths and values of an institutionalized ideology in the form of a political religion, with the intention of molding individuals and masses……..and create a new man devoted body and soul……. to the imperialist project of the totalitarian party".

The main characteristics of totalitarianism are as follows:

1) **Dynamic Leader**: A dynamic leader who can build support for his policies and justify his actions heads most totalitarian governments. Totalitarian leaders appear to provide a sense of security and to give a direction for the future. Such a leader unites people, symbolizes government and encourages popular support through force of will. In the past history such leaders have utilized secret police to crush opposition and create a sense of fear among people. No one was exempt from suspicion or accusations that he or she is an enemy of the state.

   Adorno investigated the role of irrational authoritarianism in the rise of fascism and anti-Semitism throughout Europe during World War II. Adorno *et.al*. (1950), in their work *The Authoritarian Personality*, give an analysis of 'potentially fascistic individual' and emotional traits of authoritarian personality:

   a) Conventionalism: A rigid adherence to middle class values and inflexible attitudes to others.

   b) Authoritarian submission: An uncritical, submissive orientation to figures of authority.

   c) Authoritarian aggression: A tendency to actively search out people who transgress conventional values, with the desire to see them punished.

   d) Anti-intraception: Rejection of imagination, creativity or the emotionally minded.

e) Stereotype and superstition: Belief in the mystical determinants of fate, as well as ordering of the world through rigid stereotypes.

f) Power and toughness: An exaggerated assertion of strength, coupled with a preoccupation with dichotomies– dominance/submission, strong/weak, leader/follower.

g) Destructiveness and cynicism: Generalized hostility and even hatred of the human condition.

h) Projectivity: The projection of unwanted emotional aspects of the self on to others.

i) Sex: An exaggerated concern with the sexual activities of others.

Adorno states that in fascist regimes and authoritarian identities, there was a murderous rage and bloodthirsty desire to denigrate and destroy outgroups and demonstrate propensities for racial prejudice and ethnic hatred. There is also a submissive orientation to social authority.

For Marcuse, 'repressive desublimation' was the psychic process linking 'post-psychological individual' to emergence of fascism and totalitarian societies. In *One-Dimensional Man*, Marcuse describes the state of society under capitalism. One-dimensional man is an 'administered individual' who is subjected to a new kind of totalitarianism in the form of consumerist ideology and technological capitalism propagated by the mass media. This leads to system of domination leading to systematic erosion of critical thinking and dissent.

Totalitarian Leaders in the 20th Century:

LEADER	COUNTRY	PERIOD
Adolf Hitler	Germany	1933-1954
Benito Mussolini	Italy	1925-1943
Joseph Stalin	Soviet Union	1929-1953
Kim IL Sung	North Korea	1948-1994
Saddam Hussein	Iraq	1979-2003

2) **Dictatorship and One-Party Rule**: The dictator and his party exercise absolute authority and dominate the government.

3) **Ideology**: Ideology is the *sinequanon* of totalitarianism. Louis Althusser (1970) discusses ideology as a concept for grasping how societal arrangements are sustained and reproduced in daily lives of people, and especially for addressing many forms of political domination. In a totalitarian regime, the goals of the state are set according to the ideology of the party in power; glorifies the aims of the state and justifies government actions.

4) **State Control of Individuals**: Such a state denies basic liberties to the citizens, demands loyalty and expects personal sacrifice for the good of the state.

5) **State Control of Society**: Every institution and organization of the society is controlled by the state, such as business, labor, housing, education, religion, arts, youth groups, and also personal life.

6) **Modern Technology**: This is an important aspect for all kinds of government today. But in the 20th century, the widespread use of mass communication made it possible to reach into all aspects of citizens' lives. A totalitarian government uses mass communication technology to spread propaganda. It also is in possession of advanced military weapons to control and dominate its region.

In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, for Adorno and Horkheimer (2002), enlightenment was totalitarianism as enlightenment reason has failed the West and the humanity because of:

a) Rise of socialism in Germany and annihilation of Jews by Hitler

b) Rise of culture industry in the US which was a part of the process of commercialized brainwashing and thus rise and domination of fascist ideology. Culture becomes the medium of ideological domination by which capitalist order is maintained.

c) Destruction of modern technological warfare.

7) **Methods of Enforcement**: Use of violence is a key trait of the totalitarian government. Its ideology and dictates are enforced by various means, such as, police terror, indoctrination, censorship and persecution.

a) **Police Terror**: Dictators of totalitarian states use terror and violence to force obedience and to crush opposition. The police serve to enforce the central government's policies. They may do this by spying on the citizens or by intimidating them. Sometimes they use brutal force and even murder to achieve their goals.

b) **Indoctrination**: Totalitarian states rely in indoctrination – instruction in the government beliefs – to mold people's minds. Control of education is absolutely essential to glorify the leader and his policies and to convince all citizens that their unconditional loyalty and support are required. Indoctrination begins with very young children, is encouraged by youth groups, and is strongly enforced by schools.

c) **Propaganda and Censorship**: Totalitarian states spread propaganda, biased or incomplete information used to sway people to accept certain beliefs or actions. Control of all mass media allows this to happen. No publication, film, art, or music is allowed to exist without the permission of the state. Citizens are surrounded with false information that appears to be true. Individuals who dissent must retract their work or they are imprisoned or killed.

d) **Religious or Ethnic Persecution**: Totalitarian leaders often create enemies of the state to blame for things that go wrong. Generally, these enemies are members of religious or ethnic groups. Often groups are easily identified and subjected to campaigns of terror and violence. They may be forced to live in certain areas and are subjected to rules that apply only to them.

Check Your Progress

1) What is totalitarianism?

....

....

....

....

....

2) How totalitarianism is an agency of de-civilization? Discuss.

....

....

....

....

....

3) Explain Stalin's totalitarian State.

....

....

....

....

....

4) Discuss the emergence of Nazism in Germany.

....

....

....

....

....

8.7 LET US SUM UP

Totalitarianism is thus antithetical to democracy. Democratic regimes have different kinds of social and political regimes, and diverse attitudes, practices, aspirations and ideals. Totalitarianism is a system based on the monopoly of a party which is unique not only because it is the only party allowed to exist and to have power at its disposal. The party governs, controls and administers the state apparatus. With Stalin, the state and party became one. He eliminated internal political debate by destroying the left and the right of the party, thereby making it 'monolithic' and all-pervasive.

The party is totalitarian as it controlled all, knows everything, and is everything. The party controls the state, the party's police controls the party, but the party controls the state. Thus, there is a circular linkage of one control to another in the totalitarian system.

What is also important with regard to totalitarianism is the need for the complete control of communication in order to have monopoly on information and truth. This system is not only one which enforces censorship to stifle the power of information, as other dictatorial systems do. It is also a system which presents the image of the blissful, unanimous, enthusiastic and transparent world of 'really existing socialism'. If any faults appear, they are blamed on enemies, agents of capitalism, saboteurs, traitors or spies. The totalitarian control of the media also involves the control of vocabulary, and of the meaning of words and things. The official language via the media dictates to the reader and the viewer what people must say or mot say.

Totalitarianism is a system which wants to become self-contained and to prohibit questions. It needs the 'Gulag' to eliminate not only different beliefs but also any possibility of their arising. The system is self-contained, but this is precisely what it cannot fully be. That is why Edgar Morin (1991) says that it is a system which derives its enormous strength from its enormous weakness. The weakness is enormous because the system produces an economy which is both ultra-bureaucratic and ultra- anarchic; it sustains a wide diversity of potentially divergent nationalities under an artificial constraint; in the name of the working class it prevents the working class from expressing itself in unions, grievances and strikes; and it is not able tolerate political pluralism or allow free elections.

8.8 KEY WORDS

Anti-Semitism : Prejudice against Jews.

Totalitarianism : A form of society in which the state controls and regulates all phases of life considered essential for perpetuating its power and for carrying out programs arbitrarily deemed best for society.

8.9 FURTHER READINGS

- Adorno, T. et.al. 1950. *The Authoritarian Personality*. Harper and Row.

- Friedrich, C J. and Brzezinski, Z. 1972. Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy. Praeger Publishers, New York.

- Hobsbawm, Eric. 1997. "Barbarism: A User's Guide", in *On History*. The New Press. New York.

8.10 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1) Totalitarianism is a form of government in which the government takes total, centralized, state control over and regulate every aspect of public and private life. In contrast, the people control democratic governments. Mass communication technology plays a key role in totalitarian government to

disseminate its aims and support its policies In this form of government, a one-party dictatorship attempts to regulate every aspect of the lives of its citizens. Other dictators, notably Stalin and Hitler, followed Mussolini lead.

2) Civilization in modern and contemporary is primarily a matter of 'the system of rules and moral behaviour' and rationality. The withering away of civilization started with the First World War, continued the rise of Fascism and Nazism and the Second World War. This was the beginning of the age of totalitarianism of which Fascism and Nazism were alternate expressions. Truth and reason were the two biggest casualties of the War and the victims of totalitarianism. With the destruction of civilization, we entered into a renewed state of barbarism. In other words, totalitarianism became one of the primary agencies of de-civilization.

3) Karl Marx envisaged that under communism the state would eventually wither away. Under Stalin, the opposite occurred. He turned the Soviet Union into a totalitarian state controlled by a powerful and complex bureaucracy. In a sharp contrast to the capitalist system, the Soviet Union developed a command economy, in which government officials made all basic economic decisions. The state set all prices and controlled access to farm supplies. The secret police arrested and executed millions of so-called traitors. In 1934, Stalin launched the **Great Purge**, a campaign of terror directed at anyone who threatened his power. The writings of Marx and Lenin became the 'sacred' texts and portraits of Stalin replaced religious icons.

4) In 1919, Adolf Hitler, a German army veteran, joined a small group of right-wing extremists. Within a year, he was the unquestioned leader of the National Socialist German Workers, or Nazi, party. In 1923, he made a failed attempt to seize power in Munich and was jailed for treason. While in prison, Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf* ('My Struggle'). It reflected his obsessions – extreme nationalism, racism and anti-Semitism. After his release from the prison, appealed to veterans, workers, the lower middle classes and small-town Germans. He promised to end reparations and create jobs. With the support of conservatives. Hitler was appointed chancellor in 1933. Soon he became a dictator of Germany – suspended civil rights, destroyed the socialists and Communists, and disbanded other political parties. Germany became a one-party state. He organized an efficient but brutal system of totalitarian rule.

REFERENCES

- Adorno,T. and Horkheimer, Max. 2002.*Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*. Stanford University Press.

- Adorno, T. et.al. 1950.*The Authoritarian Personality*. Harper and Row.

- Arendt, Hannah. 1951. *The Origins of Totalitarianism.* Penguin Books.

- Friedrich, C J. and Brzezinski, Z. 1972. Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy. Praeger Publishers, New York.

- Gentile, Emilio. 2006. *Politics as Religion*. Princeton University Press. Princeton.

- Halberstam, Michael. 1999. Totalitarianism and the Modern Conception of Politics. Yale University Press. New Haven.

- Hobsbawm, Eric. 1997. "Barbarism: A User's Guide", in *On History*. The New Press. New York.

- Littell, McDougal. 2005. *World History: Patterns of Interaction*. Rand McNally, U.S.

- Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man.*

- Morin, Edgar. 1991. "The Anti-Totalitarian Revolution", in *Thesis Eleven*. Sage.

UNIT 9   DEMOCRATIC*

Structure

9.0   OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain democratic Political System;

- Describe the origin and meaning of the democracy

- Discuss the component of democratic Political System;

9.1   INTRODUCTION

In this previous unit of this block we looked at Totalitarian Political System. In this unit, we will discuss democratic political system, origin and meaning of the concept of democracy. A democratic political system incorporates a few elements.

---

*Adapted by Prof.Rabindra Kumar, from ESO 11,Unit 18.

While explaining these elements of a democratic political system the unit highlights the ideology, the structure and function, the political processes and the basis of legitimacy of a political system.

9.2   DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL SYSTEM

In this section, we intend to familiarize you with democratic political system with the development of the industrial social system, rise of the ideologies of freedom, equality and individualism. These ideologies were responsible for the development of the democratic political system.

With the development of the industrial social system and capitalism, the medieval monarchy was replaced by the modern democratic political system. This system emphasized the principle of minimum individual freedom and the principle of minimum interference by the state. In the nineteenth and twentieth countries, the industrialist capitalistic states captured the still primitive and agrarian parts of the world and turned them into their markets. These states were known as the capitalistic imperialistic states. The mutual competition of the capitalistic – imperialistic state caused the two world wars. The first world war, a war which the western allied leaders could proclaim was fought to make the world safe for democracy. Resolutions have made against western liberal democracy in the name of proletarian democracy, of people's democracy and several varieties of African and Asian democracy. The Soviet Union is no longer considered unviable. China has moved entirely outside the Western orbit. And top of all this, most of the underdeveloped areas of Africa and South and East Asia have achieved independence in circumstances which have led them to become one party states or system. But all these countries consider themselves to be democracies. This indicates the various dimensions of democracy. Now let us discuss the origin and meaning of democracy.

9.2.1   Origin and Meaning of the concept of Democracy

A political system providing for the participation of citizens in political decision making, either directly or through the election of political representatives is known as democracy. The concept of democracy comes from the Greek demokratia, bringing together demo ('the people') and kratos ('rule' or 'power'). It is clear that societies should be ruled by 'the people' themselves, rather than by emperors, monarchs or unelected dictators. However, although a direct type of mass democratic participation was practiced in ancient Greece, important decisions of governance were taken by a much smaller group of 'citizen' with special rights not afforded to the rest of the population. Democratic rule has also taken differing forms at varying times and in different societies. Not least, because what is meant by 'the people' has changed over time and location. At various times, the concept of 'the people' has been restricted to adult men, just to those who owned property, and to male and female adults-but only those beyond a certain age. Representative democracy, in which people elect representatives to act on their behalf, has become the normal method of achieving 'rule by the people'. With the ending of Eastern European communism in the 1990s, representative forms of 'liberal' democracy have been seen as the dominant model around the world.

Democracy is understood as the political system most able to ensure political equality, protect liberty and freedom. It defends the common interest, meet

citizens' needs, promote moral self-development, and enable effective decision-making which takes everyone's interests into account (Held 2006). Representative democracy is a political system in which decisions affecting a community are taken not by its members directly, but by those they have elected. In national governments, representative democracy takes the form of elections to congresses parliaments or similar national bodies. Countries in which voters can choose between two or more parties and in which the mass of the adult population has the right to vote are usually called 'liberal' democracies and include Britain, the USA, Japan and Australia.

Since the early 1980s, a number of countries in Latin America, such as Chile, Bolivia and Argentina, have undergone the transition from authoritarian military rule to democracy. Similarly, following the collapse of the communist block in 1989, many Eastern European states – Russia, Poland and Czechoslovakia, for example- have become democratic. And, in Africa, a number of previously undemocratic nations – among them Benin, Ghana, Mozambique and South Africa – have come to embrace democratic ideals. Democracy is no longer concentrated primarily in Western countries but is now endorsed, at least in principle, as the desired form of government in many areas of the world (Anthony Giddens) . Now let us discuss the elements of democratic political system.

9.3 ELEMENTS OF A DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL SYSTEM

The political system of democratic society can be best described in terms of (1) Ideology, (2) Structure, (3) Function, (4) Process and (5) Basis of Legitimacy.

9.3.1 Ideology

Ideology may be defined as an integrated system of beliefs and symbols which have an appeal to the followers beyond their rational and objective meaning. It has the power to sway the sentiments of the followers. It is accepted as an article of faith by the followers. A political system in general and political parties within that system, in particular may have their own ideologies which will define to the members the nation's or parties' goals and means. By implication, the followers not only accept the goals without question, but become committed to the means and to adopt them' with all the risks involved. The degree of internalization of an ideology and of its goals and means, are dependent on political socialization of individual and the party's capacity for disciplining its members. That is to say that the degree to which an ideology is understood differs from individual to individual. The degree to which it is absorbed depends on political exposure of the party members and the extent to which the party considers it important.

Ideology may be based on political, economic or religious elements. Sometimes, ethnic and cultural elements also may provide the necessary basis for ideology. Democracy is a political ideology, communism is an economic ideology and theocracy is a religious ideology. However, none of them can be considered as falling within a single realm alone. Since politics, economics and religion overlap in many areas, especially in the developing societies where the relationship is highly diffuse, a political ideology will have economic and religious overtones. An ideology like democracy will call for the welfare of all citizens (an economic ideology). In a multi-religious society, it will also call for secularism. Communism

is the best example of an ideology which extends to political and other fields. Communism is against religion and, at least in the early stages, calls for a totalitarian social structure. However, communism as an ideology in its purest form, as visualized by Karl Marx, has not been found in practice, anywhere in the world.

A characteristic feature of modern political process is the entry of non-political issues and factors into the political arena in a big way. Thus ethnic, religious and regional considerations have begun to weigh heavily in the ideology of many political parties in the world including India. Religious fundamentalism also has formed a fertile soil 'in many countries'. Another tendency for political parties is to follow extremist methods in most cases terrorism, to achieve their goals. These are becoming more and more the pattern in political process in many of the countries of the world.

The implication of the rise of fundamentalism as a political ideology and terrorism as a means to achieve goals is the potential for destruction of the socio-political basis of the state and unpredictability in the pattern of political modernization. In India for example, both religious fundamentalism and ethnic and linguistic movements for example the developments in Punjab, Kashmir, Nagaland, Manipur and in North Bengal, Karnataka and many parts of Assam which are often backed by terrorism, has posed a serious threat to its democratic structure. Political elites belonging to dominant ethnic groups in ethnically pluralistic societies are finding ethnicism as a convenient ideology for achieving their political ambitions.

9.3.2 Structure and Oligarchy

Another component of a political system is its structure. The political structure of society at any point of time will be influenced by prevailing dominant ideology, i.e., the ideology of the rulers or ruling party. In turn, this will be influenced by the social structure, values and stage of development of a society. Actually structure and values reinforce each other and influence development. Traditional social structure and authoritarian values go together while modern social structure and democratic values go hand in hand. Of course, permutations are possible and do exist in some societies but they are exceptions. In many cases social structure and values have acted as constraints to development. At least they have slowed down the tempo of development and dampened modernizing efforts in some countries. From the political point of view, they have molded the political cultures of societies and the orientation of their political elites. These, in turn, have influenced the political system of societies. It should be kept in mind that when we speak of oligarchies no time bar is evident. An oligarchy comprising a small power group may go on indefinitely.

Depending upon the political culture and orientations of political elites, political structures have been divided into the following categories.

i)   Traditional Oligarchies

ii) Totalitarian Oligarchies

iii) Modernizing Oligarchies

iv) Tutelary Democracies

v)   Political Democracies.

i)   **Traditional Oligarchies**

This is usually monarchic and dynastic in form and is based on custom rather than any constitution. The ruling elite and the bureaucracy are recruited on the basis of kinship or status. The goal of the ruler is stability and maintenance of the system. In its own interest it may launch schemes of modernization - like modernization of the army and bureaucracy and may even launch welfare programmes, but the primary aim continues to be the perpetuation of the dynastic rule.

ii)   **Totalitarian Oligarchies**

Here, there is a total penetration of the society by the polity. There is a high degree of concentration of power in the hands of the ruling elite and a high tempo of social mobilization. The Chinese regime is a good example of this type of oligarchy.

iii)   **Modernizing Oligarchies**

These are characterized by the concentration of political functions in a ruling clique and in the bureaucracy. There is an absence of competitive political parties. Associations and interest groups exist with limited activity. The media are controlled by the government. Generally the ruling elite are committed to development and modernization. Some of the Latin American states are examples of modernizing oligarchies.

iv)   **Tutelary Democracies**

The dominant characteristic of this system is that it has accepted the formal norms of democracy, viz., universal suffrage, freedom of association and speech and the structural forms of democracy. But there is a concentration of power in the executive and the bureaucracy. The legislature tends to be relatively powerless and the judiciary is not always free from interference. The executive wants to establish democracy only piecemeal. The assumption is that people are not ripe for the democratic process, otherwise the political system may go out of gear and there will be instability. Until the end of 1988 Pakistan was the best example of this system.

v)   **Political Democracies**

These are systems which function with autonomous executives, legislatures and judiciary. Political parties and the media are free and competitive. There are autonomous interest groups and pressure groups. Examples are U.S.A. and U.K. some of the developing countries such as India, are examples of political systems which are moving in that direction.

As stated earlier, political structures in the five political systems will differ considerably. It is only in political democracies that the three organs of the state, the executive, the legislature and judiciary, have autonomy and political parties and the media are relatively free and competitive. In the majority of cases, there will be a written constitution which defines the powers and duties of these bodies. In all other political systems, either there is no autonomy for these bodies, or when autonomy exists, it is limited. The non-government structures also will have to fall in line with the wish of the rulers.

Check Your Progress 1

Note:

1) Describe briefly the major elements of a political system

....

....

....

....

....

2) Name the major categories of political structures:

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

3) In democracy the executive, legislature and the judiciary are autonomous.

Yes   No

4) In traditional oligarchies the bureaucrats are selected on merit.

Yes   No

5) India, is an example of tutelary democracy.   Yes   No

9.4   FUNCTION OF THE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL SYSTEM

A political system usually performs some well defined functions. The major functions of a political system may be categorised into two broad headings: The input functions and the output functions.

Input functions:

i)   Political Socialisation and recruitment

ii)   Interest articulation

iii) Interest aggregation

iv)   Political communication

Output functions:

v)   Rule making

vi)   Rule application

vii) Rule adjudication

Actually, the first set of (input) functions is reflected in the non-governmental sub-systems and the second set of (output) functions is reflected in the government sub-systems.

9.4.1 Political Socialization and Recruitment

Political socialization is the process of inducting an individual in the political culture. It is a part of general socialisation but with a different focus and objective. Unlike general socialization, political socialization starts later in childhood. There are two main components of political socialisation. One is the inculcation of general values and norms regarding political behaviour and political matters and the other are the induction of the individual into a particular political party and the imparting of the party's ideology and action programmes to her or him.

The first is done by the general educational system and by the other agencies of the state. The second is done by different political parties. In democratic countries and those which are experimenting with democratic models, the two components of political socialisation are different. Whereas the first aims at some general understanding of the what he should and should not do, the second may differ from party to party both in goal and is means adopted. In oligarchies, the socializing agencies will be more or less, identical, if not the same. The ruling elite would take up the political education of the masses in a manner that will perpetuate their (elite's) power and influence over the masses. This tendency of the ruling elite is in its own interests. Thus, the theory that is forwarded will show the ruling elite in a good light.

Another aspect of political socialisation is the socialisation that takes place within the non-political sub-systems which make frequent inroads into polities. These are ethnic, religious, linguistic and other particularistic associations and organisations which play upon the inner feelings of members and enter or try to enter politics in order to enforce their ideology. Actually, they are a threat to the smooth political development of a society, but in so far as they are assuming importance all over the world, they have to be reckoned with. This is more so in the developing societies where they are being used by clever politicians to sway the sympathies of the masses.

Political recruitment means recruitment into political areas and political roles. In a modern political system, all citizens are involved in the political process and even when they are not active workers of any political party, they are aware of the political process to participate in it passively. In the oligarchic type of political systems, elections may be only a ritual even so the citizen will have to undergo the procedures of election with all the political overtones involved. While all persons in a society are thus politically socialised, the actual recruitment to political roles and authorities will be limited to only those who qualify. This is inevitable, as general socialisation itself follows such patterns.

The social base for entrants into the political file could be broad or narrow. In the Arab countries, the base is narrow, patriarchic and oligarchic, whereas in India it is broad-based and competitive. In the first category, leaders are recruited from social groups which have been historically predominant (wealthy and aristocratic families or clans or classes). Other categories such as civil servants, army officers and professional and business groups may come from the urban educated class. In the patriarchal societies, professional and business elites and other modern groups are largely non-participant but their increase which follows modernization is bound to make them competitors in the political arena. Social change is bound to enable these groups to come to the forefront, eclipsing the traditional elements.

Broad-based societies are characterized by competition in the political arena but it is mostly the urban, educated middle-class persons, who are increasingly attracted to the catchment area of politics and it is they who are potential material for recruitment by political parties. Social mobility which is a characteristic of competition and which is a part of social change is bound to upset the balance, so that it is possible for non-middle-class persons to be inducted into politics.

9.4.2 Interest Articulation

Interest articulation means the expression of interest in a political system, for the attention of the government. In all political systems, the needs and problems of the citizens are, in the final analysis, to be taken care of by the state. Due to the complex and interdependent nature of modern societies, even small problems of individuals, may have a bearing beyond the area of their occurrence, and may require solutions by an agency located elsewhere. Many of the problems of an individual are beyond his control and need the help of the state for their solution. While the problems may not be political, their solution would require political (state) action. However, for a need to be taken care of, it has to be expressed. Usually since it is difficult to get individual demands heard or attended to by decision-making agencies, they are collectively expressed; persons who have the same problems join together. Depending upon the mode of their articulation, they can be divided into the following institutional interest groups, associational interest groups, non-associational interest groups and economic groups.

9.4.2.1 Institutional Interest Groups

These are duly constituted, stable and institutionalized structures such as the Church, the bureaucracy, the army and the legislature. Though their official functions are clearly spelled out, they, or, an active group among them. may take up the cause of reform or social justice, and use the formal structure for airing their views, even though this is not in the permitted categories of functions. In many developing countries, the elite among the bureaucracy or army may espouse the cause of the underdog or the poor and the down-trodden.

9.4.2.2 Associational Interest Groups

Examples of these are trade unions, associations of managers, businessmen and traders and various agencies organized for non-economic activities such as ethnic, cultural and religious groups or civic groups, youth organisations etc. They will have their own established procedures for formulation of interests and demands, and further transmission of these demands to other political structures such as political parties, legislatures, bureaucracies, etc. In most of the developing countries, many of these associations will have political leanings and some of them, like trade unions and youth organisations, may actually be front organisations of political parties. However, the special feature of these associations or organisations is that they have established goals and means.

9.4.2.3 Non-associational Interest Groups

These are groups that are not formally established, but are nonetheless important due to their caste or religious or family positions. An informal delegation may be

formed to meet the official or minister concerned, about some problem, for example, the mode of collection of a certain levy or alterations of a government rule, etc. It is not necessary that the interest is articulated through a delegation. It is possible that in a formal or informal get-together, the spokesmen of a group could air its grievances before the official. In any case the occasion serves the purposes of articulation of the demand.

9.4.2.4   Anomic Interest Groups

These are groups that are spontaneously formed and may be relatively unstable and short-lived, such as in a riot or demonstration. Here we do not include the violent political demonstrations .and show of strength at rallies and route marches of political parties and their front organisation. We have in mind groups that are formed ad hoc and that may find other forms of articulation ineffective. Sometimes they will remain stable for a relatively long period, in which case, they will become associations.

9.4.3   Interest Aggregation

Aggregation is the sorting out and combination of the demands articulated by the different interest groups. Aggregation may be achieved by means of the formulation of general policies in. which interests are combined, accommodated or otherwise taken account of. This could be done by political parties or by the ruling elite or by the government itself. It is also possible that the interest articulation agencies themselves could aggregate these interests and present them to those in charge of policy formulation. It can be exemplified that issues pertaining to the lower status of women in the society were articulated by the women's organisations, and other associations they pressurised the government to formulate policies on women's development. The government, however, realising the urgency of the issue formulated the National Perspective Plan for Women's Development. In societies where political functions are not so clearly divided, the functions of articulation and aggregation will generally be combined. This is because tasks have not been sufficiently specialised. As political functions develop, aggregations and articulation functions become divided. In modem societies, associations at the national level aggregated the demands of the local units, and present them to the authoritative body for consideration. Here, these apex bodies also act as an interest articulation as well as interest aggregation only. However, it has to be remembered that the two functions are different. The first is the expression of interest while the second is the combination of different interests in an implementable form.

Actually, the aggregative functions could be performed by other systems within the polity. Thus the institutions and associations could, articulate their demands, and put them in an organised form and present them to the political system. They even take up the demands of individuals and groups and incorporate them in their manifestos. Alternatively, in such a political system, Associations which have sympathies with one or the other or the political parties would seek the latter's help in aggregating their demands for action.

This is more so if the associations find it difficult to get their demands accepted by the government. We have many such examples in our own country. Many apparently independent trade unions affiliate themselves with the labour fronts of the political party in power, some trade unions which have their own political

learning also would go over to the ruling party. Interest aggregation is an important function in the political system. It enables the different and, in many cases conflicting, demands of groups to be sorted out and consolidated into a single set or different sets of demands which are pragmatic if the political authority takes them up seriously. In multi-party systems where there is competition between parties it serves the purpose of all important demands being taken care of.

In a political system where there is one dominant party and opposing small parties, interest aggregation is a difficult task. There will be trouble if there is a strong traditional element in the party, for this element is sure to oppose all modernization efforts. The same would be the case even if the traditional elements were weak or non-existent but heterogeneity among the people is strong. Thus, a society composing of a population which is divided on ethnic, linguistic and communal lines, poses a big problem for the dominant political party to aggregate the interests of groups. In that case, party cohesion is in trouble. The situation could result in splits within the party and in the formation for new parties. Even then, this would not achieve better aggregation of interests. On the other hand, it would strengthen the hands of another subsystem (e.g. bureaucracy) to which the interest groups will turn for help.

9.4.4 Political Communication

Communication is the life-blood of any social system. It is through communication that interpersonal and elite mass relationships are maintained. In a political system this is equally important since all the political functions-socialisation, recruitment, articulation, aggregation and the entire rule-making, enforcement and adjudication process rest on it. Information, which is an essential input in any rational action, is supplied through communication. Again, it is the means of communications that makes the political system work efficiently and in a responsible manner.

An autonomous, neutral and thoroughly penetrative communication system is essential to the development and maintenance of an active and effective electorate and citizenship. This is possible only in a mature democracy. In the developing countries the government will be controlling many of the means of communication, especially the electronic media (radio and television). In these countries, the press will be controlled by interest groups so the information coming out of it will be selective and biased. Low literacy level and poor means of transport will restrict the spread of the newspapers and other print media while poverty will restrict the spread of communication through the radio and television. In many modern political systems, political parties run their own newspapers to educate and inform their followers but the information that flows through them will be selective.

Even in a modern society where there is widespread penetration of the mass-communication media, the role of person-to-person communication is very important. In the developing societies, opinion makers and elites assume great prominence in screening the available information and passing the desired one to other followers. This is one reason where government seeks the support of the opinion leaders to help the Family Welfare Programmes of the Government in India. Political parties in developing countries have used the person-to-person communication in reaching the rural masses who are illiterate and who are beyond the pale of the mass media.

In the modern societies, the political information that flows from the government to the people is much larger in volume than that flowing from the citizen to the government. The government therefore makes extensive use of the communication network-be it the electronic media controlled by government, or newspapers, or official communications sent as circulars and orders through the bureaucracy.

9.4.5 Government Functions

Under this head there are three items which cover all the functions of modern governments. They are: rule making, rule application and rule adjudication.

A characteristic of modern political systems is the increasing tendency to specialise government functions. Thus, rule making is done mostly by the legislature and party by the executive, while rule enforcement is done by the executive with the help of the bureaucracy. Rule adjudication is done by the judiciary which, in modernised countries, is free from the executive and legislature. However, there are two factors which contribute to a difference in the situation. In most modernising societies, there is a wide difference between the formal and informal arrangements in the government functions. While the formal arrangement is embodied in the Constitution of the country, this is seldom observed in actual practice. This, in turn, is because of the political culture and the type of government that a country may have.

Activity 1

Do you think mass media in India, which includes radio, T.V., Newspapers, etc. are effective in educating the masses in the political process of voting and electing a suitable Government? Write a report of two pages on "The Role of Mass Media in Spread of Political Education in India." Share your report with other learners and your Academic Counsellor at your study centre.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Describe briefly the major functions of a political system.

    ....

    ....

    ....

    ....

    ....

    ....

    ....

2) Name the major interest groups of a political system.

    a)

    b)

    c)

    d)

    e)

3) Political socialisation is the process of induction of individual in the political system of the society.   Yes   No

4) Political socialisation starts as soon as a child is born.   Yes   No

5) Describe briefly the functions of the government.

9.5 POLITICAL PROCESSES

The transactions that take place within a political system and between political systems may be called political processes. These include interactions between individuals and groups within the polity, viz., the executive, legislature, judiciary, bureaucracy, political parties, the communication media and other agencies within a state. Interest groups whose activities influence political decisions also form part of the political system. Depending on the type of political structure, these processes would differ. In democracies, for example, the executive will be responsible to the legislature, law-making will be the responsibility of the legislature and the courts will function without interference from the executive or the ruling group. The political parties and the mass media will act with great freedom and could penetrate deep into the society. On the other hand, in a controlled or guided democracy, the freedom that exists under full democracies will not be available. The different agencies may be existing but will be controlled by and be sub-servient to, the whims of the ruling elite or, more often, a single ruler. The three types of oligarchies also will reflect different political processes. In a totalitarian state, for example, there will not be much difference between executive, legislative and judicial functions. All merge together in the hands of the ruling group or individual.

9.6 BASIS OF LEGITIMACY

Use of coercive power is the distinguishing mark of the state. This means that the state possesses the power to coerce individuals and organisations under its jurisdiction to accept its authority and to impose all kinds of punishments, including imprisonment and death, on erring members. The individuals and organisations will have to submit to the authority of the state. This makes the state the final authority. It can authorise any punishment on the members. It is the final collective authority. Otherwise the citizens will not feel obliged to submit themselves legally or even morally to their authority. All holders of power of this kind therefore are anxious to legitimatise their power.

According to Max Weber there are three ways of legitimising authority. They are (1) Traditional, (2) Charismatic and (3) Legal-rational ways.

9.6.1 Traditional and Charismatic Authority

Traditional Authority: This authority is sanctioned by custom and practice. The authority was there from the very beginning and nobody has challenged it so far. The authority of the parents over children and of kings over subjects has rested on such claim.

Charismatic Authority: This is derived from charisma, that is, the extraordinary power of some of the leaders to influence their followers. According to these followers, their leader possesses certain powers which will enable him or her to

take them out of a critical situation or give them what they want. They consider their leader as a saviour. The extra-ordinary power attributed to a leader or claimed by him/her may be-real or imaginary, but for the followers it is real. The followers submit to all her/ his authority without questioning. Mahatma Gandhi and Napolean were charismatic political leaders.

Activity 2

List out at least five charismatic leaders of India and write an essay on "Charisma as a basis of Social Change." Discuss your answer with your peer group at your

9.6.2   Legal-Rational Authority

Legal rational authority is the authority based on law. The person who uses authority is duly appointed as per rules to the office concerned and this entitles him to exercise all the authority vested in that office. The President or Prime Minister of a State who comes to power through the constitutionally established methods is the legitimate ruler of the country and the subjects consider him or her to be legitimate ruler. Since the rules and regulations are based on reason, they are rational. In fact, law is considered to be an embodiment of reason.

9.6.3   Legitimacy of Modern Political System

Modern political system works on the basis of legal rational authority. All the parts within the system function on the basis of clearly established rules and the persons holding office are entitled to discharge all the functions that are assigned to their offices. Those affected by their action are legally bound to obey them. If anybody has any complaint or grievance that an official has acted arbitrarily or beyond the power vested in his office, there are again, legal and constitutional remedies for him i.e., he can go to a court. But if the court also decrees that the official concerned is right, he has to accept the decision.

In the modern political systems,there are instances of persons coming to power through revolutions or **coup d' etats**. Such methods are not permitted by law and the persons who come to office by using these methods are not considered legitimate rulers. These persons, therefore, are under increasing anxiety to legitimise their position. They may either claim themselves to be saviours (invocation to charisma) or if this is not convincing to people, they will offer to stand for election so as to come to power through legitimate means. In the long run, none of these leaders feel secure without giving some cloak of legitimacy to their claim to hold power.

Check Your Progress 3

1)   Describe briefly the basis of legitimatising authority.

....

....

....

....

2) Describe the basis of legitimacy of a modern political system.

   ....

   ....

   ....

3) In modern democracies executive is responsible to the legislature.

   Yes   No

4) Charismatic authority of a leader is derived from traditional rules and regulations.

   Yes   No

5) The legal-rational authority is based on the law.   Yes   No

9.7   LET US SUM UP

A political system providing for the participation of citizens in political decision making, either directly or through the election of political representatives is known as democracy. The political system possesses five elements viz ideology, structure, function, process and the basis of legitimacy. Ideology defines a political system's goals and means. The political structure of a society is also influenced by the prevailing ideology. However depending upon the political culture the political system of a society may have any of the following forms: traditional oligarchy, modernising oligarchies, tutelary democracies, and political democracies.

A political system is to perform certain functions for the maintenance of the systems. The major functions of a political system are political socialisation and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation, political communication, rule making, rule application and rule adjustment.

Political processes that emerge out of the interaction between and within the political system is an important element of a political system. Depending upon the types of political structures these processes indeed differ.

There are three distinctive ways of legitimatising political authority. These are: i) traditional ii) charismatic and iii) rational-legal.

A modern political system is based on a rational-legal authority. Here people hold office of the government and discharge all of their functions based on the established rules and laws.

9.8   KEY WORDS

Anomic	:	A social condition without any rules of law.
Authority	:	One's legitimised capacity to impose his or her influence on others. The legitimacy can be derived from traditional, rational-legal and charismatic basis.
Elite	:	People who have excelled themselves in the field of their activity: social, political, economic, religious, etc.
Coup d' etat	:	A regime capturing power through extra legal military means. The capturing of power may or may not be violent.

Charisma	:	An extra-ordinary power of some leaders to influence followers.
Interest group	:	Groups formed especially for the attainment of certain common interests of its members.
Ideologies	:	A system of beliefs and symbols which have an appeal to the followers.
Modernisation	:	A process of achieving the composite features of a modernised nation through high per capita income, high rate of literacy, urbanisation, industrialisation, social mobility, extensive penetration of mass communication, and wide-spread participation of the citizen in the social and political processes etc.
Power	:	One's capacity to impose his/her influence on others.
Structure	:	Network of relationships between the individuals, groups, institutions or organisations.

9.9   FURTHER READINGS

Kornblum, William, 1988. *Sociology in a Changing World*. Holt, Renehant and Winston Inc. New York (Ch. 16)

Macionis, John J. 1987, *Sociology*, Prentice Hall: Inc. New Jersey. (Ch. 16 and 17)

9.10   SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) The principle elements of a political system are: i) ideology, ii) the structure, iii) function, iv) the process and (v) the basis of legitimacy. These elements, have their coherent meanings specific to a particular political system.

2) a) Traditional Oligarchies:

    b) Totalitarian Oligarchies:

    c) Modernising Oligarchies:

    d) Tutelary Democracies: and

    e) Political Democracies.

3) Yes

4) No

5) No

Check Your Progress 2

1) The vital functions performed by a political system may be enlisted as follows: political socialisation and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation, political communication, rule making, rule application and rule adjustment.

2) a) Institutional Interest groups.

   b) Associational Interest groups.

   c) Non-associational Interest groups and

   d) Anomic Interest groups.

3) Yes

4) No

5) Rule-making rule-enforcement and rule-adjudication are the major functions of government. For rule-making there is legislature, while rule enforcement and rule adjudication are looked after by the executive and the judiciary.

Check Your Progress 3

1) There are three main bases of legitimatising authority: Traditional basis, charismatic basis and rational legal basis. The traditional basis is sanctioned by the traditional customs and practices of a society. The charismatic basis by the extraordinary quality of the leadership and rational legal by the law of the land.

2) A modern political system works on the basis of rational legal authority. On the basis of the established rules all the persons in the government office discharge their duties. The Indian political system works on the basis of rational legal authority.

3) Yes

4) No

5) Yes