

POLITICAL THEORY

- **MEANING**
- **Rajeev Bhargava** says that political theory is needed for **explanation** of political facts. **Generalisation** of political concept is next objective of political theory.
- **Prediction** is also required for political theory.
- **Sabine** says that political theory is associated with the following features:-
 - **(a) Political fact:-** Like anarchy in England during 1649 to 1660.
 - **(b) Cause of political fact:-** which refers why there was anarchy during that time.
 - **(c) Evaluation:-** Whether Hobbes was individualist or supporter of absolute monarchy.

- Political theory is rational therefore it is different from political ideology. Political ideology is more **emotional** or **anti-rational** says **Rajeev Bhargava**.
- **Sabine** says that **political theory** and **thinker** is almost same. He wrote a book **History of Political Theory** and describe the thinkers from Plato to Marx.
- Although **thinkers** write according to their **social political context**. However, **theory** is more **generalistic** in nature.
- **S.P. Verma** is of the view that we need political theory for:-
 - (a) Explaining political concept
 - (b) Finding out relation between two political concepts.
 - (c) A base for further political research.

POLITICAL THOUGHT, PHILOSOPHY, THEORY

- **(1) POLITICAL THOUGHT**

- Political thought is **time bound**. It emerged in a particular **historical** and **social** condition. For instance, **Machiavelli** was affected from the condition of Italy. **Sabine** says that political thinkers are influenced by conditions. And they make impact on political conditions too. **Lockian** thought became the cause of **Glorious Revolution** (1648).

- **(2) POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY**

- Political philosophy deals with **what ought to be?** Plato try to make an ideal state and moral individual. Political philosophy is normative in nature.

- It refers values like justice, equality. Political philosophy is **judgemental** to which means some values are more important than other.
- **(3) POLITICAL THEORY**
- Political theory is related to the explanation of political facts. It is **generalistic** in nature like theory of justice is not associated with **any particular thinker**. It includes the variety of thinkers.
- **Social contract** theory is also based on the thought of **Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau**.
- We can identify the following use of political theory:-
 - (a) For conceptual understanding.
 - (b) Model building.
 - (c) A technique of analysis.
 - (d) A history of political thought.

APPROACHES

- **Normative Political Theory:-**
- It is also known as **Traditional Theory-**
- **(a) Historical Approach:-** Sabine says that the historical phase of Greek age and modern age of 16th century is responsible for the emergence of political theory. Sabine said that, political theory incorporates three elements:-
 - (i) Political facts.
 - (ii) Cause behind that fact.
 - (iii) Evaluation.
- Political theory originates due to the social circumstances like- the theory developed by **Plato** and **Aristotle** was evolved in the Greek city-state.
- Similarly, the situation of Europe between 16th to 18th century is important factor for the development of political theory by **Hobbes, Locke** and **Rousseau**.

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- **Mcllwain** wrote the **Growth of Political Thought in West** (1932). He says that political ideas is emerge due to historical development, ideas or result of history.
- **Dunning** wrote **History of Political Theories**. He said that political theory is essentially a historical research.
- History impacts over the development of political theory but at the same time the ideas of political theories also change the historical circumstances.
- **Historical approach** examine the influence of historical social conditions on the ideas of political thinkers. Political thinkers also became **catalyst** for change in society.

- **(b) Philosophical Approach:-** Apart from the historical approach, philosophical approach is also incorporated within the ambit of traditional approach. Philosophical approach is as old as the thought of Plato and Aristotle because they deal with:-
 - **(i) An ideal state.**
 - **(ii) A virtuous, moral human being.**
 - **(iii) The relation between ideal state and virtuous human being.**
- Normative political theory deals with the political values- **liberty, equality, justice** etc.
- **Leo Strauss** is the modern propounder of the normative or philosophical political theory, who said that **the soul of political theory lies in the philosophy.**

CAUSES OF BEHAVIOURALISM

- There are various reasons behind the emergence of behaviouralism:-
- **(1) Focus over political process:-** Graham Wallas wrote **Human Nature and Politics** (1908). Arthur Bentley wrote **Process of Government** (1908). They emphasize over process of political activities and **detached** the study of politics from **history and philosophy**.
- **(2) Positivism:-** The term positivism was coined by **Max Weber** who propounded the **empirical method** for studying society. Positivism means **value free or ethically neutral**.
- **(3) Logical positivism:-** Positivism was extended in other branches of study by **Vienna Circle (Vienna school)** comprised of **mathematicians, philosophers and scientists**.

- **Wittgenstein** was a member of Vienna school who applied the positivism in the study of philosophy and it is known as **linguistic positivism**. It implies the use of **scientific** or **objective** language in philosophical studies.
- **Karl Popper** was also associated with the Vienna school who propounded **principle of verification** with **principle of falsification**. It means everything is true unless we are getting adverse result due to observation.
- **(4)Marxism:-** Behaviouralism was propounded by **Chicago school** which was influenced by the rise of Marxism in the world politics.
- Marxist claim that there method of study is **empirical** and **scientific**.

Empirical Political Theory:-

- It is also known as **Scientific/Positivist/Behavioural theory**.
- Empirical Political theory was developed by **Chicago School** and Chicago school was founded by **Charles Merriam** who said that “Political Theorist should concentrate over the political **facts** rather than **values**”.
- It is also known as **fact-value dichotomy**. They were looking for the development of a general theory. Therefore, their focus of study was on **voting-behaviour**, which was based on the observation and prediction.
- It is important to be noted that **sociologists, psychologists and anthropologist** first utilised scientific methods.
- Therefore, behaviouralist detached the political theory from **history** and **philosophy** and they associated political theory with **sociology** and **psychology**.

- **David Easton** laid down the intellectual foundation stone of behaviouralism:-
- **Regularity**
- **Verification**
- **Techniques**
- **Quantification**
- **Separation between facts and values**
- **Pure science**
- **Systematisation**
- **Integration**
- Behaviouralist were willing to develop a scientific and general theory like in natural sciences in physics and chemistry.
- They assumed that political theory is more like a theory in natural sciences.

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POST-BEHAVIOURALISM

- **David Easton** himself realised the drawback of behaviouralism therefore revised behaviouralism. Behaviouralism become the victim of **hyper factualism**.
- Post-behaviouralism is **not rejection** of behaviouralism but it is an **extension** of behaviouralism. Post-behaviouralism did not reject the fact and scientific methods but it believe in the **synthesis of fact and value**.
- Post-behaviouralism is also known as **credo of relevance** which includes the following features:-
- (1)**Substance** is more important than **technique**.
- (2)**Social change** is an objective not social prescription.
- (3)Political scientist should realise the brute realities of politics and they should act as an **agent of change**.

- (4) Values are equally important.
- (5) Political scientist are also responsible for protecting values.
- (6) Action orientation is equally important apart from theory building.
- (7) Political scientist have positive role to change the society.
- In short post-behaviouralism stand for **relevance** and **action orientation**.

POST-POSITIVIST (REVIVAL OF TRADITIONALISM)

- **(1) METHODOLOGICAL PLURALISM**
- Post-positivist are not agree with the scientific methods and tools adopted by the behaviouralist.
- **Berlin** said that Plato, Aristotle, Marx and **Positivist** believe in **methodological monoism**. Berlin supports the **methodological pluralism** for any enquiry or knowledge.
- **Sheldon Wolin** wrote **Politics and Vision- Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought** (1960). He says that political theory is a form of aesthetic and religious vision. Imagination is an important element of political theory.

- **(2) PARADIGM**

- **Thomas Kuhn** is a critic of behaviouralism which believes in standardize scientific theory. His notion of **paradigm** is the most important contribution for political theory.
- **Paradigm** is a perspective a set of belief and ideals of a scientific community for making a theory. It may be conceptual, theoretical or methodological.
- The concept laws or **theories are not abstract** but based on some historical previous experiences.
- **Traditional behavioural and post-behavioural** approaches are not fit in the paradigm of **Kuhn** because **no single theoretical approach is sufficient** but there may be multiple and number of competing approaches.

• (3) HERMENEUTICS

- Habermas said that there are three broad type of knowledge:-
- (a) Empirical-analytical.
- (b) hermeneutic.
- (c) Emancipatory.
- Hermeneutics is concerned with revealing the meaning of things that may be hidden or concealed in a text. Meaning of life can be understood through the historical circumstances.
- **Social sciences** could not be understood on the basis of natural sciences because human nature is **purposive**.

- **Contextualist** approach is influenced by the hermeneutics. **Skinner** and **Pocock** propounded **contextualism** which means historical background cannot be neglected.
- **Purpose** and **motivation** behind writing a text is equally important for understanding the text.
- Therefore **context** is more important than **text** and according to changing the context the meaning of text change automatically and there is a scope of reinterpretation of text.

ISSUES RELATED TO POLITICAL THEORY

- **DECLINE OF POLITICAL THEORY**
- Peter Laslett wrote **Philosophy Politics and Society** (1956) and he declared that political philosophy is dead. There was vacuum in the development of political theory after the writings of Laski.
- S.P. Verma identified the following reasons behind the decline of political theory:-
- **(a) Historicism:-** Easton says that the traditional approach is responsible for decline of political theory. Historicism is basic reason behind the decline of political theory. It means defining history according to predetermined and preconceived notions.

- **(b) Positivism:-** Laslett says that political theory has decline due to positivistic and scientific method of study.
- **(c) Moral relativism:-** The scholars like **Auguste Comte** and **Max Weber** says that values are merely **personal preferences** of individual. Therefore, they advocated about **detachment** between **fact** and **value**.
- **(d) Ideological reductionism:-** **Germino** believes that **reducing** each and everything to ideology is the basic reason behind decline of political theory. Ideology is associated with **sentiments** or **emotions** rather than **reason**.

REVIVAL OF POLITICAL THEORY

- Political theory was alive in the works of Arendt, Theodore Adorno (1903-69), Marcuse, Leo Strauss (1899-1973), Oakeshott, Bertrand de Jouvenal and Eric Vogelin (1901-85).
- **Oakeshott** says that there are four principle mode of experience, history, science, practical and poetry. In his book **Experience and its Modes** scientific methods are not sufficient to know about experience of life.
- **Leo Strauss** says that behaviouralism and scientific method is unable to search the meaning of good and moral life.
- **Hannah Arendt** said in his book Human Condition about uniqueness of human being which is beyond the measurement of science.

EURO-CENTRIC OR ORIENTALIST

- **Edward Said** propounded the concept of orientalism.
- Critics said that entire political theory is **Euro-Atlantic centric**. Therefore, it is **not relevant** for understanding the **Indian society and culture and state**. In fact western societies are materialistic, individualistic and secular.
- However, Indian society is more **spiritual and religious**. **Community and family** is more important in the Indian context.
- Therefore, **Mahatma Gandhi** rejected the **modern materialistic ideas** and the famous socialist scholar **Ram Manohar Lohiya** and **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar** said that Marxist theory is not relevant for the interpretation of Indian society, because Marxists emphasize over **class**, however, **caste** is more important factor in Indian society.

STATUS-QUO OR CHANGE

- Political theory can be utilised in either way. It can become an instrument for changing the society like **Marxist** and **Feminist** are looking for bringing about change into society.
- However, **Elitist theorist** want to maintain the **status-quo** in society.
- Marxist theory is considered as an **emancipatory theory**. They speak for the betterment of proletariat class.
- **Robert Cox** said that political theory can never become **objective in social sciences**. It is always aiming for justifying the interest of bourgeoisie section of society.

CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENT

- Contemporary political theory is developing in normative field as well as in **behaviouralist** domain too.
- **Communitarianism, multiculturalism, post-modernism** are the dominating trend of **normative** political theories.
- **Rational choice theory** propounded by Mancur Olson wrote **The Logic of Collective Action-Public Good and Theory of Groups** (1968). Public choice theory is a sub field of rational choice theory which believe in the analysis of human behaviour according to principle of economics.

- Every individual try to maximize his/her own interest. The people working in **bureaucracy, political parties** try to **maximize their own interest**.
- They also highlighted the failure of government due to the belief in neo-liberal market economy.
- **Game theory** is developed by **Newmann** who was mathematician and **Morgenstern** was a economist. It is utilized in international relations in form of **Zero-sum** game and **non-zero sum** game.
- **Zero-sum** game is also known as **constant sum game** which depicts the condition of pure conflict between two parties.
- However **non-zero sum** game is also known **mix motive game** which believes in **cooperation** is beneficial for both players.