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Political Culture in Indian Society

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1.1 Introduction

The study of political culture is a complex study, which is included by knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and other capabilities which are acquired by individual as a member of society. When a political system differs it from other political systems that time we call it political culture. But that does not mean that political culture is entirely a creation of deliberate. Indeed much of political culture may not always be consciously held. It may grow very implicitly under the influence of many factors which are not lying within the jurisdiction of the political authority. The opinion is that political culture stands clearly differentiated from ideology. That means ideology is a large extent, pre-meditated and usually proclaimed overtly by political authority. It is also a matter of deliberate creation. It is thoroughly explicit and consistent. Mainly said it is more easy describe than political culture. When political culture flowing from multiple sources and subtly underlying the individual or group relationship with the political system.

The ideology provides an inflexible image of political life, which is very close to conflicting information and offers a specific explanation in code of political conduct for most situations. But political culture in embodies an element of spontaneity, not a fixed order. When ideology is always an action oriented then political culture is not necessarily action-oriented. Because it implies only ideas and beliefs about political actions. It refers that not to what is happening in the world of

politics, but what people belief about those happenings. And these belief can be of several kinds that they can be empirical beliefs about what the actual state of political life is they can be beliefs as to the goals or values that ought to be pursued in political life, and these beliefs may have an important expressive an emotional dimensions.

The concept of political culture is also an major contribution of political ideology. It would b better to admit that the subjective aspect of politics of the political culture are the great interest matter of political scientists. These scientists frequency referred to national character as one of the important variables of a nation's politics. There are some argument that political sociology can hardly claim to have introduced new any things through the political culture.

There are also opinion that culture consist of abstract patterns for living and dying. These abstract patterns are cultural which are the part of the common orientation of the people in a society. Culture is abstract in the sense that it is manifested in human behavior and in the results of behavior. So culture must be inferred from observation of uniformities in behavior. It is to some extent an imperfect construct of the language in a part of culture. But a scientific description of language must certainly be based on observation of the way in which people actually speak.

Behavior is to a large extent culture, but it is not culture. It may be a chemical, physical genetic and psychological. Culture may divided in two parts,

such as material culture and non-material culture. Material culture includes all the material and tangible equipments and objects which are made and produced by human beings. On the other hand non-material equipment made capabilities and acquired by man in group life. What may be the political culture plays a vital role in the modern dynamic society. For this reason it has so many object to study it. Which have been described in the next chapter that is chapter no. 11.

2.1: Object of the study

It is true that political culture touches the levels of human awareness and sensitivity. It has so much objects to study. Among them main objects may placed here. First of all this study gives the knowledge about on political system such as political roles, and specific public policies and issues. It may examined through the political system such as

- (i) Input objects
- (ii) Output objects
- (iii) Self as an object

Orientation to the political system means one's understanding of the governmental system. That means its working and also the historical development of the various political institution. Firstly orientation to input object means the study of those institutions and structures which convey the demands and supports of the people to the decision-makers. These institutions are government political parties, party elites and pressure groups. Secondly out-put object means the attitudes towards and understanding of rule making, rule application and rules adjudication of the structure of the political system, which is involved with bureaucracy. Lastly, self object means one's knowledge of rights and duties, tacts, strategies, and resources to influence the elite.

3.1 Historical Background of the political culture

The term political culture was first used by Gabriel Almond in comparative political system, which appeared in the Journal of political system

Vo.-18, 1956. Several others like Samuel Beer, Adams Ulams, Sidney Verba, Lucian Pye and Dennis Karangh who have been responsible for popularizing it. Gradually the term became popular and now it has come to stand as a very important touch-stone for morphological study of the political system.

3.2 Definition of Political Culture

In the words of Almond and Powell, political culture is the pattern of individual attitudes and orientation towards politics among the members of a political system.

According to Lucian Pye "Political Culture is the set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments of that give orders and meaning to a political process and that provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in the political system. It encompasses both the political ideals and the operation norms of a polity. Political culture is thus the manifestation in aggregate form of the psychological and subjective dimensions of politics.

According to Sidney Verba "Political culture is the subjective Orientation to politics on the system of empirical, beliefs, expressive, symbol and values which define the situation in the political action take place"

According to Robert A. Dahl "Political culture as a factor which is explaining different patterns of political opposition. According to this word there are four elements for it. Such as,

- (i) Orientation of problems solving
- (ii) Orientation to collective actions
- (iii) Orientation to the political systems
- (iv) Orientation to other people

A political culture is a product of many inter-related factors. Tradition as well as modern elements changes in political culture come under the influence of these factors. A study of these factors is essential for an understanding of the political culture.

3.3 Concepts of political culture

The history of political culture refers both to an academic discipline and to its subject matter. Generally said according to the common

definition of culture history since 1970 it combines the approaches of anthropology and history to look out the popular cultural traditions and cultural interpretations of historical experiences. It examines the records and narrative descriptions of past knowledge, customs and art of a group of people. Its subject matter encompasses to continuing the events in fruitful leading from the past to the present and even into the future pertaining to a culture. Cultural history records and interprets past events involving human being through the social, cultural, and relating to the arts and manners that group of people.

History plays an important role in the making and evaluation of political culture. Historical events always influence the shaping of political events always influence the shaping political culture in a big way. In the case of British political culture the signing of Magna carta 1215 petition of political culture bears the influence of events of the freedom struggle and the contact with western civilization and culture. As such the political culture of each society is greatly influenced by the historical events.

Except historical development geography is another important factor to design a political culture. Favourable location has helped British to meet successfully to foreign attack. The vast size and diversities have helped to Americans to accept the values of equality and freedom for all.

The nature of Political culture is always determined by the existence of different religion and regional conflict among several regional group and minorities which live in the society. Regional difference have recently began to affect attitudes in great Britain. Yet the United States with a more recognized population has succeeded in assimilating the vast number of multilingual, at least the voluntary ones. So that different regional groups think of themselves primarily as Americans. Differential religions give rise to the emergence of Sub-political cultures within the national political culture.

4.1 Elements of Political culture

Political culture is composed of attitudes and orientations. It has given to the people of society to develop towards objects within their political system. These orientation has divided in three parts. Such as –

- (i) Cognitive
- (ii) Affective
- (iii) Evaluative

4.2 Cognitive

Firstly the cognitive orientation means the knowledge of people which has about objects within their political system. It also includes (a) action (b) perception and (c) notion. In addition to the knowledge of the physical world. Every society has in its culture many ideas about its own social organization and how to marks in relation to the needs and aspiration of the people.

4.3 Affective

Secondly, the affective orientation is meaning by the people's feeling and beliefs about themselves. In empirical terms better beliefs are neither true nor false. Most of the social belief are held by the people. As a result of this long tradition heritage and religious practice. For an example we believe that god is omnipresent. Some people believe that number thirteen is inauspicious. We believe in the supernatural tricks of the magician. Most of these beliefs defy empirical examination and explanations.

4.4 Evaluative

Lastly, the evaluate orientation values are intimately linked to the attitude and judgment of the people. They also tend to overlap with one another. Joint family system was a value in India for long time. But today nuclear families is a modern value. Sociology is more concerned with values that are involved in social relationships moral and religious values that have been to some extent institutionalized.

Mainly said to develop the orientations people must not only be physically and legally members of a political system. But as well as be psychologically members of the system. Another object of the cognitive, affective and evaluative

orientations is the input process of the political system for the for the conversion into authoritative polices by means that the active of the political parties. Pressure groups, and the media of mass communication. The other object is output process that involves the work of bureaucracy, court and other political institutions concerned with applying and enforcing authoritative decisions. Lastly, an individual's orientations are also directed toward his own self. As he plays a role in the political system he has certain knowledge of attachment to and also his own evaluation of this role. After this the classification of political culture is most important to delightful study. It has described in the chapter No-6

5.1 Classification of Political culture

It has been observed that the political culture of our country fundamentally differs from other countries. There is no country in the world to-day which can boast of single uniform political culture. Almond and verba has listed three pure types of political culture. They are

- (i) Parochial Political culture
- (ii) Subject Political culture
- (iii) Participant Political culture

5.2 Parochial Political culture

Where the people have no understanding of the national political system. They do not possess any tendency to participate in the in-put processes and have no consciousness of the out-put processes, such type of political culture is called parochial political culture. African tribes and Eskimos fall in this category. Such a type of people have no role to play in the political culture.

5.3 Subject Political culture

This type of Political culture is found in the subject countries and monarchies. There the people are aware of the Government system whether they like it or not. They also know the role of the government regarding law-making, enforcement of the laws and tax collection. In this type of culture people are not taught to participate in the input functions. Sometimes they are not allowed to do so. So the people find it more

difficult how to influence the working of the political system.

5.4 Participant Political Culture

In this type of political culture people participate in the political system and influence its working. They are always busy making reasonable demands on the political system and they are involved in the making of decisions. They develop a particular attitude towards the political system. Political parties, pressure groups and interest groups fall in this category and decide for themselves what role they can do.

These three types of political culture are only the pure types. But non of them can be found in its purity from in any society since all the individuals within a political system cannot be expected to be oriented in the same way and the same extent According to Almond and Varba there are four mixed type of political culture. They are

- (i) The parochial subject political culture
- (ii) The subject participant political culture
- (iii) The parochial participant political culture
- (iv) The civic political culture.

5.5 The parochial subject political culture

In this political culture an individual has knowledge about a variety of governmental roles. But he is mostly unknown about the ways in which they can influence the political system. Further in this cultural system the sense of self as a political force is very much vague and undeveloped and the input structure of the society is relatively poorly defined.

5.6 The Subject participant political culture

It is a type of representative which represented by a society. Here some of the citizens are very much politically aware and also active and others are relatively possible. This former are naturally found to develop positive orientations to all types of political objects. Here the more citizens know that he must be active and be a participant. But in fact they do not get more opportunity for sharing in decision.

5.7 The parochial participant political culture

In this political culture the input institutions are relatively local like tribal or caste associations

although the national output institution are quite well and developed. But in many case both the input and output institutions are so much under the pressure of parochial interest that their performance as national participatory organs to greatly affected.

5.7 The Civic Political Culture

This type of political culture combines all the characteristics of the three ideal types of political culture. It represents a synthesis of directive participant and passive attitudes. Here the subject orientations and the participant orientations are equally strong. According to Almond and verba “ Great Britain and the United states real the closest approximation to the civic culture.”

Now a question is arising in the mind that what are the political cultural contribution to Indian society. Which have been discussed in the chapter No-6.

6.1 Political cultures contribution to Indian Society

Political culture is an important method to judge the development and modernization of a country. It has made a significant contribution to political science. Prof. S.P. Verma has highlighted the five main contributions of this approach. Which has described in below.

Firstly, it has made political science a more complete social science. Secondly, it has focused our attention on the study of political community or society as distinct from the individual and thus on the total political system. Thirdly, it has encouraged political scientists to take up the study of social and cultural factors which are responsible for giving a political culture of a country its broad state. Fourthly, it has helped us in combining the study of the national factors which shape the actions of the individuals to a large extent. Lastly, it is the political culture approach which helped us to understand why different political societies inevitably movement in different directions of political development or may be political development or may be found themselves suffering from sever constraints., socio-economic, as well as political, which free

then to move towards political, which free them to move towards political decay.

From the above discussion one can easily confirmed that political culture is undoubtedly connected with the study of politics. For this reason it will be better to discuss about the political culture’s impact on Indian political dynamic society. Which has placed in the chapter No-6.

6.2 Political cultures impact on Indian Society

In ancient India monarchy prevailed and people were not politically aware and the political culture was parochial in nature, However with the coming of the British the different Kingdoms in India were consolidated in the hands of a single political power, i.e. the British. The discontentment of the people during the British period made the people aware of their rights and duties. The political culture in India showed a marked change.

The study of political culture is related to the study of political defection, political socialization, pressure groups, political behaviors and voting behaviors’ etc. The political system of a country having standard political culture can easily face grave in dangers. For an example The nature of political culture and socialization in Manipur.

Due to continuous political socialization among the people of Manipur the political orientation of the people also changed from time to time . The political stratification and political alliances are complex issues in the state. In Manipur the power is in the hands of the political elite whether they may be from urban or rural or hills areas. But the party system in Manipur is not based on region, caste, religion etc. The political culture of the people had changed after Manipur attained its statehood. The regional parties played an important role in the political of Manipur. In the early 1970 the regional political parties were very active, strong and popular. The political ideologies of the regional political parties influenced the people’s choice of candidates and their political orientations. The people’s orientation was changed. Another example may be cited her that were two different types of tribal

movements during the colonial period which greatly helped increasing the political consciousness of the people. These movement were the KUKI Rebellion of 1871-1932. The basic objectives of the movements were against the federal system and colonial policy of the imperialists and try to bring a change in the system.

Indian political culture has gone through varied changes since the pre-independence era till the contemporary time. India arrived at independence after a long struggle and with a multiplicity of heritages and legacies which influenced its post independence course in intricate ways. Amongst the legacies was the long experience of British rule, which extended back more than two centuries of particular important at independence was the government of India Act of 1935, which was the most recent structure of rule under which the country was governed and which included as a substantial measure of responsible government for Indians in the provinces. A second legacy was that provided by the shared experience of those Indians who participated in or identified with the nationalist movement and its great leaders. A third was the prevailing social order the communal structure and social conflicts which surrounded and influenced political movements, thoughts and practices. Finally, there was the great body of traditions and cultural practices which proceeded British rule as a civilization of great depth, density and diversity.

Caste and religion are an important part of politics in India and these factors to a great extent help to shape the political culture of the country. There are several communities, minorities and castes which greatly influenced the contemporary political scenario of India. After independence the federal government of India has been led by the Indian national congress. Contemporary politics of India have been dominated by a number of national parties including the INC, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI) (M) and various Regional parties.

7.1 Conclusion

From the above discussion one can easily realized that the political culture is the back bone of a political study. Generally politics depends on the political culture. And political culture depends on the political behavior of human beings of the society. A political culture is not static. It changes as a result of its response to new ideas, industrialization, the impact of new leaders, population changes and many other factors. Incorporating these changes, it continues from generation to generation and the process by which is transmission from generation to generation is made possible is known as political socialization. Hence a study of political culture is incomplete without a proper understanding of the process of political socialization. At the end it may be said that socio-political development never be possible without political culture. It is no doubt that the politics must be destroy in the absence of political culture.

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