UNIT 18   STATE IN MODERN SOCIETIES

Structure

18.0   OBJECTIVES

This unit introduces you to the political processes of modern society and thereby aims to:

- describe a modern society;

- explain political modernisation;

- discuss the political systems of modern society; and

- analyse the major components of a political system.

18.1   INTRODUCTION

The political system of a modern society is very complex one. A lucid description of this system, indeed, requires coverage on a wide range of items pertaining to society and polity. Here the unit describes a modern society and political system in society. A political system incorporates a few important elements. While explaining these elements of a political system the unit highlights the ideology, the structure and function, the political processes and the basis of legitimacy of a political system. In discussing the structure of a political system the unit explains various forms of the same, viz. traditional oligarchies, totalitarian oligarchies, modernising oligarchies, tutelary democracies, and political democracies. The major area of discussion on the function of the political system has been that of political socialisation and recruitment, interest articulation (institutional interest groups, associational interest groups, non-association interest groups, anomic interest groups), interest aggregation, political communication and the function of the government. The unit also covers traditional authority, charismatic authority, legal rational authority and the legitimacy of modern political systems. The unit, lastly, summarises the economic and social indicators of modernisation and the elements of political system.

18.2   MODERN SOCIETIES

In this section we intend to familiarise you with the political system and political process in modern societies. A modern society may be defined as one with a comparatively high per capita income, high rate of literacy, urbanisation and industrialisation, considerable geographical and social mobility, extensive and penetrative mass-communication media and wide-spread participation of the citizens in the social and political processes. Some scholars have included a few more items to measure the level of modernisation. They are quality of life index, per capita availability of doctors and hospital beds, road length, number of vehicles, consumption of electricity etc.

Box 18.01

A developed Country like America uses about 14,000 K whr per capita of electricity which is about 30 times more than the Indian average of 415 K whr per capita. America also produces eight times more electricity i.e. 3235 billion kilowatt hours; than India for a population that is about one-fourth of India's. (TOI, Aug. 16, 2003)

Based on the position which a country has achieved on the above items, one can determine the extent of modernisation of the country. Using the same indices, one can also prepare a ranked list of countries on the modern scale and tell whether one country, for example, India, is more or less modern than another country, for instance, Bangladesh.

The idea of modernisation has a profound appeal in the developing countries of the world. Even traditional societies, which are against modernisation, for example some of the Arab countries, have introduced elements of modernisation in different areas. They have modernised their armies and started industrialisation in a big way. Even in tribal societies, modern items of consumption and modern technologies of agriculture have become popular. An important point to remember in the context of modernisation is that one cannot hold up modernisation in one sector for a long time when other sectors are getting modernised, except at a great strain to the social system. For example, with the modernisation of Indian economy the traditional joint

family system has broken down in many parts of the country. Again, when modernisation takes place in a society, its political set-up also is bound to get modernised. For example, as an impact of modernisation popular movement began in Nepal for the decentralisation of power. This movement challenged the traditional hereditary authority of the King of Nepal. It however, ended with the formation of Rastriya Panchayat, which handed over considerable power to the hand of peoples representatives. As a matter of fact, the process of modernisation has influenced political development in all societies. The state has been exposed to the influence of modernisation and has found it a useful tool for effective transaction of business at both internal and external levels.

18.3 POLITICAL SYSTEM IN MODERN SOCIETIES

The conventional approach to the study of polities was through the "State". Politics in this sense is a set of activities centering in the state. According to Max Weber, a state is a human community which successfully claims, within a given territory, the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force. Hence politics means the striving to share power or to influence the distribution of power either among states or among groups within a state. However, this definition cannot adequately define political process in societies which are apparently stateless or where a regime capturing power through revolutionary means or a **coup d'etat** is still struggling for obtaining legitimacy for its action and position. Political writers, therefore, prefer to use the term "political system" instead of the term "state" to discuss the various agencies and their relationships that were earlier studied under the blanket term politics. A political system, in this sense, may be defined as a sub-system of the general social system. Unlike other sub-systems in society, the political sub-system is characterised by the monopoly of coercive power over citizens and organisations. The political system can therefore force a citizen to behave in the general good. In the case of such force the question some times arises whether this is legitimate or not. The possession of coercive power by an individual or group over the entire societies, the monopoly of power held by the state is in dispute and voluntary organisation pose a challenge to the arbitrary and monopolistic use of power by the state.

A political system in this sense is a system with structures, functions and transactions, which are directed towards the control of individuals and groups within an identifiable and independent social system. It also covers the transactions between different political systems.

A modern political system is characterised by a high degree of differentiation, explicitness and functional specificity of governmental and non-governmental structures. In a modern political system each of these sub-systems plays its assigned role and acts as a mutually regulative mechanism. Since modernisation in different societies shows different levels of attainment, this is reflected in the political development of these societies also.

We have discussed several features of a modern society and the features of the political system of a modern society. We hope you have read and understood this section on the modern society and political system. You will know the level of your understanding by doing the exercises given below.

Activity 1

Have you ever visited the Parliament when it is in session or watched the proceedings on T.V. If so, write a page on "Indian Democracy". Compare your answer with those of other students at your study centre. You may also discuss this topic with your Academic Counsellor.

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1)   What is meant by a modern society? Use about five lines for your answer.

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2)   What is meant by a political system? Use about five lines for your answer.

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3)   A modern political system is characterised by a high degree
        of differentiation.   Yes   No

4)   The political system is not a sub-system of the society.   Yes   No.

18.4   ELEMENTS OF A POLITICAL SYSTEM

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

18.4.1   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 internalisation of an ideology and of its goals and means, are dependent on political socialisation 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 visualised 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 modernisation. 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.

18.4.2   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 modernising efforts in some countries. From the political point of view, they have moulded 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)   Modernising 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 modernisation - like modernisation 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 mobilisation. The Chinese regime is a good example of this type of oligarchy.

iii)   Modernising Oligarchies

These are characterised 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 is committed to development and modernisation. Some of the Latin American states are examples of modernising 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 2

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

   b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1)   Describe briefly the major elements of a political system. Use about five lines for your answer.

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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

18.5 FUNCTION OF THE 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 subsystems and the second set of (output) functions is reflected in the government subsystems.

### 18.5.1 Political Socialisation and Recruitment

Political socialisation 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 socialisation, political socialisation 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 is 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 socialising

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.

Elections
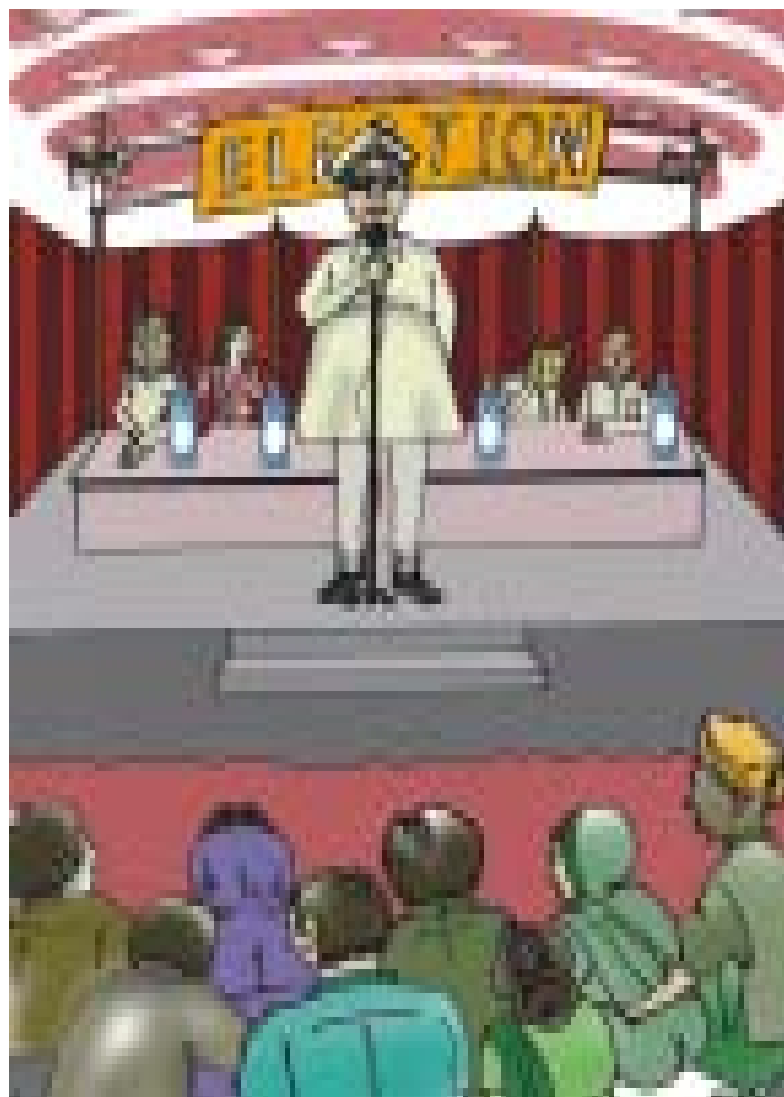
The social base for entrants into the political file could be broad or narrow. In the Arab countries, the base is narrow, patriarchic and oligarchic, whereas in India it is broad-based and competitive. In the first category, leaders are recruited from social groups which have been historically predominant (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 modernisation 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 characterised 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 recuritment 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.

18.5.2 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.

18.5.2.1 Institutional Interest Groups

These are duly constituted, stable and institutionalised 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.

18.5.2.2 Associational Interest Groups

Examples of these are trade unions, associations of managers, businessmen and traders and various agencies organised 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.

18.5.2.3   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.

18.5.2.4   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.

18.5.3   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 modernisation 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.

18.5.4 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.

18.5.5 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 3

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Describe briefly the major functions of a political system. Use about five lines for your answer.

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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.

18.6   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.

18.7   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.

18.7.1 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 study centre.

18.7.2 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.

18.7.3 Legitimacy of Modern Political System

Modern political system work 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 system, 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 4

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

    b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Describe briefly the basis of legitimatising authority. Use about five lines.

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2) Describe the basis of legitimacy of a modern political system. Use about five lines

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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

18.8 LET US SUM UP

A modern society is characterised by a comparatively high per capita income, and a high rate of literacy. It has high rates of urbanisation, industrialisation, geographic and social mobility. It also uses mass communications and its citizens actively participate in the social and political processes. The political set-up of a modern society gets modernised as modernisation takes place in society.

The political system is a sub-system of the social system. A modern political system is characterised by a high degree of differentiation, effectiveness and functional specificity of government and non-government structures.

A 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.

18.9 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.

18.10   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)

18.11   MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1)   A modern society may be defined as one with comparatively high per-capita income. It has a high rate of literacy, urbanisation, industrialisation, geographical and social mobility. It also has extensive mass-communication and wide-spread participation of the citizens in the social and political processes.

2)   A political system is a sub-system of the social system and is characterised by the monopoly of coercive power over citizens and organisations. A political system is directed towards the control of individuals and groups within an identifiable and independent social system.

3)   Yes

4)   No

Check Your Progress 2

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 3

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 4

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