

Comparative Politics

COURSE CODE: M23PS07DC

Postgraduate Programme in Political Science

Discipline Core Course

Self Learning Material



SREENARAYANAGURU
OPEN UNIVERSITY

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

Vision

To increase access of potential learners of all categories to higher education, research and training, and ensure equity through delivery of high quality processes and outcomes fostering inclusive educational empowerment for social advancement.

Mission

To be benchmarked as a model for conservation and dissemination of knowledge and skill on blended and virtual mode in education, training and research for normal, continuing, and adult learners.

Pathway

Access and Quality define Equity.

Comparative Politics
Course Code: M23PS07DC
Semester - II

Discipline Core Course
Postgraduate Programme in Political Science
Self Learning Material
(With Model Question Paper Sets)



SREENARAYANAGURU
OPEN UNIVERSITY

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala



SREENARAYANAGURU
OPEN UNIVERSITY

COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Course Code: M23PS07DC

Semester- II

Discipline Core Course

Postgraduate Programme in Political Science

Academic Committee

Prof. M.H. Ilias
Prof. Suresh Rangarajan
Prof. V. Bijukumar
Prof. Teresa Joseph
Dr. T. K. Jabir
Dr. A. Mohana Kumar
Dr. Archa Arun
Dr. Anil Kumar P.
Dr. Antony Dawson D'silva
Dr. P. M. Joshy
Dr. C.R. Pramod

Development of the Content

Dr. Vinesh N.V.

Review and Edit

Dr. Muhammed Sihabudheen K.

Linguistics

Dr. Mohammed Shihabudheen

Scrutiny

Dr Vinesh N.V.
Dr. Noufal N.
Subeesh K.V.
Dr. Geetha K.L.
Hemanth V.L.

Design Control

Azeem Babu T.A.

Cover Design

Jobin J.

Co-ordination

Director, MDDC :

Dr. I.G. Shibi

Asst. Director, MDDC :

Dr. Sajeevkumar G.

Coordinator, Development:

Dr. Anfal M.

Coordinator, Distribution:

Dr. Sanitha K.K.



Scan this QR Code for reading the SLM
on a digital device.

Edition
May 2025

Copyright
© Sreenarayanaguru Open University

ISBN 978-81-986024-6-6



All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, by mimeograph or any other means, without permission in writing from Sreenarayanaguru Open University. Printed and published on behalf of Sreenarayanaguru Open University by Registrar, SGOU, Kollam.

www.sgou.ac.m



Visit and Subscribe our Social Media Platforms

MESSAGE FROM VICE CHANCELLOR

Dear learner,

I extend my heartfelt greetings and profound enthusiasm as I warmly welcome you to Sreenarayanaguru Open University. Established in September 2020 as a state-led endeavour to promote higher education through open and distance learning modes, our institution was shaped by the guiding principle that access and quality are the cornerstones of equity. We have firmly resolved to uphold the highest standards of education, setting the benchmark and charting the course.

The courses offered by the Sreenarayanaguru Open University aim to strike a quality balance, ensuring students are equipped for both personal growth and professional excellence. The University embraces the widely acclaimed "blended format," a practical framework that harmoniously integrates Self-Learning Materials, Classroom Counseling, and Virtual modes, fostering a dynamic and enriching experience for both learners and instructors.

The University aims to offer you an engaging and thought-provoking educational journey. The MA programme in Political Science offers an advanced study of governmental structures and processes. It combines theoretical frameworks with practical applications, emphasising policy analysis and implementation. The curriculum covers organizational theory, public policy, administrative law, governance ethics, etc. Through the courses, learners gain expertise in public sector management. This programme prepares graduates for leadership roles in government agencies, non-profits, and international organizations, as well as for further academic pursuits. The Self-Learning Material has been meticulously crafted, incorporating relevant examples to facilitate better comprehension.

Rest assured, the university's student support services will be at your disposal throughout your academic journey, readily available to address any concerns or grievances you may encounter. We encourage you to reach out to us freely regarding any matter about your academic programme. It is our sincere wish that you achieve the utmost success.



Regards,
Dr. Jagathy Raj V.P.

01-05-2025

Contents

Block 01	Comparative Politics & Approaches	1
Unit 1	Meaning, Nature & Scope	2
Unit 2	Institutionalism, Political Economy and Political Culture	15
Unit 3	Contemporary Trends	26
Block 02	Forms of State and Regime Types	35
Unit 1	Democratic State	36
Unit 2	Authoritarian and Military Regime	48
Unit 3	Post-colonial States	60
Block 03	Comparative Constitution and Federalism	71
Unit 1	USA and Canada	72
Unit 2	India and Britain	89
Unit 3	Switzerland and France	106
Block 04	Parties and Party Systems: UK, USA, and India	121
Unit 1	Party System: Comparative Perspectives	122
Unit 2	Major Political Parties	134
Unit 3	Transformation in Electoral Politics	154
Model Question Paper Sets		168



BLOCK 1
**Comparative Politics &
Approaches**

UNIT 1

Meaning, Nature & Scope

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- define and explain the meaning, nature, and scope of Comparative Politics
- differentiate between Comparative Politics and Comparative Government
- understand the historical evolution and major phases of Comparative Politics
- analyze the key approaches to the study of Comparative Politics, and
- evaluate the impact of interdisciplinary perspectives on the study of political systems

Background

Comparative Politics is a vital sub-discipline of Political Science that focuses on the systematic study and comparison of political institutions, processes, and behaviors across different political systems. Traditionally, the study of politics was confined to understanding the structures of government and state, but with time, Comparative Politics evolved into a broader field encompassing political behavior, power dynamics, and policy-making across nations.

The emergence of Comparative Politics as a specialized field gained momentum in the 1950s when scholars transitioned from merely studying governmental institutions to analyzing entire political systems. This shift was driven by the realization that political structures could not be understood in isolation; rather, they had to be examined in relation to socio-economic, cultural, and historical contexts.

The study of Comparative Politics has gone through three significant phases: the unsophisticated phase (early thinkers like Aristotle and Machiavelli who used comparisons for better governance), the sophisticated phase (mid-20th-century scholars like Samuel Beer and Roy Macridis, who applied rigorous institutional comparisons), and the increasingly sophisticated phase (modern scholars such as Gabriel Almond and David Easton, who incorporated empirical methodologies and interdisciplinary approaches).

Comparative Politics also distinguishes itself from Comparative Government by focusing on broader political dynamics, including non-state actors like political parties and interest groups. Several methodological approaches are employed in this field, such as the philosophical, historical, institutional, legal, sociological, and psychological approaches. These approaches help scholars understand how political systems function, evolve, and interact with other societal factors.

Thus, Comparative Politics serves as an essential tool in analyzing governance models, policy effectiveness, and the role of power within different political frameworks, making it indispensable for scholars and policymakers alike.

Keywords

Comparative Politics, Political Systems, Political Power, Political Institutions, Political Behavior, Governance Models, Interdisciplinary Approach, Political Socialization, Institutional Analysis, Empirical Methodology

Discussion

1.1.1 Comparative Politics: Meaning

Comparative politics is a branch of political science that uses a method called the comparative approach to study political systems. Scholar Arend Lijphart explains that this field is more about *how* political studies are done rather than *what* is being studied. This means it focuses on the method used to analyze political topics, not on a specific subject. On the other hand, Peter Mair and Richard Rose offer a slightly different view. They believe comparative politics involves both a focus on political systems in different countries and a method to compare and understand similarities and differences between them using shared ideas. According to Rose, this approach usually involves looking at more than one country and using concepts that can apply across borders. He also notes that comparisons within just one country generally don't fall under this area of study.

Branch of Political Science

Comparative Government and Comparative Foreign Policy

When applied to specific topics, comparative politics may have different names. For instance, comparing different forms of government is called "comparative government," while studying and comparing the foreign policies of various countries is known as "comparative foreign policy."

1.1.2 Nature and Scope of Comparative Politics

- ❑ Use of Comparative Method

The comparative method is widely used in many academic fields, but what makes comparative politics unique is its focus on political topics, specific terminology, and its unique perspective. This raises a question: Is comparative politics a distinct area of study, or just a part of the broader field of Political Science? Although comparative politics shares many subjects with Political Science- like democracy, constitutions, political parties, and social movements- its distinctiveness lies in how it studies these topics. What sets it apart is its deliberate use of comparisons to explore political questions in a more analytical way.

1. The Role of Comparison in Political Analysis

- ❑ Structured and Thoughtful Comparison of two or more Countries

Some people wrongly believe that comparative politics is simply about studying other countries. By that logic, anyone studying a country other than their own would be considered a comparativist. However, this is a misunderstanding. Simply collecting information about different countries without drawing clear comparisons does not qualify as comparative political analysis. True comparative politics involves a structured and thoughtful comparison of two or more countries to understand their political similarities and differences. At first, this was mainly about spotting differences or grouping political systems. But over time, scholars began to focus more on using comparisons to understand deeper relationships within political systems. This method provides broader and richer insights into political behavior and institutions.

2. Comparative Politics and Comparative Government

- ❑ Extra-Constitutional Agencies

Generally, the two terms 'comparative politics' and 'comparative government' are used loosely and interchangeably. But there is a point of distinction between the two terms. While the comparative government covers a comparative study of different political systems with special emphasis on their institutions and functions. However, comparative politics has a broader scope so as to cover all that comes within the purview of the former and, in addition to that, all else that may be designated as the study of 'non- state' politics. In other words, the scope of comparative politics is wider than that of comparative government despite the fact that the search for making comparisons is central to the study of both. The concern of a student of comparative politics does not end with the study of rule-making, rule-implementing and rule-adjudicating departments of the political systems or even with the study of some extra- constitutional agencies (like political parties and

pressure groups) having their immediate connection, visible or invisible, with the principal departments of state activity.

In the words of Curtis "Comparative politics is concerned with significant regularities, similarities and differences in the working of political institutions and in political behaviour. Meaningful analysis requires explanatory hypotheses, the testing of sentiments, categories and classification by the collection of empirical data, observation, experimentation if at all possible; and the use of research techniques such as sampling, and communications data to increase knowledge." Edward Freeman makes an attempt to bring out a distinction between the two in these words: "By comparative government I mean the comparative study of political institutions, of forms of government. And, under the name of comparative politics, I wish to point out and bring together many analogies which are to be seen between the political institutions of times and countries most remote from one another... We are concerned with the essential likeness of institutions and we must never allow incidental traits of unlikeness to keep us from seeing essential likeness".

❑ Political Institutions

1.1.3 Evolution and Development of Comparative Politics

Comparative Politics emerged as a field of study mainly in the 1950s when American political scientists began to focus on analyzing political systems rather than just studying foreign governments. They started comparing how different countries are governed, aiming to understand both the similarities and differences between them. This field helps people learn about various political systems and use that knowledge to improve their own. It also allows researchers to organize and understand political information better and to make general conclusions based on that data.

❑ Emerged as a New Field of Study

Although the formal study of comparative politics is relatively recent, its roots go back to ancient thinkers like Plato and Aristotle. Aristotle was one of the first to use methods that resemble today's comparative political studies. After him, scholars such as Cicero, Polybius, Machiavelli, Montesquieu, J.S. Mill, and Laski continued to examine and compare different governments. However, a more structured and systematic approach to studying political institutions was introduced by writers like Finer, Friedrich, and Bryce. These scholars shifted the focus from just the structure and authority of governments to a more analytical and forward-looking examination.

❑ Ancient Political Thinkers and Comparative Method

The most important progress in the field came from modern

❑ New Methods for Studying Politics

❑ Analytical-cum Empirical Method

❑ Use of the term Political System

❑ Politics of the Developing Areas

thinkers like David Easton, G.A. Almond, Karl Deutsch, Harold Lasswell, Robert Dahl, and Jean Blondel. These scholars introduced new methods for studying politics because they were unhappy with the old, traditional ways of analyzing political systems. In this phase, the subject of comparative politics has these main characteristics.

1. Analytical and Empirical Investigation: The analytical-cum empirical method adopted by the thinkers belonging to this phase has definitely enlarged the field of our enquiry as it has cleared up the mist in which many helpful distinctions within the framework of political studies lay obscured.

2. Study of the Infra-Structure: Here a student is concerned 'with inquiry into matters of public concern, with the behaviour and acts that may concern a society as a totality or which may ultimately be resolved by the exercise of legitimate coercion. Instead of remaining concerned with the formal structures of government alone, he has to be concerned with crystallized patterns of behaviour, with 'practices' since these are parts of the living structures of government. If instead of 'government' the term 'political system' is used, naturally it becomes a part of the entire social system and the 'input-output' process includes all those forces of the 'environment' that have their effect on the decision-making process. Thus, the role of political parties and pressure groups, for example, becomes as significant as the role of legislatures and executives in the study of modern political systems.

3. Emphasis on the Study of Developing Societies: In this phase the thinkers give more emphasis on the 'politics of the developing areas'. It has occurred as a result of the realization that the subject of comparative politics must include all governments along with their infra-structures that "exist in the contemporary world and, where possible, references to governments throughout time." The study of comparative government is no longer a study of the selected European or American governments; it is as much a study of developed western governments as those of the developing political systems of the poor and backward countries of the Afro-Asian and Latin American world.

4. Focus on Inter-Disciplinary Approach: In this phase the subject of comparative politics focuses on inter-disciplinary study. Thinkers belonging to in this phase have made more and more use of tools that they have borrowed from the disciplines of sociology, psychology, economics, anthropology and even from natural sciences like biology. For example, systems analysis with its two derivatives in the form

❑ Application of Sociological and Psychological Analysis

of structural-functional and input-output approaches owes its origin to the discipline of biology that has been borrowed by the leading American political scientists like David Easton from sociologists like Robert Merton and Talcott Parsons. The result is that comparative politics has come to have much that makes it look like political sociology and political psychology. A study of new topics like political development, political modernization, political socialization, political acculturation, political change, political leadership and the like shows that now political science has become the 'application of sociological and psychological analysis to the study of the behaviour of government and other political structures.

❑ Authoritative Allocation of Values

5. Value-Free Political Theory: Finally, the subject of political science has lost its normative aspect and assumed empirical dimensions in the sphere of comparative politics. The result is that value-free political theory has replaced value-laden political theory. The concern of the students of comparative politics is not with the things as they ought to be in their ideal forms; it is with what they are. There is hardly any place for the rules of history or ethics in the subject of comparative politics as the entire field has been covered by the rules of sociology, psychology and economics. There is thus hardly any place for a man like Leo Strauss in the field of comparative politics who, while sticking to the traditions of Plato and Aristotle, contends that political theory cannot eschew 'values' and thus a value-free political science is impossible. It should, however, be made clear that the use of the term 'values' by Easton (when he defines politics as 'the authoritative allocation of values') or of 'value system' by Almond (when he identifies it with a system of ideas and beliefs) has an empirical, and not a normative connotation. We may say that the term value is used by the writers on comparative politics in the sense of a 'price' or 'worth' that a thing gets after it is recognized by the policy-makers. There is no value in a thing unless it is allocated by those who are in authority.

1.1.4 Traditional Approaches to the Study of Comparative Politics

An approach simply means as a way of looking at and then explaining a particular phenomenon. An approach is closely linked to a theory because it shapes how we generalize, explain, predict, and make recommendations- these are the main roles of a theory. The major traditional approaches to the study of Comparative Politics are:-

1.1.3.1 Philosophical Approach

☐ Oldest Approach

This is the oldest approach to the study of politics. Here the study of state, government and man as a political being is inextricably mixed with the pursuit of certain goals, morals, truths or high principles supposed to be underlying all knowledge and reality. Generally, a person who takes a philosophical approach to a subject aims to enhance linguistic clarity and to reduce linguistic confusion; he assumes that the language used in description reflects conceptions of reality, and he wants to make conceptions of reality as clear, consistent, coherent, and helpful as possible. He/She seeks to influence and guide thinking, and the expression of thought so as to maximize the prospect that the selected aspect of reality (politics) will be made intelligible. It is for this reason that thinkers and writers subscribing to the philosophical-ethical approach look like advising the rulers and the members of a political community to pursue certain higher ends. Thus, great works of Plato, More, Bacon, Harrington, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel Green and Bosanquet, Nettleship, Lindsay and Leo Strauss take the study of 'politics' to a very high level of abstraction and also try to mix up the system of values with certain high norms of an ideal political system.

1.1.3.2 Historical Approach

☐ Focused on the Past or on a Selected Period of Time

This approach is focused on the past or on a selected period of time as well as on a sequence of selected events within a particular phase so as to find out an explanation of what institutions are, and are tending to be, more in the knowledge of what they have been and how they came to be, what they are than in the analysis of them as they stand". The historical approach stands on the assumption that the stock of political theory comes out of socio-economic crises and the reactions they leave on the minds of the great thinkers. Thus, historical evidence has an importance of its own. The conditions of ancient Greece created Plato and Aristotle; likewise, the conditions of seventeenth century England produced Hobbes and Locke; the capitalist system of the nineteenth century created Mill and Marx. Obviously, in order to understand political theory, it is equally necessary to understand clearly the time, place and circumstances in which it was evolved. The political philosopher "may not actually take part in the politics of his times, but he is affected by it and, in his own turn, he tries vigorously to affect it." Sabine well takes note of this fact when he observes that all great political theories "are secreted in the interstices of political and social crises." Nevertheless, the value of the study of Comparative Politics in the context of its

historical evolution and growth cannot be so lightly dismissed.

1.1.3.3 Institutional Approach

- ❑ Study of the Formal Structures of Political Organizations

In this approach the student of politics lays stress on the study of the formal structures of political organizations like legislature, executive and judiciary. This trend may be discovered in the writings of a very large number of political scientists from Aristotle and Polybius in the ancient to Bryce and Finer in the modern periods. However, the peculiar thing about modern writers is that they also include party system as the 'fourth estate' in the structures of a political system, while contemporary writers like Bentley, Truman, Latham and V.O. Key, Jr. go a step further by including numerous interest groups that constitute the infra-structure of a political system. That is why, institutional approach is also known by the name of structural approach.

- ❑ Study both Formal Informal Institutions

The institutional or structural approach may be seen in the works of several English and American writers such as Walter Bagehot, F.A. Ogg, W.B. Munro, Herman Finer, H.J. Laski, Richard Neustadt, C.F. Strong, Bernard Crick, James Bryce, Harold Zink, Maurice Duverger and Giovanni Sartori. The striking feature of their works is that the study of politics has been confined to the formal, as well as informal, institutional structures of a political system. Furthermore, in order to substantiate conclusions a comparative study of major governmental systems of certain advanced countries of the West has also been made.

1.1.3.4 Legal Approach

- ❑ State as a Social Organism

In legal approach the study of politics is mixed up with legal processes and institutions. Themes of law and justice are treated as not mere affairs of jurisprudence, rather political scientists look at state as the maintainer of an effective and equitable system of law and order. Here matters relating to the organization, jurisdiction and independence of judicial institutions, therefore, become an essential concern of a political scientist. Analytical jurists from Cicero in the ancient to Dicey in the modern periods have regarded state as primarily a corporation or a juridical person and, in this way, viewed politics as a science of legal norms having nothing in common with the science of the state as a social organism. Therefore, this approach "treats the state primarily as an organization for the creation and enforcement of law.

In the context of legal approach we can refer the works of Jean Bodin, Hug Grotius and Thomas Hobbes who established

❑ State is the Highest Legal Authority

the doctrine of sovereignty. According to Hobbes, the head of the state is the highest legal authority and his command law that must be obeyed either to avoid punishment following its infraction, or to keep the dreadful state of nature away. The work of Bentham, John Austin, Savigny, Sir Henry Maine, and A. Dicey may be referred to in this connection with this. The result is the study of politics is integrally bound up with the legal processes of the country and the existence of a harmonious state of liberty and equality is earmarked by the glorious name of the rule of law.

❑ Emphasis the Fact

Legal approach also emphasis the fact that where the citizens are law-abiding, the knowledge of law provides a very important basis for predictions relating to political behaviour of the people. Jellinek, an advocate of legal approach, advises us to treat organized society not as a mere social or political phenomenon but as an ensemble of public law rights and obligations founded on a system of pure logic or reason. It implies that the state as an organism of growth and development cannot be understood without a consideration of those extra-legal and social forces which lie at the back of the consideration and, for this reason, are responsible for many of its actions and mutual reactions.

1.1.3.5 Sociological Approach

❑ Political Behaviour of the Individuals

This approach to the study of comparative politics has become very popular. Political thinkers like R.M. MacIver, David Easton and G.A. Almond subscribing to this approach have taken into recognition the essential fact that ample data is available in the realm of sociology so as to lay down certain empirical rules of political behaviour. They have accepted the view of leading sociologists like Comte, Spencer, Ratzenhofer, Weber, Parsons, Merton and a host of others that state is more of a social than that of a political institution. That means the social context is necessary for the understanding and explanation of political behaviour of the individuals. Sociological approach has popularized the term 'political socialization' that refers to the process of transmission of values from one generation to another. This approach has also popularized the term 'political culture' that refers to the totality of what is learned by individuals as members of a society; it is a way of life, a mode of thinking, acting, and feeling. Therefore, sociological approach has its own place in the twin doctrines of political development and political decay. Besides, as society is a network of numerous associations and groups which play their own part in the operation of the politics of a country, this approach automatically suggests an investigation of the

study of interest groups that constitute the infra-structure of a political system.

1.1.3.6 Psychological Approach

Recently, political science has moved very close to the discipline of psychology particularly at the hands of Graham Wallas, Charles Merriam, Harold D. Lasswell, R.A. Dahl and Eric Fromm. Also a good number of political scientists have borrowed material from the writings of eminent psychologists like Freud, Jang, Eyesenck and McDougall to lay down certain valid rules of political behaviour. As a result the study of politics has been made so as to display the role of emotions, habits, sentiments, instincts, ego etc. that are the constituent elements of human personality. In psychological approach the concept of 'power' has gained its own importance. Prof. W.A. Robson has frankly treated political science as a study of power. "It is with power in society that political science is primarily concerned its nature, basis, premises, scope and results....The 'focus of interest of the political scientists is clear and unambiguous; it centres on the struggle to gain or retain power, to exercise power or influence over others, or to resist that exercise." Similarly, according to Fredrick M. Watkins "the proper scope of political science is not the study of state or of any other specific institutional complex, but the investigation of all associations in so far as they can be known to exemplify the problem of power." Harold Lasswell identifies the term power with 'influence' and then defines politics as the study of 'the influence and the influential."

❑ Emphasis on Power

Summarised Overview

Comparative Politics is a systematic field of Political Science that examines political institutions, behaviors, and systems across different countries. Unlike traditional political studies that focused only on state structures, Comparative Politics extends to analyzing power dynamics, policy-making, and political culture.

The field has evolved through three significant phases. The first phase, led by early thinkers like Aristotle and Machiavelli, primarily used comparison to understand governance structures. The second phase introduced rigorous institutional analysis, pioneered by scholars like Samuel Beer and Bernard Ulam. The third and current phase incorporates empirical research, systems analysis, and interdisciplinary methods, with contributions from figures like Gabriel Almond and David Easton.

One of the central debates in Comparative Politics is its distinction from Comparative Government. While Comparative Government focuses on the formal study of

governmental institutions, Comparative Politics includes both formal structures and informal political processes such as public opinion, political parties, and pressure groups.

Various methodological approaches are employed in Comparative Politics. The philosophical approach emphasizes ethical and normative perspectives, while the historical approach studies political institutions in their historical contexts. The institutional approach focuses on formal government structures, whereas the legal approach integrates law and politics. The sociological approach examines the role of social structures in politics, and the psychological approach explores the influence of individual and collective psychology on political behavior.

Overall, Comparative Politics is a dynamic and evolving field that provides a broad perspective on political systems worldwide. By integrating multiple disciplinary insights, it helps scholars and policymakers develop a deeper understanding of political power, governance, and institutional effectiveness in both democratic and non-democratic regimes.

Assignments

1. Define Comparative Politics and explain its scope.
2. Discuss the major phases in the evolution of Comparative Politics.
3. How does Comparative Politics differ from Comparative Government?
4. Explain the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in Comparative Politics.
5. Describe the philosophical and historical approaches to the study of Comparative Politics.
6. Analyze the role of political socialization and political culture in Comparative Politics.
7. What contributions did Gabriel Almond and David Easton make to Comparative Politics?
8. How has the study of Comparative Politics expanded beyond government institutions?
9. Discuss the impact of empirical methodologies on the study of Comparative Politics.
10. Compare and contrast the institutional and sociological approaches to Comparative Politics.

Reference

1. Johari, J. C. (2009). *Comparative politics*. Sterling Publishers.
2. Bhagawan, V., & Bhushan, V. (2012). *World constitutions: A comparative study*. Sterling Publishers.
3. Agarwal, R. C. (2012). *Political theory: Principles of political science*. S. Chand & Company.
4. Agarwal, R. C. (2008). *Principles of political science*. S. Chand & Company.
5. Almond, G. A. (1956). *Comparative Political Systems*. *The Journal of Politics*, 18(3), 391-409.
6. Easton, D. (1965). *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*. John Wiley & Sons.
7. Lijphart, A. (1999). *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. Yale University Press.
8. Powell, G. B. (1982). *Contemporary Democracies: Participation, Stability, and Violence*. Harvard University Press.

Suggested Reading

1. Apter, D. E. (1965). *The Politics of Modernization*. University of Chicago Press.
2. Curtis, M. (1988). *Comparative Government and Politics*. HarperCollins.
3. Macridis, R. C. (1983). *Comparative Politics: Notes and Readings*. Dorsey Press.
4. Pye, L. W., & Verba, S. (1965). *Political Culture and Political Development*. Princeton University Press.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU

UNIT 2

Institutionalism, Political Economy and Political Culture

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the historical evolution and significance of Institutionalism in Comparative Politics
- differentiate between traditional Institutionalism and New Institutionalism, including its various methodologies
- analyze the Political Economy approach and its implications for governance and economic structures
- evaluate the role of Political Culture in shaping political behavior and governance structures
- critically assess the strengths and limitations of different theoretical approaches in Comparative Politics

Background

Comparative Politics has evolved over the decades by incorporating diverse theoretical approaches to analyze governance structures, political behavior, and economic systems. Three significant approaches in this evolution are Institutionalism, Political Economy, and Political Culture.

Institutionalism is one of the earliest approaches to political analysis, emphasizing the role of formal institutions such as constitutions, legal systems, and government structures. Early scholars like Bryce and Lowell focused on institutional comparisons to understand governance. However, traditional Institutionalism was later criticized for being overly descriptive and Western-centric. In response, New Institutionalism emerged, incorporating normative, rational choice, and historical approaches to examine both formal and informal structures of governance.

Political Economy examines the relationship between economic structures and political power. Rooted in Marxist theory, it argues that economic forces shape political institutions, with class struggle playing a central role. However, the approach evolved to

include both Marxist and Liberal perspectives, with the former emphasizing economic inequality and class domination, while the latter advocates for market-driven economies and limited government intervention.

Political Culture explores how societal values, beliefs, and norms influence political behavior and institutions. Scholars like Almond and Verba developed the concept of civic culture, arguing that political stability depends on cultural values. While the approach has been widely applied, it has also faced criticism for Western bias and oversimplification of political behavior.

Together, these three approaches provide a comprehensive understanding of Comparative Politics, offering insights into how institutions, economic structures, and cultural values interact to shape governance and policy-making.

Keywords

Institutionalism, New Institutionalism, Political Economy, Class Domination, Rational Choice Theory, Political Culture, Civic Culture, Path Dependency, State Autonomy, Consociational Democracy

Discussion

1.2.1 Institutionalism

This approach has played a significant role in the study of political systems. Traditionally, political analysis focused on government institutions and their structures. The institutional approach emphasizes the formal agencies and frameworks of governance. For a long time, this method mainly examined constitutions, legal systems, and democratic values. Colonial powers also promoted it to spread European liberal ideas in their territories. As a result, newly independent nations found this approach appealing. By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, scholars like Bryce, Lowell, and Ostrogorski made major contributions to the comparative study of political institutions. Their works helped establish comparative politics as a separate field. Notable works include Bryce's *The American Commonwealth* (1888) and *Modern Democracies* (1921), as well as Lowell's *Governments and Parties in Continental Europe* (1896) and *Public Opinion and Popular Government* (1913). However, in the 1950s, critics like Easton and Roy

❑ Focused on Government Institutions and their Structures

Macridis challenged this approach. Scholars such as Herman Finer (*Theory and Practice of Modern Government*, 1932) and Carl Friedrich (*Constitutional Government and Democracy*, 1932) further refined comparative political studies.

1.2.1.1 New Institutionalism

The concept of new Institutionalism emerged in the 1980s. It arose as a reaction to the shortcomings of both traditional institutional analysis and behavioralism. While traditional institutionalism concentrated mainly on formal structures like constitutions, legislatures, and judiciary. Besides, behavioralism focused on the impact of individual behaviors and decisions in politics. New Institutionalism combines the elements of both approaches, examining not only formal institutions but also informal aspects such as social norms and cultural practices to better understand political dynamics. New Institutionalism centers on the idea that institutions such as rules, norms, and structures play a key role in influencing the behavior of political actors. These institutions are not permanent; they adapt and transform as a result of the actions and interactions of the individuals involved. This dynamic relationship makes New Institutionalism a flexible and thorough framework for analyzing comparative politics.

❑ Involvement of the Individuals

Different Theoretical Approaches in New Institutionalism

1. Normative Institutionalism

Normative Institutionalism examines the values and norms that form the foundation of institutions. It investigates how these norms guide the actions of political actors and impact policy decisions. For instance, in India, the constitutional principle of secularism influences the creation and execution of policies related to religion. This approach sheds light on how deeply rooted values can either limit or facilitate political behavior.

❑ Political Actors and Policy Decisions

2. Rational Choice Institutionalism

Rational Choice Institutionalism draws on economic theory to explore how individuals make decisions within the limits set by institutions. It operates on the assumption that political actors act rationally, aiming to maximize their benefits. This viewpoint helps clarify strategic actions, such as coalition-building in parliamentary systems or the structuring of electoral systems to achieve desired political results. In the case of India, Rational Choice Institutionalism can help explain why political parties form coalitions even when they have differing ideologies.

❑ Parliamentary System and Coalition Building



3. Historical Institutionalism

- ❑ Focuses on Historical Events and Processes

Historical Institutionalism focuses on how historical events and processes, along with path dependency, shape institutions. It suggests that past choices and occurrences leave lasting legacies that continue to affect political behavior today. For example, the colonial legacy in India has had a long-term influence on its administrative systems and political practices. By studying these historical developments, this approach helps explain why some institutions endure and how they change over time.

4. Formal and Informal Institutions

- ❑ Interaction between Institutions and Individuals

New Institutionalism expands the definition of institutions to encompass both formal and informal aspects. Formal institutions refer to established rules and structures, like constitutions, laws, and governmental organizations. In contrast, informal institutions involve unwritten norms, customs, and practices that shape political actions and behavior. A key feature of New Institutionalism is its emphasis on the ongoing interaction between institutions and individuals. While institutions play a role in guiding individual behavior, individuals also have the power to impact and alter institutions. This two-way relationship contributes to the constant evolution and dynamism of political systems.

1.2.2 Political Economy

- ❑ Marxist Approach

This approach is also known as Marxist approach to the study of Comparative Politics. The political economy approach studies the relationship between economic and political processes in a comparative perspective. It recognizes that the political system operates within a larger social framework, including economic, social, and religious factors. Simply studying constitutions and government institutions is not enough to understand politics. Marxist theorists emphasize that the economy is the foundation of society and the political system. The relationship between economy and class domination is the central theme of political economy approach.

1.2.2.1 Economy and Class Domination

Marxism aims to create a classless society. Until this goal is achieved, state and politics must be understood in terms of class struggle and domination. According to this view, politics is shaped by economic power, and political structures reflect the interests of dominant classes. The political system represents

❑ Creation of Classless Society

specific social and economic interests within a nation. It is influenced by civil society, which includes social, cultural, and political forces. Understanding the historical evolution of a state helps explain its structure, functions, and legitimacy. To analyze modern states, it is essential to study both their political history and economic systems (capitalist or socialist). Economic and social forces shape national cultures, which, in turn, define the role of the state and its limits in economic and social affairs. Although states may follow similar economic models, their political systems can differ based on national history and social structures. Therefore, Marxist scholars argue for a detailed historical analysis of each state to understand its unique development and contradictions.

Key Aspects of Comparative Study

5. Differences and similarities in political structures and functions.
6. Development of institutions over time.
7. The degree of state autonomy from economic and social forces.
8. Internal conflicts and processes of social change.

Additionally, post-colonial states often remain economically dependent on developed nations, creating international economic and political institutions that shape their policies. The Marxist approach examines common patterns in the development of states and their global relationships.

1.2.2.2 Political Economy: Different Perspectives

Political economy is understood in different ways by different scholars. There is no single approach to political economy; instead, it consists of multiple competing schools of thought, each with its own view on how politics and economics are connected. The main perspectives in the modern world are the Liberal and Marxist approaches.

1. **The Liberal Perspective:** The liberal approach emphasizes a free market system, where voluntary trade and competition drive economic growth. According to this view, free trade and the unrestricted movement of capital help investment reach the most profitable areas. Every country benefits by specializing in industries where it has a natural advantage. Open markets and freely exchangeable currencies create a global pricing system that functions like an

❑ Limited role of Government Institutions

Competitive World Economy

"invisible hand," ensuring fair and efficient distribution of goods and services worldwide. The role of governments and institutions is limited to maintaining stable conditions so that markets can operate smoothly. It is believed that governments have various choices in shaping their economic policies, both in their own countries and in the global system.

- 2. The Marxist Perspective:** The Marxist view also sees the world economy as competitive, but instead of focusing on competition between countries, it highlights the struggle between social classes. Capitalism is seen as the main force driving the global economy. In Marxist terms, the economy is shaped by a conflict between two groups: the capitalists, who own businesses and industries, and the working class, who provide labor. Capitalists aim to maximize profits, often by exploiting workers. This idea has been expanded to explain the economic relationships between wealthy industrialized nations (the "core") and developing countries (the "periphery"). According to dependency theory, many poor countries remain underdeveloped because they are economically dependent on wealthier nations. Their political and social systems have been shaped by their international economic ties, which are largely controlled by the interests of the global capitalist class.

1.2.2.3 Criticism of the Political Economy Approach

Despite its focus on economic factors and developing nations, the political economy approach has limitations. Its belief that the state is controlled solely by the dominant economic class has been widely debated. Many modern Marxist scholars now argue that the state has some autonomy and is not entirely controlled by capitalist elites. This explains the differences in governance structures among capitalist nations. In developing countries, the state often plays an active role in directing economic development, rather than simply serving capitalist interests.

Another criticism is that the political economy approach overlooks minor but important political and social factors, limiting its ability to provide a detailed theoretical framework. Historically, it has not focused much on comparative political analysis. However, its ideological and transformative focus

remains relevant. Even after the collapse of the Soviet Union and socialist regimes in Eastern Europe, Marxist ideas continue to spark debate and analysis in political science.

1.2.3 Political Culture

❑ Pioneers of the Approach

The political culture approach has been widely used for comparative studies and analyzing transitional societies. Scholars have explored how political behavior and processes are shaped by the political culture of a society. Gabriel Almond, Sidney Verba, and Lucian Pye were pioneers of this approach. Almond, drawing from Sociology and Anthropology, developed a methodology to compare political cultures. He believed that all political systems could be studied using this framework. According to Almond, a political system consists of observable roles and interactions that can be analyzed scientifically. His research extended beyond legal institutions to include family relations, mass behavior, elections, power dynamics, and influence.

❑ Three Types of Political Systems

Almond argued that political systems are defined by both structures and cultures, which influence each other. The political culture of a society shapes its institutions, and in turn, these institutions reinforce cultural norms. He identified three types of political systems that reflect how individuals engage with political activity, similar to Weberian ideal-types. Political culture is measured by how a society interacts with political structures and actions.

1.2.3.1 Features of Political Culture

1. **Understanding of the whole system:** How people perceive and engage with their political environment.
2. **Input processes:** How people interact with political structures such as parties and bureaucracies.
3. **Output processes:** Government actions, including executive, judiciary, and bureaucratic decisions.
4. **Individual roles and identity:** Citizens' understanding of their rights, responsibilities, and power in governance.

The political culture approach declined in the 1970s but later regained importance. Scholars linked it to economic development and democratization, particularly in East Asia, where Confucian values were seen as contributing to economic growth and stable governance.

However, the approach faced criticism. Almond and Verba's *Civic Culture* was accused of bias toward Western

❑ Bias toward Western democracies

democracies like the USA and Britain. Arend Lijphart argued that homogeneous values were not necessary for a strong political culture, citing Germany and Italy as examples. He introduced the concept of consociational democracy, where elite cooperation ensures stability. Carole Pateman also challenged the idea that political culture directly determines democratic stability. D. Kavanagh emphasized the role of sub-political cultures, while Almond and Powell later revised their work to include secularization as a factor. Despite various interpretations, no final conclusion has been reached, and the political culture approach continues to evolve.

Summarised Overview

The unit explores three major approaches in Comparative Politics: Institutionalism, Political Economy, and Political Culture. Each approach provides a different perspective on how political systems operate and evolve.

Institutionalism is a traditional method that focuses on formal political structures such as legislatures, executives, and constitutions. However, it was later criticized for being too rigid and ignoring the influence of informal institutions. This led to the development of New Institutionalism, which includes Normative, Rational Choice, and Historical Institutionalism. These methodologies recognize that institutions are dynamic and shaped by both historical contexts and individual choices.

Political Economy studies the interaction between economic and political systems. The Marxist perspective argues that politics is driven by economic structures and class struggle, with capitalist elites controlling the state. On the other hand, the Liberal perspective emphasizes free markets and limited government intervention. Political Economy also examines dependency theory, which highlights how post-colonial nations remain economically subordinate to wealthier states.

Political Culture analyzes how societal beliefs and values influence political behavior. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba's Civic Culture theory suggests that democratic stability depends on participatory and engaged citizens. However, this approach has been criticized for favoring Western democracies and neglecting variations within political cultures.

Despite their differences, these approaches collectively enhance the study of Comparative Politics. While Institutionalism highlights governance structures, Political Economy focuses on economic power, and Political Culture explains behavioral aspects. Understanding these frameworks enables scholars to analyze political systems comprehensively, recognizing both historical influences and contemporary challenges.

Assignments

1. Explain the difference between Traditional Institutionalism and New Institutionalism.
2. How does Rational Choice Institutionalism analyze political decision-making?
3. Discuss the relevance of Historical Institutionalism in understanding political change.
4. Explain the Marxist perspective on Political Economy and its critique of capitalism.
5. Compare and contrast the Liberal and Marxist views of Political Economy.
6. What is Political Culture, and how does it influence governance?
7. Analyze the concept of Civic Culture as proposed by Almond and Verba.
8. Discuss the criticisms faced by the Political Culture approach.
9. How do formal and informal institutions interact in shaping political behavior?
10. Evaluate the role of class struggle in shaping political structures according to Marxist theory.

Reference

1. Johari, J. C. (2009). *Comparative politics*. Sterling Publishers.
2. Bhagawan, V., & Bhushan, V. (2012). *World constitutions: A comparative study*. Sterling Publishers.
3. Agarwal, R. C. (2012). *Political theory: Principles of political science*. S. Chand & Company.
4. Agarwal, R. C. (2008). *Principles of political science*. S. Chand & Company.
5. Almond, G. A., & Verba, S. (1963). *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Princeton University Press.
6. North, D. C. (1990). *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance*. Cambridge University Press.
7. Pierson, P. (2004). *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis*. Princeton University Press.
8. Huntington, S. P. (1991). *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. University of Oklahoma Press.

Suggested Reading

1. Hall, P. A., & Taylor, R. C. R. (1996). *Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms*. Political Studies Journal.
2. Streeck, W., & Thelen, K. (2005). *Beyond Continuity: Institutional Change in Advanced Political Economies*. Oxford University Press.
3. Jessop, B. (2002). *The Future of the Capitalist State*. Polity Press.
4. Lijphart, A. (1999). *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. Yale University Press.
5. Pye, L. W. (1985). *Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimensions of Authority*. Harvard University Press.
6. Inglehart, R., & Welzel, C. (2005). *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy*. Cambridge University Press.

SGOU

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU

UNIT 3

Contemporary Trends

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- explain the significance of comparative politics in understanding political systems across nations
- analyze the impact of globalization on the sovereignty and governance of modern states
- evaluate the challenges in comparative political research, including case selection, terminology, and bias
- compare different models of democracy and governance, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses, and
- assess the role of political economy and public policy in shaping governance and development strategies

Background

Comparative politics is a crucial subfield of political science that systematically studies political systems by drawing comparisons between different nations. It seeks to identify patterns, similarities, and differences among political institutions, governance models, and policies. The primary goal of comparative politics is to understand how and why political systems evolve, function, and interact with global forces.

Historically, comparative politics has evolved through various frameworks. During the Cold War, political scientists classified states into capitalist (First World), communist (Second World), and developing (Third World) categories. With the collapse of communism, new classifications emerged, including the Global North (wealthy nations) and Global South (developing countries). More refined categories distinguish states based on governance structures, such as advanced capitalist states, weak post-colonial states, and modernizing states.

One of the most significant developments in comparative politics is the shift from studying political systems in isolation to examining their relationship with global forces.

The concept of sovereignty has changed due to globalization, where international institutions and global markets influence domestic policies. This has led to the emergence of multi-level governance, where decision-making is shared between national, regional, and international actors.

Contemporary comparative politics also faces methodological challenges. These include issues such as case selection bias, lack of standardized terminology across cultures, and the complexity of applying universal political theories to diverse historical and cultural contexts. Additionally, scholars debate the extent to which politics is shaped by social and economic factors versus independent institutional frameworks.

Given the growing interdependence of states and the rapid changes in governance models, comparative politics remains a dynamic and evolving field. It provides essential insights into democratic governance, policy effectiveness, and global political transformations.

Keywords

Comparative Politics, Globalization, Sovereignty, Political Economy, Multi-level Governance, Democracy, Public Policy, Authoritarianism, Political Institutions, State Formation

Discussion

Comparative politics is based on the idea that comparing political systems helps us understand politics scientifically. Since political systems function within independent countries, comparisons usually focus on different nations. This approach is widely accepted in the field, and many political scientists do not question it. Similarly, in international relations, countries are seen as the core units of the global system. States play a crucial role in providing people with essential needs such as security, justice, and economic stability. Despite globalization, states remain vital for their citizens. Living in a weak or unstable country can be extremely difficult, even dangerous. Because states are always evolving, it is important to study how they change and why some succeed while others struggle. During the Cold War, countries were categorized into three groups: capitalist nations (First World), communist nations (Second World), and developing nations (Third World). After the fall of communism, some scholars began using the terms "North"

❑ Three categories of States

(wealthy nations) and "South" (poorer nations). Another approach divides states into three types:

1. **Advanced capitalist states** – shifting from modern to postmodern governance.
2. **Weak post-colonial states** – struggling with governance and stability.
3. **Modernizing states** – a mix of both, in different stages of development.

This classification does not replace others but helps explain how globalization has changed sovereign states. Comparative politics must consider the broader global context and recognize the close connection between domestic and international affairs.

❑ Multi-level Governance

Sovereignty has also changed. In the past, sovereignty meant that states had full control over their affairs without outside interference. Today, international organizations and alliances often intervene in national matters. This is called multi-level governance, where sovereignty is shared across different levels. Weak states, despite being legally independent, often rely on international support. This has led to new practices like humanitarian intervention, where stronger nations or organizations step in to help struggling states. However, the sovereign state still exists but has evolved. Globalization has not erased states but has deeply connected domestic and international politics. Comparative political studies must adapt to these changes.

1.3.1 Challenges in Comparative Politics

Scholars have identified several issues with using comparison as a research method in politics.

1.3.1.1 Problems with Cases and Variables

❑ Difficulty Comparisons

One major issue is that political scientists cannot fully control the factors they study. Each country is unique in terms of economy, culture, geography, and political systems. This makes it difficult to conduct accurate comparisons. Even within a single country, conditions change over time, adding complexity. Researchers try to limit variables that might distort results, but complete control is impossible.

Another challenge is the limited number of cases. Unlike natural sciences, where researchers can study thousands of samples, political scientists have fewer than 200 countries to compare. This restricts their ability to generalize findings.

❑ Limited Number of Cases

Furthermore, accessing data from different countries is difficult. Language barriers, political restrictions, and limited resources prevent researchers from studying multiple nations thoroughly. As a result, many scholars specialize in one region, leading to biases in global comparisons.

❑ Cultural Differences

1.3.1.2 Lack of Common Terminology

Different cultures interpret political concepts differently. For example, the meaning of "democracy" or "justice" can vary across nations. This makes it hard to compare political behavior accurately. Researchers must understand the local context before drawing conclusions.

❑ Modification of Political Theories

1.3.1.3 Equivalence Issue

Another challenge is whether political theories apply equally in all societies. Some scholars believe political concepts should be universal, while others argue they are shaped by local traditions and histories. A middle-ground approach suggests modifying political theories to better fit different cultural and social contexts.

❑ Failure of Democracy

1.3.1.4 Selection Bias

Researchers often unintentionally choose cases that support their theories, leading to biased conclusions. For example, if a study includes only successful democracies, it might ignore factors that contribute to democratic failure. Similarly, historical accounts used in research can be selectively interpreted to fit a theory, distorting results.

❑ Lack of Completely Neutral Study

1.3.1.5. Value Bias

Personal beliefs and cultural backgrounds can influence political research. No study is completely neutral, as researchers' perspectives shape how they interpret data. This can lead to biased conclusions, even in well-conducted studies.

❑ Role of Society

1.3.2 Contemporary Significance

After World War II, the field of comparative politics has gone through several changes. Scholars have continuously revised their approaches. Initially, comparative politics focused on studying the role of society in shaping political systems. It was believed that political conflicts reflected social divisions. However, some political scientists, such as Samuel Huntington, argued that politics should be studied independently of social and economic influences. This led to a shift toward analyzing political institutions like governments, political parties, and

democracy versus authoritarianism. The focus changed from democracy to ensuring stability through strong institutions.

❑ Political Systems and Policy Making

Later, political scientists began examining the effects of different political systems on policy making. This shift was influenced by a renewed interest in the role of the state, both among conservative and progressive scholars. This phase merged comparative politics with public policy and political economy, seeking to understand how political systems shape policies and their outcomes.

❑ Westminster and Consensus Democracy

Those who study the influence of society on politics debate how much social and economic factors shape political systems. Some argue that politics is entirely shaped by social divisions, while others believe institutions operate independently. The challenge is finding a balance between these views. Since earlier distinctions between traditional, developing, and modern political systems were too vague, scholars now focus on classifying governments as democratic or authoritarian. However, even democracy is defined in different ways. Two key democratic models are Westminster democracy and consensus democracy. Non-democratic systems, particularly in developing countries, lack clear classification, and future research is expected to focus on understanding their variations.

❑ Comparative Study of Public Policy and Political Economy

One of the most significant developments in comparative politics since the 1970s is the comparative study of public policy and political economy. Instead of broad theories about political development and modernization, researchers now focus on how states influence economic growth and policy decisions. This approach has moved comparative politics closer to economics, while also making it more relevant for policy makers and public administrators.

❑ Method for Implementing Ideas

Public policy defines how societies allocate resources and balance the roles of the state and private sector. It seeks to understand which policies promote development. Through comparative analysis, scholars can determine the most effective role of the state. Public policy is not just descriptive; it also analyzes and prescribes solutions. Politics is now seen as a matter of making public choices among different policy options, with the goal of improving governance and democracy. Political economy, in particular, examines how political decisions impact the economy, including resource distribution and development strategies. In developing countries, these choices determine the path of economic and social progress. Leaders must decide whether to simply manage existing conditions or drive significant changes through policy. While political economy provides the theoretical framework, public

policy serves as the method for implementing ideas. As a result, comparative politics now focuses on smaller, more manageable comparisons, such as studies within a single region or similar countries.

1.3.3 Impact of Globalization on Comparative Politics

❑ Beyond the Traditional State-Society Framework

Political scientist Neera Chandhoke highlights how globalization challenges traditional political institutions, including the nation-state. The movement of capital, technology, and people across borders, along with international interventions, has weakened the idea of a self-contained, culturally unified state. Historically, it was believed that each society naturally formed its own state, and these states reflected the values of their people. However, modern developments challenge this idea. Many states and societies now follow different historical paths, sometimes leading to fragmentation, as seen in the breakups of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. As globalization continues, comparative politics must move beyond the traditional state-society framework. Political scientists must rethink their approach, considering how international and domestic forces interact in shaping political systems.

Summarised Overview

Contemporary comparative politics is a field that explores how political systems function, interact, and evolve in response to internal and external factors. Traditionally, scholars analyzed political institutions within specific national contexts, but globalization has reshaped this approach. Modern comparative politics now considers the increasing interdependence between domestic and international affairs.

One key trend in comparative politics is the changing nature of sovereignty. Historically, sovereignty implied absolute state control. However, in today's interconnected world, international organizations, trade agreements, and humanitarian interventions influence national policies. This has led to multi-level governance, where decision-making occurs at multiple levels, from local to global.

Comparative politics also examines challenges in research methodology. Political scientists struggle with issues such as selection bias, limited case studies, and varying interpretations of political concepts across cultures. The lack of universal definitions for terms like "democracy" and "justice" complicates cross-national comparisons. Additionally, researchers must navigate personal and cultural biases when analyzing political developments.

Another major shift in the field is the growing emphasis on public policy and political

economy. Instead of solely focusing on political institutions, scholars now study how states influence economic policies, development strategies, and governance outcomes. This approach has bridged comparative politics with economic theories, making it more relevant for policymakers.

Furthermore, globalization has intensified discussions on state legitimacy and governance models. Political scientists now assess how democracies and authoritarian regimes adapt to global challenges. The study of public policy within different political systems helps determine the effectiveness of governance strategies.

As comparative politics continues to evolve, scholars must integrate traditional theories with emerging global realities. The field remains vital for understanding political change, governance challenges, and policy outcomes across diverse political systems.

Assignments

1. Define comparative politics and explain its significance in understanding political systems.
2. Discuss the impact of globalization on state sovereignty and governance structures.
3. What are the major challenges faced by researchers in comparative political studies?
4. Explain the concept of multi-level governance with examples.
5. Compare and contrast the different classifications of states in comparative politics.
6. How does political economy influence public policy in different governance models?
7. Analyze the role of international organizations in shaping national political decisions.
8. Discuss the significance of democracy and its variations in contemporary politics.
9. Explain the methodological challenges in conducting comparative political research.
10. Evaluate the influence of globalization on developing countries' political and economic systems.

Reference

1. Johari, J. C. (2009). *Comparative politics*. Sterling Publishers.
2. Bhagawan, V., & Bhushan, V. (2012). *World constitutions: A comparative study*. Sterling Publishers.
3. Agarwal, R. C. (2012). *Political theory: Principles of political science*. S. Chand & Company.
4. Agarwal, R. C. (2008). *Principles of political science*. S. Chand & Company.
5. Chandhoke, N. (2003). *Governance and Globalization: Rethinking State Sovereignty*. Oxford University Press.
6. Huntington, S. P. (1991). *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. University of Oklahoma Press.
7. Lijphart, A. (1999). *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. Yale University Press.
8. Fukuyama, F. (2004). *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century*. Cornell University Press.
9. Held, D. (1995). *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance*. Stanford University Press.
10. North, D. C. (1990). *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge University Press.

Suggested Reading

1. Almond, G. A., & Powell, G. B. (1996). *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach*. Little, Brown.
2. Dahl, R. A. (1971). *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. Yale University Press.
3. Norris, P. (2011). *Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited*. Cambridge University Press.
4. Linz, J. J., & Stepan, A. (1996). *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
5. Rodrik, D. (2011). *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the World Economy*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



BLOCK 2
Forms of State and
Regime Types

UNIT 1

Democratic State

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, learners will be able to:

- explain the historical development and evolution of democratic states, including their roots in ancient civilizations
- distinguish between different types of democracy, such as direct and representative, and their application in various countries
- identify the key conditions for the success of democracy and their relevance in modern political systems
- evaluate the merits and demerits of democracy as a system of governance in different socio-political contexts, and
- analyze the factors contributing to the stability or instability of democratic states, with examples from around the world

Background

Democracy, as a concept and system of governance, has evolved over centuries, influencing the political landscape globally. Although widely associated with ancient Greece, democratic traditions existed in various forms, including India's Vedic period, where local self-governance through panchayats was practiced. Over time, democracy developed from direct participation in decision-making to representative systems, where elected officials govern on behalf of the people.

The success of democracy depends on several factors, including political awareness, education, equality, and freedom. While democracy ensures individual rights and fosters public participation, it also faces challenges like corruption, instability, and the influence of wealth in politics. Modern democracies strive to balance individual freedoms with the collective good, emphasizing cooperation, decentralization, and effective governance.

Democracy is often contrasted with other forms of government, such as autocracies and monarchies, due to its focus on inclusivity and accountability. Despite its flaws, democracy remains a preferred system for ensuring equality, fairness, and public involvement. This unit delves into the principles, practices, and challenges of democratic states, offering insights into their functioning and significance in today's interconnected world.

Keywords

Democracy, Representative Democracy, Direct Democracy, Accountability, Equality, Sovereignty, Decentralization, Good Governance, Political Awareness, Social Security

Discussion

□ Democratic Tradition

While historical records suggest that democracy began 2,500 years ago in ancient Greek city-states, democratic institutions existed in India much earlier, during the Vedic period. Texts like Chanakya's *Arthashastra* and Shukracharya's *Nitisara* describe self-governing village communities led by a panchayat. These councils were responsible for local governance, and accountability was an essential part of the system. In the 19th and 20th centuries, representative parliaments became the core of democratic governments. Democratic ideals played a crucial role in anti-colonial movements and helped shape the modern welfare state. Instead, it evolved as both a political system and a set of ideals, shaped by the progress of civilization after the Renaissance.

□ Authority of the People

2.1.1 Democratic State

According to Hearnshaw, "a democratic state is simply one in which the community as a whole possesses sovereign authority, maintains ultimate control over affairs, and determines what sort of governmental machinery shall be set up because democracy as a form of state is not merely a mode of government; but is merely a mode of appointing, controlling, and dismissing government." This means that in a democratic state, the people have the right to shape the government, choose its leaders, and remove them if necessary. Through elections, citizens select a new government after a set period, and they also have the opportunity to voice their opinions on key issues through the press or other channels.

2.1.2 Types of Democracy

Generally, there are two types of democracy: (1) Direct, and (2) Indirect or Representative.

2.1.2.1 Direct Democracy

When citizens themselves directly participate in decision-making on public matters, the system of governance is known as pure or direct democracy. In this form of democracy, laws are created through public gatherings and discussions. According

Direct Participation in Decision Making

to Hearnshaw, "A democratic form of government, in the strict sense of the term, is one in which the community as a whole, directly or immediately, without agents or representatives, performs the functions of sovereignty." Direct democracy first emerged in the city-states of ancient Greece. In India, it was practiced in the Vajji Sangha during the Buddhist era. However, with the expansion of states and the increasing complexity of societies, implementing direct democracy on a large scale has become impractical. Today, this system is limited to only four cantons in Switzerland: Appenzell, Uri, Unterwalden, and Glarus.

2.1.2.2 Indirect or Representative Democracy

Role of the Elected Representatives

In a Representative or Indirect Democracy, the authority to make decisions and shape state policies is not exercised directly by the people but is entrusted to elected representatives. These individuals are given the responsibility of deliberation and decision-making on behalf of the citizens. According to John Stuart Mill, "indirect or representative democracy is one in which the whole people or some numerous portion of them exercise the governing power through deputies periodically elected by themselves." Bluntschli said that "in representative democracy, the rule is that the people govern through its officials; while it legislates and controls the administration through its representatives." This system of governance was first implemented in England during the seventeenth century. France adopted it in 1830, while Italy embraced it in 1948. In Germany, it was introduced following the First World War through the Weimar Constitution and later reestablished in West Germany after the Second World War. In India, elements of direct democracy were incorporated through the Minto-Morley Reforms of 1909. Today, representative democracy is practiced in numerous countries, including Japan, Sri Lanka, India, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Germany, Italy, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Austria, and Belgium.

2.1.3 Conditions for the Success of Democracy

Power of the People

Democracy is a form of government where people have the power to choose their leaders and take part in decision-making. It gives citizens the right to vote, express their opinions, and enjoy personal freedoms. However, for democracy to work well and last over time, certain conditions must be met. It is not enough just to have elections; the system also needs to be supported by values, institutions, and people's active participation.

Importance of Educated People

Sound System of Education : Democracy works best when people are educated because it requires certain qualities to succeed. Literacy helps citizens understand political issues and develop important values like sacrifice, sympathy, discipline, and unity. Education should be accessible to everyone, rich or poor, so that all individuals have equal opportunities for growth. It also helps people improve their mental and physical well-being and find jobs, reducing unemployment, which can be harmful to democracy. In short, education plays a key role in shaping responsible citizens, and without it, democracy cannot thrive.

Importance of Political Awareness

Enlightened Citizenship : For a democracy to work well, people must know their rights and responsibilities. If citizens do not fulfill their duties, democracy cannot succeed. Just as duties are important, being aware of one's rights is equally necessary. Without this awareness, there is a risk of the government becoming authoritarian.

Right to Freedom

Political Awakening : To make democracy successful, people must be aware of politics. Without political awareness, they may not understand important issues or choose the right leaders. Lack of interest in politics also makes it harder for citizens to grasp economic and political challenges or support national development and defense efforts.

All Individuals are Equal

Freedom : Democracy gives people the right to express their opinions, choose their professions, follow any religion, and form groups. A free and fearless press is essential to prevent the government from becoming too powerful. In places where the press is restricted, citizens cannot openly criticize the government, which limits their freedom.

Maintenance of Law and Order

Equality : Democracy treats everyone equally, without dividing people into different classes. It is based on social, economic, and political fairness. In a democracy, all individuals are equal under the law, and there is no discrimination based on caste, religion, gender, skin color, or financial status. Economic equality does not mean everyone gets the same income, but rather that everyone has equal opportunities and a fair chance to succeed. This fairness ensures social justice, which is essential for democracy. Equality in democracy means that every person has the right to vote and run for elections, regardless of their background.

Law and Order: For democracy to work well, the government must maintain law and order in society. If it fails to do so, chaos spreads, and people lose confidence in the government. In such situations, they may prefer a dictatorship to restore stability.

❑ Public Cooperation

Spirit of Co-operation : Every democracy faces various economic, social, religious, and political challenges. In a dictatorship, the ruler makes decisions based on personal wishes, and in an absolute monarchy, the situation is similar. However, in a democracy, leaders like the Prime Minister or President cannot act on their own; they must follow the decisions of Parliament and the will of the people. These challenges can be overcome through public cooperation. Democracy thrives when there is mutual understanding and teamwork between the government and the people.

❑ Democratic Decentralization

Decentralization of Powers and Local Self-Government: For democracy to succeed, power must be shared rather than controlled by a single authority. When too much power is concentrated, the government can become authoritarian. Dividing responsibilities between the central and regional governments reduces the central government's workload and gives local authorities more independence, leading to better administration. Local self-government also encourages people to participate in governance and support the government.

❑ Stability in Social and Economic Conditions

Social and Economic Security : A stable economy is important for democracy to thrive. People should have the right to work, and it is the government's responsibility to provide suitable jobs. If the government cannot offer employment, it should at least ensure basic needs like food, clothing, and shelter. Social security is also crucial. Nowadays, the government sets work hours, salaries, bonuses, paid leaves, and compensation for workplace accidents to protect workers from exploitation. Additionally, the government should support people who become unable to work due to old age, illness, or accidents. Without these measures, democracy would not be meaningful.

❑ Role of the People in Democracy

Tolerance and Spirit of Unity: People play a key role in making democracy successful. For this, unity and tolerance are essential. In a diverse country like India, where people follow different religions, speak various languages, and belong to different castes, these values become even more important. Despite differences, everyone should come together during times of national crisis. If the country faces an external threat, people must set aside differences in caste, religion, language, and region, and work with dedication and sacrifice to protect their nation's freedom.

Sound Party System: In a democracy, different opinions are not only accepted but also encouraged because constructive criticism plays a vital role. This is why multiple political parties exist in a democratic system. In countries where only one party is allowed and others are banned, democracy cannot grow, and

Political Stability

Constitutional Safeguards

Maintenance of People's Trust

dictatorship takes over. This happened in Germany under Hitler and in Italy during Mussolini's rule. Similar dictatorships were seen in Russia, China, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Poland. For democracy to work well, a strong and effective opposition is necessary; otherwise, the ruling party may become authoritarian after winning elections.

Written Constitution and Independent Judiciary: For democracy to function properly, people are given fundamental rights, and written constitutions are created to prevent the government from becoming too powerful. Without a written constitution, the government can misuse its authority. The judiciary protects both the constitution and people's rights, and its independence from the government is ensured. If the judiciary is not free from government control, fundamental rights cannot be protected, and the constitution loses its importance.

Independent, Impartial, and Periodical Elections: Free, fair, and regular elections are important to maintain people's trust in democracy. They also give opposition parties a fair chance to form a government and ensure that public opinion is valued. Without such elections, opposition parties may attempt to overthrow the government through military action or violence.

2.1.4 Merits of Democracy

1. Democracy pays special heed to the interests of the common man. In other types of government, some groups receive special benefits, but democracy ensures equal treatment for all. It prioritizes the well-being of ordinary citizens, making it the most just and effective form of government.
2. Democracy is based on equality. In a democracy, no group is given special privileges. Everyone is treated equally, without discrimination based on gender, race, caste, or religion.
3. Democracy is the greatest upholder of the lofty ideals of liberty and fraternity. The freedom people have in a democracy is greater than in any other type of government.
4. Democracy is based on public opinion. Democracy gives people the greatest opportunity to participate in governing themselves. Their elected representatives manage the administration, and laws are made based on the people's wishes. The Council of Ministers is accountable to the legislature, ensuring that the government prioritizes public welfare.

5. Democracy minimizes the chances of revolution. In a democracy, the chance of a revolution is very low because: (a) public opinion is valued, (b) the government focuses on the well-being of the people, (c) no class is given special privileges, and (d) everyone has equal opportunities to improve themselves.
6. Democracy serves as a training school for good citizenship. Democracy teaches discipline, kindness, empathy, cooperation, and generosity. In a democracy, the government is run by elected representatives, and they gain valuable experience and training in leadership.
7. Democracy is an efficient form of government. In a democracy, elected representatives manage the government and avoid wrongdoing because they are accountable to both Parliament and the people. They seek expert advice for efficient governance and consider media criticism seriously. Public opinion keeps them in check, preventing excessive spending and ensuring the government follows economic principles.
8. Democracy raises the moral standard of the people. In a dictatorship or absolute monarchy, ordinary people are seen as unfit to lead and are denied rights. However, in a democracy, the government believes that the people hold the highest power and that their leadership is important. That is why all adults have the right to vote, and elections are held regularly. This helps people understand their power and develop a sense of responsibility, as choosing the wrong leaders can negatively impact governance.
9. Democracy gives political education to the people. In a democracy, every adult has the right to vote. Anyone can stand for elections, regardless of their caste, religion, gender, property, or education. Different opinions are accepted, and people have the freedom to express their thoughts and beliefs. This leads to the formation of many political parties. Elections are held regularly to choose which party will govern. During elections, parties share their plans with the public, drawing attention to political, economic, and social issues. Party workers help voters reach polling stations and guide them on how to vote. This process helps people understand and participate in democracy.
10. Democracy encourages patriotism and national unity while keeping people interested in governance. Citizens feel in-

volved because they elect their representatives to run the government. This participation makes them responsible and strengthens their sense of patriotism. As a result, they actively engage in administrative matters. There is no big gap between the government and the people, and they feel like contributors to their country's development.

2.1.5 Demerits of Democracy

1. Democracy is the rule of incompetent persons. Some people believe that democracy allows unqualified or uneducated individuals to take part in governance. According to Plato, administration is an art that cannot be acquired by the common man. Only intelligent and competent persons can fully understand the administration, but democracy is the rule of illiterate persons. Aristotle has called democracy a perverted form of government.
2. Democracy hinders the progress of civilization and culture. Henry Maine, Lecky, and Treitschke argue that democracy slows down cultural and civilization progress. They believe that ordinary people tend to have traditional views and resist change. In their opinion, aristocracy is where culture and civilization thrive. According to Burns, "The civilization which a democracy produces is said to be banal, mediocre, or dull."
3. Democracy gives more importance to quantity rather than quality. Democracy is often criticized for focusing on numbers rather than quality. Election results depend on the number of votes a candidate receives, regardless of the voters' knowledge or wisdom. In Parliament, laws are passed based on majority votes, without giving special consideration to the opinions of educated individuals.
4. In a democracy, administration is very costly. Elections cost a lot of money, which could be used for more important purposes. They also create chaos and disruptions. Additionally, maintaining multiple legislative bodies and ministries adds to the high costs. Democracies often lack the incentive to save money.
5. Capitalists exercise a dominant influence on democracy. In a democracy, wealthy capitalists have significant influence. They fund political parties likely to win elections and later shape laws in their favor. Since they own many newspapers and industries, they also control the media and the econo-

my. In the U.S., this system is often called "Dollar Democracy." Similarly, capitalists hold power in India, England, and other democratic countries.

6. Political parties disturb social harmony and increase corruption. During elections, winning votes becomes more important than moral values. Campaigns often mislead and misinform people. After winning, the ruling party may become authoritarian, and elected leaders prioritize their party's interests over the public. To gain voter support, the government may take unnecessary actions. As a result, dishonest individuals gain power, and corruption weakens the country's moral standards.
7. In a democracy, the majority holds power, which can sometimes lead to unfairness. The majority may become authoritarian and ignore the rights of minorities, creating an oppressive system.
8. Democratic governments can sometimes be unstable, especially in a multi-party system. For example, during the Third and Fourth Republics in France, the government faced instability. Similarly, in Kerala, frequent instability led to the imposition of President's Rule multiple times.
9. Democracy is often an ideal rather than a reality. According to Oswald Spengler and Burke, "Government by the people is a sheer impossibility" or "Democratic equality is a monstrous fiction." Most people do not have the expertise to understand complex governance issues. Leaders are chosen by the general public, many of whom lack experience and knowledge. In the end, a small group holds actual power in a democracy. For example, in England, the Cabinet handles most of the administration, while Parliament plays a secondary role.
10. Democracy often sees local conflicts taking priority over national interests. In the struggle for power and favors, the country's overall well-being is affected. Elected representatives focus on gaining benefits for their own areas, sometimes neglecting the nation's broader needs.

Summarised Overview

The unit explores the origins, types, and functioning of democratic states. Beginning with historical references to democratic practices in ancient Greece and India, it outlines the evolution of democracy into direct and representative forms. While direct democracy involves direct public participation in decision-making, representative democracy relies on elected officials to govern. Examples of both types are discussed, highlighting their applications in different historical and modern contexts.

The success of democracy depends on factors such as education, freedom, equality, political awareness, and decentralization. It is presented as a system that ensures public participation and accountability but is also critiqued for potential flaws like corruption, instability, and dominance by capitalist interests. The importance of cooperation, effective governance, and law enforcement in sustaining democracy is emphasized.

This unit also examines democracy's merits, such as equality, public participation, and opportunities for leadership development, alongside its demerits, including high costs, potential instability, and the influence of the majority. By analyzing these aspects, the unit provides a comprehensive understanding of democratic states and their role in promoting liberty, equality, and justice globally.

Assignments

1. Explain the historical roots of democracy, highlighting its development in ancient Greece and India.
2. Distinguish between direct and representative democracy with examples from history and modern governance.
3. What are the key conditions necessary for the success of democracy? Provide relevant examples.
4. Analyze the role of education and political awareness in strengthening democratic states.
5. Discuss the concept of decentralization in democracy and its impact on governance.
6. Evaluate the advantages of democracy as a system of governance.
7. What are the major criticisms of democracy, and how can they be addressed?
8. How does democracy ensure equality, and what challenges does it face in achieving this goal?
9. Examine the influence of wealth and capitalism on democratic governance.
10. Compare the stability of democratic states with other forms of government, citing specific examples.

Reference

1. Johari, J. C. (2009). *Comparative Politics*. Sterling Publishers.
2. Bhagawan, V., & Bhushan, V. (2012). *World Constitutions: A Comparative Study*. Sterling Publishers.
3. Agarwal, R. C. (2012). *Political Theory: Principles of Political Science*. S. Chand & Company.
4. Agarwal, R. C. (2008). *Principles of Political Science*. S. Chand & Company.

Suggested Reading

1. Lipset, Seymour Martin. *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*.
2. Huntington, Samuel P. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*.
3. Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom*.
4. Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*.
5. Held, David. *Models of Democracy*.
6. Sartori, Giovanni. *The Theory of Democracy Revisited*.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU

UNIT 2

Authoritarian and Military Regime

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, learners will be able to:

- explain the characteristics and features of authoritarian and military regimes, distinguishing them from democratic systems
- analyze the causes and conditions that favor military interventions in politics.
- evaluate the levels and types of military involvement in governance, including direct and indirect rule
- identify the impact of authoritarian and military regimes on political stability, social structures, and civil liberties
- critically assess the criticisms and challenges associated with authoritarian and military rule in different contexts

Background

Authoritarian and military regimes represent forms of governance that contrast sharply with democratic ideals. Authoritarianism centralizes power in the hands of a single leader or a small group, with limited accountability to the public. It prioritizes obedience to authority, restricts individual freedoms, and often suppresses political opposition. Unlike totalitarian systems, which seek complete control over all aspects of life, authoritarian regimes may allow limited personal or economic freedoms while maintaining strict political control.

Military regimes, a subset of authoritarian systems, emerge when the military either directly seizes power or indirectly influences governance. Such regimes often justify their actions as necessary to restore order or implement reforms. While military rulers claim efficiency and stability, their governance is often marked by repression and limited public participation. Over time, military interventions in politics have been influenced by factors such as political instability, weak civilian governments, and ideological conflicts between military and civilian leaders.

The aftermath of World War II saw a rise in authoritarian and military regimes, particularly in developing regions like Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia. Many of these regimes suppressed democratic institutions and restricted civil rights, relying on

military power and systematic repression. This unit explores the characteristics, types, and impacts of these regimes, shedding light on their causes and consequences. It also addresses criticisms of military rule, emphasizing its challenges in promoting inclusive governance and long-term stability.

Keywords

Authoritarianism, Military Regime, Totalitarianism, Legitimacy, Political Stability, Nationalism, Pluralism, Elite Rule, Ideological Conflict

Discussion

2.2.1 Authoritarian Government

Authoritarianism is a type of government often associated with dictatorship, as opposed to democracy. It is based on strict obedience to authority and limits individual freedom in decision-making. In this system, power is concentrated in one leader or a small group that is not accountable to the public. Unlike totalitarian regimes, authoritarian governments do not always follow a strong ideology. They allow some social diversity but generally lack the ability to unite the nation for common goals. Leaders often use their power as they wish and may act above the law. Modern authoritarian governments are usually controlled by a single dominant party that oversees key areas like the economy, media, and education. They do not hold fair elections, making it hard or impossible for people to form opposition groups or parties.

Centralization of Power

An authoritarian political system is a form of government where individual freedom is strictly limited, and all power is held by either a single leader or a small group. These rulers are not legally required to answer to the public. According to Almond and Powell, “authoritarian governments are those in which executive, legislative, and judicial power is concentrated and in which the agents of government are not chosen in popular competitive elections.”

Consent of the People

Democratic and authoritarian governments differ in both their goals and methods. In an authoritarian system, rulers decide what is best for individuals and impose their values on society, regardless of public opinion. This type of government demands complete obedience and control, opposing democratic principles. Authority, in contrast, is power that is accepted willingly by the people and is considered legitimate. Democratic governments

operate with this kind of authority, where power comes from the consent of the people. However, when a government exercises power without public approval and relies on force, it becomes authoritarian, meaning power is imposed from above.

Authoritarian rule is common in absolute monarchies, traditional dictatorships, single-party states, and military governments. These systems suppress opposition and restrict political freedom. However, they are different from totalitarian regimes, which seek complete control over all aspects of life, including politics, society, and culture. Totalitarianism, a 20th-century phenomenon, was seen in regimes like Italian Fascism, German Nazism, and Stalinist Russia. While all totalitarian regimes are authoritarian, not all authoritarian governments are totalitarian. Unlike totalitarian systems, authoritarian governments do not try to eliminate the divide between the state and society. They often allow some economic, religious, and personal freedoms while maintaining strict political control.

❑ Limited Political Freedom

❑ Modern Authoritarian Rule

❑ Two Forms of Military Rule

2.2.1.1 Forms of Authoritarian Regimes

Military Dictatorship: This is the most common type of modern authoritarian rule. Military involvement in politics usually happens for two main reasons. First, there is often a close connection between military leaders, government officials, and political institutions. Second, in cases where civilian governments are well-established and widely accepted, the chances of the military successfully taking over are very low—even within the military itself.

Direct and Indirect Military Rule: Military rule can take two forms: direct or indirect. In direct rule, the military openly governs the country. In indirect rule, the military influences politics through control, negotiation, or by having the power to reject decisions (veto). This type of influence is seen in some countries that appear democratic but are actually controlled by the military. To gain some level of public support, these regimes may allow elections at national or local levels. Examples of countries with such political systems include Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Uruguay, Guatemala, and Colombia.

2.2.1.2 Characteristics of Authoritarian Regimes

1. Authoritarian governments have enough power to ignore constitutional limits.
2. Leaders in these regimes do not always claim authority from public consent but rather from special qualities they say they have.
3. Since authoritarian rule is based on force, it often uses vi-

olence against citizens, who have little say in governance. Power remains tightly controlled, and leadership changes are often neither smooth nor peaceful.

4. These regimes may also use force in dealing with other countries. Since they do not involve the public in decision-making, they are not influenced by public opinion, which makes them less likely to support international peace.
5. Political participation is low in authoritarian systems. The ruling elite prefer to keep citizens disengaged, which aligns with their mindset and the limited political diversity they allow.
6. Unlike democratic systems, which allow broad political diversity, authoritarian regimes permit only limited pluralism. This restriction may be legal or informal and can apply strictly to political groups or extend to other organizations.
7. Political leaders in such systems are not legally accountable to the people, even if they occasionally respond to public needs. In contrast, democratic governments depend on public support for legitimacy.

2.2.1.3 Authoritarian Regimes after World War II

After World War II, authoritarian regimes were mostly established in developing countries across Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia. However, some Western nations like Spain, Portugal, and Greece also experienced such rule. These regimes relied more on military power and systematic repression rather than political, economic, cultural, or ideological factors. Democratic institutions were either weakened or completely abolished, leaving people without political and legal rights. Many of these regimes were controlled by military juntas, where officers from the army, navy, and air force held power. Examples include Argentina from 1978 to 1983 and present-day Myanmar. In some cases, a single military leader dominated the regime, using personal authority and a strong public image to maintain control. Leaders like Colonel Papadopoulos in Greece, General Pinochet in Chile, General Abacha in Nigeria, General Zia-ul-Haq in Pakistan, Ft. Lt. Jerry Rawlings in Ghana, and Sergeant Samuel Doe in Liberia are key examples of such rule.

❑ Developing Nations and Authoritarian Regimes

Another form of authoritarian rule involves civilian governments that survive mainly because of military support. In these cases, the military prefers to stay in the background while controlling power through civilian leaders. For example,

❑ Transition from Military Rule to Authoritarian Regime

❑ Military Involvement in Politics

❑ Direct and Indirect Military Rule

❑ Limitations in Democratic Reforms

Mobutu took power in Zaire through a military coup in 1965 but later allowed the army to withdraw from direct politics. Similarly, Egypt transitioned from military rule to authoritarian civilian leadership under Gamal Abdel Nasser and Anwar Sadat in the 1960s and 1970s.

2.2.2 Military Regime

In recent times, many social and political thinkers have shown interest in the relationship between the military and politics. This topic is important because today, almost no country is completely safe from military involvement in politics, especially when facing internal chaos or external threats. History shows that while military rule is more common in poorer and less developed countries (often referred to as the Third World), even advanced Western nations are not entirely free from it. Whether the military steps in temporarily to fix problems and support the government or takes over through a coup for the long term, it usually leads to rule by a small group of powerful leaders who are not limited by the constitution. This goes against the principles of democracy, even if these leaders claim they are acting to protect the people from crisis and promote their well-being.

Military rule can take two forms: direct and indirect. It is direct when military leaders take full control, with no civilian government, and make all major decisions. Indirect military rule happens when the military influences a civilian government, shaping its policies to fit their interests. In such cases, the government may be considered partly civilian and partly military, as the military exercises power from behind the scenes. This can happen temporarily for a specific purpose or as a long-term system after removing a civilian government. The hidden influence of military rule allows military leaders to stay in a secure position while still enjoying power. Any attempt to challenge their strong control is rarely successful because civilian leaders, including the President, Prime Minister, and Ministers, often protect their influence. On the other hand, direct military rule is openly undemocratic and is usually justified as a temporary measure needed to implement long-pending reforms that the people want.

Military rule can be of two types when viewed in relation to constitutional principles. It can either be a temporary arrangement to support a constitutional government or a long-term system under a totalitarian regime. In the first case, people do not strongly oppose military rule because they see it as a temporary solution to a serious national crisis. However, in the second case, military rule becomes authoritarian, using oppressive tactics and ignoring basic human rights. Sometimes,

such regimes introduce limited democratic reforms to make their rule appear legitimate. Over time, military governments may extend their control to include aspects of governance typically found in democratic states.

A military government may or may not be considered an authoritarian regime, even if it has features of a totalitarian system. To differentiate between the two, it can be noted that authoritarian regimes often involve a coalition led mainly by military officers and bureaucrats, but not entirely controlled by them. These regimes do not follow a fixed ideology and make decisions based on practical considerations within their bureaucratic mindset. Unlike totalitarian rule, they do not create or support a dominant mass political party. While some operate without political parties, others form a government-backed single party. However, instead of actively involving people in politics, these parties often limit public participation, even in a controlled manner, to maintain power.

❑ Limitation in Public Participation

❑ Huntington's Classification

❑ Impact of Political Institutions

❑ Social and Economic Structure and the Country

2.2.2.1 Types of Military Intervention

The military's involvement in a country's politics becomes clear during a coup, which can either bring significant change or have little noticeable impact on everyday life. Well-known American sociologist Samuel P. Huntington identifies three types of coups in this context.

1. Palace Revolution

This happens when the government's leadership changes, but there is no major impact on the social structure, political groups, or institutions that support the government. A good example of this is France's transition from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic in 1958.

2. Revolutionary Coup

This type of coup brings major changes, not just in leadership but in the country's social and economic structure. Unlike a regular coup that only shifts power internally, a revolutionary coup aims to reshape the political system by weakening or removing certain groups while strengthening others. A key example is Colonel Nasser's revolution in Egypt in July 1952, which completely dismantled the old political system and transformed the socio-economic structure. When a coup turns into a full-scale revolution, it often leads to violence as the new government suppresses opposition from social, political, and military groups. In many cases, this results in civil war. While a revolutionary war is an external uprising, a revolutionary coup

involves intense conflict within the government and society, with the government launching a swift takeover and then struggling to maintain control.

3. Reform Coup:

This type of coup is a mix of the two mentioned earlier. A group of military and civilian leaders takes control with the goal of introducing political, economic, and social reforms. While they do bring some changes, they do not trigger a full-scale revolution. Over time, the coalition that led the coup starts to weaken, and new alliances form with opposition groups. As a result, the pace of change slows down, and eventually, another coup occurs, bringing a new group to power with its own vision for reform.

❑ Mixed form of Coup

2.2.2.2 Causes of Military Intervention

No country is completely safe from military intervention, but when it leads to a long-term totalitarian rule, it is mainly influenced by political and social factors. Politically, the chances of military involvement increase if constitutional rules allow military officers to hold government positions or if a weak civilian government relies on military support for decision-making or to suppress opposition. Socially, a lack of strong public opinion and political awareness, along with declining trust in civilian leaders, further motivates the military to take control, often justifying their actions as a response to corruption and poor governance. In such cases, the military steps in when other leadership groups are weak, absent, or indifferent, taking on roles beyond their original purpose to manage crises in a changing society.

❑ Social and Political Factors

S.E. Finer states that military involvement in a country's politics is influenced by several key factors.

1. **Professionalization of the officer corps:** The disciplined nature of army officers usually keeps them away from politics. However, if they experience deep frustration, their training and professionalism may drive them to intervene in the country's political affairs.
2. **Nationalism and Nation-State:** Nationalism gives the military a strong sense of duty and shared values, as they play a key role in protecting the nation and upholding its principles. When nationalism is deeply rooted in society, the armed forces become a symbol of national identity and independence, earning respect and admiration from the people.

3. **Defence of Popular Sovereignty:** Democracy is based on the well-known idea that the people's voice is supreme. This means that any group, including the military, can claim to be a legitimate government if they gain even a small amount of public support. As a result, different factions may try to take power in the name of the people. This creates an opportunity for the military to step in, take control, and justify their actions by claiming to represent the people's sovereignty.
4. **Emergence of an Insurrectionary Army :** An army fighting to free its homeland or change the social system often earns great respect from the people. The officers in such an army follow a basic ideology and gain strength from public support, claiming to represent the entire nation. Intellectuals, scholars, and national leaders may join them, surprising others with their military, administrative, and diplomatic skills. While they might disband after achieving their goal, they can still step into politics at any time to protect the outcomes of their revolution.
5. **Widespread Chaos in a State Emancipated from Colonial Subjection :** When a country faces severe social, economic, and political conflicts, the military often steps in, claiming to act in the name of nationalism and the people's will. This is especially common in newly independent nations that have recently freed themselves from colonial rule. Military intervention becomes more likely when strong nationalist feelings among the people combine with the need for a powerful central government—something that civilian leaders struggle to achieve.

2.2.2.3 Levels of Military Intervention

Military involvement in a country's politics can be seen at four levels: influence, blackmail, displacement, and supplantment.

1. **Influence:** Military leaders try to shape the decisions of civilian leaders. Like other powerful groups in society, they work to protect their interests by advising or pressuring policymakers.
2. **Blackmail:** If civilian leaders do not follow their suggestions, the military may threaten to resign or take other actions to force compliance.
3. **Displacement:** The military can push for changes in gov-

ernment positions, such as reshuffling the cabinet, transferring, or even removing officials who oppose them. This strengthens their control over civilian administration.

4. **Suppliment:** In the final stage, the military completely takes over, removing the civilian government and establishing its own rule.

These levels show a gradual increase in military involvement, from influencing decisions to fully controlling the government.

2.2.2.4 Favoring Conditions for Military Interventions

To better understand the reasons behind military intervention in a country's politics, three key factors should be considered: the military's professionalism, the legitimacy of the political system, and the strength of the ruling ideology.

1. **Military Professionalism:** When the military is highly professionalized, it becomes separate from society and forms its own class, trained and capable of taking power. This leads to a unique mindset that may not align with civilian ideology. However, if military personnel come from diverse backgrounds and are organized into different units, this separation can be reduced, preventing any one section from becoming too dominant.
2. **Legitimacy of the Political System:** If a government is unstable and has lost public trust, it creates an opportunity for military leaders to take control. In many cases, such coups not only remove the weakened government but also gain public support, helping the new regime establish itself quickly.
3. **Ideological Conflict:** If there is a major disagreement between the military and civilian leaders, and the gap cannot be bridged, power may ultimately be decided by force. If the government's policies are unpopular, it strengthens the military's position and encourages them to take over and implement their own vision.

2.2.2.5 Criticism

1. **Elite Control in Military Rule:** Military rule is a form of governance where power is concentrated in the hands of a select group of leaders. Although they may involve other important groups in decision-making, this inclusion is usually temporary. As a result, military rule does not truly

support a diverse political system. It is neither fully inclusive nor completely authoritarian but falls somewhere in between.

2. **Lack of a Clear Ideology :** Military rule does not have a specific ideology, even though its leaders may claim otherwise. In reality, different ideologies often clash under such a system. Sometimes, military rulers adopt an ideology for strategic reasons rather than genuine belief. This is evident even when they create or support a political party under their control.
3. **Negative Impact of Military Rule:** Military rule is harmful, despite its promises of clean and efficient governance. Even after removing a corrupt government, internal conflicts within the military can lead to further instability. These power struggles create more insecurity, making the situation worse than before. In the end, military rule poses a constant threat to people's freedom and safety.

Summarised Overview

The unit examines the features, causes, and consequences of authoritarian and military regimes. Authoritarianism is characterized by centralized power, limited accountability, and restricted freedoms, while military regimes involve direct or indirect military control over governance. The unit highlights the different types of military intervention, such as coups, and their varying impacts on society and governance.

The conditions that favor military involvement include political instability, weak civilian governments, and ideological conflicts. The professionalization of the military, coupled with a lack of trust in civilian leadership, often paves the way for interventions. Military regimes can take forms ranging from short-term crisis management to long-term authoritarian rule, often justified as necessary for national stability.

The unit also critiques military rule, addressing its lack of clear ideology, temporary inclusivity, and potential for internal conflicts. While some regimes have been able to maintain order, they often fail to promote inclusiveness and long-term development, creating challenges for political and social stability. The discussion emphasizes the complexities and trade-offs of authoritarian and military governance in various contexts.

Assignments

1. Define authoritarianism and discuss its key features.
2. How does authoritarianism differ from totalitarianism? Provide examples.
3. Explain the causes and conditions that favor military interventions in politics.
4. Analyze the levels of military involvement in governance, from influence to full control.
5. Compare direct and indirect military rule, highlighting their implications for governance.
6. Discuss the characteristics of authoritarian regimes established after World War II.
7. What role does nationalism play in military interventions and regimes?
8. Evaluate the criticisms of military rule in terms of its impact on civil liberties and governance.
9. Explain the concept of a "revolutionary coup" and provide historical examples.
10. Discuss the challenges associated with transitioning from military rule to civilian governance.

Reference

1. Johari, J. C. (2009). *Comparative Politics*. Sterling Publishers.
2. Bhagawan, V., & Bhushan, V. (2012). *World Constitutions: A Comparative Study*. Sterling Publishers.
3. Agarwal, R. C. (2012). *Political Theory: Principles of Political Science*. S. Chand & Company.
4. Agarwal, R. C. (2008). *Principles of Political Science*. S. Chand & Company.
5. Ekiert, Grzegorz (2023). *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the 21st Century: A Sketch*. Harvard University.

Suggested Reading

1. O'Donnell, G. (1973). *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism*.
2. Barany, Z. (2012). *The Soldier and the Changing State: Building Democratic Armies in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas*.
3. Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. (2006). *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*.
4. Finer, S. E. (1976). *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*.
5. Linz, J. J. (2000). *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU

UNIT 3

Post-colonial States

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, learners will be able to:

- explain the historical emergence and evolution of post-colonial states
- analyze the impact of colonization and decolonization on political, social, and economic systems in post-colonial nations
- evaluate various theoretical perspectives on post-colonial states, including liberal, modernization, and dependency theories
- assess the challenges faced by post-colonial states in achieving stability, unity, and development
- explore the role of globalization in shaping the contemporary dynamics of post-colonial states

Background

Post-colonial states refer to nations that gained independence after being under colonial rule for extended periods. The concept of the modern state originated in Europe and was introduced to other parts of the world through colonization. European powers like Spain, Britain, and France imposed their systems of governance, legal institutions, and cultural values on the colonized regions. This process disrupted indigenous traditions and exploited local populations, leading to significant social and economic inequalities.

The decolonization waves in the 19th and 20th centuries resulted in the emergence of numerous post-colonial states in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. While independence brought hope and the promise of self-rule, it also exposed challenges like political instability, economic dependency, and ethnic fragmentation. Theories like liberal, modernization, and dependency perspectives sought to explain the struggles and aspirations of post-colonial states. These perspectives highlighted issues such as the centralization of power, external economic exploitation, and the role of elites in governance.

In the contemporary era, globalization has further influenced the trajectory of post-colonial states. Neoliberal reforms, the rise of transnational corporations, and the involvement of international financial institutions like the World Bank and IMF

have reshaped economic and political structures. While globalization has opened new opportunities, it has also deepened inequalities and reinforced dependencies on advanced capitalist nations. This unit delves into the historical development, theoretical interpretations, and modern challenges of post-colonial states, offering insights into their complex and evolving nature.

Keywords

Post-Colonial States, Decolonization, Dependency Theory, Modernization, Globalization, Neo-Colonialism, Sovereignty, Comprador Class, Nationalism, Economic Exploitation

Discussion

□ Meaning of Post-Colonial States

Post-colonial states are countries that were once under foreign rule and later gained independence. These nations endured a long and difficult struggle to establish themselves after years of colonial control. The concept of a "state" developed in Europe and was then introduced to other parts of the world through colonization. European powers like Spain, Britain, and France explored new lands, created colonies, and imposed their own systems of governance, legal institutions, and constitutions. As these colonial empires expanded, many modern nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America emerged from them. Colonizers took over foreign lands, gradually asserting control over the native population. They imposed their customs, traditions, and way of life while suppressing local cultures, often labeling them as "backward." Over time, colonial rulers attempted to erase indigenous traditions and replace them with their own practices.

□ Independence Movements and Waves of Decolonization

2.3.1 Emergence of Post-Colonial State

At first, some natives sided with the colonial rulers, looking down on their own culture and imitating their foreign masters. However, over time, some among the indigenous population stood up to defend their heritage. The open discrimination by colonial rulers made the local people realize they were being exploited in their own land. This led to independence movements and waves of decolonization. Latin American countries under Spanish and Portuguese rule gained independence in the early 19th century. The struggle was mainly to replace monarchies with republics, but the results were mixed. Many newly independent states faced instability, leading to authoritarian regimes. While new constitutions were introduced, they were often undemocratic and poorly implemented. Economic exploitation of the native population, the poor, and descendants of slaves continued.

❑ Wave of Decolonization

Inspired by the American and French Revolutions, the Latin American wars of independence led to the formation of many new nations. Haiti gained independence in 1804, followed by Brazil, which ended Portuguese rule in 1823 and became a republic in 1889. Uruguay declared independence in 1825. Soon after, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Argentina, Paraguay, Chile, Peru, and Bolivia also became independent nations. The second wave of post-colonial states emerged in Europe and the Middle East after World War I, following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian, Russian, and Ottoman empires. The Austro-Hungarian Empire, for example, broke apart into five separate nations: Austria, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. During this period, the rise of communism and fascism introduced new ideas about the structure of the state in Europe. The third wave of decolonization saw countries in Asia, such as India and the Philippines, gaining independence. Many African nations also achieved freedom during this time. Between 1944 and 1984, over 90 new states were established, almost half of the world's present-day nations—marking a rapid shift toward independence and self-rule.

❑ Divide and Rule

Impact of Colonialism: Colonial rulers deeply damaged Africa's long-standing social systems. They tried to replace traditional tribal structures and cultural practices with foreign ideas and institutions. This confused many Africans and led to divisions within communities. The colonizers used "divide and rule" tactics, turning tribes against each other while taking over their land.

❑ Unstable Political Conditions

Religious and Political Conflicts: Colonial powers introduced Christianity, which created tension among tribes that had their own spiritual beliefs. Political instability followed, giving rise to military takeovers. In many countries, military leaders came to power promising order but ended up becoming dictators.

Examples of Authoritarian Rule:

- **Kenya :** After independence, Jomo Kenyatta merged political parties and formed a one-party system. He suppressed opposition and supported elites from his own ethnic group.
- **Zimbabwe :** Robert Mugabe initially fought for freedom but became a dictator, rigging elections and oppressing opponents.
- **Tunisia :** Ben Ali took power without violence and ruled for 24 years until mass protests forced him to resign.

- **Sudan** : Gaafar Nimeiry came to power through a coup and caused economic collapse.
- **Guinea, Libya, Nigeria, Togo, and Uganda** also witnessed authoritarian leaders who came to power by overthrowing civilian governments.

Challenges after Independence: New African states faced major difficulties:

- Poor infrastructure, low literacy, and weak healthcare
- Foreign companies exploiting resources
- Widening gap between rich and poor
- Lost traditional methods of resolving conflicts
- Artificial borders that increased tribal tensions

Economic Legacy and Neo-Colonialism : Colonial powers had forced Africans to grow cash crops, leading to food shortages and famine. Some governments feared falling under “neo-colonial” control, where wealthy countries return under the guise of investment. Wealth remained in the hands of elites, and the masses continued to suffer.

Lack of Development : With no strong leadership or financial stability, many countries struggled. Corruption and lack of bold reforms kept them from progressing. Most decisions benefited a small elite, not the majority. These countries also faced pressure to align with either the U.S. or the USSR during the Cold War, complicating their path forward.

2.3.1.2 Post-Colonial Asian Societies: An Overview

Initial Unity and Later Division : After colonial rule ended in Asia, a brief period of national unity gave way to power struggles among elites. The unity forged during independence movements began to break down due to differences in caste, religion, and region.

India’s Journey : India inherited working institutions and trained leaders, but the country faced massive challenges like:

- The trauma of Partition (division into India and Pakistan), which led to ongoing conflict
- Widespread illiteracy, caste divisions, and poor infrastructure
- A choice between aligning with the U.S. or USSR, which risked losing independence again

- Weak involvement of women and rural populations in governance

Despite this, India maintained democracy. However, political elites held on to power for generations, and regional politics weakened central authority. Religious violence and lack of basic services in remote areas still create instability.

Pakistan's Path : Pakistan struggled to build strong institutions and experienced repeated military coups:

- Generals like Ayub Khan and Zia-ul-Haq took power under the excuse of fixing democracy.
- Civil institutions remained weak and under military control.
- Ethnic tensions, poverty, and U.S. interference worsened the situation.

Other Asian Nations:

- **Nepal :** The monarchy ended, and a parliamentary system began, but internal conflicts remain.
- **Sri Lanka :** A long civil war between Tamil rebels (LTTE) and the government caused suffering. Although peace has returned, corruption and inequality continue.
- **Myanmar :** Military rule continues, despite public pressure and the efforts of leaders like Aung San Suu Kyi.
- **Bangladesh :** Also experienced military interference, similar to Pakistan.

Common Challenges:

- Weak institutions for managing internal and external conflicts
- Authoritarian tendencies replacing democratic ideals
- Ongoing corruption and failure to address social needs
- Environmental damage due to unregulated development
- Continued cultural identity crises due to colonial legacies

India vs. Pakistan : A Comparison: India has faced religious-based politics and economic inequality, while Pakistan has suffered under military rule and foreign influence. Both nations

have leaders who often prioritize personal gain over public welfare.

2.3.2 Post-Colonial States: A Theoretical Perspective

2.3.2.1 Modernization Perspective

❑ State as a Tool for Modernization

In the 1950s and 1960s, American universities developed various ideas about political development and modernization within the liberal tradition. These theories suggested that political leaders in post-colonial states had the important task of using the state as a tool for modernization. It was believed that these leaders could rise above narrow group interests and act in the best interests of the entire nation. They were thought to have a clear understanding of what was good for society, ensuring their decisions would ultimately benefit the country.

❑ Liberal Democracy

However, this view was overly simplistic, as it assumed that all post-colonial states would naturally develop into liberal democracies. Modernization theorists such as Seymour Martin Lipset, Gabriel Almond, Walt W. Rostow, and David E. Apter believed that for progress to occur, the state had to support modern industries and institutions while sidelining traditional sectors, even if this meant favoring a minority. As a result, those who depended on traditional ways of life or followed traditional cultures were often neglected by the post-colonial state. The claim that this was in the national interest was highly debatable, as there was significant evidence that those in power primarily served their own interests rather than the broader population.

2.3.2.3 Dependency Perspective

❑ Concept of Centre vs. Periphery

In the 1960s and 1970s, criticism of modernization theories grew due to the rise of third-world nationalism and Neo-Marxism. These criticisms, both ideological and methodological, challenged the earlier views about post-colonial states. Marxist thinkers from Asia, Africa, and Latin America highlighted the failures of post-colonial states to meet even basic needs, despite being a central focus of people's hopes. Dependency theorists argued that underdevelopment in post-colonial states resulted from the exploitative relationship between the capitalist West and colonized regions during colonialism. Even after independence, economic dependency continued through neo-colonialism, maintaining inequality.

Theorists like Andre Gunder Frank, Samir Amin, and Immanuel Wallerstein explained that the global economy was structured with advanced capitalist nations at the core and developing nations at the periphery. This system exploited weaker states by extracting economic surplus through unfair trade,

monopolies on technology, and policies that favored wealthy nations. Newly industrialized countries like the "Asian Tigers" (Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Taiwan) were considered semi-peripheries. Dependency theorists believed that the economic progress of developed countries occurred at the expense of the underdevelopment of post-colonial states.

For Neo-Marxists, decolonization did not bring real change to the economies of post-colonial nations. They argued that these states remained dependent, with local elites acting as agents for the interests of powerful capitalist nations. These governing elites, often referred to as the "comprador class," aligned themselves with foreign imperialist forces rather than their own populations. As a result, the post-colonial state continued to serve the interests of metropolitan states while ignoring the needs of its people.

❑ Economies of Post-Colonial Nations

However, dependency theory faced criticism. Critics argued that independence did bring some shifts in power, allowing post-colonial states to prioritize local interests in certain policies. Indigenous classes gained some influence, and post-colonial governments were not merely tools for transferring wealth to the West. Later theorists also recognized that economic development within a dependent system was possible, as seen in Southeast Asia. Additionally, flawed domestic policies in post-colonial states contributed to underdevelopment.

❑ Impact of Domestic Interest on Development

Despite its limitations, dependency theory helped deepen our understanding of the challenges faced by post-colonial states. It highlighted the historical differences between developed Western countries and post-colonial nations and stressed how global economic systems constrained development in newly independent states. It also encouraged the analysis of the relationship between political and economic factors in understanding development.

❑ Analysis of Economic and Political Factors

In contrast to modernization theorists, who viewed post-colonial states as highly autonomous, dependency theorists emphasized the external control over these states. While modernization theory ignored the role of social classes, dependency theory focused on external class domination. As both theories lost prominence, new opportunities arose to explore the complex relationship between class and state in post-colonial societies.

❑ External Control over Post-Colonial States

2.3.3 Post-Colonial States in the Contemporary Period

Since the early 1990s, globalization has grown rapidly, raising doubts about the central role of the state. It is argued that states

❑ State Involvement in Social and Economic Sectors

❑ Change from Centrally Planned Economy to Market Economy

are no longer the main economic players because neo-liberal reforms have reduced their role, allowing market economies to function independently. Additionally, institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have linked loans to underdeveloped countries with conditions such as promoting "good governance" and reducing state involvement in social and economic sectors. These organizations also encourage political decentralization at the local level while increasing the importance of decisions made at intergovernmental or global levels.

The shift from centrally planned economies to market economies in many countries across Asia, Africa, and Latin America has strengthened the global corporate sector, which now operates with significant independence from national governments. However, as these transnational corporations are largely controlled by capitalist elites in advanced nations, the influence of wealthy countries over developing nations remains strong and undeniable.

Summarised Overview

This unit explores the concept of post-colonial states, examining their emergence, evolution, and contemporary challenges. These states arose following the collapse of colonial empires, which had imposed foreign systems of governance and disrupted local traditions. While independence movements brought political freedom, post-colonial states faced challenges such as instability, economic dependency, and underdevelopment.

The unit reviews major theoretical frameworks for understanding post-colonial states. The liberal and modernization perspectives emphasized the role of strong governments in fostering development but faced criticism for their oversimplifications. Dependency theorists highlighted the enduring influence of colonial powers and global capitalism in maintaining economic inequalities. They argued that the global economic system benefited advanced nations at the expense of developing ones.

In recent decades, globalization has reshaped the dynamics of post-colonial states. Neo-liberal policies, driven by organizations like the World Bank and IMF, have reduced the role of the state in social and economic sectors. Transnational corporations now wield significant influence, often reinforcing dependencies on wealthy nations. Despite these challenges, post-colonial states continue to navigate the complex interplay of historical legacies, internal dynamics, and global forces. This unit provides a comprehensive analysis of these issues, equipping students with a deeper understanding of the post-colonial experience.

Assignments

1. Define post-colonial states and explain their historical emergence.
2. Discuss the impact of colonization on the political and social structures of colonized regions.
3. Explain the role of decolonization movements in shaping modern post-colonial states.
4. Compare and contrast liberal and dependency perspectives on post-colonial states.
5. Analyze the challenges faced by post-colonial states in achieving political stability and economic independence.
6. How did globalization influence the dynamics of post-colonial states in the 20th and 21st centuries?
7. Discuss the significance of the "comprador class" in the governance of post-colonial states.
8. What are the criticisms of modernization theories in explaining post-colonial states?
9. Evaluate the role of international financial institutions like the World Bank and IMF in shaping post-colonial economies.
10. Discuss the concept of neo-colonialism and its relevance to post-colonial states in the contemporary era.

Reference

1. Johari, J. C. (2009). *Comparative Politics*. Sterling Publishers.
2. Bhagawan, V., & Bhushan, V. (2012). *World Constitutions: A Comparative Study*. Sterling Publishers.
3. Agarwal, R. C. (2012). *Political Theory: Principles of Political Science*. S. Chand & Company.
4. Agarwal, R. C. (2008). *Principles of Political Science*. S. Chand & Company.
5. Kumar, Sanjay, *Post Colonial State*, <https://ebooks.inflibnet.ac.in/psp03/chapter/post-colonial-state/>

Suggested Reading

1. Fanon, F. (1963). *The Wretched of the Earth*.
2. Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*.
3. Nkrumah, K. (1965). *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*.

4. Escobar, A. (1995). *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*.
5. Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*.
6. Prashad, V. (2007). *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*.
7. Alavi, H. (1972). *The Post-Colonial State and Social Transformation*.
8. Amin, S. (1974). *Accumulation on a World Scale: A Critique of the Theory of Underdevelopment*.
9. Frank, A. G. (1967). *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America*.
10. Wallerstein, I. (1974). *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*.
11. Chatterjee, P. (1993). *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*.
12. Rodney, W. (1972). *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



BLOCK 3
**Comparative Constitution
and Federalism**

UNIT 1

USA and Canada

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, learners will be able to:

- explain the concept of constitutionalism and federalism, with a focus on the USA and Canada
- compare and contrast the constitutional structures of the USA and Canada, highlighting key differences
- analyze the division of powers between the federal and state/provincial governments in both countries
- evaluate the role of the judiciary and judicial review in shaping constitutional governance in the USA and Canada
- discuss the significance of fundamental rights, the Bill of Rights (USA), and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Canada)

Background

The study of constitutionalism and federalism is crucial for understanding how nations structure their governance to balance power, protect individual rights, and maintain democratic principles. The USA and Canada provide two prominent examples of federal states that exhibit distinct constitutional frameworks while sharing common democratic values.

The USA, with its written and rigid constitution adopted in 1789, is characterized by a strong emphasis on the separation of powers, checks and balances, and an independent judiciary. The U.S. Constitution enshrines popular sovereignty and ensures that governmental authority is derived from the people. A significant feature of American governance is its federal structure, where the division of powers between the central and state governments is constitutionally defined and safeguarded by the judiciary through the principle of judicial review.

Canada, on the other hand, follows a unique model blending British parliamentary traditions with American-style federalism. Established through the British North America Act (1867) and later consolidated by the Constitution Act (1982), Canada's

constitution allows for a flexible federal structure with significant centralizing tendencies. The Canadian system is characterized by the parliamentary form of government, where executive authority is exercised through the Prime Minister and Cabinet, accountable to the legislature. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms ensures the protection of fundamental rights, balancing individual freedoms with collective national interests.

Both nations exemplify the evolution of federalism, adapting their systems to changing political, social, and economic landscapes. This unit explores these constitutional models, providing comparative insights into their effectiveness in upholding democracy, ensuring governance, and protecting civil liberties.

Keywords

Constitutionalism, Federalism, Separation of Powers, Checks and Balances, Judicial Review, Bill of Rights, Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Parliamentary Democracy, Bicameral Legislature, and Sovereignty.

Discussion

3.1.1 Constitutionalism

Constitutionalism is a modern idea that promotes a political system ruled by laws and rules rather than individual authority. It emphasizes the rule of law and incorporates principles like nationalism, democracy, and limited government. It is often associated with a system where power is divided. Essentially, constitutionalism advocates for the presence of a constitution in a state, as it serves as the fundamental law that limits arbitrary government actions, protects citizens' rights, and outlines how sovereign power operates.

❑ Fundamental Law of the State

3.1.1.2 Meaning of Constitution

To understand the concept of 'constitutionalism,' it is important to first grasp the meanings of 'constitution' and 'constitutional government.' A constitution can be seen as a set of principles that define the powers of the government, the rights of the people, and the relationship between them. In simpler terms, it is the framework of a political society organized by law, where permanent institutions with clear roles and rights are established by legal authority. According to K. C. Wheare: "The word 'constitution' is commonly used in at least two senses in an ordinary discussion of political affairs. First of all, it is used to describe the whole system of a government of a country, the

❑ Framework of a Political Society

collection of rules which establish and regulate or govern the government. These rules are partly legal, in the sense that the courts of law will recognize and apply them, and partly non-legal or extra-legal, taking the form of usages, understandings, customs, or conventions which courts do not recognize as law but which are no less effective in regulating the government than the rules of law strictly called. In most countries of the world, the system of government is composed of this mixture of legal and non-legal rules, and it is possible to speak of this collection of rules as the 'Constitution.'"

❑ Constitutional State

A constitution outlines the structure of a political society governed by law, where permanent institutions with defined roles and rights are established. A constitutional state, on the other hand, is one where the government's powers, the people's rights, and their relationship are clearly defined and balanced. According to K. C. Wheare, constitutional government "means something more than a government according to the terms of a Constitution. It means government according to rule as opposed to arbitrary government; it means government limited by the terms of a Constitution, not government limited only by the desires and capacities of those who exercise power." Constitutionalism seeks a political system where the government's powers are restricted. It is essentially the idea of having a limited and, therefore, a 'civilized' government. The main purpose of a constitution is to ensure a government with limited powers that operates according to established laws and rules.

❑ Federal and Unitary Structure of the Political System

3.1.2 Federalism

Political systems can be categorized based on how administrative powers are divided between the national government and regional or provincial governments. Based on this, they can be classified as either federal or unitary, though some systems may have a mix of both. In a federal system, power is divided between the central government and regional governments in a way that allows both to operate independently within their own areas of authority. The national government has specific powers and functions without interference from regional governments, and vice versa. Both levels of government have limited powers and are not subordinate to each other but function as equals. In contrast, a unitary system has a single, supreme law-making authority for the entire country. While it may allow regional legislatures to exist and function, they remain under its control and can be overruled at any time. Some political systems combine elements of both federal and unitary structures. In such cases, the central government is much stronger than regional governments, leading to what is called a quasi-federal system.

3.1.2.1 Meaning of Federal System

Political systems around the world can be classified as federal, unitary, or a mix of both. Countries like the United States, Switzerland, Australia, South Africa, Canada, and India follow a federal structure, where power is shared between the central and regional governments. In contrast, nations such as Britain, France, Sri Lanka, and China have a unitary system, where most authority lies with the central government. Some countries have a system that combines both elements, with power divided but still heavily controlled by the central government. This type of system, known as "quasi-federal," was seen in the former Soviet Union. According to Daniel J. Elazar, "a federal system provides a mechanism which unites separate polities within an overarching political system so as to allow each to maintain its fundamental political integrity." This system divides power between two levels of government, the central and regional, ensuring that both can function independently within their designated areas. According to traditional principles, these governments are seen as equal and work alongside each other.

❑ Power is shared between the Central and Federal governments

A detailed study of federalism shows that it is both flexible and cooperative. Neither the central nor the regional government is completely dependent or independent of the other. However, there is a difference between traditional and modern views of federalism. In a federal system, policies are shaped through interactions between the central and regional governments, as they share decision-making and implementation responsibilities. Traditional ideas of federalism often reflect outdated views that do not align with the evolving nature of modern constitutional systems.

❑ Traditional and Modern Views of Federalism

Today's federal system lies between a unitary government and a loose alliance of independent states. Unlike a confederation, it has a stronger central structure, yet it also differs from a purely unitary system. While traditional views consider national and regional governments as separate political entities, modern interpretations see them as parts of a single system with overlapping functions. Recent trends suggest that while the central government may have authority over regional units, those units can also influence the center through cooperative federalism. Their bargaining power depends on factors like geographic size, population, natural resources, and strategic position. Additionally, the traditional concept of federalism needs to be updated to reflect new studies on constitutional frameworks and center-state relationships. Instead of seeing federalism as a fixed system, it should be understood as an evolving process shaped by political parties, bureaucracies, interest groups, and elected governments with expanding roles.

3.1.3 Constitution of the USA

The current Constitution of the United States was adopted at the Philadelphia Convention in 1787 and took effect in 1789 after being approved by the required number of states. This Constitution is unique in several ways. It is one of the shortest in the world, originally containing seven Articles, with twenty-six amendments added over the years. It is known for its rigidity and strict adherence to the principle of 'Separation of Powers,' a concept introduced by Montesquieu, which is applied more thoroughly in the U.S. than in any other constitution. This principle is paired with an effective system of checks and balances in the American government. The judiciary plays a central role in the U.S. political system, with powers of judicial review and constitutional interpretation, which have further shaped the Constitution over time.

3.1.3.1 Silent Features of the Constitution of the USA

Written Character

The American Constitution, like other federal constitutions around the world, is written and concise. It consists of seven articles and twenty-six amendments. Known for its brevity and clarity, it was considered a model of excellent drafting. The framers designed it as a basic framework, leaving the specifics to be determined later through Congressional Acts. Over time, the Constitution has been expanded and shaped by conventions, customs, court rulings, and laws. These unwritten practices have significantly influenced its nature. For instance, although the framers originally intended for the President to be elected indirectly, conventions have turned the process into a direct election.

Rigidity

The American Constitution is one of the most rigid in the world. Changing it requires a lengthy and complex process. Due to the difficulty of this procedure, it can take years for a proposed amendment to be approved and put into effect. Any amendment can be introduced in two ways, but it must be approved by three-fourths of the states to pass. This rigidity is evident from the fact that, despite being in effect for many years, only twenty-six amendments have been made to the Constitution.

Federal Character

The American Constitution has a federal structure. Initially, it was a federation of thirteen states, but with the addition of

new states, it has grown to include fifty states. The Constitution divides powers between the central government and the states. It specifies the powers of the central government while leaving all remaining powers to the states. This arrangement makes the central government relatively weak since residual powers are given to the states. However, in practice, the central government has become very strong due to the Supreme Court's application of the "Implied Powers" doctrine.

Supremacy of the Constitution

The Constitution is the highest law in the United States. Neither the central government nor the states can violate it. If a law or executive order goes against the Constitution, the American Supreme Court has the authority to declare it unconstitutional and invalid.

Separation of Powers

The U.S. Constitution follows the principle of "Separation of Powers," although this is not explicitly stated. The three branches of government—executive, legislative, and judicial—are designed to function independently but remain interdependent for effective governance. The Constitution attempts to separate their roles as much as possible. The legislative branch, Congress, makes laws. The President leads the executive branch and is elected indirectly by the people. The President is not a member of Congress, does not participate in its debates, and cannot dissolve it. He serves a fixed four-year term and cannot be removed by a vote of no confidence during that time. Similarly, the judiciary, led by the Supreme Court, operates independently and has the freedom to carry out its duties.

In practice, however, the separation of powers is not absolute. The President influences legislative policies, a role that became prominent during President Roosevelt's era. At the same time, Congress can impeach the President, ensuring coordination between the executive and legislative branches. Each branch also has some overlap in functions, creating a system of checks and balances to maintain harmony in governance.

Checks and Balances

To ensure effective coordination among the three branches of government, the framers of the Constitution introduced the system of "Checks and Balances." This system allows each branch to limit the powers of the others. For example, the President can veto bills passed by Congress. The Senate, on the other hand, shares some of the President's powers, such as approving federal appointments and ratifying treaties with foreign nations.

Treaties require a two-thirds majority in the Senate, giving it control over the President's internal administration and foreign policies.

Additionally, Congress determines the structure of the judiciary, while Supreme Court judges are appointed by the President with the Senate's approval. The Supreme Court, in turn, has the power to declare laws passed by Congress or actions taken by the President unconstitutional. This interconnection and mutual oversight ensure a balance of power among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

Bill of Rights

The Constitution ensures fundamental rights related to personal freedom, property, and liberty. However, it is important to note that these rights were not part of the original Constitution but were added later through amendments. The first ten amendments, known as the Bill of Rights, were introduced to protect individual freedoms effectively. Citizens can enforce these rights through the judiciary, and they cannot be changed or suspended without a constitutional amendment. Rights such as freedom of speech, freedom of religion, protection against unreasonable searches and seizures, and the right to habeas corpus are now integral to the Constitution and form the foundation of a just society.

Judicial Review

The Supreme Court and lower federal courts have the authority to review laws and executive actions. They can declare them invalid if they conflict with the Constitution. This makes the judiciary the protector of the Constitution and citizens' fundamental rights. Over time, the Supreme Court has interpreted the Constitution to meet society's evolving needs, often expanding Congress's powers. The judiciary's authority over the executive and legislative branches has led some to say that the U.S. government is effectively run by judges and that the Constitution is shaped by their decisions. Critics even refer to the Supreme Court as a "third chamber" and judicial review as a "judicial veto."

Republicanism

In contrast to the UK, where a hereditary monarch serves as the head of state, the USA is a republic with an elected President as its head of state. The Constitution gets its authority from the people. Additionally, it requires every state to adopt a republican form of government.

Presidential Form of Government

The U.S. Constitution establishes a presidential system of government where all executive powers are given to the President. Unlike in England or India, the President is not accountable to Congress. He does not attend its sessions, propose legislation directly, or answer questions. Congress cannot remove the President during his fixed four-year term, and the President cannot dissolve Congress. Members of the President's Cabinet are not part of Congress and are not answerable to it. They are often referred to as the President's "family" or "kitchen Cabinet" since they work directly under him.

Dual Citizenship

The U.S. Constitution allows for dual citizenship, meaning an American is both a citizen of the United States and the state where they reside. This differs from India's Constitution, which, despite having a federal system, provides for single citizenship, where individuals are only citizens of the country as a whole.

- Citizen of the United States and the State where they reside

Popular Sovereignty

The American Constitution is founded on the principle of popular sovereignty, meaning that the ultimate authority rests with the people. The Preamble of the Constitution reads as follows: "We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the USA." This principle replaces arbitrary rule with a constitutional system of government, ensuring that power comes from the people.

- Authority Rests with the People

Spoils System

The Spoils System has been a key feature of the American political system since the Constitution was established. It was at its peak during the 19th century. Under this system, government positions were given as rewards to those who supported the President during the election. As long as the President remained in office, his supporters held these positions and worked to secure his election or re-election. If another party won the next election, the existing officeholders had to resign, and the new President appointed his own supporters. This practice led to corruption and inefficiency. To address this issue, the Pendleton Act of 1883 was introduced, requiring about 80% of government positions to be filled through competitive exams. Today, the Spoils System is limited to around 20% of such positions, which remain under the President's control.

- Control of the President



Most Upper Chambers of the World

Bicameral Legislature

Like the UK, the USA has a bicameral legislature. The Lower House is called the House of Representatives, and the Upper House is known as the Senate. Unlike most upper chambers worldwide, the U.S. Senate is more powerful than the Lower House. It has legislative, executive, and judicial powers, making it the most powerful upper chamber in the world. Senators serve a six-year term, compared to the two-year term of members in the House of Representatives. Additionally, the Senate is smaller, with 100 members, while the House of Representatives has 435 members.

Blended Form

3.1.4 Constitution of Canada

Canada's Constitution is made up of various laws, political conventions, and judicial practices. Its main foundation is the British North America Act (BNA) of 1867, a British law. Over 115 years, this Act was amended 23 times, with the last amendment being the Constitution Act of 1982. The American Civil War of 1861, which coincided with the development of federalism in Canada, also influenced its Constitution. As a result, Canada's Constitution is a blend of British and American systems, combining federalism from the USA with parliamentary democracy from Great Britain.

Not a Single Document

3.1.4.1 Salient Features of the Canadian Constitution

Written Constitution

The Canadian Constitution is largely written, with its foundation being the British North America Act. It also includes amendments made over time, laws passed by the British Parliament specifically for Canada—such as the Colonial Laws Validity Act, the Statute of Westminster 1931, the Balfour Declaration, and the Abdication Act of 1936—and British Orders-in-Council, which incorporated territories like the Northwest Territories and British Columbia into Canada. Additionally, it consists of Canadian laws like the House of Commons Act, the Alberta and Saskatchewan Acts, the Bill of Rights of 1960, and various other laws establishing provinces, adjusting their boundaries, or setting up institutions like the Supreme Court in 1875. Together, these make up the written part of the Constitution. Unlike the U.S. Constitution, it is not a single document but a collection of 20 documents, including 13 British Acts, seven Canadian Acts, and four British Orders-in-Council. The unwritten part of the Constitution is shaped by conventions, which have been crucial to its development.

For example, conventions govern the relationship between the Cabinet and the Governor-General, define the role of the Prime Minister, and establish ministerial responsibility. These conventions have transformed Canada from an autocracy into a democracy.

Rigidity-cum-Flexibility

The British North America Act did not specify how to amend the Constitution. It only allowed provinces to make changes to their own Constitutions, except regarding the roles of Lieutenant Governors. Initially, amendments to the Constitution could only be made by the British Parliament upon request from the Canadian Parliament to the King of the UK. In 1949, this changed when the Canadian Parliament was granted the authority to amend certain parts of the Constitution, except for areas like provincial legislative powers, provincial rights and privileges, language rights (English and French), and the term of the House of Commons. Later, the Constitution Act of 1982 introduced detailed procedures for amending the Constitution, creating four amendment processes:

❑ Amendments to the Constitution

Under the first formula, amendments must be passed by the Senate and the House of Commons, and by the legislature of every province. This gives every single province a veto. Under the second formula, amendments must be passed by the Senate and the House of Commons, and by the legislatures of two-thirds of the provinces with at least half of the total population of all the provinces. The seven provinces needed to pass any amendment would have to include either Quebec or Ontario. Under the third formula, amendments dealing with matters that apply to one province or to several but not all provinces must be passed by the Senate and the House of Commons and by the legislature or legislators of the particular province or provinces concerned. Under the fourth formula, amendments can be made by an ordinary Act of the Canadian Parliament. This makes the Canadian Constitution somewhat flexible, as certain amendments can be made by Parliament alone. However, it is largely rigid because the first three processes involve provincial participation in the amendment process.

❑ Provincial Participation

A Federal Constitution

The British North America Act of 1867 and subsequent amendments established Canada as a federal system, evident from the following features:

Division of Powers: Legislative powers are divided between the central (Dominion) and provincial governments. Provinces have exclusive authority over certain specified subjects, while the Dominion controls the rest.

Separate Governments: The Dominion and provincial governments function independently, with distinct personnel. Neither can alter the Constitution regarding the division of powers.

Role of the Supreme Court: The Supreme Court of Canada resolves disputes between the Dominion and provinces. It ensures the Constitution's distribution of powers is upheld, reflecting the Constitution's supremacy—a key feature of federal systems.

Amendments: Major parts of the Constitution cannot be amended without provincial consent.

Although Canada is a federation, there are strong centralizing tendencies, as shown by the following:

Distribution of Powers: The division of powers favors the central government.

Veto Power: The Governor-General can disallow provincial laws within a year of receiving them from the provincial governor, giving the central government veto authority.

Provincial Oversight: The central government can appoint and remove Lieutenant Governors in provinces. It can also instruct them to withhold assent to provincial laws or refer them to the Governor-General, who may withhold assent if necessary.

Judicial Appointments: The central government controls key judicial appointments.

Senate Composition: The Prime Minister appoints Senate members, and provinces are not equally represented, unlike the U.S. Senate. This means the Senate does not act as a protector of provincial interests.

Residuary Powers: Unlike in the U.S., where they rest with states, residuary powers in Canada are given to the Dominion government.

Over time, Canadian provinces have gained more authority and now hold greater powers than U.S. states, despite Canada's federal structure originally favoring central control. Unitary elements in the system have not clashed with the federal principle. The central government's power to disallow provincial legislation is rarely used and is limited to cases that violate legislative principles or harm the interests of the Commonwealth. Additionally, Lieutenant Governors are no longer mere instruments of central authority.

Control of Central Government

❑ Promoting Equal Opportunities

Equalization

Another important feature of the Canadian Constitution is equalization. The Constitution Act of 1982 contains a provision which proclaims that (i) the national Government and Parliament and the provincial Governments and legislatures "are committed to promoting equal opportunities for the well-being of Canadians, furthering economic development to reduce disparities in opportunities, and providing essential public services of reasonable quality to all Canadians"; and (ii) the Government and Parliament of Canada "are committed to the principle of making equalization payments to ensure that provincial Governments have sufficient revenues to provide reasonably comparable levels of public services at reasonably comparable levels of taxation." The 1982 Act also provides that the Charter shall be interpreted "in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canada."

❑ Symbolic Head of the Executive Branch

Parliamentary Government

The Canadian Constitution follows the British Parliamentary model. Over time, customs and conventions have turned the Canadian monarchy into a parliamentary democracy. The Governor General serves as the symbolic head of the executive, while the Prime Minister, who leads the majority party in the House of Commons, is the actual head of the government. The Governor General acts on the basis of the Prime Minister's advice. Ministers can be removed through a no-confidence vote by the majority in the House of Commons. The provinces also operate under a parliamentary system of government.

❑ Highest Judicial Authority

Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is the highest judicial authority in Canada. Unlike the USA and Australia, Canada does not have lower federal courts. Provincial courts, similar to Indian High Courts, handle cases involving both federal and provincial laws. The Supreme Court can strike down laws made by the Dominion or provincial legislatures if they violate the Constitution. However, the Supreme Court of Canada is less powerful compared to its counterpart in the United States. Initially, it had a Chief Justice and five judges, but this number later increased to nine, including the Chief Justice.

A Fully Sovereign State

Canada, though recognized as a Dominion, is a fully sovereign nation in every sense. The Statute of Westminster of 1931 confirmed Canada's status as an independent state. It

Complete Control over its Internal and External Affairs

Use Either English or French

Ceremonial Body

Enjoyed Broad Human Rights

is no longer a colony and has complete control over its internal and external affairs. The Constitution Act of 1982 officially brought the Constitution under Canadian control, ending the British Parliament's authority over the country. Canada is now a full member of the United Nations and is accountable for its actions on the global stage.

Bilingualism

The British North America (BNA) Act introduced limited bilingualism in Canada. Members of Parliament are allowed to use either English or French during proceedings, and the records of both Houses are maintained in both languages. Additionally, both languages can be used in legal proceedings in courts established by Parliament. In 1969, the Parliament passed the Official Languages Act, officially recognizing English and French as equal and making them the official languages of Canada for all government and parliamentary purposes.

Bicameral Legislature

The Canadian Parliament has two chambers: the House of Commons (Lower House) and the Senate (Upper House). The House of Commons is directly elected by the people, while the Senate is made up of appointed members. Initially, the House of Commons had 181 members, but it now has 282 members. Similarly, the Senate started with 72 members and now consists of 104 members. The Senate holds very little power and is often seen as a ceremonial body, serving mainly as a formal approval chamber with limited influence.

Charter of Rights and Freedoms

The BNA Act did not specifically protect fundamental rights such as freedom of worship, the press, or assembly. In 1960, Parliament introduced a Bill of Rights and later passed laws to prevent discrimination in areas under federal jurisdiction. A significant change came with the Constitution Act of 1982, which added the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to the Canadian Constitution. While Canadians have historically enjoyed broad human rights, few of these were officially written into the Constitution, and there was no guarantee against government misuse or removal of these rights. The inclusion of the Charter ensures that fundamental rights and freedoms are better protected and harder for the government to alter. It also allows individuals to appeal to the courts if they believe their rights have been violated. The liberties spelled out in the Charter include:

- (i) Fundamental freedoms (of conscience, thought, appeal, peaceful assembly, and association).
- (ii) Democratic rights (the right to vote, the right to be elected).
- (iii) Legal rights (the right to be secured against unreasonable seizure or search, to be informed promptly of the reasons for arrest or detention, to be represented by a lawyer, and the right to a public trial by an impartial court).
- (iv) Mobility rights (to enter, remain in, or leave Canada or any province).
- (v) Equality rights (no discrimination on grounds of race, religion, ethnic or national origin, sex, age, or mental or physical disabilities).
- (vi) Official language rights.
- (vii) Minority language education rights.

All these rights are, however, "subject to such reasonable limits as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society." What these limits might be, the courts will decide.

In conclusion, the creators of the Canadian Constitution skillfully combined elements from both the British and American systems to design a model that best fits the country's political conditions and needs.

Summarised Overview

The unit explores the comparative constitutional frameworks of the USA and Canada, focusing on their structures, principles, and governance systems. The USA operates under a rigid written constitution with a well-defined separation of powers. The executive, legislative, and judicial branches function independently, with checks and balances ensuring that no branch dominates the others. The U.S. Constitution is the supreme law, and judicial review plays a crucial role in its interpretation and enforcement. The American federal system grants states significant autonomy, with powers clearly delineated between the federal and state governments.

Canada's constitutional framework is rooted in the British North America Act (1867) and evolved with the Constitution Act (1982). Unlike the USA, Canada follows a parliamentary system where executive authority is concentrated in the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, functioning under the constitutional monarchy of the British Crown. While Canada adopts federalism, it allows for greater central control compared to the USA. The judiciary plays a critical role in resolving disputes between federal and provincial authorities, ensuring constitutional integrity. A key feature of the Canadian system is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees fundamental rights

similar to the U.S. Bill of Rights but allows for reasonable limitations as determined by the judiciary.

The comparison between these two systems highlights different approaches to governance, federalism, and civil liberties. While the USA follows a strict separation of powers with extensive state autonomy, Canada balances its federal system with parliamentary supremacy and centralized decision-making. The study of these constitutional structures provides insights into how democratic governance evolves in response to historical, political, and social factors.

Assignments

1. Define constitutionalism and explain its significance in democratic governance.
2. Compare and contrast the separation of powers in the USA and Canada.
3. Discuss the role of judicial review in the U.S. and Canadian constitutional systems.
4. How does federalism function in the USA and Canada? Highlight key differences.
5. Explain the significance of the Bill of Rights in the USA and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in Canada.
6. Analyze the impact of centralization and decentralization in the Canadian federal system.
7. How does the principle of checks and balances operate in the U.S. government?
8. Discuss the role of the Prime Minister in Canada's parliamentary system.
9. How does the U.S. Constitution ensure popular sovereignty?
10. Compare the process of constitutional amendment in the USA and Canada.

Reference

1. Johari, J. C. (2009). *Comparative Politics*. Sterling Publishers.
2. Bhagawan, V., & Bhushan, V. (2012). *World Constitutions: A Comparative Study*. Sterling Publishers.
3. Agarwal, R. C. (2012). *Political Theory: Principles of Political Science*. S. Chand & Company.
4. Agarwal, R. C. (2008). *Principles of Political Science*. S. Chand & Company.
5. Elazar, D. J. (1987). *Exploring Federalism*. University of Alabama Press.
6. Cairns, A. C. (1995). *Reconfigurations: Canadian Citizenship and Constitutional Change*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

7. Tushnet, M. (2009). *The Constitution of the United States of America: A Contextual Analysis*. Hart Publishing.

Suggested Reading

1. Dicey, A. V. (1915). *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution*. Macmillan.
2. Smith, J. (2002). *The Canadian Senate in Bicameral Perspective*. University of Toronto Press.
3. Ackerman, B. (1991). *We the People: Foundations*. Harvard University Press.
4. Russell, P. H. (2004). *Constitutional Odyssey: Can Canadians Become a Sovereign People?* University of Toronto Press.
5. Kymlicka, W. (1998). *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada*. Oxford University Press.
6. Levinson, S. (2011). *Framed: America's 51 Constitutions and the Crisis of Governance*. Oxford University Press.
7. Wheare, K. C. (1963). *Federal Government*. Oxford University Press.
8. Trudeau, P. E. (1982). *The Canadian Constitution: Introduction and Commentaries*. Government of Canada.
9. Montesquieu, C. (1748). *The Spirit of the Laws*. Cambridge University Press (Translated edition).

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU

UNIT 2

India and Britain

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, learners will be able to:

- understand the fundamental features of the Indian and British Constitutions and their historical development.
- compare the written and unwritten nature of both constitutions and analyze their flexibility and rigidity.
- examine the parliamentary systems of India and Britain, highlighting their similarities and differences.
- analyze the role of federalism in India versus the unitary system in Britain.
- evaluate the significance of constitutional principles like the Rule of Law, Separation of Powers, and Judicial Review in both countries.

Background

The study of comparative constitutionalism is crucial in understanding how different nations govern themselves through constitutional frameworks. India and Britain provide an insightful contrast in constitutional design—while India's Constitution is the longest written constitution in the world, Britain operates with an unwritten and evolving constitutional framework.

India's Constitution, adopted in 1950, was inspired by multiple sources, including the Government of India Act (1935) and various global constitutional models. It incorporates features like a parliamentary democracy, a federal structure with a unitary bias, fundamental rights, and an independent judiciary. The document ensures a division of powers between the central and state governments, integrating both flexibility and rigidity in its amendment process. India's parliamentary system, derived from the British model, emphasizes the supremacy of the legislature, with the executive being accountable to it.

In contrast, Britain's Constitution is an evolutionary entity, consisting of statutes, conventions, judicial decisions, and historical documents like the Magna Carta and the

Bill of Rights (1689). Unlike India's rigid amendment procedure, British constitutional law can be altered by a simple majority in Parliament. Parliamentary sovereignty is a cornerstone of the British system, where the legislature has the ultimate law-making authority, and courts lack the power of judicial review. Additionally, Britain's unitary government structure centralizes power, allowing local authorities to function under the directives of Parliament.

By examining the constitutional principles and governance structures of both India and Britain, this unit provides students with a comprehensive understanding of how historical, political, and legal factors shape modern democracies.

Keywords

Parliamentary Sovereignty, Rule of Law, Separation of Powers, Federalism, Unitary System, Judicial Review, Fundamental Rights, Constitutional Conventions, Bicameral Legislature, and Executive-Legislative Relations

Discussion

3.2.1 Indian Constitution

The Indian Constitution is special in its structure and essence. While it takes inspiration from various constitutions worldwide, it has several unique features that set it apart from those of other countries.

3.2.1.1 The Salient Features of the Indian Constitution

The important features of the Indian Constitution are as follows:

Longest Written Constitution in the World

The Indian Constitution is the longest written constitution in the world. It is a detailed and comprehensive document. When it was adopted in 1949, it included a Preamble, 395 Articles (divided into 22 Parts), and 8 Schedules. Over the years, several amendments have been made, removing around 20 Articles and one Part (VII) while adding about 95 Articles, four new Parts (IVA, IXA, IXB, and XIVA), and four more Schedules (9, 10, 11, and 12). No other constitution in the world has as many Articles and Schedules.

☐ Detailed and Comprehensive Document

There are four main reasons for the Constitution's large size:

- a. (Geographical factors: India is a vast and diverse country.
- b. Historical factors: The lengthy Government of India Act, 1935, influenced its structure.
- c. Single Constitution for the Centre and States: Unlike some countries, India has one Constitution for both levels of government.
- d. Legal experts in the Constituent Assembly: Many members were lawyers who preferred a detailed document.

Drawn From Various Sources

The Indian Constitution has taken many of its provisions from the constitutions of different countries and the Government of India Act, 1935. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar proudly stated that the Constitution of India has been framed after 'ransacking all the known Constitutions of the World.' The structural framework of the Indian Constitution is largely based on the Government of India Act, 1935. The philosophical aspects, such as Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy, are inspired by the American and Irish constitutions, respectively. The political elements, including Cabinet Government and the relationship between the Executive and Legislature, are mainly influenced by the British Constitution. Other features have been adopted from the constitutions of Canada, Australia, Germany, the former USSR, France, South Africa, Japan, and others.

❑ Constitutions of Different Countries

Blend of Rigidity and Flexibility

The Indian Constitution is a mix of both rigid and flexible features. Article 368 outlines two types of amendments: (a) some provisions need a special majority in Parliament, which means at least two-thirds of the members present and voting, along with a majority of the total members in each House, and (b) certain provisions require not only a special majority in Parliament but also approval from at least half of the states. Additionally, some parts of the Constitution can be amended by a simple majority in Parliament, following the usual process for passing laws. However, these changes do not fall under Article 368.

❑ Two Types of Amendments

Federal Structure with Unitary Bias

India's Constitution sets up a federal system of government, meaning power is divided between two levels—central and state governments. It includes key features of a federation, such as a written Constitution, division of powers, an

☐ Union of States

independent judiciary, and two houses of Parliament. However, it also has several unitary characteristics, like a strong central government, a single Constitution and citizenship, a flexible amendment process, an integrated judiciary, centrally appointed state governors, all-India services, and emergency provisions. Notably, the word "Federation" is not mentioned in the Constitution. Instead, Article 1 calls India a "Union of States," meaning that states did not come together through an agreement, and no state has the right to separate from the Union.

☐ Westminster Model

Parliamentary Form of Government

India's Constitution follows the British Parliamentary System rather than the American Presidential System. In the parliamentary system, the legislative and executive branches work together, while in the presidential system, they function separately. This system is also called the 'Westminster Model,' 'Responsible Government,' or 'Cabinet Government.' It is used not just at the national level but also in the states.

Key features of India's Parliamentary system include:

- a. A distinction between the nominal and real heads of government.
- b. Rule by the majority party.
- c. The executive being collectively responsible to the legislature.
- d. Ministers being members of the legislature.
- e. Leadership by the Prime Minister or Chief Minister.
- f. The possibility of dissolving the lower house (Lok Sabha or State Assembly).

Synthesis of Parliamentary Sovereignty and Judicial Supremacy

In Britain, the Parliament has supreme authority, while in the U.S., the Supreme Court holds the highest judicial power. Similarly, India's parliamentary system is different from Britain's, and its Supreme Court has a more limited judicial review power compared to the U.S. This is because the U.S. Constitution follows the principle of "due process of law," whereas India's Constitution (Article 21) follows "procedure established by law." To balance these two principles, India's Constitution combines elements of both parliamentary sovereignty and judicial supremacy. The Supreme Court has the authority to

☐ Balance of Two Principles

review and strike down laws that violate the Constitution. At the same time, Parliament has the power to amend most parts of the Constitution when necessary.

Integrated and Independent Judiciary

India's Constitution creates a judicial system that is both unified and independent. The Supreme Court is the highest authority, followed by High Courts at the state level. Below them are subordinate courts, including district and lower courts. Unlike the U.S., where federal and state laws are enforced by separate judicial systems, India's courts handle both central and state laws within a single system. The Supreme Court serves as the highest appellate court, protects citizens' fundamental rights, and upholds the Constitution. To maintain its independence, the Constitution includes several safeguards, such as secure tenure for judges, fixed service conditions, funding from the Consolidated Fund of India, restrictions on legislative discussions about judges' conduct, a ban on post-retirement legal practice, the power to punish for contempt, and the separation of the judiciary from the executive.

☐ Highest Appellate Court

Fundamental Rights

Part III of the Indian Constitution provides six fundamental rights to all citizens:

- (a) Right to Equality (Articles 14-18),
- (b) Right to Freedom (Articles 19-22),
- (c) Right against Exploitation (Articles 23-24),
- (d) Right to Freedom of Religion (Articles 25-28),
- (e) Cultural and Educational Rights (Articles 29-30), and
- (f) Right to Constitutional Remedies (Article 32).

These rights are essential for maintaining political democracy and act as safeguards against misuse of power by the government. They limit the authority of both the executive and the legislature. Since they are legally enforceable, individuals can directly approach the Supreme Court if their rights are violated. The court can issue writs like habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibition, certiorari, and quo warranto to protect these rights. However, fundamental rights are not absolute and can have reasonable restrictions. They can also be modified or removed by Parliament through a constitutional amendment. Additionally, during a National Emergency, most fundamental rights can be suspended, except those under Articles 20 and 21.

☐ Legally Enforceable

Directive Principles of State Policy

Not Legally Enforceable

The Directive Principles of State Policy are listed in Part IV of the Indian Constitution and are divided into three main categories: socialistic, Gandhian, and liberal-intellectual. These principles aim to promote social and economic democracy and work towards creating a welfare state in India. Unlike Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles are not legally enforceable, meaning courts cannot be approached if they are violated. However, the Constitution states that these principles are essential for governing the country, and it is the duty of the government to follow them while making laws. Though they do not have legal backing, they serve as a moral responsibility for the government, with public opinion acting as the main driving force behind their implementation.

Fundamental Duties

Swaran Singh Committee

The original Constitution did not include Fundamental Duties for citizens. They were later added during the Internal Emergency (1975-77) through the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1976, based on the recommendations of the Swaran Singh Committee. Later, the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act of 2002 introduced one more duty. Part IV-A of the Constitution, which contains only Article 51-A, lists a total of eleven Fundamental Duties. These duties remind citizens that while they have rights, they also have responsibilities toward their country, society, and fellow citizens. However, like the Directive Principles, these duties are not legally enforceable in courts.

Secular State

India's Constitution establishes a secular state, meaning no specific religion is recognized as the official religion of the country. The following provisions of the Constitution reveal the secular character of the Indian State:

- a. The term 'secular' was added to the Preamble of the Indian Constitution by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1976.
- b. The Preamble secures to all citizens of India liberty of belief, faith, and worship.
- c. The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or equal protection of the laws (Article 14).
- d. The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on the ground of religion (Article 15).

Positive Form of Secularism

- e. Equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters of public employment (Article 16).
- f. All persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice, and propagate any religion (Article 25).
- g. Every religious denomination or any of its sections shall have the right to manage its religious affairs (Article 26).
- h. No person shall be compelled to pay any taxes for the promotion of a particular religion (Article 27).
- i. No religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution maintained by the State (Article 28).
- j. Any section of the citizens shall have the right to conserve its distinct language, script, or culture (Article 29).
- k. All minorities shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice (Article 30).
- l. The State shall endeavor to secure for all the citizens a Uniform Civil Code (Article 44).

In Western countries, secularism means a complete separation between religion and the state. However, this approach does not suit India, where multiple religions coexist. Instead, the Indian Constitution follows a positive form of secularism, ensuring that all religions are treated equally and given equal protection.

Universal Adult Franchise

India's Constitution grants universal adult franchise for elections to the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies. Every citizen aged 18 or above has the right to vote, regardless of caste, religion, gender, education, wealth, or background. The voting age was lowered from 21 to 18 in 1989 through the 61st Constitutional Amendment Act of 1988. Introducing universal adult franchise was a bold and significant decision, considering India's vast population, poverty, social inequalities, and high illiteracy. This system strengthens democracy, boosts people's self-respect, promotes equality, allows minorities to safeguard their interests, and gives hope to weaker sections of society.

Right to Vote

Single Citizenship

Although India has a federal system with separate governments at the Centre and states, it provides only single citizenship. In contrast, countries like the U.S. grant dual citizenship, where

❑ Indian Citizenship

individuals are citizens of both the country and their respective states. This gives them rights and responsibilities under both national and state governments. In India, all citizens, regardless of their birthplace or residence, have the same political and civil rights across the country without discrimination. However, despite this constitutional provision, India has faced communal riots, caste conflicts, linguistic disputes, and ethnic tensions. This shows that the vision of the Constitution's framers to create a united and integrated nation is still a work in progress.

Emergency Provisions

The Indian Constitution includes detailed emergency provisions that allow the President to handle extraordinary situations effectively. These provisions are designed to protect the country's sovereignty, unity, integrity, security, democratic system, and the Constitution itself. There are three types of emergencies mentioned in the Constitution: (a) National emergency on the ground of war or external aggression or armed rebellion (Article 352); (b) State emergency (President's Rule) on the ground of failure of Constitutional machinery in the states (Article 356) or failure to comply with the directions of the Centre (Article 365); and (c) Financial emergency on the ground of threat to the financial stability or credit of India (Article 360). During an emergency, the central government gains complete control, and state governments come under its authority. This temporarily changes India's federal structure into a unitary one without requiring a constitutional amendment. This ability to shift from a federal to a unitary system during emergencies is a unique feature of the Indian Constitution.

❑ Shift from a Federal to a Unitary System

Three-tier Government

Originally, like other federal constitutions, the Indian Constitution established a dual system of government, defining the structure and powers of both the Centre and the states. However, the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts of 1992 introduced a third tier of government—local governance—making India unique in this aspect. The 73rd Amendment gave constitutional status to Panchayats (rural local bodies) by adding Part IX and the 11th Schedule to the Constitution. Similarly, the 74th Amendment granted constitutional recognition to municipalities (urban local bodies) by introducing Part IX-A and the 12th Schedule.

❑ Local Governance

3.2.1.2 Federal Features of the Indian Constitution

The federal features of the Constitution of India are:

Dual Polity

The Indian Constitution creates a dual system of government, with the Union government at the Centre and state governments at the regional level. Both have independent powers in their respective areas, as defined by the Constitution. The Union government handles national matters such as defense, foreign affairs, currency, and communication. Meanwhile, state governments manage regional and local issues like public order, agriculture, health, and local administration.

Central and State Government

Written Constitution

India's Constitution is not only a written document but also the longest in the world. Initially, it included a Preamble, 395 Articles (organized into 22 Parts), and 8 Schedules. Currently, it has a Preamble, around 450 Articles (divided into 24 Parts), and 12 Schedules. The Constitution outlines the structure, organization, powers, and responsibilities of both the central and state governments. It also sets boundaries for their functioning, helping to prevent conflicts and misunderstandings between them.

Fundamental and Basic Law of the Nation

Division of Powers

The Constitution distributes powers between the Centre and the states through three lists in the Seventh Schedule: the Union List, the State List, and the Concurrent List. The Union List has 100 subjects (originally 97), on which only the central government can make laws. The State List contains 61 subjects (originally 66), where state governments have the authority to legislate. The Concurrent List includes 52 subjects (originally 47), where both the Centre and states can make laws. However, if there is a conflict, the central law takes priority. Any subject not mentioned in these lists, known as a residuary subject, is under the Centre's control.

Three Lists

Supremacy of the Constitution

The Constitution is the highest law of the country, and all laws made by the central and state governments must follow its provisions. If any law goes against the Constitution, the Supreme Court or high courts can declare it invalid through judicial review. This ensures that all branches of government—legislative, executive, and judiciary—at both central and state levels function within their defined limits.

Highest Law of the Country

Strict Amendment Process

Rigid Constitution

The Constitution ensures a clear division of powers and maintains its authority through a strict amendment process. To protect the federal structure, changes to provisions related to Centre-state relations and the judiciary require the involvement of both the central and state governments. These amendments need a special majority in Parliament and approval from at least half of the state legislatures.

Independent Judiciary

Independent Judiciary

The Constitution provides for an independent judiciary, with the Supreme Court at the top, to serve two main purposes. First, it ensures the supremacy of the Constitution through judicial review. Second, it resolves disputes between the Centre and states or between different states. To maintain judicial independence, the Constitution includes provisions such as security of tenure for judges and fixed service conditions.

Two Houses of the Parliament

Bicameralism

The Constitution establishes a bicameral legislature with two houses: the Rajya Sabha (Upper House) and the Lok Sabha (Lower House). The Rajya Sabha represents the states, while the Lok Sabha represents the people of India. The Rajya Sabha plays an important role in maintaining balance in the federal system by safeguarding state interests from excessive central influence.

Not a Single Document

3.2.2 Constitution of Britain

The British Constitution is unwritten because most of its rules and principles governing the distribution and use of power are not compiled into a single document. Instead, these principles have evolved over time through experience. Unlike some countries, the British Constitution was not created by a Constituent Assembly but developed through conventions over centuries of political growth. Many of its provisions have never been formally adopted. Additionally, it can be changed at any time through a simple act of Parliament. The British Constitution has been derived not from a single source but from different sources such as conventions, charters, statutes, judicial decisions, eminent works, and common law.

3.2.2.1 Salient Features of the British Constitution

The salient features of the British Constitution are as follows:

Partly Written and Partly Unwritten

A key feature of the British Constitution is that it is mostly unwritten. However, this does not mean that none of its principles are in written form. The British Constitution is considered unwritten because: (1) The unwritten portion is more significant than the written part; (2) The written parts were created at different times rather than all at once; and (3) New laws were made to address specific issues rather than to reform the entire Constitution.

Key Feature of the Constitution

Evolutionary

The British Constitution has developed gradually over time through various charters, laws, precedents, customs, and traditions. It has evolved naturally, much like a living organism, rather than being created all at once. It is the oldest existing Constitution and has remained largely unchanged for the past three centuries, except during the brief period when Oliver Cromwell ruled as "Protector of the Commonwealth." Unlike France in 1789 or Russia in 1917, Britain has not experienced a major revolution that drastically altered its political system. Any changes that have occurred over time have been gradual and have not disrupted the overall direction of its political development.

Gradual Development

Difference between Theory and Practice

A distinctive feature of the British Constitution is the difference between its theoretical principles and actual government practices. In theory, all government power belongs to the Crown. Government officials serve under the Crown and can be appointed or removed at its discretion. No law is valid without the Crown's approval, and all official appointments are made in its name. Parliamentary elections can only take place with the King's authorization. Additionally, the King is the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces and has the sole authority to declare war, make peace, and sign treaties.

Original Practice of the Government

Parliamentary Sovereignty

One key feature of the British Constitution is the sovereignty of Parliament. It has the power to create or repeal any law, and no court can challenge its decisions. Unlike in the United States or India, where constitutional and law-making powers are separate, the British Parliament holds both roles. It can change the line of royal succession, restrict the King's choice of

Dual Role of Parliament



marriage, abolish the monarchy, remove the House of Lords, or take any other action it deems necessary. Over time, the British Parliament has exercised many of these powers, demonstrating its supreme authority.

Unitary Constitution

The British Constitution follows a unitary system, not a federal one. In a federal system, like that of the United States, power is divided between the central and state governments, with neither having the authority to change the constitutional structure. However, in the United Kingdom, all governmental power is centralized in London. Local governments operate under powers granted by the central government, which can modify or revoke them at any time. This makes the British Constitution unitary in both structure and practice.

Unitary System

Flexible Constitution

The British Constitution is flexible, meaning there is no special process for passing or amending constitutional laws. In England, both constitutional and ordinary laws follow the same procedure in Parliament. This flexibility allows the Constitution to adapt easily to changing circumstances, unlike in federal countries where constitutional amendments require a more complex process.

Amendment Process

Rule of Law

One key feature of the British Constitution is the rule of law, which is not written in a single statute but is reflected in various parliamentary acts, judicial decisions, and common law. Unlike countries like the United States or India, where fundamental rights are explicitly stated in the Constitution, Britain does not have a specific law listing citizens' rights. However, British citizens still enjoy strong protections under the rule of law, which applies to everyone, including government officials, courts, and even the King. This principle ensures that the state cannot impose obligations, interfere with property, or restrict personal freedom without legal authority. While Parliament has the power to limit or suspend rights, public opinion and tradition prevent unjustified restrictions unless required for national security. Similarly, even in countries with written constitutional rights, certain limitations exist for the greater good of society.

Rule of law

Parliamentary Form of Government

England follows a parliamentary system of government, unlike the presidential system. The King serves as the ceremonial

❑ Mother of parliaments

head of state, while the actual power lies with the Ministers. These Ministers come from the majority party in the House of Commons and stay in office as long as they have its support. Since the Ministers are also part of Parliament, there is close coordination between the executive and legislative branches, reducing the chances of conflict. This smooth functioning of the government is a key feature of the British parliamentary system, which is why the British Constitution is often referred to as the "Mother of Parliaments."

Separation of Powers combined with Concentration of Responsibility

❑ Separation of powers

Montesquieu observed that the British government followed the principle of separation of powers. At first glance, this seems true—the Crown handles executive functions, Parliament makes laws, and the judiciary interprets them. However, unlike in the United States, the executive branch in Britain is not strictly controlled by the legislature. Similarly, British courts do not have the power of judicial review like American courts. Over time, the Cabinet in Britain has gained significant influence, not just in administration but also in lawmaking and even some judicial matters. Unlike in the U.S., where the Cabinet has limited authority, the British Cabinet has become the driving force of the government, with Parliament largely following its lead.

Blend of Monarchy, Aristocracy and Democracy

❑ The British Constitution

The British Constitution combines three different elements—monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy in a balanced way. The King symbolizes monarchy, which is based on hereditary rule. The House of Lords represents aristocracy, consisting of nobles and lords. The House of Commons stands for democracy, as it represents the people. Although the King and the House of Lords no longer have significant political power, their presence may seem inconsistent with a democratic system. However, the British people have never strongly pushed for their complete removal. Over time, efforts have been made to reduce the influence of the monarchy and limit the powers and structure of the House of Lords. The privileges of the monarch have also been restricted.

Bicameral Legislature

❑ Bicameral legislature

The British Parliament has two houses. The House of Commons, which is the Lower House, has 651 elected members. The House of Lords, which is a hereditary chamber, currently has over 746 members. The House of Commons holds more

power than the House of Lords. Because of this, the House of Lords is often seen as a "secondary chamber" and is sometimes referred to as the "Westminster Abbey of living Celebrities."

Summarised Overview

This unit provides a comparative analysis of the constitutional frameworks of India and Britain, highlighting their distinct characteristics and governance models. India's Constitution, enacted in 1950, is a detailed and structured document drawing influences from multiple global sources. It incorporates a federal system with a unitary bias, ensuring a division of powers between the central and state governments. The Indian Constitution balances parliamentary sovereignty with judicial review, allowing courts to strike down unconstitutional laws. Additionally, the Constitution safeguards fundamental rights and outlines directive principles to guide state policies.

On the other hand, Britain's Constitution is unique in being largely unwritten and flexible. It comprises historical documents, statutes, conventions, and judicial precedents. The principle of parliamentary sovereignty ensures that the British Parliament can make or repeal any law without judicial interference. Unlike India, Britain follows a unitary system where all governance powers are centralized, with local governments functioning under the authority of Parliament. The British system also lacks a codified bill of rights, instead relying on common law and legislative enactments to protect individual freedoms.

Despite these differences, both countries follow a parliamentary system where the executive is drawn from the legislature and remains accountable to it. The Prime Minister, in both cases, plays a crucial role in governance, shaping policy decisions and ensuring legislative efficiency. India's judiciary, however, enjoys more independence and authority in reviewing legislative actions compared to Britain's judiciary, which cannot challenge parliamentary sovereignty.

By studying these two constitutional systems, students gain insights into how historical evolution, political structures, and legal traditions influence governance models, shaping the democratic institutions of each country.

Assignments

1. Discuss the key differences between the Indian and British Constitutions in terms of their structure and form.
2. Explain the concept of parliamentary sovereignty in Britain. How does it differ from India's parliamentary system?
3. Compare and contrast the federal nature of India's Constitution with Britain's unitary system.
4. How does the principle of Rule of Law operate in the Indian and British constitu-

tional frameworks?

5. Explain the role of constitutional conventions in Britain. Why do they play a crucial role in its governance?
6. Analyze the significance of fundamental rights in India compared to the British legal system.
7. Discuss the process of constitutional amendments in India and Britain. Which system offers more flexibility?
8. How does the British parliamentary system differ from the Indian parliamentary democracy in terms of executive power?
9. Examine the role of the judiciary in India and Britain. Why does judicial review exist in India but not in Britain?
10. Discuss the historical factors that contributed to the development of the Indian and British constitutional frameworks.

Reference

1. Johari, J. C. (2009). *Comparative politics*. Sterling Publishers.
2. Bhagawan, V., & Bhushan, V. (2012). *World constitutions: A comparative study*. Sterling Publishers.
3. Agarwal, R. C. (2012). *Political theory: Principles of political science*. S. Chand & Company.
4. Agarwal, R. C. (2008). *Principles of political science*. S. Chand & Company.
5. Lekshmikanth, M (2017). *Indian polity*. Tata McGraw Hill Education Private Limited.
6. Basu, D. D. (2015). *Introduction to the Constitution of India*. LexisNexis.

Suggested Reading

1. Austin, G. (1966). *The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation*. Oxford University Press.
2. Finer, S. E. (1970). *Comparative Government*. Penguin Books.
3. Hood Phillips, O. (1978). *Constitutional and Administrative Law*. Sweet & Maxwell.
4. Jennings, I. (1950). *Cabinet Government*. Cambridge University Press.
5. Khosla, M. (2020). *India's Founding Moment: The Constitution of a Most Surprising Democracy*. Harvard University Press.



6. De Smith, S. A. (2002). *Constitutional and Administrative Law in the UK*. Oxford University Press.
7. Dicey, A. V. (1915). *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution*. Macmillan.
8. Wheare, K. C. (1963). *Federal Government*. Oxford University Press.
9. Ambedkar, B. R. (1950). *The Indian Constitution: A Comprehensive Analysis*. Government of India.
10. Laski, H. J. (1948). *A Grammar of Politics*. George Allen & Unwin.
11. Jennings, I. (1959). *The Law and the Constitution*. University of London Press.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU

UNIT 3

Switzerland and France

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, learners will be able to:

- explain the key features of the Swiss and French Constitutions
- compare the democratic structures of Switzerland and France
- analyze the role of federalism in Switzerland and unitary governance in France
- evaluate the significance of direct democracy in Switzerland and its contrast with French political traditions, and
- assess the historical and political contexts that shaped the constitutional frameworks of both countries

Background

Switzerland and France are two European nations with distinct constitutional and political frameworks. Switzerland, a federal state, is known for its long-standing tradition of direct democracy and decentralized governance. The Swiss Constitution, first adopted in 1848 and revised in 1874 and 1999, outlines a system where sovereignty is shared between the federal government and the 26 Cantons. It includes key principles such as democracy, rule of law, social welfare, and federalism, which ensure that citizens play a direct role in shaping policies through referendums and initiatives.

In contrast, France operates under a unitary system, centralized around strong executive authority. The current French Constitution, established in 1958 during the Fifth Republic under Charles de Gaulle, blends parliamentary and presidential elements, creating a semi-presidential system. While it upholds fundamental democratic rights, it also concentrates power in the presidency, granting significant executive authority. Unlike Switzerland's direct democratic mechanisms, France emphasizes representative democracy, where elected officials govern on behalf of the people.

This unit provides an in-depth exploration of these two contrasting systems. It examines Switzerland's unique model of shared governance and direct legislation while highlighting France's structured approach to centralized administration and constitutional flexibility. By analyzing their constitutional developments, students gain insight into

how historical, political, and cultural factors influence governance. The study of these two nations offers a comparative perspective on federalism versus centralization, the role of public participation, and the evolution of democratic institutions.

Keywords

Federalism, Direct Democracy, Semi-Presidential System, Cantonal Autonomy, Unitary State, Constitutional Amendment, Rule of Law, Popular Sovereignty, Plural Executive, and Judicial Review.

Discussion

3.3.1 Constitution of Switzerland

The Helvetic Republic is still referred to as a Confederation of twenty Cantons and six half Cantons. However, since 1848, it has followed a Federal Constitution, which was significantly revised in 1874 and later rewritten in 1999 to include all previous amendments. Switzerland is known as the birthplace of direct legislation and remains the only country in the world that continues to practice direct democracy. [Direct Legislation]

3.3.1.1 Silent Features of the Swiss Constitution

The important features of the Swiss Constitution are;

Written and Lengthy Constitution

The Swiss Constitution, originally established in 1848 and later amended in 1874 and 1999, is a written document similar to the U.S. Constitution but is twice its size. The 1999 Constitution contains 196 articles and represents a balance between those supporting cantonal rights and those favoring a strong federal government. The Constitution begins with a Preamble and general provisions (Articles 1-6) and then details the structure of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches (Articles 143-191). It also formally outlines four key principles of Swiss constitutional law:

1. **Democracy** (Articles 136-142): Defines the role of citizens in government, including rules for popular initiatives and referendums to revise laws.
2. **Rule of Law** (Articles 7-36): Establishes principles for government actions and guarantees fundamental rights.

Key Principles



3. **Social Welfare** (Article 41): Highlights social goals to be pursued by federal and cantonal governments.
4. **Federalism** (Articles 42-135): Defines the relationship between the Swiss Confederation, the 26 Cantons, and municipalities while specifying federal legislative powers.

Rigidity

The Swiss Constitution is somewhat rigid, though not as strict as the U.S. Constitution. The amendment process is complex and follows two main methods:

1. Amendment by Referendum:

- If both Houses of the Federal Parliament agree on revising the Constitution, either fully or partially, they draft a proposal and present it for a public vote. If the majority of citizens and Cantons approve it, the amendment is made.
- If only one House supports the revision, the proposal is put to a public vote to decide if a revision is necessary. If approved, the Federal Assembly is dissolved, and a newly elected Assembly revisits the proposal. If ratified by both Houses, it is again submitted to the people and Cantons for approval. If accepted by the majority, the revision takes effect.

2. Amendment by Constitutional Initiative:

- ▶ A constitutional revision, either full or partial, can also be initiated through a petition signed by at least 100,000 Swiss citizens.
- ▶ **For a full revision**, the proposal is first put to a public vote. If the majority supports it, new Federal Assembly elections are held. The new Assembly drafts and approves the revised Constitution, which is then submitted to a referendum. If a majority of people and Cantons agree, the changes are implemented.
- ▶ **For a partial revision**, two approaches can be used:
 - **Unformulated Initiative** (general proposal): If approved by the Federal Assembly, it is drafted and put

to a public vote. If the Assembly rejects it, the proposal still goes to a public vote. If the majority favors it, the Assembly must draft the amendment and submit it for final approval by the people and Cantons.

- **Formulated Initiative** (specific proposal): If the Assembly approves it, it goes directly to a referendum. If rejected by the Assembly, they can propose an alternative, and both versions are presented to the public for voting. If one is approved by the people and the other by Cantons, neither takes effect.

This process ensures that any constitutional changes reflect the will of both the people and the Cantons.

Republican Constitution

Switzerland is one of the oldest republics in Europe. The 1999 Constitution firmly establishes a republican system not only at the national level but also in the Cantons. Republicanism is a core part of Swiss life, ensuring that Cantonal Constitutions uphold democratic principles. This system abolished aristocratic and oligarchic privileges, guaranteeing equality before the law for all Swiss citizens. Every citizen has a role in shaping the government, as all political institutions in Switzerland are based on elections. Republicanism serves as the foundation of Swiss democracy.

☐ Oldest Republic

Federal Form of Government

Although Switzerland is officially called the Swiss Confederation, it functions as a federation. The Constitution's Preamble clearly indicates that Switzerland is a unified nation rather than a loose alliance of states. It states that the Confederation was created to strengthen unity, stability, and national pride. The Swiss people and Cantons collectively adopted the Constitution to achieve national solidarity.

☐ Swiss Confederation

Like the United States, Switzerland divides government powers between the national and cantonal levels. The federal government handles matters of national importance, while Cantons retain control over other areas. However, Cantons must follow certain rules:

☐ Sovereignty of Cantons

- a. they must have a republican form of government.
- b. their constitutions cannot conflict with the federal constitution.
- c. they must allow amendments through popular vote.

❑ Responsibility of Federations

Local autonomy remains strong in Switzerland. Cantons retain significant authority, enforce federal laws, and their officials serve federal functions. No amendment to the federal constitution can occur without their approval. The Constitution also guarantees the sovereignty of Cantons, protects their territories, and upholds the rights of their citizens.

Cantons can even sign treaties with foreign states on economic and policing matters, as long as they do not harm the Federation or other Cantons. All communication between Cantons and the federal government must go through the Federal Council. Uniquely, Cantons can maintain their own military forces, though national defense is generally a federal responsibility. In emergencies, the federal government assumes full control over cantonal forces. If a conflict arises between Cantons or in rare cases of rebellion, the Federal Council has the power to take strong, even dictatorial, actions.

Democratic Character of the Government

❑ Democratic Principles

Switzerland is widely associated with democracy. Its Constitution is based on key democratic principles such as the sovereignty of the people, rule of law, equality among citizens, and universal adult suffrage. The people's sovereignty is reflected in the representative nature of both national and cantonal legislatures, the Constitution's Preamble, the use of referendums and initiatives, and the republican structure of the executive offices. Equality is ensured by eliminating aristocratic and oligarchic privileges. In some Cantons, legislative decisions are made by primary assemblies of adult citizens, known as "Landsgemeinde." Here, every adult has the right to voice opinions, participate in law-making, and elect officials.

Liberalism

❑ Individual Freedom

The Swiss Constitution was heavily influenced by the liberal philosophy of the 19th century. This influence is evident in many aspects of the Constitution, including individual freedom from the control of the church and other authoritative institutions, the elimination of political privileges, and the guarantee of fundamental rights. These rights include freedom of petition, belief, speech, the press, and assembly, as well as compulsory education, legal equality, and free trade and commerce. However, in recent years, this liberal approach has been somewhat moderated due to increasing government involvement in economic matters.

Citizen's Rights

The Swiss Constitution of 1874 did not have a formal Bill of Rights like those in the former USSR or India. However, this does not mean that Swiss citizens lacked constitutional rights. Instead, these rights were spread across various articles of the Constitution. In the 1999 Constitution, they were consolidated under Title 2, specifically in Articles 7 to 40. The Constitution ensures equality before the law, freedom of movement and residence, as well as freedoms of the press, association, and petition. Citizens aged 18 and above have the right to vote.

Equality Before Law

Highest Judicial Body

Some restrictions apply to these rights. For example, freedom of expression must align with moral standards, and religious freedom has protective limitations. No one can refuse civic duties based on religion, and the establishment of new religious orders is not allowed. Citizens can form unions, provided they do not act against the interests of the state. They also have the right to free elementary education in government schools and the right to marry. The Federal Supreme Court, Switzerland's highest judicial body, safeguards these rights.

Plural Executive

The Swiss Constitution grants executive power to the Federal Council, which consists of seven members elected by the Federal Assembly for a four-year term. Unlike the U.S. President or the British Monarch, Switzerland does not have a single executive leader. Instead, the Federal Council collectively exercises executive authority.

Seven Member Executive

First among Equals

The "President" of the Swiss Council is elected by the Federal Assembly for a one-year term. However, this role is largely symbolic, as the President is considered "first among equals" and does not hold greater authority than other Council members. As the chairperson, they perform certain ceremonial duties similar to those of formal heads of state. Because of this unique system, the Swiss executive is often described as "a collegium fulfilling simultaneously the functions of a Government and of a Chief of State."

Secondary Position of the Judiciary

The Swiss judiciary has a more limited role compared to the judicial systems in the United States or India. The Swiss Federal Tribunal has restricted powers of judicial review and can only declare cantonal laws unconstitutional. The Constitution explicitly states that "the court shall apply laws voted by the

❑ Limited Power of Judicial Review

Federal Assembly," meaning it cannot review or overturn laws passed by the central government. Additionally, Swiss judges are elected by the Federal Assembly, which further limits the judiciary's independence and authority. Unlike in the U.S. or India, where national courts oversee a broader judicial system, the Swiss Federal Tribunal operates as the only national court without a hierarchical judicial structure beneath it.

❑ Two Chamber Legislature

Bicameral Legislature

The Swiss legislature has two chambers. The Upper House, called the Council of States, represents all Cantons equally, similar to the U.S. Senate. It is a smaller body with only 46 members. The Lower House, known as the National Council, has 200 members and represents the people. Both Houses have equal authority in legislative matters.

❑ Flexibility of the Constitution

Dynamic Constitution

The Swiss Constitution is flexible and evolves with changing times to reflect the needs of society. For example, during the two World Wars, freedom of speech and association were somewhat restricted to uphold Switzerland's neutrality. The government ensured national security while staying within the constitutional framework. The state also stepped in to protect citizens' rights when needed, as seen in labor laws enacted in 1877, 1908, and 1920.

❑ Ministerial Committee

3.3.2 Constitution of France

The Constitution of the Fifth French Republic was created by a small Ministerial Committee led by Michel Debré under the guidance of General de Gaulle. After being reviewed by the Cabinet, the French Council of State, and senior legal advisors, it was presented to the public for a referendum on September 28, 1958. Nearly 80% of voters approved it, and it officially took effect on October 4, 1958. The Constitution consists of a Preamble and 92 Articles, combining both republican and presidential elements. It has been described in various ways, including "tailor-made for General de Gaulle," "quasi-monarchical," "quasi-presidential," and even "the worst drafted in French constitutional history."

3.3.2.1 Features of the French Constitution

The salient features of the French Constitution are as follows;

Preamble

The Constitution of the Fifth Republic includes a Preamble that upholds the Declaration of Rights of 1789. This Declaration

❑ Set of Guiding Principles

was based on the ideas of "natural law" and the "general will." It guaranteed freedoms such as speech, press, assembly, and religion, though these could be limited by law. It also ensured the right to private property, except when needed for public purposes. Other key principles included government by representation, protection from arbitrary arrest, prohibition of cruel punishment, and the presumption of innocence until proven guilty. The new Constitution introduced additional rights, particularly for overseas territories, promoting liberty, equality, and democracy. However, the Preamble serves only as a set of guiding principles and has no legal enforcement through the courts.

❑ Authority of Central Government

Similar to the United Kingdom, France is a unitary state where authority is concentrated in the central government. Local governments do not have independent powers and instead receive their authority from the central government rather than the Constitution.

❑ Principle of Equality

France promotes the principle of equality before the law for all citizens. However, in practice, civil servants are subject to administrative law and can only be sued in special administrative courts. In contrast, ordinary citizens have access to regular courts for legal matters.

❑ Motto of French Constitution

Popular Sovereignty

Article 2 of the French Constitution states that France is a united, secular, democratic, and social republic. Its motto is "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity." The people hold the ultimate power and can exercise it through their elected representatives or referendums. The Constitution grants all adult French citizens, regardless of gender, the right to vote. Political parties are free to form and operate, but they must respect national sovereignty and democratic values.

❑ Public Vote

Rigid Constitution

The 1958 Constitution, like the one from 1946, has a specific process for making changes (Article 89). According to this Article, any proposed amendment, whether from the President or other members, must first be approved in the same form by both Houses of Parliament. After that, it must either be confirmed through a public vote (referendum) or, if the President chooses, by a three-fifths majority of both Houses when they meet as

Congress. However, the republican system of government cannot be changed.

In the Fourth Republic, the Assembly could bypass the Senate's approval by securing a two-thirds majority. But under the Fifth Republic, the Senate has an effective veto, and its approval is mandatory before any constitutional change can take place. If the President decides not to hold a referendum, the amendment must first be passed separately by both Houses in the same form and then approved by a three-fifths majority of Congress before becoming law. While the procedure for amendment under the Fifth Republic is relatively simple as far as the constitutional requirements are concerned, it is not that easy to implement, keeping in view the prevalence of a multi-party system in France.

❑ Role of Senate

Mixture of Parliamentary and Presidential Forms

The Constitution of the Fifth Republic blends two different systems—Parliamentary and Presidential government. However, it does not fully define the system of governance, making it difficult to categorize as strictly parliamentary or presidential. On one side, it establishes a democratic and parliamentary structure. The roles of the Head of State (President) and the Head of Government (Prime Minister) are separate. The Prime Minister selects and removes ministers and is accountable to Parliament. Both Houses of Parliament are elected democratically, the judiciary operates independently, and citizens have fundamental rights, including equality before the law, regardless of origin, race, or religion.

❑ Democratic and Parliamentary structure

At the same time, the Constitution limits Parliament's power. In the Fourth Republic, the Assembly had significant control over legislation, and the government had to constantly fight for its survival, with a confidence vote being its main tool. The Prime Minister could dissolve the Assembly only once, in 1955. However, under the Fifth Republic, the government holds more control over legislation, and Parliament's ability to challenge it is limited. The previous trend of "Government by Assembly," seen in the Fourth Republic, was reversed to ensure greater political stability, something that was lacking under the Third and Fourth Republics.

❑ Ensure Political Stability

As a result, the Fifth Republic's Constitution can be described as a mix of both presidential and parliamentary systems. According to C. F. Strong, "That the President should appoint the other members of the government (Article 8) and that the Government (Ministry) should be responsible to the Parliament (Article 20) to that extent France under the Fifth Republic has a Parliamentary form. But there are several features which make

❑ Nature of the French Executive

❑ Prohibition of Dual Position

the system a semi-Presidential System based on the principle of separation of powers. Firstly, the President is indirectly elected by the people. Secondly, the ministers are not members of Parliament and thus, are not subjected to the discipline of the parties and the pressure of the elections. Thirdly, the President is the active head of the executive. Fourthly, the President has the right to dissolve the Parliament and call for new elections. The Constitution gives to the President emergency powers." These features reflect the Presidential nature of the Executive.

Separation of Legislative and Executive Powers

One key aspect of the 1958 Constitution is the clear separation of legislative and executive powers, preventing ministers from also being members of Parliament. General de Gaulle believed that if executive power came from Parliament, it would create confusion and weaken the government by turning it into a collection of delegated authorities. Under the 1958 Constitution, the President nominates the Prime Minister, who then selects a team of ministers. These ministers are officially appointed by the President. Article 23 of the Constitution explicitly states that holding a government position is not allowed while serving as a member of Parliament. Unlike the Third and Fourth Republics, where governments were usually formed by parliamentarians, the Fifth Republic strictly prohibits individuals from holding both a government and parliamentary position at the same time.

The Constitutional Council

The 1958 French Constitution established the Constitutional Council to review whether government or parliamentary actions follow the Constitution. It replaced the Constitutional Committee of the Fourth Republic and has four main roles:

1. It oversees the election of the President and referenda, announces the results, declares the President's office vacant if necessary, and resolves disputes over parliamentary elections (Articles 58-60).
2. It reviews and approves the constitutional validity of organic laws and parliamentary rules before they take effect (Article 61).
3. The President must consult the Council during emergencies to confirm the situation and the measures being proposed (Article 16).
4. The Council can be asked by the President, Prime Minister, or leaders of Parliament to check whether an international agreement or new law aligns with the Constitution and to

settle disputes over executive and legislative powers (Articles 61, 54, 41).

❑ Advisory Role of Constitutional Council

However, the Constitutional Council does not have the authority to enforce its decisions. Its role is advisory, meaning it cannot act unless consulted. If the President, Government, and Parliament choose not to seek its opinion when not required, the Council has no way to intervene. Citizens and courts also cannot appeal to it, making its role different from that of the U.S. Supreme Court. Still, when consulted, the Council has played a significant role in shaping constitutional decisions and legal procedures.

The Community

❑ Constitutional Referendum

The concept of the Community was a key innovation in the Constitution of the Fifth Republic. It was designed as an association between France and its overseas territories and departments, falling somewhere between a Federation and a Commonwealth. This replaced the earlier idea of the French Union. (The French Union was a political body created by the French Fourth Republic to replace the old French colonial empire system). Members of the Community had equal status, with full autonomy to govern themselves and manage their affairs democratically. All citizens, regardless of origin, race, or religion, were legally equal and shared the same responsibilities. Initially, the Community included France and twelve overseas territories that participated in the 1958 constitutional referendum. However, soon after the Constitution was enacted, these territories gradually gained independence, leading to the rapid decline of the Community in its original form.

❑ Commonwealth Conference

To accommodate this shift, the Constitution was amended to allow independent states to join the Community through agreements with France. All twelve former territories signed agreements for close cooperation with France in various areas, but only six chose to remain part of the Community. They also became members of the United Nations. Today, the Community exists mainly in name, with interactions among its members resembling a "Commonwealth Conference" rather than an active political structure.

Advisory and Judicial Organs

The 1958 Constitution established two advisory bodies, one of which is the Economic and Social Council. This council provides opinions on government bills, proposed ordinances,

Economic and Social Council

and private members' bills referred to it by the government. It can also be consulted on economic or social issues affecting France or the Community. Any economic or social plan must be reviewed by the council before implementation. Under the Fourth Republic, a similar Economic Council existed, which could independently study and report on relevant matters and advise both the Assembly and the Government. However, under the Fifth Republic, its role has changed. Sessions are no longer public, most work is done in specialized technical sections with outside experts, and its function is now mainly technical advisory.

Highest Court of Appeal

The second advisory body is the High Council of Judges and Public Prosecutors, which is led by the President of the Republic. The Minister of Justice serves as its Vice-President and can act on behalf of the President. The council consists of nine members appointed by the President for a four-year term, with the possibility of one reappointment. Its main role is to advise the government on appointing judges to higher judicial positions, such as judges of the Cour de Cassation (the highest appeals court) and presiding judges of the Courts of Appeal. It also provides opinions on judicial appointments proposed by the Minister of Justice, acts as a disciplinary body for judges, and is consulted on matters of pardon.

Responsibility of Higher Council of Judiciary

Under the Fourth Republic, the Higher Council of Judiciary was also responsible for organizing the judicial system and ensuring judicial independence. However, when political interference affected judicial appointments, these responsibilities were transferred to the Ministry of Justice. The current Constitution has introduced several ordinances and decrees to reform criminal procedures, restructure courts, and improve the training and status of judges, aiming to enhance the quality of the judiciary.

Official Recognition of Political Parties

Political Parties Recognized

A key feature of the 1958 Constitution is the official recognition of political parties (Article 4) and their role in the political system. Unlike India or the United States, where political parties developed outside the constitutional framework, the French Constitution explicitly acknowledges them as an essential part of political life. Article 4 states that "Political parties and groups shall be instrumental in the exercise of the suffrage. They shall be freely formed and shall freely carry on their activities. They must respect the principles of national sovereignty and democracy." This means that any party that does not show clear loyalty to France or respect for democracy can be banned if necessary.

Untidy, Vague, and Ambiguous

❑ Demerits of the Constitution

The 1958 French Constitution has been described as somewhat unclear, with certain parts being vague or ambiguous. It does not fully define the system of government and leaves out details about several key institutions. Important aspects such as electoral laws, the Community institutions, the structure of Parliament, the judiciary's organization, and the roles of advisory councils were established through a series of ordinances issued between October 1958 and February 1959. During this time, over 300 ordinances were enacted, many of which dealt with administrative matters, making constitutional interpretation more challenging. Additionally, the Constitution was drafted privately by a small Ministerial Committee led by General de Gaulle and was never discussed in Parliament. As a result, interpreters of the Constitution lack insight into how different political parties would have understood and debated its terms.

Summarised Overview

Switzerland and France provide two distinct models of governance, shaped by historical, social, and political influences. Switzerland is characterized by a federal system with a plural executive, strong cantonal autonomy, and a direct democracy mechanism allowing citizens to influence constitutional amendments through referendums. The Swiss Constitution has evolved through multiple revisions, with the most recent in 1999 consolidating previous amendments. This system ensures that government authority is decentralized, with Cantons holding significant power in legislative and administrative functions.

On the other hand, France's governance is centered on a unitary state with a semi-presidential system. The 1958 Constitution, drafted under Charles de Gaulle, reinforced executive power by creating a strong presidency while maintaining elements of parliamentary democracy. The French political system emphasizes popular sovereignty, with citizens exercising their rights through elected representatives rather than direct legislative participation. Unlike Switzerland's decentralized federalism, the French state maintains hierarchical control, delegating powers to local governments without granting them constitutional autonomy.

The Swiss Constitution embodies principles of democracy, social welfare, and liberal rights, with an emphasis on citizen participation. France, while upholding democratic ideals, restricts direct public intervention in governance and leans towards administrative efficiency and state-driven decision-making. Another key contrast lies in the judiciary; Switzerland's Federal Tribunal has limited judicial review, whereas France's Constitutional Council plays a key advisory role but lacks enforcement authority.

By comparing Switzerland and France, students gain an understanding of the different

approaches to constitutionalism and democracy. While Switzerland prioritizes direct citizen involvement, France's governance structure reinforces centralized authority, balancing executive and legislative powers. This comparative analysis highlights how institutional frameworks shape political culture, public policy, and the distribution of power.

Reference

1. Johari, J. C. (2009). *Comparative politics*. Sterling Publishers.
2. Bhagawan, V., & Bhushan, V. (2012). *World constitutions: A comparative study*. Sterling Publishers.
3. Agarwal, R. C. (2012). *Political theory: Principles of political science*. S. Chand & Company.
4. Agarwal, R. C. (2008). *Principles of political science*. S. Chand & Company.
5. Linder, W. (2010). *Swiss Democracy: Possible Solutions to Conflict in Multicultural Societies*. Palgrave Macmillan.
6. Elgie, R. (2019). *The Semi-Presidential System of France*. Oxford University Press.
7. Sartori, G. (1994). *Comparative Constitutional Engineering: An Inquiry into Structures, Incentives, and Outcomes*. Cambridge University Press.

Suggested Reading

1. Arendt, H. (1963). *On Revolution*. Viking Press.
2. Lijphart, A. (2012). *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. Yale University Press.
3. Bell, D. (2002). *French Constitutional Law: The Fifth Republic, Rights, and Democracy*. Oxford University Press.
4. Kriesi, H. (2005). *Direct Democratic Choice: The Swiss Experience*. Lexington Books.
5. Milward, A. S. (2000). *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*. Routledge.
6. Gagnon, A.-G. (2010). *Federalism, Citizenship and Quebec: Debating Multinationalism*. University of Toronto Press.
7. Debré, M. (1958). *The French Constitution: Origins and Development*. Paris: Gallimard.
8. Tsebelis, G. (2002). *Veto Players: How Political Institutions Work*. Princeton University Press.

9. Strong, C. F. (1963). *Modern Political Constitutions: An Introduction to the Comparative Study of Their History and Existing Form*. London: Sidgwick & Jackson.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU

BLOCK 4

Parties and Party Systems: UK, USA, and India



UNIT 1

Party System: Comparative Perspectives

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, students will be able to:

- explain the different types of party systems, including one-party, two-party, and multi-party systems
- compare the party systems of the UK, USA, and India, identifying their key features and differences
- analyze the historical evolution and impact of political parties in shaping governance structures
- evaluate the role of ideology, regionalism, and coalition politics in different political systems
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of each party system in promoting democracy and political stability

Background

Political parties are essential components of modern representative democracies. They provide a structured platform for political participation, help in policy formulation, and ensure the smooth functioning of government institutions. The party system in any country is shaped by historical, social, and political factors, leading to different models such as one-party, two-party, and multi-party systems.

The UK's party system has historically followed a two-party model, dominated by the Conservative and Labour parties. This system ensures stability but limits the influence of smaller parties. The USA, similarly, has a two-party system with the Republicans and Democrats as the primary contenders. While third parties exist, they have struggled to gain significant power due to structural and electoral barriers. In contrast, India follows a multi-party system, where numerous national and regional parties compete for power. This diversity reflects India's vast social and cultural landscape but also leads to coalition

politics and political fragmentation.

The evolution of party systems is influenced by factors such as ideology, historical developments, and electoral processes. In the UK, the two-party system emerged due to historical class divisions, while in the USA, it developed alongside federalism and presidential governance. In India, the presence of multiple political and regional identities led to the emergence of numerous parties, making coalition governments a common feature.

By studying party systems comparatively, students can understand how different democracies function and what challenges they face. This analysis helps in appreciating the role of political parties in ensuring representation, governance, and political stability across different systems.

Keywords

Party System, One-Party System, Two-Party System, Multi-Party System, Coalition Government, Ideological Divide, Electoral System, Political Stability, Regional Parties, Opposition Politics

Discussion

In modern representative democracy, political parties play a crucial role in every society. Generally, there are three main types of party systems: (1) One-Party System: Only one political party is allowed to govern, and opposition is not permitted. This was seen in former communist countries like the USSR and other Eastern European nations. (2) Two-Party System: Two major political parties dominate, such as in the United States and Britain. (3) Multi-Party System: Several political parties exist, often leading to coalition governments. Examples include India, France, Switzerland, and Italy.

4.1.1 Party System in the United Kingdom

Political parties play a crucial role in making democracy function effectively. They serve two main purposes: first, they help inform people about political matters, and second, they allow citizens to choose their leaders. In England, the government is often referred to as a "party government," which is largely true. Over time, the rise of the party system has led to a stronger Prime Minister and a weaker Parliament, reducing the power of the King.

Government led by Political Party

4.1.2. Features of the Party System in the UK

4.1.2.1 Two-Party System

❑ Two Dominant Parties

The English party system has been characterized by the presence of two well-organized political parties since the 17th century. Initially, the political divide was between the Cavaliers, who supported King Charles I, and the Roundheads, who opposed the King's authority and the established Church. However, these groups were more like factions rather than modern political parties. Later, the Cavaliers' ideals were carried forward by the Tories, while the Whigs represented the Roundheads' views. []

❑ Supporting Class

The Tories supported the Church of England and the monarchy, representing the interests of the upper class. In contrast, the Whigs aimed to limit the King's power and advocated for the rights of the lower classes. These two groups became the first true political parties in England. After the Reform Act of 1832, the Whigs became known as the "Liberals," and the Tories were renamed "Conservatives." These two parties remained dominant until the Labour Party emerged in the early 20th century. While the Labour Party temporarily threatened the two-party system, the decline of the Liberal Party helped maintain it. The first Labour government was formed in 1924, and over time, the Liberals lost influence, holding only a handful of seats by the late 20th century. Today, Labour and the Conservatives continue to be the main political forces in England.

❑ Political Stability

The two-party system is deeply rooted in British politics, ensuring a stable parliamentary government. Historically, coalition governments have been unpopular, and party leaders have worked to maintain the dominance of the two-party system. Even the British Constitution evolved in a way that reinforces it.

❑ Division within the Labour Party

In 1981, a division within the Labour Party led to the formation of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), which later allied with the Liberal Party. This posed a challenge to the two-party system, but its impact remained limited. By the early 2000s, Labour and the Conservatives continued to be the main contenders for power. In the 2005 election, under Tony Blair's leadership, Labour won for the third consecutive time. However, Labour's majority was significantly reduced compared to the 2001 election, leading to Blair's eventual replacement by Gordon Brown.

❑ Organizational Strength of Political Parties

British political parties are highly centralized, with strong organizations at both national and local levels. The main decision-making power lies with the central leadership, which maintains direct control over local branches. Party members closely follow their leaders, and there is strict discipline within

the party, especially in Parliament. The central leadership, rather than local units, selects candidates for elections. This strict party control ensures unity and helps keep the ruling government stable.

4.1.2.3 Continuity of Operations

Political parties in England remain active at all times, even between elections. Once one election ends, they immediately begin preparing for the next. They continue their outreach efforts by publishing party materials, organizing meetings, holding training sessions, and participating in local elections. They also maintain connections with Members of Parliament and the Cabinet. While their activities may slow down compared to the intense campaigning just before an election, they never completely stop.

❑ Functioning of Political Parties

4.1.2.4 Moderation and Compromise

British political parties follow a tradition of moderation and compromise. The Conservatives are not always strictly conservative, nor are the Liberals always entirely liberal. At times, the Conservatives have supported reforms that the Liberals opposed. Similarly, the Labour Party, despite its socialist agenda, does not aim to nationalize all industries. Over time, Conservatives have adopted more flexible policies, while Labour has taken a more balanced approach to socialism.

❑ Nature of Political Parties

Party support is also not strictly divided by class. The Conservative Party is not solely made up of wealthy individuals like landlords, industrialists, and business owners, nor is the Labour Party exclusively for workers. Not all workers vote for Labour, just as not all businesspeople vote for the Conservatives. In fact, the Conservative Party has accepted many nationalization policies introduced by Labour. People from the middle class often have mixed loyalties, supporting both parties at different times. This spirit of moderation and compromise is also evident in Parliament. The government acknowledges the importance of the opposition and does not try to suppress it. In return, the opposition provides constructive criticism rather than blocking the government's work or making unrealistic promises to sway public opinion.

❑ Party Supporters

4.1.3 Party System in the USA

In the United States, political parties have a significant role in the government. The country holds elections frequently. The President and Vice President are elected every four years. Every two years, elections are held for the House of Representatives and one-third of the Senate seats. Governors and Lieutenant

❑ Role of Political Parties in the USA



Governors in different states are elected every two or four years. Additionally, elections take place for state legislatures, local councils, and various public offices. Due to the large number of elections, political parties play a key role in the country's political system.

4.1.3.1 Characteristic Features of the American Party System

Extra Constitutional Growth

Political parties in the United States, like those in Great Britain, developed without official recognition in the Constitution. The framers of the American Constitution were against political parties, believing they could harm national interests. At the Philadelphia Convention, Madison aimed to create a government free from party divisions. Washington also opposed political factions and warned about their negative effects in his farewell address. To keep politics free from party influence, the Constitution established a presidential system and an indirect election process for the President.

❑ Constitutional Recognition of Political Parties

However, even before the Constitution was finalized, political parties began to emerge. Local groups in towns, counties, and states worked to promote candidates and gain public support. At the Philadelphia Convention, delegates were already divided into Federalists and Anti-Federalists. After Washington stepped down, these differences became more pronounced, and political parties gained influence, actively competing for the presidency. Over time, parties received legal recognition, with both Congress and state governments passing laws to regulate their membership, organization, and finances.

❑ Legal Recognition of Political Parties

Two-Party System

The American political system, like the British, follows a two-party structure. Throughout its history, the U.S. has always had two dominant political parties. Many smaller parties, such as the Anti-Masons, Free Soil Party, Green Backers, Populists, Prohibitionists, and various Progressive parties, have appeared and disappeared over time. The Socialist Party has existed since 1900 but has had influence mainly in New York City. The Communist Party was founded in 1920, and some labor groups also exist. However, no minor party has ever come close to winning a national election. At times, third-party candidates have gained enough votes to influence the outcome between the two major parties, but they have struggled to maintain their independence. Instead of holding office, third parties have primarily introduced new policies, which the major parties often adopt. Many ideas from minor parties, such as

❑ Two Dominant Parties

the Populists, Greenbackers, Socialists, and Progressives, have been incorporated into the platforms of the leading parties. As a result, those who support third-party movements rarely gain political power.

☐ Strength of Two-Party System

There are several reasons why the two-party system remains strong in the U.S. First, like the British, Americans tend to be flexible in their political views rather than strictly ideological. Second, divisions based on nationality and religion, which often create political factions in countries like India, are less influential in the U.S. Third, the British party system, which was introduced during the colonial period, has continued even after independence. Fourth, the American voting system, especially the Electoral College and the single-member district method for electing legislators, supports the two-party system. If no candidate secures the required majority in the Electoral College, the decision goes to the House of Representatives, where each state casts one vote. This process makes it difficult for third parties to succeed. Similarly, the single-member district system benefits the dominant party and discourages the growth of smaller parties. Finally, the major parties absorb many of the issues raised by minor parties, preventing them from gaining long-term influence. Over time, Republicans and Democrats have adopted policies once promoted by left-wing parties. Unlike in Europe or India, American political parties have not divided into strictly conservative and liberal factions. The two-party system has remained stable without breaking into smaller ideological groups.

No Fundamental Ideological Dissimilarities

☐ Similarity in Approach

The American party system is different from the British system in a key way. In the UK, the two major parties, Labour and Conservative, have clear ideological differences. The Conservative Party represents capitalists, aristocrats, and business elites, supporting a capitalist economy. In contrast, the Labour Party represents the working class and follows a socialist agenda. However, in the United States, the Democratic and Republican parties do not have fundamental policy differences. Any distinctions between them are often subtle and more about approach than ideology. Over time, even these differences have faded. The Republicans, once weak in the South during the Civil War era, are now more competitive there. Similarly, it is incorrect to say that Democrats represent only the poor and Republicans only the rich. Both parties include people with conservative and liberal views, though in varying proportions.

Overall, there is no strong ideological divide between the two

❑ Support of Capitalism and Free-Market Economy

❑ Influence of Regional and Traditional Elements

❑ Organizes at the Local Level

major U.S. parties. Both support capitalism and a regulated free-market economy. They agree on key policies, such as controlling inflation, establishing national healthcare programs, supporting unemployment and old-age insurance, protecting land resources, ensuring farmers' stability, and encouraging industrial growth. In foreign policy, both parties back collective security through the United Nations, economic aid to developing nations to prevent communist influence, and cooperation with Western countries. Traditional political differences, such as high versus low tariffs, isolationism versus global engagement, and pacifism versus militarism, have become less distinct.

Geographical and Traditional Differences

Although there are no major ideological differences between the two main political parties in the United States, regional and traditional influences play a role. Many people support a party because their family has historically been part of it or because it is dominant in their area. Republicans mainly draw support from industrial sectors, while Democrats have stronger backing from agricultural communities. Additionally, Democrats tend to have more support among lower-income groups compared to Republicans.

Localism

In the United States, political parties are primarily organized at the local level, focusing on local issues. Even members elected to Congress and state offices tend to prioritize local concerns over national matters. Because local issues vary widely across the country, candidates from the same party often take different stances on key topics. A position that is popular in one state may be unpopular in another. For example, a Democrat from Georgia may have a different view on civil rights than a Democrat from Connecticut to avoid losing voter support. This strong emphasis on local concerns has made American political parties less effective in governing. In contrast, in Great Britain, the ruling party follows clear principles and ensures that its members support its policies, rather than catering solely to local interests. In the U.S., parties are highly effective in winning elections and distributing political benefits but struggle to function as unified organizations for governance. Instead of enforcing party-wide policies, they are often divided and primarily focused on electoral success rather than long-term national goals.

4.1.4 Features of Party System in India

4.1.3.1 Characteristic Features of the Indian Party System

Multi-Party System

India has a vast land area and a diverse society. It follows a system where all adults can vote, and its unique political process has led to the formation of many political parties. Although India has a multiparty system, the Congress party dominated politics for a long time. Because of this, political analyst Rajni Kothari described India's party system as a "one-party dominance system" or the "Congress system." However, Congress's strong position began to weaken after 1967 due to the rise of regional parties and other national parties like Janata in 1977, Janata Dal in 1989, and the BJP in 1991. This led to the emergence of a competitive multi-party system. Before the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, there were 7 national parties, 52 state parties, and 2,354 registered but unrecognized parties. The country has parties of all kinds, including left-wing, centrist, right-wing, communal, and non-communal groups. As a result, situations like hung parliaments, hung assemblies, and coalition governments have become common.

❑ Increasing Number of Political Parties

Lack of Clear Ideology

Apart from a few political parties, most parties in India do not follow a distinct ideology. Their policies and programs are quite similar, and they generally support democracy, secularism, socialism, and Gandhian principles. However, in reality, most parties, including those with strong ideologies, focus mainly on gaining power. As a result, politics in India is now driven by specific issues rather than ideology, and practical strategies have taken precedence over firm commitment to principles.

❑ Focus on Gaining Power

Personality Cult

In India, political parties are often built around a strong leader who becomes more important than the party or its ideology. People recognize parties more by their leaders than by their policies. For example, the Congress party gained popularity mainly due to the leadership of Nehru, Indira Gandhi, and Rajiv Gandhi. Similarly, AIADMK in Tamil Nadu was linked to M. G. Ramachandran, and TDP in Andhra Pradesh was associated with N.T. Rama Rao. Some parties are even named after their leaders, such as Biju Janata Dal and Lok Dal (A).

❑ Leadership of Political Parties

- ❑ Caste and Religious Based Political Parties

Based on Traditional Factors

In Western countries, political parties are usually formed based on social, economic, and political programs. However, in India, many parties are created based on religion, caste, language, culture, or ethnicity. Examples include Shiv Sena, Muslim League, Hindu Maha Sabha, Akali Dal, Muslim Majlis, Bahujan Samaj Party, Republican Party of India, and Gorkha League. These parties mainly focus on representing specific communities or groups, which can sometimes weaken the broader public interest.

- ❑ Regional Elements in Politics

Emergence of Regional Parties

A key aspect of India's political system is the rise of many regional parties and their increasing influence. These parties have become dominant in various states, such as BJD in Odisha, DMK and AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, Akali Dal in Punjab, AGP in Assam, National Conference in Jammu & Kashmir, and JD(U) in Bihar. Initially, these parties were limited to state politics, but with the rise of coalition governments at the national level, they now play a crucial role in national politics as well. Notably, in the 1984 elections, the TDP became the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha.

- ❑ Polarization of Political Parties

Factions and Defections

Political parties in India often face issues like internal conflicts, defections, splits, mergers, and polarization. Many politicians switch parties or form new ones due to their desire for power and personal gain. The trend of defections became more common after the 1967 general elections, leading to political instability at both the national and state levels. This has resulted in the division of several parties, such as two Janata Dals, two TDPs, two DMKs, two Communist Parties, two Congress parties, three Akali Dals, and three Muslim Leagues.

- ❑ Role of Opposition Party/ Front

Lack of Effective Opposition

A strong Opposition is crucial for the smooth functioning of India's parliamentary democracy. It helps prevent the ruling party from becoming too powerful and offers an alternative government. However, over the past 50 years, a stable and well-organized national Opposition has rarely emerged, except for brief periods. Opposition parties often lack unity and frequently take conflicting stands against the ruling party. As a result, they have struggled to contribute effectively to governance and national development.

Summarised Overview

This unit explores the concept of party systems and provides a comparative analysis of the UK, USA, and Indian political frameworks. A party system refers to how political parties are structured and operate within a democracy. The one-party system, seen in former communist nations like the USSR, allows only one political entity to govern. The two-party system, dominant in countries like the UK and the USA, ensures stable governance but limits smaller political voices. The multi-party system, as seen in India, enables broader representation but often leads to coalition politics and governance instability.

In the UK, the two-party system has been historically dominated by the Conservatives and Labour. British politics is characterized by strong party discipline, centralized leadership, and a focus on moderation and compromise. Similarly, the USA follows a two-party model with the Republicans and Democrats. Unlike the UK, American political parties are more decentralized, and elections are frequent, making party organization critical.

India, on the other hand, operates under a multi-party system, with national and regional parties playing significant roles. The Congress Party dominated politics for many years, but the rise of the BJP and regional parties has made coalition governments a regular occurrence. Indian politics is also influenced by factors like caste, religion, and regionalism, leading to a highly fragmented party system.

Assignments

1. Define a party system and explain its importance in a democracy.
2. Discuss the key features of the UK's two-party system.
3. How does the American two-party system differ from that of the UK?
4. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of a multi-party system with reference to India.
5. What role do regional parties play in India's political landscape?
6. Compare the ideological foundations of political parties in the UK, USA, and India.
7. Discuss the impact of coalition politics in multi-party systems.
8. How do electoral laws influence the dominance of a two-party system in the USA?
9. Explain how the rise of new political parties affects traditional party structures in democracies.
10. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of each party system in promoting political stability.

Reference

1. Johari, J. C. (2009). *Comparative politics*. Sterling Publishers.
2. Bhagawan, V., & Bhushan, V. (2012). *World constitutions: A comparative study*. Sterling Publishers.
3. Agarwal, R. C. (2012). *Political theory: Principles of political science*. S. Chand & Company.
4. Agarwal, R. C. (2008). *Principles of political science*. S. Chand & Company.
5. Lekshmikanth, M. (2017). *Indian polity*. Tata McGraw Hill Education Private Limited.
6. Sartori, G. (1976). *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*. Cambridge University Press.
7. Lijphart, A. (1999). *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. Yale University Press.
8. Aldrich, J. H. (1995). *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America*. University of Chicago Press.

Suggested Reading

1. Heywood, A. (2019). *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*. Palgrave Macmillan.
2. Hague, R., Harrop, M., & McCormick, J. (2019). *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction*. Macmillan.
3. Lipset, S. M., & Rokkan, S. (1967). *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*. Free Press.
4. Webb, P. (2000). *The Modern British Party System*. Sage Publications.
5. Shively, W. P. (2018). *Power and Choice: An Introduction to Political Science*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU

UNIT 2

Major Political Parties

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- explain the different types of political parties based on ideology and structure
- compare the major political parties in the UK, USA, and India, highlighting their evolution and significance
- analyze the role of political parties in governance, policymaking, and representation
- evaluate the impact of regional parties in shaping national politics, especially in India
- assess the influence of ideology, leadership, and electoral systems on the success of political parties

Background

Political parties are essential institutions in democratic governance, providing a structured platform for political participation, policy development, and representation. They are broadly categorized into reactionary, conservative, liberal, and radical parties, each differing in their approach to governance and change. Based on ideology, parties are classified as left-wing, centrist, or right-wing.

The UK's major political parties include the Conservative Party, Labour Party, and the Liberal Democrats. The Conservative Party, rooted in aristocratic traditions, has historically supported monarchy, free markets, and national stability. The Labour Party, established in 1906, advocates socialist principles, trade union rights, and a welfare state. The Liberal Democrats, once a dominant force, have seen fluctuating electoral success due to their moderate stance.

The USA has a two-party system, dominated by the Democratic and Republican parties. The Democrats are generally left-leaning, supporting progressive taxation, social welfare, and government regulation. The Republicans lean right, advocating free-market policies, conservative values, and limited government intervention. While third

parties exist, their impact is minimal due to structural and electoral barriers.

In contrast, India follows a multi-party system with both national and regional parties. The Indian National Congress (INC) played a pivotal role in the country's independence but has faced challenges from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which promotes Hindutva and economic reforms. Other significant national parties include the Communist Party of India (CPI), the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), and the Samajwadi Party (SP). Regional parties like the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) also play a crucial role in governance.

By examining these major political parties, students will gain insight into how political structures and ideologies shape governance in different democratic systems.

Keywords

Political Party, Party System, Conservative Party, Labour Party, Republican Party, Democratic Party, Indian National Congress, Bharatiya Janata Party, Regional Parties, Coalition Government

Discussion

Political parties are groups of people with similar political beliefs who come together to gain power through legal methods and work for the country's progress. In modern democracies, political parties are generally classified into four types:

1. Reactionary parties: They support traditional social, economic, and political systems.
2. Conservative parties: They prefer to maintain the current system without major changes.
3. Liberal parties: They seek to improve existing institutions through reforms.
4. Radical parties: They aim to completely change the system by replacing the current institutions. Based on ideology, political scientists classify radical parties as left-wing, liberal parties as centrist, and reactionary and conservative parties as right-wing.

❑ Groups of People with Similar Political Beliefs

In modern democracies, political parties perform different functions, such as

1. Uniting, simplifying, and stabilizing the political process.



2. Providing a link between the government and the people.
3. Recruiting political leaders.
4. Serving as the broker of ideas by selecting a number of issues and focusing attention on them.

❑ Functions of Political Parties

❑ Evolution of the Party

❑ Organizational Structure

❑ Administrative Function and Policies

4.2.1 Political Parties in the United Kingdom

4.2.1.1 The Conservative Party

The Conservative Party traces its roots back to the Tories of the 18th century. It has traditionally been supported by wealthy individuals, aristocrats, and upper-class elites. However, it also attracts university graduates, middle-class citizens, patriotic workers, and skilled laborers who share its values. The party is particularly popular in southern England.

Party Structure and Organization

At the top of the party structure are the National Union of Conservatives and Unionist Associations (NUCUA). Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own Unionist Associations. NUCUA is a federation of local and central groups with over three million members. Its main roles are to establish party associations, promote party principles, and coordinate activities. It is governed by a Central Council and an Executive Committee. The Central Council includes representatives from different categories, such as university graduates and local associations. It elects key leaders, including a President, a Chairman, and three Vice-Chairmen, during its annual meeting. The Executive Committee, which meets monthly, mainly provides advice.

The party's administrative tasks are handled by a central office, led by a Chairman chosen by the party leader. This office manages finances, candidate nominations, and party publications such as reports and journals. It also supports local branches and helps set up new ones. Despite these structures, real power lies with the party leader. He appoints the Chairman of the central office and determines party policies. The central office keeps him informed about public opinions within different constituencies. Once elected, the leader remains in position for life unless he chooses to resign. He also selects his own successor. For example, Winston Churchill chose Anthony Eden to follow him. The leader's decisions are followed by the entire party, and he usually serves as the leader in the House

of Commons. Party manifestos often reflect this authority—Churchill personally signed the 1951 manifesto, which even began with "I."

Ideology of the Party

The Conservative Party's core beliefs align with thinkers like Edmund Burke, David Hume, and Adam Smith. It strongly supports the monarchy, the church, and property rights. The party emphasizes loyalty to the King and admires the royal family. It encourages citizens to be part of the church and traditionally follows a free-market economic policy (*laissez-faire*). Conservatives have historically supported the British Empire and were resistant to granting independence to colonies. Churchill, for example, strongly opposed India's freedom and defended imperialism.

Belief in Monarchy

The party has also protected the interests of the aristocracy and supported church-run schools. It has long defended the House of Lords and was historically against expanding political and educational rights for the working class. Economically, Conservatives were protectionists until World War I but later adjusted their policies to safeguard British industries. While generally against nationalization, they have accepted some of the nationalized industries introduced by the Labour Party. Overall, the Conservative Party values tradition, national pride, and continuity. It has a strong belief in British superiority and supports gradual social reforms.

Interests of the Aristocracy

4.2.1.2 Labour Party

The Labour Party was established in 1906 and is considered a relatively new political party. It emerged from two key influences: trade unionism and socialism. Trade unions first appeared in England during the early Industrial Revolution and grew in number throughout the 19th century. Over time, workers realized they needed their own political party rather than relying on candidates from other parties. [Trade Unions and Socialism]

Political Identity of Workers

In 1893, an independent Labour Party was founded in Scotland to promote socialism and create a distinct political identity for workers. In 1899, the Trade Union Congress proposed forming a new organization, which led to the creation of the Labour Representation Committee. The goal was to establish a Labour presence in Parliament. By 1906, this committee was renamed the Labour Party and adopted a new Constitution. The party grew rapidly, and by the 1922 general election, it had become the second-largest party in England. Today, the

Labour Party remains a significant political force, with Gordon Brown becoming Prime Minister after Tony Blair stepped down following his third election victory in 2005.

Organization of the Labour Party

The Labour Party has a more complex structure than the Conservative Party. Before 1918, it was not a national organization with individual memberships in every constituency. Instead, it was a federation of trade unions, trade councils, and socialist societies, and people could only join by being part of one of these groups. However, after World War I, the party introduced a new Constitution, allowing both old and new voters, including women, to become direct members. The Constitution emphasized that both intellectual and manual workers were welcome, encouraging a broad range of people, including teachers, businessmen, journalists, military personnel, engineers, and shopkeepers, to join. This change helped transform Labour into a truly national party.

❑ Part of One of the Groups

Structure and Leadership

The Labour Party's highest decision-making body is the Annual Conference, which consists of delegates from member organizations. Each organization sends one delegate per 1,000 members, and constituencies with more than 500 female members can send an additional female delegate. National executive members, Labour MPs, and approved parliamentary candidates attend but cannot vote unless sent as official delegates. The Conference meets once a year to guide the party's direction, make decisions, and amend the Constitution.

❑ Highest Decision-Making Body

Between conferences, the party is managed by the National Executive Committee (NEC), which consists of 28 members. These include:

- 12 members elected by trade unions, socialist societies, and cooperative groups
- 8 members chosen by local constituency organizations
- 5 women elected by the Conference
- 3 ex-officio members (the party leader, deputy leader, and treasurer)

The Conference elects the chairperson of the NEC each year. The NEC oversees the party's organization in all constituencies,

ensures decisions are implemented, interprets the Constitution, expels members who violate rules, and supervises party activities. It meets two to three times a month and forms sub-committees for specific tasks.

Party Administration and Parliamentary Role

The Labour Party's central office is managed by a Secretary elected by the Conference. This office coordinates party activities, supports regional branches, selects candidates, provides speakers, distributes campaign materials, and funds party newspapers. It functions under the NEC's supervision. Labour MPs form the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP), which elects its leader in Parliament. If Labour wins an election, the leader becomes Prime Minister. If in opposition, the leader serves as the Leader of the Opposition. The PLP follows the general policies set by the Annual Conference and consults with the NEC on key decisions.

☐ Activities of the Party

Programme of the Party

The Labour Party follows a strong socialist approach. It aims to gradually replace the capitalist system by ensuring that land and capital are owned by the nation. According to the party's manifesto, the government should control all economic activities and ensure fair distribution of wealth. The party supports the nationalization of industries and opposes privileges for any specific class. Its ultimate goal is to establish a complete socialist system. Labour also advocates for a fair taxation system, where taxes increase progressively. Overall, its main objective is to bring political, social, and economic equality, particularly for workers—both manual and intellectual. The party promotes the idea of a welfare state and upholds socialist and liberal values.

☐ Strong Socialist Approach

Politically, the Labour Party has always supported self-governance for British colonies and territories. Under the leadership of Clement Attlee, India gained independence. The party also supports the decentralization of power in the UK, leading to the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh on May 13, 2000, and the Welsh Assembly. This aligns with the governance structures of other European Union countries. While the Labour Party once advocated for abolishing the House of Lords, it later accepted its existence. On March 8, 2007, reforms proposed by Tony Blair were presented in a White Paper to the House of Commons. These reforms suggested reducing the size of the House of Lords, modifying its structure

☐ Supported Self-Governance for British Colonies and Territories

and name, while keeping its role unchanged. Although MPs voted for a fully elected chamber, this proposal was not part of the formal reform bill, making its implementation unlikely. The party also supports strengthening the United Nations and maintaining close relations with the United States.

4.2.1.3. The Liberal Party

The Liberal Party was influenced by the ideas of John Locke and the Liberal Whig movement. At one time, it was one of the major political parties in England. However, over time, its influence declined, and it became a smaller party. Despite this, in 1977, the Labour Party was able to stay in power with the support of the Liberals. The Liberal Party has always supported reforms, particularly in the areas of political and religious freedom. It has advocated for equal voting rights for all citizens and supported the idea that the elected House of Commons should have the ultimate decision-making power. A significant achievement of the party was the Parliament Act of 1911, which reduced the power of the House of Lords. This law was passed after a long struggle between the Liberals and the Conservatives.

❑ Political and Religious Freedom

Historically, the Liberals believed in free trade and minimal government intervention in the economy. While some members still support free trade, the party has moved away from strict free-market policies. Instead, it now promotes a mixed economic system that combines elements of both private enterprise and government regulation. It supports individual freedom for the wealthy but believes in government assistance for the poor. The party claims to represent the interests of the entire nation rather than just one social class. While it does not fully support socialism, it also does not believe that nationalizing industries is necessary. Instead, it encourages profit-sharing and worker participation in business decisions. The Liberal Party envisions a society where all individuals enjoy both personal freedom and financial security. It receives support from people across different income levels, including the middle class, some wealthy individuals, and the poor.

❑ Ideology of the Liberal Party

Decline and Electoral Performance

One of the main reasons for the decline of the Liberal Party over the past fifty years is its lack of a clear and unique policy agenda. It has struggled to differentiate itself from both the Labour and Conservative parties. Like Labour, it supports the welfare state, and like the Conservatives, it opposes state-controlled industries. As a result, many of its left-wing supporters have shifted to Labour, while right-wing supporters have joined the Conservatives. The party's decline is reflected in its election results. In 1945, it won only 12 seats, which dropped

❑ Supports the Welfare State

to 9 in 1950. In 1955 and 1959, it managed to win only 6 seats. However, its performance improved slightly in 1964, securing 9 seats, and in 1966, it increased to 12 seats. In the March 1974 elections, it won 14 seats and later joined Labour in a coalition government in 1977. In 1987, the Liberals allied with the Social Democratic Party and won 19 seats. Their progress continued in the 1992 elections, where they secured 20 seats. In 1997, the party received 16.8% of the votes, compared to 43.2% for Labour and 30.7% for the Conservatives. Their performance improved further in 2001 when they won 52 seats, showing increasing public support. In the 2005 general elections, the Liberal Democrats secured 63 seats, strengthening their position in national politics.

❑ Role of Government

4.2.1.4 The Social Democratic Party (SDP)

In 1981, some right-wing members of the Labour Party broke away to form the Social Democratic Party (SDP). This split happened because Labour adopted the Electoral College system, which gave trade unions significant influence in choosing the party leader. The SDP supported a mixed economy, the NATO alliance, and membership in the European Common Market. The SDP followed the policies of Hugh Gaitskell, a former opposition leader. Gaitskell believed that equality could be achieved without fully nationalizing industries. Instead, he suggested that the government should buy large shares in private companies. Unlike Labour, the SDP did not focus on trade union activities or class conflict.

❑ Political Alliance

The SDP and the Liberal Party formed an alliance because their policies were similar. However, in the 1987 elections, the Conservative Party, led by Margaret Thatcher, achieved a decisive victory. The Liberals, under David Steel, and the SDP, led by David Owen, had hoped to gain enough seats to influence a hung Parliament, but their expectations were not met. In March 1988, the Liberal Party and SDP merged to form the Social and Liberal Democratic Party. However, in the 1992 elections, they won only 19 seats in a Parliament of 651 members. A small faction of the SDP remained independent and secured three seats in the 1987 elections.

4.2.2 Political Parties in the USA

The United States has two main political parties: the Democratic Party, which is generally more left-leaning, and the Republican Party, which is more right-leaning. Since the U.S. does not use proportional representation, third parties do not have a significant impact. When a third party does emerge,

- ❑ Two Main Political Parties

- ❑ Favored a Strong Federal Government and States' Rights

- ❑ Emphasis on Strong Central Government and Individual Rights

one of the major parties often adopts its ideas, causing it to lose support. For example, in 1992, billionaire Ross Perot ran for president, but both Democrats and Republicans later embraced his focus on reducing the deficit, leading to a decline in his influence. Additionally, state laws often make it difficult for third-party candidates to get on the ballot.

4.2.2.1 Evolution and Growth of Political Parties in the USA

The history of political parties in the U.S. dates back to before the Constitution was officially adopted. Even at that time, local groups were involved in selecting candidates for various positions. When the Constitution was being sent to states for approval, supporters (Federalists) and opponents (Anti-Federalists) competed to elect representatives who shared their views. Political divisions were already visible at the Philadelphia Convention, where Alexander Hamilton led a group that favored a strong federal government, while Thomas Jefferson supported states' rights. President George Washington tried to prevent political divisions, but he himself was seen as the leader of the Federalist Party. His warning about the dangers of political parties was more about preventing extreme factionalism rather than opposing political organizations. However, his warning was ignored, and after his retirement, political rivalries became more pronounced.

John Adams, the next president, struggled to keep the Federalists and Anti-Federalists united. Disagreements within the Federalist Party, particularly between Adams and Hamilton, led to their defeat in the 1800 election. Jefferson, backed by farmers, won, while Adams had more support from industrial and business interests. The Federalists prioritized order and a strong central government, while the Anti-Federalists emphasized individual rights. The Federalist Party gradually lost influence, and by 1820, it had disappeared. Meanwhile, divisions emerged within the Republican (formerly Anti-Federalist) Party, leading to the rise of new political factions. By 1824, personal rivalries replaced party politics, and no candidate won an outright majority, so the House of Representatives chose John Quincy Adams as president. Eventually, two new parties formed: the Democratic-Republicans, led by Andrew Jackson, and the National Republicans (later known as the Whigs), led by Adams.

In the 1828 election, the Democratic-Republicans won, making Jackson president. His leadership further solidified party divisions. He was re-elected in 1832, and his party remained in power in the 1836 election. The Whig Party was formed in 1834 by those opposed to Jackson's policies. They briefly gained

❑ Electoral Performance

power in 1840 but lost in 1844. They won again in 1848 but were defeated by the Democrats in 1852. The major political issue in the 1860 election was slavery. The Republican Party, which had evolved from the Whigs, opposed slavery and won the presidency with Abraham Lincoln as their candidate. His election led to the secession of Southern states and the Civil War. After the war, the Republican Party remained dominant for the next 24 years. The Democrats briefly won the presidency in 1884 and 1892 but remained out of power until 1912, when Woodrow Wilson was elected.

World Wars and Election Results

During World War I, Wilson initially kept the U.S. out of the conflict, which helped him win re-election in 1916. However, the country later joined the war. After the war, Wilson played a key role in the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations, but the Senate rejected it. This issue influenced the 1920 election, in which the Republicans won. Warren Harding became president but died in office, and Vice President Calvin Coolidge took over. The Republican Party stayed in power until 1932, when Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected. Roosevelt served four terms, leading the nation through the Great Depression and World War II. He strengthened the Democratic Party, but after his death in 1945, Vice President Harry Truman took over. Truman won the 1948 election and later pursued a Cold War strategy against communist countries.

❑ First African American President

In 1952, the Republicans returned to power with Dwight Eisenhower, who won re-election in 1956. The Democrats regained the presidency in 1960 with John F. Kennedy. After his assassination in 1963, Lyndon B. Johnson took over. The Democrats remained in power until 1968, when Republican Richard Nixon was elected. In 1976, Democrat Jimmy Carter became president, but in 1980, he was defeated by Republican Ronald Reagan, who also won re-election in 1984. In 1988, Republican George H.W. Bush became president, but in 1992, Democrat Bill Clinton defeated him and remained in office until 2000. That year, Republican George W. Bush won after a controversial legal battle. He served two terms, leaving office in 2009 when Democrat Barack Obama was elected as the first African American president.

❑ Parties Role in American Politics

Over the years, power in Congress has frequently shifted between the two parties. In 1994, Republicans gained control of both the House and Senate but faced challenges in the following years. By 2008, Democrats had regained the majority. Throughout U.S. history, the presidency has always been held by either the Democratic or Republican Party. While third parties have occasionally participated in elections, they have never won the presidency. The Democratic Party evolved from Jefferson's

Anti-Federalists, while the Republican Party traces its roots back to Hamilton's Federalists. Both parties have shown resilience and have played a dominant role in American politics.

4.2.2.2 Party Structure and Organization

Loose Structure:The Democratic and Republican parties in the U.S. are not as strictly organized as political parties in Britain. Both parties aim to represent a wide range of people and viewpoints across the country. As a result, they do not have strict ideological differences and are not as unified as British parties. This also means that party discipline is not very strict.

The National Committee:At the top of the party structure is the National Committee. In the Democratic Party, it includes one man and one woman from each state and territory. Members are usually selected by state delegations at national party conventions, but in some states, they are chosen through state conventions, committees, or direct elections. This means the selection process varies across states. Since each state sends two members, the National Committee has over a hundred members. Although it holds significant authority, its main role is focused on managing presidential elections.

Congressional Campaign Committee:The National Committee focuses on electing the President and Vice President. Each party also has a Senatorial Campaign Committee to manage campaigns for national legislative seats. The Congressional Campaign Committee includes one representative from each state, selected for two years by party members in the House. Similarly, the Senatorial Campaign Committee has seven members, chosen for two years by party members in the Senate. These committees mainly work during election campaigns to help their parties win and keep seats in Congress. They track voting records, assess political conditions in different areas, and prepare for Congressional elections.

State Central Committee:At the state level, the party organization mainly includes a State Central Committee and a Chairman. The Committee is made up of members selected by party voters, either directly or indirectly. The selection process differs across states and may be done by committees or districts. State Committees usually consist of local party leaders. Their main role is to keep local party organizations active and handle tasks like voter registration.

County Committee: In the United States, there are more than three thousand counties, and in each one, at least one of the major parties has a County Committee. This committee oversees the work of smaller party groups, handles county government

❑ Organizational Weakness

❑ Role in Presidential Election

❑ Activities in Election

❑ State Level Party Organization

❑ More than Three Thousand Counties

matters, and collaborates with State Central Committees on important issues. A County Committee is led by a Chairman, whose influence grows if their party holds power in local government.

☐ Smallest Unit of a Party Organization

Local Organization: The precinct, or polling district, is the smallest unit of a party organization. Its size depends on population, voter density, and total voters, with around 130,000 precincts across the country. Each precinct typically has between 100 and 500 voters. The precinct Chairman maintains direct contact with voters, helps address their concerns, and ensures they support the party on Election Day. In cities, the next level of organization is the Ward Committee, which represents an election district for city council members. It manages precinct units and handles local political issues. Above this is the City Committee, which oversees both ward and precinct levels and deals with city governance. In rural areas, village or township committees serve a similar role to city committees. They coordinate rural precincts and plan party activities related to local government in those areas.

4.2.3 Other Important Political Parties in the USA

Apart from the two major political parties, several smaller parties have emerged in the U.S., including the Prohibition Party, the Socialist Party, and the Communist Party.

☐ All-round Prohibition of Alcohol

4.2.3.1 Prohibition Party

The **Prohibition Party** was established in 1872 with the main goal of banning the production, import, and sale of alcohol. Until 1920, its primary focus was pushing for nationwide prohibition, which was achieved with the Eighteenth Amendment. For over a decade, the party worked to ensure that the law was enforced. However, in 1933, the amendment was repealed, causing the party to lose significance.

☐ Public Ownership

4.2.3.2 Socialist Party

The **Socialist Party** was founded in the early 20th century through the merger of the Socialist Labour Party and the Socialist Democratic Party. It gained some support in urban areas and had a well-structured program. Its main policies included public ownership of railroads, telecommunication systems, and natural resources, as well as government control over industries, job creation for the unemployed, and expansion of social security benefits. The party also advocated for political changes such as abolishing the Senate, limiting the judiciary's power to review laws, electing federal judges, and implementing nationwide initiatives and referendums.

☐ Marxian Ideology

4.2.3.3 Communist Party

The **Communist Party** represents the far-left side of the political spectrum and follows Marxist ideology. Although it is well-organized, it has struggled to gain widespread support due to strong anti-Communist sentiments in the U.S.

☐ Power Seeking Groups

4.2.3 Political Parties in India

Political parties in India have become more practical, making them adaptable and open to change. This trend of being more flexible is seen in political parties worldwide. Most political parties today claim to support the poor and marginalized. Some openly back specific religious groups and focus on regional and local issues. Over time, parties have shifted from being focused on policies to mainly seeking power. Instead of prioritizing national concerns, they now strategize by supporting regional or ethnic issues to gain influence. A major issue with political parties is that they often fail to fulfill their promises to the people. They should focus on real problems like poverty, healthcare, and unemployment. Their efforts should be directed toward the overall development of the nation.

4.2.3.1 Recognition of National and State Parties

The Election Commission registers political parties for elections and gives them recognition as national or state parties based on their performance in polls. Parties that do not meet the required criteria are considered registered but not recognized.

4.2.3.2 Conditions for the Recognition as a National Party

A political party is recognized as a national party if it meets any of the following criteria:

1. It receives at least 6% of the valid votes in a general election for the Lok Sabha or legislative assembly in four or more states and also wins at least four Lok Sabha seats from any state or states.
2. It secures 2% of the total Lok Sabha seats in a general election, with its candidates elected from at least three states.
3. It is recognized as a state party in at least four states.

4.2.3.3 Conditions for the Recognition as a State Party

A political party is recognized as a state party if it meets any of the following conditions:

1. It receives at least 6% of the valid votes in a state election for the legislative assembly and wins at least two assembly seats.
2. It gets at least 6% of the valid votes in a state during a general election for the Lok Sabha and wins at least one Lok Sabha seat.
3. It secures at least 3% of the total seats in the state's legislative assembly or a minimum of three seats, whichever is higher.
4. It wins one Lok Sabha seat for every 25 seats (or a fraction of 25) allotted to the state.
5. It receives at least 8% of the valid votes in a state during a general election for either the Lok Sabha or the legislative assembly.

The number of recognized parties changes based on their election performance. Before the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, India had 7 national parties, 52 state parties, and 2,354 registered but unrecognized parties. National parties are also called all-India parties, while state parties are referred to as regional parties.

4.2.3.4 National Parties in India

Indian National Congress (INC)

The Indian National Congress (INC) is one of India's oldest and most influential political parties, playing a key role in the country's struggle for independence from British rule. Established in 1885, it was led by prominent leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Sardar Patel. After independence, the party dominated Indian politics under Nehru, Indira Gandhi, and Rajiv Gandhi, promoting socialism, secularism, and planned economic growth. However, since the 1990s, the Congress has faced challenges in maintaining its influence due to the rise of regional parties and competition from the BJP. The Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) governed India from 2004 to 2014, but corruption scandals and leadership issues weakened its position. In the 2024 elections, the party improved its performance, winning 99 Lok Sabha seats, up from 52 in 2019. Congress remains strong in states like Kerala, Karnataka, Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh but struggles in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. It continues to support social justice, economic equality, and a secular democratic system while opposing the BJP's majoritarian policies.

❑ Oldest Party in India

❑ Based on Hindutva Ideology

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is currently the largest political party in India in terms of influence and electoral success. It was founded in 1980 as the successor to the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), which was established in 1951 by Syama Prasad Mookerjee. The party's ideology is based on Hindutva, a form of Hindu nationalism promoted by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), with which it has strong ties. The BJP gained national attention in the 1990s, especially through the Ram Janmabhoomi movement and its push for the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. Under Atal Bihari Vajpayee, it led a stable coalition government from 1998 to 2004. However, its major electoral success came under Narendra Modi's leadership, winning a majority in both the 2014 and 2019 elections. In the 2024 elections, while the BJP remained the largest party with 240 seats, it had to rely on allies in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) to form the government. The party focuses on economic reforms, nationalism, infrastructure development, and a centralized governance model, with a strong emphasis on foreign policy and national security. It remains dominant in North and Western India while working to expand its presence in the South and East.

❑ Split in Communist Party in India

Communist Party of India (CPI) and Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M)

The Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI (M)] are the main left-wing political parties in India, promoting Marxist-Leninist principles, economic equality, and workers' rights. The CPI was established in 1925 and played a key role in trade unions, peasant movements, and labor struggles. However, ideological differences led to the formation of CPI (M) in 1964, which took a more radical approach. The Left Front, led by CPI (M), governed West Bengal from 1977 to 2011 and Tripura from 1993 to 2018, while also maintaining a strong presence in Kerala. However, the decline of industrial labor movements, economic distress in rural areas, and the rise of identity-based politics have reduced their political influence. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the CPI won 2 seats, and CPI (M) secured 4 seats, continuing their decline at the national level. Despite this, left parties remain significant in Kerala, where Pinarayi Vijayan's government follows a welfare-driven governance model.

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is a relatively new political party in India, founded in 2012 by Arvind Kejriwal after the

❑ Anti-Corruption Movement

anti-corruption movement led by Anna Hazare. The party focuses on transparency, good governance, and public service improvements, especially in education, healthcare, and water supply. AAP first came to power in Delhi in 2015 and has won multiple assembly elections with strong public support. It later expanded to Punjab, where it won the 2022 state elections and formed a government. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, AAP secured 3 seats, showing limited national growth. However, its alliance with Congress under the INDIA bloc and challenges from central investigative agencies have created hurdles for its future expansion.

Samajwadi Party (SP)

❑ Key Political Party in Uttar Pradesh

The Samajwadi Party (SP) is a key political party based in Uttar Pradesh (UP), India's most influential state in elections. It was founded in 1992 by Mulayam Singh Yadav and has focused on social justice, empowerment of Other Backward Classes (OBCs), and secularism, following the ideals of Lohiaite socialism. The party's main support comes from OBCs, especially the Yadav community, and Muslims, making it a strong force in UP politics. Under Akhilesh Yadav's leadership, the SP has worked to modernize its image while staying committed to social justice. The party has governed UP multiple times, with Akhilesh Yadav serving as Chief Minister from 2012 to 2017, emphasizing infrastructure, youth programs, and economic development. However, it suffered losses in the 2017 and 2019 elections due to the BJP's Hindutva-driven strategies and social engineering.

❑ Most Influential State in India

In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the SP made a strong comeback, winning 37 seats and becoming the largest opposition party from UP, posing a major challenge to the BJP. Its alliance with other opposition parties, especially under the INDIA bloc, has strengthened its national relevance. The party's future success will depend on uniting OBC, Dalit, and Muslim voters, countering the BJP's outreach to backward communities, and expanding beyond its traditional voter base.

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)

The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) was formed in 1999 by Sharad Pawar, P.A. Sangma, and Tariq Anwar after breaking away from the Indian National Congress (INC) over opposition to Sonia Gandhi's foreign-born leadership. Mainly based in Maharashtra, the party has been an important player in coalition politics, working with both the Congress and BJP at different times. The NCP has traditionally focused on agrarian issues, Maratha leadership, and centrist secularism, making

it a key regional force. It has held significant influence over Maharashtra's sugar cooperatives, rural economy, and banking sector. However, in 2023, the party split into two factions—one led by Sharad Pawar and the other by Ajit Pawar, who joined forces with the BJP. This division weakened the party's position in Maharashtra and affected its electoral performance. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the Sharad Pawar-led faction won just one seat, while Ajit Pawar's group struggled to gain support. The party's future depends on whether it can reunite, rebuild its voter base, and stay relevant in Maharashtra's changing political scene, where the BJP and Shiv Sena factions continue to grow in influence.

4.2.3.5 Major Regional Parties in India

Regional parties play an important role in India's political system, often shaping national coalition governments. Some of the most influential regional parties are:

- ***Trinamool Congress (TMC)***: Led by Mamata Banerjee, the TMC is the dominant party in West Bengal and has been in power since 2011. It has successfully resisted the BJP's expansion in the state. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, TMC won 29 seats, maintaining its strong influence.
- ***Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)***: A major party in Tamil Nadu, DMK, under the leadership of M.K. Stalin, continues to promote Dravidian ideology, social justice, and Tamil identity. In the 2024 elections, it secured 22 seats, reaffirming its hold in the state.
- ***Shiv Sena (Thackeray & Shinde factions)***: The party split in 2022, with Eknath Shinde leading a pro-BJP faction and Uddhav Thackeray aligning with the opposition. Both factions remain key players in Maharashtra politics.
- ***Biju Janata Dal (BJD)***: Led by Naveen Patnaik, the BJD has been a dominant force in Odisha for over 20 years. However, in the 2024 elections, it suffered significant losses, losing ground to the BJP.

Summarised Overview

This unit provides a comparative analysis of major political parties in the UK, USA, and India. Political parties serve as the backbone of democratic governance, influencing elections, policymaking, and public representation.

In the UK, the political landscape is dominated by the Conservative and Labour parties. The Conservative Party supports monarchy, free markets, and national stability, while the Labour Party emerged from trade union movements and promotes socialism and social justice. The Liberal Democrats, though historically significant, have struggled to maintain electoral influence. The UK's party system is structured around strong leadership and centralized decision-making.

The USA operates under a two-party system, where the Democratic Party supports progressive policies, economic regulation, and social welfare, while the Republican Party advocates free-market capitalism, conservative values, and limited government intervention. Although third parties exist, their impact is minimal due to the first-past-the-post electoral system.

India's multi-party system allows for diverse political representation. The Indian National Congress (INC), one of the oldest parties, has played a major role in governance but has faced strong competition from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which emphasizes Hindu nationalism and economic reforms. Other key parties include left-wing groups like the Communist Party of India (CPI) and emerging parties such as the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Regional parties like the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) influence state politics and coalition governments.

This unit highlights how party ideologies, leadership, and electoral systems impact governance. The study of major political parties across different democracies helps understand their role in shaping national and regional policies.

Assignments

1. What are the main types of political parties based on ideology? Provide examples.
2. Discuss the historical evolution and ideology of the Conservative Party in the UK.
3. How does the Labour Party differ from the Conservative Party in terms of policies and governance?
4. Explain the structure and role of the Democratic and Republican parties in the USA.
5. Why do third parties struggle to gain political power in the USA?
6. Analyze the impact of regional parties on Indian politics, using examples.
7. What are the key differences between India's multi-party system and the two-party systems in the UK and USA?
8. Explain the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its influence on Indian politics.
9. How do coalition governments function in a multi-party system like India?
10. Assess the role of ideology in shaping the success of major political parties in democratic nations.

Reference

1. Johari, J. C. (2009). *Comparative politics*. Sterling Publishers.
2. Bhagawan, V., & Bhushan, V. (2012). *World constitutions: A comparative study*. Sterling Publishers.
3. Agarwal, R. C. (2012). *Political theory: Principles of political science*. S. Chand & Company.
4. Agarwal, R. C. (2008). *Principles of political science*. S. Chand & Company.
5. Lekshmikanth, M. (2017). *Indian polity*. Tata McGraw Hill Education Private Limited.
6. Aldrich, J. H. (1995). *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America*. University of Chicago Press.
7. Kothari, R. (1970). *Politics in India*. Orient Longman.
8. Lijphart, A. (1999). *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. Yale University Press.
9. Sartori, G. (1976). *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*. Cambridge University Press.
10. Webb, P. (2000). *The Modern British Party System*. Sage Publications.

Suggested Reading

1. Heywood, A. (2019). *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*. Palgrave Macmillan.
2. Hague, R., Harrop, M., & McCormick, J. (2019). *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction*. Macmillan.
3. Lipset, S. M., & Rokkan, S. (1967). *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*. Free Press.
4. Chhibber, P., & Kollman, K. (2004). *The Formation of National Party Systems: Federalism and Party Competition in Canada, Great Britain, India, and the United States*. Princeton University Press.
5. Shively, W. P. (2018). *Power and Choice: An Introduction to Political Science*. Rowman & Littlefield.
6. Farrell, D. M. (2011). *Electoral Systems: A Comparative Introduction*. Palgrave Macmillan.
7. Dalton, R. J., & Wattenberg, M. P. (2000). *Parties Without Partisans: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. Oxford University Press.
8. Duverger, M. (1954). *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*. Methuen.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU

UNIT 3

Transformation in Electoral Politics

Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, learners will be able to:

- understand the transformation in electoral politics across the UK, USA, and India
- analyze different electoral systems and their impact on political representation
- evaluate major electoral reforms and their role in improving democratic processes
- compare the role of election commissions and governance structures in conducting elections
- assess key challenges in electoral politics, such as voter behavior, money power, and political influence

Background

Elections are fundamental to democratic governance, ensuring that citizens have a voice in choosing their representatives. The way elections are conducted varies across different political systems, shaping electoral outcomes, party competition, and voter participation.

In the United Kingdom, elections follow the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) system, which has historically resulted in stable governments. However, it has been criticized for not proportionally representing voters. Over time, electoral reforms have been debated, particularly regarding alternative voting systems like the Alternative Vote (AV) and Proportional Representation (PR). The 2011 referendum on AV highlighted public resistance to changing the FPTP system.

The United States follows a decentralized electoral system, with states managing elections independently. Elections for the President, Congress, and state offices occur frequently, and campaign finance laws, voter registration processes, and election technology play crucial roles. The Federal Election Commission (FEC) oversees campaign financing, while local governments conduct elections, leading to variations

in voting methods across states. Technological advancements, such as electronic voting machines and ballot scanning, have transformed the electoral process, but concerns about security and accessibility remain.

India follows a mixed electoral system, with FPTP for Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections and Proportional Representation for Rajya Sabha elections. The Election Commission of India (ECI) plays a critical role in ensuring free and fair elections. Over time, reforms such as lowering the voting age, introducing voter ID cards, and enforcing model codes of conduct have been implemented. However, challenges such as money power, caste politics, and electoral fraud persist.

By examining these electoral transformations, students will gain insight into how different democracies manage elections, address electoral challenges, and implement reforms to enhance political representation.

Keywords

Electoral System, First-Past-the-Post (FPTP), Proportional Representation, Electoral Reforms, Voter Behavior, Election Commission, Campaign Finance, Voter Registration, Electoral Fraud, Coalition Politics

Discussion

Elections are a key part of democracy in countries around the world. They allow people to share their political views and help shape government decisions. The way elections are conducted, including the rules for voting and counting results, plays a crucial role in ensuring that citizens' choices are properly reflected in the final outcomes.

4.3.1 Electoral Politics in the UK

The United Kingdom follows a voting system known as "first-past-the-post," also called the simple plurality or majority system. Elections for the House of Commons take place in 650 areas, with each electing one representative. The candidate who gets the most votes wins the seat for that area. Electoral systems are often judged based on how well they represent voters and whether they create strong governments. This stability is seen as a key benefit. However, the system is less effective in ensuring fair representation for all voters.

❑ First-Past-the-Post System

4.3.1.1 Electoral Systems Used in the UK

First-Past-the-Post (in single-member districts): Each voter selects one candidate, and the candidate with the most

votes wins. This system has been used in UK general elections since 1832, covering most seats since 1885 and all seats since 1948. It is also commonly used in local council elections in England and Wales.

First-Past-the-Post (in multi-member districts): This system works like the single-member version, but each district elects multiple representatives. Voters can cast as many votes as the number of available seats.

The Limited Vote: Similar to First-Past-the-Post in multi-member districts, but voters have fewer votes than the number of available seats. This system was used in thirteen three-member constituencies during general elections from 1867 to 1885.

The Cumulative Vote: Similar to First-Past-the-Post in multi-member districts, but voters can give multiple votes to one candidate if they choose. This system was used for School Board elections from 1870 to 1902.

The Single Transferable Vote (STV): In this system, voters rank candidates in order of preference in multi-member constituencies. A winning quota is set by dividing the total votes by the number of available seats. Candidates who receive more votes than the quota are elected, and their extra votes are redistributed based on voters' next choices. If seats are still unfilled, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and their votes are reassigned to the next preferences. This process continues until all seats are filled.

4.3.1.2 Electoral Reforms in the UK

Elections in the United Kingdom have been conducted using different voting systems over time. However, since 1950, the House of Commons has been elected using the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) system. This method is different from the Proportional Representation (PR) systems used in most European countries and has been a topic of debate in the UK for decades. Discussions about changing FPTP intensified, and in 2011, a public vote was held to decide whether to switch to the Alternative Vote (AV) system. However, the majority of voters chose to keep FPTP.

4.3.1.3 Debate over Electoral Reforms

The debate over electoral reform in the UK dates back to the Great Reform Act of 1832 but became more prominent in the 1970s. In the 1974 elections, smaller parties received a significant portion of the votes—around 25%—but still gained very few seats. The Liberal Party, in particular, won

☐ Use of Different Voting Systems

❑ History of Electoral Reform

nearly 20% of the vote but secured only about 2% of the seats. Although both Labour and Conservative governments resisted changing the electoral system for the House of Commons, the issue remained in political discussions. In the late 1970s, reports and proposals emerged suggesting alternative voting methods, such as the Additional Member System (AMS) and a proportional system for European Parliament elections.

❑ Modifications to the Voting System

By the 1980s and 1990s, as multi-party politics continued to grow, calls for electoral reform gained momentum. Movements like Charter 88 and the Scottish Constitutional Convention pushed for constitutional changes, including modifications to the voting system. The Liberal Democrats strongly supported these efforts, as FPTP put them at a disadvantage, while Labour showed mixed support. When Labour won the 1997 election, it introduced new voting systems for devolved governments in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, London, and European Parliament elections. A commission led by Roy Jenkins later recommended replacing FPTP with the Alternative Vote Plus (AV+) system, but the government did not act on this suggestion.

❑ Hung Parliament

The Liberal Democrats continued to push for electoral reform, and after the 2009 MPs' expenses scandal, Labour included a promise for an AV referendum in its 2010 election manifesto. When the election resulted in a hung parliament, the Liberal Democrats joined the Conservatives in a coalition government, securing a referendum on AV as part of their agreement. The 2011 referendum saw various parties and groups campaigning for and against AV, with the Conservative Party defending FPTP. Labour remained divided, with members on both sides of the debate. In the end, voters decisively rejected AV, with 67.9% choosing to keep the existing FPTP system.

❑ No Central Election Authority

4.3.2 Electoral Politics in the USA

A major difference between the United States and other countries is how elections are managed. In the U.S., there is no central election authority. No single federal agency is responsible for announcing election results, handling disputes, or setting election rules. Instead, elections are managed by individual states, following basic federal anti-discrimination laws. Most states further delegate the actual election process to local officials. As a result, elections in the U.S. are conducted at the local level across nearly 10,000 counties, cities, and townships.

4.3.2.1 Governance of American Elections

❑ Federalist System

In the United States, governance follows a federalist system, meaning that many responsibilities are handled at the state or local level. Elections are a key example of this system in action. There is no single national election for the president or Congress, nor is there a central election board to resolve disputes. Instead, each of the 50 states conducts its own elections. That means in the U.S., each level of government plays an important role in election administration.

4.3.2.2 The Federal Level

❑ Role of Different Agencies and Actors in Elections

At the federal level, there is no central electoral body that governs election administration. Instead, the federal government plays a relatively minor role in most elections, with these roles spread across several different agencies and actors. The U.S. House of Representatives and Senate, under the U.S. Constitution (Article I, Section 5), state, 'Each House shall be the Judge of the Elections, Returns and Qualifications of its own Members.' This means that, should a dispute arise in a U.S. House or Senate race that cannot be remedied by state and local election officials, the membership of the Senate or House will make the determination of who won the election.

Federal Election Commission - Campaign Finance:The Federal Election Commission (FEC) is responsible for overseeing and enforcing laws related to campaign financing in federal elections. It ensures transparency by disclosing campaign finance information, enforces rules on donation limits and restrictions, and manages public funding for presidential elections. The FEC consists of six members, with three from each major political party. To maintain fairness, at least four votes are needed for any official decision.

Election Assistance Commission:Established in 2002, the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) is an independent, bipartisan organization that helps improve election processes. Its main responsibilities include:

Providing guidance to state and local governments to help them follow the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

- Creating voluntary guidelines for voting systems.
- Acting as a national resource for election administration information.

Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG):The Election Assistance Commission (EAC) created the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG) to establish technical standards for voting equipment. These guidelines outline the

required documentation and testing procedures for voting systems. While states are not required to follow VVSG, many choose to align their own voting system standards with these recommendations.

Department of Justice: The Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice is responsible for enforcing federal election laws. This includes ensuring compliance with four major election-related laws:

1. The Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965.
2. The National Voter Registration Act of 1993.
3. The Uniformed and Overseas Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA).
4. The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA).

4.3.2.3 The State Level

In the United States, each of the 50 states oversees its own elections and certifies the results. In most states, elections are managed by a state official, usually the Secretary of State or Lieutenant Governor, who is often an elected member of a political party. For example, Jon Husted, a Republican, served as Ohio's Secretary of State, while Debra Bowen, a Democrat, held the same position in California. These officials also guide local election offices on election procedures. Under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), they are responsible for maintaining the state's voter registration database and ensuring voting access for individuals covered by the Uniformed and Overseas Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA).

4.3.2.4 The Local Level

Elections are conducted at the local level by the Local Election Office (LEO), which is usually part of a county or city government. The local government is also responsible for covering election costs. The LEO manages key election tasks, such as selecting polling places, hiring and training poll workers, preparing ballots, overseeing voting, and counting votes. After the election, local officials conduct a canvass to verify that all ballots were counted accurately. The final results are then sent to the state for official certification.

4.3.2.5 Conducting Elections

The federal government sets general rules for elections in the United States, but each state creates specific laws and regulations for how elections are conducted and managed.

Hours of Voting

Each state decides the opening and closing times for polling places. For instance, in Maryland and Washington, D.C., voting takes place from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., while in Virginia, polls are open from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Voting Procedure

In the U.S., voters generally have three ways to cast their ballots:

1. **Election Day Voting** – In every state except Oregon and Washington, people can vote in person at a polling place on Election Day. This is the most common method.
2. **In-Person Early Voting** – In 32 states, voters can go to designated polling locations before Election Day to cast their votes. This option helps those who may not be able to vote on the actual day.
3. **By-Mail Early Voting** – All states allow voting by mail. In 29 states, voters do not need to provide a reason to request a mail-in ballot. Additionally, seven states offer a permanent vote-by-mail option, where voters automatically receive a ballot before each election.

4.3.2.6 Electoral Reforms in the USA

In the U.S., ballots are often too long to be counted by hand on Election Day, so most jurisdictions use electronic methods to tabulate votes. Voters either cast their votes directly on a computer, which records them instantly, or mark a paper ballot that is later scanned and counted electronically. The 2000 election highlighted how some voting technologies are better at accurately capturing voter choices. By 2008, about 58% of voters used optical scan machines, 30% voted on direct-recording electronic (DRE) devices, and 11% used other methods like punch cards, lever machines, or hand-counted ballots. Notably, nearly 6% of voters used lever machines, although only 2% of election jurisdictions had them. In 2012, there were three main types of voting technology:

1. **Paper Ballots with Electronic Counting:** Voters fill in an oval next to their candidate's name with a pen or pencil, and the ballots are scanned electronically. These scanned results are the first counts reported on election night, and some states verify them by comparing electronic results with hand recounts.

❑ Technological Advancement in Voting

❑ Active Participation in Political Process

❑ Role of Election Commission

2. **Electronic Ballots with Direct Tabulation:** Voters make their selections on a touch screen voting machine, known as a DRE. Some DREs print a paper audit trail for verification, while others do not.
3. **Electronic Ballot Marking Devices:** These machines help voters, including those with disabilities, make their choices on a touch screen. The selected choices are then printed on a paper ballot, which is later scanned and counted.

Since 2000, the use of DRE machines has increased. Each voter activates the machine using a card or code, and then selects their choices on the screen. If the DRE includes a paper audit trail, voters can verify their selections before finalizing their vote. If not, votes are recorded electronically without a printed record. These advancements in voting technology aim to improve accuracy and accessibility while ensuring votes are counted efficiently.

4.3.3 Electoral Politics in India

The Indian Constitution promotes democratization and decentralization, allowing people to actively participate in the political process. Elections play a key role in this system. As per the Constitution, all citizens aged 18 and above, unless disqualified, have the right to vote. India follows two main types of election systems:

1. **Direct elections:** People vote directly in territorial constituencies to elect Members of the Lok Sabha (Parliament) and State Legislative Assemblies.
2. **Proportional Representation:** This method, using a single transferable vote, is used to elect the President, Vice President, Members of Rajya Sabha (Upper House), and Legislative Councils.

The responsibility for conducting elections lies with an independent Election Commission. It operates based on laws passed by Parliament, such as the Representation of People's Act (1950 & 1951) and the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Election Act. Some key features of India's electoral system include:

- A single electoral body for all elections
- Voting based on adult franchise (every adult has the right to vote)

- Reserved seats for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs)
- Representation based on geographical areas
- Secret voting to ensure fairness
- Single-member constituencies (one representative per area)
- Major role of political parties in elections
- Election disputes handled by the High Court or Supreme Court

Elections are held as per a schedule set by the Election Commission and the government. The process involves several stages, including:

- Announcement of elections
- Filing of nominations by candidates
- Scrutiny of nomination papers
- Withdrawal of candidatures
- Finalizing the list of candidates and assigning symbols
- A 14-day campaign period
- Voting and declaration of results

All candidates must follow a code of conduct during elections. So far, Lok Sabha elections have been held, showing an increase in voter turnout, especially in rural areas, along with greater participation of women.

Some key trends observed in elections include:

- People tend to vote out governments that fail to meet their expectations.
- Voters often make choices based on the leaders' personalities rather than party ideology.
- Caste and religion significantly influence voting behavior.
- Regionalism plays a major role in elections.
- Money power and muscle power have had a strong impact on election outcomes.

4.3.3.1 Electoral Behavior in India

India's electoral politics varies across different regions, with national and state-level elections influencing each other in complex ways. Although India's Constitution has a centralized

❑ Presence of Many Regional Parties

❑ Constitutional Authority to Conduct Elections

❑ Role of Various Commissions

❑ Measures for Free and Fair Elections

structure, the presence of many regional parties has created a form of electoral federalism, limiting the central government's power. This diversity in elections exists even though India has traditionally had strong central parties and a voting system that usually favors two major parties.

4.3.3.2 Election Commission of India (ECI)

As per Article 324 of the Indian Constitution, the Election Commission of India has the authority to oversee, direct, and manage elections for the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. It is a three-member body consisting of a Chief Election Commissioner and two Election Commissioners. The President of India is responsible for appointing these officials.

4.3.3.3 Electoral Reforms in India

India's electoral system faces several challenges, such as corruption, the influence of money and muscle power, the role of caste and religion, an advantage for the ruling party, too many political parties and independent candidates, and a gap between vote share and seats won. Various commissions have studied these issues and suggested reforms. In 1974, the Tarkunde Committee recommended that the Election Commission be appointed by a high-powered committee. It also suggested having a three-member Election Commission, lowering the voting age to 18, and granting autonomy to radio and television. In 1990, the Dinesh Goswami Committee proposed increasing the security deposit to reduce the number of candidates, limiting candidates to contesting from only two constituencies, preventing booth capturing, introducing photo identity cards to stop fake voting, enforcing a model code of conduct, maintaining proper election accounts, banning liquor distribution, and restricting armed individuals during elections. It also recommended that the government provide financial support to national parties.

The Election Commission has also suggested various measures for fair elections, such as video recording at polling stations, issuing voter identity cards, seizing weapons, closing liquor shops during elections, and keeping anti-social elements in check.

Summarised Overview

This unit explores the transformation of electoral politics in the United Kingdom, the United States, and India, focusing on voting systems, electoral reforms, and election administration.



In the UK, elections are conducted using the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) system, ensuring strong single-party governments but often leading to disproportional representation. Electoral reforms have been debated for decades, particularly regarding Proportional Representation (PR) and the Alternative Vote (AV). Despite these discussions, the 2011 AV referendum upheld FPTP, showing resistance to change.

The USA follows a decentralized electoral system, with elections managed by individual states. The Federal Election Commission (FEC) oversees campaign finance, while the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) provides guidelines for voting systems. Elections are conducted through various methods, including in-person voting, early voting, and mail-in ballots. Technological advancements such as electronic voting machines have improved accuracy but raised concerns about security and accessibility.

India's multi-tier electoral system is managed by the Election Commission of India (ECI), ensuring free and fair elections. While FPTP is used for Lok Sabha and state elections, Proportional Representation is applied in Rajya Sabha and Presidential elections. Electoral reforms, such as voter ID cards, a Model Code of Conduct, and restrictions on campaign funding, have improved election integrity. However, money power, caste-based politics, and electoral malpractices remain major challenges.

By studying these electoral transformations, students will understand how electoral systems evolve, how reforms shape democratic processes, and how different countries address challenges related to voting, representation, and governance

Assignments

1. Explain the importance of elections in a democracy and their role in political representation.
2. What are the key features of the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) system? How does it impact electoral outcomes?
3. Discuss the major electoral reforms in the UK and the debates surrounding them.
4. How does the decentralized election system in the USA differ from those in the UK and India?
5. What role does the Election Commission play in ensuring free and fair elections in India?
6. Compare the use of Proportional Representation (PR) in the UK, the USA, and India.
7. What are the major challenges in electoral politics, including money power and voter fraud?
8. Discuss the impact of voter behavior on election results in democratic nations.

9. How have technological advancements influenced election processes in the USA?
10. What are the similarities and differences in electoral reforms across the UK, the USA, and India?

Reference

1. Johari, J. C. (2009). *Comparative politics*. Sterling Publishers.
2. Bhagawan, V., & Bhushan, V. (2012). *World constitutions: A comparative study*. Sterling Publishers.
3. Agarwal, R. C. (2012). *Political theory: Principles of political science*. S. Chand & Company.
4. Agarwal, R. C. (2008). *Principles of political science*. S. Chand & Company.
5. Lekshmikanth, M. (2017). *Indian polity*. Tata McGraw Hill Education Private Limited.
6. David Klemper (2019). *Electoral Systems and Electoral Reforms in the UK in Historical Perspective*. The Constitution Society.
7. David Klemper (2019). *The Electoral System and British Politics*. The Constitution Society.
8. Dr. Thad E. Hall (2012). *Primer on the US Election System*. IFES.
9. Helena Harshammar (2017). *The Politics of Electoral Reforms in the United Kingdom*. Lund University.
10. Farrell, D. M. (2011). *Electoral Systems: A Comparative Introduction*. Palgrave Macmillan.
11. Lijphart, A. (1999). *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. Yale University Press.
12. Sartori, G. (1976). *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*. Cambridge University Press.
13. Powell, G. B. (2000). *Elections as Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian and Proportional Views*. Yale University Press.
14. Norris, P. (2014). *Why Electoral Integrity Matters*. Cambridge University Press.

Suggested Reading

1. Heywood, A. (2019). *Politics*. Palgrave Macmillan.
2. Hague, R., Harrop, M., & McCormick, J. (2019). *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction*. Macmillan.

3. Chhibber, P., & Kollman, K. (2004). *The Formation of National Party Systems: Federalism and Party Competition in Canada, Great Britain, India, and the United States*. Princeton University Press.
4. Webb, P. (2000). *The Modern British Party System*. Sage Publications.
5. Dalton, R. J., & Wattenberg, M. P. (2000). *Parties Without Partisans: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. Oxford University Press.
6. Shively, W. P. (2018). *Power and Choice: An Introduction to Political Science*. Rowman & Littlefield.
7. Birch, S. (2011). *Electoral Malpractice*. Oxford University Press.
8. Norris, P., Frank, R. W., & Martinez i Coma, F. (2014). *Advancing Electoral Integrity*. Oxford University Press.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

SET-1

QP CODE:

Reg. No :

Name :

SECOND SEMESTER MA POLITICAL SCIENCE EXAMINATION
DISCIPLINE CORE - **M23PS07DC COMPARATIVE POLITICS** (CBCS - PG)
2024-25 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

SECTION A

Objective type questions. Answer **any 10**

10x1=10

1. Who is considered the first political thinker to use the comparative method?
2. What term describes the comparison of different governments' foreign policies?
3. What is the key focus of comparative politics according to Arend Lijphart?
4. Name the approach in comparative politics that emphasizes economic factors and class struggle.
5. What is the oldest traditional approach in political science?
6. Which country practiced direct democracy during the Buddhist era?
7. Define the concept of "sovereignty" in a democratic context.
8. Who classified military coups into three types?
9. What is meant by 'value-free' political theory?
10. Which approach combines sociological and psychological tools for studying politics?
11. Give an example of a country with a consociational democracy.
12. What is the key difference between direct and indirect military rule?
13. What does 'multi-level governance' indicate?
14. Which perspective in political economy promotes free markets and minimal state control?
15. Name any one challenge faced in comparative political studies?

SECTION-B

Very Short answers questions. Answer **any 5**

5x2=10

16. What distinguishes comparative politics from comparative government?
17. What is meant by political socialization?
18. Why is political awareness important for democracy?



19. Describe any two characteristics of authoritarian regimes.
20. What does the term 'political culture' mean?
21. What is the significance of written constitutions in democracy?
22. Explain the concept of post-colonial state.
23. What is meant by selection bias in political research?
24. State two demerits of democracy.
25. How does the institutional approach view political systems?

SECTION C

Short Answer Question. Answer **any 5**

5x4=20

26. Explain the evolution of comparative politics from ancient to modern times.
27. Discuss the features of the sociological approach in political analysis.
28. Differentiate between direct and indirect democracy with examples.
29. Highlight the causes of military intervention in politics.
30. Describe the New Institutionalism and its key characteristics.
31. Analyze the major challenges in studying comparative politics.
32. How did colonial rule affect African political structures?
33. What are the merits of a democratic government?

SECTION D

Long Answer questions. Answer **any 3**

3x10=30

34. Describe in detail the different traditional approaches to the study of comparative politics.
35. Examine the conditions necessary for the success of democracy.
36. Discuss the political economy approach and compare the Marxist and Liberal perspectives.
37. Elaborate on the characteristics and classification of post-colonial states.
38. Critically analyze the impact of globalization on comparative politics.
39. Explain the structure, role, and significance of military regimes with suitable examples.



SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

SET-2

QP CODE:

Reg. No :

Name :

SECOND SEMESTER MA POLITICAL SCIENCE EXAMINATION
DISCIPLINE CORE - **M23PS07DC COMPARATIVE POLITICS (CBCS - PG)**
2024-25 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

SECTION A

Objective type questions. Answer **any 10**

10x1=10

1. Who introduced the idea of 'authoritative allocation of values'?
2. Which political thinker is linked with the normative institutional approach?
3. What is the basic unit of analysis in comparative politics?
4. In which form of democracy do people govern directly without representatives?
5. What term is used for the unwritten rules and social practices in institutions?
6. Name the author of *The Civic Culture*.
7. Which concept refers to a state's ability to function independently?
8. What is the purpose of decentralization in democracy?
9. Which country uses referendums as a form of direct democracy?
10. Define the term 'dependency theory'.
11. Mention any one major thinker associated with behavioralism.
12. What is 'Palace Revolution' in Huntington's classification?
13. What does the term "consociational democracy" refer to?
14. Which approach studies political behavior using psychology?
15. What is the primary aim of Marxism?

SECTION-B

Very Short answers questions. Answer **any 5**

5x2=10

16. What are the limitations of traditional institutionalism?
17. Briefly define indirect military rule.
18. What is meant by historical institutionalism?
19. State two criticisms of the political economy approach.



20. What are the main features of representative democracy?
21. Explain the term 'multi-party instability' with example.
22. What is the relevance of political culture in transitional societies?
23. Define 'reform coup' with an example.
24. What role does education play in a democratic society?
25. State any two causes of political instability in post-colonial states.

SECTION C

Short Answer Questions. Answer **any 5**

5x4=20

26. Describe the importance of political parties in a democratic system.
27. What are the contributions of Gabriel Almond to political culture studies?
28. Explain the psychological approach in comparative politics.
29. What are the levels of military intervention in politics?
30. Compare totalitarian and authoritarian regimes.
31. Write a note on the challenges of democracy in developing countries.
32. Discuss the contribution of ancient political thinkers to comparative politics.
33. Describe the features of rational choice institutionalism.

SECTION D

Long Answer questions. Answer **any 3**

3x10=30

34. Compare and contrast the different theoretical approaches in new institutionalism.
35. Discuss the emergence and impact of post-colonial states in Africa.
36. Elaborate on the strengths and weaknesses of democracy.
37. How does the liberal and Marxist political economy approach explain global inequality?
38. Explain in detail the various forms and consequences of military regimes.
39. Critically assess the role of comparative politics in understanding globalization and state transformation.

സർവ്വകലാശാലാഗീതം

വിദ്യാൽ സ്വതന്ത്രരാകണം
വിശ്വപൗരരായി മാറണം
ശ്രദ്ധപ്രസാദമായ് വിളങ്ങണം
ഗുരുപ്രകാശമേ നയിക്കണേ

കുതിരുട്ടിൽ നിന്നു ഞങ്ങളെ
സൂര്യവീഥിയിൽ തെളിക്കണം
സ്നേഹദീപ്തിയായ് വിളങ്ങണം
നീതിവൈജയന്തി പറണം

ശാസ്ത്രവ്യാപ്തിയെന്നുമേകണം
ജാതിഭേദമാകെ മാറണം
ബോധരശ്മിയിൽ തിളങ്ങുവാൻ
ജ്ഞാനകേന്ദ്രമേ ജ്വലിക്കണേ

കുരിപ്പുഴ ശ്രീകുമാർ

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

Regional Centres

Kozhikode

Govt. Arts and Science College
Meenchantha, Kozhikode,
Kerala, Pin: 673002
Ph: 04952920228
email: rckdirector@sgou.ac.in

Thalassery

Govt. Brennen College
Dharmadam, Thalassery,
Kannur, Pin: 670106
Ph: 04902990494
email: rctdirector@sgou.ac.in

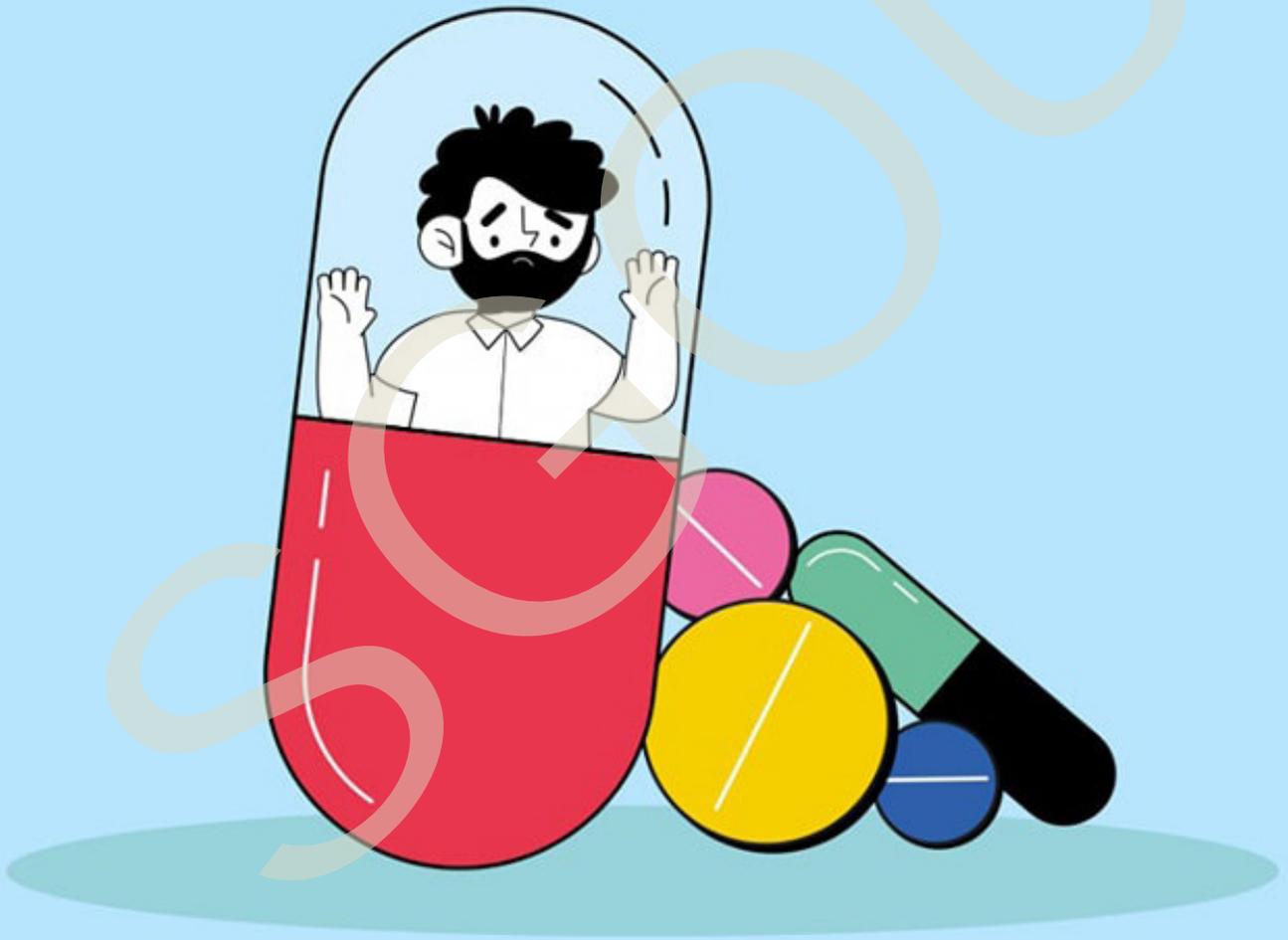
Tripunithura

Govt. College
Tripunithura, Ernakulam,
Kerala, Pin: 682301
Ph: 04842927436
email: rcedirector@sgou.ac.in

Pattambi

Sree Neelakanta Govt. Sanskrit College
Pattambi, Palakkad,
Kerala, Pin: 679303
Ph: 04662912009
email: rcpdirector@sgou.ac.in

NO TO DRUGS തിരിച്ചിറങ്ങാൻ പ്രയാസമാണ്



Comparative Politics

COURSE CODE: M23PS07DC

SGOU



YouTube



Sreenarayanaguru Open University

Kollam, Kerala Pin- 691601, email: info@sgou.ac.in, www.sgou.ac.in Ph: +91 474 2966841

ISBN 978-81-986024-6-6



9 788198 602466