**POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT**

The term political development entered the lexicon of political science in the fifties when the newly independent states of Asia and Africa began formulating development plans for socio-economic well-being of their people. It implies systematic change, the alterations of a relatively fundamental nature in the functioning of the political system. The original foundation of the concept of development was economic.

**Definitions**

Almond and Powell defines it as,” the increased differentiation and specialisation of political structures and the increased secularisation of political culture”.

Samuel P. Huntington also defined it as,”the process by which organisations and procedures acquire values and stability”.

According to Alfred Diamont, “political development is a process which aims at a particular condition, but one which creates an institutional framework for solving an ever-widening range of social problems”.

Leonard Binder referred to political development as “changes in the type and style of politics”. He attributes the following five characteristics to political development.

1. Change of identity – from the religious to the ethnic and from the parochial to the societal.
2. Change in legitimacy – from transcendental to immanent sources.
3. Change in political participation – from elite to mass and from family to group.
4. Change of distribution – from status and privilege to achievement.
5. Change in the degree of administrative and legal penetration into social structure and out of the remote regions of country.

**Concept of Political Development**

The concept of political development can be discussed in the following different ways:

1. **Geographical –** It refers to the politics of the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. In this sense almost any study on some aspect of the politics of these countries could be termed as study of political development.
2. **Derivative –** This dimension implies that the study of political development is a study which refers to the political aspects and consequences of the boarder process of modernisation. Modernisation involves industrialisation, urbanisation, increased literacy, expansion of mass media, economic growth, great social and occupational mobility and other related processes.
3. **Teleological –** From this dimension political development can be analysed in terms of a movement toward one or more goals or status for the political system. The different goal with which political development has been identified includes democracy, stability, legitimacy, identity penetration, distribution, integration, rationalisation, bureaucratisation, security, welfare, justice, liberty etc.
4. **Functional –** Political development from this angle can be conceived in terms of a movement towards the political characteristics of a modern industrial society. It has to be remembered that most industrialised societies do have some types of political party system. Thus, it can be inferred that the existence of an urbanised political party system is one aspect of political development.

**Factors influencing Political Development**

1. **Social factors –** The social factors include the nature and evolution of the status system in the society, the opportunities for social mobility and the nature of communal, religious differences in the society.
2. **Economic Factors –** The Marxian approach particularly would place primary emphasis on economic factors. They like to analyse the extent to which and the manner in which the capitalist structure of economy developed and the manner in which the bourgeois class has risen.
3. **Cultural Factors –** Cultural factors also play a major role in influencing political development, particularly in all phases in the process of modernisation while examining the process of adaptation to modernisation.
4. **Political Factors –** The nature of the traditional political system, the sequences and ways in which new groups enter politics, the values of the newly emerging political elites, the skills of political leaders, the nature and extend of political participation and the development of political institutions are important variables shaping the political development.

**Problems of Political Modernisation**

1. **Problem of State-building –** This problem arises when there is a threat to the survival of the political system from international environment or from society in the form revolutionary pressure, challenging the stability or the survival of the political system. It may result from the development among the political elite of new goals such as national expansion or the creation of an extravagant court life.
2. **Problem of Nation-building –** Nation building puts emphasis on the fact that one should give up narrow loyalties such as loyalty to the tribal chief, family, caste, ethnic group, religion, region etc. And concentrate on his loyalty to the nation. The problem of nation-building or national integration has not been solved in India on account of the attitude of the various minorities who put emphasis on their separate interests.
3. **Problem of Participation –** Whenever a society develops politically, there is an increasing demand from the public for a share in the decision-making process. These demands are generally put forward through such political structures as political parties, pressure groups, factions and various organisations. Political participation implies the development of the requisite political infra-structure and the responsive attitude and bargaining skill of the elite.
4. **Problem of Distribution –** Increased political participation leads to the demand that the values, benefits and national income should be distributed equally among all the sections of society, irrespective of caste, colour, sex and creed. Equal opportunities should be given to all and merit alone should be the criterion for selection to the high posts.

Lucian w. Pye, whose contribution to the theory of political development has been noteworthy has outlined the different crises that the process of political development is expected to overcome. These crises are:-

1. Identity crises
2. Legitimacy crises
3. Penetration crises
4. Participation crises
5. Integration crises and
6. Distribution crises.

Pye made an attempt to show that the nature of these crises determines the sequence of political development in different countries of the world.

**Criticism**

The concept of political development has been subjected to various criticisms. In the first place, the concept lacks a precise definition. Anybody, even after thoroughly studying the rich literature on this subject gets really confused as regards to what political development covers and what it does not. Secondly, the different studies on the subject suffer from the absence of any coherent political model of the development process. Finally, the concept is not in a position to offer a model that maybe applied uniformly to all countries of the world.

**Conclusion**

In spite of the various criticisms levelled against the theory of political development, this approach has immensely contributed towards broadening the scope of empirical investigations. It has also provided the scope of scholars of the Western countries to study the political conditions of the newly emerging countries in the Third World. Further, the study of political development has brought political scientists, sociologists and economists somewhat closer by differentiation between their respective autonomies and contributions.