

UNIT – II

BEHAVIORALISM

1. INTRODUCTION:

Behavioralism is one of the most modern approaches to the study of political science. But the development of this approach is spread over the whole of the 20th century. It was towards the end of 19th century that political scientists had realized the demerits of the traditional approaches. It was as early as 1908 that Graham Wales and A. F. Bentley strongly advocated on the study of psychology of the individual is meaningless. Behaviour of the person plays an important role in all political phenomena. Bentley emphasized on the role of the groups. In other words, he advocated the study of the behavior of the individual as a member of the groups. Charles, E. Miriam stressed on the 'way of functioning' of the individuals in the polity. To him, study of political science will be more scientific when one analyses the behavior of the man instead studying the institution. He presented his views in various international conferences during 1923 to 1925 which helped in the growth of behaviouralism.

1.1 BEHAVIOURAL REVOLUTION:

It was after the second World War that Behaviouralism as a revolution entered into the field of the study of political science. Being influenced by the sociologists like Max Weber, Talcott Parsons, Robert Merton and many others; political scientists realized the importance of resolving social problems. Many scholars like, Lasswell, David Easton, G. A. Almond, Powell, Herbert Simmon etc; produced many commendable pieces of research which were based on behavioural approach. The committees on 'political behaviour' and 'comparative politics' instituted by the American Political Association also helped a lot in bringing about behavioral revolution. These efforts helped behavioralism to flourish in a short period of time.

1.2 Meaning of Behaviouralism:

Behaviouralism emphasizes scientific, objective and value-free study of the political phenomena as conditioned by the environment, categorically the behavior of the individuals involved in that phenomena. As such, it stresses on the role of the behavior of the individual at various levels and the scientific analysis. Behaviouralism is a reaction against traditional political science which did not take into account if human behavior as an actor in politics. Behaviouralism is different from behaviourism. Behaviorism is narrow in its application. It refers to the response of an organism as aroused by some stimulus. It does not consider the part played by the feelings, ideas, prejudices that determine the response of that individual. Behaviouralism, on the other hand, does take into account the role of the feelings, ideas and prejudices. David Easton distinguishes between behaviourism and behaviouralism through a paradigm. The paradigm adopted by behaviourists, according to him is S- R (Stimulus-Response). But the behaviouralists have improved it by making it as S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response). David Easton regards behavioural revolution is an intellectual tendency on the part of the political scientists to study empirically the political behavior of individuals.

1.3 Features of Behaviouralism:

Commonly agreed features of Behaviouralism are the following;

1. It is a protest against the abstract nature of the traditional political theory. Traditional theorists dealt with only the institutions and not the behavior of the individuals involved. Behaviouralism, on the other hand, studies both the institutions and the behavior. However, behaviouralism ignores institutions only to the extent of their theoretical description. When the institutions provide a hint to the political behavior of the individuals involved, the institution becomes of importance to the behaviouralists. And they consider institutions as "patterns of individual behavior that are more or less regular and uniform. They are treated as sources of influence that shape political behavior."

2. Behaviouralism adopts scientific method in studying political phenomena. It is more empirical. It comprises of such techniques as observation, interviews, survey research, case studies, data collection, statistical analysis, quantification, etc. Model building is another method of the behaviouralists like Easton's and Almond's model of political system and Cybernetics model of Karl Deutsch.

Features of Behaviouralism:

1. Empirical studies
2. Inter-disciplinary study
3. Scientific Theory building

As such, according to Easton behaviouralism has remarkable features like:-

1. Regularities
2. Verification
3. New techniques,
4. Quantification
5. Values – Value free
6. Systematization
7. Application of the theory.
8. Integration.

Regularities stand for discernible uniformities in Political behavior which can be expressed in theory-like statements facilitating explanation and prediction of political phenomena.

Verification implies acceptance of only that kind of knowledge which can be empirically tested and verified.

Technique symbolizes emphasis on the adoption of appropriate tools of data collection and analysis.

Quantification stands for the advocacy of rigorous measurement and data manipulation in political analysis.

Values, according to behaviouralists need to be separated from 'facts'. Ethical evaluation is one thing, empirical explanation is another. Objective scientific enquiry has to be value-free or value-neutral.

Systematisation implies the behaviouralist's conscious effort to build causal theories on the basis of logically interrelated structure of concepts and propositions.

The pure science advocacy is directed toward forging a link between theoretical understanding of politics and application of theory to practical problem-solving.

Integration aims at mixing political science with other social sciences. It marks a conscious move to encourage cross-fertilization ideas across the boundaries of separate social sciences.

1.4 Achievements of Behaviouralism:

- 1) Use of such methods as context analysis, case studies, sample survey, interviews and other sophisticated quantification.
- 2) Theory building.

1.5 Criticisms:

- 1) Behaviouralism over emphasizes on techniques.
- 2) It is criticized as Pseudo-politics – as it aims at upholding only American institutions as the best in the world.
- 3) Emphasizes behavioural effect at the cost of institutional effect.
- 4) Emphasies static rather than current situations.
- 5) Value – free research, as it argues, is not possible.

2.0 Post-Behaviouralism:

Introduction: Behaviouralism dominated in the study of political Science for a decade. However, the behaviouralists drifted away from the path they had chosen for themselves. They got absorbed in finding out new techniques and methods for its study. In the process they lost the real subject matter. They got divided into two groups – the Theoretical behaviouralists and the positive behaviouralists. While the former laid emphasis purely on theory building, the latter concerned themselves with finding out new methods for the study of political phenomena. Consequently, certain behaviouralists got disillusioned with behaviouralism towards the close of sixties. The main attack upon behaviouralism came from David Easton who was one of the leading behaviouralists. According to him, there is a "post – behavioural revolution" underway which is born out of deep dissatisfaction with the attempt to convert political study into a discipline modeled on the methodology of the natural sciences. In their efforts at research and application of scientific method, the behaviouralists had gone far away from the realities of social behavior. In this way, political science again lost touch with the current and contemporary issues.

2.1 Reasons for the growth of Post-Behaviouralism:

The chief reasons for the growth of post-behaviouralism are- failure of the behaviouralists in addressing the social problems for their solutions; over-emphasis on research methods and tools, and consuming more time on conceptualizing or theory-building.

2.2 Features of Post-Behaviouralism:

Following are the characteristic features of post-behaviouralism-

1. It is a movement of Protest. It is a protest against the wrong direction which the behaviouralists had given to political science. As such, the post-behaviourists stressed on "Relevance and Action". They held that political science should be directed towards solving actual problems. So that it would be more relevant to the society. Political Scientists, according