

3 Basic Concepts in Government (I)

3.1 POLITICAL CULTURE

The political culture of a nation is made up of the beliefs, emotions, values and attitudes of its population as expressed in their political system. These include the philosophies of government and the way the people are made to believe. The political culture may include the practice of government, how the government is appointed by election or nomination, the form of constitution, etc. Political culture includes the extent to which people participate or influence the government.

Components of Political Culture

The two major components of political culture are:

- (i) The attitude of individuals to political institutions of the state.
- (ii) The extent to which individuals feel they can influence the political system and participate in its decision-making process.

These two are discussed in detail below.

The 'institutions' in (i) above in relation to the State and political system mean:

- (i) Structures - legislature, executive, judiciary, etc.;
- (ii) Incumbents - persons who occupy these official positions and who perform different roles;
- (iii) Policies and programmes of the incumbents.

The attitude of individuals to the general political system can be classified as follows:

- (a) Cognitive orientation
- (b) Affective orientation
- (c) Evaluative orientation

- (a) **Cognitive Orientation:** The knowledge and belief which individuals possess about the political system is known as *cognitive orientation*.

This concerns the roles and persons who occupy official positions. It poses such questions as: do individuals know the history, size, location of their nation and its constitutional arrangements?

- (b) **Affective Orientation:** This refers to the feeling of individuals towards the political system. The following questions can be asked: Are they proud of the country? Are they patriotic? Are they loyal to the leadership and the nation as a whole? Or are they alienated from their country? In some countries such as Britain, United States and Ghana, large sections of the population are proud of their country. Loyalty tends to be diverted to the ethnic groups in Nigeria. This is why the federal government has asked that school pupils sing the national anthem and recite the national pledge every morning, in order to inculcate the feeling of patriotism in Nigerians. Also, public buildings, and business houses have been asked to fly the national flag. The feeling of love towards the nation and admiration and respect for its institutions, officials and leadership are important factors for the stability of its political system.

- (c) **Evaluative Orientation:** This refers to the ability of the populace to evaluate or assess the performance of the political system, its institution, leaders and the effectiveness of its policies. Are the legislature, executive and judiciary performing their functions? Are the officials corrupt or honest? Do individuals have expectations that the political system can improve their living conditions? Do they consider the whole system liberal or authoritarian? All these questions are bound to elicit judgmental opinion from the populace about their political system.

The extent to which individuals feel they can influence the political system and participate in its decision making process produces three major types of political culture:

- (a) Participatory political culture
- (b) Subject political culture
- (c) Parochial political culture

(a) Participatory Political Culture: In this type of political culture, individuals are actively involved in the running of the political system. They expect that the activities of the government will improve their living conditions. Thus, a *participatory political culture* is characterised by the following:

- (i) Individuals within the State are oriented as to the political system as a whole. They perform activist roles in the system and everyone is involved in the political process.
- (ii) There is provision for and respect by the government for Fundamental Human Rights, the most important being the *freedom of speech* and *right to vote and to contest elections*.
- (iii) There is a clear limitation to governmental power and its area of activity.
- (iv) The press must be free to gather, publish and disseminate information without harassment. Also it should not be compelled to reveal its sources of information.
- (v) The judiciary must be independent and fearless.
- (vi) The electorate must be educated and well informed.
- (vii) Public opinion must be well informed.

The United States and Britain, among others, are examples of countries with anticipatory political culture. Generally speaking, participatory political culture is found in highly developed democratic societies.

(b) Subject Political Culture: In this type of political culture, individuals tend to be passive as they are alienated from the system. They are not actively involved in the activities of government. As a result, they have little or no expectation that the activities of the government will affect their lives in any meaningful way. They are, therefore, not encouraged, by the nature of the system to vote or contest elections, join political parties and pressure groups, attend political rallies or take part in debates or attend hearings in a public tribunal and sessions of the parliament as observers. The citizens obey but do not participate. They merely watch the political process. There is lack of identification with the government. The subject political culture is found in a centralised authoritarian political system.

(c) Parochial Political Culture: Under a *parochial political culture*, individuals are not aware of what happens beyond their community or tribal group. Some of the individuals may be aware, in a very unclear way, of what is happening in the central political system. They are not interested in what happens at the central government or in the other States. They are tribal-oriented. Their orientation is, therefore, parochial and low. Thus, majority of the people do not see themselves as part of the central government of a modern political system. They are not aware of government policies and programmes nor are they familiar with their political leaders and government officials. They do not, therefore, expect that the activities of the government will affect their lives in any meaningful way. A majority of the people, therefore, tend to look up to narrow sectional groups, interests and leadership that emanate from narrow sectional groups, interests and leadership that emanate from the tribe; ethnic or religion. To these they owe allegiance. That is, they are alienated from the specialised structures and institutions of government of the modern political systems. A parochial political culture is found in traditional political systems.

However, it must be pointed out that none of these types of political culture exists in a pure form. Instead, we have mixed political cultures in which participatory, subject and parochial

characteristics co-exist. For example, the Nigerian political culture is a mixture of the three to some extent.

3.2 POLITICAL SOCIALISATION

Political socialisation is the process of developing the individual to learn political attitudes, values and beliefs that are relevant to the political system. It begins from childhood and continues through adult life.

The process involves the deliberate upbringing of the individual to play a citizen's role and a role in politics. He learns to develop certain feelings towards the political system such as feelings of love, loyalty and pride towards the nation. However, the process may produce some individuals who are not proud of their country. *Political socialisation* may also lead to awareness in individuals of the nature of the political system, such as the legislature, executive and judiciary. They acquire knowledge of the way the government operates, its policies and programmes. They learn to obey the law, respect political leaders and other persons in positions of authority in the State. They may also develop feelings of loyalty towards one political party or the other. Also, political socialisation may create in individuals the awareness of their rights and obligations as citizens. They vote or stand as candidates during elections. They learn to criticise the government if it is not performing well. Political socialisation is a process of inducting individuals into the political culture of their country.

Agents of Political Socialisation

The agents of political socialisation are:

- (a) The family
- (b) The school and other educational institutions
- (c) The peer group
- (d) The mass media
- (e) Political parties
- (f) Pressure groups

- (a) **The Family:** The home is the child's first contact with authority. This is even more so in a family where both parents are present. The father plays an important role in the political socialisation of the children, particularly the males. They look up to him and tend to imitate him in his political views. They like to vote in the same party as he does. Mothers also have an influence on the future political behaviour of their children. It has been observed that in a family where the mother is the only parent, the male child particularly is likely to feel less interested in politics. Usually, these other agents are at work in the process of moulding children to fit into the political system. This may result in their holding opposing views from their parents. Also, children are likely to be independent of parents' influence if they are intelligent or have spent a longer period of their impressionable years at school.

(b) The School

- (i) *The curriculum:* One of the ways in which the school helps in political socialisation of pupils is by offering subjects and courses such as civics, government or political science, and history. The pupils are taught the functions and roles of the structure of the political system such as the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. They learn about government policies and programmes and persons who hold the various offices. In history lessons, they learn about national heroes such as Herbert Macaulay, General Murtala Muhammed, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe and Alhaji Ahmadu Bello.
- (ii) *The teacher:* The teacher's own political views may influence the future political behaviour of pupils. Also, he organises the information about the political system to be passed on to the pupils. He may lay emphasis on some and ignore the others.

- (iii) *The classroom:* This provides an environment for cross-pollination of view points held by the pupils. It is the basis for the emergence of new sets of ideas and opinions relevant to the future political system. And they are likely to influence the pupils' future political behaviour.
- (iv) *Non-class aspects of school life:* Some pupils belong to youth organisations which may not be purely political. Such pupils still acquire leadership skills which they later use in future political roles. For instance the art of public speaking and creative writing are first learnt in schools' drama, literary and debating societies and press clubs. Also, every morning at the assembly, pupils engage in rituals which help them acquire the spirit of loyalty and love of the nation. They sing the national anthem and recite the national pledge. During the independence anniversary, pupils march past and salute the national flag and the Head of State or his representatives.

At the university level, the individuals' awareness of political values, beliefs and attitudes, deepens. This is why many university students find it necessary to be involved in politics, as the number of students' crisis in Nigeria suggests.

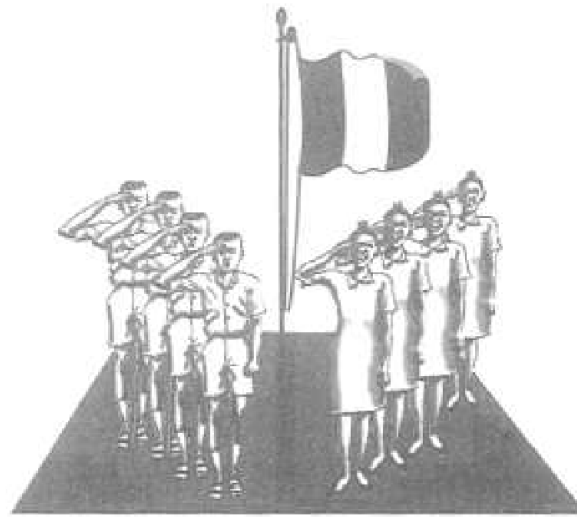


Figure 3.1: School children singing the national anthem

- (c) **The Peer Group:** This group is made up of playmates, classmates and friends. They are always in contact. Information and viewpoints on various issues which may or may not be politically relevant are exchanged between members. Thus, each member tends to be influenced to think and act as expected by the peer group. The peer group is an effective tool of political socialisation of its members particularly in adolescence when parental influence has diminished.
- (d) **The Mass Media:** This includes the newspapers, the radio and the television. They do create new viewpoints about various aspects of the political system to be assimilated by individuals. The role of the mass media is to create political awareness in the people. The better educated members of the society are likely to be more influenced by what they read in the newspapers and by their re-interpretation of the news from the radio and the television.
- (e) **Political Parties:** They tend to influence the political activities of citizens. If there are many political parties, citizens will be left to choose which one they like. Political parties educate citizens on their needs, interest and how best to achieve them. Political parties educate citizens on how the parties stimulate political awareness and political consciousness among the people. They explain political issues in the way the electorate can clearly understand.
- (f) **Pressure Groups:** These educate their members on their rights and privileges and also on their obligations to the State. This is done through seminars, conferences and workshops.

3.3 DEMOCRACY

Democracy is a system of government based on popular consent. It is a system of government in which the people establish their own government in the manner suitable to them for their general welfare.

The Greeks first introduced this system of government. They practised the type of democracy based on direct participation of all adult citizens in the making of public policies. This is called *direct democracy*. This was possible because the Greek city states were small. Secondly, all the citizens were free from daily chores because slaves, who were excluded from the act of governing, did all the work. Direct democracy is not possible in modern times.

Modern democracy is, therefore, not based on direct policymaking by all adult citizens, but on representation. That is, citizens do not directly exercise power. They delegate it to a periodically elected body of men, imposing a system of control to limit the power of government.

Britain and the United States are examples of countries which adopted the democratic system of government.

Characteristics of Democracy

The democratic system of government is characterised by a combination of the following features:

- (i) Fundamental rights are recognised and guaranteed by the constitution and respected by the State. These include rights to life, liberty and property, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of movement, freedom of association, religion and equality before the law, right to criticise the government, right to choose one's job and right to privacy and family life.
- (ii) There must be free and fair elections. They must be held periodically as prescribed by the law.
- (iii) There must be self-government. It must be based on majority rule and respect for minority rights.
- (iv) The opposition must be recognised and allowed to perform its functions of constructive criticism of the government policies.
- (v) The government must consult the populace before taking major national decisions.
- (vi) The individuals must actively participate as electors and participants during public debates. They should also be able to criticise government programmes and actions without fear of harassment by officials.
- (vii) There must be the *rule of law*, which must be respected, particularly the aspect dealing with equality before the law. Also, the judicial process must ensure that individuals' rights are not encroached upon by the State or its agents.
- (viii) The governmental powers must be limited by the law and constitution (limited government).
- (ix) There must be political equality. That is, each person must be entitled to one vote irrespective of the economic resources at their command. Also, economic equality should ensure that there is no co-existence of extreme poverty and opulence in the political system.
- (x) The judiciary must be fearless. It must also be independent of the executive and the parliament.

Conditions for the Success of Democracy

The following conditions facilitate the growth of democracy:

- (a) **Economic Development and Equal Opportunities:** There is need for a considerable level of economic development since it is costly to run the democratic system of government. There is also the need for a relative economic equality with no significant gap between 'the rich' and 'the poor'. Conditions which allow for the co-existence of extreme wealth and poverty tend to threaten the stability of the political system. This therefore, calls for equitable distribution of the wealth of the nation among individuals and groups.
- (b) **Education and Literacy:** The higher the level of literacy, the greater the chances for effective popular participation. A well-educated, informed and articulate electorate is in a better position to

evaluate public policies, decide reasonably at elections, and be capable of checking the excesses of the government. This is the basis of a stable democracy. For example, the most stable democracies e.g. Britain and the United States, have high levels of literacy. However, this may not always be the case, as France and Western Germany with comparable levels of literacy manifest a measure of political instability.

- (c) **Effective and Efficient Leadership:** The efficiency and skill of a leadership with the will and capability to take the right decisions and implement them is basic to a stable democracy.
- (d) **Open Society:** This implies a climate of political liberty, free discussion and movement and the right to hold any political liberty. It also implies open government. That is, the activities of government must not be shrouded in total secrecy nor must the government be above constructive criticism.
- (e) There must be willingness and a common desire among the populace to operate a democratic system.
- (f) The people must be willing to tolerate one another's views and actions irrespective of their political differences.
- (g) Absence of discrimination of all sorts facilitates the growth of democratic institutions.

3.4 COMMUNALISM

Communalism is a principle of organisation of a society and a theory of government which states that the widest degree of autonomy should be granted to the community with a distinct identity such as based on **culture, ethnic origin** or **religion** to enable it to develop at its own pace.

There are many such communal groups or organisations in Nigeria. For example, in the 1920s and 1930s, the Ibos and Ibibios of Eastern Nigeria and the Yoruba speaking peoples comprised separate communities under the British rule. These communal groups first emerged to fulfil social and economic functions. However they later asserted themselves politically. The oldest and most striking example of communalism is that represented by the Paris Commune of 1871.

Features of Communalism

- (i) A community is made up of persons who share a common culture and identity.
- (ii) Communal groups contain a full range of the divisions in age and sex among persons as found in the wider society.
- (iii) There is also a network of other groups and institutions in communal groups extending throughout an individual's life e.g. age-grades, marriage institution, etc.
- (iv) Members of a communal group are differentiated by wealth, status and power.
- (v) Communal groups are economically and socially self sufficient in their needs.
- (vi) Members tend to unite efforts in the production or provision of amenities for groups responsible for the building of schools, markets, roads, health centres etc.
- (vii) There is a collective ownership of some property by the community.
- (viii) Communal conflicts tend to reflect the desire for separation from the wider society and, therefore, may threaten to alter its boundaries.
- (ix) Technological and economic development within the wider society tends to reduce communal conflicts and demands for separateness.

- (x) Cooperations among members of a community in executing development projects is an essential feature of communalism.

3.5 SOCIALISM

Socialism is an ideology which advocates collective ownership, control and organisation of means of production, distribution and exchange by the community in their own interest.

Origin and Development

- (a) **Early Origin:** The origin of the concept has been traced to the writings of a political philosopher, Plato, in his work *The Republic*. He suggested that those who rule must not own property of their own but should share all things. Also the Bible advocates this in the teaching and practices of early Christians by emphasising the need to share wealth with one another and to protect the slaves, workers, women and the poor from exploitation.
- (b) **Socialism as a Product of Industrial Revolution and Modern Industrial Capitalism:** Karl Marx (1867- 1879), a German - Jew, studied the development of Western European industrial capitalism. He noted the tendency for its unrestricted expansion and the centralisation of capital due to the application of new technologies. He also observed that thousands of workers employed by the factories were subjected to hardship. This was because as the owners of capital and industries made more profit and got richer, their workers got poorer; as profit from production was not equitably shared between them. Marx predicted that the exploitation of workers and their alienation from production (i.e. they had no control over what they produced) would result in class conflict between the owners of means of production (capitalist class) and the workers (working class). In the ensuing struggle, workers would pool their resources and overthrow the capitalist class in a violent revolution and a new social, political and economic order (socialism) would be ushered in. He also predicted that the working class or the proletariat would seize control of the industries and other means of production as well as the machinery of State and administer them on behalf of the society through a workers' party (Dictatorship of the Proletariat). Karl Marx's prediction was to be proved right when a socialist revolution occurred in Russia in 1917 ushering in a socialist regime in that country.



Figure 3.2: Karl Marx

Karl Marx suggested that the first stage in the development of socialism is the occurrence of a 'socialist revolution'. The middle class would overthrow the aristocracy and the feudal class. They would then introduce democratic institutions and practices such as parliaments, political parties, and representative and responsible governments. This would allow for the further development of socialism. A socialist revolution occurred in France in 1789. The second stage of the development of socialism is the stage of 'socialist revolution'. The *proletariat* would overthrow the capitalist society, nationalise all means of production and revert them to public ownership. This was the stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was attained in Russia in 1917 and in China in 1949.

Features of Socialism

- (i) **Single Party System:** In a socialist State, only one legally recognised party is allowed to exist i.e. the socialist party. It is the only political party that is allowed to present candidates to contest elections.
- (ii) **Centralised Planning:** Socialist States operate a centrally-planned economy. The goods produced, the quantity and prices are all determined by officials, not by the price system or the interaction of forces of demand and supply as in capitalist states.
- (iii) **Public Ownership:** All the factories, industries, land and other means of production of wealth are collectively owned. Individuals are not allowed to own or control means of production. That is, socialist states operate a public sector economy.
- (iv) **Centralised Control:** All major decisions in the economy and entire society are made by the socialist party. Effective power is in the hands of the socialist party.
- (v) **Full Employment:** All able-bodied men and women are employed. Unemployment is rare.
- (vi) **Political-Social and Economic Equality or Egalitarianism:** It is not common to find persons who have levels of extremely high income over and above the rest of the other members of the society.
- (vii) **Co-operation:** All members of the society cooperate instead of competing to sustain the economy.
- (viii) **Collectivity in Production:** This is the policy of producing so that total output accrues to the State rather than to individuals, especially in agriculture.



Figure 3.3: A map showing the Soviet Union and China

3.6 COMMUNISM

Communism is the ultimate stage of scientific socialism. It means the absence of private property and inequality. In fact, it involves a classless society and common ownership of property.

Origin of Communism

- (a) **Early Origin:** The word 'communism' is derived from the Latin word *communis*, meaning 'common'. The primitive people were known to have shared their things in common. Also, early Christians practised a form of communism in which they shared things in common and shunned the acquisition of property.
- (b) **Later Origin:** The social philosophy and political movement of communism was developed by Karl Marx in a book *The Communist Manifesto*, which he wrote with Engels in 1848. In that work, he outlined the principles and strategies for the overthrow of the capitalist society and the establishment of a new social order, communism.

Stages in the Development of Communism

- (a) **The Stage of Socialism and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat:** In this first stage, the capitalist society was violently overthrown. The *proletariat* seized control of the capitalist State and its machinery. The ownership of means of production was now vested in the community. Income was equalised by the distribution of national income according to the work done (ability). This was a phase of socialism and it has been reached in the Soviet Union following the 1917 revolution; and in China in 1949. Other European countries passing through this phase include Poland, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Eastern Germany, Romania and Austria. Some African and Asian countries have also embraced socialism. They include Algeria, Mozambique, Angola, Tanzania, Vietnam, and North Korea. In Latin America, Cuba and Nicaragua are among those countries that have opted for socialism.
- (b) **The Stage of Communism:** In this second phase in the development of communism, the emphasis is on total abolition of private property, existence of collective ownership not only of capital goods but also of consumer goods, disappearance of antagonistic classes and the withering away of the state and its machinery, which is the government. Income is equalised by the distribution of national income according to the need of the individuals. At this stage, communism is attained. This has been described as utopian because the bliss and happiness it promises is non-existent anywhere.

Principles of Communism as a Social and Political Philosophy

- (i) The violent overthrow of capitalist society by the working class called the *proletariat*.
- (ii) The dictatorship of the *proletariat* in the new social and economic order.
- (iii) Abolition of private property and the establishment of a regime of collective ownership of property and means of production.
- (iv) The disappearance and withering away of the state and its machinery- the government.
- (v) The disappearance of antagonistic classes.
- (vi) The distribution of national income; first according to ability and, later according to need.
- (vii) The ushering in of a society of bliss and extreme happiness which is supposed to be man's natural environment.

Features of Communism

- (i) There is a violent overthrow of the capitalist society and the establishment of the dictatorships of the proletariat and hence, the withering away of the state and the government.
- (ii) There is a classless society; that is, social and economic equality.
- (iii) Public or collective ownership of property: the ownership and control of property and means of production are vested in the community and administered by the communist party.

- (iv) Collectivity in agriculture: Farmers cultivate state lands together and the output is collectively owned and distributed by the state.
- (v) National income is equitably distributed. There is absence of a class of persons with higher income levels over and above the rest of the society.

Relationship Between Socialism and Communism

- (i) Socialism is considered a stage in the historical development of the modern world from capitalist societies to communist societies.
- (ii) Both socialism and communism are realised by the violent overthrow of capitalist society.
- (iii) In both, the working class known as the proletariat are the heirs of the revolution; and hence, the need for the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat.
- (iv) There is nationalisation of the property and means of production of the capitalist society under both socialism and communism and hence, collective ownership and control of this.
- (v) There is centralised planning of the economy in both.
- (vi) There is a classless society in both.
- (vii) There is social and economic equality among individuals under both socialism and communism.
- (viii) There is only a single party - the party of the working class.
- (ix) Both communism and socialism oppose the exploitation of man by man.
- (x) They both advocate social and economic justice for man. They look forward to realising the best society for man.

3.7 CAPITALISM

Capitalism is an ideology which permits individual ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. Under capitalism, there is private ownership of land and industries. Individuals are permitted to produce what they like.

Features of Capitalism

Capitalism manifests the following features::

- (a) Private Ownership of Means of Production:** In a capitalist system, private individuals are free to own any amount of the means of production which they are capable of acquiring. They can own lands and industries.
- (b) Existence of Two Dominant Classes:** In a capitalist system, there is in existence two dominant classes in the society namely, the owners of capital and the workers (peasants). The workers sell their labour to the owners of capital and receive wages in return. They depend on the wages they receive from the owners of capital in order to survive. The owners of capital pay low wages to their workers in order to make much gain.
- (c) Private and Free Enterprise:** Individuals are free to do any type of business they desire under the regulations laid down by the State. They can invest in any type of business. In a capitalist system, the State provides internal and external security, provides infrastructure such as roads, airports, seaports, water supply etc. It also regulates and enforces contracts, and punishes crimes; but the State must never undertake commercial and industrial ventures. These are left in private hands. Businessmen and industrialists are free to organise their business in a way they like, set any price they wish and fix their wages on the basis of the forces of demand and supply.
- (d) Private Gain and Profit Maximisation:** In a capitalist economy, the motivating factor for any enterprise is private gain. Individuals organise their business in such a way as to make the maximum profit. They are not concerned with social or public interest. They pay the least wage that is possible and fix the maximum price that the consumers can pay.

- (e) **Existence of Competition in Economic, Social and Political Life:** In a capitalist system, there is acute competition in business and all political activities. Everything in a capitalist society is competed for. This results in struggles, hard work and the survival of the fittest.
- (f) **Existence of the Principle of Liberty:** Capitalism accepts the principles of equality and liberty. However, equality here is restricted to political and legal equality. *Political equality* here refers to equal rights to vote; based on the principle of one man, one vote, and the right to stand for elections and form political parties. *Legal equality* refers to equality before the law. Capitalism believes in civil liberty e.g. freedom of association, freedom of speech, freedom of conscience and religion, personal liberty, freedom to own property, etc. The principle of liberty connotes that capitalism advocates a multi-party system and the existence of opposition parties.

Advantages of Capitalism

- (i) The competitive efforts and struggles in capitalism produce efficiency and effectiveness in business and all other economic activities. These, in effect, lead to rapid growth and development.
- (ii) Capitalism fosters hard work, as reward is based on individual efforts. Everyone struggles in a capitalist system in order to survive. Thus, indolence and laziness are discouraged.
- (iii) Capitalism fosters individual liberty. The principle of Fundamental Human Rights, as inalienable rights, is recognised and respected. Individuals enjoy the right to own property as much as they are able to acquire under the law. They also enjoy social, private and political rights.
- (iv) When individuals are free to acquire and own property, they gain self satisfaction. They tend to feel proud of their personal achievements.
- (v) In a capitalist system, the basic consideration for investment is the viability of the venture. Investments are not made in nonviable ventures. This prevents economic loss and waste.

Disadvantages of Capitalism

- (i) In a capitalist system, there is a concentration of wealth, incomes and opportunities on few individuals in the society. The rich gets richer while the poor get poorer.
- (ii) The wage system is such that wages are paid to workers only when it is profitable to engage them. Thus, when a capitalist is not making huge profits as he expects, he reduces his labour force in order to maximise profits. This results in unemployment and misery of the affected workers. This occurs during periods of economic depression.
- (iii) In a capitalist system, the worker is considered as a 'wageslave'. The capitalist feels that the worker's only claim on the organisation, in which he works, is his wage. Consequently, the worker does not participate in the decision making of the organisation in which he works, especially the decisions that affect him. He has no control over the manner of production in his company and has no right to express himself about his job.
- (iv) In a capitalist system, all economic activities are governed by profit motivation. Public interests are not considered by the capitalists. They are primarily concerned with what will give them profit and more money. Projects which will benefit the general public but which are not profit making are never considered at all by the capitalist. This profit consideration often affects social and political activities e.g. many people go into politics in order to get more money.
- (v) The workers and the peasants are exploited and oppressed in a capitalist system. The workers are paid very low wages by their employers in spite of the fact that they have put in great efforts and made a lot of profits for the employers. The employers regard the workers as mere instruments for production. The exploitation of workers results in continuous struggle and conflicts between the workers and their employers. It also results in industrial tensions and unrest.
- (vi) Free economy inherent in pure capitalism obstructs the quest for rapid national development, as it does not favour serious State intervention in the economic system. There is a lack of serious central planning in the economic, social and technological development.

- (vii) Capitalism advocates the wage system which only responds to the demands of the people who have money to spend. It does not at all respond to the real interests and needs of the general public. Capitalism breeds individualism, selfishness and social irresponsibility.
- (viii) There is a high incidence of corruption in a capitalist system. This arises from the acquisitive tendencies and money-mindedness in the capitalist system. There is a tendency for individuals to resort to easy means of getting money.
- (ix) There is a high incidence of unemployment and mass poverty in a capitalist state. This is caused by the absence of a planned economy, the periodic breakdown of the economy, and the concern of making the maximum profit. Unemployment, in turn, results in high incidence of social evils and crimes.



Figure 3.4: A map showing a capitalist country (USA)

3.8 FEUDALISM

Feudalism is a political and economic system, which prevailed in Europe during the middle age, based on obligations of services (mainly military services) on the part of a vassal towards his lord who, in turn, was obliged to protect and maintain his vassal by granting him land in *fife*.

Feudalism succeeded the economic system based on slavery and preceded capitalism. However the term has been applied to other societies and systems of government with similar features in modern times. For example, emirates in Northern parts of Nigeria have features of a feudal system. The Yoruba kingdoms of the 19th century were feudalistic.

Features of Feudalism

- (i) The lord or king has the right of sovereignty over the estate or manor and over persons living on it. Hence, the land of whatever size is referred to as a fife or feud.
- (ii) The serf or vassal holds the land or fife and in return, gives services to the lord or king who is also duty-bound to protect the serf.
- (iii) The feudal system is, thus, characterised by *serfdom* which connotes an inferior social status. It is a little higher than slavery.
- (iv) There is tendency for the poor, weak serf, to be exploited and oppressed by the aristocratic lord.
- (v) There is in existence a close personal bond between the lord and the vassal.
- (vi) There is in existence private armies and a code of conduct in which military obligations are stressed.
- (vii) There is a personalised government vested in the king or lord.
- (viii) There is a fusion of political functions and powers vested in the king or lord.
- (ix) Political powers of the State tend to be weakened by the power and privileges of the lord.
- (x) There are in existence factions and power blocks.

- (xi) There is a constant feuding between the king and the lords.
- (xii) There is a state of war and insecurity of persons and goods.

Merits of Feudalism

- (i) Feudalism filled the power vacuum, created at a time the Crown was unable to exercise full sovereignty over the State following disintegration of the Roman Empire. Thus, the king conceded to the lords' rights when he could not effectively exercise his power.
- (ii) It provided security for the emancipated slaves and freemen who could not enter into contract with the lord of a manor, in order to remain free.
- (iii) It provided protection for the weak and for the poor from foreign marauders and military adventurers in the absence of a strong king and kingship ties.
- (iv) It provided land for subsistence for the landless peasants and freemen.
- (v) It provided the basis for the revival of the money economy after the collapse of the Roman Empire due to the need of main and finance military services.
- (vi) The revival of the money economy and the growth of new cities and commerce during this period laid the foundation for the development of capitalism.

Demerits of Feudalism

- (i) The fragmented authorities as residing in the king and the lords (knightly class) tended to weaken the sovereignty of the State.
- (ii) Constant feuding, drunkenness and vengeance among lords or between them and the crown tended to create insecurity of persons and goods.
- (iii) Senseless wars and vendettas were the order of the day.
- (iv) Lord - vassal relationship provided a basis for the oppression and exploitation of the weak and of the poor.
- (v) It was a system in which the strong prevailed over the weak.
- (vi) Fragmented holdings favoured lower productivity in agriculture since it precluded the use of advanced farm technologies.
- (vii) It was a system which encouraged injustice. For the lord was the judge in a suit between him and his vassals.
- (viii) It was a system which made the strong stronger, the rich richer, the weak weaker and the poor poorer.
- (ix) Obligation of service to the lord did not encourage enterprise and personal initiative and industry in freemen.
- (x) The land tenure system was inflexible. Land tenure under the feudal system was inflexible because land was not easily transferred from person to person on a freehold basis. It, therefore, reduced the productivity of peasant farmers.

3.9 FASCISM

The theory of fascism applies to a political system in which a single party dictatorship exercises total control over the government and the society. It also attempts to retain power by resort to the policies of organised state violence, racial discrimination, excessive nationalism, military adventure, conquest and domination of foreign nations.

Origin and Development

The origin of the fascist movement can be traced to a group of Italian nationalists who organised under the leadership of Benito Mussolini an opposition to communism in Italy in 1919. Mussolini came into power in 1922 and introduced fascism. The fascists controlled Italy from 1922-1943.

The fascist ideology was to spread to other parts of the world. Germany embraced it in 1933 under the Nazi party led by Adolf Hitler. Spain and Japan followed in the 1930s. Argentina in Latin America was under fascist rule, presided over by General Peron from 1943 - 1955. The backbone of fascism was broken following the defeat of the axis powers made up of Germany, Italy and Japan in 1945 at the end of the second world war by the allied powers led by Britain and the United States, the Soviet Union and France. However, fascist rule in Spain which began in 1936 under General Francisco Franco lasted for another 30 years after the war because General Franco did not fight under the banners of the axis powers.

Features of Fascism

- (i) Fascist regimes exercise total control over the government and all aspects of social life such as education, religion, business, health, agriculture, culture, recreation and family life.
- (ii) Fascism drew its main support from the middle class whose status and privileges were threatened by organised labour and big business concerns. Therefore, fascism tended to be anti-labour and anti-big business as well.
- (iii) The fortification of the State is regarded as the end of the society.
- (iv) The citizen is stripped of his individuality. He does not participate in decision making and public policy.
- (v) Decision making is reserved for a small selected group at the top of the party hierarchy, who owe their position to the dictator.
- (vi) There is, thus, emphasis on the building of instrument of power for coercive control of the State and society. This is built around a charismatic leadership, a single party machinery, organised State violence and terror, centralised control of the economy (the corporate State).
- (vii) There is emphasis on the use of propaganda as an instrument of control and terror.
- (viii) There is permanence of uncertainty, insecurity, tension and fear in the society due to constant changes in policies and personnel of the State.
- (ix) Racial discrimination and superiority are elevated to the level of State policy in a fascist State. For example in Germany, the Jews were a direct target. At the same time, the German race was considered a superior race of the homo sapiens.
- (x) Fascist States are known for their tendency towards territorial aggrandisement and desire to conquer and dominate other countries politically and economically (imperialism).
- (xi) Fascist States tend to be opposed to international law and order e.g. Germany and Italy pulled out of the League of Nations and flouted its many orders against aggression before the second world war.
- (xii) Fascism is anti-socialism, anti-communism and anti-liberal democracy.
- (xiii) Fascist States operate a highly-centralised State economy known as the corporate State.

3.10 TOTALITARIANISM

Totalitarianism is applied to political systems characterised by absolute and total control of government and society through the application of instruments of modern technology and mass communication for the purpose of realising a single positively-formulated goal of the State as identified by the leader.

Examples of totalitarian regimes include fascist Italy under Mussolini, Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler and the Soviet Union under Staling. Also, communist China under Mao tse Tung qualifies as a totalitarian regime. The goal identified and formulated under Nazi Germany was the races. The rapid industrialisation of a backward economy was the major goal formulated by Staling and Mussolini. Mao pursued the major goal of the dictatorship of the proletariat in communist China.

Features of Totalitarianism

- (i) **Absolute Control of the Individual:** There is absolute and complete control of all aspects of the individual by the government.
- (ii) **Ruthless Pursuit of a Single Goal:** This is an important distinctive characteristic of a totalitarian regime. The goals may be racial hegemony, the dictatorship of the proletariat or the policy of rapid industrialisation of a backward economy.
- (iii) **A Single Mass Party:** There is only one legally recognised political party. Opposition parties were prohibited. The single party tends to attract large membership due to the massive propaganda and enforced participation which compels individuals to identify with the party.
- (iv) **An Official Ideology:** The State formulates and adopts an elaborate totalitarian ideology linked to the single positively formulated goal of the State. For example, the ideology of communism is furthered by, and in turn furthers the goal of rapid industrialisation of the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin. The same applies to the goal of dictatorship of the proletariat in Mao's communist China.
- (v) **Charismatic Leadership:** The leader who is a totalitarian derives his authority from certain unique and exceptional personal qualities which the people attribute to him e.g. sex appeal, power, intelligence, invincibility, organisation ability, oratory etc. For example, Adolf Hitler and Mao were deeply revered and worshipped by their followers.
- (vi) **The Use of Organised Violence:** This is usually through a system of terrorist police control. It is necessitated by the need to attain the goal to which the whole system is geared.
- (vii) **Suppression of Associations:** In totalitarian regimes, associations and organisations which have been in existence before the emergence of the regime are usually suppressed or outlawed if they do not identify with the goal of the regime. For example, communist China and the Soviet Union, the church and other Christian organisations were all either suppressed or persecuted.
- (viii) **Forced Participation:** There is the tendency to force individuals to participate in public organisations and the political process, but without giving them the opportunity to take part in effective decision making. For example under Nazi Germany and Soviet Union, accord of almost 100 percent participation at the polls was attained, but mainly through forced participation and massive official propaganda.
- (ix) **Unpredictability:** Unpredictability, uncertainty, fear and insecurity were the order of the day in a totalitarian regime. For example, in Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union, there were constant changes in state policies and personnel of government. Thus, the changing criteria for deterring the enemies and friends of the state and the endemic purges and executions that followed tended to instil fear into the minds of the general populace.
- (x) A complete monopoly is exercised over all means of effective mass media.
- (xi) There is centralised control and direction of the entire economy.



KEY POINTS

Political Culture

Definition: The political culture of a nation is made up of the beliefs, emotions, values and attitudes of the population as expressed in their political system.

Components of Political Culture

There are two main components.

- (a) The attitude of individuals towards the political system was made manifest in three ways :
 - (i) Cognitive orientation: This refers to the knowledge and belief which the individual possesses about the political system.
 - (ii) Affective orientation: This is the feeling of the individual towards the political system.
 - (iii) Evaluative orientation: This is the ability of the populace to evaluate the performance of the political system.
 - (b) The extent to which individuals see themselves as political actors. This component of political culture reveals three major types:
 - (i) Participatory political culture
 - (ii) Subject political culture
 - (iii) Parochial political culture
- There is usually a mixture of the three in any political system.

Political Socialisation

Political socialisation is a process of educating the individual in the political attitudes, values and beliefs that are relevant to the political system.

The Agents of Political Socialisation

- (a) *The family:* Individuals are first given political education in the family.
- (b) *The school:* Citizens are taught government, civics, and history in schools.
- (c) *The peer group:* These are playmates, classmates and friends who share similar views about the political system.
- (d) *The mass media:* These are newspapers, radio and television. They also impart to their readers and listeners political education.

Democracy

Democracy is a system of government in which the people establish their own government through which they govern themselves in the manner suitable to them for their general welfare.

Communalism

Communalism is an ideology of government which advocates autonomy for a community with a distinct identity to enable it to develop at its own pace.

Socialism

Socialism is an ideology which advocates collective ownership, control and organisation of means of production, distribution and exchange by the community in their own interest.

Communism

Communism is an ideology which advocates the violent overthrow of a capitalist society, the establishment of the rule of the *proletariat*, the abolition of classes and private property and the ultimate withering away of the state and the government.

Feudalism

Feudalism is a political system based on the obligation of service on the part of the vassal towards his lord who, in turn, is obliged to protect him and grant him land or fief.

Fascism

Fascism is a body of ideas which involves a single party dictatorship exercising total control over the government and society. It retained Mussolini's teachings which were founded on aggressive nationalism.

Totalitarianism

Totalitarianism is a body of ideas which entails absolute and total control of the government and society by a charismatic leadership in pursuit of a single goal.

SAMPLE EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

Essay Questions

1. What is political culture? Discuss its main components.
2. What are the characteristic features of socialism?
3. (a) Discuss the main features of socialism.
(b) What is the relationship between socialism and communism?
4. What are the merits and demerits of capitalism?
5. What are the characteristic features of totalitarianism?
6. Write short notes on the following:
 - (a) Fascism
 - (b) Communialism
 - (c) Feudalism
 - (d) Political socialisation

Objective Questions

1. Which of the following aspects of a people's culture expressed in their political system constitutes their political culture?
 - (a) Their attitudes, values, beliefs, and climatic conditions
 - (b) Their attitudes, values, beliefs and the President
 - (c) Their attitudes, sentiments, values and traditional institutions
 - (d) Their attitudes, beliefs, sentiments, values and the Minister for Culture and Social Welfare
2. The political culture of a country is said to be participatory if
 - (a) individuals are not interested in visiting the museum but may vote to elect their rulers as well as contest elections.
 - (b) individuals cannot criticise the government but can take part in all cultural activities of the state.

- (c) individuals cannot form as many political parties as possible but may become financial members of as many social clubs as possible.
 - (d) individuals cannot oppose the government's decisions but may wear their traditional dresses to work and parties.
3. Which one of the following activities is political socialisation in progress?
- (a) During the morning assembly, the principal asked the pupils to sing the national anthem and recite the national pledge.
 - (b) At the end of the inter-school debate, the social prefect declared that the next item on the agenda was a social get-together.
 - (c) At the social studies lesson, the teacher asked the pupils to render a wedding song popular in their village.
 - (d) The pupils were told after the inter-house sports that there will be a raffle draw and an end-of-term party.
4. One of the following is an agent of political socialisation:
- (a) The school's social welfare prefect.
 - (b) The Master of Ceremony(M.C.) during an uncle's wedding reception.
 - (c) The 1986 winner of *Miss Nigeria* contest.
 - (d) *The African concord*, a weekly international magazine.
5. A country is democratic if
- (a) the rulers are elected by universal adult suffrage, but there is no absolute economic equality.
 - (b) the government is elected under a multi-party system and opposition is recognised but the government is not responsible.
 - (c) the government is based on majority rule and respect for minority right but the leadership is not popular.
 - (d) the government is elected under multi-party system but not accountable to the opposition.
6. Fascist movement originated in
- (a) Germany.
 - (b) Japan.
 - (c) Spain.
 - (d) Italy.
7. The socialist philosophy was first propounded by
- (a) Adolf Hitler.
 - (b) Mussolini.
 - (c) Karl Marx.
 - (d) Lenin.
8. Which one of the following features is common to socialism and communism?
- (a) Dictatorship of the proletariat
 - (b) Stateless society
 - (c) Social justice
 - (d) Existence of government

Answers to Objective Questions

1. c

2. a
3. a
4. a
5. d
6. c
7. c
8. a