



## Approaches of Comparative Politics: What Elements are Missing?

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### Introduction:

With a little thought, when one studies political science, one has to apply a lot of approaches to study. Many approaches have to be taken in mind; many methods have to be applied. So approach means how one approaches to the study. Coming to the Political Science, broadly we have seen that Political Theory, International Relations, and Comparative Politics can be the proper segments. In the words of Dr. A. K. Varma, 'pick up any component, be it Political Theory, International Relations or Comparative Politics, one can see the comparison in all the three components.' In political theory also we compare Marx with Hegel, in international relations; comparison takes place in one country to another country, one foreign policy with another foreign policy. So the comparison takes place in any component today. That's why the area of comparative politics is very wide. When it comes to comparative politics, one thing has to be understood that we have to make comparison; there is an equality and disparity in it. It is necessary to have two components for comparison. There is a difference in comparative government and comparative politics. When it comes a matter of comparative government, it is a narrow concept, while comparative politics is a wide concept as it covers different political institutions, process, leadership, parties, voters, voting behavior, political parties, their pressure groups, their interest groups etc. According Dr. A. K. Varma, 'there is no single method in comparative politics because there are different patterns to study in comparative politics'. The process of comparative politics has been in action since 384 B.C. when Aristotle and Plato used to compare politics by applying different elements what they are called as approaches. Practice to study comparative politics continued by the time of Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Marx. But when comparative politics became a matter of academic discipline, it is found increased in the closer of 18<sup>th</sup> century or somewhat in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The period after the World War II stands to be water shade for the development and changing nature of comparative politics. Behaviorism can also be one of the reasons for this changed form of comparative politics.



### **Comparative Politics:**

The rise of the Third World has provided a broad base to comparative politics. It has become related not only to the countries of the West and institutional political structures, but also to non-political structures and non-political behavior affecting them and the politics of Third World countries. That is, the scope of comparative politics, where earlier it was very narrow, now it form has become broad or wide. The prevailing state government, institutions, powers and public opinion have been replaced by new concepts such as political culture, political modernization, political socialization, political communication, political development, political system, etc., because all other concepts revolve around these. New techniques and methods are being used in the study and new methods and techniques and approaches have made comparative study scientific and practical. Today the studies of sociology, economics, psychology, etc. also have been included in it. Due to which it has made its place as an interdisciplinary subject. Today for the meaning of comparative politics, not only on the comparative study of the governments of two countries, but it also includes the study of politics and non-political institutions of the whole world, their behavior and the elements affecting their behavior.

Therefore, Comparative Politics is the study and appraisal of domestic politics across countries. It has its history as long as the systematic study of politics in Greece and Rome. The Bible is possibly one of the first written texts of Comparative Politics. The concept of Comparative Politics therefore has different dimension as theorists have their own views towards. Lijphart Arend, 1971, argued that comparative politics does not have a functional focus in itself only, instead a methodological one. In their definition, Peter Mair and Richard Rose stated that comparative politics is elaborated by combination of a substantive focus on the study of countries' political system and a method of recognizing and explaining similarities and difference between these countries using common mode.

According to M. G. Smith (1974), 'Comparative Politics is the study of the forms of political organization, their properties, correlations, variations and modes of changes.'

Having reference of M. Curtis, Geoffrey K. Roberts (1972) stated defined comparative politics as, 'Comparative Politics is concerned with significant, regularities, similarities and differences in the working of political institutions and political behavior.'

### **Approaches of Comparative Politics:**

If broadly classified the development journey of comparative politics in a very motive way, then it can be said that classical and modern are the two special approaches of comparative politics.



It would be interesting to raise a small question that the approach which has been going on since the time of Aristotle; has become classical or traditional one and after the behavioral revolution took place in the 1950s, we call the Modern Approach. But we have come almost 70 years ahead of modernity. From 1950 to today, almost 72 years have passed, so didn't any development happen in these 72 years? Has there been no other new approach within these years of span? If one attempt to see, many contemporary approaches have been developed, which is the next thing of Behavioral Revaluation? Therefore, in view of Dr. A. K. Varma, there are three stages or approaches of comparative politics like Traditional (Before 1950), Modern (Behavioral Revolution) and Contemporary Approach (Somewhat 30-40 years span).

The traditional approach, which has been going on since the time of Plato and Aristotle; used to have a lot of philosophy in it. In philosophy it is propounded that what should happen then our thinking become normative. As Plato has said what is justice? So he created a surgeon of the concept of justice, created the concept of Ideal State. On the basis of all these he propounded a principle that what should the state be like? Or Ought to? How is its judicial system? How is it in other states? Do we get that? In short, in traditional approach, the thinkers studied comparative politics on the ground of morality and values. On the basis of these values, they used to study which system is working or which system is not working. The political system which ran on the basis of their values, they called it good and they system which did not run on the basis of their values, they called it not good. Another approach within the traditional approach was about the integration of History and Politics Science as theorists like Machiavelli, Done, Cicero, Hobbes, Austen and other. According to them, if we want to study the political relations of a nation, then it is necessary to understand the historical dimensions of that nation as well. According to the theorists of traditional approach, it is a duty of a state and the government to rectify whether their system is functioning in accordance to the constitution or not. On the other hand they kept eye on the institutions like local government, judicial and other social institutions. This approach towards the politics was institutional and legal one.

What we miss in this traditional approach was that traditional approach focused maximum on descriptive form rather interactive one. Therefore, politics cannot be ruled out on description only. It needs to integrate analytical form of individual and institutions in one thread. One thing that we also miss from traditional politics was that when traditionalist were writing politics, they found ignorant about the interdependent relationship of national and international politics and it was their failure that they didn't catch it. Therefore, traditional approach of comparative politics is prejudice and incomplete. What they only focused was the



value based politics and value laden system. They missed the political system of Western and Non-western philosophy over the Third World which was in was after the World War II.

With the behavioral revolution around 1950s, as if a revolution had place in modern approach of comparative politics. In order to overcome the paucities of traditional approach, various approaches were introduced by new political intellectuals. The followers of the behavioral revolution used to say that it is not at the normative or philosophical at practical level for us. It is because whatever the people of traditional approach wrote, they wrote while sitting. In this, they did not know what was actually happening or what would happen. That's why they started study these things with the help of science because science is such a field which probes all things from every angle. Modern approach of comparative politics was mingled with sociological approach. Maclver, Easton, and Almond were the follower of this approach. According to them state is more social and individual than institution. Therefore, social contact was important to understand the political behavior of an individual. (Johari, 1982)

Furthermore, this modern approach of comparative approach viewed Psychological, Economic, Quantitative and System Approach within it. In the Chicago School, run by Charles Mariam, which was formed in the decade of 1921, was thought that if we have to study human being from political point of view, then we have to be objective rather than subjective. In order to understand the human, then it is important to understand his mind and for this it will be very important to be interdisciplinary. It became necessary for the theorist of modern approach to understand sociological and psychological environment for the practice of man. In the 1965, David Easton wrote a book 'Framework of Political Analysis' in which he defined a system and stated that politics is a political system in which there are many components like political parties, government, voters, legislations, judicial etc. In order to understand these components, David Easton offered Input- Output model. According to him, modern approach of comparative politics focuses on formal system rather than informal system of politics. In short, this approach believes on structural approach of understanding politics from all aspects of behavior associated to human and politics.

Though Modern Approach of comparative politics aroused with behavioral revolution and man was at the center, there many elements that have been missed to identify. This approach believes on science and techniques and its methodological approaches but it missed subject matters. It was taken into consideration by the theorist of this approach that behavior of human in all kind of circumstances is equal; is highly impossible. Though David Easton found strong follower of Behaviorism at the initial state and supported modern approach, later we find him



to be strong opponent of behaviorism. The reason for this was that instead of social science, political science was integrated with mathematics more. Another thing that we miss from this approach was value. According to Marx, a political science without moral value is like a man without sense of organs. It is true that there was over emphasis on moral and values in traditional approach but to ignore them is injustice after all politics needs ethics on which a state can function properly.

To conclude, comparative politics approach is a method, study of politics and government and aims to compare the political system of the world. It not only aims to compare the countries, also aims to find the similarities among the countries. It focuses on finding patterns, processes, and regularities among the political system. There is no scope for individuality or biased philosophy while comparing the countries and political system in comparative politics.

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