

Purnadas Bandopadhyay
Dept. Of Political Science

Saltora Netaji centenary college

State aided college teacher

(M)- 9933459991

• BEHAVIOURAL APPROACH

• IN :

• POLITICAL SCIENCE :

Approaches to study the Political Science.

There are different approaches to the study of politics commonly known as traditional and behavioral approaches. An approach is a method of investigating the political phenomenon which explains the causal relationship among the objects.

- **Behavioral approach:-**

- The behavioral approach to political science mainly emphasizes on scientific objective and value free study of political phenomenon. This approach stresses upon the use of empirical as well as scientific methods of study political behavior. This approach shifts its emphasis from the study of the state and government today-today problems, activities and behavior of individuals and groups. Behavioral approach has portraits individuals as center of attention and examines their behavior, actions and tries to comprehend them through a scientific outlook.
- To Leslie Lipson, "The behavioral method records the details of what men do seeking to explain why they do."

- Thus, behavioral approach studies the political behavior of individuals through an empirical viewpoint. It studies the legislatures, voters, decision makers, policy makers etc. In a scientific way and by correlating their activities and practices, tries to conceptualize and give answer to political outcomes. Behavioral political science has attempted to apply the methodologies and empirical natural sciences to the study of politics and government. Behavior list oriented political scientists try to be more rigorous and disciplined in their research, seeking scientific precision by the quantification and measurement of collected data through the formulation and systematic testing and empirical hypothesis, they attempt to discover regularities and uniformities in political behavior which can be expressed in generalizations or theory.

- **Characteristics of behavioral approach:-**

- Behavioral approach is based on some fundamental assumptions. Scholars like David Easton, Kirkpatrick etc have highlighted some basic characteristics of behavioralism. David Easton has laid down eight basic characteristics.
- Regularities
- Verifications
- Techniques
- Quantification
- Value free
- Systematization
- Pure science
- Integration

- Behavioral approach advocate empirical study of individual behaviors but all the aspects of individual behavior cannot be observed and stated through empirical generalizations. Thus the approach loses the focal assumption it has taken up. This approach is based on value-neutrality, is also not practical. Because in Political science we study human behavior and it cannot be made a value-neutral discipline at any cost. This approach gives more importance to individuals than institutions. But critics say that without looking at institutions we cannot draw proper conclusion as institutions hold prime importance in the matter of political science.
- Again one can criticize the approach due to the large diversity and differences among the political scientists of behavioral school itself. Here we can derive the answer that though theoretically behavioralism is a much applicable approach but that lacks fruitful application in practice.

- **Study of human political behavior:-**
- Instead of political institutions behavioral approach stands for study of human behavior in politics. It places emphasize upon the study of both individual as well as group behavior in politics.
- **Empirical method:-**
Behavioral approach advocates the use of empirical methods of study involving data collection through field methods, and analysis of data using statistical and mathematics techniques.
- **Regularities:-**
Behavioral approach holds that there are discoverable uniformities in humanpolitical behavior these can be expressed in generalization or theories with Explanatory and predictive value.

- **Verification:-**

- The validity of such generalizations has to be testable with reference to relevant behavior. Only empirically about politics are to be admitted as valid.

- **Techniques:-**

Means of acquiring and interpreting data cannot be taken for granted. Several different techniques can be found for observing, recording and analyzing behavior. It stands for adoption of appropriate tools of data collection and analysis.

- **Quantification:-**

- Precision in the recording of data and the statement of findings require measurement and quantification, not for their own sake but only where possible, relevant and meaningful in the light of other objectives. Use of mathematical, statistical methods of data analysis has to be made.

- **Value free study or value neutrality**
- Ethical evaluation and empirical explanation involve two different proposition. For the sake of clarity these should be kept analytically distinct. Study of politics has to be empirical and value free.
-
- **Systematization**
Research ought to be systematic it mean that, theory and research are to be seen as closely inter-twined parts of a coherent and orderly body of knowledge.
- **Pure science**
The application of knowledge is as much apart of the scientific enterprise as theoretical understanding. It admits and advocate and a link between theoretical understanding and practical application of knowledge.
- **Integration**
Recognition of interrelationship between political science and other social sciences can provide immense help to bring political science back to its status of earlier centuries and ensure its return to the main fold of the social sciences. In other words behavioralism accepts interdisciplinary focus.

- **Conclusion:-**

- The existing polarity between the traditional and behavioral approach is based on the views shared by the proponents of each approach in term of research interest, advancements of generalization in the sub discipline, subscription to ethical values and devotion to academic excellence. However, both approaches and so many other approaches to the study of political science are equally committed to creating an understanding for political process, identifying and improving on the 'perfect' political system and generally purifying the study of politics

- *end* -

Thank you!

For your Attention

Any questions?

