

Emergence of Political Socialization in an Ever-Changing Political Scenario

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Abstract: 20th century has ushered new ways of thinking in every sphere of human life including socio-cultural and political life. Man has discovered himself. He has begun to examine and reevaluate age old customs and traditions in the light of Renaissance propagated by Rajaram Mohan Rai and other socio-religious reformers in India. The western rationality acquired through English education gave them a tool to question the superstitious practices of the people. Western concept like democracy, liberty, equality and nationalism awakened the Indians and led them to develop scientific outlook and attitude. The world has become global village with the advancement in the fields of science and technology. Globalization and liberalization made the shadow lines and such other barriers which used to separate the nations vanish.

Key points: Human life, socio-religious, Globalization, liberalization

1. Introduction

The new emergence of political scenario led not only to the fall of political power from the major nations of the world, but it also led to the emergence of the sovereign nations like India, China, Srilanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Burma and Pakistan. Emergence of new nations with their new systems of government posed serious problems in training, shaping, and moulding, influencing and affecting their citizens to their systems. This has necessitated for the change in the political culture, outlook, attitude and understanding and in developing the true spirit of political awareness and responsibilities. Any change in any system including political training is a slow process. Such a change can happen only when the people become aware of their civic duties and responsibilities. Man is not only a social being but also a culture being. He always likes to adjust, affect and adopt himself to the ever-changing demands of the day. The notions, beliefs, customs, traditions and values of a nation keep changing constantly. Man has to keep in pace with the ever-changing political demands. Though India is one of the oldest countries of the world, but its outlook, attitude, and responses towards any existing socio-cultural and political system is not the same. It is changing with the political demands necessitated by the changing political phenomenon.

One of the major problems which confront all political systems is how to prepare the members of the society to develop political responsibilities. Plato, the political philosopher in his "Republic" made a bid to arrest political change by socialization of the youth through right education which can build in them as men of character. He also focuses on the political and pedagogical ideas and also on the preparation of responsible citizens to the ideal state. He showed keen interest in the political socialization and he insisted on civic education as preparation for the active participation of the people in the affairs of the state. Rousseau also gave a greater attention towards the problem of the political socialization. He insists to bring the youth to the main political stream through the process of political socialization. He said that, this can be achieved by nurturing political values to young minds in schools and other educational institutions. In the 21st century the

problem has received sustained attention due to two reasons, first, the popularization of the formal schooling system has resulted in relative uniformity in the schooling experiences to which children are subject to. Secondly, there is a growing ethos of taking active participation among the members of the modern political system.

Meaning

The term 'Political Socialization' is generally used to describe the process of formation of political values, attitudes and beliefs. Political Socialization is directly concerned with the development of the student by which children and adolescents acquire political cognition, attitudes and behavior. Scholars have expressed different opinion about political socialization. Some of the important statements and definitions regarding political socialization are. Dawson and Prewitt define it, "as the development process through which the citizens mature politically." Dennis kavanagh states that, "It is a process whereby the individual learns about and develops orientations to politics." Hass and Torney opine that, "socialization refers to the process by which a junior member of a group taught its values, attitudes and other behavior". According to Almond 'Political Socialization is the process of induction into the political culture. It also includes knowledge of values affecting towards the inputs of demands and claims into the system. Political socialization refers to the learning of norms, attitudes and behavior accepted and practiced by an ongoing political system. The process by which political culture is shaped at the individual level and at the community level is passed on from generation to generation is called political socialization.

Political Socialization is the process by which political cultures are maintained and created. Changes in the pattern of political culture also come about through political socialization. The process of political socialization is a continuous process which operates in a conscious or imperceptible manner. It starts with and lasts forever throughout one's life. It includes all the political learning formal as well as informal, consciously or unconsciously.

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Objectives of the political socialization

One of the basic objectives of the process of political socialization is to transmit political values from one generation to another so to bring about political stability in a system. The goal of political socialization is to train or develop individuals that they become well-functioning and responsible members of the political society. Without a political body, the ongoing political values will have trouble in functioning smoothly and it cannot be able to perpetuate itself. Survival is the prime goal of the political organism Just as it is of the individual organism. It involves the examination of the social, economic or cultural environment of society. Political socialization is the most important link between the social and political systems. The process of political socialization does not take place at a uniform pace. Sometimes it is very slow, while at other times it becomes very fast. Jallianwala Bagh tragedy of 1919 the people of India were somewhat indifferent towards national struggle, but after this incident they started taking keen interest in the political activities and got actively involved in the political struggle. Any quick political socialization process greatly disturbs the society and the political system.

Stages of political socialization

The process of socialization passes through two different stages. The first stage covers the childhood and the adolescent stage and the second stage covers the young age. During the first stage the general attitude of the child towards authority, obedience, resistance, co-operation and aggression etc is germinated. What the child learns in the family is further, cemented by the school. The childhood stage passes through four stages, 1, Recognition or authority through particular individuals such as parents, policemen and president of the country.2. Distinction between public and private authority.3. Recognition of impersonal political institutions like legislature, judiciary and voting behavior etc. 4. Distinction between political institutions and persons engaged in the activities associated with those institutions.

At the second stage of political socialization factors like environment and experimental influences play a significant role. It is not essential that the process of political socialization should conform to the process of socialization followed during the first stage. According to Rush and Althoff in this stage 'knowledge, values and attitudes acquired during the childhood and adolescence will be measured against the experience of the adult life.

The process of political socialization is identical in all the systems even though the system of mechanism may vary both in kind and in its effectiveness. A democratic society permits dissent and opposition and allows multifarious interests to operate, so that variety of political norms and values flourish. The degree of control exercised over information which influences the process of political socialization is greater in totalitarian society than in a democratic society. However, the objective of political socialization under both the systems is the same viz to maintain the stability and the harmony in the existing political system.

Political culture:

Political culture is nothing but the ideas shared in a political society among the members. Political culture as such is composed of various sets of "attitudes, beliefs and values of society that relate to the political system and political issues". Almond and Powell defines it as, "the pattern of individual attitudes and orientations towards politics among the members of a political system". These intrinsic values are transmitted from a generation to the other with greater or lesser modifications. Every individual in establishing close contacts with his immediate environment develops certain political orientations and attitudes towards the political system. When we talk about the political orientations, we can classify them into three orientations. Such as;

1. Cognitive orientation implies citizen's knowledge and awareness about political systems.
2. Affective orientations refer to feelings and participation people in various political activities.
3. Evaluative orientations refers to the individual capacity to pass judgement on various aspects related to the political system.

These orientations are necessary to an individual particularly in democratic countries. Citizen ought to make the optimum utilization of these orientations. A child can get introduced to all these orientations through the process of socialization.

Political Culture and Political Socialization its Relationship:

Political Culture and Political Socialization are closely related with each other. One cannot exist without the other. Almost all the political systems have their own political culture be it democratic or non-democratic. Political culture includes norms, beliefs, faiths, attitudes and values. These are essential to an individual in society so as to become a responsible citizen to a nation. Any political culture does not exist by itself or by accident. These values and norms are acquired by an individual or a child through the process of political socialization. It maintains and transforms political culture of a group or society. It successfully transforms the political culture from one generation to the next. In every society political socialization involves in maintaining, transforming and creating a new political culture. For the survival, stability and continuity of a political system the political culture and political socialization are needed. The study of these two is essential for the proper understanding of the political functions. Hence these two are inseparable and interdependent in a political system.

Agents of political socialization

The process of political socialization is channelized through various agencies. Let us examine the role played by these agencies;

The family

Family is the first and foremost agent in the process of political socialization. It has formative, affective and evaluative role to play in the life of a child. Children when they are young they identify themselves with their parents and try to imitate and adopt their outlook towards the political system. Family determines in developing political outlook and attitude. The family as such provides the foundations of the political beliefs in a child in three different ways namely, by overt and covert indoctrination, by placing the child in a particular social context and by moulding the child's family in the process of political socialization. Family is the child's first contact with the authority. It is here that, the first differences in the role expectation between the sexes are become perceptible.

School

In the world of globalization and liberalization Indian society has undergone a drastic change. In such context the school has a decisive and detrimental role to play. In the school a child is transformed into a responsible citizen of a country. Schools must train the children in such a way that the children become responsible future citizens of the country. It exercises the profound influence on the process of political socialization in them. School's curriculum must influence the attitude of the children towards a political system. Almond and Verba have describe that, the more extensive an individual's education, the more likely he is to become aware of the impact of government. Children tend to Possess wider range of opinions on political matters and engage themselves in political discussions with divergent people and they get confidence on the political affairs of the state.

Mass media

In the 20th century media (visual and print) has acquired wider dimensions. It has a crucial role in deciding, affecting and influencing the mass on various political issues. Mass media's are powerful in socializing and it exercises a powerful impact on the children in particular and people in general. The young minds get constantly exposed to these media develop certain norms and values.

Political parties

The role of political parties cannot be undermined in influencing the process of the political socialization among the youth. They criticize the functioning of the government with a view to develop political awareness and responsibilities among the people. Their approach is democratic and participatory. People watch the political parties and their attitudes towards the burning issues and problems and support those parties who represent the will of the people.

2. Conclusion

Thus, political socialization is a continuous process, which develops political awareness among the people in general and students in particular. This is a conscious effort which

aims at building strong democratic nation and to make them to involve in all the political concerns. School education must include elements of political socialization, so to provide training and instill the right values among them. It is desirable to have people with political awareness from the point of view of creating a healthy society.

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