

STUDY OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS: DIFFICULTIES/CHALLENGES/COMPLEXITIES

This article throws light upon the seven major difficulties faced in the study of comparative politics analysed by Jean Blondel. Some of the difficulties are:

1. *Inter-Connection between Norms, Institutions and Behaviour:* In the first instance, there are difficulties arising from the inter-connection between norms, institutions and behaviour which stem from the fact that some governments exist naturally and others are imposed. Traditionally, this question was examined through the study of gap between constitutions and 'real' political life, this gap is important, as no constitution will ever be fully implemented.

But the problem is more general. Constitutions are only one type of normative arrangement under which countries can be organized. Constitution-makers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries attempted to modify societies in a certain way, generally in order to increase the liberal content of government.

To that extent, they tried to impose rules. Constitutional rule is therefore, a form of imposed system of government. But other types of impositions also occur, though by different means and in the name of different principles. The distinction between natural and imposed arrangements is thus a problem for all political systems.

2. *Range of Variables:* The analysis can become precise only when it is possible to list and weigh the numerous variables which enter into the 'definition' of a political system. The list of variables is impressive and the task is impossible to calculate as many of these variables lack quantitative formalization.

Economic conditions, social conditions, the climate, physical geography and some others, all seem to be a part of the 'explanation' of political system and all have been used at one period or another by political scientists anxious to explain the norms,

institutions and behaviours of nations. Since the range of variables of politics is very large it is not possible to empirically and comprehensively analyse all these.

3. Paucity of Information: Cross-national analysis is made particularly difficult because in several countries, particularly where the system is 'imposed', information is often lacking. Totalitarian countries refuse access to much information. Admittedly, even the most 'open' country does operate limited and indirect censorship on numerous processes.

In many circumstances, lack of information poses a serious hindrance in the way of comparative politics. Many governments are not willing to let the political scientists have a look into their records and files.

4. Problems in the Way of Using Scientific Method are also Problems of Comparative Politics: Hindrances in the way of application of Scientific Methods to Social Science Research are also hindrances in the way of Comparative Politics.

These are:

- (a) The problem resulting from complexity of social data.
- (b) The problem of using empirical methods in the study of human political relations and interactions.
- (c) The problem of verification and prediction making in politics.
- (d) The issue of explanation and prediction in politics.
- (e) The problem arising from dynamic nature of the social phenomena.
- (f) The problem of applying the scientific method to highly complex and dynamic political phenomena.

All these hindrances combine to create a big hindrance in the use of the scientific method in Comparative Politics studies. However, gradually political scientists have

been overcoming these difficulties. Comparative Politics studies are now becoming quite well-organised and systematic.

5. Problem of Empirical Study: Comparative Politics stands for scientific and empirical study of all phenomena of politics. It gives rise to the problems associated with the observation and collection of facts. In particular, this problem becomes bigger when one is to collect facts about the operation of authoritarian and totalitarian political systems.

6. Dynamic Nature of Politics: Politics is an aspect of human behaviour and like all other aspects of human behaviour, it is also highly dynamic. Further, a big gap is always present in the theory and practice of all political systems. This always acts as a big hindrance in the way of every realistic study of politics.

7. The Problem of Objectivity: Scientific and empirical study of Politics demands objectivity in the observation, collection and analysis of the facts of the processes under study. It demands an ability to keep one's values and biases away from the universe of the study. For this, the researcher has to maintain a high level of alertness and commitment to maintain objectivity.

This requirement also acts as a source of big hindrance in the way of Comparative Politics studies.

Thus there have been present several problems and hindrances in the way of Comparative Politics studies. However, these are being gradually overcome through conscious efforts on the part of modern political scientists.

To conclude, we may say, as M. Curtis has observed, "the study of Comparative Politics is at the heart of contemporary political science. It has undergone several meaningful developments in recent years. Its nature has been becoming more and more systematic and its scope has been becoming comprehensive. However, it is still developing."