CHAPTER - VI

Conclusion

The ‘third wave of democracy’ sweeping across Central and Eastern Europe and their acceptance of market economy set in motion the evaluation of a distinct socio-political and economic system. The then-infant democracies have almost completed the phase of transition and have been able to set in motion of variety important ‘aspects’ of political development by the turn of the century. The study found that the systemic transformation that has taken place after 1989 in the region of Central and Eastern European countries and Hungary in particular does not completely resemble the post colonial development of 1950s (chapter I). It made a successful attempt to find out as to what extent political development in Hungary as post-socialist society can be adequately explained with the help of available theories. In addition to it, it examined whether the aspects of political development are holding conformity to the same process which is natural to the Western liberal model of democracy? In response to these rationales the study attempted to understand the political culture of post-communist Hungary. It draws lights on the process of democratisation; nature of political system and changing role of civil society and elite.

The study corroborates that, the developments during 1990–2006, in Hungary democracy have taken its course in gradual and stable manner. It has adopted the liberal market economy and reformed its administrative and legal structures. During this phase policy makers successfully adhered to the basic criteria of EU, NATO and IMF. This study confirms that the international organisations facilitated the process of democratisation. In this period, Hungary witnessed the formal establishment of minimal criteria for democracy—the ratification of rules relating to set of inalienable basic rights and liberties, the competition for central position of political power through the channel of participation in election, the submission of government institutions to rules of political accountability. It is found that after 15 year of democracy, Hungary reached early phase of democratic consolidations.
During this consolidation phase, Hungary institutionalised various democratic procedures like periodic elections, the procedures of elections and institutionalised multi-party system etc. These changes indicate that it has made a strong effort to set the normative and behavioral patterns of democratic governance. However the reforms in administration have created conducive atmosphere of transparency, accountability and responsibility among governmental agencies. It is rightly observed that the assimilation of Hungary into European values system prepared the most fashioned notion of democratic development. In specific, Hungary has completed the objective and non philosophic criteria of Pye’s development aspects—equality and mass participation, differentiation in institution and capacity of state to bring various welfare measures (in chapter I).

Besides we also witnessed that, the theories of political development developed during 1950s not successful in offering any sustained definition of recent situation (Post-communist). As we have discussed that during 1950s the process of development had seen as modernisation or transformation of traditional, less-equipped state into politically, socially and economically modern state — like West. However the post-communist juncture states had altogether different socio-cultural background (legacy of 40 years of communist rule). Here, the states alone were credited with the ability to think and act in the long term interest of its entire citizen, where market plays a supportive role. But in case of post-colonial era both state and market are agents to initiate development. However, the study confirms that the presence of external agent (USA, EU and IMF and other international agents) and free market economy played a significant role in development. Like the earlier phase, the role models are again countries from West and America but the change that took place are distinct. The dying Marxist-Leninist background has created a massive difference in nation-building and institution-building (as we discussed in chapter I & II).

In the chapter II we have observed that, there were essentially various causes which finally led to the demise of the communist socio-political systems which are same in case of Afro-Asian states of 1950s. First, there was massive economic incompetence. It
was clear that the planned economy has proved incompetent against capitalist economy prevailing in West. The intervention of state in production and distribution has created an artificial situation of growth and economic prosperity among all strata of society. Despite growth in heavy industry, science and space technology, Soviet and Eastern Europe economy lagged behind the European and Western counterparts. It was particularly, due to technological revolution and computerisation in mid 1970s which occurred in the West. In addition to it, there was a complete collapse of ideological legitimisation of Marxist-Leninist in Eastern European society. It definitely meant that Communist party rules had limited legitimacy—from only Workers. For Marxists—liberal democracy was sham—ideological dressing mask an oppressive bourgeoisie dictatorship. In second, Communist states neither nurtured any oppositions nor institutions as alternative governing agents. The establishments of party as vanguard of workers neglect the very essence of modern nation-states, like—multi party system, politics of checks and balance, delegation of power to federations and rule by law. The tendency of over-centralisation; a strong desire for party discipline set hardly any space for liberty and freedom. In third, there was a structural incapacity to adjust to new problems due to lack of institutional device. Marxism denounced to accept any market mechanism like—of supply and demand in production subsequently never allowed to hold private property, became the boomerang for the system. In fourth, the socialist system long neglected the issue of human rights, especially the issue of civil and political rights, which are very basic for civic society. In final, the Helsinki Accord has posed the strong movement for human right and civil liberty throughout the world. The ‘self-determination’ clause of it also opened-up the flood gate of ‘nationalist’ outrage for independent nationhood and recognised individual as core of state-system (in chapter II).

In this work, we observed that the development in Hungary, deep rooted historical events have accomplished the transition process rather easier fashion than other states of the region. The democratic culture (Especially tolerance towards opposite views) can be traced back from in the landmark events of the Revolution of 1956, acceptance of New Economic Mechanism (NEM) and the negotiation round table talks of 1989–90. The study successfully summarised that the Hungarian revolution of 1956 posed a significant
challenge to Marxist, authoritarian state regime. The study found that the 1968 economic reform had also made serious attempt to introduce quasi-market mechanisms, within the planned economy. Those market mechanisms had later created a competitive environment of profit in state enterprises, within state controlled economy. These reforms had brought a significant institutional change in economy and created a strong background for the pro-market institutional environment in 1990s. In 1989, round table negotiations created an atmosphere of peaceful transition to democracy and generated a competitive atmosphere among the Communist ruling elites and the democratic oppositions. In negotiation round they decided to change the undemocratic features of the Hungarian constitution and incorporate democratic ethos of modern state system. In chapter III we observed that the Hungarian Republic tried to create the significant institutions of modern political system like—multi-party system, parliamentary democracy, fundamental human rights, and some amount of social security net and a Constitutional Court nurturing the rule of law during this phase with a greater cautious. This is why a number of social scientists described Hungary as rare case; a combination of numerous institutional guarantees; the positive rights within an activist role of the Constitutional Court.

Along with the above mentioned domestic developments, the evolving relationship between the EU and Central Eastern European states has proved valuable for the political development standard. It is observed that during the transition period EU offered more aid through the PHARE programme and signed ‘European Agreements’ which had prearranged some trade concessions to the aspirant countries. As we discussed the EU set four conditions for membership at Copenhagen European Council in 1993 for Hungary. The membership to EU has brought forward various institution-building regulations and tried to establish institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for minorities. In second it created conditions which tried to establish market economy where, states are supposed to cope with competitive pressure of market. In third, the memberships presupposed the candidate’s ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union. In forth, the conditions of European Integration, is also an important
consideration in the general interest of both the Union and the candidate countries. These conditions were designed to minimise the risk of new entrants becoming politically unstable and economically burdensome to the existing EU. This is obvious that though the Copenhagen conditions did not provide a check-list of clear objectives but definitely initiated various majors to achieve the basic of a developed nation-state.

It is however clear that the first two Copenhagen conditions initiated the democratic process i.e. created an atmosphere conducive to market economies which are recognised basic to any modern state to subsist in modern times. Along with it, as the work corroborated that EU initiation to establish the 'acquis communautaire' which promulgated the laws, rules, political principles and judicial decision as binding on every member state made Eastern European states to establish themselves as democratic states. As we observed that by the year 1993, the EU had added new policy areas for activities, such as justice and home affairs, and the Schengen area of passport-free travel; a common foreign and security policy, with a defence identity; and a common currency. In this manner aspiring to being the member of EU had encouraged a profound transformation of country's laws, institutions, policies and orientations (especially towards minorities). Throughout these years the ruling elite always aspired at establishing a European-style administration with viable democracy and parliamentary norms in Hungary.

As such, we can conclude that the consensus built during the negotiation roundtable talks of 1989–90, brought many parties to political floor in Hungary. The negotiation among ruling elites and non-ruling elites or oppositions brought significant change in domestic atmosphere and created conditions for democracy, market economy and established democratic institutions in easier manner. The transformation process was less hectic, more peaceful and successful than Romania, Czechoslovakia and Poland. In Poland it was completely a revolution from the below-masses but in the case of Hungary the consensus brought by communist reform-elites and democratic opposition made the process less painful (chapter II). The democratic consolidation phase took course in Hungary also in a peaceful and consistent manner. The constitution of 1948 has
restructured according to (the requirement of environment as we observed in chapter III). The new post-communist constitution marked in many ways a complete departure from the totalitarian past. As a reaction to the Soviet system, the constitution of Hungary proclaimed the fundamental principles of liberal democracy, such as political pluralism; protection of civil and political rights and freedom; private ownership; free press (chapter III).

However, we find that Hungary tried to establish itself as a multi-party, parliamentary democracy. The parliament in Hungary is unicameral and the members are elected for four years. The parliament in Hungary is the source of executive and Constitutional Court. Nevertheless the major checks on the power of parliament are provided by referenda and especially by the Constitutional Court and civil society activities. Members of the Court are elected by a super-majority in parliament from among relatively broadly defined pool of legal professionals. The court has the capacity to declare a law, decree or rule unconstitutional even before it comes to effect. On the other hand, the President can also single-handedly dissolve parliament if, following an election, the death or resignation of the Prime Minister, the deputies can bring down Prime Minister either through a constructive vote of no confidence (which can be initiated one-fifth of the deputies), or by defeating a simple vote of no confidence initiated by the Prime Minister. The constructive vote of no confidence, if passed, automatically installs a new Prime Minister as the alternative candidate named in the motion. It is right to conclude that the Hungarian political system has exhibited stability and continuity despite severe economic setbacks because of this clause in the constitution. However as we have seen that in course of time, like all other Parliamentary states Hungary has a strong prime minister, a relatively weak parliament, and a powerful constitutional court which is the ‘strongest’ constraint on the legislative activities (during 1990–99, discussed in chapter III). As we find that though the Court was involved in some political disputes in the mid-1990s, by the end of the decade the court had to a ‘great extent become de-politicised’. 
In chapter V, we saw that in late 1990s the Hungarian party system became bipolar, with about 80 percent of public support behind the two largest parties. However, we can conclude that the originally fragmented multi-party system gave way to quasi-two-party system with two political camps. Along with it we observed that the parliament was relatively weak during initial year of policy making, but it stayed as the locus of decision-making. While reviewing the nature and function of parliament we have observed that the institutional capacity of parliament is growing. Along with it we can see that there is an increase in a culture of professionalism among MPs which is generating a system of deliberative democratic culture in Hungary. However, the roles of committees are also increased and this is adding to the professional out put of legislature in Hungary (Chapter III).

In chapter IV, we can see the shift of the Hungarian Politics in the last fifteen years from the Negotiation Round Table Talks towards the parliamentarian majoritarian model of democracy is relatively successful. There is a strong determination of Hungarian politics by historical legacies to build such model. In present political arena, even after fifteen years of post-communist rule after, 'history and its interpretations' are very strongly affecting the Hungarian political life. Unlike their ideological and political difference, the post-communist political actors are often identified or associated with some earlier era of Hungarian history (as we debated this issue with reburial of Imre Nagy and reinterpretation of 1956 Hungarian revolution.). In second we have observed that the present roots of Hungarian politics are laying in elite’s opposition to the oppressing power of the larger entity to which the country belonged (i.e. the Hapsburg Empire) or foreign domination (i.e. the Soviet Union). To sum up we have seen that, the governments are many time being identified with all vices of the old political traditions in today’s politics. However it is clearly seen that the suspicion of undemocratic or insincere motives largely determines the relationship of government and the opposition. This is apparent that the parties’ now a days hardly trust towards each other. Many a time this culminates in to verbal war in which each side blames the other for violating the basic norms of democracy (Raising Populism after 1998; in chapter IV).
However, it can be concluded that the economic transition led to the successful introduction of market economy and the restructuring of the legal system. To attain these milestones, Hungary has taken help of the EU and NATO other global players like IMF. It is also clearly seen that the systematic reform in administration and political sphere has given pathway to get ride of corruption and apathy in the society (in Chapter IV). Along with it, we can conclude that the role of NGOs intensified in recent day Hungary. They have now became the mouth piece of democratic value and constitutionalism (after the Solyom case). Selection of President Solyom as President through a network created by NGOs has opened up a new chapter in Hungarian democracy (Civil Society: the Changing Trends in chapter IV).

In contrary to it, the study finds that after 15 year of democracy Hungarian politics is pointing out serious deficiencies of democratic participation. The low level of participation, people's alienation from politics, a gap between the elite and people, emphasis on 'historical events' in politics has created a 'dual structure' in society. Though politics is democratically consolidated, it has not attended the high point of democratic participatory value. In all these discussions the intervention of intellectuals has served only 'the interests' of the intellectuals. It has not encouraged participation by people or any movements of social self-organisation from below (as described by Miszlivetsz). The intellectuals have monopolised the organisation of civil associations, thereby colonising the civil sphere of society and, in the process, excluding and disenfranchising the vast majority of society's members. They have legitimised all these in the name of people, and have come remarkably close to realising the aim of their Victorians forebears—Mill and the Webb's i.e. of establishing an 'aristocracy of intellects', the rule of the educated classes, the class rule of intelligentsia (as pointed out by Bozoki and Korosenyi in chapter IV). So it is correct to conclude that Hungary had a long history of intellectual dissidents and politicians, where the gap between the political elites and the masses reinforced disillusionment and distance between the rulers and ruled. On the other hand, the transformation from one-party system to multi-party, parliamentary democracy was very gradual, peaceful and stable.
However, the existing intellectual involvement in politics of Hungary and the domination of the educated people over the ‘less educated’ masses has resulted in an egalitarian society and elite-driven political culture in recent days (Change in the Elite Structure after 1990 in chapter IV). Besides this we observed that the families now in Hungary are the operative units of social class through which social advantages are passed on from one generation to the next. The existing liberal democratic tradition in large and privatisation in particular has started spreading the distinction between manual and efficient worker. This essentially has divided the society into rich-efficient group with financial power and middle class in the lower strata, representing the ‘nation’ (throughout the world it the impact of globalisation and liberalisation).

Further, the consolidation of democracy has been threatened by occasional scandals in politics, corruption and uncivilised behavior of mass citizen and elites. Although on general level the rule of law prevails, occasional breaches or negligence is still occurring in politics. Such behavior of elites endangers democracy in the long run. Along with this it signals to people to break the laws and indulge in corruption (Corruption: a Persisting Problem in chapter IV). Thus, such behavior on the part of elite may hinder the establishment of basic democratic values (as we discussed the politicisation of bureaucracy and economic mis-appropriations spelled in favour of parties).

While examining the nature of Political Culture in Hungary we found that the most determinable factor of democratic development in Hungary is generating a highly contradictory nature of politics. On the one hand, it has hindered the development of independent mass media and has led to the manifestation of political conflicts in other social subsystems (as we observed in chapter IV that till 1997 Hungarian media was not privatised, still now Hungarian government occasionally interferes in the activities of media and journalism). As we know without the full growth of mass media, the progress of Hungarian state towards politically, free and accountable nation is not attainable. Other than this if we see the teleological the developmental patterns throughout the CEECs
region then, Hungary has achieved stability and established itself as a successful parliamentary democracy.

Thus after observing and analysing the nature of Hungarian state and politics we can conclude that the aspects of political development described by Lucian Pye is rightly subsists in Hungarian state. Pye has rightly illustrated that, 'the politics of one country is deeply rooted in the native genius of each nation and each nation has its own distinct political culture. This distinct or separate political tradition is nurtured by the socio-economic forces.' So, we can conclude that the patterns and nature of development vary from state to state. This can be correctly to applaud in case of Hungary. However, the tolerant nature of politics and the dependant attitude towards leaders are deeply rooted in its historical events of 1956 Revolution, 1968’s NEM. We can conclude that the aspect of development like equality has definitely created a culture of ‘civic participation’ (stated by Korosenyi quoted in chapter IV). But in recent days the protest, demonstrations and involvement of people in civil society has definitely increased the civic participation. Along with it the capacity of Hungarian political system referred to governmental performance to provide welfare means to their citizens is rightly increasing despite financial shortages. However, within fifteen year of its democratic, market initiative Hungary respective governments are trying to execute policies which are socialist (specially in relation to positive rights of individuals) in nature (as we observed positive rights are also acknowledged by the new constitution; chapter III).

In subsequent understanding, we found that despite the welfare nationalism, the ‘populist measures’ to Hungarian government had accepted various instructions of IMF and other international organisations. With respect to other Eastern European countries Hungarian political system is more stable. The integration of Hungary to European Union and NATO has given the ‘mass belongingness’ in European Common Home and a security from Russia. In final, Hungarian state has completed its journey towards institutionalisation. It has created different specialised structure to accomplish different tasks. The offices and agencies tended to have their distinct and defined functions, and are now acting according to their prescribe jurisdictions. For example, the role of
Ombudsmen and Constitutional Court is not making any obstruction in policy making of parliament but, it is constructively suggestion regarding the issues of ‘social importance’ (chapter III).

However, the change that took place after 1990s brought forward significant change in nature of Hungarian state. The situation was nurtured definitely by the tendency of interdependence and globalisation of market economy. The trend throughout the globe have here made these post-communist states more civilised, democratic and judicious in their behavior. At this present juncture, almost all the countries of Central Eastern Europe have ended their journey to democratic consolidation. The process of democratic consolidation is over with the routinisation of political process; the stabilisation of electoral rules; the decentralisation of state powers; introduction of judicial reforms; the accommodation of ethnic problems; and economic stabilisation.