CHAPTER I

THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Political participation means the involvement of groups and individuals at various levels in the political system. Huntington, Samuel and Nelson Joan's definition refers to it as 'activity by private citizens designed to influence governmental decision making.' According to Nie and Verba's definition it includes 'those legal activities by private citizens which are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and the actions they take.'

Thus, political participation refers to activity that is designed to have an impact on governmental decision making and actions. One can also call political participation as people's efforts to influence the authoritative allocation of values for a society. To an extent, political participation is a function of the ambit of governmental activity. An issue involved in the meaning of the term concerns the inclusion into the concept of psychological processes leading to it or simply the act per se. Almond and Verba have focussed on the psychological or subjective attributes of political participation. Lazarafield et al have utilized interest in politics as the only means of measuring political participation apart from ballots.
The scope of the term 'political participation' has expanded. Earlier, in the narrow sense, studies focussed on citizens' participation in the elections through voting, political discussions, mobilizations, canvassing votes and attending political meetings. In the extended sense the concept now includes such activities during elections, through which the citizens try to influence government decisions diverse forms of individual's and groups' involvement in the political processes.

**Historical Evolution of the Concept**

The earliest references to political participation are to be found in the works of the ancient Greek political thinkers, Plato and Aristotle. In the age of Athenian democracy, an equation was developed between the citizen and the city. The citizen conformed his life to the public law which he himself had made and which expressed his will. Pericles declared in his speech: "We alone regard a man who takes no interest in public affairs not as harmless but as a useless character, and we Athenians are able to judge...."

In Greek city states, political participation embodied the citizen's life in the city. The individuals formed an integral part of the city state. To the Greeks, citizenship meant the capacity to rule and be ruled in turn. Citizenship of the state implied an active participation in
the government of the city state. Greek democracy worked because every citizen had a deep and abiding reverence for the city-state and its laws.

For Aristotle, democracy was one in which supreme power was vested in the hands of the freemen i.e. citizens, but excluding slaves. He gave ultimate sovereign power to the mass of the citizens, though the best citizens only would represent the actual government. However, political participation in Greek city states was not available to all individuals, but only to the Greek citizens and not to aliens and slaves. For Aristotle, smallness of territory and population was essential for democracy and effective citizen's political participation. Citizens must know their counterparts intimately and be capable of participating in work of judging and legislation.

The concept of political participation also finds mention in the writings of Roman thinkers. For the Romans, not only did popular sovereignty reside in the people, but even the laws were made by magistrates in agreement with popular assemblies. Polybius, Cicero and Seneca referred to democracy based on people's participation in the government of the city states in their classifications.

The idea of popular sovereignty became even more established during the Republican period and was also theoretically accepted during the emperical period. Popular
sovereignty was taken to be the basis not only of experience, but also of law which was an expression of popular will representing a mutual contract among the people. Moreover, the sovereign people were deemed to be the source of all special honours and had the right of final judgement in criminal cases. "The will of the state is the will of the aggregate of its citizens."

In the middle ages, the idea of 'Political Participation', finds expression through the political philosophy of Marseleo of Padua in the 14th century. His main objective was to place the authority of the church under that of the state. He lambasted the church's temporal establishment. Eclesiastical property is of the nature of a grant or subsidy made by the community. From Marseled's view point, the clergy have no right to titles or any kind of exemption from taxation except as it is granted by the community.

The doctrine of representation and representative government began to develop in the Middle Ages. A medieval representative was a trustee rather than an agent of the people. It was in this sense that the king or the nobles represented the people. Marseleo of Padua, however, gave the idea of representation a rather modern flavour with his ideas of popular sovereignty and representative government.

In the late 17th century the concept was, elucidated through implicitly by John Locke in his 'Civil Government.'
The Locke conception of the social contract points to the theory of popular sovereignty, though united by the prior rights of the individual. The individuals surrendered certain of their rights to the entire community which becomes the source and seat of all authority in the state. The people return the right of removing a government that betrays its trust or is inefficient, and to remove or alter the legislature. However, the power of the people to remove a government is revolutionary and extra legal.

Legislative power, according to Locke can never be arbitrary, because the people who set it up have no such power. It cannot rule by decrees, since men unite to have known laws and judges. It cannot expose taxes or take away property without consent or majority vote. It cannot delegate its legislative power which lies in the hands of the community. In general, its power is judiciary, since the people have supreme power to alter the legislature when it acts contrary to the trust exposed in it. Thus, Locke returned the other view that the grant of the community diverts the people of power so long in the government is faithful to its duties. The people's legislature power is in effect limited to a single act, viz. the setting up of a supreme legislature.

The concept of political participation found concrete shape in the writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau. The social
contract of Rousseau is a continuous process of participation in the general will involving the continuous consent of the individual to the acts of the state. Rousseau needs the individual's consent not only for the creation of the state, but the continued consent of the individual for the functioning of the state.

Rousseau's ideas of political participation were influenced by Locke's theory of consent as the only valid base for the existence and functioning of government. Though his concept of general will be provides for continued consent and against tyranny. Rousseau insists that sovereignty must always remain with the people. Rousseau's government cannot do anything which is not in the interests of the people. Rousseau's political theory reconciles the liberty of the individual with the authority of the state.

According to Rousseau, the sovereign people assembled to institute the government, firstly note that a certain form of government shall be instituted. They then vote that certain individuals shall be appointed to the offices thus created. Rousseau distinguishes the two acts by stating that the first vote expresses the general will and is the law. While the second vote merely represents a government.

The Marxist view of political participation enunciated by Karl Marx and Engels was further conceptualized by Lenin. People's participation was visualised in politics on the basis
of class. In a Socialist State, the Communist Party would act as the vanguard of the proletariat. The party would be organized on the principle of 'Democratic Centralism', which implied that every party organ was strictly bound by decisions of anybody with a higher position in the claim of command. Thus political participation was organized in a hierarchical manner, the higher party bodies being elected by the lower. Mao later suggested that the proletariat be replaced by the peasantry as the vanguard of the revolution. Thus, Marxists envisage Political Participation in terms of class with the majority represented by the working class dominating over the minority.

Political participation is a voluntary act of an individual which can be applied in various ways. It ranges from apathy on account of political stimuli to holding the office. Involvement of apathy in participation can be a disputable point which will be discussed at length at the latter stage in this chapter, but, it is suffice to say here that under the influence of any ideologue which depicts the participation in democracy as show off or because of realising this fact that the given alternatives in this system are not

playing any positive role or the alternatives as such are futile, people become apathetic and reveal a kind of participation which is negative from the viewpoint of the champions of mass participation. It can be positive for the supporters of the liberal democracy because for them, apathy is better than participation in terms of giving the threat to the system.

Political participation is a confused term for as its meanings and forms are concerned because of the difference of opinions on the purposes of the participation. Hence, the ideas on the meaning on the political participation have been divided on the basis of two exclusive waves of thought, i.e., liberalism and Marxism.

The Liberalist support only such participation of the individuals which is helpful in maintaining the system. Hence, this term has been defined as "those voluntary activities by which members of the society share in the selection of ruler and, directly or indirectly, in the formation of public policy." 2

At the outset this can be said that this definition includes casual talks of politics amongst friends and the intense activities of the members of the fringe political groups. In fact, this definition includes two aspects.

of the political participation. Namely, (1) selection of the rulers and (2) the formation of the public policy.

Political participation nowhere say anything directly about the role of pressure groups/interest groups which play a vital role in influencing the policy as such. It restricts participation only to the voting, involving in the political parties, passively or actively, and holding office. Hence, it is becoming a society in which masses are available to be mobilized by the elites and in turn, becoming an anti-democratic in the society. This participation is conditioned by the opportunities given from above and becoming a quinquennial ritual activity.

**Marxist Perspective**

On the other hand, Marxists refute the trend of dealing participation in isolation. They hold the view that participation is a class concept and not isolated neutral concept. They oppose the elitist participation which maintains that decision making is a specialised task and hence, to be confined to the specialists. In fact, this idea is the corollary of the idea propounded by Hegel who maintains that all citizens cannot participate in the affairs

---

of the State because for most of them, the affairs of the States are too alien to be at home in it.4

The Marxists believe that masses should be consciously involved in the politics. "To be a conscious part of something means consciously to acquire a part of it, to take a conscious interest in it. Without this, consciousness, the member of the State would be an animal. To participate in the General affairs of the State and to participate in the State, is, therefore, one and the same thing."5

They do not hold that participation is just to acquire power but to take interest in it. Involvement of the worker is "an essential process by which the worker is educated to bring about the revolution and to take hold of statepower since the working class is the majority. Raising them to the level of the ruling class is to win the battle of democracy."6

In its essence, this a theory which believes in a purposeful participation which should not be just to preserve the system but also to change if it is not serving the interest of the masses. That is why Marxists propound

4. Ibid., p.177
the idea of the important role of the workers. "To preach to the workers that they should in all circumstances, abstain from the politics to drive them into the arms of the priests or the bourgeois republicans." In the present complicated society, being unaware of the complexes of the politics means falling in the deadly arms of the fate.

These two exclusive waves of thought possess the ethical question of what is genuine participation which will be dealt at the later stage.

The long range of the variety of the participation does not suggest that there is a particular group for the particular variety of the participation. In fact, same people are involved in different kinds of participation such as, one can be a voter, a member of the party or office holder in the party at one time. However, there is a faction of the society which is confined to a particular type of participation such as, there is a large chunk of people who are only engaged in casting votes but the numerical strength of the people start shrinking when the higher stage of the participation is involved. Hence,

participation reveals two kinds of character i.e., there are people who are cumulatively engaged in the participation and there are people who confine their participation to a particular variety.

Regarding the cumulative participation and the numerical decay in the participation when one reaches at the highest degree, Lester W. Milbrath has developed a typology which is being reproduced hereunder:

**Hierarchy of Political Involvement**

**Gladiatorial Activities**

(A) Holding public and party office
(B) Being a candidate for the office.
(C) Soliciting political funds
(D) Attending a caucus or a strategy meeting.
(E) Becoming an active member in a political party.
(F) Contributing time in a political campaign.

**Transitional Activities**

(G) Attending a political meeting or a rally.
(H) Making a monetary contribution to a party or a candidate.
(I) Contacting a political official or a political leader.

Spectator Activities

(J) Wearing a button or putting a sticker on the car.
(K) Attempting to talk to another to voting in a certain way.
(L) Initiating a political discussion.
(M) Voting.
(N) Exposing oneself to political stimuli.

Before making a critical review of this typology, it is necessary to mention here that this typology has been developed on the basis of the studies made on the involvement of the American citizens in politics. Hence, it is justified to evaluate it in the light of the political activities of the citizens of the States. At the outset, it can be said that the typology is divided hierarchically in three stages which reveals the pattern that participation increases as it goes to lower hierarchy. To be more precise, in American context, about 60 per cent people are involved in spectator activities, about 7 to 9 per cent people are involved in transitional activities and about 1 to 3 per cent in gladiatorial activities. Milbrath suggests that his ordering involves a kind of internal logical natural progression of becoming involved in political activities and that persons involved at one level are also likely to involve themselves at 'lower' level.
Central to this logic is the idea that ascending the hierarchy involves increasing cost in terms of time, energy and resources, and at each level fewer people are able or prepare to make the necessary investments. This leads us to assume that participation is a consequence of the social and psychological circumstances associated with involvement. No political activity could be considered normal or routine for everyday existence. Participation, listed above, is, only possible when the basic physiological and psychological needs of the persons such as food, sex, sleep, safety, affection had been met. These democratic processes become normal or even possible only in societies where more basic needs are routinely satisfied.⁹

This typology includes most, but not all, common political activities that characterise the normal process of a democracy. It does not, however, take not of that behaviour which is considered by the liberal thinkers as disruptive to the normal course of action of a democratic process. Hence, he does not include activities like strike, agitation, revolt and coup. So far as the role of pressure group politics is concerned which has become, with the passage of time, an important part of democracy, has not been taken for consideration in this typology.

Rush and Althoff have also drawn a hierarchy in "An Introduction to Political Sociology." This hierarchy includes most of the forms of the political participation. Their model, in fact, does not differ much from the one drawn by Milbrath, except minor changes and readjustments here and there. The issues referred in the hierarchy can be seen as follows:

### A Hierarchy of Political Participation

- Holding political or administrative office.
- Seeking political or administrative office.
- **Active membership of a political organisation.**
- **Active membership of a quasi-political organisation.**
- **Passive membership of a political organisation.**
- Participation in public meetings, demonstrations etc.
- Participation in informal political discussion.
- General interest in politics.
- Voting.
- Total apathy.

Participation at the top of the hierarchy is enjoyed only by those who hold various types of offices within the political system. The offices may include the political as well as the administrative positions located at various levels in the political system of a country. Persons
participating at such level can be distinguished from other political participants in that (to varying degrees) they are concerned with the exercise of formal political power. This does not exclude the actual exercise of power nor the exercise of influence by other individuals or groups in the political system. Power may or may not reside among the office holders, but they remain important because normally they are the formal repositories of power. Besides these who hold or seek office, a number of citizens become members of various types of political, semi-political or quasi-political bodies operating in a democratic system. These bodies include all types of political parties, interest groups, trade unions and various forms of pressure groups, undertaking multifarious activities, articulating and aggregating diverse interests in a social milieu. These bodies can be termed as agents of political mobilisation. They in fact, help their constituents to participate in certain types of political activity, involving in the defence of promotion of particular ideas, positions, situations, persons or groups through the political system. Political parties seek to promote, defend or represent a broader spectrum of attitudes whereas interest groups seek to promote, defend or represent limited and specific

attitude. Participation in political parties and interest groups may be active or passive in nature. It may range from holding an office in such an organization to the provision of financial support through the payment of subscription of membership dues.

This apart, citizens may be persuaded to participate in some form of public meeting or demonstration. There they may cultivate interest regarding certain issues and problems confronting with the society. This may prove as an important stimulus encouraging the general citizen to become active in the realm of political life. Another intermittent form of political participation is that of informal political discussion by individuals in their families, peer groups, relatives and the like. Moreover, some persons do not discuss political matters with others but may get things by way of using different devices of mass media. Their exposure to such media may help them in forming their opinion about the course of events. They, however, restrict their participation only to voting, which, however, in certain situations may be regarded as the last active form of political participation because it requires a minimal commitment which may cease once the vote is cast.

Below those who participate and involve in various institutional and non-institutional ways, there are those who do not participate at all in political process. Whether
This is by choice or on account of reasons beyond the control of the individual members is a matter of rigorous enquiry. However, such individuals can be described as non-active and apathetic. Apathy may be due to their poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, indifferences, deliberate withdrawals and alienation. In the systemic progression, this inactiveness however, does not substantially contribute. It rather weakens the growth of a democratic process.

So far as the hierarchy developed in the American context is concerned, it covers all the probable activities but this hierarchy cannot be generalised because it does not make efforts to describe participation in terms of bringing change. There are some systems in which participation is manifested in the form of revolution. The countries like Cuba, Nicaragua and Poland could manage to develop their state of affairs through revolution. Hence, it is wrong to conclude that revolution plays a negative role in participation. Mao-Tse-Tung has rightly pointed out that "The truth of any knowledge and theory is determined not by subjective feelings but by objective results in social praxis." 11

They have not touched upon the participation in military states i.e. government participating as an instrument of coercion.

As involvement of the people vary from changing levels of participation, the participation also varies from system to system. Similarly, various limitations on political participation, formal and informal, would exist and would extent and degree of involvement of the general public. Participation may be limited in developing societies on account of certain factors such as, the level of economic advancement, literacy and general problem of communication. In some other systems, participation in political process is more or less, controlled by the rulers. On the contrary, in modern democracies, participation is usually by various means for seeking cooperation and confidence of the constituent citizens. The degree of variations, however, has also been noticed in the case of the developed systems.

There may exist some political systems which may not allow any type of participation to their citizens. Some do not, for instance, provide for election or any other form of voting. Others may strictly put check on meetings and demonstrations. Some others may even forbid the formation of political parties and several types of
associations and organisations. Moreover, where participation occurs at the same level, its nature and importance, may vary from one system to another. This apart, some system may provide ample choice to the voters, whereas others may restrict it only for the certain occasions. For example, the voter of United States is faced with as many as of 40 choices at one election time; he is called upon to choose a President, a Senator and a member of the House of Representatives (all at Federal level), a Governor, a member of the State Legislature and various officials (all at State levels), various local government officials (at country and possibly Municipal level), members of bodies like school boards, and not infrequently to participate in a referendum and, more rarely, in a recall. Even in these years, when no Federal offices and fewer state offices are at stake, the choice remains formidable, and it is as well to remember that Presidential elections occur every four years and Congressional elections every two. 12

Compared with this system, the demands made upon the British voters are mild; general elections must take place at least once every five years, but in practice occurred on an average of about one election every three years; there is also the occasional by-elections, but these are infrequent for any particular constituency; at local level election may occur annually or at three year intervals, and

12. Rush and Althoff, op.cit., p.81
Some electors are called upon to elect representatives to more than one local government bodies, and again by elections may occur from time to time; and, finally, very rarely—a referendum may take place at local level to decide a particular issue. At the most, the British voter faces with seven choices in one year, while his American counterpart is faced with nearly six times this number.

The significance of voting may differ from election to election. For example, national elections may be regarded as more important than state and local level elections. In some societies, elections may have a decisive voice in the overall functioning of the system, whereas in some merely of a ritualistic value. Similarly, in some systems, the voting turnout may be comparatively high. It may partially be so on account of citizens' consciousness, literacy, economic advancement and institutionalisation of various political structures and organizations. The scholars conducting research in the field of voting behaviour have noticed a close relationship between the demographic factors and the extent of range of turnout. Similarly, they have found that the citizens of advanced countries have a greater sense of participation in comparison to the under-developed or the developing ones. Table 1.1 reveals it as:
### Table 1.1

**Comparison of Voting in Different Types of Societies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of economic and Social advancement</th>
<th>Vote as to percentage of voting age population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Primitive Societies</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Civilisations</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional societies</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial revolution societies</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High mass consumption societies</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentage in the table are the mean for each category, and these have a range of 30 to 76 per cent, but the lowest turnout found by them was 1.9 per cent in Rhodesia and Nayasaland and the highest 99.6 per cent in Soviet Union. Hence, the actual range is very large indeed.

There may exist a very wide difference in the voting turnout between one type of society and another. The reason for high and low turnout may vary from system to system. Moreover, the extent of participation cannot be measured merely on the basis of voting turnout. Therefore, the scholars have tried to find out the extent to which people are interested in politics. Their findings show a

---

difference regarding people's interest in politics even in the case of the Western democracies. For this, Table 1.2 which is self-explanatory is given below:

Table 1.2

Levels of Interest in Politics in the Case of United States, Britain & W. Germany

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Interest</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Britain</th>
<th>West Germany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Per cent</td>
<td>Per cent</td>
<td>Per cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great deal of interest</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some interest/interested</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very much/not really interested</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all interested/none</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen from the table that interest in political affairs is the highest in the United States and lowest in West Germany. Nevertheless, the difference is not great, specially in the category, 'some interested'. Moreover, Britain comes at the lowest in this category (some interest/interested). But, there exists a significant difference in 'Not at all interested'). This, as a matter of fact suggests that people's interest in political matters vary from country to country. Thus, it can be pointed out that extent of the interest of the citizens even in the

14. Rush and Althoff, op.cit., p.83
similar types of political systems differ substantially. Not only this, the scholars have also noticed a substantial difference regarding the frequency of discussing politics with the fellow citizens in the context of United States, Britain, West Germany, Italy and Mexico. The percentage of citizens discussing politics with others was found highest in United States.\textsuperscript{15}

There is not enough data available on the extent to which people participate in demonstrations, meetings, canvassing and other forms of participation. Whatever little is available that shows that the level of the citizens participation in such activities is higher in Western democratic systems. The extent of participation of the citizens in the United States and Britain has an edge over others in such types of political activities. The reason for this higher level of participation can be found in the better means of communication, application of mass media, functioning of the two-party system, better economy and systemic efficaciousness and stability.

Enough data is available on the membership of voluntary organisations, which include both political and quasi-political organisations. A comparative survey of the countries like USA, Britain, Germany, Italy, France

\textsuperscript{15} For details see: Almond and Verba, \textit{The Civic Culture}, Princeton, 1963, p.79.
and Mexico shows that citizen's participation in such organisations have been quite interesting. The percentage of participants is again found highest in the United States and lowest in Mexico. The findings of the studies conducted in the context of the non-Western countries have a conformity to the trend noticed about Mexico. The extent of the participation of the citizens in these newly emerging societies has not yet reached the stage achieved by the developed countries. Some of them have progressed enough in accelerating mass mobilisation, particularly, in the programmes and policies framed by the governmental structures. For instance, in India which is regarded as the biggest democratic country in the world, various institutional and non-institutional methods have been evolved to encourage citizens for their greater participation in the government. Political parties, pressure groups and other socio-economic associations play an important role in operating the political system. The level of participation might not have increased on par to the West, but a tremendous progress is noticed since their emergence after the departure of the Western rulers. However, it is difficult to draw a specific line of demarcation regarding the extent of political participation at the global level, but the scholars have tried to analyse data in particular cases which may facilitate comparison on the contextual basis.
Participation is also affected by the constitutional and legislative provisions of the concerned system. At the initial stage, prohibitions were laid down in the American Constitution on the participation on the basis of race, religion, property or sex. The same prohibitions were applicable for holding the offices. Even in the present context, "in some of the states of United States, the suffrage is denied to negroes, Indians, illiterates, paupers, criminals and aliens." In general every constitution prohibits some of the people from casting the vote (suffrage) on account of their being bankrupt, insane, criminal and alien.

There are some factors which contribute in enabling citizens to participate and work as stimuli. These are delineated as under:

Using a national sample survey in the United States, Lindenfeld notices with those who express financial satisfaction are highly involved in political activities. He also explores that among low socio-economic status, financial dissatisfaction is related to feelings of political alienation and apathy. Negroes show a much higher proportion with

16. Hervert Mc'Closkey, op.cit., p.253
a high score on the economic scale and also much higher levels and dissatisfaction in comparison to White especially over housing and income.

Most of the studies on the participation are based on voting behaviour. Hence, when the factors contributing to the process of participation are studied, generally, the analysis has been made of those factors which are contributing in voting turnout.

While summarizing various studies on voting behaviour, Lipset suggests that a number of environmental factors influence turnout: whether the election is taking place at a time of crises; the extent to which the individual has access to relevant information; the extent to which the individual is subjected to group pressures to vote; and the extent to which the individual is subjected to cross-pressure. Similar trends were found in Britain and West Germany.

It is found in the available researches that political interest increases with the increase in age, income and occupational status. But the correlation of these variables and participation is strong in USA but weak in Norway. Almond and Verba maintained that higher

---

occupational status generally involves more frequent voluntary association membership, though the relationship is not as close that exists between education and affiliation. 39

Religion, race, sex, mobility and residence are also those variables which are related with the process of participation. Almond and Verba found that men were more likely to be members of voluntary organisation than women. The Five nations study also support this assumption. Urban-rural differences in participation occurred in some elections but not in other. City-dwellers with their increased exposure to mass media, higher education and greater predisposition to form voluntary associations characteristically participate more than who live in rural communities in the United States. Yet some states such as Idaho, Utah and South Dechota had significantly higher turnouts than some industrial states such as California, New York and New Jersey. Likewise, in some countries that had long tradition of communal leadership or cooperative forms of agricultural organisations participation was greater in rural than in urban areas. 20 Japan, France and

19. Almond and Verba, op. cit., p. 249

20. This as a matter of fact contradicts the findings of a noted political scientist, Daniel Lerner, who perceives urbanisation as a key step in a society's march towards modernisation and political activeness. Daniel Lerner, The Passing of Traditional Society?, Glencoe, The Free Press, 1958, p. 60.
parts of Scandinavia may be cited as the best example of this.

Church attendants correlates positively with political participation in the United States. They scarcely adopt in Great Britain and negatively in Germany and Italy. Some ethnic minorities in America, for example, Negroes have very low turnout while others like Jews have among the very highest.

Almond and Verba also uphold the view that education is also one of the contributory factors for increasing in the participation. But in some cases, education has negative impact and one starts feeling alienated himself because of no positive consequence of one's participation. However, in the example of education, it can be seen that three of the most powerful influences are at work which are influencing participation - articulateness, sensitivity to one's self-interest and effective socialisation by the political culture. These are important in differentiation and politically active from the ordinary citizen. These factors also help to explain the findings on participation yielded by research on the other categoric variables.

From the analysis which is made in the preceding paragraphs, it can be said that the variables in this category are so broad as to be fairly limited in their explanatory power. Often they represent configuration of
more exact and dynamic variables but the configurations are not always identical. Political apathy of Negroes in the United States reflects, in large measures, not just their position as a minority but their status as a deprived minority, poor, uneducated, rural, parochial etc. Same demographic factors may have dramatically different consequences in a different political cultural context. Social class differences may signify powerful inequalities in one culture and trivial in another.

"Through such variables as these and through other general constructs of a more dynamic nature e.g., power, influence, motives, pressures, drives, we may eventually succeed in developing models that refine demographic variables into their appropriate units equivalent over time and cross-cultures. When these components are isolated and appropriately weighed, predictions about participation under varying conditions should become much more accurate." 21

The data presented on the variations in political participation is both fragmentary and not always directly comparable, it is enough to say that political participation does vary in relation to a number of important social characteristics; and that these variations are not confined

to particular country with varying social and political system. There are, of course, differences between various countries, but the basic patterns are similar. Milbrath suggests that political participation varies in relation to four major factors, namely, (a) the extent to which the individual receives political stimuli; (b) the individual's personal characteristics; (c) the individual's social characteristics; and (d) the political setting or environment in which the individual finds himself.

The above factors have been found considerably affecting the participation process at the level of gladiatorial activities. The literature on who achieves political and administrative office is extensive. Moreover, so far as the democratic systems are concerned, there is general agreement that the decision-makers are not invariably the representative of the general public in real sense. For example, in the United States, those who have held various types of political and administrative offices are educationally unpresentative of the general population, and a similar pattern is found while examining the occupational background of these groups. 22 The pattern does not emerge differently in the case of such office holders in the context of Great Britain. For instance, the large majority of the conservative

senior ministers are from public schools and three-quarter of them have studied in Oxford and Cambridge. Hence, it used to be possible to regard Conservative cabinet as dominant by Old atomians. 23

The pattern found in the above developed analysis is repeated not only in other Western societies but also in the case of the developing countries of the Afro-Asian world. The findings of some empirical studies show that the extent to which political and administrative office holders are drawn from particular groups in society, phenomenon which, it has been argued, is found in all societies in the form of an oligarchy, political elite or ruling class. For administrative decision-makers, it has been found that the higher social and economic groups of the society has disproportionate rate of representation. 24

However, some scholars hold the view that the area of power is not limited to a ruling oligarchy or an aristocracy of birth; it is increasingly being spread to society.


as a whole by drawing new sectors into its ambit. In Europe, during the phase of rapid industrialisation and social change, political participation was confined to the upper class of society, and from the experiments of both Communists and non-Communist varieties, where, barring intra-party heads and military coups, political compensation was generally not allowed to interfere with the process of development. This, as a matter of fact, appears to be in conformity with the Dahlian school contradicting the basic philosophy of the elitist school initiated and stabilised by several scholars in the West. However, the evidences collected on the basis of a number of the field studies, disapprove substantially to the paradigm evolved by Robert Dahl and his colleagues. Hence, the significance of the higher social strata in the formation of the key decision-makers cannot be undermined. The several studies in the Western as well as non-Western context show that socio-economic status is positively correlated with participation. This is more so at the upper echelons of the political spectrum.

However, the individuals who find themselves within the boundaries of a political set up are no means equally interested in the realm of politics. Some people are indifferent to politics and some deeply involved. Even among those who are deeply involved only few actively seek
power. And among power seekers some gain more power than other. Robert Dahl has divided such people in four categories: the political stratum; the power seekers and the powerful.\textsuperscript{25} He has located several fundamental reasons why people do become involved in politics. He maintains that: (1) people are likely to get involved in the politics if they place a low valuation on the rewards to be gained from political involvement relating to the rewards expecting to other kind of human activities like family, friends, affection, income, recreation, respect, playing, reading etc. (2) Persons are less likely to get involved in politics if they think that there is no significant difference in the alternatives before them and consequently and what they do won't matter; (3) An individual is less likely to become involved in politics if he thinks that he does not matter because he cannot significantly change that outcome; (4) People are less likely to get involved in politics if they believe that the outcome will be relatively satisfactory to them without their involvement; (5) Persons are less likely to get involved in politics if they feel that their knowledge is too limited for them to be effective if they become involved; (6) Finally, the greater the obstacles

placed in one's way, the less likely one is to become involved in politics. All these factors can also work in reverse.

Hence, in general, it can be said that political participation is influenced by the socio-economic factors, and, particularly, participation at the gradatorial level in a democratic society is in the hands of those persons who are representing the smallest possible segment of the society. This exactly contradicts the spirit of democracy.

The psychological correlates of the political participation are no less important than other factors. In general, psychological variables may be thought of as those stemming from individual personality traits and from cognitive structures. Participation survives by virtue of its capacity to give rewards. "Political observers throughout the ages have variously attributed man's political activity to his need for power, competition, achievement, affiliation, aggression, money, prestige, status, recognition, approval, manipulation, sympathy, in short to virtually every need that impels human behaviour." 26 Unfortunately, there is very little data available about the influence of these motives. Even, there is no clear cut evidence which can prove that there are some desires which can only be

fulfilled by way of participation which compels people to be participant in the costly form of participation (managing a campaign).

Apart from the division of the participation in terms of active-passive, participation be divided from the view point of goal. There are some kind of participations which are taking place because of the feeling of fulfilling the immediate goal and is known as consummatory participation. But there are some activities which are having some farsightedness and are performed with some broad perspective. Decision making (a form of participation) can be cited as an example of this. These activities are called instrumental activities. However, in general, most of the activities embody both kind of participation.

There are some available studies on the behaviour of the participants which reveal that more active participants exhibit less hostility than the general population, except in the case of activists who belong to extreme or massianic movements. Participants in such movements which aim at quick drastic refashioning of the world are frequently motivated by rage and paranoia and find that participation gives them a legitimised context of discharging their aggression.
Personality dimensions as guilt and rigidity do not adequately distinguish participation from non-participants but they differentiate somewhat the less active from the more active.

Relationship between the basic personality trait and the political participation has been well depicted by McCloskey. He maintains that "correlations do turn up between certain personality traits and participation that appear to be due mainly to the impairment of social functioning induced by personality disturbances an individual who scores high in measure of paranoia inflexibility, guilt, hostility and so on, will ipso facto function less effectively in many social contexts. He will be less able to perform tasks that require accurate appraisal of reality and may find threatening such political activities as organising, deciding, bargaining, interacting, co-operating, debating and proselytising."27

There are some personality traits which are influenced by the social environment. These traits such as, dominance, social responsibility and self-confidence, are positively associated with political participation. It is true that these are the signs of ego strength and

27. Ibid., p.258
those individuals who lack them are more likely to avoid active involvement.

The surveys made in United States reveal this fact that the directions of the relationships between personality traits and participation "largely refutes much of the folklore about political practitioners as highly ambitious, exhibitionistic (folkey), narcissistic, driven enthusiastic, materialistic, authoritarian and power hungry." Moreover, these surveys have proved that political participants as socially conscious and having affirmative attitude towards mankind.

Participants are also distinguished from non-participants by cognitive variables such as belief in one's own adequacy and in the amenability of the social order to change even, participation in voting may present some people with threatening question about their ability to understand and affect external institutions which strike them as bewildering. How far one feels about one's own competence gives colour for making judgement about political effectiveness which in turn strengthens one's motivation to participate. Hence, psychologically handicapped people find themselves in difficulty whenever they think of change because of the challenges to the society. Consequently, feelings of alienation, pessimism and anomie develops.

28. Ibid.
Apart from the psychological studies of an individual it is also worthwhile to see the psychology of the groups which are influencing his behaviour. Hence, the impact of groups is also studied which deals with the psychological influences on the participation. An individual who is the member of contradicting groups (cross-pressures) tend to be more confusing, even joining conflicting groups also reveal this fact that he is holding conflicting beliefs, attempting to serve conflicting interests and harbouring opinions that are manifestly discrepant with reality.

It is very difficult to collect data on the psychological influences on participation, and it can be said that it is a discipline in which more studies are yet to be made. On the basis of the available studies, it can be said that man's behaviour plays a key-role in giving particular dimension to the participation. It is also worth noting that this behaviour can also not be studied in isolation because man's behaviour is more or less the by-product of the socio-economic and cultural environment in which he is brought up. Hence, these factors which influence participation cannot be studied in isolation.

Political participation can also increase if the people start taking more interest in the policy of a system. This leads to the influence of political efficacy on political participation. What appears to motivate the
electorates more to become a voter is sense of political efficacy. People who have faith in the efficacy of the political system in general and ballot box in particular and who as such have a stake in both of them, motivated to vote. The non-participants are found subscribing to the notion that neither the government nor officials pay attention to what common man means. Nor they find the political parties and elected representatives and the civil servants helping in bringing citizens and the administration nearer to each other. Moreover, a citizen having greater touch with election information and using various media of communication have shown greater touch with election information and using various media of communication have shown greater interest in political life. These findings, however, support the thesis developed by the scholars like Campbell who concluded that the weaker is one's "sense of political efficacy", the less likely one is to become involved. 29

The sense of political efficacy, in turn, also become an index of political education that the citizens have got and the sense of involvement that they develop.

The legal requirements of an electoral system may also influence political participation. An obvious example is that of compulsory voting. Russett and his colleagues

report that seven countries require members of their electorates to vote, and with one exception, the level of voting is higher than the mean of countries at a similar stage of development. 30

Party system also plays a vital role in the process of political participation. In general, it is understood that where there is clear cut choice in a system, there can be more participation because the feeling of the decisive role of participation is quite evident. This choice becomes more clear if the parties are more divergent. In Norway, the participation is found higher than America because of the fact that parties in Norway are divergent.

It is also generally understood that the people are affiliated with the political parties in greater number, there is increase in participation. But the survey made in this regard reveals that "in France and other European countries party affiliation is less common than in United States, but electoral turnout is higher." 31

Political parties through campaigns, put forward their programme and, thereby, influence the participants. Whenever there is keen competition in political parties,

31. Herbert Mc'Closkey, op. cit., p.260
the leaders are forced to pay more attention on the campaign to influence the voting turnout.

Participation also varies from issue to issue. On the issue which are more closure to the need of common mass and present the common desire, can fetch more support. Issues like anti-emergency, Garibi Hatao etc. can be the best example for this. Mc'closkey has rightly pointed out in this regard that any issue can be a powerful stimulus to participation.32

In short, it can be said that the process of the political participation is influenced by social, economic, political, cultural and environmental factors. But the higher level of the participation, (as per the Milbrath Typology) is mainly influenced by the economic factor. Generally, in any system, there are very few people who are involved at this level because of this fact that a very small segment of the society is well off.

As has already been mentioned that all people do not participate in politics. Reasons may vary from strictly legal prohibitions to disinterestedness. These non-participants are known as apathetics. Apathy can be a minute form of participation, and, hence, is supposed to be dealt with while describing the forms of participation.

32. Ibid., p.262
But, because of the fact that there is a group which feels that apathy is as the form of participation, it has been dealt at length separately.

**Apathy**

The term 'apathy' is defined as a lack of interest or lack of concern for persons, situations or phenomena in general or particular. An individual may be disinterested in the socio-political activities and at the same time, he may shun to participate in it. So far as his individual disinterestedness is concerned, it is a particular kind of characteristics in some men, may be due to some complexes. Mc'Closkey has described apathy as contradictory to participation. "'Apathy' will refer to a state of withdrawal from or indifference to such activities" (as are attributed to participation). 33

The important characteristics of apathetics are inability to recognise personal responsibility; victim of insecurity, threat and worries; complete acceptance of constituted authority; passivity and abstention from political activities. Morris Rosenberg 34 has suggested three reasons for political apathy, namely, treating political activity as a threat to various aspects such as,


social and occupational, family members and his life; considering political activity as futile and on account of political stimuli. In other words, it can be said that people do not participate because of the terror of some damage to their social status or it is sheer wastage of time or considering the alternatives as deceptive and fake. Disinterestedness may be because of the fact that system is not so much efficient as participation may yield some positive result through it. In a democratic set up in which the role of the mass is underplayed and they are restricted to the franchise. Despite this feeling that the alternatives given in the systems are of no use, they are not allowed to topple the 'apple cart'. This restriction itself suggests that in democratic set up, it is necessary that there should be a certain amount of apathy and indifferences. 35 In fact, in bourgeois societies, they try to keep these forces in background or suppress when they try to forge themselves to the foreground. This suppression creates an atmosphere in which there is a big stratum of apoliticals who, for various reasons, do not display interest in political affairs.

Various terms have been assigned to apathy, such as, cynical, alienated and anomie. These terms are not

synonymous, although they may have some characteristics in common.

Cynicism is a feeling in which citizens regard the actions and motives of others with suspicion and doubt. He feels that politics is a dirty game, and politicians are faceless man and deserve neither sympathy nor confidence. In general, it has been noticed that the more cynical the citizens, the less they participate in political activities.

Alienated man is hostile to the system in actual sense. Lane viewed alienation as a person's sense of estrangement from the politics and government of his society... the tendency to think of the government, the politics of the nation as run by others for others according to an unfair set of rules. 36

He is of the opinion that it is misleading to speak of widespread alienation in the United States. He agrees about the existence of politically divorced who regard government as being of little or no consequence for them. In the five nations study of Almond and Verba, such an attitude was found in the respondents of the sample survey. The proportion of politically divorced citizens was found to a greater degree in the case of Mexico and Italy. 37 However,

it is difficult to accept the conclusion drawn by the scholars like Almond and Verba as one could locate very easily a number of citizens in United States and other western countries who, time and again, agitate and openly fight against the actions of the prevailing system therein. Numerous stories are heard on issues like racial segregation and wide ranging inequalities in the field of politics and economy.

Whether such attitudes be described as politically divorced or alienated is a matter of opinion. A citizen deprived of certain facility by his counterparts can easily be called as alienated. Alienation eventually leads to the non-involvement of the citizens in the governmental affairs. In fact, it helps in promoting anti-government feelings in their mind, which may erupt at any moment.

The term 'anomie' which is devised by Durkheim\textsuperscript{38} is also not conducive for the process of participation. Lane has described anomie as "a sense of valueless and lack of direction" in which the individual experiences a feeling of ineffectiveness and that authority does not care, resulting in the devaluation of his goals and the loss of urgency to act.\textsuperscript{39} Templeton finds that those who

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{38} Emile Durkheim, \textit{Suicide}, translated by George Simpson, London, 1952.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{39} Quoted in Rush and Althoff, \textit{op.cit.}, p.84.}
have a high anomic score have lower levels of political interests, knowledge and participation than those with a low anomic score. It is important, however, to make the distinction between apathy, cynicism, alienation and anomie clear. Defined simply, apathy is a lack of interest, cynicism is an attitude of distaste and disenchantment, while alienation and anomie both involve a feeling of estrangement or divorce from society, but where alienation is characterised by hostility, anomie is characterised by bewilderment. 40

Alienation, far from taking a passive form, may result in considerable political activity, particularly that involving violent political action. This action may not fall in the purview of participation as per the understanding of the liberals, but if it is taken with a clear cut purpose of changing the society, it can be called a genuine participation. Alienation may stimulate a variety of forms of political participation.

There are people who are apathetic only to the higher level of participation. They may feel that by casting vote, they fulfil their duty. This act may quench the thirst of data collectors, but, in a real sense, the awakened public who may react to the decisions made by the government and may influence this decision-making process,

40. Ibid., p. 97
can only be called real participants. This will lead to the discussion about what is real participation.

This is a clear-cut ethical question—may refer to the ethics of a particular system. As has already been mentioned, there are two waves of thought on political participation, namely, liberal and Marxist. Both can claim genuine participation from the viewpoint of their morale.

**Liberal Approach**

Liberalists treat participation in a limited sense and prohibits such participation which poses challenge to the system. For them, the purpose of political participation is to show strong faith in democratic norms and to maintain the status quo. Democracy which revolves around political participation, is the syndrome of political development. At the most, Liberal thinkers can collect data and may assign various reasons to disinterestedness. But they are least bothered about their duty to make these people more interested. Hence, the actual participation falls in the hands of few people. This so-called best part can be called elite. Whether these elites are at village level or at the town level, they are closely linked and "share the cake without conflict while the majority of the people just stand and stare, not even conscious of
how the whole process is taking place once they perform quinquennial rituals at the hustings. "41

**Marxist Approach**

On the other hand, Marxists support mass participation. Most of the writings of the Marxists are more or less emphasizing on the awakening of the workers and peasants. In other words, they lay stress on the role of the major segment of the society to bring forth change for its own betterment. This can be possible if the mass is conscious enough to understand inherent contradictions of the society.

However, it can be said that participation cannot be mere voting but the conscious effort of the society to share and decide its own destiny.

To sum up, it can be said that the political participation ranges from the decision-making process and the involvement of the people in it to posing a challenge either through agitation or coup or some other form of violent activity. Unfortunately, due to some vested interests, liberalists consider violent activities as a form of apathy. The process of participation is limited because of legal, geopolitical, socio-economic and cultural factors. At the

---

same time, the process of political participation can be hastened by the demographic, socio-economic political and psychological factors.

**Critique**

Generally, empirical work has been done by the liberalist just to prove that democratic system with the open competition is the only remedy for the developed society. They also consider that modernisation is the precondition for greater political participation. But, if it is seen critically, it can easily be pointed out that as urbanisation is the result of modernisation, there is less participation in the urban areas than the rural. The reason is quite evident. The modernisation in the kind of the so-called open society can only develop alienation which in turn develops apathy and results in less political participation particularly at the voting level. **Genuine participation can only be called when there is a purposeful participation.** This purpose of the participation cannot be other than the betterment of the society.

**As voting is considered one of the major functions of the participation, for developing the thesis on electoral behaviour in India, in 1971 and 1977 General Elections, the next chapter will deal with the general trends of participation in India.**
Conceptual Framework

In the following study of political participation in India, an attempt has been made to portray the relationship and its concomitants by focussing on the electoral process in India. In Chapter II, a historical perspective is proceeded of the development of the forms and institutions of Parliamentary Democracy in India through various Acts passed by the British for gradually involving Indians in the administration and decision making at different levels.

The background for the case study of the 1971 and 1977 elections is elaborated through an analysis of the preceding elections after India's independence. By focussing on electoral analysis, records of participation and the comparison of the non-voting ratios, contribute to understanding of the citizen's perception of political party, the scope and character of citizenship at various levels, of different responses of Party organization in different states, and finally to ascertaining the voter's capacity to exercise power across the different levels of the political spectrum.

In the following chapters a case study of the 1971 and 1977 elections has been undertaken. The political setting for these elections, the main issues involved have been compared through programmes enunciated in Party
manifestos, the configuration of opposition unity in the form of Fronts and Alliances, an analysis of the election results has been substantiated by highlighting the salient aspects of these elections.

India has a democratic polity which provides ample opportunities for people from different segments of society to participate in the political system. In the elections preceding those in the seventies, the role of caste, community and region had been emphasized by social researchers. However, the elections under study marked a significant difference, as Party leadership was able to mobilize the enthusiasm or discontent of the masses for the policies pursued by the incumbent government.

The significant increase in voters turnout and the mandate given to the winning parties in each case, was a sign of maturity of the citizens in participation in the democratic process. These elections marked a break from the past as populist slogans and 'politicking' did not pay dividends. The political leadership was held accountable by the masses for their performance in implementing plans, policies and projects of socio-economic development.

Therefore, an analysis of the electoral process unravels interesting aspects about the political participation in India. Being a developing country, the concepts
and ideas applicable to the development of societies do not hold true substantially. Thus, the concepts and methodology suitable for the Indian context have been derived from those available in a selective way so as to serve the purpose of the present study, taking into account the merits and limitations of available resources.