INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The study of political development in the post-Second World War era brought a series of discourse on the structural and operational matrix of the political systems. The parameters of political development built by the Western political scientists were applied to the study of Afro-Asian political systems. It became a debatable issue among the scholars while deciphering the problems of Afro-Asian politics through Western models. The Marxist and dependency theories of development could not provide an acceptable universal framework for the study of Afro-Asian politics.

Lucian Pye, Kenneth Organski, Edward Shills and David Apter are some of the scholars, who have defined the concept of political development and conceptualise the items in a systematic manner. However, with the change of time, the study of political development underwent certain changes. The issues put up by the forces of modernisation were decided by the will and capacity of the political leaders. Huntington defined political development as "institutionalization of political organizations and procedures" to meet the challenges posed by modernization.¹ The Marxian notion of political development is the product of the industrialised West. It involves change in the ownership of the means of production that occurs
due to contradictions. The contradictions emerge in the form of class conflicts between the have and the have-nots. The change in the ownership of the means of production also brings changes in political forms. Lenin in his thesis on the development of capitalism in Russia was confronted with the problem of bringing quick socio-economic transformation. He thought that in the absence of a bourgeois class in Russia, this would be possible through a highly organised and committed political party. His primary motive was to fit Marxism to the conditions of an underdeveloped economy. Subsequently, communist models came up in China, Cuba and Yugoslavia quite independent of the Soviet models. The models were largely indigenous in nature and reflected their social structure, cultural traditions and historical background. The Third World nations imported the Western models in order to build up the pattern of their own development. But the models that were devised in the Western socio-economic milieu became redundant when applied to the ground realities of the Third World nations. Realising the deficiencies of the Western models, the Third World scholars reframed the models in consonance with their indigenous systems confronting peculiar problems. The Islamic scholars reject the views of westerners on Islam as a negative force in the process of political development.

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1 Samuel P. Huntington, "Political Development and Political Decay". *World Politics*, vol.17, no.3, pp.386-94.
theorists perceive the persistence or revival of religion in politics as regressive force to which Almond and Powell calls "negative development". Political development is inversely related to religion by western connotation. However, some western scholars do not accept the views of Almond and Powell that Islam is negative to political development. Even Maxime Rodinson says that Islam is complimentary to the growth of both capitalism and socialism. The ideal Islamic polity is always governed by the Quranic principles with recourse to *ijtihad* (reasoning) for bringing necessary transformations in the society. So, Islam in theory does not seem to be a negative force, rather it seems to be a positive force behind the process of development. This necessitated a new approach to the study of the political systems of the developing and underdeveloped societies in an effective manner. In case of Islamic societies, any study of their political system; even if they have borrowed their structural set up from the west; has to begin with a sympathetic study of Islamic culture along with the values and beliefs that define the contours of the overall ethical, cultural universe, within which the politics, in those societies, operate. The present study of Saudi Arabian polity, as such, would try to go deep into its socio-cultural roots. However, this is not to say that the conceptualisations that emerge from the study of the western scholars would be entirely unhelpful. Thus the study would review all

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attempts at theorisation, before embarking upon a new approach to the study of Saudi polity.

**Hypotheses**

This study seeks to examine the following hypotheses, viz.

- The western and the Marxist theories of political development have very limited relevance for analysing the study of political development in Saudi Arabia.

- Islam has relevance for analysing the study of political development in Saudi Arabia.

- The historical developments show minimal changes in the process of political development.

- The views of the dependency scholars have relevance in the study of economic development in Saudi Arabia.

- Political institutions and processes in the Kingdom do not conform to the general theories of political development.

- It is feasible to develop a new theory of political development, applicable to Saudi Arabia and beyond.
Methodology

The study is based on the historical, analytical and comparative methods. The political developments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from Saud-Wahhab alliance in 1744 till the reign of King Fahd through various Saud dynasties are discussed historically. Similarly, the political institutions such as legislature, executive and judiciary are also discussed historically.

The western, Marxist and dependency theories are discussed through analytical method. The basic theoretical parameters of the political development are derived from the study. Analysis is made regarding the relationship between Islam and development. Finally, an Islamic theory of development is devised. The socio-economic milieu of Saudi Arabia is also discussed through analytical method. The data regarding the demography, rural-urban migration, human resource development, agriculture, industry and banking are analyzed and the impact of these factors upon the process of political development are also discussed.

The nature of political institutions and processes found in the Kingdom are discussed through comparative method. The legislative, executive and judiciary branches of the government are compared with that of the western and the communist political systems. Besides this, the nature of political processes such as political socialisation, interest articulation, interest aggregation and political communication are discussed through this
method. The study is based on the primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include constitutional documents and the government reports. The secondary sources include books, journals, yearbooks and reports published in the national and international dailies.

Chapterisation

The thesis is divided into six chapters and the scheme is as follows:

Introduction

Chapter I : Political Development: A Theoretical Framework
Chapter II : Historical Perspective on Saudi Polity
Chapter III : Socio-Economic Milieu in Saudi Arabia
Chapter IV : Political Institutions in Saudi Arabia
Chapter V : Political Processes in Saudi Arabia
Chapter VI : Summary and Conclusions

The first chapter deals with the theoretical aspects of political development. The theories of political development from the western, the Marxist and the dependency perspectives are analysed. Besides this, the views of the scholars regarding the relationship between Islam and development are also analysed in this chapter.

The second chapter deals with the historical development of the polity of Saudi Arabia. It covers the reign of various Saudi dynasties from Saud-Wahhab alliance in 1744 till the present King Fahd.
The third chapter deals with the socio-economic milieu in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The socio-economic components such as demography, human resources development, education, agriculture, oil, industry and banking are discussed to examine their impact upon the process of political development.

The fourth chapter deals with the political institutions, viz. legislature (*Majlis al-Shura*), executive (*Majlis al-Wuzura*) and judiciary (*Quda*) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The interpretations of the scholars are also verified while assessing the nature of legislative, executive and judiciary organs.

The fifth chapter deals with the political processes in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The political processes such as political socialisation, political recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation, political communication and political participation are analysed from theoretical angle.

The concluding chapter recapitulates the main arguments in the study and develops a new theory of political development applicable Saudi Arabia and beyond.