# Theoretical Frame work on Political Socialization

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**Abstract:**

Political Socialization is a process of learning Political culture of a nation. Political cultures are transmitted from generation to generation. All Political Systems nurture their own culture & structures through which youth of a society pass through in the process of political maturity. People of India belong to various cultural, regional, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds live together. The task of integrating and uniting them to build a strong nation is a daunting and challenging task. In this present article theoretical & conceptual viewpoints of different theories are discussed by the researcher for the proper understanding of the patterns & challenges, the political orientations & attitudes of the high school students.

*Key points: Political, culture, society, nation*

**Introduction;**

Political Socialization is a process of learning Political culture of a nation. Such Political cultures are transmitted from generation to generation. All Political Systems continue to impose their own culture & structures through which youth of the society pass through in the process of political maturity. Man is born free but finds himself constantly in meaningful social and environmental chains. He tends to cultivate societal values, beliefs and norms in a society. The process by which the social life of an individual is shaped is called 'socialization'. 'Socialization' is a process of transforming the animal instinct of a man into a responsible human being or converting the biological being into a social being. Man is not only a social being but also a political being. Along with social norms, political values are also internalized simultaneously. The agents of political socialization namely, family, school, peer groups, mass media and political parties play an integral role in different levels in the process political socialization. In India people belong to various cultural, regional, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds live together. The task of integrating and uniting people to build a strong nation is a challenging task. Its coercive effect is still being felt. The present study is highly relevant in the present political scenario. In this article theoretical & conceptual viewpoints of different theories are discussed by the researcher for the proper understanding of the patterns & challenges & the political orientations & attitudes among the high school students.

**The theories and approaches to political socialization**

Political Socialization is a process of learning Political culture of a nation. Political cultures are transmitted from generation to generation. All Political Systems tend to influence their culture & structures through which youth of the society pass through in the process of political maturity. In this article the theoretical & conceptual viewpoints of different theories are discussed for the proper understanding of the patterns & challenges & the political orientations & attitudes of the high school students. The phenomenon of political socialization has been discussed by many scholars in different ways. But the careful analysis understanding of these views is needed. The following are the important theories & approaches in the research endeavors. Namely.

1) Psycho – Cultural Theory

2) Socio – Psychological Theory

3) Social – learning Theory

4) Elite Theory

5) The micro level & macro-level approaches.

6) Individual approach& system analysis

7) Socio-political approach.

1) Psycho – Cultural Theory: -

It is an important theory in the study of political behavior of an individual in acquiring political socialization. The central argument of this theory is "all political behaviors are learned behaviors". This theory mainly focuses on two forms of socialization namely, latent & manifest political Socialization. The Latent political Socialization is the process through which information. Values & feelings are not transmitted directly. But it is a basic stage of internalization of political values. Here family plays an important role. As children grow, manifest Political socialization becomes prominent. In the manifest Political socialization, the content of the transmitted information, values & feelings are clearly political in nature. School becomes an important vehicle in transmitting political values among the Children.

The theory also discusses about the importance of agency in terms of Political socialization of children. Two divergent views are expressed in this regard. One group of social scientists believe that, 'political maturity is a byproduct of general education. The chief exponent of this view is Greenstein. Another group of social scientists focus on the potentiality of the formal schooling system. The chief advocates of this view are Hass & Torney. While giving importance to school, they have realized the importance of family. A child starts acquiring & developing basic political orientations from an early age within a family. Thus, family has a major role to play in shaping and moulding their political orientations and socialization.

2) Socio – Psychological Theory: -

To investigate certain cognitive & affective aspects of attitudes among the children of different age-groups particularly age groups of 8th to 10th in India. E.S.K, Ghosh in his study of "social identity & Political socialization" stresses on the importance of this socio-psychological theory. The theory treats individual disposition (eg, the child's political attitudes, level of political involvement etc,) and the primary output variables of interest. It is taken as an important devise to explore children's concepts and ideas about the nation and the pattern of values & preferences, which accompany these concepts.  This theory helps the researcher to find out the extent of differential effects of diverse social realities in the acquision of socio-political concepts and identification by Indian Children in different parts of the country.  It also throws light on the systematic variations in cognitive & affective behavior, which occur at different age group for intra-groups & inter-groups.'

3) Social – learning Theory: -

The chief exponent of this theory is Bruce Campbell. The social learning theory is a general theory of political socialization; It elaborately explains the levels of political trust among the high school students. This theory has taken into account. The family, peers & school, the main attributes in developing political trust among the high School Students.  Further, it argues that, social learning is successful in the case of the mother and child brought up in a meaningful social contact. In addition to this, Race & socio- economic status also play a significant role to predict political trust among the students. This type of social learning helps the children in developing certain political beliefs, attitudes & behaviors to strengthening the political system.

4) Elite Theory: -

Elite theory is one of the most important theories on political socialization. The main proponents of this theory are Pareto, Mosca and Renshon. According to this theory, every political system assumes & lives by a set of values.  Its strength & survival ultimately depends upon those values and beliefs. Because the process of political socialization is the process of internalization of the values of political system by the people of the country, its success depends on the widespread political training of & education imparted to its inmates. Elite theory of socialization develops skills in leadership, decision-making, negation and communication beyond those required by most citizens. Renshon in his adult development theory argues that, political socialization occurs in stages through adult development and that at different stages.

5) The micro level & macro-level approaches.

The micro-level approach is concerned with the study of the process of political learning at the individual level. It entails the study of political orientations of the individual learns at different stages of his life.  How an individual learns these?  & How an individual's political life is farmed?  As an individual gradually grows & matures, he tends to learn social values, beliefs, & norms & accordingly his social life is formed. Through the

process of political socialization individual learns directly OR indirectly political values, beliefs & attitudes which Shape the individual's political psychology from his political personality which determine his political behavior l.

The macro-level approach deals with the study of the impact of the political socialization process upon the operation of the political system. The political learning of an individual determines their political behavior which in turn is crucial for the stability & viability of the political system. The above arguments clearly explicate the fact that, the process of political socialization accounts not only the patterns of political behavior of the individual but also on the working of the political systems. It bridges the gap between micro-macro polities.

6) Individual approach & system approach: -

Greenstein, Langton, Nimmo & Bonjeen are the forerunners of this approach. The Individual approach focuses on the individual as the main unit of investigation & the system approach inquiries into the role of political socialization which stabilizes & nurtures the system.

Haridwar singh in this 'Democratic orientations of students in India' argues that, The Individual approach entirely concentrates & revolves round the individual only under this framework. The researcher intends to focus his attention on the cognitive ability & political maturity of an Individual. The basic concern of this approach is to analyze, how, when & why Individuals come to possess & develop their political outlook.

The system analysis is another approach advocated by David Easten, Talcot Persons, Robert Merton and to name a very few. According to this approach, a system wants to achieve certain goals and all behavior and phenomenon which are related to and should help to reach this end. In every system there are some structures performing certain functions to attain the specific goals. In this approach Easton stresses on the need for the continuance, maintenance and existence of a political system as well as changes that take place in it. From this approach, the researcher tries to find out the degree and extent of relationship is maintained between political socialization process and the larger political system. This study not only deals with the system effect of political socialization but also tries to examine the particular orientation by which political socialization takes its final shapes. This leads to Socialization process in a democracy.

7. Socio-political approach:

An earnest attempt is made in this approach to analyze the orientations of children with socio-political issues. It studies the techniques of attitudinal reinforcement of restructuring within the school. This helps the individual's acquiring citizenship. Children develop the ideas, beliefs, norms and values during their pre-adult socialization period. This kind of pre-adult socialization helps them for the proper anticipation of adult's roles in the near future. Those children whose family has political background have shown increasing interest and involvement in politics and political issues. More educational opportunities and socio-economic development, sex, age, religion and media exposure are the other influencing factors in stabilizing the pre-adult socialization. It tends to save the attitudinal pre dispositions towards political systems.

According to R, T Jangam, Political socialization of the child implies the process of political socialization by which the child becomes a full-fledged member in the meaningful socio-political system. The process of political socialization related to the child's process of political socialization. This shows, how the member of every society or children who are members in the making are shaped, educated and prepared to play their assigned roles in that society. Man performs his roles according to his age-group. This implies that, there are different stages in man's life, in which an individual goes on in performing his role in the socio-political system. Thus, he argues that, the passage from childhood to adulthood is the most crucial one as it recognizes man's role in socio-political system.

Arun P.Bali his paper 'Towards an understanding of political socialization discusses three different approaches closely related to the research under study.

Childhood approach: The first and foremost approach is childhood approach which explicates the attitudes learned earlier are the most enduring and fair predicators of adult stances, and it accords and determinative influence to both political preferences.

Easton and Robert Hess have emphasized in their studies that, the young child's personalized and idealized views of government and positive affective attachment to the political system. Although it is less visibly moulded during that period it still underlines many permanent orientations to politics.

The second one is adulthood approach which assumes that one's political orientation is easily be bent and prone to change, modification, throughout one's life-cycle gives the appropriate stimuli to change. It posits the view that, adulthood brings in its wake contact with several new settings, novel events, new responsibilities, new experiences as well as changes in biological and social status. All these factors have powerful impact in socializing the individual.

The contemporary approach is the third one, which throws light on the importance of generations in explaining adult attitudes. It accords a significant role on events and changes setting in shaping the attitudes of an individual. The events and experiences are differently interpreted among the peers, who share educational trends age at which political events that take place.

The above three approaches reveal the fact that, political socialization is considered as an instrument in moulding and conditioning the child to a prior set of conventions.

The geneses of many theories and studies on political socialization have been concerned on how to socialize children and adolescents and how to develop political orientations and behaviors which are valued by adults and society. Theories and approaches discussed above give a very clear picture about the concept of political socialization. Many scholars interpreted it in different ways about the meaning of the term political socialization. Hyman's pioneering work political socialization in 1959 has proved it as an effective approach to understand the reasons for an individual's political attitudes and behaviors.

Generally, political socialization means, a process by which an individual or children acquires values, norms, beliefs and attitudes of political culture. Greenstein offers both narrow and broad meaning of the term. Political socialization in a narrow sense is the deliberate inculcation of political values, information and practices by those instrumental agents which help the study of all political learning at every stage of life-cycle. Easton and Hess conceive, political socialization as the development of consensus on a political phenomenon or the development of shared political orientations. They are concerned with the products of socialization and conceptualize themselves as types of orientations towards the political system. The western social scientists have studied the concept political socialization mainly to understand the voting behavior of children. The school and its Co-curricular activities are set in this direction to enrich the children's participatory orientation. They have discussed comprehensively and highlighted the role of family, school, and mass media as the prime agents of political socialization. At the same time most of the Indian scholars have conducted their studies from socio-economic and socio-political and cultural background. These are many serious problems in India, which forbid the people to take active involvement in politics. R.T,Jangam highlights the role of education in the socio-political system of India points out the determining influence of education as an enormous role to play on the life of children as future active participants in the socio-political power and influence. Cultural anthropologist and psycho-analysts have argued that, early political socialization is basic than the later learning experience.

Based on the ideas of both western and Indian scholars the researcher makes an observation that, Indian political scientists go a step ahead in analyzing the process of political socialization of a child because of the nature of Indian society. Apart from endorsing the views of the western scholars, their studies also foucus upon the influence of factors like, Education, Class, Ethnicity, Residential, Religion, and Language etc. The research also finds the thin line of difference between western scholars and Indian political scientists. Both of them share similar views regarding the challenges. Most important among them are,

1)As children are immature, they are not in a position to learn about the nuisance of politics

2)Children lack up to date and authentic information about politics

3)Student themselves are not interested in politics but they need inspiration and motivation to know about it.

4) There is a lack of interest among the parents and the elders towards political socialization of girl's child.

5)The agencies which helps the children to socialize politics are highly specialized. They are restricted in their knowledge of the world.

6)The role of civic education in addressing declining tendency of the youth in political participation. This is based on the realization that, in the process of political socilization. The role of family and local community networks is eroding under a mass internet-based youth culture placing the burden of socialization of schools.

Thus. the issues raised by the social scientists has a telling effect in the light of emergence of new international order namely, Globalization. It widens the awareness regarding social, political and economic interconnectivity among the nations. The truth the researcher finds here is that, most researches conducted all over the world laid more emphasis on the significant role played by family and lesser attention is paid on other agents such as, school, peer group and political parties. Political system always revolves around society, which is rapidly changing in the Indian context. The present research problem undertaker study encompasses the areas neglected in the earlier studies to make an exhaustive and scientific study.

Based on the comparative analysis of the views of both western and Indian political scientists, the researcher has drawn the following indicators to provide scientific framework to the research under study.

1)Political socialization is a learning process through which children are introduced to politics.

2)Political orientations are essential to a political system. An individual learns these at different stages of his life.

3)The norms, attitudes, beliefs and values acquired at the early age have some profound impact on the political system.

4)Stability, survivability, continuity and change of the political system is maintained by the people through political socialization.

5)The agents of political socialization namely, family, school, peer group, mass media and political parties help the children to learn politically important aspects as well as help the political socialization to transform political culture from one generation to the next.

6)The process of political socialization is necessary for the both individual level and community level to make the political system strong and stable.

7)Socio-Economic and family backgrounds are clearly related influencing factors in analyzing the children's political orientations.

8)There is a continuing relationship between the political culture and political socialization, both are essential to a political system for its smooth running.

The indicators formulated shown above are the important guidelines in the process of testing both the objective and hypotheses framed in the previous chapter. It acts as a guiding thread in the analysis and evaluation of the research under study.

**Conclusion;** All the theories and reviews on the research topic understudy in one way or the other suggests that, children are socialized to politics by various techniques and methods of political socialization. The scholars have identified various agents of political socialization for internalizing political values by the people in general and children in particular. Most of the studies focus on the agents such as, family, school, peers and mass media. But they failed to reach to an agreement on the question of exact age at which child's political learning begins as well as which one of these agents' influences more on children's learning of political attitudes. The researcher has also observed that, most of the studies tend to suggest that, the family plays a crucial role in the development of formation of political attitudes among young children. Hyman. says that, parental influence is viewed as the key to party and participation. The child is dependent on parents to satisfy his/her basic needs and therefore comes to identify with them and accept their political roles. In this way they concluded that, the role of family is immense in the process of political socialization of children.

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