Almond's Model: Structural Functionalism

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Basic Concepts Defined:

We have already analysed in details the general systems theory as propounded by David Easton which is also called Easton model. But Easton is not the only political scientist who can be credited with being associated with this model or concept. In fact there are a number of political scientists who are actively associated with general systems theory and one of them is Gabriel Almond who died in 2003 at the age of 91. Almond's model is popularly known to the students of political science as structural functionalism.

It is so called because Almond has explained his views keeping these structures of political system in mind. He has, in fact, stressed that every political system has some structures and these structures perform certain functions meant for it. In his noted work The Politics of the Developing Areas Almond has drawn our attention to an interesting issue. He says that though there are differences between developed and developing countries so far as structures are concerned, the structures perform almost similar functions.

What is structure? Here the word structure is used in a sense different from sociological sense. Structure means institutions. Every political system has several institutions such as political party, legislature, executive, judiciary, etc. Almond claims that all these were previously called institutions. But he has changed the nomenclature.

Why has he changed the names? The reason forwarded by Easton is that he wants to adopt concepts and categories which will be suitable for analysing political systems which are radically different from each other. So he wants to adopt such terms as will enable him to analyse and compare all (or at least major) political systems.

His innovative terms do not end with structure. He uses political system instead of state. In his opinion the term state is mainly a legal concept. But political system includes many other ideas besides legality. Almond further says that "power" is a legal term and for that reason he cautiously avoids the use of the term state.

The concept function can conveniently be used. Even the word "function" is more comprehensive. He also prefers role to office. In this way Almond has made strenuous efforts to acquaint his readers with the new concepts and he has expressed his intention of doing this.

Elaborating his intention Almond has said: “the search for new concepts is not an ad hoc matter. It reflects an underlying drift towards a new and coherent way of thinking about and studying politics that is implied in such slogans as behavioural approach…… We are not simply adding terms to an old vocabulary, but rather are in the process of developing or adapting a new one”.

Almond claims that the new terms do not constitute a corpus of conceptual vocabulary but they indicate a new dimension of the nature of political science. He wants to revolutionise the system and study of political science. Almonds’ conceptualisation process has really revolutionised the political science in general and comparative politics in particular.

Why Structural Functionalism?

In structural functionalism the structures of the political system (such as political parties, interest groups, legislatures, executives, bureaucracies and courts) are not clearly defined and properly patterned and yet inspite of this their importance is immense. In the opinion of Stephen Wasby, “In structural-functional analysis, one determines the important structures and then attempts to trace out the functions of these structures”. In every political system there are certain structures and these cannot be confused with each other. So far as the functions are concerned there is certain amount of overlapping among the function of the structures. But this overlapping should not be over-emphasised.

This is a very common picture of every political system. The structural functionalism enables us to have a clear conception about the role of the various structures. This is essential at least for two purposes. One is a student of political science will be able to compare various political systems.

The second is, the student will be able to assess the various aspects of the political system. From the structural-functionalism we come to know about the operational process of the political system. In the concept structural functionalism the students must know both the structures and the functions.

Origin of Structural Functionalism:

Davies and Lewis in their noted work writes: “structural functional analysis can be said to have originated in the biological and mechanical sciences. Within the social sciences it was first used in anthropology and was later developed and refined as a mode of sociological analysis, predominantly by Talcott Parsons”. For clarity and smoothness of thought and analysis we want to make a very brief survey of the origin.

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) is treated as “an inheritor of a long French tradition of social thought”.

Durkheim elaborately analysed the basic structure of society, their various parts, different social systems and he did this in an organismic outlook. Society, according to Durkheim, is to be viewed as an entity. There are several parts of any society and all of them are well-connected.

The parts perform their allotted duties but the parts are not completely independent on each other. He also viewed that the systems or the parts of the society are quite normal divisions and the functions which they perform are also normal.

Two renowned anthropologists Bronislaw and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown were heavily influenced by the organicism of Durkheim. Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1955) believed that the concept of function applied to human society is based on an analogy between social life and organic life.

Radcliffe-Brown’s views have been summarised by Turner in the following manner:

(1) One necessary condition for survival of a society is minimal integration of its parts.

(2) The term function refers to those processes that maintain this necessary integration.

(3) In each society structural features can be shown to contribute to the maintenance of necessary solidarity. In this way, briefly stated, Radcliffe-Brown has offered us a picture of structural functional feature of any system especially social system.

Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1947) is another sociologist who introduced structural functionalism to the study of society. He has divided the society into three system levels: the biological, the social-structural and symbolic.

Turner writes: “At each of these levels one can discern basic needs or survival requisites that must be met if biological health, social structural integrity and cultural unity are to exist. These system levels constitute a hierarchy with biological systems at bottom. He stressed that the way in which needs are met in one system level sets constraints on how they are met at the next level in the hierarchy”.

Talcott Parsons:

The structural functionalism has also been elaborated by Talcott Parsons who “was most probably the most dominant theorist of his time. It is unlikely that any one theoretical approach will so dominate sociological theory again”. This assessment of Turner about Parsons is not without any reason.

In the fields of sociology and structural functionalism the contribution of Parsons is still gratefully remembered by the students of sociology and political science. Parsons has pointed out four

important prerequisites of structural functionalism and these we can treat as the main functions of structural functionalism.

These are adaptation, goal attainment, integration and latency. Adaptation involves the problem of securing from the environment sufficient facilities and then distributing these facilities through-out the system. Goal attainment denotes the problems of establishing priorities among system goals and mobilising system resources for their attainment. Integration refers to the problem of coordinating and maintaining viable interrelationships among system units.

Latency implies two related problems—one is pattern maintenance and the other is tension management. There are many actors in the social system and how they play their role that requires to be ascertained. In every system there arises tension and conflict and all these should be managed. In any system there are many subsystems and all these functions are performed by them.

Characteristics of Political System:

Mention has been made that Almond's analysis has built-up a huge structure of general systems theory and he has thrown light on the subject from different angle.

According to Almond all the political systems have in common four main characteristics. He has also admitted that there may be minor variations in some of the characteristics but the main theme remains unaltered.

The characteristics are:

(1) There are simple and complex political systems in different parts of the globe. The industrialised matured societies of the West have complex political structures where as the developing countries of the Third World have simple structures. Almond's point is that all the political systems have political structures.

Even the simplest political systems have political structures which may be compared with the developed structures of the West. Almond has admitted that the comparison between two types of structures may not be completely relevant but they can be compared. Moreover, -the emergence of the new state systems in the Third World encouraged Almond to devise a technique that will be helpful for comparison. Here lies the credit of Almond.

2. There may be differences between the systems and structures but all the systems perform almost same political functions. For the purpose of comparative analysis the frequency of the performance can be studied.

3. The political structures may be specialised, non-specialised or may be primitive. But thorough study of the various aspects has revealed that the structures are multifunctional which means that

though the functions of a particular structure have been specifically stated, in practice the structure performs other functions.

For example, the chief function of the court is to adjudicate, but in practice it performs legislative functions. In the same way the legislative wing of the government has been found to act like a court of law. In liberal democracies the pressure groups participate in the legislative function. In both democratic and authoritarian systems the multifunctional character of structure is found.

4. All political systems are mixed systems in the cultural sense. The culture of any political system is the mixture of modern and traditional cultures. From the study of the cultures of various political systems Almond has found that there cannot exist any all-modern and all-primitive cultures. Even the cultures of primitive political systems are partially moulded by the developed cultures of the West.

Of course there may be difference of predominance of any particular culture on the cultural aspects of another system. For example, during the British rule Indian society and culture were influenced by British culture. But at the same time the British culture and society could not keep itself away from Indian culture.

However, the percentage of mixture may be different in both cases. There are also stages in the process of assimilation. These are the four main characteristics of all the political systems and by finding out the characteristics Almond has made attempt to generalise the political systems.

Functions of Political Systems:

The chief objective of Almond was to make a comparative study of the major political systems and for that purpose what he has done ultimately became the foundation of general systems theory/analysis. For the purposes of comparison Gabriel Almond has divided the functions of political system into two broad categories—Input functions and output functions.

Easton and Almond have borrowed the terms—input and output from economics for the purpose of analysing the functions and behaviour of political systems and their different structures. This approach helps comparison considerably.

The input functions are:

1. Political socialisation and recruitment.

2. Interest articulation

3. Interest aggregation

4. Political communication.

The output functions are:

1. Rule making

2. Rule adjudication

3. Rule application.

If we focus our attention to these two types of functions performed by political systems we shall find that the input functions are generally done by the nongovernmental organisations and agencies which include pressure groups, interest groups, parties, educational institutions. The government has very little part to play in the input functions.

While performing the input functions the agencies have little scope to violate the common law and existing legal and constitutional structure. But if the agencies have in mind the idea of changing the existing structure, they can do otherwise.

Input Functions:

(i) Political Socialisation and Recruitment:

The first input function of the political system is political socialisation and recruitment. One expert of political socialisation calls it “a continuous learning process involving both emotional learning and manifest political indoctrination”. Through the process if political socialisation people gradually adjust themselves with the political system. “Political system” defines Almond “is the process of induction into the political culture. Its end product is a set of attitudes—cognitions, value standards and feelings —towards the political system, its various roles and role incumbents”.

In developed political systems of the West schools, churches, political parties and other voluntary organisations generally play the leading role in socialising the people. The socialisation process is not very much prominent in the Third World states but the very existence can never be denied. As society gradually develops the process of socialisation also proceeds.

From the study of political system Almond has come to know that socialisation may be latent and manifest. When the transmission of values, ideas, thoughts, feelings etc takes place in a direct way, it may be called manifest socialisation. Latent political socialisation does not take place directly.

The values, thoughts, ideas, feelings of one system are influenced by those of other systems. Both latent and manifest socialisation work simultaneously in any political system and both are important. In order to revolutionise the people’s thought and outlook the latent method is resorted to.

When the boundaries of political systems are not clearly demarcated the differences among the different cultures are found to be insignificant. In that situation political socialisation fails to assume a clear shape. But when the boundaries are well-settled the impact of one culture falls upon the culture of another political system and vice versa. In this way the political socialisation advances.

Defining political recruitment Almond says: “Political recruitment function takes up where the general political socialisation function leaves off. It recruits members of the society out of particular subcultures, religious communities, statuses, classes, ethnic communities and the-like and inducts them into specialised roles of the political system, trains them in approapriate skills, provides them with political cognitive maps, values, expectations and affects”.

The definition is self-explanatory. Here also the non-governmental orgnisations such as political parties, groups etc. recruit persons and train them to perform specific functions. The purpose of political recruitment is to train the general public to make them suitable for the political system.

The objective of both political socialisation and recruitment is to ensure the stability of the political system. If any external force threatens the political system the citizens, on their part, can resist it and socialisation makes it possible. Plato suggested a scheme of education for the ideal state whose purpose was to train the citizens to make them suitable for ideal state. It is also socialisation.

(ii) Interest Articulation:

The second important input function of political systems is interest articulation. In every political system, specifically pluralist political system, citizens claim the fulfilment of their demands or materialisation of interests.

But there is a big gap between the raising of demands and their realisation. Demands must be placed before the competent authority in an articulated form and they must pass through proper channel. So we find that both the articulation of demands and their placement are vital.

From the analysis of Almond we come to know that the interest articulation is a complicated and broad concept. Many agencies are involved in this function.

Almond has pointed out four such agencies:

(1) Institutional interest groups.

(2) Non- associational interest groups,

(3) Anomic interest groups and

(4) Associational interest groups.

Institutional interest groups generally consist of legislatures, executives, bureaucracies etc. These institutional interest groups articulate interests (of their own) in various ways and they exert pressure upon the authority for the realisation of interests.

The institutional interest group is a formally organised group and consists of professional persons. Particularly the bureaucracy in various ways creates pressure upon the authority for the fulfilment of their demands and the authority is forced to act accordingly.

There are non-associational interest groups. People form associations or groups out of their sociable character. Man is by nature a social animal. But non-associational interest groups are formed on the basis of different grounds. Such groups are formed by persons of the same religious, ethnic or family, community. Affinity develops among the people of the same religion, ethnic group, or kinship.

The members of the non-associational groups complain about their non-delegation to the legislature, or the non-fulfilment of their legitimate demands. The presence of non-associational interest groups is very common in developing societies because of the great attachment of people to religion, kinship, caste etc.

It has been found that these groups or subgroups fight together against the authority and on political consideration the authority of the political system is forced to comply with their demands.

In almost all political systems riots or militant demonstrations frequently erupt and these are led by men who want to snatch away few privileges from the political system. These groups are called anomic interest group. These groups have no permanent structure or organisations. On certain important political or social or economic issues they spontaneously form agitation or lead demonstrations.

Emphasising their role Almond says that the anomic groups besides articulating interests also perform adjudication functions, rule application function such as to free the prisoners and communication function which means communicating the news to various anomic interest groups.

Finally we shall deal with associational groups. Such groups are formed by the trade unions, businessmen, industrialists or professional groups and persons. The articulation of interest by such groups is quite prominent in all political systems. Trade unions create pressure upon the industries or authority in support of their demands and if necessary launch agitation.

This form of technique to articulate interest is not only common but also very effective. In democratic countries the right to form association and through it to process is an important right and workers and professional groups taking this opportunity agitate for realisation of demands.

In the opinion of Almond: “The performance of the interest articulation function may be manifest or latent, specific or diffuse, general or particular, instrumental or affective in style”.

Sometimes the groups or agitators place specific demands before the authority such as revision of pay scale or lessening of working hour etc. This is called manifest interest articulation. If the groups demand in indirect or ambiguous ways and do not demand specific solution and do not place clear formulations it may be called latent interest articulation.

The failure of the political system forces the people to demand that the present political system should be changed. Capitalism is to be replaced by socialism. The demands may be of general type such as poor people should be given more financial relief and rich people ought to be taxed more. In all these forms, interest articulation takes place.

(iii) Interest Aggregation:

Interest aggregation is the third function of the political system. In our analysis of the second function we have noted that various organisations, groups and agencies as well as political parties raise demands and grievances in an articulated form. Now the problem is mere placing of demands or problems is not sufficient for their translation into fruitful policies. For that reason the issue of interest aggregation arises.

Various demands and claims are to be aggregated into a consolidated form and after that the political system takes action. “Aggregation may be accomplished by means of the formulation of general policies in which interests are combined, accommodated or otherwise taken account of or by means of recruitment of political personnel, more or less committed to a particular pattern of policy”.

The political system cannot take separate steps or adopt measures for each set of demands and claims. Naturally a general policy is formulated which covers all demands and claims. Almond’s specification of interest articulation and interest aggregation does not always work in all systems. In developed political systems these two are clearly demarcated but not in less developed systems.

In democratic countries the process of interest articulation and interest aggregation are different because the voluntary organisations demand-to the government on behalf of the common people and these are passed through different channels to the authority. But in authoritarian system of administration or in tribal society both the functions are performed by same person.

(iv) Political Communication Function:

So far we have noted the three different functions of political system—political socialisation, interest articulation and interest aggregation. These three functions are performed by means of political communication. All sorts of interests are articulated through communication and, again,

they are aggregated by means of communication. Naturally, without communication the political system will not be in a position to discharge any function.

In every political system there must exist a network of elaborate communication system and it must have enough autonomy to work independently. We can treat it as an important precondition and it is essential for successful functioning of the political system. All the organisations must have freedom to articulate interests, these, after being aggregated, must be communicated to the relevant authority.

Since in authoritarian systems there is no elaborate and effective network of political communication a political system is generally characterised by the political communication function. “Thus it is essential in characterising a political system to analyse the performance of the communication function. Just because of the fact that all the political functions are performed by means of communications political communication is the crucial boundary-maintenance function.” In one area or subsystem claims are made and it is transmitted to another subsystem through communication.

The success of the input functions of the political system to a large extent, depends upon the efficient and independent network of communication. But is unfortunate that such a network is not always available in all systems. Governments are inclined to control communication.

Output Functions:

Output functions of political system include—rule making, rule application and rule adjudication. Gabriel Almond and many others have made thorough study about the output functions of various political systems and he has concluded that the output functions or the governmental functions are not uniform in all political systems.

In liberal democracies such as United States, Britain, France, Canada etc. the governmental functions bear striking similarities. But in the newly independent states of the Third World these functions assume different nature. This is mainly due to the nature of their political systems.

Edward Shills in the Political Development of the New States has divided the new states into the following categories:

1. One category is political democracy. In political democracies legislature, executive and judiciary are comparatively autonomous and their functions are different. The parties and groups also enjoy sufficient freedom in discharge of their functions.

2. There are tutelary democracies in some countries. The characteristic feature of such democracies is there is the combination of the formal forms of democracy and the structural forms of democracy. Elites have gained ascendancy over other groups and classes. In such democracies the legislature and judiciary are not allowed to enjoy full autonomy and authority.

In fact, power is concentrated in the executive and bureaucracy. Executive and the bureaucracy are controlled by elites. The formal structure is maintained.

3. Modernising oligarchies are characterised by powerful bureaucracy. Also, army has a tremendous influence in the administration of state. Top-ranking army officers and bureaucrats control the administration. In such types of political systems emphasis on economic development is laid.

4. Totalitarian oligarchic systems are found in some countries. The entire state administration is controlled by ruling elite, top bureaucrats, party bosses and leaders. 'Common people or the rank and file of the party has no say in the policy formulation and implementation. It has been maintained that is former Soviet Union and other communist states totalitarian oligarchy existed.

5. There is, finally, traditional oligarchy. Hereditary or dynastic monarchy falls in this category. Relatives and henchmen of monarchy are generally recruited to the posts of top bureaucracy. In fact, these persons fully control the state administration in the name of the king. The structures of government in ancient India and European countries belonged to this category. Ordinary people had no access to power and authority. The priests and relatives of king enjoyed power.

The common forms of political system found in the Third World states are tutelary democracy, modernising oligarchy and traditional oligarchy. The three governmental functions are not clearly defined which exists in political democracies. Such democratic systems prevail in Japan, Israel, and Turkey etc.

Adaptation and Change:

The core idea of Almond's structural functionalism is how the structures of the political system function and how (through the functions and other ways) adjusts with other systems as well as with the environment surrounding it. This, like Easton's analysis, lays the foundation of general system analysis.

It has been held by Almond and many others that behind the building up of a general system there is the very crucial role of adaptation and change. The two, of course, cannot be effectively separated. If the political system adjusts (or adapts) itself with the new challenges emanating from the environment, then that means that the political system has succeeded is adapting with the outer conditions which we call the environment.

Again, change travels with the adjustment or adaptation. Adaptation means make suitable for a new use or purpose. When a political system is faced with new circumstances, it cannot outright neglect or reject them. So it tries to accommodate itself with the new situation. Moreover, in a democratic set up, it is not an easy task to neglect the new situation because the citizens might have support or weakness for these.

Naturally, the political system will gradually adjust itself with the challenges. This adaptation or adjustment brings about change in the political system. The change is inevitable because in an open system the political system cannot keep itself aloof from other systems. Thus adaptation and change are linked.

We thus find that Almond's theory of general system is also a theory of political change. Because of the influence of outer factors the political system is impelled to adapt itself with them and this finally causes change. This change may be qualitative or quantitative. But the fact remains that in both Easton's and Almond's general systems analysis there is both adaptation and change.

Almond's theory of political change denotes: "those transactions between political system and its environment that affect changes in general system performance". The traditional political scientists did not deal with the concept of political change so elaborately. Their main concern was the functions of institutions.

Almond calls this adaptation or adjustment conversion process. The demands or claims coming from other systems or from the environment do not remain unattended. Today or tomorrow they are converted into decisions or policies. The demands, claims and supports for these are called inputs and the decisions/policies are called outputs. This is the conversion process. Inputs are converted into outputs. The conversion takes place through feedback.

But the conversion depends upon the capabilities of the political system. Here capabilities indicate the ability of the political system to receive the demands and claims (which are called inputs) and to act accordingly (which means to implement them). The question of the augmentation of capability is also a pertinent issue.

For this purpose it is essential on the part of the political system to proceed the work of political socialisation and political recruitment. This will help the political system to create a support base for the existing system. "Thus" Almond asserts, "capabilities analysis is the method by which the empirical investigation of political system is undertaken. It links the deductive analysis with the reality".

How does the change take place? It is the function of political system to respond to the demands, claims and supports and this finally leads to change.

Almond identifies three different sources from which these originate:

(1) The elites and their associates and affiliated groups.

(2) Numerous social groups and organisations which are active in the society and the environment.

(3) Finally, within the political system the demands may originate. Whatever may the sources of demands be, the political system, for convenience, should respond. It is mainly due to the fact that if the political system deliberately neglects the demands some sort of political turmoil will disturb the political system. So, for the sake of stability of political system, it is really incumbent for it to take care of demands and to do something so that stability is not disturbed.

Almond's system analysis also throws light on the stability and, along with it, the balance or equilibrium. Both Easton and Almond were concerned with the stability of the political system. This stability largely depends on the equilibrium position or the balance between inputs and outputs.

Explaining Almond's views, Davies and Lewis have made the following observation: "A political system is stable when the flow of inputs and outputs is such that inputs are converted in a way that does not result in any strains (emphasis added) being imposed on the systemic capacity to respond to them) for such strains may have led the structure of the system itself to suffer basic changes".

Both Easton and Almond have greatly emphasised the stability of political system and this they have done purposely. Their purpose was to counteract the advance of Marxism. Their intention was to prove that liberalism was superior to Marxism.

Easton, Almond and several other exponents apprehended that Marxism would destabilize the American system, and for that reason they vigorously argued that the self-regulatory mechanism of capitalism had the ability to resist any attack on it and restore (if it is at all disturbed) equilibrium or stability.

Hence we find that the stability, equilibrium, balance etc. are specially coined terms to denote the nature and function of political system. We have already noted that Easton and Almond were concerned about the rapid progress of Marxism and they built up a theoretical structure which would be capable to resist any external onslaught.

They believed that the capitalist system possesses certain self-regulatory mechanisms by which can defend itself. The internal system or arrangement can combat any recalcitrant elements/forces. In order to strengthen their stand both Easton and Almond have strenuously advocated the general systems theory.

An Evaluation:

Structural functionalism strongly advocated and minutely elaborated by Gabriel Almond suffers from a number of shortcomings some of which are:

1. The critics are of opinion that Almond borrowed the chief elements and aspects of his structural functionalism mainly from sociology and specifically from Parsons —the most noted

sociologist of the second-half of the twentieth century. The problem is the term and concepts having abundant relevance in sociology may not have the same in political science.

But Almond's structural functionalism has done it and because of this the sociological terms applied in political science do not carry with them proper meaning and importance. The critics are of the view that this method of analysis makes the subject cumbersome.

For example, he has used "system" and "interactions" which have been borrowed from anthropology. But the import of the two terms in political system is unlikely to be same and the entire analysis appears to be confused.

2. Defining political system Almond says that interaction is to be found in all independent societies that is in order to be a system there shall be interactions among various parts or subsystems of independent societies. Now critics say that what is exactly meant by "independent" is not clear from Almond's definition. Are the societies free from foreign domination? If it so means then should we say that a system does not exist in societies controlled by foreign power? We cannot form a definite reply.

Hence the ambiguity overcasts the definition of Almond. It would have been better if he had clarified his stand. We are, however, of opinion that Almond uses the term independent in general sense. A society will be called independent if it enjoys power to take decision.

3. Some critics are of the view that he has thrown very little light on the structural aspects of political systems. He has given them new nomenclatures. He calls state a political system, institutions, structures etc. But by giving new names he has not been able to change the character and functions of political system/state.

The units remain the same and there do not occur changes in functions, behaviour etc. We can say that the structural functionalism of Almond can, at best, be called a new attempt to view politics/states. It can be called a model and not more than that.

4. Numerous factors operate behind the interaction among the system. But it is unfortunate that he has not drawn our attention to these factors. We believe that for a comprehensive analysis and for the purpose of general systems theory all these are to be brought into active consideration. Otherwise, the general systems theory will remain incomplete.

5. The gravest charge against Almond is he has, in a clandestine way, supported the existing structure of the capitalist system. He wants to establish that the capitalist system, through its management and self-regulatory mechanism, can defend itself. It is a better system in comparison with other systems.

6. In spite of all these criticisms one might say that Almond's model (structural functionalism) is the most suitable one for comparative analyses and we come to know from his writings that he

modelled this aiming at a comparative analysis. We think that his purpose has been served. With the help of structural functionalism we can easily compare the different political systems. Not only this, his model will help us compare the various systems systematically and methodologically.

7. In this age of globalisation his model has a clear and overriding importance. Because of the tremendous impact of globalisation the world has become too small. Almost all the countries of this world have come closer and no state can claim that it is outside the influence of other states. Naturally, the influence of one or more states is bound to fall on the activities and systems of other states.

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In the light of this we can say that Almond's theory has special significance. The political, cultural, economic and other elements, today, can very easily create impact upon different states. This influence is never a one-way traffic.

The result is that the structural functionalism of Almond has received new dimensions in this age of globalisation. Particularly the capitalist states of the West are, in different ways, influencing and dominating the states of the Third World. We must take note of it.

8. There is no denying the fact that the General Systems Theory has opened the new vistas of comparative politics. Though Aristotle is considered by many as the originator of comparative politics, the credit of expanding its base and periphery should go to Almond. To do justice to Almond, one must say that it is Almond who has modernised and popularised the concept of comparative politics.

9. It is true that the main purpose of Almond and his supporters was to corner the advance of Marxism. But simultaneously it is also true that he has strengthened the foundation of liberalism.

10. Some critics object to the use of terms borrowed from other disciplines but only this method has enhanced the acceptability and reliability of political science.