**Political Systems: Meaning, Functions and Types of Political Systems**

**Meaning:**

Each society must have a political system in order to maintain recognized procedures for allocating valuable resources. In large complex societies, many decisions must be made about the duties and responsibilities of citizens and also about the rights and privileges.

If the society is to be orderly, people must obey the rules that are made. The political institution determines and enforces the laws and punish those who disobey them.

Even in stateless societies which had no developed formal central institutions were seen having some kind of decision-making and rule-making processes which were dominated by some members. As societies become wealthier and more complex, political systems develop and grow more powerful.

According to renowned political scientists, Gabriel Almond and James Coleman (1960), ***‘Political system is that system of interactions to be found in all independent societies which performs the functions of integration and adaptation by means of legitimate physical compulsion***.’

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Sociology (1994) defines it as, ***‘a political system in any persistent pattern of human relationship that involves (to a significant extent) power, rule and authority.’ It is a collectivity of political institutions (e.g., government), associations (e.g., political parties) and organizations performing roles based on a set of norms and goals (like maintaining internal order, regulating foreign relations, etc.). Sociologically, the term ‘political system’ refers to the social institution which relies on a recognized set of procedures for implementing and achieving the political goals of a community or society.***

**Functions of a Political System:**

Almond and Coleman (1960) have described the following three main functions of a political system:

1. To maintain integration of society by determining norms.

2. To adapt and change elements of social, economic, religious systems necessary for achieving collective (political) goals.

3. To protect the integrity of the political system from outside threats.

They have grouped these functions into two categories:

 (1) Input functions—political socialization, interest articulation, interest aggregation, and political communication; and

2) output functions—rule making, rule appli­cation and rule adjudication.

Eisenstadt (1966) has classified the functions of a political system as:

 (1)legislative,

 (2)decision-making, and

(3)administrative.