**Question: What is behaviouralism? What are its basic elements? (2019)**

**Answer**

The exponents of this approach are Charles Merriam, David Easton, Almond, Sidney Verba, Robert Dahl, David Apter, Harold Lasswell, V.O Key, Herbert Simon, Arthur Bently, David Truman, etc. Charles Merriam was called the father of Behaviouralism.

The behavioural approach is an attempt to improve understanding of political science using systematic methods with emphasis on empirical data, so that political process could be interpreted scientifically. Beviouralists favour inters- disciplinary approach in analyzing and predicting political phenomena. Behaviouralists mostly drown to subject about whom quantitative data could be obtained and thus the study of mass political behaviour was promoted at the expense of studying just the state. Their argument is based on the explanation that individuals run the state and in order to understand state behaviour one need to understand the behaviour of the individuals, their reasons, emotions, prejudices, intuitions and disposition. In international politics also attention should be focused not on the state, organization, but on the reasons, motivations, feelings, interest of the individuals.

**Definitions**

1. *Behaviouralism is “An empirical and enduring theory about political life*.” Arnold Bretch.

1. *“A protest movement within* Political Behaviour comprehends those actions *political science.*” Robert Dhal
2. “*The* *term and interactions of men and groups which are involved in the* *process of governing.”* David Truman.
3. *“A systematic empirical causal explanation of certain phenomena*” Gild and Palmer.

**Features of behaviouralism**

David Easton, Kirkpatrick and Eula offered some features of behaviouralism from their own perspective. But the core aspects of these features are the same.

**Features mentioned by David Easton**

David Easton, one of the pioneers of Behaviouralist movement mentioned some assumptions regarding behaviouralism and he coined these assumptions as the “Intellectual Foundation Stone”. These assumptions are mentioned as follows:

1. **Regularities:** According to the behaviouralists, there are some similarities in the political behaviour of the individuals which can be expressed as theory for the prediction of particular political phenomena. Though human behaviour may be vary as per time and situation yet in a particular situation they show similar behaviour which helps to build theory. The regularities of political behaviour of the individuals can be observed at the time of elections.
2. **Verification:** The behaviouralists do not believe on the abstract aspect. They only give importance on the facts which can be scientifically tested. For instance, the data which are collected from the election commissions are not abstract but are empirical in nature, the collected data can be verified and through the analysis of data the behaviour of the electorates can be predicted.

**Techniques:** Without proper techniques and methods it is not possible to analyze the collected data. Therefore, the behaviouralists’ emphasis to proper techniques and methods to the study of political events. In research activities techniques like interview, questionnaire, sampling etc. should be used for the collection of data. In India, Centre for the Study of Developing Society (CSDS) uses different techniques like questionnaire and sampling to study the electoral behaviour of the Indian voters.

1. **Quantification:** The quantification implies that there should not be any abstract prediction of any events happened in the society. The prediction should be clear cut and it should be expressed mathematically. For instance, if a researcher conducts an election survey, he will not predict that a particular community has casted vote for a particular political party. Rather he should say the percentage of casting of vote of particular community for a particular party.
2. **Value Neutrality:** The goals and objectives of the behaviouralists are to study and analyze the political phenomena objectively. Therefore, they should totally discard the values in their study. According to them, the researchers should not be biased or value oriented. Like natural science, neutrality should be maintained in social science research activities. The political scientists should not give any opinion like, “What ought to be” or “What should to be”. They should say “what is” in their study.
3. **Systemization:** Systemization implies that there should be close relationship between collected data and theories building. The theories should have close link with research. Research untutored by theory may prove trivial and theory unsupported by data may turn out to be futile.
4. **Pure science:** The primary goals and objectives of the behaviouralists are to make the study of political science scientific, using scientific methodologies which are used in natural or pure science.
5. **Integration:** The behavioralists advocate inter-disciplinary approach to their study. They do not treat political science as separate discipline from other social sciences. They view that political science is one of the branches of social science. They want to link the social problems with political problems. Therefore, political science should be integrated with other social sciences like psychology, sociology and economics. The political behavior of the people can be studied only understanding how other social, economic and cultural factors influence it.