

GAUHATI UNIVERSITY

Institute of Distance and Open Learning



Semester- I



Paper - POL 1016
WESTERN POLITICAL THOUGHT

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**MA in Political Science
(under CBCS)**

POL-05-I-1016

GAUHATI UNIVERSITY
Institute of Distance and Open Learning

M.A. First Semester
(under CBCS)

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Paper: POL 1016
WESTERN POLITICAL THOUGHT



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May, 2021

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BLOCK- I
FUNDAMENTALS OF MODERN
POLITICAL THINKERS

UNIT 1: RENAISSANCE AND ITS IMPACT ON POLITICAL THEORY

Unit Structure :

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Meaning of Renaissance
- 1.4 Medieval period and Renaissance
- 1.5 Impact of Renaissance in different Areas
- 1.6 Renaissance and Political theory
- 1.7 Summing Up
- 1.8 References and Suggested Readings

1.1 INTRODUCTION

We all are familiar with the common idea of Renaissance that took place in the fields of art, culture, science and technology and literature in the 14th to 16th centuries. It brought changes in political and economic structure of Italy which resulted in major transformations in Europe. Literally Renaissance stands for rebirth. Thus, Renaissance that took place in Europe signifies revival and rediscovery of rational, secular, scientific spirit as well as thinking. It touched all the fields of knowledge and there was overall revival in different fields like philosophy, religion, art, literature, politics and science.

In Europe, Renaissance brought major transformation in the socio-political lives too. By ending feudal order, Renaissance laid the foundation for a new social order. In the political area, it helped in the rise of strong central governments while in the economic field it witnessed flourishing of economy based on commerce and agriculture. In this unit we are discussing about Renaissance and its impact on political theory. Reading of this unit will help you to understand the impact of Renaissance in different Areas and Renaissance and Political theory.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

Before the advent of modern period, there was Renaissance in Europe which brought many changes in the social, cultural, political lives of the people. The Renaissance has brought unprecedented changes in the socio-political and cultural lives of the people. It is also known as

thereawakening. This unit discusses how Renaissance marks a discontinuation from the Medieval period in all spheres of lives. Further this unit also attempts to discuss the meaning of Renaissance and its impact on different spheres of lives. Moreover, this unit aims at analysing the process of Renaissance of Europe and its impact on the political theory. After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the meaning of Renaissance
- describe reformations and revolutions brought by Renaissance in different areas
- examine the impact of Renaissance in Political theory

1.3 Meaning of Renaissance

We all know that Renaissance was a transition period between the medieval era and the modern world and it stands for rebirth or revival. Thus, Renaissance signifies a rebirth of the human spirit in the attainment of liberty, self-confidence and optimism. It stands for the essential goodness of the individual, the beauty and the glory of the earth, the significance of the supernatural and the importance of the present etc.

During Renaissance, Italy witnessed intense political turmoil affecting and involving the dominant city states of Florence, Milan, Venice etc and the Holy Roman Empire. Affirming the dignity and excellence of the individuals, Humanism is the cornerstone of Renaissance began in the later half of the 14th century. Thus, Renaissance stands for a return to a pre-Christian attitude towards humans, God and nature and signals a breakdown of a unified Christian society. According to historian H. G wells, the Renaissance actually emerged in the twelfth century and “there were many signs that the European intelligence was recovering courage and leisure.”As mentioned earlier, Renaissance, reformation has made the political, socio-cultural life upside down. Renaissance makes a drastic change in the whole thinking process of the individuals.

Here you must remember that Renaissance is not merely revival. It also paved the way for new beginning, thinking, and discovery in the fields of art, literature, religion, philosophy, science and politics leading to new discoveries. Now let us have a look at the significant characteristics of Renaissance:

i). **Humanism:** The first characteristics of renaissance may be sited as emphasis on humanism. Concept of humanism stands for freedom of the individuals and his inalienable rights. Most importantly, it glorifies human beings. By urging man to seek joy on this earth rather than after life, it marked a significant departure from the Middle Age. It thus delimits the role of the divine body and emphasises on human capacity and reasoning. Thus, the idea of humanism taught mankind to believe in his worth and dignity and to have faith in his creative potential. It also stands for awakening of mind and freedom of thought and expression.

ii). **Secularism:** Renaissance inspired the artists to present their art in new forms by making it free from religious domain. We all know that the medieval period is dominated by religious thoughts. By incorporating the idea of Secular art and literature, the Renaissance brought about a revolutionary change in this field as well as instilled a secular outlook in the individuals.

iii). **Scientific thinking and discovery:** Scientific thinking and discovery are also the important features of Renaissance. There was intellectual rebirth, thirst for knowledge and development of scientific outlook. The people developed the spirit of discovery which paved the way for the modern era.

iv). **Reason and Rationality:** Renaissance created an atmosphere where everybody started questioning things and tried to justify everything with reason. Thus reason and rationality had replaced superstitions and conservativeness. There was a tendency to view everything from a scientific point of view and look into the world with inquisitiveness. People became critique of everything that did not have any scientific basis.

Thus, impact of Renaissance was huge in all sections of the society. There were revolutionary changes in the thinking process as well as outlook of all. We can say that scientists and reformers made significant contribution towards changing outlook and shedding the age old values and thoughts. These gradually led to the revival in the spirit of secular thoughts and scientific spirits. There was thirst for knowledge and discovery in Renaissance period. People developed curiosity and start questioning things. Man desired to know the unknown and see the unseen. People started exploring new areas and took up voyages. Because of such efforts, Columbus reached America and Vasco- da Gama reached India.

Stop to Consider:**Renaissance in India:**

Renaissance in India started much later than Renaissance in Europe. In India it started in the mid of 19th century when there was social and cultural awakenings inspired by the Western concepts of reason, rationality, equality, liberty and secular beliefs. Many term this Renaissance as Bengal Renaissance and Raja Ram Mohan Roy is known as the father of this Renaissance. Roy who was the founder of Brahma Samaj fought against the social evils and malpractices prevailed at that time in India. The Brahma Samaj and Some other socio religious movements of that period mainly fought against practices like Child Marriage, Sati system, Purdah System etc. Moreover, they also encouraged widow remarriage and women education.

Indian Renaissance besides fighting against the social evils also tried to reinterpret Indian religious scriptures and rituals. Along with Raja Ram Mohan Roy, some other names closely associated with this renaissance were Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Annie Besant, Ram Manohar Lohia etc. Thus, Indian Renaissance resulted in socio-religious reforms mainly inspired by Western literature, thought and philosophy. It significantly contributed towards all round development of individuals as well as spreading the spirit of revivalism to all sections of the society. It sought to establish faith in India's glory and to instil a sense of self-respect and confidence among Indians. Indian Renaissance is closely related to Indian Nationalism too.

1.4 Medieval period and Renaissance

The Medieval period lasted for almost 1000 years from about 500 A.D. to 1450 A.D. This unit is an attempt to discuss revolutionary changes brought about by the Renaissance in the thoughts and beliefs of the individuals. However, without studying the medieval period and the prevailing system of that period we will not be in a position to understand the concept of Renaissance as well as the revivalism and reawakening associated with renaissance. Hence, in this section let us make an attempt to discuss Medieval period and how Renaissance makes a departure from this period and thinking.

From the discussions in the above sections, we have understood that 'Renaissance' connotes 'Rebirth'. Here rebirth marked revival of social non-political activities predominated and political thought did not make any progress. There was conflict between state and the Church. The medieval period is marked with superstitions, narrow minded-ness and religious conservatism. The scientific outlook was totally missing in such an environment. Hence, this period is known as Dark Phase of history where there was almost no progress in art, literature and science.

The term Middle Ages denotes the period which is a deviation from the path of classical learning supposed to be reconnected by Renaissance scholarship. Originally, the term characterizes the Middle Ages as a period of intellectual darkness existing between the extinguishing of the light of Rome and the Renaissance or rebirth from the 14th century onwards. Today it is frequently applied only to the earlier part of the era, the Early Middle Ages. The Early Middle Ages exemplifies the trend of depopulation, de-urbanisation and increased barbarian invasion. During this period, barbarian Goths, Vandals and Huns invaded Europe from the north and east. They destroyed many fine buildings and works of art existing during the Roman period. During this period, knowledge survived only in monasteries and there were very few schools. Many of the old arts and crafts were lost and the phase is called the dark ages.

This period witnessed the cultural and economic decline and disruption that took place in Western Europe following the decline of the Roman Empire. The concept of a dark age originated with the Italian scholar Petrarch in 1330's and was originally intended as a criticism of the characteristics of Latin literature. Petrarch regarded the centuries since the fall of Rome as dark compared to the light of classical antiquity. Later, the historians restricted it between the Roman period and High Middle Ages. This period witnessed not only the lack of Latin literature but also the lack of contemporary written history, general demographic decline, limited building activity, and material cultural achievements in general. Christian writers including Petrarch himself used traditional metaphors of 'Light versus Darkness' to describe 'Good versus Evil'.

Petrarch wrote that history could be divided into two periods- the classic period of the Greeks and Romans followed by a time of darkness, in which he saw himself as still living. In the conclusion to his epic Africa written around 1343 he opined "my fate is to live among varied and confusing storms. But for you perhaps, if as I hope and wish you will live long after me, there will follow a better age.

This sleep of forgetfulness will not last for ever. When the darkness has been dispersed, our descendants can come again in the former pure radiance”. (Petrarch, 134, Africa IX, 451-7).

By the late 14th and early 15th centuries, humanists such as Leonardo Bruni believed that they had sensed the beginning of a third modern age. When the modern scholarly study of Middle Ages arose in the 19th century, the term ‘dark ages’ was widely used by historians. However, the early 20th century saw a radical re-evaluation of the Middle Ages as well as the question of the terminology of darkness. However, many historians are of the view that the Medieval period often seems ‘dark’ to us because of the paucity of historical records compared with both earlier and later times.

The public idea of the Middle Ages as the dark ages also reflected misconceptions regarding the study of nature during that period. The contemporary historians of science David C. Lindberg and Ronald Numbers discuss the widespread popular belief that the Middle Ages are a time of ignorance and superstitions, the blame for which is to be laid on Christian Church for allegedly placing the word of religious authorities over personal experience and rational activity.

At first Renaissance began in Italy and later it influenced the whole of Europe. It marked the beginning of modern thinking guided by secular ideas, rational and scientific beliefs. Thus Renaissance makes a significant departure from Medieval period and opened a new horizon of ideas.

SAQ

According to you how far the negative features of the Medieval Age are responsible for the Renaissance in Europe?

1.5 Impact of Renaissance in different Areas of human lives:

From the definition of Renaissance, we have learnt that it touched all aspects of the lives of the individuals and thus there were revolutionary changes. In the political fields also there were marked

differences from the Medieval period. Because of awakening and faith in rationality, people from all sections become more aware of their rights and obligations. Such consciousness had resulted in more and more demand for rights and privileges in the society. Renaissance paved the way for establishing a modern world free from superstitious beliefs and unscientific concepts and conservative outlooks. In this period, Scientists, Philosophers, Political theorists, economists, historians all started challenging the old ideas and contributed towards creating a modern world.

Now, there are different opinions regarding the areas where Renaissance took place. Most of the thinkers are of the opinion that Renaissance has taken place in art, literature, architecture, sciences. However, Ebenstein has given a broader concept of Renaissance. According to him, Renaissance took place in all the fields of social life. For him, Renaissance is the consequence of any single work of Art of any intellectual, rather it is the discovery of man. Thus, according to him, "Renaissance is not confined to any particular intellectual field, but in all fields of human knowledge and enquiry."

Renaissance created a situation where people from different fields were inspired to search for new knowledge. It was believed that there was lack of intelligence among the rulers and education was neglected earlier. People were mainly guided by irrational and superstitious beliefs. However, Renaissance activated the minds of the people and they started challenging everything on the basis of rationality and secular beliefs. There are a number of thinkers whose ideas and thinking brought revolutionary changes in the Renaissance period. Here, we must mention the name of Leonardo Da Vinci who is considered an important figure of Renaissance period. He had made significant contribution in the fields of Art, Architecture, engineering, painting and human biology too.

Another important name of this period is Nicolaus Copernicus. He was born in 1473. He is known for his contribution in physics, astronomy, mathematics, economics and diplomacy. He challenged the established teachings of the Church that the Sun revolves around the Earth. Thus his views on the Universe and the solar system are the most important contributions to the Modern World.

F. Petrarca is another important figure of Renaissance period. Born in 1304, Petrarca who is also known as Petrarch contributed significantly with his ideas of humanism in the initial phase of Renaissance in Italy. He holds the idea that God has given humans their intellectual and creative potential to be used to the fullest.

In the political field also, there were different developments in this period. The Renaissance is also a period of great geographical discoveries leading to the development of the concepts of nationalism and nations. Power becomes an important subject of study in this period. Machiavelli also emphasizes the concept of power in his writings. However, it needs to be mentioned that the political situation prevailing in Italy at that time has also influenced the writings of Machiavelli. As a child of Renaissance, Machiavelli's writings reflect a secular approach to politics. Thus, his writings make a departure from the medieval writings controlled by the church. Therefore, it can be said that Machiavelli's writings are free from the influences of theology and religion. The political turmoil in Italy due to the imperial domination of countries like France, Germany and Spain has been influential as Machiavelli values the freedom of his country most.

Thus, we can see Renaissance has paved the way for development in different fields which brought revolutionary changes in socio-political and cultural lives of human beings.

Check Your Progress:

1. Why medieval period is called 'Dark phase' of history?
2. What do you mean by Renaissance?
3. Write True or False
 - a). Renaissance brought changes in political field only.
 - b). Copernicus challenged the established teachings of the Church that the Sun revolves around the Earth.
4. Discuss briefly the impact of Renaissance in different areas.

1.6 Renaissance and Political theory:

From the discussions in the previous sections, we have learnt that one important characteristic of Renaissance is empiricism. Thinkers of the period emphasised on drawing conclusions after physical verifications. Thus, it is against superstitions and religious beliefs. The empirical approach towards different problems has also influenced in political analysis and formulation of political theory in the renaissance period.

Now, before discussing the impact of Renaissance in political philosophy and theory let us first understand the meaning of theory vis-à-vis political theory.

P. Jenkins is of the view that a theory about anything is an abstracted generalisation. In simple terms, theory is usually understood as a

causal relationship between end and means. We often use the term 'political theory' in the study of political science. David Easton put emphasis on the study of political theory. According to some scholars, Political theory comprehends the political science as well as political philosophy. However, political thinkers like Sabine, Dunning have used the term 'political theory' as a synonym of 'political thought' which stands for ideas expressed by different political philosophers in chronological order.

According to Sabine, Political theory is, quite simply, man's attempts to consciously understand and solve the problems of his group life and organisation....(it) is the disciplined investigation of political problems...not only to show what a political practice is, but also to show what it means. In showing what a practice means, or what it ought to mean, political theory can alter what it is... (Sabine 1973).

David Held defines Political theory as "a network of concepts and generalisations about political life involving ideas, assumptions and statements about the nature, purpose and key features of government, state and society and about the political capabilities of human beings". (Political Theory Today, 1991)

We can say that political theory is concerned with analysis of issues/problems relating to state, sovereignty, rights, democracy, equality, justice etc.

In Political theory we usually find three types of statements:

1. Empirical statement: based on observation.
2. Logical statement: based on reasoning
3. Evaluative statement: based on value judgement

Scope of political theory ranges from statement on nature of state to sovereignty, political ideologies to different forms of government. It also includes different ideas like freedom, equality, justice to division of power in the society. Political theory thus sometimes paves the way for acquiring new knowledge.

Classification of Political Theory: Again, Political theory may be divided into normative and empirical theory. The normative theory suggests the mode/means by which an imperfect political or social order can be made perfect. The advocators of normative theory suggest ways to reform different systems, institutions etc.

On the other hand, empirical and descriptive theory is concerned with things like state structure, political process etc. This type of study may be based upon observation. While discussing empirical theories we

must mention about behaviouralists. The neo-empiricists are concerned in drawing generalisations from the data collected and also constructing models through which the interpretation of political process can be made with scientific accuracy.

Contemporary political theory focuses research on actualities, that is, on the disclosure of facts and their relationships. Modern political theory is considered as “the master discipline whereby the science of politics is to be unified, systematised and empirical investigation oriented and guided.”

The main concern of contemporary political theorists is to end political as an exercise in intellectual history and replace it by a search for the development of general principles which give meaning and life to political science. Modern political theory is growing and developing. Political theory now includes the study of circumstances and environments, individual and family. Contemporary theory puts emphasis on the inter-disciplinary approach. Modern political theory has very liberally borrowed not only from social sciences but from natural sciences.

Modern political theory is still in formulative stages. Political theory is needed by the public to know about a form of government and the legitimacy of the rulers.

As we have already learnt Renaissance brought revolutionary changes in different aspects of human lives. The political thinkers also tried to investigate political problems with a scientific look. As a result, different political theories emerged. It has paved the way for empiricism in different studies including social sciences. Francis Bacon is known as the father of empiricism in the renaissance period.

One important contribution of Renaissance to political philosophy has been to examine or analyse politics from a secular point of view. Such thinking emerged after about a century of political thought in Europe. We have already learnt that changes in the political and economic structure of Italy have brought larger transformations in Italy. Two important political thinkers of the Renaissance period are ---- Niccolo Machiavelli and Thomas More. Infact, Machiavelli is known as the father of modern political theory.

Here we must remember that Renaissance provided the platform for the rise of secular political philosophy after a century of theological political thought. While discussing about the emergence of secular political outlook we must mention the name of Machiavelli. Before

that Medieval political philosophy in Europe was highly influenced by religious thinking and superstitious beliefs.

Again, the Renaissance signified a rebirth of the human spirit in the attainment of the liberty, self-confidence and optimism. In contradiction to the medieval view, which had envisaged the human being as fallen and depraved in an evil world with the devil at the centre, the Renaissance captured the Greek ideal of essential goodness of the individual, the beauty and glory of the earth, the joy of existence, the supernatural and the importance of the present (Mukherjee and Ramaswamy). It has thus emphasised on the concept of humanism which further contributed in shaping political theory in a different way.

Now, coming to classification of political theory, we have found that there are three categories. They are---- Classical, Modern and Contemporary Political Theory. Classical political theory originated in the ancient Greek culture and continued till the beginning of twentieth century. These theories are mostly dominated by philosophical, idealistic and normative approaches.

Modern Political theories emerged in 15th-16th centuries. It aimed at building a science of politics, which is empirical, objective based on observation, value-free and analytic. It is also process oriented rather than purpose oriented. As we all know, Renaissance marked a departure from medieval thinking and practice, it brought changes in to the different aspects of lives including politics. Impact of religion was reduced from the economy and politics of their societies. In regard to the development of political theory the influence of renaissance is significant. The reformations and awakening brought about by renaissance led to the growth of modern political theory.

Again, most of the important features of modern political theory can be attributed to renaissance. The features of modern political theory can be summed up as follows:

- Emphasis is on present rather than the past.
- Philosophical interpretation is replaced by analytical explanation
- Modern political theory is explanatory rather than descriptive
- It is process oriented rather than purpose oriented.
- Subjectivity is replaced by objectivity to a large extent.
- Normative approach is replaced by scientific approach.
- There is emphasis on separation of facts from values
- Adoption of inter-disciplinary approach

Hence, from the discussions above, we can conclude that Renaissance has significantly contributed towards political theory. It has given a new dimension to political theory by introducing new ideas and approaches to political issues and problems. Since renaissance brought reformations in every sphere of human lives peoples' approach to politics have also changed. The Rational and Scientific thinking of Renaissance thus paved the way for the growth of Modern Political theory.

SAQ

Make a list of Similarities and dissimilarities between Renaissance in Europe and Renaissance in India. (80 words)

Ans:-----

Check Your Progress:

1. Mention two characteristics of Modern political theory.
2. Write a note on classification of political theory.
3. Discuss briefly the impact of renaissance on Political theory.

1.7 Summing Up:

After reading this unit we have learnt that the Renaissance has brought changes in scientific ideas and beliefs as well as outlook towards life. It touched almost all aspects of human lives. Because of that, Renaissance is considered as rebirth and reawakening. It marked a departure from the medieval period which was characterised by superstitious beliefs and unscientific approach. Renaissance created an atmosphere for empirical investigations. You have also learnt that Renaissance gave importance on humanism, scientific temperament, secular outlook and rational thinking. All these have significantly contributed towards formulation of modern political theories too. Therefore, after reading this unit, now you have a clear idea about the impact of Renaissance in Political theory. In the next two units of this

Block, we shall deal with the ideas of Machiavelli who is considered the child of Renaissance.

1.8 References and Suggested Readings

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Unit 2

Machiavelli: As a Child of Renaissance, Ideas of State

Unit Structure

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Objectives

2.3 Impact of Renaissance on Machiavelli

2.4 Machiavelli's idea on Human Nature

2.5 Machiavelli's idea of State

2.6 Summing up

2.7 Reference and Suggested Readings

2.1 Introduction:

The Florentine statesman and political philosopher, Niccolo Machiavelli is regarded as the founder of realist political philosophy. He was one of the greatest writers produced by Italy in the sixteenth century. Machiavelli is an advocate of Republican Government and supports citizen armies, division of power and restraint of government expenditure for the liberty of the republic. Machiavelli contributes to political theory through *The Prince*, a treatise on statecraft. Written in 1513, *The Prince* is famous as a practical guide which justifies the use of various expediencies in the ruling of a state.

Machiavelli's work helps the ruler to exercise political power and his ideas are relevant till today. In this book Machiavelli has argued that it is the skill of the leader that determines the success of a state. The second book *The Art of War* (1520) offers a detailed exploration of the acquisition, maintenance and use of military force in a state. Besides his contributions to the political philosophy, Machiavelli is also remembered for his historical writings, short stories as well as comedies. He is one of the first political philosophers to study Political Science on the basis of historical actions. This unit will focus on Machiavelli's ideas on human nature and state of nature.

2.2 Objectives:

Machiavelli, the noted political philosopher has contributed to the political theory by advocating a secular approach to politics. During

the Elizabethan period, his name is associated with treachery, murder, cruelty, atheism and Elizabethan literature is replete with the example of a character type called Machiavel who is often viewed as an embodiment of evil. However, one should always keep in mind that Machiavelli's ideas and thoughts were guided by prevailing situation of Italy. The contribution of Machiavelli in the form of the treatise on statecraft is considered to be one of the finest works. In this unit we shall discuss the relevance of Machiavelli's ideas as well as his contribution to political theory. After reading this unit you will be able to:

- Examine the impact of Renaissance on Machiavelli
- Discuss Machiavelli's ideas on Human Nature
- Analyse Machiavelli's ideas on State

2.3 Impact of Renaissance on Machiavelli:

Before discussing the ideas of Machiavelli, it is pertinent to know the circumstances and conditions that shaped the ideas of Machiavelli. The ideas of Renaissance have profoundly influenced Machiavelli to a large extent and he is regarded as the 'Child of Renaissance'. In the first unit of this block, we have discussed about Renaissance and its impact on political theory. From that we have learnt how reawakening and scientific and rational thinking has revolutionised the socio-political, cultural and economic lives of people in Europe during Renaissance. It brought an end to the medieval thinking and marked the beginning of the modern era. Among the scholars of Renaissance period, Machiavelli's name needs special mention. Machiavelli's writings deviate from medieval thinking marking a significant break and therefore he is also known as the 'first modern political thinker'.

The beginning of 16th century witnessed a revolution. As a result of which medieval institutions had to give place to new institutions in conformity with the spirit of time. Thus, darkness of medieval period is gradually removed with this spirit of revolution. This revolution has reduced the Church to the position of a voluntary association or a part of national government. Renaissance adopted the Greek ideal of essential goodness of the individual, the beauty and the glory of the earth, the joy of existence and the insignificance of the supernatural. It is also related to the conception of new human, the individual motivated by fame and glory, self-actualisation and happiness rather than self-denial and religious faith. Spirit of individualism led to optimum development of individual. It led to the development of modern Omni-potent state. Among the city states, Florence was the most flourishing state. As mentioned earlier, renaissance has witnessed

the emergence of a number of artists, intellectuals and thinkers. Here we can mention the names of Alexander Botticelli, Leonardo Da Vinci, Raphael etc.

We have already learnt that Renaissance was a transition period between the medieval era and the modern world. Renaissance stands for rebirth or revival. Thus, Renaissance signifies a rebirth of the human spirit in the attainment of liberty, self-confidence and optimism. It stands for the essential goodness of the individual, the beauty and the glory of the earth, the significance of the supernatural and the importance of the present etc. Affirming the dignity and excellence of the individuals, Humanism is the cornerstone of Renaissance that began in the later half of the 14th century. Thus, Renaissance stands for a return to a pre-Christian attitude towards humans, God and nature and signals a breakdown of a unified Christian society. As a child of Renaissance, Machiavelli's writings reflect a secular approach to politics. Thus, his writings make a departure from the medieval writings controlled by the church. Therefore, it can be said that Machiavelli's writings are free from the influences of theology and religion.

During Renaissance, Italy witnessed intense political turmoil affecting and involving the dominant city states of Florence, Milan, Venice etc and the Holy Roman Empire. Italy was culturally vibrant and creative but because of internal divisions there was every possibility that it would fall prey to the imperial ambitions of French, German and Spanish. According to Sabine, Italian society, "intellectually brilliant and artistically creative, more emancipated than many in Europe...was a prey to the worst political corruption and moral degradation." (Sabine 1973). However, there was a political vacuum as the old feudal order was vanishing but new nation state as a sovereign political entity was yet to be established. In such a scenario, the main objective of Machiavelli's writing was the unification of Italy so that the renaissance that were taking place in different areas of Art and culture of the country can be brought in political arena too. Through this process he wanted to establish a unified and glorious Italy. Hence, freedom of the country and the common good had been the major themes of Machiavelli's writings.

Now, it is clear to us that Machiavelli was guided by the spirit of Renaissance for which his political philosophy was scientific and empirical. Further, he was not concerned whether ends are to be considered good or bad. Machiavelli had realised the importance of a ruler who could save Italy from the danger of internal strife and disunity. Again, you should remember here that though Machiavelli

advocated for strong Prince, at the same time he also believed that the prince should patronise the distinguished ability in fine arts. For Machiavelli, Italy was facing a crisis period as there was vehement corruption in the society and necessary virtues were decaying. To build a strong and unified Italy, Machiavelli advocated for a strong Ruler. This revolutionary idea has impacted the process of Renaissance in Italy.

From the previous unit, we have learnt that the Renaissance is also a period of great geographical discoveries leading to the development of the concepts of nationalism and nations. Power becomes an important subject of study in this period. Machiavelli also emphasizes the concept of power in his writings. However, it needs to be mentioned that the political situation prevailing in Italy at that time has also influenced the writings of Machiavelli. The political turmoil in Italy due to the imperial domination of countries like France, Germany and Spain has been influential as Machiavelli values the freedom of his country most. Impact of Renaissance on Machiavelli is evident from his departure from medieval thinking and his effort to make his writing free from religious domination. Analysing the impact of Renaissance on Machiavelli, Laski has opined that “the whole of the Renaissance is in Machiavelli” (Laski 1936:31). In the later period also, many scholars are of the view that renaissance has produced one of the greatest political thinkers, viz., Niccolo Machiavelli.

Stop to Consider: Life Sketch of Machiavelli:

Machiavelli was born in Florence, Italy on May 3, 1469. His father’s name was Bernardo di Niccolo Machiavelli and his mother’s name was Bartolommea di Stefano Nelli. His father was a civil lawyer. Along with humanist education, He was also taught Grammar, Rhetoric and Latin. He entered Florentine government in its diplomatic service. At the age of 29, he became the Secretary to the Second Chancery with the responsibilities of handling foreign affairs – diplomatic, administrative and military. His service as a diplomat gave him insights into the actual working of politics. As a diplomat he travelled the major centres of Italy as well as the royal court of France. Machiavelli has been termed as ‘The murderous Machiavel’ by William Shakespeare as he sanctions the use of deception, cruelty, force, violence etc for achieving the desired political ends. In 1512, with the change in government in Florence, Machiavelli becomes a direct victim of the regime and he is placed under the form of internal exile on the charge of conspiring against the ruling Medici family. At the later stage of his life, Machiavelli comes closer to Medici family. In 1520 he is assigned to compose a History of Florence. History of Florence is completed in 1525 and Machiavelli dies in June 1527.

From the discussions above, it is clear to us that the Renaissance in Europe has greatly influenced Machiavelli. Now let us discuss the factors that influenced Machiavelli and shaped his political ideas:

i). **Condition of Italy:** Italy was divided into a number of states which were involved in internal conflicts. The governments of those states were Republic or despotic. Besides, there were threats from outside too. Machiavelli wanted that these states should end war and try to make them self-sufficient. His works like Art of War, The Discourses on Living and the Prince mainly deals with those issues.

ii). **Impact of Republic:** Renaissance brought consciousness of life, liberty etc. Its main thrust was on humanism. It has brought a revival which led to the revolt against Church.

iii). **Strong Monarchies:** According to Machiavelli, strong Monarchies helped in the unification of Italy by suppressing the medieval feudal or religious institutions.

We must mention here that Machiavelli was influenced by Aristotle’s idea of separation of ethics from politics and also his belief that the state is the highest organisation of human beings. But one should always remember that Machiavelli was highly influenced by his time and the surrounding circumstances. Sabine has correctly remarked that, “clear and broad as his visions of politics, was Machiavelli still in a peculiar sense an Italian of this first quarter of 16th century. Had he written in any other time and place, his conception of politics must have been significantly different.”

Check Your Progress:

1. “Machiavelli is a Child of Renaissance”. Discuss.
2. Name two major works of Machiavelli.
3. Discuss the important factors that helped in shaping the political philosophy of Machiavelli.
4. Who termed Machiavelli as ‘Murderous Machiavel’ and why?

SAQ

Do you think Machiavelli exemplifies the Renaissance philosophy of humanism? Justify your view. (30+50 words)

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2.4 Machiavelli's Idea on Human Nature

Machiavelli is regarded as one of the important political philosophers. However, he has also dealt with certain non-political problems. In the previous section, we have discussed Machiavelli's view on state. He mainly discusses the human nature in his famous book *The Prince*. The following lines of Machiavelli offer an idea of his views on human nature. "Men in general...are ungrateful, voluble, dissemblers, anxious to avoid danger, and covetous of gain; as long as you benefit them, they are entirely yours," but their "love is held by a chain of obligation which, men being selfish, is broken whenever it serves their purpose" (*The Prince*, p: 61, 1950). Now let us have a look at Machiavelli's idea on human nature.

- Machiavelli has depicted a very dark picture of human nature. His idea of human nature contradicts the belief and thoughts of humanists. In some occasions, he has gone to the extent of equating human nature with animal nature.
- According to him, individuals are wicked, selfish and egoistic. For Machiavelli, man is self-centred and greedy and he seeks his own interest rather than anybody else. Hence, we can say that his idea of human nature is identical with that of Hobbes.
- Machiavelli believes that an individual is fundamentally weak, ungrateful, exhibitionist, artificial. Individuals do well only when they are under compulsion or there is some personal gain.
- Individuals also lack honesty and justice. He is ready to act in a manner which is detrimental to the community. Therefore, according to Machiavelli, government is founded upon the weakness and insufficiency of the individuals who cannot protect themselves against the attack of others without the power of the state.
- Again, Machiavelli is of the view that men are always in a condition of strife and competition. They are greedy who work for profit only. Therefore, he is prepared to work against collective interests provided their own interests clash with them.
- Regarding Human nature, Machiavelli further states that the individuals are timid and always try to follow established customs without opting for resistance. Thus, they always follow a middle path avoiding all kinds of dangers.

- Being very greedy, individuals love property more than their kiths and kins. Machiavelli states that an individual can easily forgive the murder of his father, but never forgives the seizure of property.
- The individuals remain dissatisfied and unsatisfied. They always desire power, glory and material well-being. Such ambitions make man dissatisfied and discontent.
- Machiavelli does not have high opinion of human intelligence or character. He believes that most people cannot judge a person's inner self. A Prince should appear to have all of the typical virtues such as mercy, sincerity. Many will not know whether he actually has those qualities or not.

In this way, according to Machiavelli, human beings are selfish, ungrateful, ambitious, anti-social and anarchical. Such nature of human beings gets reflected in politics too. Therefore, Machiavelli's views regarding politics, religion and morality are essentially based on his view on human nature. According to him, 'men are ungrateful, fickle, deceitful, cowardly and avaricious'. He believes that people are fundamentally self-interested and unbearable. Men are greedy. A man will soon forget the death of his father than the loss of his inheritance. Further, All men want glory and wealth. They are ungrateful and unreliable. After putting forward such ideas Machiavelli is of the view that, 'men are in general bad, and that the wiser ruler will construct his policies on this assumption.

Criticism:

Machiavelli is criticized for his views on human nature. We all know that human beings are not as bad as Machiavelli has portrayed. So, it can be said that Machiavelli's portrayal of human nature is only partial which fails to give us a complete picture. However, as we have already studied, Machiavelli is a product of his time. He belongs to a period when Italy is divided into small fragments. Therefore, he advocates for a strong ruler who is aware of the inherent bad qualities of human beings. Machiavelli points out the negative qualities of the human beings so that the ruler can check the wicked nature of the individuals and establish a strong and stable nation.

Stop To Consider:

Methods Adopted by Machiavelli:

Machiavelli was highly influenced by Aristotle. He believes that human nature and problems are similar irrespective of time and place.

Therefore, through studying and analysing the past one can understand the present issues. Hence, Machiavelli emphasised on adopting historical method like Aristotle. Again, Machiavelli was concerned with the actual working of the Government. As a realist his aim was to develop the theory of the act of government rather than theory of the state. Therefore, Dunning is of the view that Machiavelli's study is "the study of the art of government rather than a theory of the State." Again, it is also said that his political writings are more of diplomatic literature than a theory of state. Before drawing any conclusion, Machiavelli minutely observed and analysed the prevailing situations of his time. Thus, he adopted a form and method of political philosophy which is mostly ancient Greek Roman philosophy. Moreover, he also depended on his empirical knowledge. Sabine has correctly remarked that 'Machiavelli used history exactly he used his own observation to illustrate or support a conclusion that he had reached without reference to history'.

2.5 Machiavelli's ideas on State:

Machiavelli is considered to be the first political thinker who formulates the modern concept of state. However, it needs to be mentioned here that Machiavelli does not try to define state. He does not even try to justify the existence of the state. Two major works of Machiavelli 'The Prince' and 'Discourses on Livy' mainly deal with government's role and functions.

The state of Machiavelli may be understood as an impersonal form of rule possessing a monopoly of coercive authority within a set of territorial boundary. Therefore, it can be said that Machiavelli's views on state can be found when he describes the functions of the rulers, or how a ruler retains and controls power. Moreover, Machiavelli has also dealt with the necessary qualities required for a strong republic. From these ideas of Machiavelli, we can get a picture of his idea of a state. We have already learnt that Machiavelli's approach to politics has been secular. Hence, he considers state as a secular entity that has no connection whatsoever with any religious authority. Thus, according to Machiavelli, the state is independent with no obligation. To Machiavelli, a state exists to fulfill the desire for security of the person and property and it should try and augment the territory and power for itself.

Machiavelli does not agree with the medieval thinking that the power of the state is a single whole and can be centrally controlled. As a believer in liberty, he prefers republic over monarchy. He does not believe in the rule of aristocracy since he considers it as an instrument

to loot the ordinary and impoverished people by a few. Therefore, Machiavelli is of the view that a well-ordered state should not allow the rich to buy offices. However, he also believes that an independent and courageous group of people is required for a proper functioning of a republic. Again, it must be remembered here that while discussing State, Machiavelli is particularly concerned with the small Italian republic. He also believes that the major function of the state is the preservation of person and property. To him, the prince or the ruler controls the state as he is imposed with the power to rule. Hence, the character and performance of the government to a large extent depends on the personal qualities of the ruler or the prince. The state should always create the environment where the deserving gets the opportunity to flourish. He identified the state with government or with its personal head.

As mentioned earlier, Machiavelli deals with the state mainly in his celebrated work *The Prince*. He tries to identify the state with the government or the head of the state. In another work, *L'Artedella Guerra* (*The Art of War*), he offers extensive advice on the acquisition, management, and employment of the army for the war. Machiavelli emphasizes the importance of good laws, religion and a citizen army as the support structures for a stable and strong state. He further states that an army should consist of the citizens of the state between the ages of 17-40 having physical training in arms and military skills as well as the zeal to fight for the country. He defends war in the interest of the state as well as in the interest of the people for protecting their liberty and independence. We have already learnt that Machiavelli gives due importance to power and emphasizes the proper use of power by the ruler. However, he is against the use of violence for personal reasons. He considers violence necessary to rule in a successful state. As one of the formulators of the concept of modern nation state, Machiavelli strongly believes that common language and common culture play very important role in the development of a modern nation state. He opines that retention of the newly acquired territories becomes easy with one common language, tradition and culture.

In *Prince* Machiavelli suggests two different codes of conduct --- one for the ruler and other for the ordinary people. According to him, the common people should follow normal understanding of morality while for the Prince the interest of his state is the main concern. For the interest of the state the ruler can go beyond the conventional morality of the state. Therefore, according to Machiavelli the ruler can even take resort of deception and hypocrisy for the interest of the state.

Leo Strauss criticised Machiavelli for motivating leaders and rulers to employ violence and fear and avoid the goodness of justice, love and compassion. Skinner, however defended Machiavelli by saying that the latter advises the king to do good if he can but must be prepared to commit evil if he must.

According to Machiavelli Politics is a way to acquire power. It is not an end of good life. He separated ethics from politics. According to him, government can be of ideal or practical form. To him, Republic is an ideal form of government but only the virtuous people can be ruled by that government. The second form of government is monarchy which he considers to be more practical since most of the people are vicious. In Prince Machiavelli writes, man sooner forgets the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony. Duty of the ruler is to protect the life, property and possessions of the citizens.

On State: According to Machiavelli, State is supreme and all citizens should abide by the state. He was mainly concerned with establishing a strong national state. State/ruler should check the selfish ends of human and build a strong nation. He favoured Monarchy in the absence of a republican government only due to its people. The prevalence of corruption in Italy has made him to suggest for a strong Prince who can crush the selfish interest of the people and build a strong centre.

Machiavelli suggested some ideas to the Prince to ensure a strong state. He suggested a powerful army with soldiers. He further states strong state and a strong ruler should possess the tendency to expand and gain more power. For that, he should create strong and strict laws.

Thus, Machiavelli believed that 'end justify means'. Only when the people are virtuous, the ruler should be ethical and honest.

Stop to Consider Major Works of Machiavelli Machiavelli is regarded as the founder of modern political philosophy. His major works are as follows: The Prince (1513): In this book, Machiavelli has offered certain advices to the ruler. All these advices are meant for preserving the power of the ruler as well as to expand the territory. He has advised the prince for judicious use of violence by respecting the private property and traditions of the subjects. During Renaissance, Italy witnesses intense political conflicts and violence in largescale. The Prince is written in this backdrop and therefore all the advices incorporated in the book are meant for strengthening the state and establishing a strong ruler. In the conclusion of the book, Machiavelli

calls for Italian unity and end of foreign intervention. Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius (1513-21): In this book, Machiavelli emphasizes that for the survival of a republic, a spirit of patriotism and civic virtue must foster among the citizens. Thus, this book imparts the lesson on the structure of a republic i.e. how a republic should be started and structured including the provisions of checks and balances. His other works include: A Discourse About the Provision of Money (1502) Portrait of the Affairs of Germany (1508-1512) Portrait of the Affairs of France (1510) The Art of War, (on high military science) (1519-1520) The Mandrake (a five-act prose comedy with a verse prologue) (1518) A Discourse About the Reforming of Florence (1520)

Check Your Progress:

1. Why is Machiavelli regarded as the ‘Child of Renaissance’?
2. Discuss briefly Machiavelli’s idea of state.
3. How does Machiavelli depict the human nature? Do you agree with Machiavellian idea of human nature?

2.6 Summing up:

After reading this unit, you are now in a position to discuss Machiavelli’s ideas on Human nature and State. We have also learnt from this unit that Machiavelli is hailed as the child of Renaissance which has brought changes in socio-cultural and scientific fields of Italy. Moreover, he has also witnessed the turmoil prevailing in Italy for which he advises the prince to follow certain rules. He characterizes man to be self-centred and not willing to act in the best interest of the state. Thus, from this unit we have learn that Machiavelli depicts a dark picture of human nature which goes against the thinking of humanists. Many political thinkers have criticised Machiavelli for his ideas, but we must conclude that he is the child of his time and therefore considering the prevailing situations he put forwarded his ideas. Hence, we can conclude that Machiavelli was mainly guided by the idea of freedom of the country and common good.

2.7 Reference and Suggested Readings

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LINK

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Unit 3: Machiavelli: Morality and Politics, Attributes of a Ruler as advocated in The Prince

Unit Structure :

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Objectives
- 3.3 Machiavelli on Morality and Politics
- 3.4 Machiavelli on Religion
- 3.5 Attributes of a Ruler as advocated by Machiavelli
- 3.6 Machiavelli's Suggestions to Prince
- 3.7 Summing up
- 3.8 Reference and Suggested Readings

3.1 Introduction

In the previous unit we have dealt with some of the ideas of Machiavelli. We have learnt how his ideas were shaped by the Renaissance that was taking place in Europe. Machiavelli was one of the important political philosophers of Italy. However, he was criticised for sanctioning the use of deception, cruelty, force, violence for achieving political ends. William Shakespeare had gone to the extent of calling him 'the murderous Machiavel' for putting forward these ideas. However, as we have already discussed, Machiavelli was the child of his time and therefore he was influenced by the political events that were occurring in his time in Italy.

In this unit we shall make an attempt to study Machiavelli's ideas on morality and politics as well as his suggestions to Prince. His ideas on Morality and religion are also discussed in this unit. Moreover, we will also discuss at length Machiavelli's advices to the prince which are relevant as the practical guide to the exercise of political power by any ruler.

3.2 Objectives:

The Florentine Scholar Niccolo Machiavelli adopted a secular approach while discussing different political ideas. He was mainly concerned with making Italy strong and unified. For that he had advocated for a strong ruler who can demonstrate his strength

whenever necessary. This unit will help you to comprehend these ideas of Machiavelli. After reading this unit you will be able to:

- discuss Machiavelli's ideas on morality and politics
- examine his views on Religion
- explain attributes of a Rulers as advocated by Machiavelli

3.3 Machiavelli on Morality and Politics:

While discussing the concept of morality first of all we must remember that Machiavelli differentiates between public and private morality and assigns the former a preferential place and position over the latter. He is very seriously concerned with the display of high moral standards and qualities in public life. According to Machiavelli, a successful ruler should also aim at acquiring, maintaining, consolidating and increasing power. Therefore, to achieve that end Machiavelli even supports the use of immoral or wicked ways. He further states that a thing or action which is immoral for an individual in the interest of the state might be justifiable for the ruler. Machiavelli's idea of morality is mainly based on the ancient Greek assumption that the state is the highest form of human association necessary for the protection and welfare of the humanity. We can conclude here that Machiavelli analysed morality from the point of view of rulers and not of the ruled.

Thus, Machiavelli firmly believes that the end justifies the means. For achieving the ends, Machiavelli advocates two different sets of moralities for the rulers and subjects. According to him, an individual may follow different moral values like independence, purity, loyalty and trust. However, a ruler may follow different norms and values for conducting the affairs of the state successfully. Thus, we can see that Machiavelli distinguishes private morality from public morality. Again, according to Machiavelli the morality of the state is different from the morality of the individuals. According to Machiavelli, state morality can be termed as the morality of success while the private individuals should display the high moral standards. He again states that a ruler can be compassionate, humane, loyal, and honest and may conform to the high standards of morality like compassion, good faith and honesty in times of stability in the state. However, in times of strife, chaos and disorder, these high standards of moralities will lead to the destruction of the state. So, we can say that Machiavelli strongly promotes a secular society and feels that morality is not necessary but stands in the way of an effectively governed principality. The unstable condition of Italy is the major reason behind Machiavelli's belief.

Machiavelli's views on Politics can be mainly found in his discussions on the functions of the rulers. He had elaborately discussed how a ruler retains and controls power. In the following section we shall discuss in detail Machiavelli's idea regarding the attributes of a Ruler. For him, a ruler should emphasize on the consolidation and enhancement of power as well as betterment of his subjects. Therefore, he has advocated for a different perspective of morality for the rulers. In the words of Machiavelli: I will even venture to say that (the virtues) damage a prince who possesses them and always observes them, but if he seems to have them they are useful. I mean that he should seem compassionate, trustworthy, humane, honest and religious, and actually be so; but yet he should have his mind so trained that, when it is necessary not to practice these virtues, he can change to the opposite and do it skillfully. (Machiavelli 1950:85) Machiavelli has faced severe criticisms from various political thinkers for his views morality. Thinker like Strauss considers him as a teacher of evil.

Thus, we can conclude that Machiavelli's thinking is different from other medieval thinkers. He has made the first attempt to separate religion from politics. He keeps politics above everything and religion and morality are given a subordinate place to politics. Again, he does not believe in divine law and makes the church a part of state, but not independent of state. Again, according to him, perseveration of the state rather than excellence of its constitution were his main consideration. According to Sabine, "The purpose of Politics is to preserve and increase political power itself". It must be remembered here that the ideas of Machiavelli are shaped only by the time and situations where he lived. He is of the firm belief that religion and morality cannot play a significant role in the Italian politics of his time.

SAQ:

Do you think morality is necessary for the art of statecraft? Justify your argument with reference to Machiavelli's views on morality. (50+50 words)

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3.4 Machiavelli on Religion

Machiavelli is born in the period of Renaissance. Before him, medieval thinkers emphasise on religion and consider it to be the basis

of the state. Machiavelli makes a departure from his predecessors of medieval period by attacking the Church and the clergy for their failure to provide moral inspiration. He discusses on religion and its role in the formation and maintenance of political authority in his celebrated works, 'The Prince and The Discourses'. In the medieval period the state is believed to serve as a department of the church and as such church fathers assume supremacy over the affairs of the state. They consider the sanction of the church as important for the functioning of the state. They compare the role of the church with that of the soul and say that as soul has the supremacy over the body so the church enjoys supremacy over the state.

Machiavelli has made an attempt to divorce religion from politics and speaks against the supremacy of church over the state. Therefore, he is seen as propagating anti-Church. However, we must remember that Machiavelli is not against religion. Contrary to medieval thinkers, he tries to subordinate religion to the state. He considers religion as necessary not only for the social life of man but also for the health and prosperity of the state. However, he does not consider religion to be the end in itself. Thus, to Machiavelli, state is always the end and religion should only serve the interest of the state. He thus differs from the views of Aristotle and Plato who consider state from the ethical points of view. Therefore, according to him, the actions of the state cannot be questioned by individuals or be judged by individual moral standards.

According to Machiavelli, religion is good only when it establishes peace. Thus, religion is a social force but not a spiritual force. He views religion from a utilitarian perspective. It plays a very significant role in the society through its concepts of rewards and punishment which in turn help in inducing proper behaviour and good conduct necessary for the well-being of the society. He advises the prince to take steps to cultivate belief in religion, even if he is not a believer in religion. Thus, it can be said that Machiavelli is the first thinker to look upon religion as a coercive force. Thus, Machiavelli admires qualities like courage, self-assertiveness, ambition, intelligence and strength of the ruler. Because of his beliefs in such virtues he criticizes Christianity since it makes man charitable and weak, glorifies qualities like renunciation, humility, otherworldliness, charity, etc. however, at the same time, he retained the basic Christian views on the differences between good and evil. He advocates for a religion in Italy that can serve the interests of the state. It can also be said here that the rulers should always endorse religion in order to maintain power.

SAQ

Why does Machiavelli think religion to be a coercive force? Elaborate the reasons given by Machiavelli to justify his view. (60+50 words)

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3.5 Attributes of a Ruler according to Machiavelli :

In his most celebrated work *The Prince*, Machiavelli has discussed in detail the nature and skills necessary for the rulers. "...a prince must not have any objective nor any thought, nor take any art, other than the art of war and its ordering and discipline; because it is only art that pertains to him who commands. And it is of such virtue that not only does it maintain those who were born princes, but many times makes men rise to that rank from private station; and conversely one sees that when princes have thought more of delicacies than of arms, they have lost their state." (Machiavelli, Niccolo, Ed. Angelo M. Codevilla. 1997) Written in 1513-14, the book is published posthumously in 1532. Dedicated to Lorenzo de Medici, *The Prince* offers practical advice on how to rule a city like sixteenth century Florence. We all know that Machiavelli is of the strong belief that a state is literally owned by the ruler. Therefore, according to him the nature of the governance is determined by the qualities and skills of the rulers. Through the book called 'The Prince' which consists of 26 chapters, he has criticized the moralistic view of authority. He differs from the various important political thinkers including Plato who try to draw a relationship between moral goodness and legitimate authority. According to Machiavelli, there is no moral basis to judge the legitimate and illegitimate uses of power. The real concern of a ruler is the acquisition and maintenance of power and goodness of the ruler does not ensure power.

Machiavelli believes that a state is identified as ruler. He has warned the prince against excessive generosity, strictness or kindness and stressed the need for moderate behaviour (Mukherjee and Ramaswamy, 2007). He strongly believes that it is necessary for a successful ruler to know how power is to be used. *The Prince* should be the perfect embodiment of shrewdness and self-control. Moreover, Machiavelli considers the relationship between the rulers and the ruled as similar to the one between father and the children. He also believes that the state is the highest association in the society and therefore, individuals should merge themselves for the interests of the state. Again, Machiavelli opines that those things are virtuous in a Prince

which excelled in bringing success in power and that virtue lies in ruthlessness, cunningness, deceitfulness, boldness and shrewdness etc. Machiavelli considers the virtuous and stable state as the greatest moral good and therefore any action to protect the country is justified.

In his famous work *The Prince*, Machiavelli deals with the art of ruling state offering advice to the rulers to maintain and if possible enhance power. He considers sound law and strong military forces as the two strong pillars of a successful state. He states that ‘...a wise prince should establish himself on that which is his own control and not in that of others; he must endeavour to avoid hatred, and is noted.’ He emphasizes strong military power and fortifications for the defence of the state. He believes that a self-sufficient prince should be able to win any enemy on the battlefield. Thus, the main concern of a prince is war.

Machiavelli also favours hunting by the prince for keeping his body fit. Again, for intellectual strength Machiavelli advises the prince to study the life of great military men to imitate their success and avoid their mistakes. Again, Machiavelli does not want the prince to be very generous towards his subjects. According to Machiavelli, such generosity will only increase the greed of the ruler. So, he believes that guarding against people’s hatred is more important than building up a reputation for generosity. Therefore, the prince should carefully deal with the finance without being more generous.

Again, Machiavelli says that it is better for the prince to be feared than loved. However, it is the duty of a prince to ensure that he is not feared to the point of hatred. He also believes that fear is necessary for uniting the troops also. For commanding the respect of the soldiers the prince can be cruel at times. “...a prince must not care about the infamy of cruelty in order to keep his subjects united and faithful; because with very few examples he will be more merciful than those who, because of too much mercy, allow disorders to go on, from which spring killings and depredations: because this normalcy offend a whole collectivity, while those executions which come from the prince offend an individual.” (Pg. 61 Chapter 17, Machiavelli, Niccolò, Ed. Angelo M. Codevilla. 1997)

The prince should also try to keep his words because a prince is praised for keeping words. However, he is also praised for the illusion of keeping words. Hence, according to Machiavelli a prince should not unnecessarily break the words. He must seem to be generous while spending money, appear to be compassionate while ruling the armies cruelly, and act with great cunning while cultivating a reputation for integrity.

Again, according to Machiavelli, the Prince should not interfere in the affairs of the property and women of his subjects for interference in

these affairs may affect men's sensibilities leading to resistance by them. Besides, he should possess good leadership qualities. He should choose competent advisors to assist in the governance.

The first and foremost duty of a prince according to Machiavelli is to try and expand state's territory. According to him, either a state must expand or perish. He advised the Prince to keep force of arms for political aggrandisement as well as for the preservation of the state. However, he suggested that force be applied judiciously. He should also try to establish his image as the defender of weaker states. He has also advised the prince to play fox and lion. As a lion, he should be ready to act ruthlessly with courage. At the same time he should also handle the affairs with cunningness and shrewdness of a fox. Again, the prince should be cunning enough to detect the conspiracies of his enemies as well as courageous enough to fight against the enemies. A prince had to fight with the help of laws of civilized societies and force of the brutes.

Regarding human nature Machiavelli is very critical too. Therefore, according to him, force is necessary to control the people who are wretched and dishonourable. In the words of Machiavelli: "as (men) are bad, and would not observe their faith with you, so you are not bound to keep faith with them" (The Prince: 64) (Machiavelli 1950). For the purpose of defending the state against any conspiracy, the prince can spread the network of his intelligence and deception whenever necessary. He should also thoroughly and severely punish the conspirators. The prince has also to pay great deal of attention to the economic prosperity of his subjects. Because the prince can command respect of the people only when he can guarantee economic prosperity of his subjects. Thus, the success of a prince to a great extent is judged by the economic condition of the people living in the state. A prince should always aim at the glory of the state and his personal honours and dishonours are deeply associated with those of his state. Machiavelli places the prince above laws. The prince must be ready to protect the interest of the state at any cost. He is of the opinion that there should be two codes of conducts in the state, one for the individual and the other for the state. Both the conducts should not be combined at any stage. The prince should not follow any of these two conducts. In other words, the prince stands above all conducts. His major concern is to protect the interest of the state without bothering about the morality and immorality of the means to achieve those ends. Thus, we can see that Machiavelli has given tremendous power and authority to the prince. However, it must be remembered such power and authority is delegated to the prince for the protection of the state only. He has even gone to the extent of saying that the prince should exterminate the families of the rulers whose territories he wishes to

possess. The members of the ruling families of such territories should be murdered so that they cannot plan any revenge in the future.

3.6 Machiavelli's Suggestions to Prince

‘A prudent ruler ... cannot, and should not, keep his word when keeping it is to his disadvantage, and when the reasons that made him promise no longer exist

From the above discussion we have learnt that Machiavelli wanted a strong ruler. According to him, the ruler should be merciful, faithful, humane to the extent these are needed but at the same time should know how to act contrary to preserve his principality. The suggestions given

Attributes of the Prince as advocated by Machiavelli can be summed up in the following way:

1. Machiavelli advises Prince not to be generous from economic point of view. He should not be extravagant and at the same time should not be a miser. The Prince should spend money wisely so that he could save them for crisis period. Thus, according to Machiavelli, the Prince should follow a middle path while spending money.
2. According to Machiavelli, the Prince should better be cruel than merciful. However, it does not mean that the ruler should act in a tyrannical way. Machiavelli had asked the rulers to adopt a policy of aggression so that the subjects could be controlled in a desired manner.
3. Another attribute of Prince according to Machiavelli is to break his promises in the interests of the subjects.
4. Again, the prince must avoid to be hated by the subjects. It becomes easy for the rulers to implement his policies if he is loved by the subjects.
5. Machiavelli again asked the Prince to engage himself in great projects for the welfare of the subjects.
6. The Prince should choose wise advisors and avoid flatterers.
7. According to Machiavelli, the Prince should always regard his neighbours as enemies and should remain prepared for attacking them.
8. Machiavelli has advised the Prince to behave like fox and lion whenever necessary. According to him, integrity is good but cunningness and subtlety are often useful.

The Criticisms of Machiavelli's Suggestions to Prince :

We can say that *The Prince* which is regarded as the masterpiece of Machiavelli is the source of his political philosophy. It thoroughly prescribes the art of government. However, Machiavelli has been criticized severely for his advices to the prince. He is criticized for the effort to combine despotism and individualism. The criticisms against his advice to the prince can be listed as below:

- We have also noticed that Machiavelli has given absolute power to the prince and made him above laws. Thus, he has established absolutism of the prince with the power to use violence.
- Again, Machiavelli's idea goes against the idea of individualism. He has sacrificed individuals at the altar of the state and spoken about two different codes of conduct for the individuals and for the state. In such a situation, there is every possibility of the emergence of revolution.
- Machiavelli is also criticized for advocating narrow nationalism. In the present time, there is a call for internationalism. Therefore, his philosophy can not be termed as modern.
- Machiavelli has totally overlooked the moral principles. He has asked the prince to ignore morality for the interest of the state. At the same time he does not advise the prince to look after the moral progress of his subjects.
- Moreover, he has also depicted a very gloomy picture of the human nature.

It is also seen that Machiavelli has underestimated the intelligence of the common man when he says that man in the street can never be an effective political participant. Though Machiavelli has been criticized for his advices to the prince, one must remember the fact that while writing the book he is influenced by the prevailing conditions of Italy. *The Prince* is a book of practical interest as Machiavelli does not talk about an ideal ruler, but highlights the actions and qualities that enable a ruler to rule in the best possible way. For his practical ideas Machiavelli is also described as 'the murderous Machiavel' by William Shakespeare as he sanctions the use of deception, cruelty, force and violence for achieving political ends.

Stop to Consider:

Machiavelli on Forms of Government While discussing his ideas of state, Machiavelli makes an attempt to classify the governments. Like his predecessor Aristotle, he also classifies government as normal and perverted. The normal forms of governments are monarchy, aristocracy and limited or constitutional democracy. On the other hand, the corresponding perverted forms of governments are tyranny, oligarchy and democracy. Again, Machiavelli considers a mixed form of government as the best attainable form of government. He also

emphasizes a close relationship between the economic development and the political stability of a state. He does not prefer the rule of one on hereditary basis, i.e., monarchy. Machiavelli believes in a normal state, the citizens are law-abiding and patriots. Such a state can expand and grow and the citizens are always ready to defend their state.

SAQ

How far it is possible for a Ruler to rule a state following Machiavelli’s advice in the contemporary time? Justify your view. (30+50 words)

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Check Your Progress:

1. Assess the relevance of Machiavelli’s masterpiece The Prince in contemporary politics.
2. According to Machiavelli, what is the first and foremost duty of a prince?
3. Write a note on the advices for a prince as given by Machiavelli.
4. How does Machiavelli differentiate between public and private morality?

3.7 Summing up:

In this unit, we have discussed at length Machiavelli’s ideas on Morality and Politics as well as his advice to the prince. As a child of Renaissance, Machiavelli’s ideas were influenced by the changes in socio-cultural and scientific fields of Italy. At the same time, he was also influences by the turmoil and internal disturbances that were taking place in the political arena. Moreover, as we have learnt in the previous unit Machiavelli had depicted the human nature in a negative way by describing human beings as selfish, egoistic and wicked who are and not willing to act in the best interest of the state. Therefore, he advocated for a strong ruler who could unify Italy with strong hand. For that he advises the prince to follow certain rules. It is interesting to note that he has even prescribed different type of morality for the prince. Machiavelli is concerned not with what makes a good human being, but what makes a good prince. He believes that the prince should be the sole authority determining every aspect of the state. He has also given certain advices to the prince to maintain his power and

expand the territory of the state. Although Machiavelli has been criticized for his ideas, he is termed as the founder of the modern day secular politics.

3.8 Reference and Suggested Readings

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LINK:

https://www.academia.edu/39088741/NICOLO_MACHIAVELLIS_IDEAL_PRINCE_AND_TODAYS_RULER_PDF

BLOCK- II
EARLY MANIFESTATION OF LIBERALISM:
SOCIAL CONTRACT TRADITION

Unit 1: Thomas Hobbes: State of Nature, Human Nature, Social Contract

Unit Structure :

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Hobbes' View on Human Nature
- 1.4 Hobbes on State of Nature
- 1.5 Hobbes Idea of Social Contract
- 1.6 Summing up
- 1.7 References and Suggested Readings

1.1 Introduction:

In this block, we are discussing early manifestation of liberalism and social contract tradition. Hobbes's ideas are integral part of the discussion of liberalism and social contract. Hobbes is an English philosopher who can be regarded as the founding father of modern political philosophy. His vision of the world is strikingly original and his main concern is the problem of social and political order. The philosophy of Thomas Hobbes is perhaps the most complete materialist philosophy of the seventeenth century. Hobbes is also known for his ideas on Social Contract. Scholars have gone to the extent of saying that the *Leviathan* (1651) is the greatest masterpiece of political philosophy written in English (Oakeshott 1975). This book is a reflection of the civil strife in England following the execution of Charles I (1600-1649). It bears the mark of the conflicting situation prevailing in England at that period which must have influenced Hobbes in shaping his ideas on human nature and state of nature. Hobbes attacks implicitly or explicitly the three great current styles of political argument in England like Divine Right, social contract in its libertarian form, and the ancient constitution.

In this unit, we will make an attempt to deal with Hobbes' ideas of human nature and state of nature. According to Hobbes, human beings are selfish, mean and wicked in the state of nature. Therefore, he believes that human beings enter into a contract for preserving their interest in the society. Thus, state and politics are artificial creations of human beings for their survival.

1.2 Objectives:

This unit is an attempt to analyze the ideas of Hobbes. He is considered to be a modern thinker. He justified absolute power of sovereign as he witnessed forces of disintegration. It also made him to draw a gloomy picture of the state of nature. After reading this unit you will be able to explain Hobbes' views on human nature understand Hobbes' views on state of nature analyze Hobbes' ideas of Social Contract.

1.3 Hobbes' View on Human Nature:

Human nature has always been a central theme of discussion of political philosophers as it is the base of all human activities. The depiction of human natures by the philosophers has always been a reflection of their time. As a social contract thinker Hobbes also deals with the state of nature. In his famous work *Leviathan* we find his views regarding human and state of nature. From his writings it is clear to us that he considers the individual not a rational creature but an embodiment of passions, emotions and desires. Hobbes further views the state of nature, a period of human history preceding the establishment of the civil state are an extension of human nature. Now, in the following subsections we will discuss his views regarding human nature and state of nature in brief.

Hobbes makes the individual the spring board of his thought. The presumption of Hobbes is that motion of particles creates sensation in human mind. According to him, there is a relation between stimulus and sensation which leads to the occurrence of mental phenomenon as it comes into being as a result of the relation. Refuting to assign individuals a rational status, Hobbes states that emotions and passions are innate and reason is artificial. According to him, movement of particles either helps or stands in the way of vitality and the creations and aversions of desires depends on the movement. Each man desires something which will enhance his vitality and pleasure in the movement in his mind. Thus for Hobbes, what a man desires is good and what he dislikes is evil. He asserts that the conception of good or bad is not fixed or objective but subjective which undergoes change. In other words, according to Hobbes, human beings are highly self-centered. Every man becomes successful in getting his desired things. He also believes that man is self-centered and the desire for security is his fundamental need and this factor plays an important role in his theory. Each individual is solitary and consequently each one has his own concept of pleasure, pain, good or bad.

Hobbes has very clearly said that no individual is capable of behaving independent of external stimuli. Again Hobbes believes that human beings are by birth equal. However, the desire to possess the same things brings them in clash with each other. He says that competition, glory and differences make people brute and quarrelsome. As all men are roughly equal and apparently desire similar things, there is bound to be war where every man fights against every man. In short, Hobbes says that man is essentially selfish, contentious, quarrelsome, mean, wicked, non-altruistic, irrational, impulsive and self-centered.

Hobbes's views on human nature are quite similar to the views expressed by Machiavelli. In the previous block we have already discussed the views of Machiavelli on human nature. Both Hobbes and Machiavelli spoke about how the human beings are greedy and self-

centred. Hobbes wanted the population to select one authority and pay obedience to that supreme authority. Machiavelli on the other hand taught his sovereign how the population can overthrow him and how to handle the population. The only difference between the two thinkers on this issue is that while Machiavelli does not assign any reason for the bad nature of man, Hobbes tries to explain it in scientific terms. In this way, we can see that Hobbes has given a very gloomy picture of man in the state of nature. He holds that all men are by nature equal. However, none of them is strong enough to be safe against others. They are also affected by the same three passions viz. desire for safety, desire of glory and desire for gain. The desire for gain leads to violence when the object of desire can neither be divided nor enjoyed in common. Naturally, in such a situation human beings develop a sense of distrust towards each other. This sense of distrust is evident from the situations when a man goes around against his fellow human beings with arms in hands, closes his doors against his neighbours etc. Thus, we can say that Hobbes' concept of human nature is based on two factors:

- All men are equal
- Man is not an idle spectator in political drama but always ready to struggle and achieve something noble, gentle and higher.

However, Hobbes' views on human nature have been severely criticized on the following grounds

- According to Hobbes, human beings are highly irrational in the state of nature. But he suddenly assigns human beings the faculty of reason with the help of which they create state. Thus, he contradicts himself on this ground.
- Hobbes has said that people are quarrelsome, nasty and brutish. But he has not given any convincing argument as to how they become peace loving and rational all of a sudden.
- His assertion that all men are equal also seems far removed from practical experiences.

- His ideas of human nature are not very convincing. It is wrong to believe that human beings are always nasty and brutish. In actual practice, people do not quarrel with each other unless they are forced to do so. Nevertheless, it can be said that there are desires which prompt men to fight with each other. Such desires have made man nasty and brutish in the state of nature and made him stand against the valid desires of others to satisfy his own desires.

Stop to consider:

Life Sketch of Thomas Hobbes:

Hobbes was born in England on April 5, 1588. He was the second son. His father was the vicar of Charlton and Westport. He was brought up by his uncle. He was a bright student and mastered a number of languages like Greek, French, Italian and English. He was educated at the Westport church and then passed to the Malmesbury School. He was forced to flee to London after being involved in a fight with a clergyman outside his own church. At university Hobbes appears to have followed his own curriculum. He was little attracted by the scholastic learning. He completed his B.A. degree in the year 1608. His master Sir James Hussy recommended him as a tutor to William, son of William Cavendish who was the Baron of Earl of Devonshire. He became a companion to the younger William on a grand tour of Europe in 1610- 1615. He was exposed to European scientific and critical methods during the tour. His first publication was a translation in English of Thucydides' History of Peloponnesian War in 1629. He used to write verses in Latin and English. At the later stage of his life, Hobbes translated Homer's Odyssey and Illiad into English. In November 1640 he fled to France and stayed there till the winter of 1651-1652. During his time outside of England, Hobbes became interested in why people allowed themselves to be ruled and what would be the best form of government for England. In 1657 the Leviathan was reported to the parliamentary committee as the most poisonous piece of atheism. In 1647, he fell seriously ill. But in spite

of his ill health he published his famous work the Leviathan in the year 1651. In 1683 the leviathan was condemned and burned in the Oxford University. He finally died of paralysis on 3rd September 1679.

SAQ

Do you agree with Hobbes' views of Human nature? Give reasons in support of your argument. (20+80 words)

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Check Your Progress:

1. Hobbes considered the individuals as rational creatures. (Write true or false).
2. Hobbes opined that individuals are embodiment of passions, emotions and _____. (Fill in the blanks).
3. According to Hobbes, the desire for security is the fundamental need of a human being. (Write true or false).
4. Hobbes believes that human beings are by birth unequal. (Write true or false).
5. Differentiate between Hobbes and Machiavelli regarding their views on human nature.
6. Mention the two factors on which Hobbes' concept of human nature is based?
7. Write two criticisms levelled against Hobbes' concept of human nature.
8. Name the first publication of Thomas Hobbes published in the year 1629.

1.4 Hobbes on State of Nature :

After reading the previous section of this unit which familiarizes us with Hobbes' view on human nature, now we proceed to discuss his

views on the state of nature. Before proceeding to discuss Hobbes' views on the state of nature, we must remember that his view on the state of nature is only an extension of human nature. Hobbes believes that before joining civil state, people lived in the state of nature. According to him, the state of nature is in a state of war as insecurity is the only secure thing in the pre-state society. One is secured as long as the strong spares him. The life and property of the people are always at stake in the state of nature. In short, in such an environment, the life of man appears to be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. According to him, men have contrasting nature to that of bees and ants. In his words, "Men are continually in competition for honour and dignity, which these creatures are not; consequently amongst men there ariseth on that ground, envy and hatred and finally war."(Hobbes, Leviathan XI).

Stop To Consider

Hobbes' Views on Absolute Monarchy

According to Hobbes, monarchy is the best form of government. It is the only form of government which can guarantee peace. Hobbes in his works has always stated that there should be a supreme sovereign power in a society. In his leviathan, he clearly showed his inclination towards supreme authority in a monarchy. He opined that the clashes in the society like between church and state, between rival governments, between different philosophies etc. should be minimised. These clashes lead to civil war. Therefore for maintaining peace, he wanted all the people of his commonwealth to submit to one absolute central authority. Hobbes draws a direct relation between obedience to the sovereign and peace.

The absence of any common superior to hold all the people in check leads to a state of constant war of all against all. The state of nature is characterized by perpetual war and fear because of three reasons namely competition for acquiring means for gratifying identical competitions, the fear of being surpassed by others in power and desire

for admiration and recognition as superior. According to Hobbes, unless there is a common sovereign power to regulate and control, competition, conflicts, clashes and quarrels are unavoidable. Again Hobbes argues that there can be no distinction between right and wrong in the state of nature because such a distinction presupposes the existence of common standards and conduct, a common law to judge that conduct and a common law giver. Again there is no distinction between just and unjust in the state of nature because there is no common superior (sovereign) or law. When there is no law there can be no justice. There is no right to private property in the state of nature because the possession of a thing depends upon the power of a person to keep it. Hobbes opined that man actually wanted peace. But his fear of others, his wish not to lose what he already had and his never ending desire to acquire more has created all the clashes in the state of nature. In short, in the state of nature described by Hobbes, there was constant fear, distrust and suspicion among the people.

In the words of Hobbes :

“I put for a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death. And the cause of this, is not always that a man hopes for a more intensive delight, than he has already attained to; or that he cannot be content with a more moderate power; but because he can not assure the power and means to live well, which he hath present, without the acquisition of more.”(Hobbes, Leviathan XI).

Stop To Consider

Hobbes Views on Religion in the Commonwealth

According to Hobbes the sovereign must possess the power to determine the public observance of religion. Hobbes opined that religion is the only element which can validate authorities and hence can be a serious threat to public peace. Hobbes has found a way to counter this threat to public peace. He divided between the private belief and public worship. He opined that private beliefs should be

politically ineffectual and public worship should be decided by the sovereign. Hobbes encourages scepticism eventually making private belief neutral. Hobbes wanted to establish that all authority comes from god and everyone should obey the civil sovereign. In the opinion of Hobbes, people are allowed to continue their personal beliefs until and unless it influences the public arguments.

However, Hobbes' views on the state of nature have faced severe criticisms on several grounds. To elaborate, historically his theory is not founded on facts and in fact he has himself not tried to establish the existence of the state of nature. Thus according to Hobbes, it is all imaginary and there is no end to the flight of imagination. Since his whole theory is based on human nature and it is a well-established fact that man by nature is not nasty and brutish, therefore, the whole basis of his theory and its super structures is wrong and not founded on solid facts. Hobbes in his theory has stated no standards to find out as to what is right and wrong to judge the actions of the people in the state of nature.

Stop To Consider:

The Major Works of Hobbes:

1. *Leviathan*. Hobbes' great philosophical tract is published in the year 1651. In this book, he has elaborately portrayed the conditions prevailing in the state of nature along with the description of men living in such a state. He deals with the origin of the state and nature of sovereignty and finally the creation of absolute, indivisible and inalienable authority of the sovereign.
2. *De Cive*. This book is a major work by Thomas Hobbes. It was published in Latin in the year 1642. It was published from Paris. In the year 1651, this book has been translated to English in the name *Philosophical Rudiments Concerning Government and Society*. This translated version was published from London. This book is known for its famous phrase “*bellum omnium contra omnes*”. This means war of

all against all. In this book Hobbes tries to establish the superior authority of state by saying that both spiritual and temporal lords should bow before the authority of lord sovereign.

3. *De Corpore*. *De Corpore* or *On The Body* is a major work written by Thomas Hobbes. It was published in the year 1655. This book deals with human nature. This work is devoted to foundational matters. So, the books written by Hobbes and their contents familiarize us with the major ideas and issues of Hobbes.

It needs mention here that the political writings of Hobbes are influenced by the civil wars during that time. His writings supported the powers of the king. He was an ardent supporter of absolute monarchy and his writings truly reflected it.

Check Your Progress:

Choose the correct option:

1. According to Hobbes, the state of nature is
 - a. A period of peace and plenty
 - b. A state of constant war
 - c. Regulated by the religious law
 - d. None of the above
2. “Men are continually in competition for honour and dignity, which these creatures are not; consequently amongst men there arises on that ground, envy and hatred and finally war.” Who said this?
3. Hobbes draws a direct relation between obedience to the sovereign and peace. (Write true or false).
4. Why Hobbes opined that religion can be a serious threat to public peace?
5. Hobbes did not make any distinction between private belief and public worship. (Write true or false).

6. According to Hobbes, under which condition people are allowed to continue their personal beliefs?
7. Describe the criticisms levelled against Hobbes' views on state of nature.
8. When was the Leviathan published?
9. What was the main idea of the book De Corpore written by Thomas Hobbes?
10. De Cive written by Thomas Hobbes was published in Latin in the year _____. (Fill in the blanks)

1.5 Hobbes' Idea of Social Contract:

After reading the previous sections, we know that Hobbes is one of the famous theorists of social contract who has given a very gloomy picture of the state of nature where the people are selfish, nasty and brutish and live in a state of constant war with each other. The basis of Hobbes's argument can be stated simply though the implications of the argument are far-reaching. Social contract imagines the societal situation that exists before the emergence of civil society. Hobbes terms the condition of men living without government as the State of Nature and paints a bleak picture of it. Men without government and the settled social living made possible only by the existence of government will be roughly and naturally equal. They can escape from it only by setting up a common power which is capable of restraining and protecting every individual at the same time. They surrender their rights to the will of one in the hope of getting peace and security. In this contract, the sovereign is not the party. Thus, whereas all are equal before the contract, after the contract out of all the equals one superior is created. All rights are transferred to a common depository. In this way state is created and the individuals surrender their natural rights which are assured by the state.

Hobbes believed that multitude of people cannot exercise rights and cannot act authoritatively. This can be done by individuals only. He

opined that collective body is artificial. In the name of the whole group, one individual must act. Thus, he believed that a corporation is not a collective body at all. In a corporation, there is always one person whose supreme will represents the will of its members.

You have learnt that according to Hobbes, there is only two alternatives viz. absolute monarchy or complete anarchy. Thus we can summarize the main characteristics of Hobbes' idea of the Social Contract in the following ways——

- The parties involved in to the contract are individuals and not groups or associations of any sort.
- The state is based on reason and not on fear.
- The sovereign is not a party to the contract and cannot be guilty of violating the contract.
- The contract once entered is perpetual in nature. A lawfully constituted sovereign can be replaced only by a unanimous decision of the commonwealth. There cannot be any resistance to the sovereign. The member of the state can revolt against the sovereign only if he fails to protect them. Hence, for self-protection, the people can elect a new sovereign and give their obedience to the new sovereign.
- The minority has no right to object to the choice of the majority in the selection of the sovereign.
- The individuals surrender all their rights to the sovereign except the right to live. So we can say that Hobbes favours the system of absolute monarchy and supremacy of the king through his social contract.
- The sovereign of Thomas Hobbes is the sole source of laws. Moreover, the sovereign is also the sole interpreter of laws. He cannot be bound by civil laws. The sovereign is considered to be the creator of rights and justice. Both the law of nature as well as the law of god cannot be pleaded against the sovereign. It is because the law of nature is the creation of the sovereign and therefore only he can interpret it. Again, the law of god can be approached through him only. Therefore it is not possible to pleaded both these laws against the sovereign.

- The sovereign also enjoys the right to make war and peace with other nations and commonwealths.

Check Your Progress:

1. According to Hobbes, all are equal before the contract, after the contract out of all the equals, one superior is created. (Write true or false).
2. The parties in the social contract of Thomas Hobbes are groups and not individuals.(Write true or false).
3. A state based on reason is one of the characteristic of Hobbes' social contract theory. (Write true or false).
4. Analyse the circumstance under which the people can go against the sovereign of Thomas Hobbes.
5. The people surrender all their rights to the sovereign except the right to live. (Write true or false).
6. Why the law of nature cannot be pleaded against the sovereign of Thomas Hobbes?

SAQ Do you think that Hobbes' social contract can bring peace in his State of Nature? (50 words)

.....

You must remember here that the social contract theory of Thomas Hobbes has been criticised on many grounds. John Locke rejects the idea of state of nature propounded by Thomas Hobbes. John Locke was an ardent believer in natural right and the idea of life, liberty and happiness. Another set of critics argued that the concept of social contract is factious and hence there were no moral or political force behind it.

1.6 Summing up :

As stated earlier, Hobbes is the greatest political philosopher who is credited for conceiving state as a human institution for the first time. His idea of social contract aims at creating an absolute Sovereign authority who can establish peace and security in the state of nature. In this unit, we have dealt with Hobbes' major ideas with reference to his works like Leviathan. Reading of this unit has enhanced our understanding of Hobbes' philosophy. Hobbes regards civil society as artificial, man-made and Leviathan offers us a message tinged with profound, gloomy and fearful conservatism. In this unit, we have also learnt that according to Hobbes, any man without a Sovereign is really an outlaw who can be killed at will. Hobbes idea of man as a rational egoist is based on his idea of state of nature. This unit also helps us to learn that Hobbes contributes to the utilitarian philosophy in the form of the idea that human beings enter into a contract for their own welfare. In the next unit we shall attempt to examine Hobbes as an individualist for the promotion of the interest of the individuals in the society.

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Links:

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Unit 2: Thomas Hobbes : Natural Rights and Absolute Sovereignty

Unit Structure :

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Objectives
- 2.3 Hobbes' Views On Natural Right, Liberty and Law
- 2.5 Hobbes as an Individualist and Absolutist
- 2.6 Contribution of Hobbes Towards Political Theory
- 2.7 Critical Appreciation of Hobbes' Political Philosophy
- 2.8 Summing up
- 2.9 References and Suggested Readings

2. 1: Introduction:

From the discussions of the previous unit of this block we have learnt that Hobbes is the greatest political philosopher who is credited for conceiving state as a human institution for the first time. His idea of social contract aims at creating an absolute Sovereign authority who can establish peace and security in the state of nature.

In this unit, we will make an attempt to deal with Hobbes' ideas on natural right, liberty and law. These ideas of Hobbes are inter-related to his ideas of Social Contract. He is of the opinion that human beings enter into a contract for preserving their interest in the society. Thus, state and politics are artificial creations of human beings for their survival. Moreover, we will also try to analyze Hobbes as an individualist and absolutist and assess his contribution to Political theory in this unit.

2.2 Objectives:

This unit is an attempt to analyze the ideas of Hobbes. Human nature has always been a central theme of discussion of political philosophers as it is the base of all human activities. The depiction of human natures by the philosophers has always been a reflection of their time. As a social contract thinker Hobbes also deals with the state of nature. In his famous work *Leviathan* we find his views regarding human and state of nature. From his writings it is clear to us that he considers the individual not a rational creature but an embodiment of passions, emotions and desires. Hobbes further views the state of nature, a period of human history preceding the establishment of the civil state are an extension of human nature. After reading this unit you will be able to :

- discuss Hobbes' views on natural right, liberty and law
- analyse Hobbes as an individualist or absolutist

- examine Hobbes contribution to political theory

Now, in the following subsections we will discuss his views regarding human nature and state of nature in brief.

2.3 Hobbes' Views on Natural Right, Liberty and Law :

We have already discussed Hobbes' views on social contract on the light of his views on human nature and the state of nature in the previous unit. Now, in this section we will discuss his views on natural right, liberty and law.

According to Hobbes, before joining the civil state the people lived in the state of nature where they enjoyed full freedom. Hobbes also assumes that in such a state of nature none possesses reasoning power but is guided by impulses and passions. At that stage, he enjoys right to life and liberty but the only rule to enjoy the right is the use of force. Hence, in such a state one can keep with oneself what one has. When one joins the civil society he agrees to surrender all his rights to the sovereign except the right to life. Hobbes' emphasis on absolute and unlimited character of sovereignty is likely to give the impression that he does not concede any right or liberty to the people under the Leviathan. This feeling is further strengthened by the fact that he does not concede to the individual any right against the sovereign. According to Hobbes, freedom is a private pursuit of the individual. It means that each individual can create his own conception of freedom within a framework of state authority. Liberty, according to Hobbes, is whatever the law permits and on which the law is silent. Liberty implies absence of restraints and coercion. Hobbes identifies and safeguards the private sphere of the individual where none can exercise control. The only freedom or right which an individual is permitted firstly includes the freedom to do what the laws of the state do not forbid and secondly the rights which the individual cannot have surrendered under any covenant. Liberty in the first sense is not of much significance because it does not constitute any limitation on the authority of the sovereign.

Regarding the freedom of the second category, Hobbes allows the individual the right to disobey the state if he is asked to do anything which endangers his life or body. However, it will be wrong to infer from the above that Hobbes does not permit liberty to the individual under *Leviathan*. He does permit liberty, but his liberty is essentially of a negative nature. Hobbes justifies the grant of liberty within the limitation of laws and does not find any contradiction between the two. Therefore, until the sovereign interferes with the individuals, he can do anything, but once there is a clash between the individual and the sovereign, the former has to become subservient to the latter.

In so far as the right to life is concerned, Hobbes accords it a prominent position in his scheme and permits this right even against the will of the sovereign. Regarding the other rights which individuals enjoy through silence of law, Hobbes refers to the right to buy and sell and otherwise contract with one another; the right to choose their own abode, diet, trade and life and the right to educate their children according to their liking. We can say that Hobbes concedes liberty and freedom to the individual but it is essentially of a negative character and is conceived in relative terms.

Again, Hobbes defends the right to private property. According to Hobbes, there will be no undue interference from the sovereign in the private affairs of the individuals including economic activity. The individuals will have the liberty to buy and sell and otherwise contract with one another. The state can provide charity for the destitute. But it is not the responsibility of the state to actively promote the 'felicity' of the subjects.

Hobbes provides the individual with an absolute right, namely the right of self-preservation. The sovereign cannot command a man to kill, wound or maim himself. This right is an inalienable right of individuals since the basic motive for surrender of their power is self-preservation. If the sovereign fails to protect the individual, the individual has the right to resist the sovereign. Resistance is justified only when the sovereign seeks to destroy the individual directly. These are the dictates of reason. According to Hobbes, the laws of nature are proper laws since they are delivered in the word of God. We should remember here that natural laws in Hobbes' theory do not mean eternal justice, perfect morality or standards to judge the existing laws. According to Hobbes, natural law is a general rule found out by reason by which man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life, or takes away the means of preserving the same. Hobbes argues that to attain justice and harmony in society, the law of nature must be enforced by some coercive power. In the state of nature, there exists neither any giver nor interpreter of laws.

Now let us discuss here the three categories of law as pointed out by Hobbes viz. Law of Nature, Civil Law and Divine Law.

- **Law of Nature**- The law of nature is considered as Articles of Peace. Hobbes argues that the most fundamental law of nature states that each person should seek to live with others in peace. He preaches that the law of nature stands for individual sacrifice in order to achieve social peace. He desires the laws of nature to be supported by swords as the covenants without the swords are words only and possess no value.
- **Civil Law**- Civil laws are those laws and regulations which have the sanction of the sovereign behind them and are also permitted by him. Their obedience is checked by the use of force where necessary. The

civil laws are sanctioned and interpreted by the sovereign only and he is above all laws.

• **Divine Law-** Hobbes defines divine laws as the command of the sovereign. The divine law supersedes the civil law. But the sovereign is the supreme authority to interpret the divine law. However, Hobbes is of the opinion that the civil law or the law of the sovereign is the supreme law and it prevails over every other types of law. A custom becomes law if the sovereign feels that it fulfills the aim of collective social interest.

According to Hobbes, people have no right to question the reasonability or non-reasonability of the law sanctioned by the sovereign. Every rightful civil law passed by the sovereign is just. He can amend and change every law on his own. No one can compel him to either modify or remove any law from the statute book. There are no limitations on the laws enacted by the sovereign in the nature of natural law, divine law or international law. In case, the law enacted by the sovereign clashes with the categories of other law, it shall reign supreme.

Stop to Consider:

Hobbes' view on Sovereign :

The sovereign is created as a result of the contract and enjoys all the powers surrendered by the people at the time of concluding the contract. He is not a party to the contract. The contract is irrevocable. According to Hobbes, the person to whom the rights are surrendered is the sovereign. He is the great 'Leviathan' before whom all need to bow. He is the preserver of peace, hope for prosperity, development and security. Hobbes' sovereign is not a party to the contract and remain above all laws. The sovereign enjoys the power to determine on behalf of the entire community as to what should be done to maintain peace and order and promote general welfare. The sovereign enjoys absolute powers to make laws and this power of the sovereign is not limited by any human authority, superior or inferior. The sovereign is empowered to distinguish between good and bad, moral and immoral, just and unjust.

Check Your Progress:

1. After joining the civil state the people surrender all their rights except the right to _____. (Fill in the blanks).
2. According to Hobbes, the person to whom the rights are surrendered is the _____. (Fill in the Blanks)
3. What is Leviathan?
4. What are the three categories of law described by Hobbes?
5. Write a note on Hobbes' view on Natural Rights.\
6. Why Hobbes' liberty is called the negative liberty?

7. According to Hobbes, international law acts as a limitation on laws. (true/false)
8. What is Divine Law according to Hobbes?

2.4 Hobbes as an Individualist and Absolutist :

We have already read in the previous sections that social contract theory depends on the view of individuals being autonomous in some important sense. We have also seen that to trace the origin of individual autonomy is a vexed question. In Hobbes's case, this difficulty does not arise. It has often been remarked how susceptible Hobbes is to the influence of the scientific and philosophical currents of his day, both English and continental. Hobbes has been carried up and down for his political theory which has been described as pure and naked despotism by some thinkers while the others consider him as the greatest individualist. The first view seems to be based on superfluous reading of the philosophy of Hobbes. In reality he is a great individualist and the theory of absolute sovereignty generally associated with Hobbes is basically the necessary compliment to his individualism.

As we have already seen, the rationale behind Hobbes' theory of ardent absolutism is the concern for the peace and security of the person and property of the individual which lends the tinge of individualism to Hobbes' theory. Hobbes does not talk about vague things like public good or general good and his main concern is the individuals who desire to live and enjoy protection for the means of life. The prominent position accorded to the individual by Hobbes is evident from the fact that he allows the individual the right to resist the sovereign if the latter attacks his life as the contract is finalized for self-preservation. In certain contingencies the individual is permitted to refuse to serve as a soldier as the service may endanger his life. Hobbes also allows the individual to withdraw allegiance from the sovereign who is incapable of securing his life. The right of resistance granted to the individual carries with it the right of the individual to judge for him when his life is endangered. Hobbes does not think in terms of common will or collective will. According to Hobbes, each one has left his freedom enjoyed in the state of nature only on the condition that his life will be secured. As soon as he feels that either his life is insecure or the behaviour of the sovereign is endangering his life, the individual can resist the authority of the state and sovereign. Another condition under which the individual can resist the sovereign arises when the sovereign is weak and unable to discharge his functions. The individuals can also resist the authority of the sovereign when they are forced to leave the state of nature. They can join the civil state and accept the supremacy of the sovereign.

Here we must remember that the greatest sign of individualism in Hobbes is visible in his delineation of the treatment of the individuals.

He believes that they are equal in knowledge and development and the rationale behind his support for absolute rule is the fact that as an individualist he does not believe in the idea of privileged classes. The absence of privileged class can be reconciled by the institution of absolute monarchy. Thus, according to his model, it is not anti-individualism when he does not assign moral as well as political functions to the sovereign and the state. Hobbes' state stands for public safety and he does not ask the state to perform the functions of looking after the well-being of the individuals. He clearly says that he wants to give the individuals sufficient scope for their development. Apart from these examples, Hobbes has made individual a distinct and separate unit throughout his philosophy. In his contract he has made individual and not group or family, the party. The individual continues to exist before and after the contract. Hobbes has made the state not an end in itself but only the means to an end, the end being the individual and protection of his life.

It is evident from the above account that Hobbes' philosophy is pregnant with the strongest seeds of individualism. He makes the individual the centre of his thought. After raising the individual to such heights, Hobbes feels that if the individual is not kept in proper check, it will lead to the destruction of the civil society giving rise to anarchy. This will tantamount to return to the state of nature characterized by war of all against all. To check such a possibility, Hobbes feels the need of a supreme power which possesses the power to take appropriate action to prevent such a degeneration of the individual. Hobbes realizes that covenants without swords are simply words and he concedes absolute authority to his sovereign to guarantee that the covenants are observed by the people. However, Hobbes does not stop with the grant of absolute powers to the sovereign but also ensures that he is not able to use it for his selfish ends. He gives the sovereign the power to make laws or rules by which it may be possible to determine what is just and what is unjust; or what is good and what is evil.

The civil laws enacted by the sovereign are largely based on the laws of nature and therefore his laws cannot be absolute. Again the laws are made with the sole objective of maintenance of peace for which the individual surrenders his natural liberty. The sovereign makes the laws for the benefit of the individual and is subject to the judgment of individualism. Hobbes has assigned his sovereign the responsibility of checking the anti-social tendencies of the individuals without destroying their individuality. Though his sovereign is absolute, yet he has been characterized by Hobbes as the representative of his people. In this way Hobbes negates the right of absolutism. Hobbes grants to the individual certain rights and imposes certain obligations on the sovereign towards his subjects. Thus, from this discussion it is evident that Hobbes is more interested in the individual than the sovereign. Seen in this context, it will be sheer mockery of Hobbes' political philosophy to charge him of absolutism. In fact, as Prof. Wayper has

said, “he is perhaps the greatest individualist in the history of political thought.”

SAQ

Do you agree with Hobbes classification of Laws? Give reasons for the support of your answer. (80 +60 words)

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.....
.....
.....
.....

Stop To Consider:

Hobbes’ Views on Women: Hobbes accords some fairly robust equality to women on the ground that they are sufficiently equal in strength. He argues that women are as capable as men. So they do not require any protection from men. The mother constitutes authority and guarantees protection to a child by virtue of giving birth to the child. In Hobbes’ state of nature, every woman who has children becomes both a mother and a lord. But if the mother is taken prisoner, she loses her right of authority over her child. In that situation, she can select the person who will exert authority over her child in her absence. According to Hobbes, the idea of female subordination is a human creation. In the state of nature described by Hobbes, the natural domination of mother is accepted as it is she who can declare the father of her child. Hobbes argues that marriage is not based on natural ties of sentiments between generations. According to him, it arises from the consent of its individual members. Though, Hobbes is a supporter of equality of sexes yet he gives the father exclusive jurisdiction within the family, thereby defending patriarchy. While discussing the succession to the sovereign in the state, he wants it to pass from one male child to another.

2.5 Hobbes’ Contribution to Political Theory :

The reading of the previous sections of this unit has helped to familiarize us with Hobbes political philosophy. Hobbes is credited to have offered a theory of absolute sovereignty and freed his sovereign of all shackles. He declares sovereignty as an indivisible and inalienable personality. His theory forms the basis of all definitions given by political thinkers in this regard. Hence, it has rightly been said that Hobbes is the first political philosopher who stands for unlimited sovereignty.

- Hobbes is the first thinker to conceive state as a human institution. He clearly states that God has no role in the origin of the state. He does not believe that there was any mystery in the creation of the state.
- He is the first great individualist with his emphasis on the fact that the state is merely a means for the promotion of the interest of the

individual. Hobbes has made absolute sovereign as a necessary part of individualism and both are combined together and made dependent on each other.

- Utilitarianism, a logical corollary of his individualism is another important contribution of Hobbes to political thought. Hobbes clarifies that people leaves the state of nature and joins civil society only because they want to gain something out of that. Unless the state proves useful and is capable of discharging its obligations, it has no right to demand obedience from the citizens.
- Hobbes is the first thinker to emphasize the supremacy of the matter in relation to mind. He asserts that matter affects the sensation as well as the whole chain of perception, memory, imagination etc and in this respect he anticipates Marx. While developing his theory of materialistic interpretation of history, Marx is greatly influenced by Hobbes' idea of the supremacy of the matter in relation to mind.
- Again, Hobbes applies the true scientific method to the study of Political Science and emphasizes that all human ideas and social phenomena are derived from moving particles.
- Hobbes makes morals at par with politics and affects a complete severance between the two. Machiavelli is often given the credit of separating ethics from politics, but it is Hobbes who provides a rational basis to this separation.
- Hobbes repudiates the classical doctrine of the law of nature and advocates the concept of positive law. Hobbes proves to be a guiding genius for scientific legislation. He clearly states that it is the man-made law and not the natural law which matters most in all the legislation relating to human affairs. He asserts that only man-made law can be effective in human affairs.
- Hobbes is the first thinker to conceive the theory of factious corporation. In his contract, the individuals surrender all their power to a person and authorize him to will and act on behalf of all the constituents. He gives the idea that the multitudes cannot act and that an individual alone can act in the name of the people.

Seen in terms of his numerous contributions to political philosophy, we can agree with Hacker that Hobbes creates a theory which embraces Psychology, Sociology and Political Science and integrates these into a coherent theoretical framework.

2.6 Critical Appreciation of Hobbes' Political Philosophy:

In the previous sections of this unit, we have already discussed the major ideas of Hobbes. We have also assessed the contributions made by Hobbes towards the field of Political Science. He is remembered for the creation of a theory which embraces Psychology, Sociology and Political Science and integrates these into a coherent theoretical

framework. However, Hobbes' successors have criticized him on various grounds.

Now in the following section, we will discuss the criticisms levelled against him.

Criticisms:

- It is difficult to understand how the masters of Hobbes' state of nature become the law abiding and docile citizens of the society. The sudden transformation of the individual from savage to the civilized seems illogical.
- His theory leads to despotism, pure and simple and the individual is virtually reduced to the position of a slave with no right to resist the oppressive and tyrannical rule of the absolute sovereign. Thus, gross materialism, atheism and despotism of Hobbes fail to appeal to his contemporaries as well as succeeding generations.
- The so called scientific method applied by Hobbes has not been found practicable by the modern thinkers. They have found it difficult to apply geometry to the study of social sciences in general and the science of politics in particular.
- Hobbes' philosophy is mainly influenced by his personal predilections and prejudices. He is motivated by the sole consideration of defending the royal absolutism. Besides, he is wrong in insisting that common terror is the sole bond of union among the individuals.
- He represents secularism which is unacceptable to the church, the prime representative of theocracy. It cannot reconcile itself to the philosophy of Hobbes which thrives on elevating the state and sovereign reducing the church into a mere department of the state. The unqualified low position assigned to the church by Hobbes is a source of constant criticism by church fathers. Hobbes almost stirs the whole existing order and creates a sense of great dissatisfaction in many of the existing institutions including the church.
- The believers of divine rights of kings do not support Hobbes' theory of social contract as it makes the monarch a by-product of contract and not a descendant of God on earth. Even granting the monarch unlimited authority and powers do not satisfy the supporters of divine rights of kings. Thus, we have seen that Hobbes is criticized severely on various grounds. However, it is certainly wrong to say that Hobbes' political philosophy has not exercised any influence on the history of political thought. Hobbes is remembered not only a great thinker of the seventeenth century but also as a thinker whose influence can be traced in various schools of contemporary thought. Even his critics appreciate his contribution to political philosophy. We can rightly conclude with the saying of Sabine that, "Hobbes is probably the greatest writer on political philosophy that the English speaking people have produced."

Check Your Progress:

1. "Hobbes is perhaps the greatest individualist in the history of political thought." In the light of the above statement discuss critically Hobbes as an Individualist.

2. Analyse Hobbes as an ardent believer of Absolutism.
3. Give a brief account of Hobbes's contribution to political theory.
4. Examine critically Hobbes's Political Philosophy.

2.7 Summing up :

In Unit 1 and Unit 2 of this Block, we have dealt with Hobbes' major ideas with reference to his works like Leviathan. Reading of this unit has enhanced our understanding of Hobbes' philosophy. Hobbes regards civil society as artificial, man-made and Leviathan offers us a message tinged with profound, gloomy and fearful conservatism. In this unit, we have also learnt that according to Hobbes, any man without a Sovereign is really an outlaw who can be killed at will. Hobbes idea of man as a rational egoist is based on his idea of state of nature. This unit also helps us to learn that Hobbes contributes to the utilitarian philosophy in the form of the idea that human beings enter into a contract for their own welfare. Apart from being one of the exponents of social contract theory, Hobbes is also considered as a great individualist for the promotion of the interest of the individuals in the society. Besides Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau are also major exponents of social contract theory. After familiarizing you with Hobbes's ideas in this unit, we will be dealing with the views of John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau in the next two units for a comprehensive and comparative account of Individualism and Liberalism.

2.8 References and Suggested Readings

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3. Skinner Quentin, The Ideological Context of Hobbes's Political Thought, The Historical Journal-IX, Great Britain.

Links:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Hobbes<http://www.rjgeib.com/thoughts/nature/hobbes-bio.html><http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hobbes/><http://www.philosophypages.com/hy/3x.htm>http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_and_legal_rights<http://www.merineews.com/article/hobbes-individualistic-and-totalitarian-both/15710957.shtml>

Unit 3: John Locke : State of Nature, Human Nature, Social Contract

Unit Structure :

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Objectives
- 3.3 Locke on Human nature and the State of Nature
- 3.4 Locke on Human Nature
- 3.5 Locke on State of Nature
- 3.6 Locke's Idea of Social Contract
- 3.7 Summing up
- 3.8 References and Suggested Readings

3.1 Introduction:

In this block we are discussing liberalism and Social Contract Tradition. You have already got the idea that Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau constitute the most important contributors in this area. In unit 1 and 2 of this block we have discussed Hobbes at length. This unit will deal with Locke's views on human nature, state of nature and his idea about the social contract theory of origin of state. John Locke is an English philosopher and he is considered as the first British empiricist. His writings have influenced the American revolutionaries. John Locke has also contributed to the growth of classical republicanism and liberal theory as reflected in the American Declaration of Independence. Locke's concepts of constitutionalism, toleration, natural rights, limited consensual, law based authority, pluralism, property have a significant impact in establishing and nurturing a liberal society in England beyond the English settlement of 1688. Moreover, his concepts are influential in inspiring similar traditions in America, France and Holland. The American and the French revolutions and the constitutional edifice in the United States are Lockean in spirit.

3.2 Objectives:

This unit attempts to deal with the ideas and views of Locke who has made significant contribution towards the growth of ideas like constitutionalism, natural rights and human nature. After reading this unit you will be able to

- *discuss Locke's views on human nature
- *analyze Locke's views on state of nature
- *discuss Locke's views on social contract theory

Stop To Consider:

Life sketch of John Locke:

Locke was born on 29 August 1632 in a small thatched cottage by the Church in Wrington, Somerset, about twelve miles from Bristol and was baptized on the same day. Soon after Locke's birth, the family moved to the market town of Pensford, about seven miles south of Bristol where Locke grew up in a rural Tudor house in Belluton. In 1647, he was sent to the prestigious Westminster School in London. After completing his studies in Westminster School he was admitted to the Christ Church, Oxford. Locke was awarded a Bachelor's Degree in 1656 and a Master's Degree in 1658. He also obtained Bachelors of Medicine in 1664. Locke's political life started when Shaftsbury, the founder of the Whig movement became Lord Chancellor in 1672.

From the very beginning of his life Locke came in contact with Lord Ashley, who was the founder of Whig party. In 1666, he met Ashley for the first time. Within a year of the meeting, Locke joined Ashley's household in London. This incident proved to be a turning point in Locke's life. The Glorious Revolution was another potent influence on him. This influence was so significant that his whole political philosophy moved round it. His notion of human nature was an outcome of this revolution. Sydney who was executed for treason in 1683 was another influence on Locke. He stated that the authority

resided with the people. Thus Locke borrowed this idea from him though he presented it in his own way and style. Locke died in 28th October, 1704 in Essex. All thinkers are influenced by their time and the surrounding environment. Therefore, a reading of the above paragraph will help you to comprehend the background of Locke which helped him in formulating his ideas.

3.3 Locke on Human Nature and the State of Nature :

In the first unit of this block we have learnt Hobbes' view on human nature and the state of nature. Now in this unit, we shall discuss Locke's ideas on Human nature and the State of Nature. Different political thinkers are influenced by the philosophies and ideas of their predecessors. In Block I of this paper, we have learnt how the ideas of Aristotle are shaped by the ideas of his predecessor Plato. In the arena of Social Contract theory also, it is found that Locke's ideas are influenced by Hobbes. Hence it is easy for us to read Locke's Second Treatise of Civil Government (1681–3) as a straight attack on Hobbes. The most famous sentence in the Second Treatise of Civil Government is that 'though this (the State of Nature) be a state of liberty, yet it is not a state of licence'.

Like Hobbes, Locke begins with a hypothetical State of Nature, gives an account of it, and then proceeds to show how men come out of it. Locke's State of Nature differs from Hobbes' as for Locke, life is recognizably social in the state of nature in a sense Hobbes will never allow. Hence to Locke the State of Nature is a state of liberty. Here Locke means that men bound by Natural Law in the State of Nature will be able to recognise and respect the Natural Rights of others. In the following sections we will discuss his views on human nature and the State of nature.

Stop to Consider:

Principal Works of John Locke:

Locke wrote thirty five books touching all walks of life. His first works namely Two Tracts on Government (1662) and Essays on the Law of Nature in Latin (1664) were written at Oxford. His whole philosophy was based on the ideas expressed in Essay Concerning Human Understanding published in 1679. It was forbidden as a text for tutorial discussions in Oxford and its colleges. In his *An Essay Concerning Toleration* (1667) he campaigned vigorously for toleration. Some of his minor works like Second Letter on Toleration (1691) and Third Letter on Toleration (1692) were written in response to the criticism made by Jonas Prost. In 1693, *Some Thoughts on Education* and in 1695 *the Reasonableness of Christianity* were published. In the First Treatise Locke offered a detailed critique of Robert Filmer's *Patriarchia*, a quasi-religious attempt to show that absolute monarchy was the natural system of human social organization. The Second Treatise on Government developed Locke's detailed account of the origin, aims and structure of any civil government.

3.4 Locke on Human Nature:

Locke's depiction of the human nature differs from Hobbes' description. Locke does not offer a systematic account of his views on human nature and we get a glimpse of his views from the scattered ideas in the Essay Concerning Human Understanding and the Second Treatise of Civil Government. Locke believes that human beings are capable, efficient, considerate and basically decent. According to him, human beings are endowed with a natural social instinct. Locke does not agree with Hobbes that human beings become quarrelsome, savage and brutish for the sake of pleasures. He believes that people are essentially peace-loving and not quarrelsome. They are not always selfish and sometimes they are altruistic also. He feels that people always want to achieve the ends by peaceful and rational methods. In

the pre-state civil society, goodwill, mutual understanding and sense of mutual cooperation prevail and govern their social relations. However, like Hobbes, Locke also considers all human beings as equal. He stresses on the point that all human beings are born equal, if not physically than morally.

Stop to consider

Locke and The Glorious Revolution

The most acclaimed work of Locke, 'Second Treatise' is influenced by the revolutions against the English throne during that time. Locke was said to be the apostle of revolution and his Second Treatise justifies revolution. But thinker like Haslett has opposed this view. He opined that the Second Treatise could have been written before the accession of king William to the throne. Cranston, on the other hand believes that the text was written 10 years before the Glorious Revolution. This was written to justify or create the arguments for the revolution.

Locke believes that every individual enjoys certain natural rights viz. right of life, liberty and property. His enjoyment of these rights springs not from any position, strength, wealth etc. but from the fact that he is a human being and possesses reason. He stresses that these rights should be respected. Children do not enjoy these rights as they lack developed mind. Locke has also said that everyone is bound by duty to obey moral and natural laws. It is the duty of the state to protect indefensible rights. Locke has made it clear that every human being wants to substitute his pain with pleasure. Things which we consider good give us pleasure whereas those termed evil lead to pain. According to him, all human beings possess certain basic rights even though the rights may not be recognized. Locke does not agree with the idea that man is a centre of blind passions. He is of the opinion that man is a moral and social being. In his Essay *Concerning Human Understanding*, he has said that every individual is basically endowed

with social instinct. Basically each individual is decent and socially capable of ruling himself. The people are not quarrelsome and want to lead a peaceful life. They are not always selfish but basically rational. In short, Locke assumes that human beings are basically decent, orderly, sociable and capable of ruling themselves.

Stop to consider

Locke as the Founder Of Empiricism

Locke is rightly called the founder of empiricism. He believes that knowledge is derived from experience. He strongly negates the concept of innate idea or principle as favoured by Plato. He opined that if truth is native to one's mind than observation and experimental enquiry cannot add anything new to our knowledge. According to Locke, the ideas are not nurtured from within. They are acquired from outside. He believed that experience give rise to various ideas. Our ideas are derived from two sources namely sensation and internal sense. Locke divided the ideas into two groups. First one is simple ideas and second one is complex ideas. The simple ideas are derived either from sensation or from reflection. The complex ideas are derived from a combination of the first. The mind of man can be resembled with an empty page. Experience writes upon it. In Locke's view, the quality of the external object produces an idea in our mind. These qualities can be of primary or secondary in nature. The primary qualities are constant in nature and suffer no change. These are solidity, extension, form, number etc. The secondary qualities are the result of impact of some power in the primary qualities upon our sense organs. For eg. Colours, odours, sounds, tastes etc. These cannot exist without sense organs.

Locke's concept of human nature has been criticized on the following grounds.

- On the one hand Locke says that every human mind at the time of birth appears to be a clean slate without imprints. It is the world which creates sensations which subsequently get deepened. On the other hand, he has claimed that from the birth every individual has certain natural rights and these rights should be protected. Hence, these statements are contradictory.
- Locke has also been criticized on the ground that he has failed to give any concrete reason as to why human beings are sociable and good in nature since birth. He has also provided no reasons to believe that the people are capable of governing themselves. Though he believes in the application of scientific reasoning to the study of every problem, yet he has advanced no scientific grounds or basis for this. It has been said that each and every individual wants maximum pleasures for the self. He wants to avoid pain. On the other hand, Locke enjoins his people that they should struggle for maximum public and general happiness. It is not clear how a person, who is basically keen to achieve maximum happiness for him, can be expected to promote greatest happiness for the public all of a sudden.

Check Your Progress

1. In which year Locke obtained the degree of Bachelors of Medicine?
2. Who was the founder of Whig Party?
3. Name two principal works of John Locke.
4. An Essay Concerning Toleration was published in the year _____. (Fill in the blank)
5. What is the main content of the book ‘Second Treatise on Government’?
6. Locke believes that human beings are capable, efficient, considerate and basically descent. (Write true or false)
7. Locke advocates the concept of innate idea. (Write true or false)
8. Write a note on Lockean concept of empiricism.

9. Mention the criticisms leveled against Locke's idea of human nature.
10. In which year 'Some Thoughts On Education' was published?

3.5 Locke on State of Nature :

We have already mentioned that Locke's view on the state of nature is a logical extension of his views of human nature. He agrees with Hobbes that there is a stage in human history when there is no state and the people live without any controls and regulations. Like Hobbes, Locke does not consider the state of nature as the state of war of each against all. On the other hand, he considers it as an era of "peace, good-will, mutual assistance and preservation". He conceives the state of nature as a pre-political rather than a pre-social condition. As social beings, people have lived together in perfect peace and harmony in the society. Locke also believes that in the state of nature life is not intolerable and there is no perpetual hostility. Peace and reason prevail in the state of nature as the fellow beings are socially inclined towards each other and have a mutual bond of union among themselves. The spirit of sociability and brotherhood characterize such state and all are happy, equal and free and possess the right to property. Thus, we can say that the life of the people in Locke's state of nature appears to be different from Hobbes' depiction as both offer contrasting pictures. Locke also argues that before living in the civil state, the people are living in the state of nature characterized by peace and prosperity. It is a state of goodwill governed by the law of nature. He again states that the law of nature is based on the principle of equality. Locke stands for the idea that personal liberty matters most in the state of nature than physical liberty. He further believes that though there is no common authority in the state of nature, the consequence is not anarchic. Locke highlights three deficiencies in the state of nature. These are:

- Lack of an established, settled and known law. Because of this lack, law can be interpreted by each individual in his own way leading to a confusing state.
- Lack of an impartial judge who can interpret and execute the law of nature without personal whims.
- Lack of an executive organ which can enforce a just decision. Individuals agree to enter into a contract and create the state chiefly to remove these inconveniences and uncertainties of the state of nature.

Stop to consider

Locke on Political Authority

Locke's concept of political authority is based on firm and explicit moral relationship between the human being and god. He believed that political power should be derived from state where individuals are free to do what they are best at within the limits of the law. Locke opined that political authority is based on religious obligations. Religious obligation is the source of all morality. God has created us and it is our duty to protect the right of self-preservation. Locke's political authority is a combination of power and right. He was not in favour of the idea of absolute authority as he considers absolute power as illegitimate. The fundamental idea of Locke's political authority is trust and if the authority violates this trust, the society is entitled to revolt for the cause of self-preservation. He was in favour of a limited sovereign state.

SAQ

Do you think Locke's idea of political authority is relevant in contemporary world. Give reasons in favour of your answers. (120 words)

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3.6 Locke's idea of Social Contract :

We have already learnt that according to Locke, state is created by the individuals through a contract to remove some inconveniences and uncertainties of the state of nature. We have also learnt that social contract is an extension of the pre-existing morality which exists in the state of nature. Locke stresses on God's permissions rather than on God's prohibitions that is natural rights before natural law. They become an asset rather than a liability, something men desire to keep rather than to give up. Restricting the Hobbesian natural right to a given number of natural rights makes natural right much more manageable, and, being manageable, natural rights can be retained within the framework of civil society.

Now, we must remember here that Locke's social contract is a contract of each with all. It is a contract under which each individual agrees to concede to the community as a whole. The individuals surrender only those rights whose exercise introduce an element of distraction in the state of nature and the surrender of these rights makes peace secured. Thus the individuals surrender the rights to interpret the law for them, to execute it and to punish anyone who transgresses these rights. The rest of the rights remain the same even in the civil society. There are certain important features of Locke's idea of social contract. These are—

- It is a double sided contract in which the sovereign is not outside the contract but forms a part of it.
- Locke gives only limited powers to the community. The civil community which is to interpret and execute law is as much bound by it as the individual is.
- The social contract of Locke is unanimous. His contract is based on the consent of the people.
- Locke's contract is enforceable on the present generation only. It is not compulsory for all the subsequent generations to follow the contract.

- After signing the contract, Locke does not dissolve the state of nature. Locke's idea of social contract is irrevocable in the sense that once people have entered into the contract, they cannot revert back to the state of nature unless the government is dissolved.

Stop to consider

Locke on Parental And Patriarchal Authority

Locke made a division between paternal and political power. He also distinguished between parental and patriarchal authority. He believed that while parental authority is shared authority, patriarchal authority implies the authority of one single individual. A child pays obedience towards his/her parents till he/she is morally responsible. Hence this type of authority is temporary in nature. It is the duty of the parents to take care of their children and educate them till they become responsible. And the children pay honour to the parents and not obedience. And most importantly, when we say parents it includes both the father and the mother. Locke was in favour of granting equal rights to the mothers as well. Mothers do their own responsibilities towards their children. Therefore they deserve honour and respect from their children irrespective of the will of the father. He went to the extent that the wife can leave a unhappy marriage at her own will and it should not be dependent on the will of the husband. He also granted the right to property to women. But he laid the power of decision making in the hands of the husbands. He justified this on the basis that husband is physically stronger and the wife has accepted and consented to her domination through the contract of marriage. At the same time he put some limitations on this authority exercised by the husband. He suggested that the husband can take decision in the matter of property and of common interest. The husbands were denied right over his wife's life or fortune. Locke separated family life from political authority.

Thus we can say that, social contract is a double process for Locke. Men therefore, have a right of rebellion, and perhaps even a moral duty to rebel if government begins to frustrate God’s purpose for the world. In all events, the Lockean ‘sovereign’ is a party to the contract to set up government. Hence, it is clear from the above discussion that unlike Hobbes’, in Locke’s social contract, two contracts take place and he does not prefer absolute monarchy. We can therefore, say that Locke is a supporter of the limited form of Monarchical system.

SAQ

Make a comparative analysis of the the social contract theory as depicted by Hobbes and Locke. (100 words)

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3.7 Summing Up:

After reading this unit you all have learnt according to Locke liberty depends upon the necessity of pursuing true happiness and upon the government of our passions. Moreover, Locke’s view of human nature is not so profound and as consistent as that of Hobbes. The state of nature, which Locke described, was thus in contrast to the argument of Hobbes, pre-eminently social in character. For him, it was not a state of constant warfare. Rather, it is a state of ‘peace, goodwill, mutual assistance and preservation.’ Again, Locke believed that men are by nature rational beings and hence they obey the law of nature. Regarding social contract, Locke is of the opinion that society and state were created in different steps. Further, according to him, government is like a trust which is bound to act within the terms of its constitution. In the following units of this block we shall discuss the ideas of another thinker of social contract tradition i.e. Rousseau.

Check Your Progress

1. Locke considers the state of nature as the state of war of each against all. (Write true or false)
2. Which among the following is wrongly stated?
 - a. Locke considers the state of nature as an era of peace, goodwill, mutual assistance and preservation.
 - b. Locke believes that in the state of nature life is intolerable.
 - c. Locke's state of nature is a state of goodwill governed by the law of nature.
 - d. Locke opines that personal liberty matters most in the state of nature.
3. Mention the deficiencies highlighted by Locke in the state of nature.
4. According to Locke, political authority is based on religious obligations. (Write true or false)
5. Religious obligation is the source of all _____. (fill in the blanks)
6. Locke's political authority is a combination of power and _____. (Fill in the blanks)
7. The social contract of Locke was a contract of each with all. (Write true or false)
8. Write down the important features of Locke's social contract theory.
9. Write a note on Locke's views on parental and patriarchal authority.
10. Locke prefers absolute monarchy. (Write true or false)

Stop to consider

Comparison of Hobbes and Locke

Both Thomas Hobbes and John Locke were social contract theorists. Hobbes was one of the founders of modern political philosophy and Locke was known as the father of liberalism.

Locke differs from Hobbes in the context that while Locke was in favour of a limited government, Hobbes favoured absolute sovereignty with no responsibility attached to it. In Locke's view, the power rested in the hands of political community. The community delegates its power to the government and the community had the power to overthrow the government if situation arises. On the other hand, the sovereign of Hobbes enjoyed unlimited and absolute power and it is inalienable. Locke has assigned the right to revolt against the authority to the people while Hobbes had completely denied it stating revolution as something unlawful.

3.8 References and Suggested Readings:

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Links:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Locke

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/locke/>

<http://answers.google.com/answers/threadview?id=39026>

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/93360/John-Locke-on-Property-Rights> ----
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<http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/politics/ideology-politics/difference-between-locke-and-hobbes/>

Unit 4: John Locke: Natural Right, and Limited Government

Unit Structure:

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Objectives

4.3 Locke on Individualism

4.4 Locke on Private Property

4.5 Locke's View on Natural Right and Natural Law

4.6 Critical Appreciation of Locke's Political Philosophy

4.7 An estimate of Locke's Contribution

4.8 Summing up

4.9 References and Suggested Readings

4.1 Introduction:

John Locke is considered one of the important thinkers of social contract tradition. In the previous unit we have discussed some of the important ideas of Locke like his views on human nature, state of nature as well as social contract. It is believed that liberalism as a creed began with Locke. Locke's concepts of constitutionalism, toleration, natural rights, limited consensual, law based authority, pluralism, property have a significant impact in establishing and nurturing a liberal society in England beyond the English settlement of 1688. This unit will try to examine Locke as an individualist. Moreover, this unit will also attempt to discuss Locke's views on law, rights, property, etc.

4.2 Objectives:

This unit attempts to deal with the ideas and views of Locke who has made significant contribution towards the growth of ideas like constitutionalism, natural rights and human nature. After reading this unit you will be able to

- analyze Locke as an individualist
- explain Locke's views on private property
- discuss Locke's views on natural right and natural law

- examine Locke as an individualist

4.3: Locke on Individualism :

From the discussions of the unit 3 of this block we have learnt got the idea about Locke's views on human nature, state of nature and social contract. Now we are now going to discuss Locke as an individualist in this section. We already know that Locke is one of those few political philosophers of his age who stands against the idea of his time and boldly expressed his political ideas. He is not convinced that the individual has no standing whatsoever and he is only an insignificant and subordinate organ of the society. On the other hand, he believes that the individual has a definite standing. Locke displays himself as an ardent individualist in his writing.

Now, we will discuss the main features of the individualist philosophy of Locke. It must be remembered that Locke accords a fundamental position to the innate and natural rights in his scheme and asserts that the natural rights of life, liberty and property belong to the individual due to the fact of his very personality. In the philosophy of Locke, individual occupies the supreme place and for that purpose he even gives the individual the right to resist the sovereign. In other words, to him the natural rights are prior to the state. Again, we have also learnt that the state is created for the protection of the natural rights and the happiness of the individual. According to Locke, the individual is the end and the state stands for preserving the rights and freedoms of the individuals. Locke believes that a state where the interests of the individuals are best protected can be termed as the best state. It is the foremost duty of the state to preserve, protect and honour the innate and natural rights of mankind. It may be noted here that Locke seeks rights and freedom for all men without distinction. Locke attempts to base the government on the consent of the individuals. He considers the government based on the consent of the individual as the legitimate government. The government will be regarded as illegitimate if it is not based on the consent of individual.

According to Locke, law can have no binding force without the consent of the individuals. Viewed in this context, he does not consider an absolute government or monarchy as the true government because it is based on caprice rather than reason. The belief in the individual consent also implies that people can withdraw their consent

if the state violates its trust. Locke assigns purely negative functions to the state. It interferes only when the rights of the individual are endangered. Otherwise the individual is left completely free to pursue his moral, material and intellectual pursuits. As a staunch individualist, Locke cannot reconcile with the idea of assigning positive functions to the state which can lead to state intervention in the personal affairs of the individual. In his social contract, Locke has said that the state should confine its functions to checking the violations of the rights of individuals. It can only interfere when there is infringement of rights of individuals. Locke proves himself a great individualist by assigning only negative functions to the state. He has left the individual isolated and alone in many fields, particularly in his personal affairs.

Locke's views on property further confirm him as an ardent individualist. He says that property initially owned in common becomes private property of an individual after he mixes his labour with it or imparts a bit of his individuality to the common object. According to him, property in which individual adds his labour becomes his private property and none has the right to touch or snatch that. This is probably the best way to emphasize the importance and worth of the individual and Locke assigns a prominent position to the law of nature and insists that even the state law must conform to it under all circumstances. According to him, secular law cannot be above natural law. Thus he places the state completely at the mercy of the individual. Locke displays his strong individualist bias in his views on revolution. He authorizes the individual to rise in revolt against the state if it transgresses its limits or fails to carry out its part of obligation. He has also said that the state can be justified to the extent to which it can protect as well as strengthen the rights of the individuals. The happiness of the individuals or love for individualism is the end of the state. If the state fails to do so, the individual can revolt against it. Thus in Locke's scheme of things the state is reduced to the position of a hand-maid of the individual who rules supreme. A state should bestow and not snatch rights.

Again, Locke's faith in pleasure and pain, which forms the starting point of his philosophy, proves him to be an ardent individualist. He says that all the actions of an individual are motivated by the desire for pleasure and avoidance of pain. Locke therefore, concludes that every individual should be spared of pains and given maximum pleasure. So he has stressed on the pleasure of the individual and not of the society. Locke advocates division of power, because he is convinced that it is an essential pre-condition for the preservation of individual freedom. Unless there is division of power, it will be futile to talk about

individual freedom. It is evident from the above discussion that Locke is an ardent individualist. In fact some of the scholars have criticized Locke for carrying individualism to such an extreme. Prof. Laski says, “Locke reduced the state to a negative institution, a kind of gigantic limited liability company”. By assigning purely negative functions to the state, Locke, in fact, ensures the domination of the strong over the weak and rich over the poor. According to some critics, Locke does not pay any attention to the moral upliftment of the individual. But it cannot be said that his individualism has no value. In fact, Locke theory forms the basis for the development of theories of liberalism and utilitarianism which subsequently became popular.

SAQ

Make a comparative analysis of Hobbes and Locke as supporter of Individualism. (80 words).

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Stop to consider:

Locke on Revolution:

Locke was in favour of Glorious Revolution of 1688 in England. He believes that people have every right to revolt against the government if it fails to protect their rights. He also holds the opinion that government holds power only for the welfare of the people. If the government fails to perform the functions, the people have every right to resort to arms and set up new government. The government loses its legitimacy as soon as it becomes arbitrary and exceeds its authority. But according to him, right to revolution does not mean encouragement for rebellion. People are permitted to revolt only when they have lost their patience and all the other methods have failed. Locke’s support of Glorious Revolution is evident from the fact that the background of the Second Treatise is provided by the years of rebellion against the English Throne. It is also believed that the preface of the text has defended the philosophical and political concepts of the Glorious Revolution.

4.4 Locke on Private Property:

We have already discussed Locke as an ardent individualist and it is apparent from his views on private property. Private property is an

age-old institution. It is the subject matter of many controversial theories both in political as well as economic fields. Locke firmly believes that the institution of private property is essential for the development of mankind. He believes that man is an entrepreneurial animal. He has right to own private property. Locke uses the word property in both broad and narrow senses. In a broad sense, it covers a wide range of human interests and aspirations. Conceived in a narrow sense, it refers to material goods. According to Locke, state comes into being to protect the natural rights of life, liberty and property of mankind. He believes that of all the rights, the right to property is the most sacred and the valuable one. He believes that the state must preserve private property for the happiness of the citizens. According to Locke, private property always constitutes an important source of joy. Locke's theory of property is a labour theory of property. He believes that God gives the world to men for his common use. People can keep the fruits of their labour with them as long as they follow the basic rule of not wasting anything. There must be enough left in common for others. He justifies ownership of private property on different grounds. Now let us discuss the grounds on which Locke has justified private property.

- First, Locke justifies private property on religious grounds. According to him, God has given mankind the appropriate means for making use of the resources. It is the duty of the individuals to develop the resources so that they can actually sustain life.
- Another justification for the retention of private property as given by Locke is that property is the result of human labour. He says that men put their labour by way of tilling and sowing the land. It is his labour which makes the land worthy of possession and converts lands into private property. He argues that it is human labour which distinguishes private ownership from common ownership. Labour is the exclusive and unquestioned property of the labourer and by mixing his labour with a piece of land, an individual acquires the right to possess whatever he has made out of that material.
- Social sanction and recognition from the past is another justification for owning private property.
- Another justification is that private property emerges in the society and continues to exist even today whether we like it or not.
- Locke has justified the institution of private property on historical ground. History has witnessed that people who do not own property, suffer under tyranny and people without property are deprived of their liberty. Hobbes believes that encouraging the institution of private

property appears to be a valid guarantee for all kinds of liberty. He believes that private property is the natural right of every individual and the state must protect this right. Thus, we find that according to Locke the ownership of property is created by the application of labour. According to Locke, unused property is a waste and an offence against nature. Labour not only creates property but also determines its value. The right to property is a natural right and therefore, it comes prior to the government. Locke argues that property represents human entitlements. He states that the chief objective or the main aim of the union of human beings into a commonwealth is the preservation and protection of their property. The purpose of all government is to secure the material possessions of all human beings. Locke identifies property with society. He states that even if the commonwealth is based on freely elected representatives, it cannot alienate property from its subjects arbitrarily.

No government can deprive an individual of his material possessions without the consent of the latter. The state is created for the sole protection of property. Therefore, no part or whole of the individual's property can be alienated without his consent. Locke also states that no taxes can be levied without the consent of the individuals. Otherwise it invades the fundamental right to property. Locke defends property that is directly acquired through one's labour. He avoids the issue of inheritance or transactions as gifts. Here we should remember that Locke divides the society into two classes with different rights viz, classes owning property and classes without property. Locke's views on private property have been criticized by many political thinkers. C. B. Macpherson sees Locke as a defender of unrestricted capitalist accumulation. Macpherson argues that Locke's views on property makes him a bourgeois apologist, a defender of the privileges of the possessing classes. Macpherson's arguments are challenged by Dunn, Laslett, Tully, Wood etc. They argue that Locke can at best be seen as a spokesman of agrarian capitalism. Locke's stress on the importance of labour and industry for higher productivity becomes apparent during the Enclosure movement. The Enclosure movement is a protest against confiscation of land without the consent of the individual owner.

Stop to consider:

Locke on Government:

Locke believes that state and government come into being for the welfare of the people. According to him, the state should create some standards by which the individuals can judge what is wrong and what

is right. The government should provide the subjects an impartial authority to settle down the disputes. According to Locke, the government should also safeguard the interest of its individuals from the outside agencies. Locke believes that government can be divided into three forms, namely, monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. He is of the view that limited democracy is the best form of government. By limited democracy Locke means that form of democracy in which power has been delegated to the representatives guided by the electorates.

Check Your Progress:

1. Locke's labour theory of property greatly influences Marx's labour theory of value. (True/False)
2. Which one of the following statements of Locke confirms that he is an individualist
 - a. The natural rights are prior to the state.
 - b. He seeks rights and freedom for all men without distinction.
 - c. He bases the government on the consent of the individual.
 - d. All the above.
3. Why according to Locke individuals enter in to contract in the state of nature.
4. Mention four grounds on which Locke justifies private property.

4.5: Locke's View on Natural Right and Natural Law

In the previous sections of the unit we have learnt that Locke believes that before joining the civil state, people have lived in the state of nature. The state of nature is a state of peace, goodwill and mutual understanding as people are peace loving and understanding. Life is not intolerable in the state of nature. The state of nature is only a pre-political society and not a pre-social society. Locke's view on natural law is simple. According to him, there are certain laws whose content is set in nature by God and has universal validity. By the law of nature Locke means a set of rules for human behaviour. He agrees with Grotius that law of nature is only legal in character but it represents

moral and rational reasoning of the society. It is a conduct and code of rules which governs all people at all time.

Locke's law of nature is based on two factors

1. Reason
2. Equality of all in relation to each other.

Locke has tried to pinpoint as to how the people should behave with each other. By the law of nature he promotes equality in independence. According to him, it is everybody's birth right. For him, it is the pre-condition of natural law. Locke argues that all should be free and equal to act and think within the bounds of natural law. The act of people should not violate the law of nature. The violation of law under certain circumstances is decided by reason. Those who violate the law of nature should be punished by everyone. According to Locke, the fundamental natural law is that the human life should be preserved as much as possible.

The natural law as stated by Locke has faced some serious criticisms.

- The natural law has not been codified properly. There is no standardized legal norm for the codification.
- The natural law can be interpreted by every individual in the way he likes as there is a lack of an established, settled and known law. Hence, there will be as many interpretations of law as the individuals wish. Consequently, it will lead to a confusing state in practice.
- A law must have an accepted judge to interpret it. But in the state of nature there is no such judge to interpret the natural laws. Obviously, when people are their own judges, the passions are bound to rise.
- There is no executive power to enforce the natural law and that makes the law meaningless. Thus, we know that Locke conceptualizes rights as natural and inalienable. According to Locke, there are three natural rights.
 - Right to life- everyone is entitled to live once one is born.
 - Right to liberty- everyone is entitled to do anything one wants to so long as it does not conflict with the first right.
 - Right to property- everyone is entitled to own all one creates or gains through gift or trade so long as it does not conflict with the first two rights. These rights protect our freedom to control our own lives consistent with the rights of others to do the same. Locke argues that

the natural rights alone are solely capable of maintaining a harmonious society. Locke also opines that man is originally born into a state of nature where he is rational, tolerant and happy. In this original existence, man is entitled to enjoy the rights of life, liberty and property. Locke believes that the preservation of these natural rights is only reason for the existence of government.

Stop to consider:

Locke's view on state:

Locke assumes that the state is composed of three powers viz. legislative, executive and federative. Legislative power is the most important power. Locke assigns supreme power to the legislature but does not grant it absolute power. People can curtail its power if it acts contrary to the trust reposed in it. The executive power includes the judicial power also. Locke assigns it the duty of enforcing the law and permits it to impose necessary penalties in accordance with the laws. Locke limits the power of the executive wing by making it dependent on the legislature. The federative power includes the duty to protect the interest of the community and the individual citizens in relations to other communities and citizens.

4.6 Critical Appreciation of Locke's Political Philosophy:

Locke has been criticized by many thinkers on various grounds. In this section we attempt a critical appreciation of Locke's political philosophy.

- Locke takes a mechanistic view of state and society which is not correct. The state and society are not institutions which can simply be created or destroyed by the individual at will. There are certainly more complicated motives involved in the formation of the community than Locke wanted us to believe.
- Locke's philosophy suffers from logical inconsistencies and he does not stick to any particular opinion. For e.g. at various times he asserts that the sovereignty resides with the individual, the community, the government and the legislature. At the very initial stage of his theory of social contract he gives us the impression that the individual and his rights are absolute. But a little later he attributes supremacy to the community as a whole. As he proceeds further he vests the supreme power in the government as a trustee of the community. And finally he asserts that the supreme power inside the government rests with the

legislature. At another stage he even suggests that a single person can have supreme power if the executive power is vested in him and he has a share in the legislature. It is indeed difficult to make out what Locke actually wants to convey.

- Locke refers to the original contract without specifying the outcome of this contract- whether it is society or state. Probably to overcome this difficulty he envisages a second contract, though he does not make a specific mention of it.

- There is a clear contradiction of the denial of innate ideas and belief in inborn natural rights.

- Locke gives supreme powers to the majority and treats its acts as acts of the community as a whole. It does not matter whether a person is deprived of his so called natural rights by a single individual or the majority. Locke fails to realize that even the majority can be despotic.

- Again, Locke wrongly assumes that natural rights can exist in the pre-civil society in the absence of an enforcement agency.

- His theory of natural laws is also deficient in so far he fails to explain how and from where the law of nature originates and why it should be binding even without the power of enforcement. His views on law of nature are quite unconvincing.

- Locke after painting a very bright picture of the state of nature fails to give any convincing arguments as to why people decide to descend from Golden Age to Iron Age.

- Locke's theory of tacit consent is defective in so far as it contains no provision for continuity of consent and the contract once concluded is binding on all the succeeding generations.

- Locke has depicted the man of his state of nature leading a highly moral and civilized life, enjoying certain rights and duties. This is more of a picture of a civil man than a man living in the primitive society.

- Locke has been criticized for depriving the state of all moral authority and assigning it purely negative functions. He specifically debar the state from undertaking functions like promotion of education, morality, scientific and intellectual development. In this way his theory is contrary to the notions of modern welfare state.

Stop to consider:**Locke on Religion:**

Locke is a supporter of religious tolerance. Locke believes in religious tolerance except in the case of those who has foreign allegiance. Further, according to Locke, the church should not interfere with the state affairs. The state should not interfere in the religious beliefs of its individuals. He argues that the state should not intrude in the religious affairs of the individuals except when peace of the state is threatened. Locke has assigned the civil magistrates the function of regulating religious practice for peace, safety and security of his people. He believes that church and state are two separate organizations and should be treated as such. He does not support religious persecution also. Religious tolerance is essential for human and national development.

4.7 An estimate of Locke's Contribution:

In this unit we have discussed various ideas of the English political thinker John Locke. We have already read the criticisms leveled against John Locke. Though his views have been severely criticized, it cannot be denied that he is one of the most influential thinkers in the field of modern political thought. He is the first thinker to draw a distinction between society, state and government and to put them in proper chronological order. He opines that society comes prior to state and this idea is accepted even today. According to him, society existed in the state of nature and was followed by the state and ultimately the government came into existence to exercise the powers of the state as its trustee. Locke has contributed significantly to the political theory the doctrine of natural rights. According to Dunning, "the most distinctive contribution of Locke to political theory is his doctrine of natural rights". He stresses that the state stands for the preservation of these rights. According to him, state comes into being to uphold these natural rights.

Locke also emphasizes the doctrine of supremacy of community on which Rousseau's theory of 'General Will' is based. Locke also opines that the individuals have the right to revolt against the state if the state fails to achieve the ends for which it is created. His views on the right

to revolt are influential as the people of America and France have tried to translate his views into actual practice. Though these two revolutions differ from each other, they share common heritage from Locke. His ideas on constitutionalism, toleration, natural rights, limited consensual and law-based authority and private property have profoundly influenced the political establishment of England, America, France and Holland.

Locke is also regarded as the champion of liberalism of eighteenth century. In fact it is believed that liberalism as a political creed began with Locke. He argues that if the state goes beyond its jurisdiction, its authority must be restricted. In this way, Locke provides the basis for the development of the idea of a democratic state based on popular institutions and constitutional government. He also emphasizes the principle of consent of the governed and majority rule which form the basis of the modern democratic institutions. Locke regards the concept of separation of powers as an essential ingredient for preservation of individual liberty. His idea provides the basis for Montesquieu's classical theory of separation of powers. It can also be said that Locke's thought contains the seeds of utilitarianism. He greatly emphasizes the general happiness of the people which is later adopted by Bentham. While dealing with utilitarian ideas, Bentham adopts Locke's concept of state as a machine, but he brushes aside Locke's theory of natural rights. In this we can say that though Bentham does not follow Locke blindly, he is indebted to Locke for the basic principles of utilitarianism.

Locke delineates the idea of popular sovereignty which had a preference even over political sovereignty. In his set up everything revolves round the individual whom he conceived lived even before the state came into existence. There is no denial that his conception of individualism is much more ahead of the modern individualist. He can claim to have a place as the forerunner of modern individualism. Locke lays great emphasis on the principles of toleration and secularism. He for the first time reduces church to a voluntary society which can exert no power save over its members. The state was expected to remain neutral in religious matters unless the views expressed at the religious meetings posed a threat to the peace and existence of the state. He gives a death blow to notions of divine rights and asserted that state is human institution. He does not favour interference of god or religious leaders in the affairs of the state. It is found that Locke has tremendous influence on political institutions of his own time and also on the posterity. French Huguenots, The Dutch, Montesquieu, Rousseau were greatly influenced by him. The

impression of Locke on the American declaration of independence is quite clear.

Check Your Progress:

1. Make a critical evaluation of Locke as an individualist.
2. Discuss briefly Locke's View on Private Property.
3. Analyse Locke's views on Natural Rights and Natural Laws.
4. Critically examine Locke's Contribution to Politics.

4.8 Summing up:

The political theory of Locke depends for their plausibility on the different pictures of the state of nature. This unit provides you a comprehensive account of Locke's political philosophy. After reading this unit, you are now in a position to discuss Locke's view on the state of nature and human nature. Locke's state of nature is different from the concept given by Hobbes. Locke considers human beings as the moral beings. He considers state of nature as state of liberty where natural laws prevail. Moreover, you have also learnt that Locke is considered to be one of the important social contract theorists after Hobbes. According to Locke, the social contract is a contract of each individual with all. The individuals surrender only those rights through the contract whose exercise introduce an element of distraction in the state of nature and makes its peace secure.

Locke has also discussed at length the natural rights and natural laws. According to him, there are three kinds of natural rights, viz, right to life, liberty and property. He also believes that the natural rights are solely capable of maintaining a harmonious society. In this unit, you have also learnt that Locke has contributed significantly to the growth of constitutionalism and utilitarianism. Rousseau's formulation of the theory of 'General Will' draws on Locke's idea of the supremacy of community. In the next unit of this block, we will be dealing with the views of Rousseau who is also considered to be an important social contract theorist. After familiarizing you with Locke's ideas in this unit, in the next units we attempt to give you a comparative study of Locke and Rousseau.

4.9 References and Suggested Readings

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Unit 5

J.J Rousseau: State of Nature, Human Nature Social Contract

Unit Structure:

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Objectives
- 5.3 Rousseau on Human nature and Private Property
- 5.4 Rousseau on the State of Nature
- 5.5 Rousseau's Idea of Social Contract
- 5.6 Summing up
- 5.7 References and Suggested Readings

5.1 Introduction

Rousseau is a great political philosopher, educationist and essayist of the eighteenth century. He is also known as a great novelist, composer of music and a theorist. His ideas and political philosophies have influenced the French Revolution and the development of modern political and educational thought. The great eccentric Rousseau is a genius but he often faces criticisms for his conflicting and contradictory ideas. He is a staunch advocator of individual freedom. However, at times he also advocates collectivism. Many thinkers have viewed him as a precursor of modern totalitarianism. Rousseau criticizes property as the root cause of all evils and at the same time defends property in civil society. He also criticizes religion but refuses to assign any place to the atheists in his republic. The influence of Rousseau's ideas can be seen not only in politics and government but also in education, literature, religion, morality, customs and manners. He paves the way for the great revolutions that take place within a decade of his death. Rousseau's intellectual contribution to the world makes him a monumental figure in the history of political theory and through the idea of "General Will", he contributes the idea of popular will and democracy to the world of political philosophy. In this unit, we shall discuss Rousseau as an individualist and as a theorist of social contract. Hence, here we shall deal with Rousseau's ideas on Human nature and the State of Nature.

5.2 Objectives

Rousseau is an important figure in the history of political theory as his major ideas of individualism, collectivism and theories of social contract have helped to shape the course of political philosophy. After reading this unit you will be able to:

- Analyse Rousseau’s ideas on Human nature and Private Property
- discuss Rousseau’s view on the State of Nature
- explain his ideas of Social Contract

5.3 Rousseau on Human Nature and Private Property

In the previous units of this block, we have already discussed the ideas of Hobbes and Locke on human nature. The concept of social contract is an important aspect of Hobbes and Locke’s theorization of the system of government. Following them, Rousseau continues the discussion on social contract. While elaborating the idea of social contract, Rousseau deals with the concept of natural man and put forwarded the idea of ‘General will’. Rousseau observes that, ‘the first man who, having fenced in a piece of land, said “This is mine” and found people naive enough to believe him, that man was the true founder of civil society. From how many crimes, wars and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes might not anyone has saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows: Beware of listening to this impostor, you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody.’ (Jean Jacques Rousseau, Discourse on Inequality, 1754)

Rousseau differs from Hobbes for asserting that man, in the state of nature is wicked. On the other hand, he opines that ‘uncorrupted morals’ characterizes the state of nature. However, Rousseau does not believe that human beings act morally in the state of nature. He further believes that the terms like ‘justice’, ‘wickedness’ are inapplicable to pre-political society. Thus, Rousseau is of the view that human beings, in the state of nature may act with the ferocity of an animal. Consequently, human beings are good only when they are self-sufficient and not subject to the vices of political society. In this way, the natural goodness of humanity, as defined by Rousseau, is the goodness of the animal which is neither good nor bad. In his Discourse on Inequality (1754), Rousseau traces man’s social evolution from the primitive state of nature to the modern society. According to Rousseau the passage from the state of nature to the civil state produces a very remarkable change in man, by substituting justice for instinct in his conduct, and giving his

actions the morality they had formerly lacked. Then only, when the voice of duty takes the place of physical impulses and right of appetite, does man, who so far had considered only himself, find that he is forced to act on different principles, and to consult his reason before listening to his inclinations. Although, in this state, he deprives himself of some advantages which he got from nature, he gains in return others so great, his faculties are so stimulated and developed, his ideas so extended, his feelings so ennobled, and his whole soul so uplifted, that, did not the abuses of this new condition often degrade him below that which he left, he would be bound to bless continually the happy moment which took him from it forever, and, instead of a stupid and unimaginative animal, made him an intelligent being and a man. (The Social Contract, Chapter 8)

Thus, from the above statement, we can find that Rousseau believes that man, in the state of nature is equal, self-sufficient and contented. In short, every man in the state of nature lives a life of idyllic simplicity and happiness. In his Discourse on Inequality, Rousseau further argues that civilization has robbed the individual of the natural freedom and made him cruel, selfish and bloodthirsty. Therefore, he regards the human beings in the state of nature as the ‘noble savages’. In the words of Rousseau, from the moment one man began to stand in need of the help of another; from the moment it appeared advantageous to any one man to have enough provisions for two, equality too disappeared, property was introduced, for work became indispensable, and vast forests became smiling fields, which man had to water with the sweat of his brow, and where slavery and misery were soon seem to germinate and grow up with crops (Rousseau 1958: 199).

Now we can trace the connection between the thinkers as like Hobbes, Rousseau also believes that in the state of nature, the institution of private property is absent. Moreover, Rousseau also believes that the civil society has emerged to protect the property of a few and the institutionalization of property rights put an end to the sense of self-sufficiency that existed in the state of nature, thereby bringing misery to the majority.

Stop to Consider:

Life sketch of Rousseau: Rousseau was born in Geneva on June 28 in 1712. His mother died soon after his birth and his father deserted the family. Rousseau was put to school by one of his uncles. But he did not enjoy formal education and at 16 Rousseau ran away from home and for 14 long years he roamed around Europe. In 1742 Rousseau came to Paris to earn his livelihood. He became the secretary to the French ambassador in Venice from 1743-1744. In 1749 the Academy at Dijon announced a prize for the best essay on the question: ‘Has the progress

of sciences and arts contributed to corrupt or profit morality'. Rousseau worked on the essay and won the first prize. After winning this award, Rousseau turned into a great literary person from a non-entity. After that he wrote many books among which *The Emile* and *The Social Contract* have drawn great attention of the political philosophers of the world. Besides, his contribution to the field of Political Science, Rousseau also made significant contributions in other fields like opera and music. One of his operas, 'Le Devin du Village' (The Village Soothsayer) became an instant hit in Paris in 1753. A Dictionary of music written by Rousseau can be regarded as another notable contribution of him. However, despite the success and fame, Rousseau was persecuted for religious reasons. His two valuable works *The Emile* and *The Social Contract* were burnt in Paris as well as in Geneva. Rousseau went in to hiding facing the threat of imprisonment. He died in 1778.

Check your Progress 1

1. Rousseau considers man as wicked by nature (write True or False)
2. Mention two characteristics of human beings as pointed out by Rousseau.
3. How does Rousseau differ from Hobbes while put forwarding his ideas on Human nature? Explain.
4. Why does Rousseau regard the human beings in the state of nature as the 'noble savages'?
5. Write a short note on Rousseau's idea on private property.

3.4 Rousseau on the State of Nature:

After discussing Rousseau's idea on Human nature in the above section, now we are going to discuss his idea on the state of nature. Like his predecessors, Hobbes and Locke, Rousseau also begins his theory of social contract with a description of the state of nature. However, Rousseau's theorization is different from Hobbes and Locke although we can trace the similarities between them. To elaborate, Rousseau agrees with Hobbes and Locke that in the state of nature, self-preservation is men's basic drive. We have already learnt that while describing the state of nature, Hobbes regards man as wicked by nature. So, according to him, the state of nature is characterized by a state of war where men fight against each other. For establishing peace and security in the society, men enter into a mutual contract in order to surrender all their rights and possessions in favour of the 'Sovereign'. Locke, on the other hand, believes that the state of nature is a state

characterized by peace and goodwill. But the inconveniences in the state of nature prompt people to enter into a contract for an orderly living.

Again, we have found that Hobbes believes that society is the corrupting force that transforms ‘natural man’ into a wicked man. Rousseau argues that Hobbes has failed to define the state of nature correctly. According to Rousseau, in the state of nature a man will be like a savage whose actions are primarily determined by immediate needs like the desire for food, sexual satisfaction and sleep. In such a state of nature man fears only hunger and pain. Rousseau considers the savage as the solitary animal and for him ‘State of Nature’ is much more than just a removal of government. To him, it also includes removal of all the cultural aspects like beliefs, languages etc. In such a situation, Rousseau believes that self-love and pity are the only sentiments that characterize and remain in our nature. So, we find that according to Rousseau, human beings possess positive qualities in the state of nature and all the negative aspects of human nature are the result of the interaction with the society. He, therefore, views society as ‘artificial’ and ‘corrupt’ and argues that the furthering of the society results in the continuing unhappiness of humankind.

Rousseau also opines that the progress of knowledge has made governments more powerful leading to the consequent loss of individual liberty. Thus, Rousseau points out a fundamental division between society and human nature. According to him, human beings are good because they are self-sufficient and the vices of the society fail to affect them. He also thinks that the development of the society, especially the growth of social interdependence, has been inimical to the well-being of the human society. Hence, it is clear to us that, according to Rousseau, men are free in the state of nature and enjoy all rights incidental to their persons.

Stop to consider :

Major works of Rousseau:

1. The Discourse on the Sciences and Arts, 1750
2. The Discourse on the Origin of Inequality, 1755
3. The Discourse on Political Economy, 1755
4. Julie or the New Heloise, 1761
5. The Emile or on Education, 1762
6. The Social Contract, 1762
7. The Confessions (Rousseau’s Autobiography), Part I, 1782 and Part II, 1789

8. Reveries of the Solitary Worker, 1782

9. Judge of Jean Jacques, 1782

Rousseau's idea of the state of nature is similar to Locke's idea. According to Rousseau, the natural man leads a life of idyllic simplicity and unrestricted freedom. He believes that the state of nature is pre-social and pre-political. The natural man lives in isolation until his instincts prompt him to seek the company of others. In that sense, he is non-social and amoral. The natural man is, therefore, neither good nor bad, neither happy nor unhappy, neither evil nor virtuous. Like Hobbes, Rousseau also believes that the natural man is guided by a primary need and compulsion of life, namely self-preservation. Rousseau further considers self-interest and sympathy as the two instincts that enable the natural man to satisfy his needs. In this way, Rousseau idealizes man in the state of nature as a 'noble savage'. Thus, Rousseau believes that these noble savages were equal. At the same time, he did not rule out the possibility of having inequalities among them. However, these inequalities do not hinder the independence and self-sufficiency of human beings as they continue to lead free, healthy, honest and happy lives. Rousseau's idealization of man as 'noble savage' invites attention to the reasons behind man's rejection of the state of nature in spite of the promise of liberty and happiness.

Rousseau believes that the fury of nature translated in the calamities like flood, cyclone or earthquake instills a sense of insecurity in man. Besides, the increase in population leads to various other problems. Consequently, in such a situation, man's sense of self-dependence is diminished when he starts seeking the company of others. Family is the first of the social institutions that comes into existence. With the establishment of family, economic needs also arise leading to the emergence of the concept like private property. Rousseau, therefore, opines that, 'the first man who enclosed a plot of ground and bethought himself saying "this is mine" and found others foolish enough to believe him was the true founder of civil society"'.

Regarding the consequences of private property, Rousseau again says that, "Such was or may well have been the origin of society or law, which bound new fetters on the poor, and gave new powers to the rich, which irretrievably destroyed natural liberty, eternally fixed the law of property and inequality, converted clever usurpation into unalterable right and for the advantage of a few ambitious individuals and subjected all mankind to perpetual labour, slavery and wretchedness". Thus, Rousseau believes that in the state of nature, individual is guided by instinct and not by reason. The life of the individuals in the state of nature is different as the former possessed a will and a desire for perfection. Like Hobbes, Rousseau believes that man in the state of

nature is guided by the primary need and desire for self-preservation. Rousseau does not view reason as the innate quality of the individuals. He also believes that the natural man is able to fulfill his needs without much assistance from reason. Reason for Rousseau is an instrument to attain ends, and if one's ends are satisfied effortlessly, then it plays a marginal role. In the state of nature, human beings have limited desires. However, the moment individuals start reasoning, his range of desires also increases. Since happiness is dependent on the satisfaction of desires, consequently the rational individuals become unhappy. Under such circumstances the natural persons cease to be happy and his life becomes miserable where both natural equality and innocence of the individual is lost.

Rousseau therefore says that, Reason is what engenders egocentrism and reflection strengthens it. Reason is what turns man in upon himself....Philosophy is what isolates him and what moves him to say in secret at the sight of a suffering man, "Perish if you will; I am safe and sound" (Rousseau, 1958). Rousseau also strongly believes that it is impossible for human beings to go back to the state of nature once society, family and private property come to stay. Therefore, according to him, the problem is to find a form of association which will defend and protect the whole common force, the person and goods of each associate. In such an association, an individual uniting himself with all may still obey himself alone and remain as free as ever. In other words, the existing social order known for its inequality and exploitation should be replaced by a new social order in which the community resulting from a voluntary social contract can be strong enough to assure every member both liberty and equality in much greater measure than what he possesses in the state of nature.

Further, Rousseau believes that in the state of nature, human beings are healthy, good and almost equal to each other. But later, they become evil, corrupt and unequal. Thus, Rousseau envisages two stages of the state of nature namely, the pre-property state and the post-property state. While the pre-property state of nature is an ideal stage, the post-property state of nature is wretched.

Stop to Consider:

Rousseau as an Enlightenment thinker Rousseau belongs to the age of Enlightenment which is also known as the Age of Reason. In this period, thinkers do not establish any particular mode of philosophical speculation, but agree on many fundamental issues. Thinkers of Enlightenment age had faith on the idea on progress and emphasize on the application of scientific methods. Rousseau, as a product of Enlightenment has taken into account these developments. However, he protests against intelligence, science and reason in so far as they destroy

reverence, faith and moral institution, the factors on which society is based. According to Rousseau, arts, manners and politeness not only destroy martial virtues, but also deny human nature forcing individuals to conceal 'their real selves'.

3.5 Rousseau's Idea of Social Contract :

We have already learnt that like Hobbes and Locke, Rousseau also belongs to the Social Contract school. According to Hobbes, social contract is essential in the state of nature for establishing peace and security for the preservation of life and liberty of every individual. But to Rousseau, peace has no meaning without freedom. Rousseau is of the view that 'Tranquility is also found in dungeons but is that enough to make them desirable places to live in?' Thus, Rousseau believes that the graveyard peace is no peace. Peace is real only when it is founded on liberty. **Therefore, Rousseau will not exchange liberty merely for the sake of peace.** To him, to renounce liberty is to renounce the essence of being human. Like Hobbes and Locke, Rousseau assumes that people enter into a social contract to come out of the wretched and unbearable conditions of the post-property stage of nature. According to him, once the serpent in the form of private property enters in the society, the whole order and peaceful atmosphere is disturbed and all feel the necessity of bringing back the old order of calmness and happy life. The Social Contract of Rousseau is not one-sided but mutual. Here, men will not surrender themselves to a sovereign or any external agency. According to Rousseau, each man of the state of nature will enter into a contract with every other person. Thus, in the state of nature, each man gives up their liberty to gain more than he has sacrificed. Hence, we can see that according to Rousseau's, the social contract helps to establish a strong common force that leads to the preservation of rights and freedoms of all the individuals in the society and secure peace for all the citizens. Rousseau discusses his theory of social contract in his famous work *The Social Contract*. According to him, society is inevitable as human life is impossible without it. Forced by such necessity, the individuals make a contract and establish civil society. In *The Emile*, he distinguishes between the state of nature and civil society and states his preference for the latter. In his words: Oh! Emile, where is the man who owes nothing to the land in which he lives? Whatever, that land may be, he owes to it the most precious thing possessed by man, the morality of his actions and the love of virtue. Born in the depth of forests he would have lived in greater happiness and freedom; but being able to follow his inclinations without a struggle there would have been no merit in his goodness, he would not have been virtuous, as many be of his passions. The mere sight of order teaches him to know and love it. The public good, which to others is a mere pretext, is a real motive for him. He

learns to fight against himself and to prevail, to sacrifice his own interest to the common weal. It is not true that he gains nothing from the laws; they give him courage to be just, even in the midst of the wicked. It is not true that they have failed to make him free; they have taught him to rule himself (Rousseau, 1911) From the above statement of Rousseau, it is evident that he prefers the State of Nature than the civil society established through social contract. However, with the increase in men's desire, the possibilities of inequalities also increase. And therefore, the people of the state of nature make a contract. The main features of Rousseau's Social Contract are:

- The individual is made to surrender everything to the society but receives back what he surrenders as a member of the society. In this sense he is not a loser but gainer.
- The individual surrenders all his rights not to any individual but to a body of which he himself is a part.
- The contract gives rise to an organic society. It is a moral being possessing its own life, will and entity. Rousseau calls it public person.
- The contract leads to material and moral transformation of the individual.

Now we are in a position to find an explicit difference between the contracts provided by Locke and Rousseau. While Locke's contract takes into consideration a specific object in view, Rousseau's contract is a continuous process because he believes that the community can grow rich and become fertile only with the constant participation of the individual in the welfare of the society.

Rousseau also argues that state results from a contract between individuals in their personal capacity and individuals in their corporate capacity. Through the social contract, Rousseau merges the individual completely into the state and creates a political society which is based on the consent of all the members. He maintains that this system of equality makes all to surrender their rights. Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains: In the opening page of his famous work, *The Social Contract*, Rousseau observes that, '**Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains**'. As we see, this observation has serious contradictions — how can man be free and yet remain in chains? But such contradiction is only at the surface level as by making this observation, Rousseau actually wants to reaffirm the fact that man is free by birth and by nature and therefore, he is entitled to have a free life in the society. However, in civil society every man becomes a slave of customs, conventions and also of laws as these are invented by a few clever men to perpetuate their power and domination over the vast majority of common men. Rousseau also strongly believes that even the men who claim to be the masters fail to realize that they are slaves of

their own creation as they are in constant danger of being deprived of their possessions. Therefore, Rousseau makes this statement before discussing his idea on social contract.

We must remember here that Rousseau is considered to be a great supporter of individual liberty as liberty is the central concept of his thought. His main concern is to deal with the mechanisms through which human beings are forced to give up their liberty. His idea of social contract delineates that the governed agrees to be ruled by the government for protecting their rights and property and ensure happiness. Once rulers cease to protect the governed, the latter are free to choose another set of governors. Thus, we can see that Rousseau makes the governed powerful by giving them the power to change the rulers and thereby paves the way for democratic rule.

Stop to Consider :

Influence of Rousseau's idea on French Revolution :

The Social Contract (1762) written by Rousseau has considerably influenced the French Revolution. This book starts with the famous declaration, "man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains". The phrases like liberty, equality and fraternity used in The Social Contract inspired the French Revolution. Therefore, Vaughan has opined that Rousseau's ideas are put into practice during the 'later and more terrible phases of the Revolution' (Vaughan, 1962). Rousseau believes in the natural goodness of man. According to him, human beings are corrupted by the greed and competition of civilization. Rousseau's ideas are based on reason which influenced the French Revolution. According to Rousseau, politics is not based on some fictional social contract, but instead upon the general will of the people in a community. Thus Rousseau emphasized the liberty of the individual which became the hallmark of the French Revolution. This is why Rousseau is regarded as the spiritual father of the French Revolution.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Rousseau considers man as wicked by nature (write True or False)
2. Mention two characteristics of human beings as pointed out by Rousseau.
3. Write two lines on Rousseau's idea of the state of nature.
4. According to Rousseau, why did man give up the state of nature and make a contract?
5. Explain, 'Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains'.

3.7 Summing up:

After reading this unit, you must have gathered a comprehensive knowledge of Rousseau's ideas. Rousseau has made lasting contribution to the field of Political Science through his ideas on human nature and social contract. Rousseau differs from Hobbes in regard to the nature of human beings. According to him, human beings are good only when they are self-sufficient and not subject to the vices of political society. In short, every man in the state of nature lives a life of idyllic simplicity and happiness. Rousseau considers the human beings in the state of nature as the 'noble savages'. This unit also helps us to comprehend Rousseau's idea on state of nature and social contract. He began his discussion on 'The Social Contract' with the famous sentence that 'Man is born free, and he is everywhere in chains'. Thus, he believed that people could experience true freedom when they lived in a civil society which ensures rights and well beings of the citizens. In the last unit of this block we shall deal with Rousseau's idea of General Will which has received wide attention from the political philosophers.

3.8. References and Suggested Readings

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Unit 6: J.J Rousseau :General Will and Democracy

Unit Structure:

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Objectives

6.3 Rousseau's idea on General Will

6.3.1 Characteristics of General Will

6.3.2 Criticism of General Will

6.4 Rousseau on Democracy

6.5 Summing up

6.6 References and Suggested Readings

6.1 Introduction

In the previous unit we have discussed some of the ideas of Jean J Rousseau. We already know that Rousseau is one of the important political thinkers of 18th Century. He is as an advocate of liberalism as he has emphasized on individual liberty. He tried to trace the relationship between human society and the individuals. His theories of Sovereignty and Law have immensely contributed towards French Revolution. Moreover, his ideas on 'General Will' is also very significant in the political discourse. For Rousseau, The general will is so important because it alone can direct the state toward the goal which is common welfare. However, Rousseau believed that General Will of the people can not be decided by elected people representatives. He advocated for a direct democracy in which everyone voted to express the general will and thus make the laws of the land.

In this unit we shall deal with Rousseau's idea of General Will and his views on democracy and representative government.

6.2 Objectives

After reading this unit you will be able to:

- To analyse Rousseau's view on General Will
- To Examine Rousseau's view on Democracy

6.3 Rousseau's View on General Will :

Rousseau introduces his concept of 'General Will' first in *The Discourse on Political Economy* and further develops it in *The Social Contract*. According to Rousseau, before joining the society, man use to live in the state of nature in which all are equal and live peacefully. Life, in the state of nature is simple and not organized. It needs to be mentioned here that historically such a society does not exist but Rousseau creates such a society in which people possess the capacity to learn as well as understand. In such a society, private property does not exist and all co-operate with each other in gathering food. Emergence of private property has disturbed this social setting and created a state of anarchy and disorder. According to Rousseau, the community established through the social contract is a corporate body with a personality and a will of its own. This common will of the community has been termed as the 'General Will'. In Rousseau's opinion, the social contract makes the community sovereign and therefore, the General Will is also sovereign. By obeying the General Will a man becomes a citizen and not a subject. He also opines that the obedience to the General Will is compulsory for all in the society. If anybody refuses to obey the General Will, he will be forced to obey it.

Thus, in Rousseau's words, "The General Will means nothing less than that he will be forced to be free". We can now comprehend that Rousseau's General Will cannot be arbitrary or oppressive because the sovereign to whom it belongs cannot be arbitrary. He states that, "the Sovereign, merely by virtue of what it is, always what it ought to be". As a result, neither the sovereign nor the General Will can go wrong. Rousseau again says that the General Will always aims the preservation and welfare of the whole and of every part, and is the source of laws. Now let us discuss Rousseau's idea on **General** and **particular** will-----

We have already discussed that the General Will aims at the general good and it must come from all and apply to all. Each individual in a community has his/her own will. It may be called the 'particular will' of the individual. Each particular will has two different aspects – selfish and general. The selfish will is also called the actual will of every individual that induces man to think only of his own interest while the general aspect of the particular will asks him to find his own interest in the general interest of the community. Thus the selfish or actual will aims at the good of the individual alone. The selfish wills of individuals in the community clash with each other and cancel each other. As a result, the general aspects of all the individual wills remain.

All the general aspects of the individual wills together become the General Will of the community.

According to Rousseau, this General Will of the community is unselfish and aims at the good of all and therefore, it is termed as 'real will'. The real will based on reason and foresightedness of the individuals is higher, nobler and supreme which impels the person to think of the well-being of all rather than his self-interest. Thus it is the moral will.

Again Rousseau believes that the General Will must be consciously adopted and continuously operated. To practice the concept of General Will, the citizens must find opportunities to come together, discuss their affairs in common and arrive at unanimous decisions. This is possible only in small societies. While formulating the idea of General Will, Rousseau has in mind the city Republics of Geneva. **Thus, the concept of General Will is based on the idea of direct democracy.**

The General Will of Rousseau resides in a community and it cannot be alienated from the community. This will of the community cannot be delegated to any person. Likewise, the General Will cannot be represented also as the representative may develop a will of its own in the process which is different from the General Will. Therefore, the General Will has no place in the representative democracy.

Rousseau distinguishes his General Will from the will of the all. He says that whereas the will of the all is merely a majority will which is concerned with the welfare of a few only, the General Will thinks in terms of the good of the community as a whole. The difference between these two wills can be explained in the following words of Rousseau, "There is often a considerable difference between General Will and the will of all, the former aims at the common interests, the latter aims at private interest and is only a sum of particular wills. But if we take away from the various particular interests which conflict with each other, what remains as the sum of difference is General Will". According to Rousseau, the existence of organized groups and associations within a society is again a hindrance to the expression of General Will. It is because General Will is the will of the whole community and therefore, it should not have any rival. Thus, the General Will of Rousseau demands unconditional loyalty of all in the community. When the loyalties are divided, General Will ceases to exist. Commitment to the General Will is a commitment to what is just and what is moral. General Will can never be arbitrary since it belongs to the community as a whole. Rousseau believes that the, 'community merely by virtue of what it is always what it ought to be'.

Thus, the General Will is the source of all laws. He further believes that there is a close relationship between law and liberty. Therefore, he

opines that, “obedience to law which we prescribe to ourselves is liberty”.

Here you must remember that Rousseau is considered a totalitarian because he regards sovereignty as absolute and thus individuals have no rights or guarantees against it. He further believes that those who refuse to obey the General Will should be forced to do so and thus they “will be forced to flee.”

(Philip J. Kain, 1990).

However, many scholars disagree to the above views.

In the simple way, we can say that The General Will is simply defined as that which tends to right or which aims at the common good. When it does not it simply is not called the General Will.

Some conditions mentioned by Rousseau in Social Contract -----

i). All citizens must sit on the sovereign body—the legislature and must vote on all issues. There can be no representation – each must vote in person.

ii). General will should be general in its object as well as in its essence --- it should come from all to apply to all.

iii). All laws must be rigorously and equally enforced; Rousseau (in Emile) says ‘everyone necessarily subjects himself to the conditions he imposes on others. If each citizen knows that they and all others will be strictly bound by the law they are voting on, they will take great care to see that it is right and equal for all. (ibid)

Hence, we can say Rousseau is giving us some idea through which outlining a procedure which if the sovereign can discover what actually is right.

Christopher Bertram has talked about two conceptions of General Will. First one is democratic where Rousseau clearly envisages that the citizens of a legitimate state assemble together in person to legislate and he identifies their legislation with General Will.

He has further stated that there are considerable differences between will of all and General Will declaring that ‘the latter looks only to the common interest, the former looks to the private interest and is nothing but the sum of particular wills.

The contrast between democratic and transcendent conceptions of the General Will raises questions not only about Rousseau’s own thought but also about politics and philosophy in general. We must know that the correct understanding of the General Will turns out to be thoroughly democratic one. By ‘forced to be free’ Rousseau understands freedom as non-subjection to the will of a particular other.

Rousseau on democracy: Rousseau defines democracy as a government in which the sovereign straightway may deliver the power to all the people or to the larger parts of the people in such a way that the citizen magistrates may outnumber the simple private citizens. Or, the sovereign may entrust it to the hands of a small number in such a way that there are more private citizens than magistrates an aristocracy.

Or finally, the sovereign may entrust it to the care of one magistrate, from whom other magistrates will receive their powers. Rousseau declares that this kind of government is the most common and is called monarchy.

Again, Rousseau's view on aristocracy is related to the modern concept of democracy. According to him, there are three kinds of aristocracy-----

- a). the natural
- b). the elective
- c). the hereditary

According to Rousseau, the second is the best and the wisest be entrusted with the government of others, particularly when it is certain that they will rule for the interest of the others. Here, we can conclude that what Rousseau called aristocracy is what we would normally call democracy. Rousseau stresses nonetheless that the contrast can be revoked at any moment that representative government is fundamentally vicious and illegitimate.

Rousseau draws a distinction between government and sovereignty. Moreover, while giving his ideas on Government vis-à-vis Democracy, Rousseau has always kept in mind his theory of General will. General will paves the way to understand what is just and unjust. On the basis of this, he further states that the government is formed for the purpose of guaranteeing the property, the life, and the freedom of each individual.

Now let us have a look at the rules Rousseau has set for the legitimate popular government to follow-----

- i). The General Will Must always be followed
- ii). All particular wills must be in right relation to it.
- iii). The general interest even in conflict with the personal interest must be respected.
- iv). Government rightly constituted must look after the preservation of each citizen.

- v). It must also forestall any extreme inequality in wealth.
- vi). Foster loyal citizens take care of all and see to the education of each.

6.3.1 Characteristics of General Will:

The General Will of Rousseau is the corporate will, sovereign will and just will. It is the foundation of moral freedom which makes every individual a free citizen of the state. It is the source of all laws which promote the good of the community as a whole. The General Will is the best safeguard against despotism of any kind. The theory of General Will advocated by Rousseau has been described as the most revolutionary, distinguishing, impressive and influential doctrine of Rousseau. According to Prof. Jones, “the notion of the General Will is not only the most central concept of Rousseau’s theory, it is also the most original, the most interesting and historically the most important contribution which he has made to Political theory”.

Now, from the above discussion, we can summarise the main characteristics of the General Will as follows:

- It is individualistic. It cannot be divided. Once it is divided, it shall cease to be the General Will
- Like the human will, the General Will cannot be represented by anybody else.
- The General Will is supreme and absolute and nobody can disobey it. It has complete control over the state.
- The General will is a single unit and cannot be alienated. Rousseau’s sovereign is the General Will and not any human being. Rousseau’s sovereign in fact cannot give up the sovereignty and also cannot pass that onto any other individual. The sovereignty or sovereign and General Will are inseparable and hence inalienable.
- The General Will always aims at the well-being of the community. It is based on the right of reasoning, presumption, wisdom and experience and cannot be swayed by the currents of time.
- Since General Will was based on reason, wisdom, and experience it is permanent.
 - Self-interest in a certain sense is at the very heart of the General Will. As Rousseau says, “why is the General Will always right and why do all constantly want the happiness of each, if not because there is no one who does not apply this word each to himself, and not think of himself as he votes for all? Which proves that the equality of right, and the concept of

justice it produces, are derived from each man's preference for himself and consequently from the nature of man."Self-interest must be present –each must think of themselves –but they must consider their self-interest in the abstract case where laws will be rigorously and equally enforced for all. Again, self-interest must not be eliminated, it must be transformed. (Philip J. Kain, 1990)

Thus, from the discussion of his idea of General Will, we can say that Rousseau's idea of General Will paves the way for the present form of democratic system. So, we can say that Rousseau has supported the idea of direct democratic system where everyone can participate in the decision making process of the government.

Stop To Consider:

Rousseau's Idea on Family and Woman: Rousseau considers family as the natural and the oldest institution of the human society. Rousseau favours a patriarchal family providing the authoritative powers to the man and believes that the identity of women is related to the identity of man. Rousseau's idea on family is thus based upon his views on woman. He assigns a subordinate position to women in society and believes that women should be educated in such a way that gives them an inferior position in comparison to their male counterparts. Rousseau's view on the nature of the relationship between men and women is rooted in the notion that men are stronger and, therefore, more independent. He also argues that since the functions of men and women differ, their education will also have to be different. Thus, according to Rousseau, while men enjoy the maximum freedom, women should be trained to accept the constraints. In Rousseau's words, Woman is specially made for man's delight. If man in his turn ought to be pleasing in her eyes, the necessity is less urgent, his virtue is in his strength, he pleases because he is strong. I grant you this is not the law of love, but it is the law of nature, which is older than love itself.....If woman is made to please and to be in subjection to man, she ought to make herself pleasing in his eyes and not provoke him to anger (Rousseau 1911:322).

SAQ

Do you think that Rousseau's is applicable in a country like India? Give reasons in support of your answer (50 words)

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3.6 Rousseau on Representative Government and Democracy:

We have already learnt that Rousseau supports the system of direct democratic system. In the present context, we understand democracy in the light of the representative governmental system. But Rousseau does not favour a representative parliamentary government. Instead, he advocates for a participatory democracy as it guarantees freedom, self-rule, equality and virtue.

Again Rousseau believes that the General Will must be consciously adopted and continuously operated. To practice the concept of General Will, the citizens must find opportunities to come together, discuss their affairs in common and arrive at unanimous decisions. This is possible only in small societies. While formulating the idea of General Will, Rousseau has in mind the city Republics of Geneva. **Thus, the concept of General Will is based on the idea of direct democracy.**

Again, as we have discussed earlier, the General Will of Rousseau cannot be represented. Rousseau does not believe in the representative bodies because such bodies may also develop a will of its own, different from the General Will. Therefore, there cannot be General Will in the representative democracy.

He further opines that the people of England are free and their General Will gets manifested or translated into actuality only when they go to polls. Such freedom cannot be enjoyed by them in other occasions. Again, the General Will is opposed to party government. It is because, in a party government, various parties develop their own general wills. In such a scenario, the general representing the satisfaction and the good of the community as a whole is very difficult to achieve.

Rousseau advocates the establishment of a democratic sovereign through his idea of 'General Will'. However, he does not advocate any form of direct democratic government in the Social Contract. Rousseau, on the other hand warns humanity against the democratic government. In his *The Social Contract* Rousseau further states that, In the strict sense of the term, **a genuine Democracy never has existed, and never will exist.** It is against the natural order that the greater number govern and the smaller numbers be governed. It is unimaginable that the people remain constantly assembled to attend to public affairs, and it is readily evident that it could not establish commissions to do so without the form of administration changing.

Another important factor for opposing representative and democratic government is that Rousseau wants to make a clear distinction between legislation and execution. He opposes democratic government as in this system, the same person acts as the sovereign as well as the government. So in the words of Rousseau, “it is not good that he who makes the laws execute them, nor that the body of the people turn its attention away from general considerations, to devote it to particular objects. Nothing is more dangerous than the influence of private interests on public affairs, and abuse of the laws by Government is a lesser evil than the corruption of the Lawgiver (the Sovereign); which is the inevitable consequence of particular considerations”. Rousseau further believes that freedom, self-rule, equality are the major pillars of democracy and the governments which fails to fulfil those criteria can never claim an individual’s obedience.

Rousseau rejects the English Parliamentary System of government as he believes that it only gives the people the illusion of freedom but not the absolute freedom. According to him, English people are free only during the time of elections and once they elect their representatives, they tend to loose freedom. Thus, he states that, “Sovereignty cannot be represented, for the same reason that it cannot be alienated.....the people’s deputies are not and could not be, its representatives; they are merely its agents and they cannot decide anything faintly” (Rousseau 1958:141). To enjoy absolute freedom, Rousseau proposes direct participation in legislation. Though he rejects representative institutions, he feels the need that the democratic institutions should protect the true freedom of the individual. Again, Rousseau assigns significant role to the legislators. According to him, the role of the legislator is to transform individuals and change human nature, alter the constitution with the purpose of strengthening it and bring about a complete moral existence to an otherwise partial one. (Mukherjee, 2007)

6.3.2: Criticism of General Will:

Rousseau’s idea of General Will is criticized because of his contradictory opinions. On one hand, Rousseau argues that General Will allows for individual diversity and freedom, but at the same time, the General Will also encourages the well-being of the whole, and therefore, can conflict with the particular interests of individuals. The General Will of the community has certain distinctive characteristics. According to Rousseau, General Will has no relation to numbers and as such it is not an arithmetical proposition. Thus, the General Will does not represent the will of the majority or the will of the whole community. However, it cannot be regarded as the will of the minority also. Neither, this is the will of a single individual.

Again, he has also spoke about undemocratic conception of sovereignty, particularly book 2 Chapter 3, “Whether General Will can Err” In that Chapter Rousseau contrasts the General Will which is “always upright and always tends to the public utility” with the “people’s deliberations” which do not.

There is no independent and reliable way of actually telling what the General Will is or whether it has been realized.

However, Rousseau has given a clear mechanism --- a set of institutions and procedures --- which if carried out will actually produce the general will which will be right and tend to the common good.

We must remember that sovereign is absolute. There can be no higher authority or power which limits the sovereign.

Moreover, General Will can never harm the individual; that it is always right and never unjust. It always tends to equality.

General Will is not what Rousseau calls the ‘Will of all’. The General will expresses the common interest, but the will of all expresses the sum of private interests.

The will of all is the sum total of the different particular interests of the citizens; it is what is registered in any ordinary majority vote. The General Will is not the vote of the majority – the will of all or the sum of particular interests --- is not necessarily so.

Check Your Progress 3

1. Write two characteristics of the General Will.
2. Fill in the blanks
 - a) The General Will aims at the general _____ and it must come from _____ and apply to _____.
 - b) The General Will of Rousseau resides in a _____.
3. Discuss how General Will is different from the will of all.
4. Why does Rousseau advocate participatory democracy? Write briefly on Rousseau’s idea of representative government.
5. Discuss critically Rousseau’s idea on Democracy.
6. Analyse Rousseau’s view on Representative government.

6.4 Rousseau on Democracy:

Rousseau is considered a Champion of democracy. For him, in a democratic government sovereign may straightway deliver the power to all the people or to the larger part of the people in such a way that the citizen magistrates may outnumber the simple private citizens. Or, the sovereign may entrust it to the hands of a small number, in such a way that there are more private citizens than magistrates, an aristocracy. Or, finally, the sovereign may entrust it to the care of one magistrate, from whom the other magistrates will receive their powers. Rousseau declares that this kind of government is the most common and is called monarchy. (Wade, 1976)

Thus, Rousseau's concept of democracy supports the most fundamental and basic premise of democracy --- one in which all citizens directly participate. In Rousseau's democracy people are both the subject and the sovereign and as such they are the law-makers as well as are subject to law.

Although the people are both sovereign and subjects, the sovereignty of the people is based solely in the assembly. Again, Rousseau states that all laws passed by the assembly are solely the authentic acts of the general will and because general will is always right, all laws passed are inherently good.

Rousseau believed that good government must have the freedom of all its citizens as its most fundamental objective. He has outlined some principles in his Social Contract and other works of political philosophy. Rousseau firmly believes that a good government is formed by the people and guided by the General Will of society. Thus, Rousseau advocated direct democracy--- one where the people made the laws and everyone had some influence.

In his political philosophy, The Social Contract, Rousseau asserts that democracy is incompatible with representative institution. According to him, Sovereignty of the people can neither be alienated nor represented. The idea of representation is a modern idea. According to him, "in the ancient Republics, the people never had representatives. The moment a people allows itself to be represented, it is no longer free; it no longer exists."

Many think that Rousseau gives a pessimistic view of democracy. To quote Rousseau, "it is unimaginable that the people should remain continually assembled to devote their time to public affairs." He concludes that "were there a people of gods, their government would be democratic. So perfect a government is not for men."

6.5 Summing up:

After reading this unit, you must have learnt that the General Will of Rousseau resides in a community and it can not be alienated from the community. In his opinion, General Will is the will of the whole community and therefore it should not have any rival. Again, we have found that Rousseau distinguished General Will from the will of all. Again, Rousseau says that, “when a particular object has different relationships to different individuals, each one having its own will concerning this object, there is no general will that is perfectly unified concerning this individual object.” Moreover, after reading the unit we come to the conclusion that Rousseau does not favour a representative parliamentary government. Instead, he advocates for a participatory democracy as it secures freedom, self-rule, equality and virtue. Through his idea of ‘General Will’ Rousseau has advocated the establishment of a democratic sovereign. Idea of General Will automatically paves the way for a democratic political society. Therefore, many call him a radical democrat. Apart from the ideas which enrich the domain of political theory, the attempt to reconcile individual interests with the larger interests of the society is Rousseau’s major contribution to the field of Political Science

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BLOCK- III
CHANGING DISCOURSE OF LIBERAL THEORY

Unit 1: Jeremy Bentham: Utilitarianism - I

Unit Structure:

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Bentham on Political Society
- 1.4 Bentham on Law and Rights
- 1.5 Bentham's ideas of Pleasure and Pain
- 1.6 Summing up
- 1.8 References and Suggested Readings

1.1 Introduction

Jeremy Bentham was an English jurist, philosopher and legal and social reformer. He was a political radical and a legal theorist in Anglo-American philosophy of law. He is best known for the advocacy of utilitarianism, the concept of animal rights and the opposition to the idea of natural rights. His position includes arguments in favour of individual and economic freedom, the separation of the church and the state, freedom of expression, equal rights for women, the end of slavery, and the abolition of physical punishment (including that of children), the right to divorce and decriminalization of homosexual acts. He is probably the best known in popular society as the originator of the concept of the panopticon.

This unit on Bentham is an attempt to deal with the ideas of Bentham regarding political society and law and rights. Here, we will also introduce you to his concept of pleasure and pain.

1.2 Objectives

This unit is an attempt to analyse the ideas of Bentham. After reading this unit you will be able to

- explain his views on political society,
 - Discuss his notion of law and rights

- discuss his idea of pleasure and pain

1.3 Bentham on Political Society:

“when a number of persons are supposed to be in the habit of paying obedience to a person, or an assemblage of persons, of a known and certain description (whom we may call governor or governors) such persons altogether (subjects and governed) are said to be in a state of political society.” (Bentham 1977: 140)

From the above definition, we can see that Bentham considers the state as a group of persons organized for the promotion and maintenance of happiness and acting through law to that end. According to Bentham, the state is primarily a law making body. He looks at the state as a contrivance designed by men for the promotion of their pleasure or happiness. State is not an end in itself. It exists merely to promote the happiness of its members. According to him, people obey the authority of state because of its utility. Again, Bentham has propounded an individualistic or atomistic conception of state. He does not believe that the state is the product of any social contract. According to him, man submits to the requirements of law and government for their interest to do so. Therefore, he opines that if any group of men living in a society and if in this group some of the members pay obedience to other members, whether one or more in number, the group altogether constitutes a political society. Bentham has rejected the theory of social contract as origin of state. He believes that utility is the basic reason behind the emergence of origin of state. Bentham opined that the individuals have submitted to the requirements of law and government because of their interest to do so and not because of any contract as stated by the social contract theorists. The state of bentham is a trustee of the individuals. Benthamite state is a democractic state. But it was clear that interst of the state was never superior than the interst of the individuals. He believed that democracy is better than monarchy. His state is a sovereign state. It is the hall-mark of a

sovereign state that it does nothing illegal. To speak of it as exceeding its authority is an abuse of language. This is true of the free state as well as the most despotic of the states. But Bentham also admits that a written constitution can limit the governmental power. In his state, all men have equal rights and all must be equal before the law. One of the most urgent tasks of state, according to Bentham, is to ensure a greater equalization of property.

Again Bentham has said that the state has no integral relation with the moral life of the citizen. Hence, though the state seeks to change his behaviour; it cannot change him. It cannot help him to develop his character, to bring out the best in him. For it is not the state that moulds the citizens, it is the citizens that mould the state. In this way, Bentham's state is a trustee for the individual. It is a democratic state in true sense. According to him, the interest of the individual is superior to the interest of the state. He mainly assigns negative functions to the state. According to him, the most important function of the state is to make laws which enable the citizens to know the felicific and non felicific tendencies of various types of action and remove all the hindrances which stand in the way of individual's pursuit of self-interest. Bentham believes that, people obey the government as long as it promotes the general happiness. But when it fails to do so, people have a right to disobey it. Thus, according to him, the only justification for the existence of the state is the promotion of utility. He asserts that the people have a moral right and duty to resist the state if the utility of resistance is greater than the evil of resistance. According to Bentham, it is the duty of the state to promote the happiness of the society by a system of punishments and rewards. A governance which promotes the happiness of its citizens is called a good governance. According to him, the main function of a state is legislation. The legislations are made with the objective to remove all the institutional restrictions on the free actions of man. The state can restrain individuals from indulging in activities which affect the general happiness of the individuals. Bentham has assigned the function of punishing the offenders to the state.

Stop To Consider:**Life Sketch of Jeremy Bentham**

Bentham was born in Spitalfield, London into a wealthy Tory family. He began his study of Latin at the age of 3. He went to Westminster School and in 1760 his father sent him to Queens College, Oxford, where he took his Bachelors Degree in 1763 and his Masters Degree in 1766. He was trained as a lawyer and was called to the Bar in 1769. He became deeply frustrated with the complexity of the English legal code which he termed as the 'Demon of Chicane'. During the period 1791-94, Bentham actively campaigned for his model prison Panopticon. Despite his adamant opposition to the natural law, language and principles of the 1776 Declaration of Independence and the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man, Bentham welcomed both the American and French Revolution. He was made an honorary citizen of French Republic in 1792. In 1823 he co-founded the Westminster Review with James Mill as a journal for the Radicals- a group of younger disciples through whom Bentham exerted considerable influence in British public life. Bentham died on June 6, 1832.

1.4 Bentham on Law and Rights:

As we have already learnt Bentham's views on political society, in this section we will discuss his ideas regarding law and rights. According to Bentham, laws of the state are not rooted in the natural law. It is simply a command expressing the will of the sovereign. Thus, according to him, a law that commands morally questionable or morally evil actions, or is not based on consent, is still law. Again, Bentham points out certain negative aspects of law. He feels that law is an evil as it restricts liberty which is painful. However, Bentham also points out the positive role to be played by law and government, particularly in achieving well-being of the community. He considers law necessary to maintain social order. He further states that good laws

are clearly essential to good government. Hence, we can say that Bentham has visualized law both from positive as well as negative perspectives.

According to Bentham, the worth of laws always depends on the general obedience given to it and the utility it promotes. The aims of model laws are security, substance, equality and abundance. According to him, people are punished mostly because of the mistakes of legislators who do not pass proper and healthy laws. Sometimes, even such laws are passed which are more respected in violation rather than in obedience. Bentham feels that state is contrivance and it is the foremost duty of legislators to see that laws passed by them promote utility.

It needs to be mentioned here that Bentham wants to remove the defects present in the English law and judicial procedure. He cannot accept that the English common law is faultless because it has an ancient origin and is developed by eminent jurists. He has no respect for the antiquity and wants that the law must be in keeping with the needs of time. Bentham insists that the old laws must be judged on the basis of their utility. If any existing law does not contribute to the happiness of the individual, it should be discarded. Bentham stated that that the laws will be obeyed only if the legislation carry the people along with it. He also opined that revolution is the result of unwilling obedience and general dissatisfaction.

Check Your Progress

1. According to Bentham, state is primarily a law making body.
(True/False)
2. Bentham has accepted the theory of social contract as origin of state. (True/ False)
3. Bentham believes that ____ is the basic reason behind the emergence of state. (Fill in the blanks)
4. The state of Bentham is a ____ of the individuals. (Fill in the blanks)
5. Bentham opined that the state has no integral relation with the

moral life of the citizen. (True/ False)

6. According to Bentham, what is a good governance?
7. In which year Bentham took his Bachelors Degree?
8. Bentham feels that law is an evil as it restricts liberty which is painful. (True/ False)
9. Comment on the creation of state as specified by Bentham.
10. Mention the reasons behind the obedience of state and law as stated by Bentham.

SAQ

Do you think that Bentham’s idea of state as primarily a law making body is valid? Give reasons in support of your answer (20+ 60 words)

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After discussing Bentham’s views on laws, now we will discuss his views on rights in the light of his understanding of natural law. Bentham’s views on rights are, perhaps, best known through his attacks on the concept of “natural rights” that appear throughout his work. Bentham’s criticisms here are rooted in his understanding of the nature of law. According to him, rights are created by the law, and law is simply a command of the sovereign. The existence of law and rights, therefore, requires government. Rights are also usually correlative with duties determined by the law. Therefore, it can be assumed that there are no natural rights prior to the establishment of state. And hence, Bentham discards the concept of natural rights. He feels that there are no rights anterior to government. Again, Bentham believes that the existence of natural rights has been derived from the theory of social contract. In the previous block on Individualism and Liberalism, we have already discussed the social contract theories according to which individuals form a society and choose a government by surrendering their rights. But Bentham criticizes it by saying that it does not even serve as a useful fiction to explain the origin of political authority.

Again, according to Bentham, the idea of a natural right is “anarchical.” Since a natural right is anterior to law, it cannot be limited by law. If everyone has such freedom, the result will be pure anarchy. To have a right in any meaningful sense entails that others cannot legitimately interfere with one’s rights. This implies that rights must be made capable of enforcement. Such restriction, as noted earlier, is the province of the law. Bentham is of the opinion that ‘nature’ is a very vague term and as such the concept of ‘natural rights’ is equally vague, uncertain and undependable. He however, justifies the existence of private property and perhaps the influence of Locke on him inspires his justification. According to Bentham, since the state is the sovereign and supreme authority and exclusively responsible for giving laws, there is no justification in claiming natural rights against state sovereignty and hence absolutely unjustified. On normative grounds, Bentham pointed out that the natural rights helps an individual to rise up in arms against whatever one does not like.

Stop To Consider :

The Major Works of Bentham

- **Principles of International Law:** It is published in the year 1798. In this book, Bentham argues that universal peace can only be obtained by first achieving European unity. He hopes that some form of European parliament will be able to enforce the liberty of the press, free trade, the abandonment of all colonies and a reduction in the money spent on armaments.
- **Catechism of Reformers:** It is published in the year 1809. Here Bentham criticizes the law of libel as he believes it is so ambiguous that judges are able to use it in the interest of the government. Bentham also points out that the authorities can use the law to punish any radical for hurting the feelings of the ruling class.
- **Constitutional Code:** It is published in 1830. This book deals with the most detailed account of Bentham’s ideas on political democracy. In this book, he argues that political reform should be dictated by the

principle that the new system will promote the happiness of the majority of the people affected by it. He argues in favour of universal suffrage, annual parliaments and vote by ballot. According to him, there should be no king, no house of lords and no established church. This book also includes his view that man as well as woman should be given the right to vote. In this book, he also addresses the problem of how government should be organized. This book also suggests the continual inspection of the work of politicians and government officials. Bentham feels that they should be continually reminded that they are the servants, not the masters of the public.

- *Fragments of Government* (1776) and *Introduction to the Principles of Moral and Legislation* (1789): In these books, Bentham argues that the proper objective of all conduct and legislation is the greatest happiness of the greatest number.
- *Essays on Political Tactics*: It is published in 1791. This book contains the earliest and perhaps the most important theoretical analysis of parliamentary procedure ever written. Bentham discusses some central themes like the publicity of proceedings, the rule of debate, the conduct of deputies and the proper steps to be taken in composing, proposing and voting in a motion. He even discusses the minor issues such as the size of the assembly room and the costume of the deputies in this book.
- *Discourses on Civil and Penal Legislation* (1802)
- *Theory of Punishments and Rewards* (1811)
- *A Treatise on Judicial Evidence* (1813)
- *Papers on Codification of Public Instruction* (1817)

The discussion of the central thematic concern of Bentham as depicted in his writings will help you assess his contribution to political philosophy.

Interestingly, even though Bentham undermines the sanctity of natural rights formulations, he recognizes the importance of rights as being

crucial for the security of the individual. He rejects the idea of not only natural and inviolable rights of property, but also the idea of absolute right to property as the government has the right to interfere with property in order to ensure security. Bentham distinguishes between the sudden and critical attack on property from the fixed, regular and necessary deduction from the wealth of the people. The regular and necessary deduction is needed to finance and support the functions and services rendered by governments. He defends the need for adequate compensation in case of a violation of individual's right to property. According to Bentham, property is neither natural, nor absolute, nor violable. Therefore, we can say that what Bentham calls the real rights are fundamentally legal rights. So far as rights exist in law, they are protected.

Here we must remember that Bentham is widely recognized as one of the earliest proponents of animal rights. He argues that animal pain is very similar to human pain. According to him, the ability to suffer, not the ability to reason, must be the benchmark of how we treat other beings. If the ability to reason are the criterion, many human beings, including babies and disabled people, will also have to be treated as things. He also speaks for a complete equality between the sexes. He is also one of the earliest philosophers to argue for decriminalization of homosexuality and equal rights for homosexuals. In two extended essays, unpublished during his lifetime, he puts forward a detailed logical argument against the stigmatization of same sex relations.

Check Your Progress:

1. Comment on the creation of the state as specified by Bentham.
2. Mention the reasons stated by Bentham behind the obedience of state and law by the people.
3. Write True or False
 - a). Bentham has discarded the concept of natural law.
 - b). Bentham believes that the state is a product of social contract.
 - c). Jeremy Bentham is regarded as the father of individualism.

4. Write a note on Bentham's views on law.

SAQ

Do you agree with Bentham's view on Rights? Give reasons in support of your answer. (20+80 words)

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1.5 Bentham's ideas of Pleasure and Pain:

“Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. (Bentham, 1789) Bentham finds pain and pleasure to be the only intrinsic values in the world. He believes that we desire pleasure and want to avoid pain. Only pains and pleasures give us the real value of actions. Whether it is private or public life, people are concerned with maximizing their happiness. According to Bentham, human beings by nature are hedonists. Each of their actions is motivated by a desire to seek pleasure and avoid pain. Every human action has a cause and a motive.

“Take away all pleasures and all pain and you have no desire and without a desire there can be no action.” (Bentham *ibid* : 40)

He has also given the idea that pleasure and pain is both simple and complex. According to him, whatever produces greatest amount of pleasure and minimum amount of pain is good and things which produce only pain without the pleasure are evil. This concept of pleasure and pain is defined by Bentham as physical as well as spiritual. Again, Bentham provides a classification of various kinds of pleasures and pains. Pleasures and pains may be caused by various kinds of sensations, thoughts, emotions, memories, expectations and associations. Simple pleasures and pains may be combined to form complex pleasures and pains. Pleasure may also be caused by the

satisfaction of desire, and pain may be caused by the frustration of desire.

Bentham explains that the sensitivity to pleasure or pain may vary among individuals, and that each individual may respond differently to the same pleasure or pain. If rewards for good conduct or punishment for bad conduct are to be administered fairly, then these rewards and punishments must account for the differences that may occur among individuals in their sensitivity to pleasure or pain. According to him, pleasure is intrinsically good and pain is intrinsically evil.

Bentham's classification of 12 pains and 14 pleasures attracts the attention of the political thinkers. The 14 pleasures according to Bentham are ---

Sense, Wealth, Skill, Amity, Good name, Power, Piety, Benevolence, Malevolence, Memory, Imagination, Expectation, Association and Relief. Now let us have a look at the simple pains enumerated by Bentham: Privation, Sense, Awkwardness, Ill name, Enmity, Expectation, Association, Memory, Imagination, Piety, Benevolence, Malevolence.

He further states that all pleasures and pains differ in sensitivity and sensibility and lists as many as 32 factors which influence sensitivity of pleasure and pains. These factors include --health, strength, firmness of mind, sensibility, insanity, sex, age, education, etc.

Bentham proposes a system for measuring the amount of pleasure and pain that an action produces. This system is called the felicific calculus. This is also known as the utility calculus, the hedonistic calculus or the hedonic calculus. This felicific calculus is an algorithm formulated by Bentham for calculating the degree or amount of pleasure that a specific action is likely to cause. Bentham's system identifies the seven aspects of an action's consequence that can be used to compare the results of different deeds. Bentham calls these elements or dimensions. These are as follows-

- Intensity: How strong is the pleasure?
- Duration: How long will the pleasure last?

- Certainty or uncertainty: How likely or unlikely is it that the pleasure will occur?
- Propinquity or remoteness: How soon will the pleasure occur?
- Fecundity: The probability that the action will be followed by sensations of the same kind.
- Purity: The probability that it will not be followed by sensations of the opposite kind.
- Extent: How many people will be affected? Bentham distinguished pleasures quantitatively rather than qualitatively.

He, therefore, regards pushpin as good as poetry. By that he means that if a simple child's game like hopscotch or pushpin causes more pleasure to more people than a night at the opera house, the society should devote more resources to propagating hopscotch or pushpin than running opera houses. He does not differentiate between pleasures and in that sense he is not an elitist. He does not assign any inherent grading to activities and treated them at par in terms of their contribution to individual happiness. According to Bentham, there are four sanctions regarding pains and pleasures. The physical or natural sanction implies those pleasures and pains which are not the product of any human efforts but have been given by nature in course of time. The moral sanction implies the sanction which is promoted by goodwill or contempt by the hands of our fellow beings. Then he mentions about public sanctions by which he means legal sanction which is given to the individuals by the magistrates in exercise of their legal powers. The religious sanction follows from religious doctrines. Hence, it can be concluded here that in the hands of Bentham, the theory of pleasure and pain evolves into a scientific principle to be applied to the policies of the state, welfare measures and for administrative, penal and legislative reforms. Using the yardstick of utility, Bentham and his followers desire the restructuring of government and legal institutions to maximize individual happiness.

Check Your Progress

1. Bentham stated that there are no natural rights prior to the establishment of state. (True/ False)
2. According to Bentham, the idea of natural right is _____. (Fill in the blanks)
3. Write two major works written by Bentham.
4. In which year 'Principles of International Law' was published?
5. What was the main theme of the book 'Constitutional Code' written by Bentham?
6. 'Essays on Political Tactics' written by Bentham was published in the year _____. (Fill in the blank)
7. What was Bentham's view on animal rights?
8. What is simple and complex pleasure and pain according to Bentham?
9. Write down the 12 pains and 14 pleasures as classified by Bentham.
10. What is felicific calculus?

1.8 Summing up:

Bentham is one of the important thinkers of the utilitarian school of thought. After reading this unit, you are in a position to comprehend his political ideas. The reading of this unit has enabled you to understand Bentham's political philosophy as well as his views on political society, state, law and rights. You have also learnt that Bentham is one of those thinkers who condemn the theory of social contract and pleads that the government should stand at the bar of public opinion. He thus elevates public opinion in an age in which preaching such a doctrine is considered a symbol of revolution. His government is not a mystery but on the other hand can be tested on the basis of utility. He insists that the state exists for man and man does not exist for the state. In the field of jurisprudence, he is the first political thinker who boldly demands that the laws should be modified, complicated laws should be replaced by simple ones and these should be given wide publicity. Execution of laws should not only be simple

and cheap but quick too. Bentham has considerably influenced the domain of political philosophy. His ideas and speeches influenced French revolutionaries and were appreciated in Spain, Russia and Portugal. His influence was quite visible in the collapse of Turkish and Spanish empires and Holy Roman Empire. He has suggested the U.S.A and Russian governments to improve their legal systems. In the second unit we shall discuss Bentham's ideas about administrative justice and punishment. We shall also discuss Bentham as a moral philosopher and reformer.

1.9 References and Suggested Readings

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Unit 2: Jeremy Bentham: Utilitarianism - II

Unit Structure:

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Bentham on Administration of Justice and Punishment
- 1.4 Bentham as a Moral Philosopher and Reformer
- 1.5 Summing up
- 1.6 References and Suggested Readings

1.1 Introduction

In the previous unit you have already learnt that Jeremy Bentham was an English jurist, philosopher and legal and social reformer. He was a political radical and a legal theorist in Anglo-American philosophy of law. You have also learnt that Bentham was an utilitarian thinker. The previous unit has introduced you to his concepts of political society, law, rights and most importantly his theories of pleasure and pain. By talking about a good or bad consequences of an action Bentham actually meant about the happy and painful consequences of an action. Bentham believed that all experiences are either pleasurable or painful or both.

Here in this unit you will be able to understand his concepts of justice and punishment. An attempt will also be made to make you familiar with Bentham as a moral philosopher and reformer.

1.2 Objectives

This unit is an attempt to analyse the ideas of Bentham. After reading this unit you will be able to

- Understand Bentham's idea of administration of justice
- Explain Bentham's notion of punishment
- Discuss Bentham as a moral philosopher

- Explain Bentham as a reformer

1.3 Bentham on Administration of Justice and Punishment:

You have already learnt that according to Bentham, those actions which promote happiness or pleasure among the greatest number of people can be termed as morally right actions. Bentham is concerned with the way in which justice is being administered in the country. He stands for codification of laws and pleads that laws should be enacted in the way that these are understood by all. In justice, there should neither be any uncertainty nor unnecessary expenses. He also believes that justice delayed is justice denied. Regarding the present system of justice, Bentham is of the view that in it justice is not given but only sold at different prices, which suits the pocket of the lawyers. This is the most undesirable situation and as such corrective measures must immediately be taken so that justice becomes available to all and is cheap. Bentham as a utilitarian believes that real justice is less important than apparent justice. In other words, he believes that seeing justice done is more important than justice actually being done.

SAQ

Do you agree with Bentham that seeing justice done is more important than justice actually being done? Give reasons in favour of your answer. (20+80 words)

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While dealing with the concept of justice, Bentham has also reviewed the concept of punishment. He also discusses whether a punishment

will create more pleasure or more pain for a society. He calls for legislators to determine whether punishment creates more evil offence. Instead of suppressing the evil acts, Bentham argues that certain unnecessary laws and punishments can ultimately lead to negative and more dangerous vices. Thus, we can say that according to Bentham while punishment is sometimes reformatory sometimes it fails to control the actions of human beings.

Stop To Consider:

Bentham on Sovereignty:

It must be remembered that, unlike Austin and Hobbes, Bentham does not think that the powers of the sovereign are to be unlimited or illimitable. Instead, he dismisses talk of illegality of actions of government as absurd unless it is possible to limit these actions by conventions. He accepts the division of sovereignty as a federal system. He also envisages the possibility of constitutional law. According to him, sovereignty rests with the people, and has to be exercised by the 'constitutive authority' i.e. the electorate. The task of a sovereign is to harmonize different individual interests and promote social cooperation through legislation in form of punishment, rewards, encouragement and incentives. Bentham feels that the individuals have no right to resist the sovereign. The legal duty of the people is only to extend unconditional obedience to the sovereign. He has justified right to resistance only under very exceptional circumstances.

It needs to be mentioned here that Bentham's utilitarian perspective on punishment is greatly influenced by Cesare Beccaria. Influenced by him, Bentham forms some harsh notions of punishment. He believes that torture can be justified in certain cases. According to him, punishment is a very weak disincentive. There is always a risk that an offender will commit another offence. He believes that torture removes this risk as it does not cease until the subject complies with the demands of authority. He terms legal punishment as the embodiment

of an unquestionable evil. According to Bentham, punishment is a particular category of pain, produced not just as the result of some individual action, but of an action that can be termed an 'offence'. Each and every legal punishment has the potential of becoming morally unacceptable. That is to say, in Bentham's terms, any offence may be found 'unmeet for punishment'. In fact, if it can be known for sure that a similar offence will never again be committed, then, from his utilitarian standpoint, he finds no justification for the infliction of any punishment. For Bentham, pain, and thus punishment, is always a social negative, unless it promises greater pleasure in future.

Stop to consider

Economic ideas

Bentham believed that for bringing international harmony among the individuals, the economic interdependence must be recognized and accepted. Though Bentham was a supporter of laissez faire and free trade yet he did not advocated for a non interventionist government. He wanted the government to be used for producing happiness which includes security, abundance, subsistence and equality. Basically he proposed a welfare state with free education, guaranteed employment, minimum wages, sickness benefit and old age insurance. The law needs to ensure security in benthamite state. Until and unless an individual is sure that his/her property will be protected, he/she wont thrive to acquire more property. The expectation in human being determines and influences the future decision of that person. Hence, security of expectation is a prime function of law. Bentham believed that increase in individual wealth will lead to increase in mass wealth. The individuals should get the freedom to buy the best economic opportunities. According to bentham, economic leveling is impractical as it will bring more pain than pleasure. Bentham did not want government intervention in acquiring wealth. He believed that the wealth of the society is the

wealth of the individuals and they know their interest better than anyone else. Bentham opined that government action implies restriction upon individuals and this restriction will give pain to the individuals. Therefore, for healthy competition, Bentham proposed unlimited freedom.

Bentham's Favoured Forms of Punishment:

It must be remembered that Bentham's preferred forms of punishment certainly undergo a change over the course of his life. It is found that, in his earlier writings a variety of corporal punishments are recommended; in his middle years the panopticon penitentiary is his prime interest; and finally, in the 1820s, he feels an increasing attachment towards banishment and fining. Most importantly, punishment has to provide a variable quantity of pain in response to the varying quantities of mischief caused by offences. In addition to that, an equalization of pain is necessary when the same punishment is applied to different individuals. It should be ensured that the offenders receive the same pain if they commit the same offence.

Again in the late 1790's, he abandons his support for simple corporal punishment and joins the pursuit of an increased use of penal incarceration. His theory of punishment includes the reformation of the criminals. He believes that a great many criminals and evil-doers are capable of improvement and that they can be restored to society as useful and self-respecting members. On the strength of this belief, he advocates many principal reforms for the reformation of the criminal and for teaching them some skills while in confinement. He has evolved a scheme known as 'panopticon' for the systematic supervision of the daily life of the convicts. He is of the opinion that the prison buildings are to be arranged in such a fashion (semicircular) that the superintendent can have a view of all the cells from his residence. The scheme combines careful supervision and discipline with sympathy and improved environment. The criminals are to be taught not only useful trades but also to be given elementary

education. Moral and religious training should be imparted to them. On their discharge, criminals are to be provided with employment until they are able to regain the confidence of the public and stand on their own feet.

By the early 1790s, panopticon imprisonment has become the dominant mode of punishment promoted by Bentham. It offers adequate punishment for the most, if not all, serious offences. It can inflict both simple and complex punishment as demanded by the occasion. Additionally, it uses the means of reward to reform the prisoners. Bentham envisages panopticon as an institution primarily related with the psychological motivation of the prisoners. But it should also be noted that ‘corporal’ pain still forms an intrinsic part of the punishment. Thus, it is not simply a punishment of ‘the mind’, but equally it is an effective punishment of the body.

Throughout the period of Bentham’s intense focus on penitentiary imprisonment, the main legal punishment for serious offences continues to be capital punishment. The death penalty is universally attacked by penal reformers in the late eighteenth century, though it is not until 1830 that Bentham publishes the reasons for his own opposition to capital punishment. He draws up a pamphlet on the death penalty, specifically for the people of France, and throughout this text he displays all the fundamental penal principles he has first established in 1776-78. In concise terms, Bentham denounces capital punishment for possessing the detrimental qualities of inefficiency, irremissibility etc. In Bentham’s view, the pains resulting from capital punishment, and more particularly from the widespread threat of capital punishment, are judged to be considerable and excessive.

As we have already learnt, Bentham is much interested in the theory of punishment and prison reforms. He opines that the chief end of punishment is to prevent crime. Punishment should not be given in order to take revenge. Punishment should be exactly suited to the purpose. It should be neither more nor less. It should secure the good of the community. If capital punishment is necessary for the safety and security of society, it is justifiable, otherwise not. According to

Bentham, whether capital punishment is to be administered in cases other than murder, it should be determined by their consideration of utility, i.e. their effect upon the general good. The execution of justice should, as far as possible, be exhibited to the public eye so that prospective evil-doers are frightened away from committing the crime. Bentham believes that punishment should fit the criminal and not vice-versa. He believes that punishment should be graded according to the nature of the crime, the previous character of the offender, his parentage, the circumstances in which the crime is committed, the motive of the criminal, and the kind of persons to whom the injury is done. Punishment, thus is to be certain and impartial in its imposition. As a matter of fact, according to him, the only valid test of the adequacy of a punishment is its ability to secure public welfare.

Check Your Progress

1. Bentham believed that justice is not given but sold at different prices.
(True/ False)
2. Justice delayed is justice _____. (Fill in the blank)
3. Bentham opines that the powers of the sovereign are unlimited.
(True/ False)
4. Write Bentham's views on sovereignty.
5. Who influenced Bentham's utilitarian perspective on punishment?
6. What is punishment according to Bentham?
7. Bentham was in favour of free trade. (True/ False)
8. What are Bentham's economic ideas?
9. Bentham's theory of punishment includes the reformation of the criminals. (True/ False)
10. What is panopticon?
11. Why Bentham opposed capital punishment?
12. What is the only valid test of adequacy of a punishment as advocated by Bentham?
13. Idea of punishment presupposes that idea of _____. (Fill in the blank)
14. What is Bentham's favoured form of punishment?

15. According to Bentham, punishment is a very ___ disincentive. (Fill in the blank)

1.4 Bentham as a Moral Philosopher and Reformer:

After reading the previous sections of the unit, it can be said that Bentham is a moral philosopher and a reformer. Bentham's moral philosophy consists of three basic principles- the greatest happiness principle, universal egoism and the artificial identification of one's interest with those of others. According to Bentham whether an action is good or bad should be judged from the happiness or utility which it produces. An action which results in pain is sure to be a bad action. According to Bentham, an act of theft is not always bad and can be good as well if it produces pleasure. But if the outcome of action is pain, it is surely bad. As a moral philosopher, he has made it clear that pleasures and pains are our sovereign masters. According to him, these however, proceed from physical, political, moral and religious sources. Regarding physical sources, he has said that temperance conserves health and thus pleasure and intemperance result in ill health and thus pain. To describe the political source, he has said that we know how governmental legislation can result in bringing either pleasure or pain. To elaborate the moral source, we find that praise of an action by the public morally encourages and thus gives pleasure, whereas condemning by the public results in pain. Coming to religious source, he says that when one performs duties towards God, one feels pleasure otherwise the feeling of pain disturbs one. As a moral philosopher, he is of the view that both pleasure and pain can be mathematically measured and arithmetically calculated. In estimating pleasure, he has said that intensity, duration, certainty, propinquity, remoteness, fecundity, purity and extent must be taken into consideration. According to his philosophy, principles of pleasure are as certain as those of geometry.

Bentham has also given the idea that pleasure and pain is both simple and complex. In the complex form wealth, skill, amity, good name,

power, pity, benevolence, expectation and relief are included, whereas simple form includes pains of privation, sense, awkwardness, etc. All pleasures and pains differ in sensitivity and sensibility and he has listed as many as 32 factors which influence sensitivity of pleasure and pains. These factors include health, strength, firmness of mind, sensibility, insanity, sex, age, education, etc.

Stop To Consider :

Bentham's Views on Church of England:

Bentham was opposed to the Church of England, because he could not reconcile himself to the situation where the bishops could become rich. He also failed to understand how the priests could usefully and purposefully sit in the House of Lords and contribute to its proceedings. He felt that church activities should be checked and priests, bishops should desist from owning huge amounts and private property.

Bentham as Reformer

As we have already seen, Bentham is a firm believer in gradual reform. He has no faith in the violence of a revolution. He believes that there is scope for reform in British society, law and judicial procedure. He has said that procedure in law should be simplified. He also favours codification of laws. In his view, a complicated procedure only serves lawyers and as such the poor are always in a disadvantageous position. He feels that in its present system, justice is simply sold. He has also condemned delays by judges in giving justice. Bentham does not like the idea that the punishment is not proportionate to the crimes and pleads that the end of punishment should be the prevention of crimes.

Bentham is a great social reformer. He believes that all existing social and political institutions must be reformed, if these are to exist. He believes in universal adult franchise and wants that there should be annual elections for the parliament. Bentham is in favour of

introducing secret ballot system in order to check intimidation and bribery. He also wants that existing laws should be reformed and hereditary character of House of Lords should be dispensed with. He has propagated a national scheme for improving the health of the people. Bentham also favours national system of education.

Bentham advocates a numbers of practical reforms. The principal among them are: the reform of the corrupt and restricted parliamentary system; a thorough going municipal reform; the humanization of the terribly cruel criminal law of the time; the improvement of prisons and prison management; the abolition of imprisonment for debt; the elimination of the usury laws; the repeal of religious test ; the reform of the poor law; the suppression of ‘tardy beggars’; the utilization of able-bodied paupers; the training of pauper children; the institution of savings banks and friendly societies; the following of a code for merchant shipping; the protection of inventors; the encouragement of local courts; a comprehensive system of health legislation; the creation of the public prosecutors and of advocates for the poor; a thorough-going revision of hereditary rights; the supervision of scientific and philosophical foundation; and the recall of public officials. It is needless to add that many of the reforms which Bentham ardently pleads have been incorporated into the laws of various lands. He suggests reforms in educational field also as he is in favour of the establishment of a vast scheme of national education. His scheme includes two system of education- one for the pauper children and the other for the upper class children. His scheme of education has paid due regard to the capacity of learner. According to him, it is the duty of the state to look after the education of the poor children.

Bentham also suggests that the legislators should be subject to the punishment of dismissal. Bentham’s chief interest is in devising systems and methods of legislation that will surely conform to and serve this great end. His services to ethical and juristic science in connection with this work are of utmost value. Bentham also formulates codes of international law, constitutional law, civil law, criminal law which embody principles and fruitful suggestions in later

generations. He is eager to see justice administered and happiness secured to the deserving and the oppressed. With this objective, he criticizes the existing laws and the existing machinery for the execution of them. But he never appears to be a destructive critic. His objective is primarily constructive and criticism is simply a means to that end. Bentham emphasizes the need of reforming the existing institutions to transform them into instruments of general good. Most of the legal and parliamentary reforms advocated by Bentham have been carried out in England and other countries.

Check Your Progress

1. Bentham rejected the idea of irrevocable marriage. (True/ False)
2. According to Bentham, what are the two spheres of autonomy of a woman?
3. Write a note on Bentham's views on women and gender equality.
4. What are the three basic principles that constituted the moral philosophy of Bentham?
5. According to Bentham, pleasure and ____ are our sovereign masters. (Fill in the blank)
6. Bentham believes that principles of pleasure are as certain as those of geometry. (True/ False)
7. What was Bentham's view on Church of England?
8. Bentham did not favour secret ballot system. (True/ False)
9. Name few practical reforms advocated by Bentham.
10. What was Bentham's suggested scheme of education?

1.5 Summing up:

You have already learnt that Bentham is one of the important thinkers of the utilitarian school of thought. After reading this unit, you are in a position to understand his political ideas regarding administration of justice, punishment, and Bentham as a moral philosopher and reformer. This unit has helped you to understand that Bentham is perhaps the first political thinker to point out glaring defects in English

constitutional, legal and jail system and stand for their reforms. His jurisprudence is one of the most remarkable achievements of 19th century. He has discussed the system of punishment in a detailed manner. Like a practical thinker, he preaches that punishment should not be retaliatory but should aim at reforms. Though Bentham is a radical thinker, he does not suggest far-reaching changes and does not wish to upset the whole political system. His realism can be appreciated with the saying that with Bentham an era of stagnant legislation comes to an end. His influence on J.S.Mill is quite immense and in the second unit we shall discuss Mill as a reformer of Bentham's utilitarian ideas.

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Unit 3: J.S. Mill: Utilitarianism, Concept of State

Unit Structure :

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Objectives

3.3 Mill as an Utilitarian

3.4 Mill on State

3.5 Summing up

3.6 References and Suggested Readings

3.1 Introduction:

We have already discussed Bentham's views on Utilitarianism in the previous unit of this block. Now, in this unit we shall discuss Mill's revision of Bentham's Utilitarianism. John Stuart Mill is considered as the last Utilitarian and the foremost of the individualists. He is the most influential thinker of the nineteenth century and known as the champion of individual liberty. In his political theory, liberalism makes a transition from Laissez faire to an active role for the state, from a negative to a positive conception of liberty and from an atomistic to a more social conception of individuality. Mill can be regarded as a liberal, reluctant democrat, a pluralist, a cooperative socialist, an elitist and a feminist. Reading of this unit will help you to understand Mill's ideas on state and representative government. As mentioned earlier, we will also analyze Mill as a revisionist of Bentham's utilitarian ideas in this unit.

3.2 Objectives :

Mill is the only male thinker of nineteenth century who provides arguments in favour of women and suggests various rights for them. He is also admired for his theory of liberty. His political philosophy is based on his principle of logic. He applied empirical methods in explaining his ideas. After reading this unit you will be able to:

- discuss Mill's view on Utilitarianism
- explain Mill's view on the state

3.3 Mill as Utilitarian:

In the previous unit of this block we have discussed Utilitarianism. Utilitarianism is a doctrine which believes in greatest happiness of the greatest number. As you know Bentham is the main proponent of the doctrine of Utilitarianism. Now in this section we shall discuss Mill as an utilitarian. While doing so let us discuss Mill's revisionism of Benthamite Utilitarianism first.

Mill is deeply influenced by Bentham in his earlier days but later he does not agree with some of the ideas of Bentham. During his youth, Mill is a great supporter of Bentham's doctrines and radical politics. However in his later years, he has made certain modifications in the principle of Utilitarianism. In the process he not only repudiates the Utilitarian philosophy but practically overthrows the whole of it.

Mill's doctrine of Utilitarianism is found in the famous essay "Utilitarianism". He introduces many elements which counter Bentham's Utilitarianism. In this sense Mill's is a revisionist of Bentham's Utilitarianism. He even transforms Bentham's idea of Utilitarianism and gives his own view on Utilitarianism different from Bentham. In the previous unit we have studied the pleasure and pain theory of Bentham. Mill provides a critique of this theory. To Bentham, pleasure differs only in quantity and one pleasure is as good as another. But, Mill makes a distinction between quality and quantity of pleasure and emphasizes the quality of pleasure. Mill has revised Bentham's Utilitarianism in the following ways

- Bentham is of the opinion that pleasure differs only in quantity. Mill retains the basic premise of Utilitarianism but distinguishes between higher and lower pleasures and opines that greater human pleasure means an increase not merely in quantity but also in quality of goods enjoyed. Mill insists that human beings are capable of intellectual and moral pleasures superior to the physical ones that they share with animals.
- According to Bentham, pleasure is the only cause and motive of individual's actions. According to Mill, individual pleasure does not give maximum pleasure. On the other hand, it is collective pleasure which gives maximum happiness and joy to the individual. Thus he believes that pleasure comes from outside and not from within. He regarded individual self-development and diversity as the ultimate ends and important components of human happiness and the principal ingredients of individual and social progress. This is in complete contrast to Bentham's view that pleasure comes from within.

- In Bentham's Utilitarianism, the gulf between self-interest and general happiness is very wide. Mill, on the other hand, has greatly narrowed down the gulf between self-interest and general happiness. He holds that utilitarian standard is not the individual's own greatest happiness but the greatest amount of happiness altogether. The distinction between the two has been brought out by Prof Maxey "Bentham's principle of Utility in a society of wolves would exalt exact wolfishness; in a society of saints it would exalt saintliness. Mill was determined that saintliness should be the criterion in any society whatsoever".

- Bentham considers personal happiness as the sole criteria for all human actions. Mill introduces the concept of good life more than a life devoted to pleasure. He places the moral ends above individual happiness and thus tries to promote virtuous life. Mill points out that every human action had three aspects –

a) the moral aspect of right and wrong,

b) the aesthetic aspect,

c) The sympathetic aspect of its loveableness. The first principle instructs one to disapprove, the second teaches one to admire or despise and the third enables one to love, pity or dislike.

- Bentham does not attach any importance to liberty because according to him it does not in any way contribute to the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people. He attaches more importance to security than liberty. Mill, on the other hand, considers liberty essential for the attainment of the principle of Utility and asserts that minority rights can be protected only when all enjoy liberty.

- Bentham advocates secret voting. Mill advocates public voting as he believes that voting is public duty and like any other public duty it should be performed before the public.

- Seventhly, Bentham gives no special treatment to women in his Utility. Mill gives special position to women and gives them educational and political rights for their emancipation.

- Both Mill and Bentham favour democracy but the reasons for their support of democracy are different. Bentham justifies it because of the nature of men. But Mill justifies it because of the condition of men.

- Bentham is in favour of unicameral legislature .But Mill is in favour of bicameral legislature.

Mill defines utilitarianism as a based on the principle that “actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness , wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.” Thus for Mill happiness is pleasure and the absence of pain. Further, he believes that pleasure can differ in quality and quantity. However, he has spoken about degrees of pleasures. According to him, pleasures that are rooted in one’s higher faculties should be given more weightage than other pleasures. Again, Mill is of the view that people’s happiness is also constituted of their achievements.

According to Mill, utilitarianism coincides with “natural” sentiments that originate from human’s social nature. The society which embraces utilitarianism as an ethic, people would naturally internalise these standards as morally binding. For Mill, happiness is the sole basis of morality, and that people never desire anything but happiness. He defends this claim by showing that all the other objects of people's desire are either means to happiness, or included in the definition of happiness. Mill explains at length that the sentiment of justice is actually based on utility, and that rights exist only because they are necessary for human happiness.

This theory of utilitarianism of Mill is criticised on many grounds. Many critics are of the view that this theory does not provide adequate protection for individual rights because everything can not be measured by same standards. Moreover, happiness has been defined in a very simple way by this theory which actually is very complex.

Mill has discussed the concept of utilitarianism in details in his Book named ‘Utilitarianism’ which is composed of Five chapters. The first chapter of the book provides an introduction to the essay. In the second chapter Mill discusses the definition of utilitarianism where he has put forwarded some misconceptions about the theory. In the Third Chapter there is a discussion about the ultimate sanctions or rewards which utilitarianism may offer. The Fourth chapter of his work discusses methods of proving validity of utilitarianism. In the Last and the Fifth chapter Mill writes about the connection between justice and utility. Here he has also concluded that happiness is the foundation of justice.

Stop To Consider:

Mill’s Views on India:

Mill held a respectful office during the British rule in India. From his Autobiography and his personal letters, we can analyze his views regarding India. His Autobiography indicates that he looks upon his

Indian duties as essentially belonging to his official employment. He writes about India and is influenced by his father's pessimistic views on Indian culture. From his writings, we find that he is skeptical about the feasibility and success of representative government in India. Mill believes that centuries of despotisms prevent the people of India from taking an active posture in the public sphere. He also argues that despite attaining high standards of civilization, they are dominated at that time by custom and sufficiently unresponsive to the stimulating ideas of individualism and rationalism. He also marks that it has made Eastern societies essentially passive and stagnant, making it difficult for them to progress on their volition. In this point, we can say that Mill's views are Eurocentric. However, Mill suggests that some form of benevolent despotism or rule by a superior people belonging to an advanced society is best suited for India. In the mean time, he is also critical about the capacity of a foreign government to act in the best interest of its subject, especially in the case of India where the British had very little understanding of their subjects, or sympathy for them. For the development of India, Mill suggests that British parliament must take permanent interest and responsibility in the Indian affairs. Thus it can be said that Mill favours the British policy and their rule for developing Indian society. As evident from his writings, we find that he is in favour of non- interference in religious practices in India and also advocates gender equality.

Check Your Progress:

1. Fill in the banks
 - a). Utilitarian Society is founded by.....
 - b). The best form of Government according to Mill is.....
2. Name the two activities in which Mill divides individual activities.
3. Name the individual activities where Mill advocates full freedom.
4. What was Mill's view on payment to the members of the Parliament?
5. Write a note on Mill's view on public voting?

3.4 Mill on State:

State is the legal and the supreme authority. Every political philosopher has discussed the state in their political philosophy. Mill has dealt with state elaborately and rejected the mechanistic view of

the state and considers it as the product of the will of the people. His theory of state is based on the classical economic theory of laissez faire. Mill believes that the theory of laissez faire is the ideal. However it should be kept out for the purposes of education, care of children and the insane, relief for poor, public utilities etc. The basic task for the state, according to him is to ensure that none is starved.

Basic features of Mill’s state

- Mill rejects the mechanistic view of theories of the state because it completely ignores the human will and neglects the personalities of men.
- He considers state as the product of the will of the people who compose it rather than an instrument for the promotion of their interests.
- Mill considers that the state and other political institutions are the result of human voluntary agency and do not act by themselves. They require an active participation of the individuals and must adjust according to the capacities and qualities of those individuals.
- Mill does not emphasize the negative aspect of state and asserts that state interference is indispensable for the development of the individual personality.
- Mill wants that the state should be regulated to stimulate and utilize the best intellectual and moral qualities of the citizens for the service of the society.
- Mill’s theory of state is based on the classical economic theory of “Laissez Faire”.

SAQ

Examine Mill as a revisionist of Bentham’s Utilitarianism? (80 words)

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3.5 Summing up:

Mill is one of the foremost individualists or liberal thinker who emphasizes the principle of human progress as the goal of civilization. After reading this unit, we can now draw a conclusion that Mill is one of the supporters of liberty of thought and expression. He highlights

the evils of bureaucracy and opposes governmental interference in the economic life of the community. Again, we have also learnt that he is a strong advocator of women's rights. The profound influence of Mill is still witnessed on the contemporary intellectuals. Mill is the first male philosopher of considerable stature and repute to consider the women's question. He applies the liberal principles not only in the public sphere but also in the private realm and remains the only philosopher to emphasize the importance of fairness, equality and independence within the family well as within the state. Towards this end, he advocates women's enfranchisement, quality elementary education for the masses and land reforms for agriculture labourers.

This unit also helps you to understand that Mill makes Benthamite Utilitarianism more humane and consistent. Due to his contribution to Utilitarianism, he is described as the last of the great Utilitarians. Mill's effort to revise and modify classical Utilitarianism by emphasizing the social aspect of the individual as well as the need to assess happiness both quantitatively and qualitatively is significant. He also states that liberty is the chief end of the state and defines happiness to include liberty, individuality, self – development and self –control. Hence, Mill's above mentioned ideas pave the way for many of the changes initiated within English political thought and practice

3.6 References and Suggested Readings

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2. Mukherjee, Subrata&SushilaRamaswamy. A History Of Political Thought – Plato To Marx , Prentice Hall of India Pvt. Ltd , 1999
3. Sabine, H. George & Thomas L Thorson. A History of Political Theory. Oxford and IBH Publishing Co, New Delhi 1973
4. Rao, V. Venkata. A History of Political Theories. S. Chand and Company, 2000.

Links: <http://www.google.co.in//search=J.S Mill> * *

Unit 4: J. S. Mill: Concept of Liberty, Representative Government, Subjection of Women

Unit Structure :

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Objectives
- 3.3 Mill idea of liberty
- 3.4 Mill on Representative Government
- 3.5 Mill on Subjection of Women
- 3.6 Summing up
- 3.7 References and Suggested Readings

3.1 Introduction

This unit also makes an attempt to analyze Mill's ideas on liberty and his ideas of general discrimination and gender equality. In the previous unit you have learnt some of the ideas of Mill as an utilitarian thinker. From this unit you will learn e of the important idea put forwarded by Mill i.e Idea of Liberty. Besides, you will also get an idea about his concept of Representative government and woman.

3.2 Objectives

Reading of this unit will help you to

- Examine Mill's idea on Liberty
- Discuss Mill's idea on Representative Government
- Describe Mill's view on Subjection of woman

3.3 Mill on Liberty:

Liberty indicates freedom and it is the foremost requirement for the development of the personality of an individual. Among the various political ideas of Mill, the concept of 'liberty' has received wider attention. In fact, he is regarded as a champion of individual liberty as he insists that neither state nor government should interfere in the life

of the individual. He believes that liberty is an essential ingredient for moral development of mankind and thus an end in itself. Mill's development of this doctrine, on the basis of utility, embodies a complete and systematic philosophy of individualism and laissez faire. He emerges as the advocate general of individuality – of the supreme importance of developing the individual in all the completeness of his being so that his active and intellectual nature realize their utmost scope and reach the highest efficiency. Without this, general progress is impossible. In this sense, Mill is an ardent advocate of individual liberty.

Mill defends individual's right to freedom. This right has both positive and negative aspects. In its negative sense, it means that society has no right to coerce an unwilling individual, except for self- defense. Again, in its positive sense, it means the grant of the largest and the greatest amount of freedom for the pursuit of the individual's creative impulses and energies and self-development. He further states that if there is a clash between the opinion of the individual and that of the community, it is the opinion of the individual which will prevail, unless the community can convince him without resorting to threat and coercion.

Thus, Mill considers individuals to be the ultimate judge. He lays stress on the concept of individual liberty on the grounds that liberty is essential for the development of human personality and that without maximum liberty one cannot develop and becomes stagnant. According to Mill, if every individual is allowed to develop his personality as he likes, it will enrich the world with variety of characters. He further believes that democracy, public opinion and collectivism are dangerous to individual liberty and must be kept within their sphere of activity. Any effort on the part of the government to hamper the full development of personality of the individual leads to monotony, which is no sign of progress of the society. It is very interesting to note that Mill divides individual activities into two types

1. Self- Regarding Actions- These activities of the individual are concerned with the individual person alone. Mill argued that there should be no interference with self- regarding actions.

2. Other- Regarding Actions - These activities of the individual are concerned with other members of the community. Mill argued that there shall be interference with other-regarding actions if it produces positive and demonstrable harm to others. Though Mill is an ardent advocate of individual liberty, he argues that so long as the action of the individual concerns him alone and does not in any way hamper the

interest of others, he can be free and there will be no limitation on him. Thus, Mill permits full freedom in self-regarding activities. However in case of other-regarding activities, the state or society can impose restrictions on those actions which affect other members of the community.

Mill here admits that as a natural development of this position, it is legitimate to oblige a man to bear his share in maintaining society – conscription is not to be regarded as an unwarranted infringement of liberty. He must not make himself a nuisance to other people. Again, Mill defends the right of individuality which means the right to choice. As far as self-regarding actions are concerned; he explains why coercion will be detrimental to self- development. Firstly, the evil of coercion out weights the good achieved. Secondly, individuals are so diverse in their needs and capacities for happiness that coercion will be futile. Since the person is the best judge of his own interests, thus he has the incentive and information to achieve them. Thirdly, since diversity is in itself good. Other things being equal, it should be encouraged. Lastly, freedom is the most important requirement in the life of a rational person. Here we should remember that Mill wants to promote the development of individual men and women as he is convinced that all wise and noble things come from individuals. According to him, there can be no self-development without liberty. It is this connection between liberty and self-development which attracts him most and he goes on to argue that liberty is necessary for the happiness of the society.

Different Types of Liberty:

Mill categorizes liberty in the following ways:

- Liberty of thought and expression
- Liberty of opinion and sentiments
- Liberty of conduct
- Liberty of taste and pursuit
- Liberty of scientific and practical or speculative
- Liberty to unite
- Liberty of conscience
- Liberty to live

- Liberty of association

Mill has made a forceful plea for freedom of thought and asserted that the state has no justification to suppress the independent thinking of an individual even if it is wrong because the truth emerges out of collision of opinion. According to Mill, liberty of conscience, liberty to express and publish one's opinion, liberty to live as one pleased and freedom of association are essentials for a meaningful life and for the pursuit of one's good. Mill further argues for liberty of tastes and pursuits, of framing the plan of our life to suit our own character.

Again, Mill contends that positive liberty i.e. autonomy and self-mastery, are inherently desirable and it is possible if individuals are allowed to develop their own talents and invent their own lifestyles. Mill's doctrine of the individual liberty of conduct may be summarized under three heads:

- The advocacy of the due recognition of the place and importance of impulse and desire in man. According to Mill the supreme need is to amply acknowledge 'the active and energetic side of the individual's nature'.
- Insistence on the view that spontaneity or individuality is a necessary ingredient for happiness or human welfare.
- Revolt against the conventionalities of society that hinder or seem to hinder the development and expression conduct.

Criticism of Mill's View on Liberty Though:

Mill has given an excellent argument on individual liberty, we can criticize his views in liberty on the following grounds-

- Mill has divided human activities into two types which are defective and unacceptable. It is difficult to draw a line of demarcation between selfregarding and other-regarding activities.
- There can be hardly any action of the individual which does not affect other members of the community.
- Mill's concept of liberty is not consistent. He is not clear whether liberty is absence of restraint or freedom to do what one desires.
- Mill's concept of liberty deals with the individual not as a part of the society but in isolation. However, in actual practice the individual is an integral part of the society.

- Mill has advocated liberty of thought and expression but he does not grant absolute liberty in the field of action.
- Mill talks about bestowing maximum freedom to the individual, but when individual is given maximum freedom as conceived by Mill, it leads to inequality among men. Despite these criticisms, it must be admitted here that Mill is one of the foremost individualists who offer the best vindication of liberty of thought and expression.

Stop To Consider:

Life Sketch of Mill :

J. S Mill was born on 1806 and he was the eldest son of James Mill. As a child he was subjected to a very hard training by his father and spent most of the time reading books. He learnt Greek, Latin and French languages and was greatly influenced by the dialogues and dialectic methods of Plato. He also studied the history of Roman Government and felt its influence. The Utilitarian Philosophy of Bentham has exercised the maximum influence on J.S Mill. At the age of sixteen, he founded the Utilitarian Society. He also became the member of Speculative Debating Society and the Political Economy Club. The other thinkers and writers who exercised profound influence on Mill were Coleridge and Wordsworth. Above all, his wife Mrs. Taylor greatly stimulated him. At the age of twenty-three, Mill followed his father into the service of the East India Company, and stayed there until he retired in 1858. He is one of the very few voices raised in England against the treatment of the prisoners after the Indian Mutiny was put down. Mill's intellectual energy alone was enough to make him an eminent Victorian. All the cross-currents of the age—romanticism, positivism, political economy, the suffrage question (including votes for women), birth control, socialism (Mill had generous things to say about the Communards) united in Mill. He was the MP for Westminster from 1865 to 1868. Harriet Taylor died the year before 'On Liberty' came out in 1859. By that time Mill had established himself as one of the leading social scientific thinkers of the day, and, in a happy phrase, he became the schoolmaster of liberalism. He died and was buried in Avignon in 1873.

SAQ

Discuss Mill as a champion of individual liberty. (80 words)

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2.4 Mill on Representative Government:

Now in this section we will discuss Mill’s ideas on representative government. In his book Representative Government, Mill proceeds to discuss the form of government that will best apply the basic principles of liberty. Ideally, he considers that form of government to be the best in which “the sovereignty, or supreme controlling power in the last resort is vested in the entire aggregate of the community”. Again, every citizen has a voice in the expression of the sovereign will and at least occasionally they can take an actual part in the discharge of some public functions. The excellence of such a representative government is to be deduced from two principles:

- Firstly, that any task is done best by those whose rights and interest are immediately involved and
- Secondly, that the moral, intellectual and practical faculties of men are most developed and improved when they are in active exercise.

As a champion of individual liberty, Mill opines the representative government as an ideal form of government as it guarantees individual freedom. He also believes that the best government is that which promotes the virtue and intelligence of the people and its value should be judged by its action. The representative government serves the purpose of citizenship to the highest degree. It imparts political education and training to the citizens by fostering the moral and intellectual qualities of the citizens.

Mill has made three considerations for representative government-

- Mill has considered the representative government as the best form of government as it raises the general standard of intelligence and honesty existing in the community.
- Mill has favoured representative government only for the advanced nations and did not favour it for the backward and colonial people.
- Mill has pointed out that the representative government prevailing in England has various shortcomings. To improve its working and make

it fully representative and democratic, Mill favours “Proportional Representation” system.

Basic Features of Mill’s Representative Government

- Proportional representation Mill advocates the system of Proportional Representation to ensure that each section of the society gets representation in proportion to its voting strength. He is unhappy with the inadequate representation accorded to the minorities and the tyrannical attitude of the majority. He argues that in real democracy, every section of the society must be represented proportionally.
- Right to vote to all Mill advocates the right to vote to all without distinction as he believes that all are competent enough to exercise this right properly and intelligently. However, he insists on property and educational qualifications for the voters. He pleads for greater emphasis to voting to persons with better abilities and capabilities.
- Public voting Mill argues for public voting in contrast to secret voting. He says that “the duty of voting like any other public duty” should be performed under the eye and criticism of the public.
- Equal treatment to women Mill stands for equal treatment to women and favours that they should enjoy equal status with men. Mill argues that the difference of sex is only external, thus it should not become a disqualification for women and qualification for men.
- Non-payment to the members of the parliament Mill is against payment to the members of the parliament. He asserts that membership of the parliament is an honour and service for which the members need no payment. This will ensure not only efficiency and purity in administration but also leads to economy.
- Rejection of the idea of annual election of parliament Mill also rejects the idea of annual election of the parliament. Once elected, the candidate should be completely free to guide and instruct the state. Cr

Criticism of Mill’s Representative Government:

However Mill’s representative government can also be criticized on the following grounds-

- Mill is in favour of public voting which is not practicable at the present times. Presently all the countries follow for secret ballot.

- Mill has given more emphasis on giving voting right to the people with educational and property qualification, which is against the principal of equality and democracy.
- If voting is done publicly, the people will not be in a position to vote fearlessly.
- He favours the idea of proportional representation which is impracticable in the present times as it is impossible to give due representation to all people.
- Mill's representative government is meant only for developed countries not for developing countries.

Though, Mill's representative government has the above mentioned shortcomings, he strongly favours representative government, adult franchise and equality of women which are the hallmarks of modern democracy.

Stop To Consider : Major Works of Mill:

Like many other nineteenth-century thinkers, John Stuart Mill had to face the crisis of authority which had been implicit in Europe since the French Revolution and which became pressing after the Revolution of 1848. When Mill wrote his famous essay 'On Liberty', France was going through a phase of Napoleonic rule for the second time. From Mill's attitude the idea how far utilitarianism had travelled since Bentham. In his book On Representative Government (1861), Mill makes an important addition to the traditional utilitarian definition of good government. Again in his System of Logic (1843) which he began writing in the 1920s, he tries to elucidate a coherent philosophy of politics. One of his important works was Subjection of Women (1869), which is the classic elaboration of liberal thought on some important issues regarding the liberation of women in the context of law, rights and liberty. His famous pamphlet Utilitarianism (1863) endorsed the Benthamite principle of the greatest happiness of greatest number. Apart from these, some other major works of him are as follows: Principles of Political Economy (1848) The Three Essays on Religions (1874) Enfranchisement of Women Dissertations and Discussions Women Suffrage.

SAQ

Discuss how Mill's idea of Government can be regarded as the basis of modern democracy. (80 words)

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3.4 Mill on Gender Equality and General Discrimination

Mill has discussed elaborately on general discrimination and equality of sexes. Mill’s thought and activism can be distinguished from all his predecessors within the liberal tradition because of the application of the principles of liberalism to the question of women. In his book *Subjection of Women*, Mill makes a strong plea for equality of sexes. For Mill, improving women’s position by giving them suffrage, education and reemployment opportunities is a stepping stone to progress and civility. Women are denied equal treatment for long and considered inferior to men. They are not allowed to act according to their wishes and always have to be dependent on their male counterparts. Mill has referred to women as both the subject and the enslaved class as their position is even worse than slaves. Their capacities are spent in seeking happiness for others. A woman is not free within marriage, nor is she free to remain unmarried. Unmarried women are deprived of avenues for leading a good and independent life. There is lack of freedom of choice for women. The subordination and domination of women are possible for the following reasons –

- Women are physically weak and not as strong as their male counterparts.
- Women have accepted the domination voluntarily without any protest or resistance.
- The psychology of women from childhood is moulded in such a pattern that she accepts all subordination without objection.
- Renunciation, patience, resignation and submission to power have been regarded as the characteristics of a gentle and graceful woman which woman willingly accept from birth.

Again, Mill has argued for three key areas for the equal status to women –

- Right to vote – Mill argues that women should be given the right to vote and chose their representatives.

- Right to education – Mill argues for women’s education. Unless they are given proper education, they will not understand their capacities and rights and their empowerment will remain impossible.
- Right to employment – Mill insists for the right to employment for women because employment will lead to empowerment and progress of women.

From the above discussion it is clear that Mill considers women as bright and gifted as men and once granted the same eagerness for fame; women will achieve the same success. Moreover, a judgment regarding capacities and talent in women can be made only after generations of women benefit from equal opportunities for education and employment. He supports the idea that it is the women who should be able to decide whether to marry and manage a house, or to pursue a career. According to Mill, it is society that has decided marriage to be ultimate aim of a woman. Mill has articulated and defended the right of women to be considered as free rational beings capable of choosing the life they like to lead for themselves rather than being dictated by what society thinks they should be or do. Mill is confident that women, even if granted freedom and opportunities will not fail to perform their traditional functions. It is not a question of a choice between domesticity and career. The reason why men do not grant equal status to women is because they are afraid of marriage on equal terms.

Mill further points out that marriage does not give the women the dignity and equal status she is entitled to get. Once she is married, she is totally under the control of her husband. Hence they must have the right to property, inheritance and custody. A marriage contract based on the equality of married persons before law is not only sufficient but a necessary condition for full and just equality between the sexes. For Mill, equality is a genuine moral sentiment that ought to govern all relationships including the marital one. Such a sentiment could be instilled and nurtured within a family that had been justly constituted. Mill acknowledged the family as the real school for learning the virtues of freedom and liberation. The boy by virtue of being a male was treated and reared as if he was superior and better thus dismissing the needs and interests of one half of mankind to bear the consequences of sub-ordination and inhumanness. The self-worship of the male in the traditional family was described by Mill as a school of despotism. A just family will nurture feelings of sympathy in terms of equality and love, rather than sub-ordination and command. Mill desires a transformation of the family to suit the temperament and

spirit of the modern age namely the spirit of equality and justice and in the process aims to bring a moral regeneration of humankind.

Mill also suggests some reformative measures for the improvement of women's condition:

- Men should not be vested with absolute powers. Such absolute power within the family and marriage only leads to brutalization of women.
- Women should have the right to decision-making because this will reduce the feeling of negligence and ignorance.
- The dignity of women will be guaranteed if women are given the power to earn their own living. She should be given the right to enter a profession and take up a career.
- Women should have full right in her property and earning.
- Women should be equally paid for equal work with men.
- Women should be given the political right to vote and participate in government and administration as rulers.
- Condition of women can be improved by education, opinion, habits and finally a change in family life itself.

SAQ

Critically examine Mill's ideas on gender discrimination and equality of sexes. (60 words)

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Criticism of Mill's view on Gender Equality:

Mill's view on general discrimination and gender equality has various shortcomings which are as follows –

- Mill has failed to address the problems of women in the market place and as a part of the labour force.

- The critics highlight that Mill's main focus in the 'Subjection of Women' is on wife and mother and he ignores the plight of daughters, sisters etc.
- Mill does focus on the plight of single women in a society thereby giving undue importance to marriage.
- Mill has supported women's power of decision-making but he does not mention how their decisions can be made binding.

Thus, it is giving power on one hand and taking it away on the other hand. However, Mill has made a brilliant study of the plight of women and suggested various measures for the improvement of their condition. He does not believe that women are slaves to customs and it is necessary to improve their position by giving them suffrage, education and employment, the stepping stones to progress and civility.

Check Your Progress:

1. Discuss Mill as a Supporter of Gender Equality.
2. Critically analyse Mill's view on Liberty.
3. What are the different types of Liberty according to Mill?
4. What are the basic Features of Mill's Representative Government ? Discuss his view on Representative Government.

3.6 Summing up

From the last two units of this Block you have got some ideas about Mill's philosophy. These two units have helped you to analyse Mill as an utilitarian. Reading of this unit has also helped you learning Mill's idea on Liberty. He is known as the champion of liberty. We have also learnt that for Mill liberty is an essential ingredient for moral development of mankind and thus an end in itself. Further, this unit has also helped us in learning Mill's view on Representative government. As a champion of individual liberty, Mill opines the representative government as an ideal form of government as it guarantees individual freedom. According to him, the representative government serves the purpose of citizenship to the highest degree. From this unit we have also learnt that Mill considers women as bright and gifted as men and once granted the same eagerness for fame; women will achieve the same success.

3.7 Reference and Suggested Readings:

1. Mukherjee, Subrata&SushilaRamaswamy. A History Of Political Thought – Plato To Marx , Prentice Hall of India Pvt. Ltd , 1999
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BLOCK- IV
MARXIST TRADITION AND CONTEMPORARY
POLITICAL THINKERS

UNIT 1: KARL MARX: DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM, ALIENATION, THEORY OF STATE

Unit Structure:

- 1.1.Introduction
- 1.2.Objectives
- 1.3.Dialectical materialism
- 1.4.Marxian theory of alienation
- 1.5.Marxian theory of state
- 1.6.Summing up
- 1.7.References and suggested readings

1.1.INTRODUCTION

Marx has committed himself for the welfare of the working class. Karl Marx is known as the father of scientific socialism. Before Marx there were many political philosophers who discussed socialism at length. But Marx was the first philosopher who gave a scientific analysis of socialism. He is regarded as the most influential political philosopher of modern time. His idea of dialectical materialism is one of the major contributions towards political philosophy. The whole Marxian philosophy rests on this concept of dialectical materialism. Though he borrowed this concept from Hegel, it should be mentioned that he did not follow the idea blindly. Hegel explained the concept of dialectics with the help of thesis, anti- thesis and synthesis. Unlike Hegel who believes that idea is the essence of universe, Marx opines that matter is the essence of universe. The society progresses through the class struggle. The idea of historical materialism or materialistic interpretation of history too is Marx's contribution. This theory is the actual application of his theory of dialectical materialism. He believes that production is the main human activity and the ownership of means of production decides the course of history. The theory of class struggle is another contribution

of Karl Marx. He is of the view that in every society there are two classes and one who owns the means of production dominates the other. As a result of this domination and difference of interest between these two classes, class conflict emerged. This unit also deals with Marxian concept of alienation and state. According to Marx, this loss of control over the products leads to alienation among the workers. In simple terms alienation refers to powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation and self-estrangement. you will also learn that marx considered state as an instrument in the hands of the capitalist class to exploit the working class. He also believed that state will wither away and a classless and stateless society will be established.

1.2.OBJECTIVES

This unit will help you

- To examine Marxian concept of dialectical materialism.
- To explore Marxian concept of alienation
- To understand Marxian concept of state

1.3.DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

Hegel was the chief exponent of the dialectic method of history. Dialectical implies the process where ideas are formed and clarified in the course of intellectual debate. Dialectic materialism involves thesis anti thesis and synthesis. Thesis is the proposition or the statement which is challenged by the counter proposition. This counter proposition is called the anti thesis. Both thesis and anti thesis are partly true. The outcome of the discussion between thesis and anti thesis is a revised thesis which is known as synthesis. Synthesis combines the valid elements of both thesis and anti thesis.

It must remember here that neither thesis nor anti thesis represent complete truth. Synthesis is nearer truth or perfection as it embodies the

true elements of both thesis and anti thesis and free from the untrue elements of the two. Despite this, the synthesis does not present the whole truth. Therefore it again takes the form of thesis and a new anti thesis is formed to counter this thesis. This process of negation continues till it finds the absolute truth. The idea or reason develops through the history of the world. This reality is dynamic in nature and hence cannot be understood through the static concept of formal logic. The new logic formulated by Hegel is called dialectics.

Hegel opined that evolution happens through the process of thesis, anti thesis and synthesis. Marx was highly impressed by the Hegelian logic. But he rejected the Hegelian notion that idea is the principal cause of historical progress. According to Marx, the social ideas and theories of different times represent the material laws of the society. For Marx, the ultimate reality is matter in motion. He believes that historical development is caused by economic reasons. Dialectic materialism will establish a society perfectly organized for production where there will be no class division. There are three laws on the basis of which Marx put forward his theory of dialectics.

- a. Transformation of quantity into quality and vice versa is the first law. Marx is of the view that the progress of humanity is not affected by the gradual process of growth but by the sudden jumps. Marx termed this as revolution and believed that it is inevitable.
- b. Unity of opposites is the second law. It implies that unity contains polar opposites. He cited the example of a capitalist society where the bourgeoisie and proletariat exist and they are connected to each other. They cannot develop without each other.
- c. The third law is the negation of the negation. Thesis anti thesis and synthesis are the stages of development. This can be illustrated with the help of feudalism, capitalism and socialism. The contradictions within feudalism led to the rise of capitalism. Again the contradictions within capitalism led to socialism.

Marx has concluded that each phenomena is related to other one. They should be studied in the light of interaction. They should be studied as changing and developing. He believes that contradictions are the motive force behind all development.

Stop to consider

Class struggle

Class is an important unit of the society. It is an economic unit. It is already known to you that in every society there are mainly two classes- the haves and the have nots, the propertied and the property less class, the rich and the poor. According to Marx, one class can be distinguished from another class on the basis of two factors. These are- ownership of the means of production and control of labour powers of others. Marx, on the basis of these two factors in his Communist Manifesto talked about three distinct classes in the society. The capitalist class is the owner of the means of production and it also purchases the labour power of others. The worker class neither owns the means of production nor possesses the ability to purchase the labour of others. Rather, they sell their own labour. The third class known as the petite bourgeoisie class owns sufficient means of production but cannot buy the labour of others. Marx has not defined this class in details. Marx defines a class on the basis of ownership of means of production. He holds that the class is not determined by the occupation but by the ownership of means of production. For eg. If there are two blacksmiths and one owns the shop while the other is a paid labourer in that shop, then both belongs to two different classes in spite of their same occupation.

You have already learnt that according to Marx, the labour class earns their income by selling their labours while the capitalist class earns its income by exploiting the labourers. The capitalist class owns the products of the laboureres. Whatever they produce, belongs exclusively to the capitalist class. They need to work in the factories under hard and fast rules. They work in a mechanization process which ultimately

alienates them from their respective products and even from their own self as well. They are left with no other options than to work in a mechanical way. Work becomes necessary for their survival. He is of the view that all the classes possess different interest and these differences in interest lead to class struggle in the society. It has already been mentioned that both the capitalist and the working classes hold opposite views which is the reason behind this class struggle. Marx cited various examples like Roman Revolution, Glorious Revolution, Russian Revolution, Chinese Revolution etc. In the Roman Revolution the slave class of Rome revolted against their masters under the leadership of Spartacus. Glorious Revolution was led by the bourgeoisie against the feudal class. The Chinese Revolution was a revolution of the working class against the bourgeoisie. He opines that the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle. It needs mention here that Marx has attributed various reasons for the emergence of class conflict in the society. The negligence of the capitalist class towards the proletariat is one of them. The capitalist class as the controller of legal and political system makes laws which are not in favour of the working class. This leads to the conflict between the two classes. Again, the exploitation by the capitalist class also induces the conflict. The labour is a perishable commodity and therefore the labourers need to sell their labour at any cost. The capitalists take advantage of this situation and exploit the labourers. This also gives rise to conflict in the society. The capitalist tendency to expand leads to the establishment of big factories consequently leading to the concentration of labourers near the factory area. This has given the labourers a chance to unite and put their demands in front of the capitalist class. By now, you have learnt that according to Marx, society progress as through class struggle. He criticized the present system of society where the capitalist class dominates the working class. He holds the view that this capitalist domination should be replaced by the socialist system where the means of production shall be owned by the working class. He believes that in course of time the dictatorship of

proletariat will be established which will lead to the withering away of states and ultimately a stateless and classless society will be established. In conclusion, we can sum up the elements in Marx's view of class conflict as follows-

- Classes are authority relationships and it is based on property ownership.
- A class is based on shared life situations and interests.
- There are two classes in the society and all the economic and social relationships revolve round these two classes.
- Class struggle leads to structural change.

SAQ:

Do you think only economic factor can bring about changes in the society? Give reasons in support of your answer. (20+ 30 words)

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1.4. MARXIAN THEORY OF ALIENATION

In the previous section you have learnt the concept of class and class struggle put forwarded by Marx. You have also learnt that the labourers work under pressure and they are not free to choose their own action. According to Marx, this loss of control over the products leads to alienation among the workers. In simple terms alienation refers to powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation and self-estrangement. This concept of alienation is based on human relationship. But this view of human relationship is not based on equality but on the superiority of one man over another as this theory is based on the relationship of master and slave. The dictionary

meaning of the term alienation is “withdrawing or separation of a person or his affections from an object or position of former attachment”. If we see from historical perspective, the concept of alienation has been developed due to the factors like the low level of the productive forces, from human subordination to the land and from the domination of the feudal ruling class. Hegel opines that realization of self or freedom is the main goal of man. Two factors namely necessity and alienation stand in the way of a person in achieving this condition. Here necessity refers to natural as well as physical constraints while alienation implies the dissociation of subject from the object. Though man wants to be a master of himself, most of the time he becomes a slave. Man fails to realize his own self and this is the chief reason of human alienation. But Marx has given a totally different outlook in his famous book Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts (also known as the 1844, or Paris Manuscripts). He denied Hegel’s conception that failure to realize one’s own self is the reason of alienation. Religious superstitions are also not a chief cause of human alienation. According to Marx, it is the work of man which leads to alienation. Division of labour leads to the loss of control of work process which ultimately leads to the loss of control over his product of labour which is dehumanization and depersonalization. The workers cannot buy the end product of their labour. The people who do not work only buy those products. You have already learnt that according to Marx, alienation refers to loss of control over labour. He did not believe that alienation is rooted in religion or mind. The origin of Marxian theory of alienation can be attributed to Feuerbach, Hegel and English Political Economy. Alienation is that process which makes the workers feel foreign to the products of his/ her own labour. Lack of control over work process also leads to alienation. The work process like the condition in which labourers work and how the work is organized and how it affects the labourers physically and mentally is under the control of the capitalist class. The workers cannot use their creativity in the work process which alienates them from the whole process.

SAQ:

Do you think that the loss of control over labour is the only cause of alienation among the urban people? Explain. (20+ 40 words).

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According to Marx, there are four forms of alienated labour or four levels of alienation. These are as follows - Firstly, it is the alienation of the product from the labour. In this level, the worker is alienated from the product. The worker cannot decide what to produce and how to produce. It is the capitalist class which directs the workers to produce different things. The product of the worker does not belong to the worker but someone else. The labourers are alienated from their own products as it is not owned by them but by the capitalists. They build houses, in which they can never live; they make cars which they can never buy. Secondly, worker is also alienated from the process of labour. The labourers cannot purchase the end product. Therefore they cannot feel attached to their products. They also do not feel any achievement in the product. While working in the production process they feel miserable instead of happy. Their work is not voluntary but compelled labour. The labourers cannot work to satisfy themselves. They work according to other's need. He cannot decide anything about his products and his work fail to give him satisfaction as a creative worker. He works like a machine under a monotonous environment. In the third level, the labourers feel alienated from fellow human beings. This is because everyone takes others as their competitors. They also feel that others are exploiting their labours and control the things they produce. Everyone wants to win at the cost of others. Friendly relations do not develop and they feel alienated from each other. In the final level, man feels alienated

from his own human self. The ability to consciously shape the world around us makes us human. But capitalism does not give any chance for the development of this ability. The labour is forced labour. The worker cannot use his creative mind in the production of labour. Moreover, the worker works under a routine system and leads a monotonous life. There is no room left for the enjoyment of art, literature etc. which makes him equal to an animal. Hence he feels alienated from himself.

Stop to consider

Marx's Theory of Social Change

Reading of the previous sections has familiarized you with the Marxian concepts of class, class struggle and alienation. His concept of social change is related to his concept of class struggle. According to him, the struggle between the two classes brings about changes in the society. Marx explains his theory of social change with the help of two principles- the principle of dialectic materialism and the principle of historical materialism. The principle of dialectic materialism constructs the philosophical basis of his theory of social change. Rejecting Hegel's view that idea or consciousness is the essence of universe, Marx opines that matter is the essence of universe. The principle of historical materialism believes that the ownership of the means of production and the mode of the means of production is the basis of social change. You have already learnt that Marx has given utmost importance to the economic factor in bringing about change in the society. Marx opines that the economic structure of the society is mainly responsible for social change. Again, the ways of controlling the production and distribution system also influence the social change. Introduction of new means of production leads to new situation and system ultimately bringing changes in the society. He is of the view that it is the economic factor which brings about every kind of changes whether social, economic, political, spiritual etc. in the society. There are always two aspects of a mode of production- the

force of power of production and the relationship of the production. The everchanging things like machines, tools and labourers come under the first category. The second includes the super structure like moral, religious, political and constitutional relations. With the changes in the means of production, a new social structure is established and it eventually leads to social change. Marx also holds the view that revolution is another cause of social change. Each class tries to bring about some new changes which are bound to be resisted by the other class.

1.5 MARXIAN THEORY OF STATE

According to Marx, there are two classes in the society, the haves and the have nots. The haves created the state to exploit the have nots. Marx rejected the idea that state is a natural institution. Rather he opined that it is created by man. According to him, state is based on force and it is a product of class struggle. State, according to Marx is an organ of economically dominant class. This economically dominant class is minority and it rules the working class who are in a majority. He believed that state is an organized power of one class for oppressing another. He denounced the Hegelian view that state is march of god on earth. Rather he believed that state is a servant of the property owners.

State is not above society. Neither it can organize the society. It is also not equal to society. State is the product of society through the stages of historical development. In general, the state serves the interest of the economically dominant class. In certain circumstances, state rises above all the classes in the society.

According to Marx, the history of state can broadly be divided into 5 stages. They are the primitive communal system, the slave system, the feudal system, the capitalist system and the socialist system. The primitive communal stage is the earliest stage of social life. In this stage the instruments of labour were of very primitive nature. The tools were held in common ownership by the members of the society.

Division of labour and exchange of product were the characteristics of this stage. In the later period private property appeared and this divided the society into masters and slaves. Then came the slave system. In this stage, the slaves were treated as the property of the masters. The slaves were dominated by the masters. The state protected the private property of the slave owners. The prisoners of war and bankrupted people were made slaves. Gradually, the large scale agriculture becomes the large mode of production and the feudal system replaced the slave system. In the feudal system land was the main mode of production. The land was owned by the feudal lords and the peasants worked on the land. Though the serfs were not private property of their masters yet they were bound to serve their masters. There were peasants risings in this stage. Finally this system had been replaced by the capitalist system. The capitalist system implies the advanced industrial stage where the means of production are owned by the capitalist class and the working class was dominated by the capitalist section. The capitalist state performs mainly four functions. These are repressive, ideological cultural, economic and international functions. The main function of a capitalist state is to repress the movement of the working class. The ideological cultural function discourage dissidence. Marx observes the increasing importance of state intervention in the system of capitalist production. Again the capitalist state performs the international function by advancement of national interests in relation to external affairs. After overthrowing the capitalist system through proletariat revolution, the socialist system comes into existence. In this stage, the bourgeoisie class is being suppressed and socialism has been established. After sometime the classes will get abolished and the state is left with only economic functions. In this stage, the state consolidate the power of the proletariat by smashing the bourgeoisie. The private property is being abolished and social ownership of means of production has been established during this stage. It also establishes socio economic and cultural activities. In the final stage,

the state will wither away and a stateless and classless society will be established.

Stop to consider

Marxist Theory of Revolution

It has already been mentioned above that revolution is one of the factors which brings changes in the society. According to Marx, revolution is a social, economic, technological, political, legal and ideological phenomenon. His whole theory of revolution is based on his concept of materialistic interpretation of history. Marx opines that class struggle and revolution are the two major driving forces of history. Class struggle will definitely lead to revolution and revolution is necessary as the dominant class will not give up its socio- economic and political power through evolutionary methods. Hence, the oppressed class needs to throw it out forcibly through revolutionary means. Marx holds the view that only revolution can bring changes in the society. Marxian theory of revolution is basically a social revolution which is necessary to overthrow the socio- economic and political domination of the capitalist class in the society. It is a revolution by the majority as it involves the working class. He termed the proletariat revolution as social revolution because the proletariats are capable enough to represent the interest of the society as a whole. However, Marx opines that revolution cannot come on its own. The people will have to bring revolution for which a revolutionary consciousness among the people is very necessary. Marxian theory does not hold the view that history will bring revolution on its own without doing anything by the human beings. He is of the view that the oppressed proletarian class has to play a major role in bringing about revolution in the society. Marx is a revolutionary in the true sense of the term and he perceives revolution as a meaningful way to change the society. He holds the view that revolution not only

brings political changes, but also changes the society as a whole. You should remember here that according to Marx, when class struggle becomes intensified it can bring revolution. According to him, capturing political power is the immediate aim of any revolution. Though he was not in favour of use of terror yet he did not completely rule out the possibility of using physical forces. He has expressed the view that if the capitalist class uses arms the proletariat will have to take up arms to counter attack. He also opines that in developed liberal democratic countries like Britain and USA peaceful transition of society is possible. Though the immediate aim of his revolution was to capture political power, the ultimate aim was to bring massive socio- economic changes in the society. The French revolution has greatly influenced Marx in forming his own opinion of revolution. This revolution has established the fact that changes in society come only through revolution. The major reason behind revolution is that the subject class desires to capture the state power from the ruling class through force. As a result of revolution the social, economic and political institutions which hinder the development of the deprived classes will be eliminated. According to Marx, the proletarian revolution is the revolution of majority against minority. This revolution does not aim at the winning of power for particular class for exploiting another class. The chief aim of this revolution is to end the system of exploitation itself. Marx believes that revolution will break out in most advanced nations like Britain, France or United States. But at the same time he does not deny the possibility of breaking off revolution in underdeveloped countries like Germany.

Marx considers state as necessary evil. He opines that state has limited authority. It is controlled by the capitalist class. State is created with the sole motive to protect the interest of the capitalist class. He further believes that only a stateless society can be a just

society. According to his prophecy, state will wither away in due course of time and a classless and stateless society will be established. He believes that state does not represent the will of the general people. It is the instrument in the hands of the capitalist class. It mainly protects and expresses the will of the small minority that is the ruling class. According to him, the chief objective behind the maintenance of institutions like army, prison etc by the state is the protection of rights and interest of the capitalist class. He opines that the state will wither away with the end of capitalism. Again he says that the capitalist class retains its power through the device of democracy. According to Marx, in a democratic state everyone does not get equal opportunity. In the name of democracy the ruling capitalist class enjoys their power. Therefore, it is the duty of the working class to carefully watch the institution of democracy so that the capitalist cannot misuse it.

Check Your Progress

1. What is dialectical materialism?
2. Define Marxian idea of class struggle.
3. Discuss the concept of alienation.
4. What are the four levels of alienation?
5. Examine Marx's theory of social change.
6. Why did Marx consider state as necessary evil?
7. Examine Marxian idea of state.

1.6 SUMMING UP

After reading this unit, now you are in a position to understand the ideas of Karl Marx. You have understood that Marx believes that historical development is caused by economic reasons. Dialectic materialism will establish a society perfectly organized for production where there will be no class division. This unit has also familiarised you with Marxian concept of alienation.

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Unit 2

KARL MARX: ECONOMIC DETERMINISM, CLASS STRUGGLE AND SURPLUS VALUE

Unit Structure :

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Economic determinism

2.3 Class-struggle

2.4 Surplus value

2.5 A Critical Appraisal

2.6 Summing Up

2.7 References and Suggested Readings:

2.1 Introduction

The philosophy of Marxism derives its name from Karl Heinrich Marx (1818-1893), a famous German economist and social philosopher of the nineteenth century and was one of the greatest critics in the Western intellectual tradition. Marxism, as an ideology, first appeared in the middle of the nineteenth century as a reaction to the oppressive conditions created by the capitalist system, resulted by the emergence of Liberalism in the seventeenth century as a philosophy of human freedom. The ideas of Marx influenced on all aspects of human endeavour, which entirely changed the methodology of studying history and society by developing a theory of *praxis* that means unity of thought and action. Marxism can be defined as a set of political and economic principles founded by Karl Marx, his friend and comrade Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) and their supporters, in order to lay scientific foundation of socialism replacing utopian socialism for the analysis of the present status of world society, social problems, tries to find solution to its problems, and determines the way to shape its future. The principles of Marxism came out in the form of *Communist Manifesto* (1848), a propaganda pamphlet in which Marx and Engels interpreted some of their ideas in collective form for the establishment of a classless and stateless society based on communism.

Among the major contributions that Marx and Engels made to the field of political philosophy, Economic Determinism, Class Struggle and Theory of Surplus Value play very important role. These ideas can be discussed as follows:

2.2 Economic determinism:

A major assumption in Marxism is economic determinism that works as the ground for Marx to build rest of his theory. Economic determinism suggests that the primary human motivation is economic in its nature. It is a doctrine that all social, cultural, political and intellectual forms are determined by or result from such economic factors as the quality of natural resources, productive capability, technological development, or the distribution of wealth.

The idea of economic determinism is not unique to Marx as it was widely understood among the intellectual community. Karl Marx and Engels were strongly influenced by Ludwig Andreas von Feuerbach (1804-1872), a German Anthropologist and Philosopher, who freed Hegelianism from its idealist puzzlement and interpreted materialism in a more scientific way. Marx was convinced by Feuerbach that Hegelian notions like 'Absolute Spirit' or 'Spirit of the Age' were merely imaginary, and that the real motive forces in the history of a society are its material conditions, and the material meant for Marx that these forces are economic. Marx argues that the consciousness of men does not determine their existence, but their social existence determines their consciousness which is based on their economic circumstances. It can be said that economics plays an important role in determining and shaping social, political, intellectual and ethical behaviour and relationship among human beings.

Marx's economic determinism gives a concrete social and political meaning to his idea of dialectical materialism. In this connection Marx uses the metaphor of base-superstructure, according to which, in every society, politics, religion, and spiritual life are determined by the mode of production of material life. According to Marx, all the societies are composed of two basic parts: the *base* and the *superstructure*. The base is the foundation of the society that consists of the mode of production, while superstructure is the external build up, is represented by its legal and political structure, religion, morals, social practices, literature, art and culture etc. According to the theory of economic determinism by Marx, the foundation of society, known as base is material where motive forces are economic in nature.

Mode of production has two components: *forces of production* and *relations of production*. Forces of production are dynamic in nature

and have an inherent tendency of development to reach a perfect society. Forces of production can again be divided into two components according to Marxian perspective: *means of production* consisting tools and equipment and *labour power* that consists of human knowledge and skills etc. Correspondence between both these two components, men and women constantly try for better ways of production in a particular society that determines the kind of economic system the society enjoys.

On the other hand, relations of production are determined by the affiliation between human beings in the society and the means of production that gives rise to a pattern of ownership emerging two contending class- *haves* and *have-nots*. The owners of means of production, considered as *haves* enjoy the most beneficial position in the economy and thus become members of the most influential social group- the ruling class. In contrary to it, the *have-nots* consist of that group of people who have to give their labour for the sake of the benefits of the ruling class. The foundation of society, i.e. the base determines the nature of society's superstructure which is composed of all non-material institutions in the society, and each is arranged in a way that suits the ruling class to continue their dominance. Thus, the changes in mode of production or economic bases of society bring about changes in consciousness and the nature of contending classes. Marx's materialism referred not only to matter, but also to economic and social relations and envisaged for a humane and decent society free of exploitation, domination and oppression. According to Marx, social revolution is the only way to bring changes both in forces of production and relations of production that will help to replace the old social formation of capitalism by new social formation of a classless society.

Marx identified five stages of economic development known to history that comes under his explanation of the idea of historical materialism as empirical basis of Marxism representing dialectical materialism as its philosophical basis. These five stages are- Primitive Communism, Ancient stage or Slavery, Feudalism, Capitalism and Communism. In his analysis of these five stages, economic determinism plays a key role where economic base works as a determining factor of changes of the superstructure in the form of different stages of history to explain the law of human development. Influencing by German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel's (1770-1831) method of dialectics, Marx applied it in the context of his analysis of dialectical materialism. Marx was different from Hegel in application of the idea of *thesis* (idea), *antithesis* (opposite idea) and *synthesis* (nearer to truth) as he applied it

to explain the development of society on its economic basis whereas Hegel used it to explain the evolution of history on the basis of ideas. This method Marx used to show the transition of society from Primitive to the establishment of Communism through an economic interpretation of the various phenomena of history.

According to Marx, production is the most important of all the human activities and the form and structure of society is determined by the condition of production. The inability of the society to produce required production gives rise to tension and stresses among the members of the society. In all the stages of development, the class which controls the forces of production controls the rest of the superstructure. This domination of one class over others naturally gives rise to tensions and strains that makes people to search for a better society. Marx believes that the progress of society from one stage to another stage is not a result of chance, but a result of the law of history. To describe this law, Marx used Hegelian dialectical method, moulding it into his own shape of dialectical materialism. He considered the existing society to be the thesis, whereas the opposite forces come as antithesis that resulted to a new formation called synthesis. In each stage, each dominant class develops its opposite and as a result of clash between these two opposites, the new ruling class emerged. In Marxian view, primitive communism is an Asiatic stage where there was the absence of private ownership of production and resources; hence there was no class-contradiction. But as a result of changing mode of production since ancient times with the beginning of household-based small-scale production, the outer structure of the society also changed and class domination appeared between master and slave. A social transformation came up caused by the emergence of private property. The next stage, based on large-scale agricultural-based production represents another transformation of the society in the name of feudal society caused by the rise of feudalism as the synthesis resulted by social revolutions which also come up as a thesis towards the path of establishment of capitalism. In modern times, as the mode of production, large-scale machine-based production evolved and capitalist society emerged where the capitalist and the proletariat stand face to face against each other. As a result of clash between these two classes, classless society will be developed with the establishment of Communism at its end as Marx believed.

From the above interpretation of historical development, it is clear that Marx offers the theory of materialistic interpretation of history on the basis of economic determinism. The mode of production of material life determines the social, political and intellectual life process in

general. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less transformed which shows a close linkage between the social relations and productive forces.

2.3 Class-struggle:

Marxian concept of class struggle or class conflict is an integral part of his explanation of historical materialism. Marx expressed the idea of human liberation distinctively from political emancipation that aims to bring out the collective, generic character of human life in real sense, so that society would have to assume a collective character to match with the life of the state. This would be possible if individuals were freed from religion and private property. The proletariat, by being the universal class in chains as Marx urged them to be united, would liberate itself and human society.

It can be understood from Marxian interpretation of historical materialism that the relations of production in reality were class relations. Class antagonisms were crucial to the workings of all societies, hence Marx asserted in *Communist Manifesto* (1848) that, “the history of all hitherto existing society is a history of class struggles” and society is divided into two hostile groups, i.e. *haves* and *have-nots*. Here, Marxian meaning of history is about all written history. In *Communist Manifesto* Marx writes: “*Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.*” With the development of forces of production, one mode of production is replaced by another, but conflict between existing classes or newly appeared social classes continues to exist with a changing nature of struggle even in modern bourgeois society. Except the primitive communist stage, all historical ages have been characterised by the antagonism between the dominant and dependent classes or the *haves* and the *have-nots*. This antagonism is caused by class contradictions; it is the result of exploitation by the property owning class of the property less class. In the slavery system, they were the masters and the slaves, in feudalism, the feudal lords and the peasants and in capitalism, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The masters, the feudal lords and the bourgeois are the owners of the means of production as the elite groups whose numbers are less, but with more power. However, it is the slaves, the peasants and the proletariat, consists majority of numbers, who carry out production, but their produce is taken away by their exploiters and in return, they are given just

minimum for their survival. By virtue of the ownership of the means of production, the property owning class exploits the property less class. This is the main source and cause of class struggle. The interests of the contending classes are irreconcilable. No compromise or reconciliation is possible between the contending classes. Marx opposed the idea of the middle-class historians that class struggle has ended with the rise of the bourgeoisie. In his letter to Josef Weydemeyer in 1852, he declared that class struggle would not be a permanent feature of society, but were needed by the historical development of production. Class struggle would end with the destruction of capitalism, establishment of communism and a classless society. The inherent contradictions of contending classes of every epoch can be resolved only through the annihilation of the exploiting classes with the help of socialist revolution.

Marx and Engels had full faith in revolutionary potential of the proletariat and their ability to overthrow capitalism. But it was necessary for the proletariat to understand the actual reality behind “false consciousness” that the bourgeoisie had adopted as their ideology. For Marx, bourgeoisie ideology played a pivotal role in controlling the oppressed. They depicted the existing order as embedded in forces that were beyond human control. But Marx believed it to be instituted by certain sections of people for their own benefit. Ideas explained how the existing order benefitted everyone in society was not real and the depiction was to promote the interests of the dominant economic class and protect class privileges. Ideology, along with economic determinism and class struggle, provided strategic guide to the working class in its efforts to bring about final emancipation of mankind without any class division and exploitation in the society through social revolution. It would place all means of social production under social ownership, make work compulsory for everyone, and develop forces of production to their full potential that will pave the way for the establishment of Communism and will mark the end of class struggle.

2.4 Surplus value:

According to Engels, the theory of surplus value is Marx’s most important discovery that represents economic basis of Marxist critique of capitalism. Marx was influenced by David Ricardo (1772-1823), an English classical economist and introduced the theory of surplus value as an extension of his labour theory of value to explain the reasons behind class struggle in the society. It validates how the capitalist mode of production involves the exploitation of working class. Labour

is the chief determinant of value for Marx. To quote Marx, “*The value of each commodity is determined by the quantity of labour expended on and material used in it, by the working time necessary, under given social conditions for its production*”. In simple words, value is a quantity which is inherent in a thing or commodity which is entirely due to labour. There are four elements of production- land, labour, capital and organization among which labour is the sole creator. Other three elements can be reproduced only what is put to them, otherwise these elements are useless. But labour is the only variable element that produces value in society.

Marx observed that capitalist held a monopoly not only on the means of production- resources, factories and machinery, but also tries to gain profit from the manufactured product. Ordinary people must work to survive, but due to capitalists control over the means of production, the workers must sell their labour at whatever price the capitalist will pay. Hence, the workers are enslaved to their masters who pay minimum wages, regardless of their labour to produce value. Marx opined that the amount of labour embodied in a commodity should be calculated right from the beginning of production including- labour employed in producing raw material, in processing the raw material, in mobilizing the sources of energy used and in constructing the machinery and building etc. The actual value of a commodity is the inclusion of all these aspects.

It is necessary to distinguish between value and price of a commodity to understand the theory of surplus value. *Price* is the monetary expression of value may be described as *natural price*. Besides natural price of the commodity, there is the *market price* which fluctuates depending on the condition of demand and supply. There is an uneven relationship exists between natural price and market price most of the times where market price is usually higher than the other. If a wage is paid to the wage-labourers in proportion to the amount of value created by a labourer, then there is no exploitation. But this is not the case in capitalism where free market economy sustains. Labour is unique in the sense that it creates more value than is required for its maintenance. The difference between the value created by the worker and the value paid to the worker, as wages, constitute the surplus value and the profit of the capitalist. For example, if a worker has created a value of Rs. 30,000 in a month and has been paid Rs. 15,000 as wages, then the remaining Rs. 15,000 will be considered as surplus value that will go to the capitalists as profit. But this surplus will not be counted as a value of the labourers they paid through their works. Thus, the worker always creates more value than he is actually paid. This surplus

value created by the worker is the profit of the bourgeois, which has been defended by the classical economist, because it leads to capital progress, which is invested further in new industries and enterprises and leads to growth and prosperity. For the Marxists, it is the exploitation of the workers, which has to be abolished. With the growth of capitalism and the rise in competition, the wages of the workers continue to fall and reach the stage of subsistence level. Workers are given only 'subsistence wage', i.e. required wages to meet the requirements of mere survival of the worker and his family, with the utilization of their labour to the maximum capacity. It is the minimum possible wage for the survival and perpetuation of the labour force that cannot be reduced anymore. Thus, cut throat competition in capitalism leads to deterioration of the proletariat and it intensifies class struggle and eventually leads to revolution.

2.5 A Critical Appraisal:

Marxism has been subjected to severe criticism. The Marxian theory of economic determinism is also not free from it. It is not only the economic factor, but other factors also that are equally important in bringing about social change. It is a *two way* process. Economic forces are not strong to influence polity, society, culture, religion, values, norms etc. The Marxian concept that base determines the superstructure itself was changed in the writings of neo-Marxist like Antonio Gramsci.

The class division of society into two classes, the haves and the have-nots is far from the reality. Society is very complex and is divided into numerous groups. Moreover, there exists a huge middle class. Marxian thinkers predicted that with the advancement of capitalism, the middle class would disappear and merge with the proletariat class. But this has not happened so far and there is no possibility of it ever happening. Infact, a reverse situation can be seen in the present world scenario.

Marx's assertion that labour only creates value has severely been criticized. Other elements of production are equally important with the element of labour. In modern time, skill, knowledge, organizational capacities are more important factors for the creation of wealth than the employment of labour. Karl Popper criticised Marx's doctrine of surplus value to be an abstract one.

Despite these criticisms, Marxism as an approach will continue to be used by scholars for social analysis and the exploited-oppressed people will continue to promote Marxist philosophy for their emancipation. It will always provide an alternative philosophy to liberalism with an

effective check on the excesses of liberalism and will never become irrelevant.

Check Your Progress:

1. Examine the Marxian theory of Economic Determinism.
2. Do you think economic determinism is related to materialistic interpretation of history? Give reasons for your answer.
3. Explain the concept of Class-struggle.
4. What is the theory of Surplus Value?
5. Make a critical assessment of the tenets of Marxism.
6. Examine the relevance of Marxism in the present world.

2.6 Summing Up

2.7 References and Suggested Readings:

1. Baradat, L.P., (2012), Political Ideologies- Their Origins and Impact, Pearson Education.
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Unit 3 :

V.I. Lenin : As a Marxist: Main Ideas

Unit Structure :

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Objectives

3.3 Lenin as a supporter of Marxist ideas

3.4 Differences in Marx's and Lenin's ideas

4.5 Main Ideas of Lenin

4.6 Summing Up

4.7 References and Suggested Readings

3.1 Introduction

V. I. Lenin is a Russian Communist revolutionary. He was earlier named a Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov who later became popularized as Lenin. Though he was guided by revolutionary ideas, he himself was not a worker as assumed by Marx. Rather, he was a middle-class intelligentsia who was influenced by Marxian ideas in his youth. As a revolutionary Politician and political theorist, Lenin had experienced many ups and downs in his life. From the first two units of these block you have got an idea about Marxian political ideas. Lenin may be regarded as a true and faithful disciple of Karl Marx who accepted and followed almost all the ideas of Marx. He was a founder and leader of Bolshevik Party of Russia. He made an effort to adapt Marxism to the conditions of Russia. One of his famous work is Imperialism, the Highest State of Capitalism. While putting forward his political views, Lenin has expressed different ideas. This unit will make an attempt to discuss some of those ideas put forwarded by Lenin. Moreover, it will also try to analyse Lenin as a follower of Marxist ideas.

3.2 Objectives:

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Critically examine Lenin as a Marxist
- Find out the differences in Marx's and Lenin's ideas
- Discuss Lenin's ideas on Religion
- Examine Lenin's idea on Democracy
- Discuss Lenin's view on War

3.3 Lenin as a supporter of Marxist ideas

We have already learnt that Lenin was a follower of Marxist ideas. He supported the revolutionary aspect of Communism. However, he developed the revolutionary ideas of Marxism to adjust itself in the era of imperialism. Thus, Marxism continued through Lenin's ideas what is known as Leninism. It is said that Lenin further developed and enriched the three important components of Marxism, viz, philosophy, political economy and scientific communism. He did not believe in evolutionary ideas nor supported the view that transition from capitalism to communism could be brought by any evolutionary method.

Karl Marx believe that in capitalism there lies the seeds of destruction. However, Lenin was more concerned with Russia which was industrially backward. Since Basic ideas of Lenin's philosophy or political theory was taken from Marx, in the latter period this doctrine became popular as Marxism-Leninsm. He reiterated the point that Marxism is not a dogma but a guide to action.

Lenin Supported the Marxian philosophy of materialism. He is of the opinion that Marx did not stop at the materialism of the eighteenth century. Rather, he enriched it with the acquisition of German Classical Philosophy. Moreover, Lenin considered Marx's historical materialism as the biggest achievement of scientific thought. As a supporter of Marxian idea of historical materialism, Lenin believed that all the ideas, whether individual or social are the results of our reactions to material objects in our sense organs. Therefore, to analyse the social process correctly, first one has to understand the material forces which are mostly economic in nature. Lenin further added that, materialistic interpretation of history has removed many defects of earlier historical theories. One such defect pointed out by Lenin is that

earlier, much emphasis was given on human motives of the historical activities and not the surroundings which resulted in such motives or actions.

Stop To Consider:

Life Sketch of Lenin:

V. I. Lenin was born on April 10, 1872 in Simbirsk town situated on the banks of Volga. From the early days he was influenced by Marxism and revolutionary spirit. Born in an educated and cultured family, Lenin was gifted with intelligence. At that time the People of Russia were under tyrannical Tsarist Rule. There were capitalist oppression and wide-spread poverty which created dissatisfactions among masses. The execution of Lenin's elder brother Alexander who influenced Lenin to a great extent served a severe blow to him. He then decided to dedicate his life to the cause of revolution only. He agitated against Russian Government. He was the leader of the revolutionary Marxist Party of Russia. Later, Lenin led the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and under his leadership the working Class of Russia finally became successful in 1917 after Bolshevik Revolution which is also known as October Revolution. Thus, Lenin showed to the world how Marxism Leninism can be put into practice. Lenin became the first head of the Soviet State. He was also the founder of Comintern (Communist International). Thus he implemented Marxian philosophy successfully and established a strong socialist state in Russia. However, after some time he started suffering from strokes and finally he died in 1924.

Stop to Consider:

Major works of Lenin:

1. Development of Capitalism In Russia published in 1899
2. Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism published in 1917
3. "Left Wing" Communism : An infantile Disorder published in 1920
4. The Rights of Nations to Self- Determination written in 1914
5. The State and Revolution published in 1917
6. The Three Sources and the three component parts of Marxism published in 1913
7. Materialism and Empirio-criticism published in 1909

8. One Step Forward- Two Steps Back published in 1904
9. Two Tactics of Social Democracy in Democratic Revolution written in 1905
10. What is to be Done? Published in 1902

Like Marx, Lenin also believed that all the changes in the human society are brought about by Material forces. But this is possible only when human beings become conscious about the necessity of the changes. Hence, Lenin has urged the people to be sure of the favourable situation for a change in the society. As mentioned earlier, Lenin went ahead while advocating revolutionary methods for bringing change in the society by saying that a successful proletarian revolution would not merely depend onj the evolution, but it would be conducted and fought according to a calculated programme of action as indicated by Marx.

As a follower of Marxism, Lenin also supported Marx's view on Theory of Class Struggle. In the previous units on Marx, we have already studied that In Communist Manifesto Marx has stated that, "history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle." On that Lenin further stated that, "in any given society, the strivings of some of its members conflict with the strivings of others, that social life is full of contradictions, that history discloses a struggle within nations and societies as well as between nations and societies, and in addition, an alternation of periods of revolution and reaction, peace and war, stagnation and rapid progress or decline – are facts that are generally known."

Moreover Lenin fully supported Marxian idea of inevitability of transformation of capitalist society into socialist society. In the words of Lenin, the socialization of labour, which is advancing ever more rapidly in thousands of forms, and which has manifested itself very strikingly during the half –century that has elapsed since the death of Marx in the growth of large scale production, capitalist cartels, syndicates and trusts, as well as in the gigantic increase in the dimensions and power of financial capital, forms the chief material foundation for the inevitable coming of socialism." Thus, Marxian notion of withering away of the state in the process was fully supported by Lenin.

While discussing Lenin as a supporter of Marxist ideas, one must remember that both Marx and Lenin witnessed different environments. Lenin tried to adapt Marxism to the state of affairs in Russia.

Moreover, as a realist he wanted to make Marxism more practicable and therefore advocated reformations in Marxism to adapt to the new development in Russia.

Now let us examine how Lenin deviates from the Marxian ideas.

4.5 Main Ideas of Lenin

Lenin's Political Ideas focused on the distinctive problems faced by Russian Marxists. He also dealt with post revolutionary situation.

Lenin on Democracy:

According to Lenin democracy expresses the rule of a definite class. While saying so he believes that –

- i). Democracy is a political means of struggle and it cannot resolve this struggle.
- ii). Democracy for one class means dictatorship for another
- iii). Democracy cannot make everyone 'free'.

Lenin is of the view that Liberals support pure democracy to dupe the working classes. He did not believe in the modern concept of representative democracy and supported dictatorship of the proletariat. Democracy is based on the principle of gradual and peaceful transformations. On the otherhand, Lenin did not believe in peaceful means for bringing about the transition from capitalist to communism. He thus supported the violent means for achieving the goal of establishing socialist state. Lenin describes dictatorship of proletariat as :

“the organization of the vanguard of the oppressed as the ruling class for the purpose of crushing oppressors...An immense expansion of democracy, which, for the first time, becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the rich...and suppression by force i.e, exclusion from democracy, for the exploiters and oppressors of the people---this is the change which democracy undergoes during the transition from capitalism to communism. (Lenin, State and Revolution, 1917)

In Lenin's work we can find two distinct conceptions of democracy. They are-----

- i). A revolutionary conception of democracy as a process through which the oppressed and exploited are more fully enabled to clarify their own aspirations, understand the obstacles standing in the way of these aspirations, and struggles for them.
- ii). A bureaucratic conception of democracy which acts as a means towards the ends determined by a leadership which usually limits or curtails the aspirations of the masses for broader democratic unity.

We must remember here that major contribution of Lenin towards the concept of democracy has been his revolutionary conception of democracy. While talking about democracy, his ideas revolves around ideas like – inner party democracy, democratic revolution etc.

Lenin on Religion :

According to Marx, religion is “the soul of soulless conditions” or the “opium of the people”. Lenin agreed with Marx that religion opium of the people. According to Lenin, religion was an historical phenomenon, tied to the oppressive structures of human history such as feudalism and capitalism. Marx and Engels as well as Lenin believed that the state would wither away when socialism was established. Likewise, religion would wither away when it would not be required. In the words of Lenin, “the yoke of religion that weighs upon mankind is merely a product and reflection of the economic yoke within society.”

On the basis of Marx and Engels views Lenin also opined that religion has its roots in capitalist oppression. Therefore, for rooting out religion from the society, oppression in any form must be eliminated first. In his work, Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion, Lenin expressed the view that, “ No educational book can eradicate religion from the minds of masses who are crushed by capitalist hard labour, and who are at the mercy of the blind destructive forces of capitalism, until those masses themselves learn to fight this root of religion, fight the rule of capital in all its forms, in a united, organized, planned and conscious way.”

Further, Like Marx and Engels, Lenin too believed that there should be complete separation of Church from State. State should refrain from making any laws on religious beliefs. It should never support any particular religion. Hence, Religion should be banned in a socialist

state. At the same time Lenin did not oppose recruiting workers to his Party on the basis of their religious faith unlike many supporters of socialism. He thought that there should not be any prejudice while including such people to the Revolutionary Party. In his words, “ we must not only admit workers who preserve their belief in God into the Social Democratic Party, but must deliberately set out to recruit them.” He further stated that, “ we are absolutely opposed to giving the slightest offense to their religious convictions, but we recruit them in order to educate them in the spirit of our programme, and not in order to permit an active struggle against it.”

Thus, for Lenin religion is a weapon of oppression of the masses by the exploiters. Therefore the party of the Proletariat should demand that the government should declare religion as a private matter.

Lenin on War: For Lenin, war is very important for bringing about Proletariat revolution.

4.6 Summing Up

After reading this unit, you all are now in a position to discuss Lenin as a follower of Marxism. Reading of this unit has also helped you in learning Lenin’s view on different issues like Democracy, Religion etc. Lenin has carried forward Marxian legacy and became successful in bringing it into practice in a less industrialized country like Russia. He has also contributed significantly towards Marxian philosophy by his writings. He had put forwarded his views on imperialism, state Revolution etc which are considered important doctrine in the field of political philosophy. In the next unit of this Block we shall deal with these concepts of Lenin in detail.

4.7 Reference and Suggested Readings:

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Unit 4

V.I. LENIN: VIEWS ON IMPERIALISM, STATE AND REVOLUTION

Unit Structure :

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Lenin on Imperialism

4.3 State and Revolution

4.4 Critical Appraisal

4.5: Summing Up

4.6 Reference and Suggested Readings

4.1 Introduction

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870-1924), popularly known as Lenin was an eminent Russian Marxist. He was a revolutionary who led the Bolshevik Party in the Russian Revolution (1917) and established the world's first socialist state that is the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR). Lenin is regarded as one of exponents in the development of Marxism in early twentieth century who contributed to Marxian political thought with his views on Role of the Party, Role of Ideology, State, Revolution, Views on Imperialism etc. Lenin was a faithful disciple of Marx who wanted to rescue the true revolutionary Marxism from its distortion by the opportunists and revisionists. He adapted Marxism with great skill according to the practical needs of the time and made Marxism applicable even in the less developed country in terms of industrialization. Lenin revised Marxism in the light of the latest developments of his time. Among his contributions, Lenin's view on Imperialism is a significant one which differs from Marxian concept and it establishes the uniqueness of his ideas.

4.2 Lenin on Imperialism:

Imperialism is the state policy, practice, or promotion of extending power and dominion, especially by direct territorial acquisition or by gaining political and economic control of other territories and

peoples. Through imperialism, an advanced nation uses its military, political or economic power to expand its rule and extend its control over backward, distant political communities for economic advantage, military security and international prestige as well as establishing its cultural domination over other nations. In *Imperialism: A Study* (1902), J.A. Hobson, an English economist and social scientist defined imperialism as a method of exploitation and a search for 'captive market'.

In his notable work *Imperialism- the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), Lenin argued that imperialism was an economic necessity of the capitalist economy. With the growing capital accumulation of a capitalist country, it fails to find its profitable use within its own territory that forced to look abroad for lucrative ventures. Search for new spheres of investment, new markets, and new sources of raw materials are the three major driving forces according to Lenin that leads to imperialist expansion.

Lenin claimed that with the exploitation of the colonies, advanced industrial countries saved the middle classes and skilled workers from increasing miseries of capitalism as predicted by Marx. The people of colonial territories suffered exploitation and became genuine proletariat, whereas people of ruling power became capitalist. Marx and Engels had seen the advent of imperialism in industrially backward countries paved the way for transition from feudalism to capitalism. Lenin condemned this trend of imperialism as it created exploitation of the poor nations by the rich nations. The nature of exploitation as Lenin depicted in his theory of imperialism became different, but the division of society into the exploiting and exploited class in a situation of class conflict remained same. 'The division of nations into oppressor and oppressed' became visible at the age of imperialism.

Since Marx's death, a new kind of capitalism developed. With the development of capitalism; firms became larger, units of industrial production grow bigger that resulted to monopoly capitalism with increasing confidences and associations. The financial needs were also growing along with their size to sustain these huge enterprises and corporations became increasingly dependent on banks for financing. Thus, banks became the master of capital which is used by capitalists and thus monopoly capitalism becomes *finance capitalism* as termed by Lenin. Finance capitalism created a new, much more exploitative stage than the previous condition of *industrial capitalism*. Under these new conditions, the owners of the means of production were bankers and financiers, not industrialists. There are three fold consequences of

monopoly finance capitalism: first, it results in the exploitation of colonial people; second, it produces war between nations due to competition of markets; and third, it brings about end of capitalism and emergence of new order with class war at its end. In the words of Lenin, *“Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which the domination of monopoly and finance capital has taken shape; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world by international trusts has begun; and in which the portion of all the territory of the earth by the great capitalist countries has been completed.”* It shows that with expansion of imperialism, capitalism entered all over the world. But according to Lenin, this imperialism holds number of contradictions which shall ultimately lead to its destruction and bring about socialism. Capitalist exploitation of foreign lands, which Lenin called *imperialist capitalism*, a new form of colonialism; started late in the earnest of 1880s, eventually delayed the proletarian revolution. The proletarian revolution was submerged by the issue of independence from colonialism as the capitalist began to exploit the labour of the colonial people making their domestic workers to be their partners of exploitation and profit making. With no more colonies to subdue, the profit-hungry imperialist nations started conflict with each other for powers. Thus, imperialism, Lenin declared in 1916, is the final stage of capitalism that will ultimately lead to a conflict in which the capitalists will destroy each other.

For that, Lenin urged all the oppressed nations of the world to be united against the oppressor nations, and play the role of revolutionary proletariat against the oppressive, capitalist nations to overthrow this exploitation. This message of Lenin could not go beyond Russian Revolution (1917) at that time and the oppressed nations became gradually aware of their nature of exploitation by their imperial masters when they launch their struggle for independence individually against colonialism. As a result, it was only after the Second World War (1939-45) that the victims of imperialism began winning their independence one by one. Lenin’s attitude toward imperialism became a source of inspiration for all the progressive thinkers and activists of the world who sought to identify and eliminate all aspects as well as indirect forms of imperialism.

4.3 State and Revolution:

In the book *The State and Revolution* (1917), Lenin described the role of the state in society, the necessity of proletarian revolution, and the theoretic inadequacies of social democracy in achieving revolution to

establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. Like Marx, Lenin also considered state to be a capitalist organization used by the capitalists to exploit the workers and peasants where he was inclusive about the peasants unlike Marx.

For Lenin, *"the State is a special organisation of force: it is an organisation of violence for the suppression of some class."* As the capitalists were able to acquire vast majority in the legislatures it could not be expected of them that they would give justice to common people. Lenin condemned the recent increase of bureaucratic and military influences of his time even in parliamentary democracy and said, *"to decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament – this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary-constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics"*.

The State and Revolution describes the inherent nature of the State as a tool for class oppression. It is a creation born of a social class's desire to control the other social classes of its society when political and economic disputes cannot be resolved in an amicable way. Whether a dictatorship or a democracy, the State remains the social-control means of the ruling class. Capitalists exploit the state to control the means of production and distribution and create monopoly conditions so that they may be able to exploit the workers. Even in a democratic capitalist republic, the ruling class never surrender political power and tries to maintain it via the "behind-the-scenes" control of universal suffrage — an excellent trick that maintains the idealistic concepts of "freedom and democracy". Lenin, therefore, advised for the abolition of state where communist revolution is the sole way for such remedy. He also urged for the replacement of the existing judicial institutions as these were created by the capitalists to promote their interests.

Unlike the Anarchists proposal of immediate abolition of state, Lenin proposed for a proper way where the proletariat can be prepared to crush the bourgeoisie resistance through the mechanism of the state. For him, immediate abolition of state may lead to appearance of a new state and hence the fulfilment of the goals of socialist revolution would not be possible. Therefore, Lenin took the model of Paris Commune, a revolutionary government that seized power in Paris in 1871, and envisaged that the proletariat would establish a communal state through the dictatorship of the proletariat, then gradually suppress the rebel bourgeoisie, in achieving the withering away of the state as its institutions begin to "lose their political character".

Lenin declared that it is the task of revolution to crash the state and to bring about communism. Revolution would be started initially from the countries which did not possess healthy democratic traditions. He believed that socialism could not be brought about through parliamentary methods and the workers had to adopt revolutionary methods to capture power and bring about necessary transformation of the existing economic and social institutions. According to Lenin, revolution was impossible without a national crisis affecting both the exploited and the exploiters class. For this purpose, the majority of workers who are conscious and politically active should be convinced of the need of revolution and be prepared to sacrifice their life. The government should face a crisis with their growing consciousness and that active role of the workers would draw the backward masses to become their part in overthrowing the existing system. Although for a period under communism, *"there remains for a time not only bourgeois right but even the bourgeois State without the bourgeoisie"*. Lenin believed that after a successful proletarian revolution the state had not only begun to wither, but was in an advanced condition of decay.

The majority of workers, who are conscious and politically active, constitute Lenin's party system. They are the best, most conscious, most devoted and far-sighted workers who act as the vanguard of the proletariat class. Lenin emphasized the role of the party not only before the revolution to arouse revolutionary spirit of the proletariat, but also after the revolution to annihilate the capitalist state and establish dictatorship of the proletariat. This party organization which is vital for Lenin to overthrow the existing capitalist system was termed as *Communist Party*. He insisted that the party should consist of secretly organized professional revolutionaries only having the knowledge of tactics of revolution. In Lenin's view, a great preponderance of party members was necessary who could play a decisive role at decisive time and moment taking the advantages of enemy while they were scattered and weak. Once revolution had been started, Lenin favoured for collective control over the means of production and distribution with quick action that were under private means of production so that wasteful energies in completion could be utilised for constructive purposes.

Thus, revolution leads to the abolition of existing structure of the state and is replaced by a transitory stage of dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin had converted the dictatorship of the proletariat to dictatorship over the proletariat by the Communist Party that ultimately paved the way towards establishment of a communist society.

4.4 Critical Appraisal:

Lenin's theory of imperialism have been criticised as philosophically vague and historically wrong. His assumption of monopoly finance capitalism is not true as we can see in case of Great Britain as the largest empire. Profit motive and financial interest is not the only factor to restore war as other factors like- lust for power, influence of decisions etc. equally play important role. Lenin's view that the possession of empire alone leads to improvement of standards or the workers is also not acceptable. With the deficiencies and contradictions in Lenin's theory of imperialism, C.L. Wayper said, "*Lenin's imperialism, in fact, in so far as it is a defence of Marxism, is both dishonest and untrue; in so far as it is true, it is not a defence but an effective renunciation of the teachings of his master.*"

Lenin's theory of state and revolution is also not free from criticism. State cannot be always exploitative in nature as Marxists believes. Sometimes state performs welfare activities too as explained by the positive liberalists. Lenin assigned a pre-eminent position to the party to lead the revolution and wanted the people to render full obedience to it which is not logical. Though he mentioned the party members would be professional revolutionaries, he was least bothered whether the professional revolutionaries were proletarian origin or not. In this condition, the expectation of Lenin for the devotion of them for the proletariat and the obedience of the proletariat towards the revolutionaries remained questionable. Apart from this, dictatorship of the party as favoured by Lenin again may lead to another kind of oppression in the society instead of abolition of existing state mechanism and establishment of communism.

Despite the criticism Lenin faced, his theories of imperialism and state and revolution cannot be undermined. He brought Marxism up-to-date with the use of these theories and adapted with great skill according to the necessity of changing time in non-industrialised economies and to then prevailing peasant population. The relevance of the theory of imperialism cannot be denied in understanding contemporary structure of society based on free market economy; and the theory of state and revolution had also a far-reaching impact in other parts of the world that became visible through the working of Mao-Tse-Tung (1893-1977) in the situation of China.

Check Your Progress

1. Critically analyse Lenin's view on Imperialism.
2. Make a comparative study between Marx and Lenin.

3. Explain Lenin's interpretation of Marxist theory.
4. Discuss Lenin's view on state and revolution.
5. Evaluate Lenin as a Marxist.

4.6 Reference and Suggested Readings

1. Baradat, L.P., (2012), Political Ideologies- Their Origins and Impact, Pearson Education.
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UNIT: 5

Antonio Gramsci- Hegemony

Unit Structure :

- 1.1. Introduction
- 1.2. Objectives
- 1.3. Meaning of Hegemony
- 1.4. Marxism and Hegemony
- 1.5. Gramsci's concept of Hegemony
 - 1.5.1 Super structure
 - 1.5.1.1 Political Society or, State
 - 1.5.1.2 Civil Society
- 1.6. Cultural hegemony
 - 1.6.1 Cultural Hegemony According to Antonio Gramsci
 - 1.6.2 The Cultural Power of Ideology
 - 1.6.3 The Political Power of Common Sense
- 1.7 Conclusion
- 1.8 References and Suggested Readings

1.1 Introduction

Antonio Gramsci, an Italian communist leader and Marxist philosopher, is considered to be the most original political writer among the post Lenin generation of communists.. He was the founder of the Communist Party of Italy. His writings during his imprisonment by the fascist regime of Italy, known as Prison Notebooks are considered to be very important for all those who seek a more democratic, less dogmatic and open version of socialism. He saved Marxism from the criticism of crude economic determinism. He is considered as the Godfather of Cultural Marxism

Antonio Gramsci can be considered as one of the most remarkable Marxist theorists in the previous century. The man's role in developing Western Marxism is undeniable. Specifically, Gramsci's main contribution to Marxism remains his concept of cultural Hegemony. The latter explains how the ruling class manages to dominate and rule over other classes. In this respect, unlike his Marxist predecessors, Gramsci insists on the role of ideology by which the dominant class maintains its rule and domination in society. For Gramsci, instead of imposing its rule by means of force and coercion, the ruling class seeks to establish the consent of other classes to their rule. The greatest Marxist theorist after Karl Marx, whose life is dedicated for the freedom of the Italian people, is Antonio Gramsci. At the same time, he is a philosopher, a journalist, a politician and the first Italian Marxist. Amongst the leftist western thinkers, he's accredited to be a remarkable Marxist thinker

1.2 Objectives

This unit is planned and designed with a view to understand and have knowledge about Hegemony with special reference to Gramsci's concept of hegemony. By the end of this unit one shall be able to:

- Discuss about the concept of Hegemony.
- Analyze Gramsci's notion of Hegemony.
- Describe about Cultural hegemony.

1.3 Meaning of Hegemony:

The word Hegemony was originated from the Greek word '*hegemonía*' which means Leadership and Rule. In ancient Greece the word hegemony was used to denote the political and military supremacy of one city-state over another. Hegemony, thus, is used in two contexts: firstly to mean supremacy and secondly to mean leadership with which unanimous support is incorporated. Hegemony is the power or dominance that one social group holds over others. This can refer to the "asymmetrical interdependence" of political-economic-cultural relations between and among nation-states (Straubhaar, 1991) or differences between and among social classes within a nation. Hegemony is "dominance and subordination in the field of relations structured by power" (Hall, 1985). But hegemony is more than social power itself; it is a method for gaining and maintaining power.

Hegemony is actually a cultural process by which one class dominates the other. Thus the dominators keep on practicing power and the ruled obey them. Simply it means to put something into the ear of the commoners and make them believe in it. According to Gramsci, hegemony is one kind of social authority; dominating people without using power or threatening the use of it. It is acquired through social institutions and people accept that somehow by being forced or willingly. Classical Marxist theory, of course, stresses economic position as the strongest predictor of social differences. Today, more than a century after Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote their treatises about capitalist exploitation of the working class, economic disparities still underlie and help reproduce social inequalities in industrialized societies.... Technological developments in the twentieth century, however, have made the manner of social domination much more complex than before. Social class differences in today's world are not determined solely or directly by economic factors. Ideological influence is crucial now in the exercise of social power.

The Italian intellectual Antonio Gramsci-to whom the term hegemony is attributed- broadened materialist Marxist theory into the realm of ideology. Persecuted by his country's then fascist government (and writing from prison), Gramsci emphasized society's "super structure," its ideology-producing institutions, in struggles over meaning and power (1971; 1973; 1978; see also Boggs, 1976; Sasson, 1980; and Simon, 1982). A shift in critical theory thus was made away from a preoccupation with capitalist society's "base" (its economic foundation) and towards its dominant dispensaries of ideas. Attention was given to the structuring of authority and dependence in symbolic environments that correspond to, but are not the same as, economically determined class-based structures and processes of industrial production. Such a theoretical turn seems a natural and necessary development in an era when communications technology is such a pervasive and potent ideological medium. According to Gramsci's theory of ideological hegemony, mass media are tools that ruling elites use to "perpetuate their power, wealth, and status [by popularizing] their own philosophy, culture and morality" (Boggs, 1976: 39). The mass media uniquely "introduce elements into individual consciousness that would not otherwise appear there, but will not be rejected by consciousness because they are so commonly shared in the cultural community" (Nordenstreng, 1977: 276). Owners and managers of media industries can produce and reproduce the content, inflections, and tones of ideas favorable to them far more easily than other social groups because they manage key socializing institutions,

thereby guaranteeing that their points of view are constantly and attractively cast into the public arena.

Hegemony implies a willing agreement by people to be governed by principles, rules, and laws they believe operate in their best interests, even though in actual practice they may not. Social consent can be a more effective means of control than coercion or force. Again, Raymond Williams: "The idea of hegemony, in its wide sense, is ... especially important in societies [where] electoral politics and public opinion are significant factors, and in which social practice is seen to depend on consent to certain dominant ideas which in fact express the needs of a dominant class" (1976: 145). Thus, in the words of Colombian communication theorist Jesus Martin-Barbero, "one class exercises hegemony to the extent that the dominating class has interests which the subaltern classes recognize as being in some degree their interests too".

1.4 Marxism and Hegemony

To foster a better understanding of the Gramscian concept of hegemony, it is useful to highlight its link to earlier Marxist thought. Whereas the Marxists focus on the coercive practices of the ruling class and its tendency to exploit the proletariat by means of force, Gramsci emphasizes the role of ideology. In his opinion, before the ruling class resorts to direct force and coercion, it seeks to make its rule acceptable by all classes. This is what Gramsci calls "hegemony".

It is to be noted that Marx divides society into two major components: a base and a superstructure. The first is represented by the economic structure and the second by socializing mechanisms such as language, religion, education, law, ideology, mass media and the army. It needs to be emphasized here that Marx believes that the economic base of society is what determines its social, political and cultural environment.

According to Marx, since the ruling class owns and controls the means of production, it must equally control the means of intellectual and cultural production. Consequently, the ideas of the ruling class must be the most prevailing ideas in society. Gramsci rejects the Marxist claim that the power of the ruling class is limited to the economic base. For him, a social class becomes hegemonic not only by controlling the means of production and coercing other classes but rather by establishing their consent. In fact, consent is so important to Gramsci's theory of hegemony

Stop To Consider

Critical Theory:

Critical theory is a school of thought which challenges dominant ways of exploring and explaining organizational phenomenon. It has its origins in the so-called 'Frankfurt School' and includes the work of scholars such as Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Jürgen Habermas. The core of critical theory involves exposing existing modes of domination and oppression and offering alternative possibilities which emancipate those once excluded and silenced.

1.5 Gramsci's concept of Hegemony:

Hegemony signifies the control of the intellectual life of society by purely cultural means. According to Gramsci, the supremacy of a social class manifests itself in two different ways: Domination or coercion and Intellectual and moral leadership. The latter type of supremacy is Hegemony. Thus, hegemony is a supremacy acquired by consent rather than force. Whereas 'domination' is realized through the coercive machinery of the state; hegemony is mainly exercised through civil society.

Gramsci argues that a social class emerges as hegemonic not only by coercing others but rather by establishing consent among subordinate classes. In order to understand Gramsci and the concept of hegemony, one has to look briefly at the work of Karl Marx. Marxism viewed everything in life as determined by capital. (Williams,R. 1977). The flow of money affects our relations with other people and the world surrounding us. Marx stated that everything around us, our activities and way of life is determined by economic content. The class struggle was an important part of Marxism. Marx's work is highly influenced by economic reasoning. He divides this economic reasoning into two levels, being the base and superstructure. The base is composed by the material production, money, objects, the relations of production and the stage of development of productive forces. (Williams, R. 1977) The superstructure is where we find the political and ideological institutions, our social relations, set of ideas; our cultures, hopes, dreams and spirit. (Williams, R. 1977) Both the base and superstructure are shaped by capital. While one could say that Marx

was primarily concerned with the base and economic issues, Gramsci's work seeks to focus on the superstructure and ideologies.

For Gramsci, the class struggle must always involve ideas and ideologies. (Ransome, P. 1992) Gramsci took the superstructure a step further when he divided it into institutions that were coercive and those that were not. The coercive ones, were basically the public institutions such as the government, police, armed forces and the legal system which he regarded as the state or political society and the non-coercive ones were the others such as the churches, the schools, trade unions, political parties, cultural associations, clubs and family, which he regarded as civil society. (Boggs, C. 1976) So for Gramsci, society was made up of the relations of production as well as the state or political society and civil society.

Here, Gramsci introduced a new concept which he called hegemony. Hegemony is a set of ideas by means of which dominant groups strive to secure the consent of subordinate groups to their leadership. (Ransome, P. 1992) It occurs when dominant classes in society maintain their dominance persuading the other classes of society to accept their moral, political and cultural values. This means that the majority in a population give consent to policies and ideologies implemented by those in power. Gramsci's "hegemony" refers to a process of moral and intellectual leadership through which dominated or subordinate classes of post- 1870 industrial Western European nations consent to their own domination by ruling classes, as opposed to being simply forced or coerced into accepting inferior positions.

According to Gramsci, working class could only conquer by first imparting its world view and system of values to the other classes. As Croce had stated, people would leave religion only when the spiritual needs which used to be satisfied by religion, can be fulfilled by something else. Marxism should fulfill this need. For Gramsci, the dominant classes maintain their rule through the use of cultural institutions to establish the consent of the subaltern classes i.e instead of using force and coercion, the ruling class develops a hegemonic culture through the use of ideology to manipulate other classes into accepting their status as subaltern. The latter explains how the ruling class manages to dominate and rule over other classes. In this respect, unlike his Marxist predecessors, Gramsci insists on the role of ideology by which the dominant class maintains its rule and domination in society. For Gramsci, instead of imposing its rule by means of force and coercion, the ruling class seeks to establish the consent of other classes to their rule.

Gramsci did not agree with the notion put forward by Marx that the ruling class stayed in power solely because they had economic power. He thus introduced his own concept using ideology. Ideology is the shared ideas or beliefs which serve to justify the interests of dominant groups. (Boggs, C. 1976) Gramsci felt that ideological power kept the ruling class in power because it allowed them to brainwash and manipulate the rest of society. Gramsci insists that ideology has a material nature in the social lives of individuals, as ideologies are embedded in communal modes of living and acting. (R. Simon, 1992) This means that ideologies are embodied in the social practices of individuals and in the institutions and organizations within which these social practices take place. Ideology provides people with the rules of practical conduct and moral behavior. Those who monopolize ideological power have authority over others.

From Gramsci's view, the bourgeoisie gained and maintained power due to economic domination and intellectual and moral leadership. One must not assume that this consent is always willing. Those in power may combine physical force or coercion with intellectual, moral and cultural persuasion. (Ransome, P. 1992) The dominant ideology is thus accepted, practiced and spread. According to Gramsci, hegemony never disappears but is constantly changed. He describes two forms of social control. The first type is coercive control which is achieved through the use of direct force or threat of force. (Simon, R. 1992) The second type is consensual control which arises when individuals voluntarily adopt the worldview of the dominant group. (Simon, R. 1992)

1.5.1. Super structure:

In explaining the context of Hegemony, Gramsci divided the social super structure into two sections. For example-

1. Political Society or, State
2. Civil Society

1.5.1.1. Political Society or, State

According to him, state is the defence of a fixed territory and the collective form of bureaucracy where bureaucrats, law, state fund, social security, army and educational institutions exist in a body. He also said that state is a machine of repression and persecution which constitutionally controls those groups of people who do not agree either actively or inactively (Yet, it is formed for the whole society).

Whenever spontaneous support decreases and the fear of a crisis situation arises, a state as a machine of punishment and persecution is formed.

1.5.1.2. Civil Society

The main value of Gramsci's concept of civil society is intertwined with his theory of hegemony. Gramsci stated that in the complex web of relations, the ruling class manifests itself in two ways: domination (political leadership) and moral and intellectual leadership. Thus his conception of integral state embodies a synthesis of political society and civil society or that of coercion and consent. Gramsci says that within civil society, the dominant group exercises hegemony which is intellectual domination over the subordinate group or consensual control, whereas in political society, domination is exercised through state or juridical government or coercive control (Gramsci, A. 1971). In this sense, the state is not only the apparatus of government (coercion), but also the private apparatus of civil society (consent). So, both the concept of political and civil society becomes the aspects of the theory of the integral state (Texier, 1979: 69). Thus, for Gramsci, civil society is best described not as the sphere of freedom but of hegemony. Hegemony, to be sure, depends on consent (as opposed to coercion), but consent is not the spontaneous outcome of "free choice"; consent is manufactured, albeit through extremely complex mediums, diverse institutions, and constantly changing processes. Gramsci hence arrives at the concept of hegemony through the detailed study of civil society, and, moreover, his descriptions of the complex interactions among individuals and institutions in civil society constitute a concrete, material exposition of the apparatuses and operations of hegemony.

Gramsci stated that the church, the unions, the broader civil society's unions with their multiple goals reproduce the ideological dominance of the bourgeois class and extract the consent of the workers to the capitalist manner of production. Thus it seems that in the game of ideological hegemony, the "intellectual and moral hegemony" (Georgiadou, 1996, p. 20) of the bourgeois class is better expressed via the consent that is extracted by the institutions of civil society.

According to him, Civil Societies are private institutions. These are other organizations in society those are neither related with economy or with any state department. For instance- religious institutions, medium of communication, films etc. He defined civil society as the

international citizen. According to him, it is the sphere of Hegemonic leadership.

1.6 Cultural hegemony:

Cultural hegemony refers to domination or rule maintained through ideological or cultural means. It is usually achieved through social institutions, which allow those in power to strongly influence the values, norms, ideas, expectations, worldview, and behavior of the rest of society. In Marxist philosophy, cultural hegemony is the dominance of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class who manipulate the culture of that society the beliefs and explanations, perceptions, values, and mores so that the worldview of the ruling class becomes the accepted cultural norm. As the universal dominant ideology, the ruling class worldview misrepresents the social, political, and economic status quo as natural, inevitable, and perpetual social conditions that benefit every social class, rather than as artificial social constructs that benefit only the ruling class.

Cultural hegemony functions by framing the worldview of the ruling class, and the social and economic structures that embody it, as just, legitimate, and designed for the benefit of all, even though these structures may only benefit the ruling class. This kind of power is distinct from rule by force, as in a military dictatorship, because it allows the ruling class to exercise authority using the "peaceful" means of ideology and culture.

1.6.1. Cultural Hegemony According to Antonio Gramsci:

The Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci developed the concept of cultural hegemony out of Karl Marx's theory that the dominant ideology of society reflects the beliefs and interests of the ruling class. Gramsci argued that consent to the rule of the dominant group is achieved by the spread of ideologies beliefs, assumptions, and values through social institutions such as schools, churches, courts, and the media, among others. These institutions do the work of socializing people into the norms, values, and beliefs of the dominant social group. As such, the group that controls these institutions controls the rest of society. Cultural hegemony is most strongly manifested when those ruled by the dominant group come to believe that the economic and social conditions of their society are natural and inevitable, rather

than created by people with vested interest in particular social, economic, and political orders.

Gramsci developed the concept of cultural hegemony in an effort to explain why the worker-led revolution that Marx predicted in the previous century had not come to pass. Central to Marx's theory of capitalism was the belief that the destruction of this economic system was built into the system itself since capitalism is premised on the exploitation of the working class by the ruling class. Marx reasoned that workers could only take so much economic exploitation before they would rise up and overthrow the ruling class. However, this revolution did not happen on a mass scale.

In 1967, the German student movement leader Rudi Dutschke applied Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony with the phrase *The Long march through the Institutions* (*Marsch durch die Institutionen*) to identify the political war of position, a European Communist allusion to the Long March (1934–35) of the People's Liberation Army, by means of which the working-class intellectuals would produce the popular culture to replace the dominant ideology imposed by the cultural hegemony of the bourgeoisie.

1.6.2 The Cultural Power of Ideology:

Gramsci realized that there was more to the dominance of capitalism than the class structure and its exploitation of workers. Marx had recognized the important role that ideology played in reproducing the economic system and the social structure that supported it, but Gramsci believed that Marx had not given enough credit to the power of ideology. In his essay "The Intellectuals," written between 1929 and 1935, Gramsci described the power of ideology to reproduce the social structure through institutions such as religion and education. He argued that society's intellectuals, often viewed as detached observers of social life, are actually embedded in a privileged social class and enjoy great prestige. As such, they function as the "deputies" of the ruling class, teaching and encouraging people to follow the norms and rules established by the ruling class. Gramsci elaborated on the role the education system plays in the process of achieving rule by consent, or cultural hegemony, in his essay "On Education."

1.6.3 The Political Power of Common Sense:

In "The Study of Philosophy," Gramsci discussed the role of "common sense" dominant ideas about society and about our place in it in

producing cultural hegemony. For example, the idea of “pulling oneself up by the bootstraps,” the idea that one can succeed economically if one just tries hard enough, is a form of "common sense" that has flourished under capitalism, and that serves to justify the system. In other words, if one believes that all it takes to succeed is hard work and dedication, then it follows that the system of capitalism and the social structure that is organized around it is just and valid. It also follows that those who have succeeded economically have earned their wealth in a just and fair manner and that those who struggle economically, in turn, deserve their impoverished state. This form of "common sense" fosters the belief that success and social mobility are strictly the responsibility of the individual, and in doing so obscures the real class, racial, and gender inequalities that are built into the capitalist system.

In sum, cultural hegemony is a result of socialization, our experiences with social institutions, and our exposure to cultural narratives and imagery, all of which reflect the beliefs and values of the ruling class.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss about the differences in Marxian and Gramsci’s concept of Hegemony.

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1.7 Conclusion

Antonio Gramsci can be considered as one of the most remarkable Marxist theorists in the previous century. The man’s role in developing Western Marxism is undeniable. Specifically, Gramsci’s main contribution to Marxism remains his concept of cultural hegemony.

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UNIT 6

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR – PATRIARCHY

Unit Structure :

4.1. Introduction

4.2. Objectives

4.3. Notable Works of Simone de Beauvoir

4.3.1. The Second Sex

4.3.2. Pyrrhus et Cineas

4.3.3. The Ethics of Ambiguity

4.4. Simone de Beauvoir on Patriarchy

4.5. Simone de Beauvoir on Feminism

4.6. Simone de Beauvoir on Freedom

4.7. Simone de Beauvoir on marriage

4.7.1. Simone de Beauvoir on Intercourse and Pregnancy

4.7.2. Simone de Beauvoir on Abortion and Children

4.8. Summing Up

4.9. References and Suggested Readings

4.1. Introduction

Simone Lucie Ernestine Marie Bertrand de Beauvoir was a French writer. She was an intellectual, existentialist philosopher, political activist, feminist and social theorist. She wrote many novels based on feminism. ‘She Came to Stay’ and ‘The Mandarins’ were her famous works. She had won the Prix Goncourt Award in the year 1954 for her novel ‘The Mandarins’ and Jerusalem Prize in the year 1975. Again in the year 1978, she won the Austrian State Prize for European Literature. She was famous for her open relationship with the French philosopher Jean Paul Sartre. Her father was her source of encouragement who felt proud in the fact that Simone de Beauvoir thought like a man.

Here in this unit, you are going to be introduced with different ideas of Simone de Beauvoir. She wanted to abolish the myth of eternal feminine. She focused on the role of patriarchy in creating this notion of women. This unit shall also help you in understanding her concept about feminism. All her famous books deal with this topic. The Second Sex written by her is considered to be the bible of feminist movement. In this unit an attempt has been made to connect you to the concepts developed by Simone de Beauvoir.

4.2. Objectives

This unit is designed to help you understand the main ideas of Simone de Beauvoir who was a leading feminist. After reading this unit you will be able to

- Understand Simone de Beauvoir 's ideas described in her works
- Discuss her ideas about patriarchy
- Understand her concept of feminism
- Summarise Simone de Beauvoir's idea of freedom
- Explain her concept of marriage, children etc

4.3. Notable Works of Simone de Beauvoir

You have already learnt that Simone de Beauvoir was a feminist writer. Her works dealt with the issues vital for freedom and independence of women. Simone de Beauvoir liked to call herself an author rather than a philosopher. Here in this section let us discuss her ideas and contribution through few of her books.

4.3.1. The Second Sex

The Second Sex, published in 1949 is considered to be a pioneer book in the field of feminism. The book Second Sex for the first time in history separated gender from gender conditioning. She had rightly quoted that you are not born a woman, you become one. Femininity as

a concept is not innate but taught from infancy. She believed that women were equally capable of making life choices and taking responsibilities as woman. This novel is considered to be the bible of feminism. It was so controversial that the Vatican put it in the list of prohibited books.

In this book, Beauvoir referred to women as the Second Sex because they always seemed to be defined in relation to men.

This whole book is dedicated to the question what is a woman. Simone de Beauvoir felt that the society did not accuse a man for the way he thinks only because he is a man. A man can easily become a philosopher by virtue of being a man. But the society consider woman's body as a hindrance in becoming a philosopher. In fact, by the question what is a woman, Simone de Beauvoir challenged the exclusion of women from philosophy.

This book can be divided into two parts. The first part is known as Facts And Myths. The second part is known as Lived Experiences. The first part deals with the history of subjection of women. This part explains how the myths related to this subjection of women has perpetuated the inferior position of women. As mentioned above, this part focused on the two most important factor for emancipation of women. One is participation in the production process and second is freedom from reproductive slavery. The second part explains the experiences of women at different stages of life. This part analysed the attitudes adopted by women at different stages to deal with various situations. Simone de Beauvoir also reflected the new changes adopted by women which might help them with new opportunities. Simone de Beauvoir explains that infants cannot differentiate on the basis of sex. They perceive the world through their sense organs and not their sex organs. Gradually when they grow up, adults inculcate these differentiations into them. Tears of a girl is more indulged than a boy. While boys are expected to be independent, girls are taught to be dependent.

The Other Writings of Simone de Beauvoir

- ‘She Came To Stay’ was Simone de Beauvoir’s first book. This book reflected the complexity of war in the individual relationships. It was written in the year 1943. She Came To Stay was a love triangle where she analysed the existence in relation to the other. She argued that women need to justify their existence by loving others rather than becoming a free soul. The novel She Came To Stay deals with concepts like freedom, dependence, sexuality etc. The book mainly explains the concept of existentialism that is finding the meaning of life and self through free will, choice, and personal responsibility.
- In 1945 her book ‘The Blood Of Others’ was released. This book deals with the agony of the central character as he had to deal with the responsibility he has and his individual relations.
- Simone de Beauvoir’s next book All Men Are Mortal was published in the year 1946. The central theme of this book was the concept of mortality and immortality. In this book the character, an actress found out that a mysterious and depressed man is immortal. After knowing this, she became obsessed with her own immortality.
- In 1954, The Mandarins which was the most famous novel of Simone de Beauvoir was published.
- Her first collection of short stories When Things Of The Spirit Come First was published in 1979. The stories in this book have clearly showed the hypocrisy of the French society. The intellectual or religious absolutes veils the self-interest of the French upper class. In 1967 her second collection of short stories named The Woman Destroyed was published.
- Simone de Beauvoir had written only one play named Who Shall Die? This play deals with the topic who should be sacrificed for the benefit of the people. This play was influenced by the 14th century Italian towns when during severe starvation, the old, sick, weak, women and children were thrown out so that the strong man can live longer.

4.3.2. Pyrrhus et Cineas

In the book *Pyrrhus et Cineas*, Simone de Beauvoir explained the relation between motives of action and the concern that why should we act at all. Simone was much associated with the concept of ethical responsibility towards own self. She defines that there is no god to guarantee our morality. Therefore, it is the duty of the individual existent to follow ethical action and create a bond among themselves. And for this we have to enjoy our freedom and at the same time encourage the freedom of our fellow human beings.

It is important to mention here that Simone de Beauvoir emphasised on the notion that the perfectness of a human being should be dependent on the project he/she takes and which sets up its own end as valuable rather than the approval or validation from others. She believed that all things or concept or notion which rejects or acts as a barrier to the enjoyment of human freedom, weaken the importance of individual existence. She defined that everyone should have the freedom to choose whom they want to be. She explained that relationships like slavery, mastery, tyranny, devotion etc. are all choices though it leads to inequality in the society. She believed that we cannot do anything for others. Everyone is responsible for their own acts. But we are morally obliged not to harm anyone. Simone de Beauvoir echoed the common existentialist theme that remaining silent or refuge to help others is also a kind of choice and an individual should get the freedom to make his/her own choices. But at the same time she also said that refuge to help or remaining silent implies not encouraging the freedom of others. This is against the ethical call. If we respect the freedom of others and encourage the freedom of others it will persist to the future generation. The other individual may ignore or conform to our encouragement. They will have the freedom to choose whether to ignore or conform to our encouragement. Hence we will have to carry our projects in risk and uncertainty.

The Autobiography

There are four volumes of Simone de Beauvoir's autobiography. The first volume named *Memoirs Of A Dutiful Daughter* deals with the relationship with her parents and friends. It also focuses on her life as a school going girl and her intellectual development. It reflects her critical analysis against her class and the position of women. The second volume is known as *The Prime Of Life* which was published in 1960. This volume explains her transition from student to adult and her role in war and peace. The third volume known as *The Force Of Circumstance* published in 1963 had two sub volumes namely, *After The War* and *Hard Times*. While the first part deals with the intellectual blossoming of post war Paris, the second part describes the issues like aging and death. The fourth volume, *All Said And Done*, published in 1972, clearly shows her commitment towards feminism.

4.3.3. The Ethics Of Ambiguity

In this work Simone de Beauvoir explains that there is no predetermined standard of human value. She also opined that freedom is an internal thing which is crushed by the burden and responsibility of the external world. This responsibility and burden is not chosen by us but imposed on us by the society which is very tragic.

Freedom does not imply doing anything one wants. It means freedom to choose the goal of life. The goal varies from person to person. For one individual the goal might be writing a novel and at the same time for another individual the goal might be graduating from a university. But what matters is the freedom to choose their own goals without any external hindrances or pressure. The philosophy which accepts the freedom of each individual can be considered as ethical. She further believed that every individual though a separate entity, is in a bond with each other. Then only the idea can be carried further.

You should learn here that Simone de Beauvoir opined that a child while growing up acquires values which eventually effects their decisions in

later life. But unfortunately these values are imposed and not chosen. Sometimes the situation acts as a barrier to the enjoyment of freedom. It is not always possible to surpass certain situations. This is because these situations are not chosen but imposed. And individuals are not even aware of the alternatives. These situations are made the normal by the society. The individual is made to believe that whatever they are doing is assigned to them by nature. It is well known that we cannot revolt against the nature. Therefore, the oppressor take advantage of this and make the oppressed believe that nature has made them inferior.

Check Your Progress

1. The Second Sex was published in the year ____?
2. Why Simone de Beauvoir referred to woman as the second sex?
3. What was the central theme of Simone de Beauvoir's book She Came To Stay?
4. What was the name of the play written by Simone de Beauvoir?
5. What are the four volumes of Simone de Beauvoir's autobiography?

4.4. Simone de Beauvoir on Patriarchy

It has already been mentioned above that Simone focused on the role of patriarchy in creation of a woman. Simone de Beauvoir believed that the description or the creation of a woman is socially constructed and not biologically constructed. She was a radical departure from convention. She highlighted the problems inherent in patriarchy.

You should learn here that Simone de Beauvoir explained that women are compelled to accept a passive role in life. They are also compelled to take excessive care on their look. It needs mention here that the process of socialization helps in this. From a very early age, the primary agent of socialization like family imparts the values of feminine into a girl child. Girls are socialized in such a process that they feel more comfortable in adapting feminine identity. Right from the toy to role play to the colour of the dresses are associated with gender stereotypes. There is a watertight division between male breadwinner and female

caregiver. It needs to be remembered here that according to the norms of the society while masculine implies superior, feminine implies inferior. It needs mention here that, in later phases of life, the secondary agent of socialization like media also contributes in reinforcing these values.

You should also learn here that Simone de Beauvoir wanted her women to be free to reject male stereotyping of beauty. She believed that this will bring equality between male and female. This equality will definitely challenge the patriarchal society. She explains that the patriarchal belief that women are abnormal stands as a barrier in achieving the true potential of women. It stands as a hindrance to female emancipation.

It needs mention here that Simone de Beauvoir was in favour of destructing patriarchal institutions like traditional nuclear family. She proposed a radical solution i.e. abolishing the unit of family. You should learn here that she favoured the principle of equality both in social as well as work life. She was of the opinion that patriarchy enslave women. Men get the most important posts and places by default. This is a contribution of patriarchy. Simone de Beauvoir believes that motherhood, child care, marriage etc act as a hindrance towards the emancipation of women.

Patriarchy

Patriarchy in simple terms means domination of man over woman. In patriarchal social systems, man holds the primary position and enjoys the opportunities. The patriarchal ideas justify this domination of man over woman on the basis of inherent natural difference between man and woman. Literally patriarchy means the rule of the father. The feminists consider patriarchy as the major cause of women's oppression. It is a system of maintaining status quo of power. Patriarchy is a structural force which influences the power relations. It distributes power unequally between man and woman. In a patriarchal society the

feminine attributes are undervalued and considered to be inferior while the masculine attributes are given a superior position in the society.

SAQ

Do you think Indian society is a patriarchal society? Explain. (100 words)

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4.5. Simone de Beauvoir on Feminism

Feminism as an ideology deals with the equal rights of women. It has already been mentioned above that Simone de Beauvoir was a feminist writer. Her writings reflected the conditions of women of that era. Man has a historical definition in connection to human. While women had to assert their freedom and climb the ladder in the society, the man can simply take the elevator. Man is the savior while woman is the damsel in distress. It has also been mentioned above that she suggested ways for emancipation of women. You should learn here that Simone de Beauvoir studied multiple perspectives of women which includes biological, psychoanalytic, historical, literary, anthropological perspectives etc. She opined that none of these perspectives imply the inferiority of women. She has explained it with illustrations. If we take example of biology, we find that certain conditions are unique to women. These conditions include pregnancy, menstruation, menopause etc. Man does not experience it. These concepts are alien to man's body. But this no way proves that women are inferior to man just because she is associated with these concepts. It needs mention here that Simone de Beauvoir also explained the myths related to women. She believed that these myths regarding mother, virginity, menstruation etc. are

instruments to trap the women in the name of ideal and hence denying the individual identity of women.

You should learn here that Simone de Beauvoir rejected the notion that one is born feminine. She was of the opinion that one is not born but becomes a woman. It has already been mentioned above that the society imposes the so called feminine traits on a girl child through the process of socialisation. Simone extensively studied the roles of mother, wife and prostitutes. She found that women are bound to do the monotonous works like having children, rearing them, doing the household chores rather than engaging themselves in creative works. Hence women have no freedom to choose their own action. They play a passive and alienated role.

It has already been mentioned above that Simone de Beauvoir wanted the women to be free to act according to her own will. She wanted all the women to take goals and projects of their own choice. She also opined that a woman should make herself able to take all the risks, uncertainties and dangers involved in fulfilling these projects and goals. She proposed several structural changes in the society which will pave the way for the emancipation of women. These changes include universal childcare, equal education, contraception, and legal abortion for women. She gave utmost importance to the fact that woman's economic freedom and independence from man are most important for emancipation of women. She also emphasised that marriage like any other choices should be chosen actively by both man and woman and it should not be imposed on.

It needs mention here that Simone de Beauvoir was of the view that women also deserve the same access to the opportunities, activities and projects. It makes her a second wave feminist. She also opined that the laws, customs and education should be altered and made to encourage the equality of women.

In the beginning, Simone de Beauvoir did not consider herself to be a feminist. She believed that socialist development and class struggle are needed to solve the problem of the society and not to women movement. But later on she realised that in socialist countries like USSR and China, the condition of women remained same despite their involvement in jobs and government positions in the society. Then Simone de Beauvoir realised that actual problem lies somewhere else. Eventually she started becoming a part of the feminist movement. She declared that women need to work to be independent. Not necessarily, work will solve the problem or work should be perfect. But Simone de Beauvoir considered work as the first condition to be independent. To be truly liberated, the women must overthrow the system of patriarchy itself.

She distinguished between prostitutes and hetaeras. She also described homosexuality and was in favour of it. She believed that women have homosexual feelings latent in them and therefore towards menopause they can feel attracted towards their homosexual partners.

SAQ

Do you think women are deprived of equal opportunities in the society?
Give reasons in favour of your answer. (70 words)

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4.6. Simone de Beauvoir on Freedom

It is important to mention here that the Christians believe that human beings are born with certain innate ideas. In contrary to this Christian

belief, Simone de Beauvoir believed that human is born free. This freedom acts both in a positive as well as negative sense. Through her book 'The Second Sex' she wanted to make the women understand the value of their own freedom. The women feel like failures when they cannot meet the expectations of others. Rather than concentrating on what they want for themselves, they feel depressed for not becoming what others want them to be. Simone de Beauvoir wanted the characters in her novel to dream. She also conveyed the message that falling does not make a person a failure.

You should remember here that Simone de Beauvoir had arisen a vital question regarding the freedom of women. She asked if majority of women belong to the oppressed category, then why they don't revolt. The answer is that they are not even aware that they belong to the oppressed group. She opined that they are not even aware of their unfair situation.

Simone de Beauvoir has beautifully explained women's support towards their unfreedom. According to her, women play an active role in reinforcing her unfreedom. The main cause behind this is explained as the dependent situation of the women. Simone de Beauvoir was of the view that embracing and defending their position as sexual object also implies complicity towards unfreedom. Simone explained that women are conceived as others and therefore they are deprived of opportunities. Man is the subject and hence essential. Women are others and hence non essential. It needs mention here that Simone de Beauvoir described the story of changing attitude towards female body. She has beautifully explained how the society shapes this changing attitude. Simone de Beauvoir raised a vital question that the supposed disadvantages of female body is actually the disadvantage or not. She opined that the words like menstruation, pregnancy, menopause etc. have its own meaning. But the oppressive patriarchal society is using these terms in a negative sense. Therefore, these concepts are treated as burden. She believed that as a girl child grows she becomes flesh against her will and have to take the gazes. It leads to the belief that female body

is something for which you should feel embarrassed. Female body gives you pain and hence it is awkward. The society will never let a girl forget her body. Everyone will direct a girl about her body posture which is a shameful aspect of this society. A girl can enjoy full freedom over her body in a natural environment only and not in a social environment. But this is not possible. Escaping to a natural world is not permitted always.

SAQ

Do you think women reinforce her unfreedom. Illustrate. (60 words)

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Simone de Beauvoir also pointed out the fact that humanity is male and women are not defined independently but in relation to man. She believed that women's condition can get better through two options. Participation in the production process and emancipation from the reproductive slavery. Motherhood makes a women engrossed and this helps the man to dominate her. Simone de Beauvoir has traced the growth of women's participation after industrial revolution. She also emphasized on the birth control methods and abortion. She rightly said that it is due to historical insignificance given to women which makes the women feel inferior. It has already been mentioned above that Simone de Beauvoir has beautifully explained the differences in the process of socialization of a boy and a girl. A boy is given the idea to become tough and the girls are forced to adopt the so called feminine attributes. She is taught to worship the superiority of man and given a romantic idea of sex. Simone de Beauvoir opines that women are at par with man. It is her situation which limits her activity to preparing food and arranging lodging. These are unpaid works and despite doing all the

household chores she is forced to believe that she does nothing. Simone believed that women should fight their own specific struggles. Though it is true that being a woman can limit one's freedom only if that person chose it to be a limitation, yet Simone de Beauvoir thinks that some features of a situation may act as hindrance to freedom no matter how it had been chosen. She believed freedom needs space to move.

Existentialism

The philosophy of existentialism analyses the existence of individual independent of any prior idea. According to this philosophy, individuals are responsible for his or her own act without having any prior knowledge of good or bad or right or wrong. This philosophy deals with human freedom. The followers of this philosophy believe that action, freedom and decision are the three ingredients fundamental to human existence.

4.7. Simone de Beauvoir on Marriage

You have already learnt that a woman was not given the freedom to take decisions. When a girl grows up her life is defined in terms of marriage and her relation with a man. Simone de Beauvoir explained that the society made a girl believe that the only means of support for a girl is marriage and it is the sole justification of her existence. Men were the sole breadwinners. And therefore, women were associated with the household works. This is one of the reasons why society encourages marriage. Moreover, marriage also gives children which is one of the important aspects of female life. The idea associated with the term marriage is that a woman is given to the husband by her father and the man is said to take a wife. The society expects the women to take the last name, religion, friends and family of the husband. And eventually according to Simone de Beauvoir, marriage becomes the career for women. In this career she provides services like sex, cleaning, cooking, giving birth to children, rearing the children, taking care of the household etc. In return she gets the financial support of her husband.

This career was easily acceptable to man and woman. Woman finds this career easier than the few other jobs available for them. Moreover, this career pays them well. Simone de Beauvoir explained that women take marriage as a career as there were only few job opportunities available for women at that time. Also, those were not well paid jobs for women. Women are not considered as adult until they marry. Women were eager to get married soon as they can enjoy freedom, especially sexual freedom after marriage. During that time in France, adultery was socially acceptable. Women can take a lover after marriage but not before marriage. But men were allowed to take lovers before marriage. Men were treated as adults as soon as they get their first job. So to become an adult, a man must get a job while a woman needs to get married. You must remember here that there was different definitions of adulthood and freedom for man and woman. A woman gets freedom from her parents after marriage but marriage gives her a new master i. e. her husband. The women are happy as they enjoy certain sexual freedom after marriage. She explains that the works of married woman are equal to refusing life. The dignity of a woman is associated with bed service and household service. She explains that women find disappointment after marriage and marriage almost destroys woman.

Aging

In her book *Coming Of Age*, Simone de Beauvoir dealt with the concept of aging. She studied the history of thousand years and also different nations and cultures to write this book. This book deals with the fact that our society holds the belief that the old must suffer and endure. Aging is associated with a negative term. Women are forced to use products that will give her strength to fight against time. Simone de Beauvoir in her autobiography explained that she became upset when she was aging as she was losing her looks. As a philosopher she felt that it was a value placed by the society.

4.7.1. Simone de Beauvoir on Intercourse And Pregnancy

You have already learnt the concept of feminism, patriarchy and marriage as explained by Simone de Beauvoir. Now let us learn the concept of intercourse and pregnancy by Simone de Beauvoir . The concept of intercourse is equally traumatic for girls as it involves penetration and hence gives pain. Moreover, girls are not given any prior knowledge about intercourse compared to the boys. This is the cultural angle of society. The women are given a very romantic concept of sexual education. Therefore, when they face the reality, they get the shock. Biological facts are not traumatic. It is the lack of generosity in man’s behavior that is traumatic. The girls are socialized to romanticize sex. But on later stage, when she goes through it, she finds it painful to accept the penetration. Simone de Beauvoir opined that according to the society, satisfaction of both the spouses during intercourse is absolute absurdity. Simone de Beauvoir again believed that the concept of pregnancy is more positive in nature. As a woman becomes pregnant she is considered to be no more available for sexual services. It saves her from unwanted gazes which is a very positive aspect. Moreover, she carries a life inside her which is very enriching in itself. Pregnancy gives freedom to a woman as she is valued on her own terms. She is taken care of as she is giving birth to a new life.

SAQ

Do you think economic independence can elevate the condition of women? Discuss. (80 words)

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4.7.2. Simone de Beauvoir on Abortion And Children

Simone was not against motherhood though personally she avoided it. She was against the concept of forced motherhood or motherhood against the will of the mother to be. She supported legal abortion under the expert supervision of doctors. She refused the catholic belief that unborn souls do not go to heaven as they are not baptized. She clearly defines the issue of abortion as the issue of masculine sadism rather than an issue of morality. The sadomasochistic behavior among the girl child develops a guilt feeling among them.

You should learn here that in the career of marriage the women get promoted when she becomes a mother. Simone de Beauvoir believed that the motherly instinct is not natural in a woman but coloured by a set of uncontrollable circumstances. The women from lower class did not have knowledge and access to birth control measures and children become financial burden on them. But sadly, a woman cannot choose whether she wants to be a mother or not. The mothers are embodiment of sacrifices and it is considered normal. If she has become a mother she is denied the individuality and the society impose responsibility on her.

Check Your Progress

1. Simone de Beauvoir was in favour of destructing patriarchal institutions. (write true or false)
2. Name the structural changes proposed by Simone de Beauvoir for emancipation of women.
3. Why pregnancy is a positive aspect according Simone de Beauvoir?
4. Write a note on Simone de Beauvoir's views on abortion.

4.8. Summing Up

After going through this unit, now you are in a position to discuss the ideas of Simone de Beauvoir. In this unit, you have learnt that Simone de Beauvoir was a French writer and philosopher. She is famously known for her feminist writings. You have also learnt that her book *The Second Sex* is considered to be the bible of feminism. This book revolves round the question who is a woman. It has also been discussed here in this unit that Simone de Beauvoir explained in her book *Pyrrhus et Cineas* the relation between motives of action and the concern why should we act at all. In her book *The Ethics Of Ambiguity*, she opined that there is no predetermined standard of human value. This unit has also familiarized you with various ideas of Simone de Beauvoir like patriarchy, feminism, freedom, marriage etc. She emphasized on the role of patriarchy in the creation of a woman. After reading this unit you have also learnt that Simone de Beauvoir rejected the notion that one is born feminine. She opined that one is not born but becomes a woman. You have also learnt that Simone de Beauvoir demanded for equal opportunity and access for women. It has also been explained in this unit that Simone de Beauvoir believed that human are born free. But women are socialized to accept their unfreedom as a norm of the society. She also opined that participation in the production process and emancipation from the reproductive slavery can make a women enjoy her freedom. You have also learnt that, according to Simone de Beauvoir, marriage is taken as a career by women. This unit has helped you in summarizing the ideas of Simone de Beauvoir.

4.9. References and Suggested Readings

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